TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



ויקהל

לעילוי נשמת



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

וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר - "***But the work was enough ... and there was extra.***" *(36:7)*

The word **וְהַמְּלָאכָה** / "But the work", appears in three places in Tanach – here, in the verse (Ezra 10:13), "But the work is not for one day or for two days," and in Divrei Hayamim I (29:1), "But the work is great." What can we learn from this?

R' Eliezer Papo z"l (1785-1827; rabbi in Sarajevo) writes: The work required to observe the Torah is great. There are 613 mitzvot, and who can keep them all? But the work is not for one day or for two days; rather each soul must be incarnated three or more times before its work is complete.

Alternatively, the work, i.e., mitzvot that one performs in one lifetime, can be enough if one has a real desire to observe the entire

Torah, for Hashem attaches man's good thoughts to his good deeds. Or one can get credit for observing some of the mitzvot by studying the laws of those commandments (alluded to by the fact that the word "**וְהוֹתֵר**" has the same letters as the word "Torah"). (**Elef Ha'maggen**)

Our Parashah begins: **וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** - "***Moshe assembled the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael***." There, Moshe commanded Bnei Yisrael to observe Shabbat.



R' Tzaddok Hakohen Rabinowitz z"l (1823-1900; Chassidic Rebbe in Lublin, Poland) writes: This assembly may be likened to another gathering, when Yaakov told his sons (Bereishit 49:1-2), "Assemble and I will tell you what will befall you at the End of Days. Gather yourselves and listen . . ."

Midrash Rabbah relates that Yaakov cautioned his sons to avoid Machloket / dissension. He said, "If you are united, then I may tell you about the End of Days." Similarly, writes R' Tzaddok, Moshe wanted to tell Bnei Yisrael about Shabbat and the Mishkan, but first he told them that they must be united.

R' Tzaddok explains: The Mishnah (Uktzin 3:2) teaches that there is no "container" like Shalom / peace and harmony for holding a blessing. Where does Shalom come from?

The Gemara (Berachot 64a) teaches: "Torah scholars increase Shalom in the world." At first glance, writes R' Tzaddok, the study of Torah appears to be inherently argumentative, and



Torah scholars seem to always be engaged in Machloket. However, the prophet writes (Zechariah 8:19), "Love Emet / truth and Shalom!" When debates amongst Torah scholars are pursued with the goal of seeking Emet, the result is Shalom.

R' Tzaddok concludes: [Such debates are, particularly, a feature of the Torah She'be'al Peh / "Oral Law"–today, the Talmud.] The Zohar teaches that Shabbat is a propitious time for occupying oneself with the Oral Law–not just for scholars, but for everyone. And the Mishkan–where Hashem spoke to Moshe–was the source of the Oral Law. Therefore, Moshe preceded both of them with a gathering focused on Shalom. (***Pri Tzaddik***)

קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָהׇ לַה' כֹּל נְדִיב לִבּוֹ יְבִיאֶהָ אֵת תְּרוּמַת ה' זָהָב וָכֶסֶף וּנְחֹשֶׁת - "***Take from yourselves an offering for Hashem; every generous hearted person shall bring it, [namely] Hashem's offering: gold, silver, and copper…***" (35:5)

Why does the phrase, "portion of/for Hashem," appear twice, and why does the verse say "for" one time and "of" the second time?

R' Baruch Yosef Sack z"l explains: On the verse (Mishlei 3:9), **כַּבֵּד אֶת־ה' מֵהוֹנֶךָ** - "***Honor Hashem with your wealth***," the Sages comment (via a play on the Hebrew word "honcha"/"your wealth"), "Honor Hashem with what He has given you."

When we give charity, the money that we give is not ours, it is His. All that we give of our own is our good will.

This is the meaning of our verse: "*Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem; everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it.*" The only thing that you give which is "from yourselves" is the fact that your hearts motivate you. Anything else you give is "the portion of Hashem: gold, silver and copper . . ." (**Birkat Yosef**)

וְכָל־חֲכַם־לֵב בָּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וְיַעֲשׂוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ - *"Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that Hashem has commanded." (35:10)*

How did they know who was a "wise-hearted person"?



R' Yehonatan Eyebschutz z"l (Central Europe; 1690-1764) explains: Moshe did not tell the volunteers every detail that Hashem had commanded regarding the Mishkan. Instead, Moshe gave hints, and whoever was able to "make everything that Hashem has commanded" demonstrated thereby that he was a wise-hearted person.

Alternatively, he writes, the phrase "make everything that Hashem has commanded" was a commandment that every volunteer participate in every task so that there would be no jealousy or one-upmanship amongst the volunteers. (***Tiferet Yehonatan***)

וְהַנְּשִׂאִם הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם - *"The Nesi'im / leaders brought the Shoham stones ..." (35:27)*



The word "Nesi'im" can also mean "clouds." The Gemara (Bava Batra 75a) teaches: "Moshe's face was like the sun . . ."

R' Yehonatan Eyebschutz writes: The fact that there were intermediate levels of leadership, prevented everyone from developing a personal relationship with Moshe Rabbeinu. Thus, those intermediate leaders are like "clouds" that obscure the sun. (***Tiferet Yehonatan***)

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה' - *"On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem." (35:2)*



Why does the Torah use the passive voice, "Work may be done," instead of the active voice, "You may work"?

R' Moshe Shmuel Glasner z"l (1856-1924; rabbi of Klausenberg; known as the **Dor Revi'i**) offers two answers:

The Midrash states that although craftsmen from Bnei Yisrael went through the motions of building the Mishkan / Tabernacle, the Mishkan in fact (miraculously) stood up on its own.

The Midrash says that the same thing occurred when King Shlomo "built" the Bet Hamikdash.

We know that construction is not permitted on Shabbat, but one might think that this type of building is allowed. Therefore the Torah says that even passive work is permitted only on the six days of the week, but not on Shabbat.

Alternatively, one can answer our question as follows: It is G- d's Will that man work to earn his sustenance. However, one of man's constant challenges is recognizing when he has worked enough to fulfill G-d's Will and when he is working to earn money for luxuries.

The Torah uses the passive voice to emphasize that man should have a more casual attitude towards working. Only the person who has such a proper attitude can fulfill the next part of the verse, "the seventh day shall be holy," says R' Glasner.

A person who is too wrapped up in his work may observe the Sabbath because he knows G-d demands it. However, his Shabbat will never be holy. (**Shevivei Eish**)



וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וָנֶזֶם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלִי זָהָב
*'**The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose rings, rings, body ornaments**.' (35:22)*

The anonymous medieval commentary **Da'at Zekeinim Mi'ba'alei Ha'tosafot** states: Because the women did not give their jewelry willingly to make the Golden Calf and they did give it willingly to make the Mishkan, they merited that Rosh Chodesh was set aside as a holiday for women.

Why Rosh Chodesh? Because the Miskhan was assembled on Rosh Chodesh (as related in next week's parashah).

R' Yissachar Ber Rotenberg z"l (the Voidaslaver Rav in Brooklyn; died 1988) observes: The Midrash from which the above comment is

apparently drawn does not mention that the women gave willingly for the Mishkan, only that they did not give for the Golden Calf. However, the Da'at Zekeinim apparently understood that the women's mere refusal to give up their jewelry for the Golden Calf was not sufficiently meritorious. Perhaps the women merely wanted to keep their jewelry. - Only when they willingly gave it for the Mishkan was the righteousness of their previous behavior evident. (**Yarbeh Torah**)

וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר - "***But the melachah / work had been enough for all the work, to do it — and there was extra.***" *(36:7)*

R' Chaim bin Attar z"l (the Ohr Ha'chaim Hakadosh; died 1746) explains: Although Bnei Yisrael donated more materials than were needed for the Miskhan, Hashem caused a miracle to occur such that everything that was donated was used. Why?

Due to his love for Bnei Yisrael, Hashem did not want any person to feel that his donation had been rejected.

One could also interpret the verse in the opposite way, writes **R' Yisrael Dan Taub shlita** (**Modzhitzer Rebbe in Bnei Brak**) in the name of his ancestor **R' Yechezkel of Kozmir z"l**. The verse could mean that although Bnei Yisrael brought exactly enough materials for the Mishkan, Hashem caused a miracle and there were leftover materials. - What would have been the purpose of such a miracle?

R' Taub explains that, in order to promote humility, Hashem wanted each person to feel as if his donation had been the extra one. Why?

Because the purpose of the Mishkan was to atone for the Golden Calf. Our Sages teach that haughtiness is a form of idol worship. Accordingly, the atonement for idol worship is humility. (**Yad Le'banim Al Pirkei Avot p.141**)

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָּל־חֲכַם־לֵב בְּעֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֶשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מָשְׁזָר וּתְכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי כְּרֻבִים מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָם - "***The wise-hearted among those doing the work made the Tabernacle . . . they made them with a woven design of cherubs***" *(36:8)*

Why does this verse follow immediately after the verse quoted above **וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר** -"*But the work had been enough for all the work, to do it — and there was extra*"?

R' Eliyahu Hakohen z"l of Izmir (died 1729) explains:



The Midrash states that the Mishkan stood up on its own. Thus, all the work that had been done by the craftsmen was, in fact, "extra." However, Hashem rewards one's sincere intention to do a mitzvah as if he actually did the mitzvah.

This is alluded to by our verse: The work of the wise-hearted was **מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב**, which literally means, "A work of thought." Although there was no need for the work of the wise-hearted, since the Mishkan "built" itself, nevertheless Hashem rewarded them for their thoughts. (**Semuchin L'ad**)

וְהֵם הֵבִיאוּ אֵלָיו עוֹד נְדָבָה בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר - "***They continued to bring him additional voluntary gifts each morning.***" (36:3) **עוֹד נְדָבָה /**

R' Moshe Yehoshua Hager z"l (the Vizhnitzer Rebbe in Bnei Brak) says: The gematria of the Hebrew words "**עוֹד נְדָבָה**" (together with the seven letters of those Hebrew words) equals the gematria of Pesach (148).

This alludes to the obligation to increase one's giving of tzedakah before the upcoming holiday. In this way, one can cheer up someone needy, the way a sunlit morning cheers up a person. (**Sichot U'ma'amarei Kodesh 5732-5734 p. 129**)



וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' לֵאמֹר - *"Moshe said to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael saying, 'This is the word that Hashem has commanded to say."* (35:4)

Why was this parashah taught in the presence of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael?

R' Yosef Bechor Shor z"l (12th century; France) writes: Moshe did not want any person to be able to complain that others had an opportunity to bring donations to the mishkan before he did. Therefore, he gave the commandment to donate to the mishkan to everyone simultaneously. (**Bechor Shor**)



Don't Look Elsewhere

Sometimes, the motivation to grown spiritually comes from our respect for someone else, a Tzaddik, a Talmid Chacham… But this is a mistake.

We don't need to look elsewhere to find the means to improve ourselves. Everything we need is right at home. Every day, from morning to night, we encounter challenges that are meant just for us. If we can accept them with faith and humility, and struggle with them as best we can, we will be blessed in this world and the next. We don't have to look for things about which we were not commanded, only to accept with love that which is already ours, for in this lies the path of perfection that Hashem has intended for our souls. ~ R' Yaakov Meir Shechter.



The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

וְלַחְשֹׁב מַחֲשָׁבֹת לַעֲשֹׂת בַּזָּהָב וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַנְּחֹשֶׁת ***To think thoughts to work with gold, silver, and copper.*** (35:32)

Avoiding Improper Thoughts:The Divrei Shmuel says that the word "מַחֲשָׁבָה", thought, is related to the word "חשובה", importance. This indicates that one should place importance on his thoughts and be careful not to ruin them by thinking about improper things.





How do we explain the phenomenon of non-religious parents who sometimes have a religious child or sometimes vice versa?

And the answer is this. We explain it with the principle that Hakodosh Boruch Hu told us: הַחַיִּים וְהַמָּוֶת נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ – ***I put before you a choice of life and death***, וּבָחַרְתָּ בַּחַיִּים– ***and you should choose life***! (Devarim 30:19)

It's an announcement from Hashem that there is free will in the world. The fact that a man is born from ignorant or irreligious parents does not mean he cannot become a great tzaddik. If he chooses, then Hakodosh Boruch Hu will not prevent him. And the fact that a man is born from great tzaddikim, the fact that his parents are saints, doesn't mean he's going to be a saint.

Every man must make it his business to be the best that he can. And that's why, when you see such a phenomenon – of course, it's a tragedy when the sons of tzaddikim go wrong and of course it could be his parents were to blame too; maybe they didn't put enough effort in training him – however when it does happen, it's a demonstration of the power of free will.

Anybody can change. Anybody can change! And he can change tremendously! And therefore, as long as a man is alive, there's still hope. - That's one of the lessons we learn when we see some children who are very different from their parents.



How does one teach oneself to think before he speaks?

I told you this already more than once. Make up your mind that for the next two hours when somebody speaks to you you're not going to answer until you count to five.

Do that for two hours today. No matter what, you'll count to five before you respond. Now, once you accomplish that do it again tomorrow for two hours. And the day after. And after a while you'll get into the habit of thinking before you talk.

By the way, when you talk to important people, you'll notice that even gentiles l'havdil have learnt not to shoot their mouths off. Of course, the best thing is you if don't answer at all.

A lot times, small things, you don't have to answer at all. You listen but you don't have to answer all the time. But if you must, take your time before you answer. – Count: one, two, three, four, five, and then you can open your mouth. That itself makes you considered a wise man to other people.



Should one allow himself to absorb the apikorsus found in books about niflaos habriyah?

I'm not sure I understand this question, but I suppose he means this: If you're going to read books about the wonders of nature, won't we also find there statements that can mislead people to atheism and apikorsus?

And the answer is certainly you will. And I never said you should read those books. But what I do say is that we have a tremendous textbook whose pages are open before our eyes – nature is apparent and obvious for anybody who is interested in seeing it.

יוֹדוּךָ ה' כָּל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ. *'Everything in this world is praising Hashem'.*

There are so many things that are available every day in our lives that you don't need any books. However, if you're going to be a teacher, you can read books if you're capable of understanding the poison and omitting it, skipping over it. But for ordinary people, these gentile books are not recommended.

R' Avrohom Seba ZT"L (Tzror Hamor) would say:

"Moshe Rabbeinu realized that the downfall of Bnei Yisroel was the 'Erev Rav'. They were the ones who had caused the Jewish people to make the Golden Calf and commit many other sins. Therefore, when it came to time to build the Mishkan which was to atone for the Egel, he assembled the whole of Klal Yisroel and separated them from the Erev Rav. Thus, the parsha begins: **וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** 35:1 *'And Moshe assembled all the congregation of Bnei Yisroel'* - but not the sinful Erev Rav."



לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת – *'You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Shabbos day.'* (35:3)



The Torah can be understood only through the interpretive eyes of the Oral Law. This prohibition is a classic example of this verity. Chazal teach that only the creation of fire and use of it for cooking or baking are prohibited. There is, however, no prohibition against enjoying its benefits, such as light and heat.

The Tzedukim, Saducees, forbade all use of fire. Thus, Shabbos was a day during which they sat in the dark and consumed cold food. (How fitting that one who does not allow the Torah (as given on Har Sinai – both written and oral) to illuminate his life sits in "darkness" the entire Shabbos.)

Chazal (Talmud Yevamos 6b) derive from this pasuk that bais din, Jewish court, shall not administer the death sentence on Shabbos. While its focus is primarily on one who has been sentenced to death by burning, it applies equally to all forms of execution.

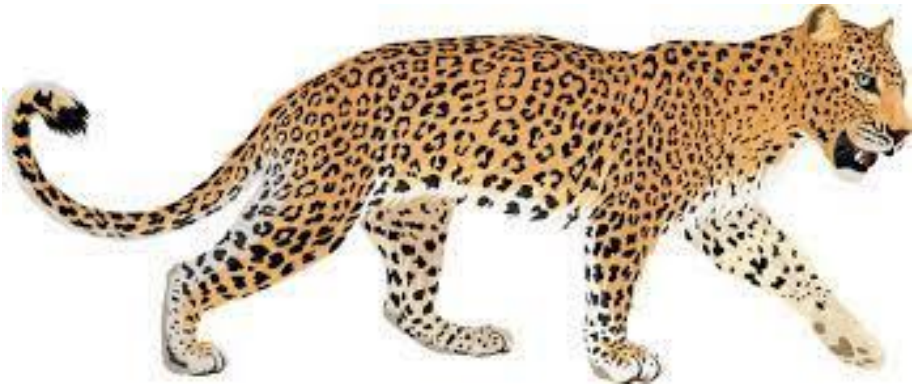
The Sefer HaChinuch explains that the root of the mitzvah, is that Hashem sought to honor the day of Shabbos, so that everyone – even sinners and guilty people– find rest on this hallowed day.

There is a parable about a king who invited the people of his country to a lavish feast, such that no man be prevented from attending. Whoever was to receive the king's justice would receive it the

following day. So, too, did Hashem want to honor His Shabbos by commanding us to sanctify and honor it for our own good and merit.

As an aside, it is truly regrettable that those who either due to choice, or lack of knowledge, do not observe Shabbos Kodesh are unaware of the esteem that Hashem Yisborach has for it. Hashem gave us Shabbos as His special treasure, which He wanted to share with us. He gave us this day of the week, a day replete with spiritual sublimity, as a gift, as a token of love. Yet, so many reject this gift, "Thanks – but no thanks."

As the Sefer HaChinuch writes, "It is the feast prepared by the King, Who invites all of His subjects to attend." - Imagine telling the King, "Not interested." - This is what we do when we denigrate the mitzvah of Shabbos.



A story which has made the rounds is worth sharing. Kivi Bernhard is a resident of Atlanta, Georgia, the son of a distinguished South African Rav. He authored a book, "Leopardology: The hunt for profit in a tough global economy." Published in 2009, it became an instant best-seller. The book gave the businessman insights and strategies to engage in critical business thinking – all gleaned from the hunting habits and the techniques of the African leopard, who is probably the most successful predator on earth.

As Kivi writes: "Not unlike the world of commerce, in the bushlands of Africa, if one is not hunting to survive, one will simply survive to be hunted."

R' Kivi was invited to speak all over the world. Soon he became one of the world's top ten platform speakers. Speaking to the Chabad of Melbourne, Australia, he told of the many fortune 500 companies to

whom he had previously spoken. He regaled the crowd with stories concerning how a frum, observant, Jew is able to navigate the secular/gentile business world.

One of his well-known stories took place when the senior Vice President at Microsoft called him and asked him (he was the senior assistant to Bill Gates, Chairman of Microsoft) to be the platform speaker for a Microsoft conference on February 11, which happened to be Shabbos. Kivi replied that he could accommodate them on any other day – but Shabbos was unacceptable.

Two days passed, and they called back. They offered to double his fee. They also reminded him that this was Microsoft speaking, and it was no ordinary conference. It was their preeminent conference of the year.

R' Kivi was immovable. The next time Bill Gates called. Being an individual of such enormous wealth, the thought of someone declining his request was unfathomable: "Perhaps it is more money that you are seeking. I am prepared to pay you three times the going rate."

"I am sorry," R' Kivi replied. "I do not work on the Sabbath."

The convention was reorganized, and he spoke on Sunday. Bill Gates told his assistant that he had never before met anyone that did not have his price. Everyone can be bought one way or another.

Kivi Bernhard could not be bought, because Shabbos is not for sale. To paraphrase Bill Gates, "That is what happens when you have something money cannot buy."

This incident continues to be an enormous Kiddush Hashem. If we think about it, this is the standard behavior for a frum Jew. Our religious commitment cannot be bought. No truly observant Jew can be swayed or bought to relinquish putting on Tefillin for a day – for any amount of money. This is the meaning of commitment. Anything less is just not frum.

קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָהּ לַה׳ – 'Take from yourselves a terumah, portion, for Hashem.' (35:5)

What is the meaning of **קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם**, "Take from yourselves?" - From whom else should they take, if not from themselves?

The sefer, Torei Zahav, offers an insightful interpretation of this phrase. One who is about to offer a terumah, portion, to Hashem; i.e., one who wants to determine the best medium, the strongest motivation, for serving Hashem, should take from himself. He should study his own life experiences and ask himself, "I receive so much from Hashem. I owe Him everything. I should serve Him in a manner that shows that I know, I care, I am thankful."

The **Chovos HaLevavos** offers the following thought. "Reuven" offers his home to "Shimon." He feeds him; he sustains him in a manner such that Shimon has no real needs. Everything has been addressed by Reuven. Is it too much for Reuven to expect that Shimon will not do him any harm?

This is how we must act toward Hashem, Who gives us everything. He supplies everything that we need – perhaps not necessarily everything that we want, but our needs are all addressed. - **קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם**, 'take from yourselves'; we should seriously take note of all that we have and then our portion, our service to Hashem, will have greater meaning.

How often does the general community have a fundraising event for a worthy organization, a new building, a new institution, an innovative endeavor, and our response is: "It is not about me; I am past that stage; I support one yeshivah/school already, I do not carry in the eruv anyway, I am beyond mikvah, etc."

We forget that **תְּרוּמָהּ לַה׳** has nothing to do with this specific endeavor. While it may be true that we will not enjoy the fruits of a specific endeavor, Hashem certainly will, as it enhances kavod Shomayim, the glory of Heaven. - We do not seem to refuse His

munificence when we are on the receiving end. קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם; "Take for yourselves."



The Ben Ish Chai relates how a rebbe took a group of yeshivah students for a *tiyul*, trip. During the journey they came across a group of stevedores quietly carrying heavy crates on their shoulders. Their muscles seemed to be bulging from the heavy labor. Yet, they did not speak; they just carried.

The rebbe said to his students, "See how they carry the load. A while ago, when they became stevedores, this was a most difficult and demeaning job. But work is work, and some people work because they need to earn a living. Over time their muscles became stronger, to the point that carrying such heavy weights does not bother them. On the contrary, they are stronger because of their daily work-out."

"Take a lesson from your daily learning. You never work up a sweat as these stevedores do. Why do they work so hard? Because they need the few dollars that they earn. If they are willing to work so tirelessly for a few dollars, how much more so should you toil in Torah for its incredible benefits, which strengthen you spiritually."

When one has positive spiritual goals and objectives, when ruchniyus, plays a critical role in one's life, he looks for every opportunity, to enhance himself – regardless of the toil, the expense, the many demands placed upon him. It is a terumah l'Hashem.

When one lives purely for himself, he always finds an excuse to rationalize his indifference, his lack of participation in a given cause. One must realize that his קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם defines his תְּרוּמָהּ לַה'.

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים – '***The men came with the women.***' (35:22)



Rashi translates the phrase, **עַל־הַנָּשִׁים**, on the women, as **עִם הַנָּשִׁים** '***with***' the women. Targum Onkelos, however, translates it as **עַל נְשַׁיָּא**, ***on*** the women. This implies that the men brought the donations that were **on** the women, suggesting that the men accompanied their wives to the collection center, after which the women removed their jewelry and contributed it to the Mishkan.

Why did they follow this procedure? Could the men not just have brought the jewelry on their own?

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, derives an important insight from here. The women wanted to show that they were wearing the jewelry, that it had great value to them. They were not taking jewelry from a box that no one was using, about which no one cared. On the contrary, the gold and silver jewelry which they gave was quite dear to them.

The Mishkan, however, was more precious. Therefore, they were removing their jewelry and readily contributing it to the Mishkan. They showed that, as much as they cared for their jewelry, the Mishkan had greater significance. It gave them greater pleasure to give to the Mishkan than to wear the jewelry.

The Rosh Yeshivah adds that this is the manner in which one should give tzedakah, charity; indeed, this is how he should perform all mitzvos, especially limud ha'Torah, Torah study. Despite the fact that one may have other things to do, other opportunities for easing his life; nonetheless, Torah and mitzvah performance take precedence.



It was Yom Kippur night, and a huge crowd had assembled in the Berditchever Shul where the saintly **Horav Levi Yitzchak, zl** was preparing to usher in the holiest day of the Jewish calendar year. The Berditchever motioned to the chazzan to wait a while; he was not quite ready to begin Kol Nidre.

The minutes passed by as the packed congregation began to whisper silently, "What could be holding up the Rebbe?"

Soon, Rav Levi Yitzchak turned to his shammes, attendant, and asked, "Is Reb Mottel from Zhitomia here?"

The shammes looked around and, after noticing Reb Mottel, he told the Rebbe that he was in attendance.

"Please ask him to come here," said Rav Levi Yitzchak.

When Mottel came over, Rav Levi Yitzchak began to question him. "Tell me, do you not live on land owned by a certain gentile landowner?"

"Yes," responded the surprised Mottel.

"Does he not own a dog?" asked the Rebbe.

"Yes, Rebbe, he owns a very fine dog," answered Mottel, not having any idea why Rav Levi Yitzchak would be asking such questions prior to Kol Nidre.

"Do you know how much he paid for the dog?" the Rebbe asked.

"I surely do," answered Mottel proudly. "He said it was a special dog with a distinguished pedigree and that he had paid four hundred rubles for it."

This was a huge sum to pay for anything in those days, let alone for a dog. Hearing the amount, Rav Levi Yitzchak was thrilled, exclaiming, "Four hundred rubles! That is fantastic!"

He quickly summoned the chazzan to begin the Kol Nidre prayer to usher in Yom Kippur.

It was not surprising that everyone who was privy to this entire episode was bewildered. First, why would the saintly Rebbe care about a gentile's dog? And what difference did it make how much the dog had cost?

After Maariv, a close group of the Rebbe's disciples gathered around him and worked up the courage to ask him to explain to them what had occurred.

The Rebbe related to them the following incident: "A melamed, tutor, came to our town this past year to earn enough money tutoring to repay the many debts that he had accumulated in his hometown. After a while, he had earned enough money to repay his debts and still have sufficient funds to support his family for the coming year. On his way home, he stopped overnight at an inn.

You can imagine what happened. He was careless with his money bag, and it was stolen. He woke up the next morning to discover the terrible thing that had occurred, and he became hysterical. He screamed and cried. He was crushed: months and months of his work were lost, gone forever.

"Mottel's gentile landowner was staying at the same inn. Upon hearing the melamed's wailing, he inquired about the commotion. He listened to the melamed broken-heartedly relate the entire story: how he had worked hard for months to pay off his debts and support his family, and now it was all gone.

The landowner was moved by the story. After hearing how much the melamed had lost, he took out four hundred rubles – the amount that had been stolen – and gave it to the melamed."

The Rebbe continued, "As we were about to begin Kol Nidre, I became concerned about the episode and its far-reaching effect on us as we stand in judgment before Hashem. Do we deserve that Hashem should look at us favorably? Let us ask ourselves: 'Are we deserving of His favor? Did any of us do an unusual act of chesed, kindness, that would stand in our behalf?' If a gentile could perform such an exemplary act of kindness, Hashem's nation should do no less. Can we say that we did?

"I then remembered the dog – the dog for which the gentile had spent so much money. When I discovered that he had spent four hundred rubles for a dog, an ordinary pet, it indicated to me that this gentile does not place a premium on his money.

Thus, while the act of giving the melamed four hundred rubles was clearly a remarkable act of chesed, it surely did not represent an act of sacrifice on the gentile's part. A man who can spend so much money on a dog does not truly appreciate the value of money."

Many of us give tzedakah with an open hand, responding to a multitude of charities both private and communal. Are we aware of the theory of "relativity," whereby our tzedakah's value is "relative" to how much we actually spend on ourselves?

Spending money for mitzvah performance is wonderful and the appropriate manner of observance, but when the funds that we spend are a far cry from what we spend on our personal lives, the merit is diminished. Our spiritual dimension should maintain center stage in our lives.

"Hashem's presence can be felt in every aspect of creation. From the smallest blade of grass to the grandest mountain." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

וְכָל־הַנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא לִבָּן אֹתָנָה בְּחָכְמָה - '***All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom***.' (35:26)

The Baal HaTurim notes the Mesorah, Masoretic tradition, of the phrase, **וְכָל־הַנָּשִׁים**, "*And all the women*," is used again in Megillas Esther, **וְכָל־הַנָּשִׁים יִתְּנוּ יְקָר לְבַעְלֵיהֶן** - "***And all wives should show respect to their husbands***" (Megillas Esther 1:20).

This refers to Haman's advice in which he instructs Achashveirosh to issue a decree, emphasizing the significance of women appreciating and valuing their husbands.

This is undoubtedly one of the primary tenets that provide the framework for a successful marriage relationship. A woman who does not value her husband (and reminds him of his second-class status) will ultimately cause the matrimonial structure of their home to implode, creating an abnormal home, dysfunctional children, and a relationship that holds little hope for the future.

It goes without saying that the husband must, likewise, acknowledge and appreciate his wife's input into the relationship and the home.

Horav Meshullam Igra, zl, (1742–1801) was one of Europe's dominant Torah scholars. A brilliant mind, he was profoundly versed in all areas of Torah erudition. Even as a young child, his fame as a genius spread throughout the country.

Many a young boy, upon reaching the age of twelve, if he had the reputation of which successful futures in Torah scholarship were made, was sought after by prospective fathers-in-law. Wealthy men were prepared to disperse large amounts of money to secure the right young man for their "perfect" daughters. This allowed these young men to sit and learn for years, unencumbered by the fiscal responsibilities of providing for their families.

Obtaining a brilliant son-in-law who would one day become an erudite Torah leader was, indeed, a worthy investment. When Rav Meshullam was a mere lad of eight, the lines for this extraordinary young boy

began to form. In four more years, his parents would finally listen to shidduchim.

The city's wealthiest man, an individual who valued Torah, as well as the good deeds for which he was famous, was able to procure the opportunity for his daughter to meet with the budding young scholar.



It was at this time that the coffee beverage was introduced. Being very expensive, this beverage was enjoyed only by the very wealthy. The Igra family, especially their son, had yet to be introduced to this latest rage.

When the young Meshullam came to the man's home to meet his daughter, he saw coffee for the first time in his life. It was not Starbucks, nor even instant. It was coffee, sugar, and milk, in three different containers. Rav Meshullam was clueless as to how to drink/eat the three items set before him.

Thinking for a few moments, he turned to Chazal and halachah for guidance. First, our sages teach that eating precedes drinking, so he ate the contents of the plate of sugar cubes. Next, he saw before him two liquids: one dark in color; and one white. He decided that dark precedes light; so, he drank the coffee followed by the milk.

Watching in "horror," the cultured girl could not believe her eyes. Demonstrating her level of maturity, she ran from the table right to her mother, and, after relating to her the boy's lack of culture, declared that she was not interested in pursuing a relationship with him. The subject was closed. She would not marry Meshullam,

because he did not know how to drink coffee! (For those who think such foolish reasoning is ludicrous and certainly not a reason to break a shidduch, such ridiculous absurdities, albeit "state-of-the-art," continue to plague families to this very day, as the finest opportunities for a wonderful, lasting relationship are irrationally disregarded.)

When the father entered the kitchen and was confronted by the scene of mother and daughter weeping incessantly, he asked what had happened. After being informed of his daughter's debacle with the brilliant boy her father had hoped she would marry, the father raised his voice in disgust and said, "You are willing to renege the opportunity to be married to a living Sefer Torah?!"

Her response was sadly typical of young people raised in comfort and contemporary values, "A Sefer Torah belongs in an Aron HaKodesh. I am not prepared to spend the rest of my life with a Sefer Torah!" End of shidduch. - The distraught father had to live with the products of his childrearing. He had lost the future Rav Meshullam Igra.

Fast forward seventeen years, and that wealthy man had occasion to be in the city of Breslau on business. While he was there, he felt he should visit the Rav of the city, **Horav Yeshayah Pik, zl**, who was one of Europe's preeminent gaonim, brilliant scholars. He knocked on the Rav's office and went in to see the Rav who was pacing back and forth, while staring at a letter that he held in his hands. The man figured that the Rav's anxiety over the letter was due to the nature of its contents. Perhaps a Jewish community was undergoing a major crisis that required the Rav's counsel or intervention. What else could it be?

Being a man of means, well-connected throughout the world of commerce, he asked the Rav, "Perhaps I can help?"

The Rav replied, "I received this letter from a young man whose identity is unbeknownst to me. In it, he poses a halachic question

with such incredible brilliance that I have literally spent hours in an attempt to grasp the profundity of his words. He must be an outstanding Torah scholar. Perhaps you might know who he is? He signs the letter, Meshullam Igra."

When the man heard mention of the name of the young man who, if not for an absurdity, would now have been his son-in-law, he passed out.

The Rav immediately revived him. "What happened? What does this name mean to you?" he asked.

The man related the entire story of his daughter's "on/off/almost" shidduch with the author of the letter.

When the Rav heard this, he exclaimed, "If this is the case, then I regret having revived you. You have every reason to pass out – again!"

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – '***Moshe assembled the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael***.' (35:1)

The Avnei Nezer explains that as the Mishkan's construction concluded, Moshe assembled the entire nation for the purpose of teaching them the importance of harmony. The goal of the Mishkan is to serve as the one unifying place, the singular force towards which all the Jewish People focus their prayers and sacrifices.

Until the completion of the Mishkan, it was permissible to offer sacrifices on Bamos, personal altars. Each and every Jew did his own thing, expressing his service to Hashem on his personal wavelength, exclusive of his neighbor. Tefillah was an individual endeavor. It was not b'tzibbur, expressed through the entirety of a cohesive communal effort. It was splintered and exclusionary, while the Mishkan was to be cohesive and inclusive.

The power of a unified Klal Yisrael is awesome. In his commentary to Parashas Korach, **Be'er Moshe, the Ozrover Rebbe, zl**, observes

what seems to be an anomaly concerning the **יְהִי רָצוֹן** prayer recited by the chazzan, leader of the prayer service, following Krias HaTorah on Monday and Thursday.

This series of prayers which all begin with **יְהִי רָצוֹן** - "***May it be the will***," contains supplications for the health and continued welfare of the shearis Yisrael, remnant of the Jewish People in exile, for its spiritual leadership and their families.

These prayers are followed by a communal supplication which begins, **אַחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל** - "***Our brothers, the entire family of Yisrael***," which beseeches the Almighty to deliver from distress and captivity, from pain and misery, any Jew who is in need, regardless of his geographical location.

The Rebbe wonders why the last prayer does not begin with **יְהִי רָצוֹן**, as its predecessors do?

He explains that the tefillah commences with the invocation, **אַחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל**, whereby all Jews are united under one family banner. When there is unity among Jews, there is no need to ask Yehi ratzon. The eis ratzon, period of good-will, is aroused by a unified people. There is no greater inspiration for good will than when Jews act toward one another as acheinu, our brother.

Horav Moshe Soloveitchik, zl, suggests that the concept of tefillah b'tzibbur, communal prayer with a minyan, quorum of at least ten men, has had a critical impact on the survival of Klal Yisrael.

Ordinarily, one would wonder why tefillah b'tzibbur is so important; why Chazal were very stringent in underscoring the absolute need for prayers to be recited in a communal gathering place, such as a shul.

He explains that if Jews had not been compelled to pray in shul, the average Jew would not have survived the vicissitudes of life's challenges. The only ones who would have gone to the shul would have been the talmidei chachamim, Torah scholars, the spiritual elite, who

would all study in the shul. The simple Jew whose life does not revolve around Torah study would have no reason to attend, thus depriving himself of a spiritual relationship with like-minded Jews.

A Jew alone in exile in countries where spiritual ascendency is not encouraged needs a brother, and friend, to offer him chizuk, to encourage and embolden him to maintain his spiritual affiliation. This takes place during the daily prayer services when all Jews congregate together to pray as one.

The following story underscores and defines the benefit and true essence of unity: When Napoleon Bonaparte, self-proclaimed emperor of Europe, reached the outskirts of Russia, it was the summer of 1812. He stood at the helm of an army consisting of half a million soldiers.

Already having conquered most of Europe, his heart was now set on the Russian bear. Although he really desired to conquer this vast country, he was smart enough to acknowledge that this would not be a simple task. Thus, the emperor decided that he would pay a visit to **Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl**, and seek his sage advice.

"What counsel do you suggest concerning my forthcoming battle with the Russians? Will this war end in victory for me, or does a catastrophic end await my army?" Napoleon asked Rav Chaim.

Rav Chaim replied with an analogy: A prince once traveled through the countryside in a carriage that was fashioned from the finest woods. His horses were among the finest steeds in the country, each imported from a foreign land, each with its own unique pedigree. They traveled quickly through the day until nightfall, at which point the horses could not see that well. The driver, fearing for his well-being if the prince would be delayed, pushed the horses even harder.

The road changed and became very muddy, causing the horses to slip. Once the first horse fell, the second followed, until all four horses had slipped, causing the carriage to turn over tossing its

distinguished passengers into the mud. The horses could not pull the carriage out of the mud.

A few hours went by, and a simple farmer appeared, driving a wagon which was pulled by three horses that appeared to have been left over from "Pharoah's" time! This was the region's idea of AAA road service.

The prince was quite incredulous when the farmer offered to help. After all, what could the farmer's three "has been" horses do, that his own precious horses could not do? Well, it took the farmer five minutes to pull the carriage from the mud. Shocked, the prince asked, "How could your horses achieve what my horses failed to do?"

The farmer explained, "Sir, it is simple. Your horses are aristocratic, each one among the finest and most exalted steeds in its respective country. When you give a signal or touch them with your whip – each individual horse does what is best for it. It pulls the way it wants to go. It is not part of a collective team, because each horse is from a different land.

"My three horses are family, all born to the same mare. They were raised together on the same farm. While individually – horse for horse – they are no match for any of your horses, as a team – they excel! They are all one family."

"The lesson," explained Rav Chaim, "is quite simple. As the Emperor Napoleon, you have gathered a fine army of soldiers from throughout the world! They may be individually great, but they are lacking as a team.

On the other hand, the Russian army is comprised of soldiers who are all from within the government's region. They are family, with each soldier feeling a sense of empathy for his brother soldier. This is an unbeatable combination. - It is for this reason that I question your ability to triumph over them."

History has proven the brilliance of Rav Chaim's advice. Nothing can overcome the power of achdus, a unified group whose members work together cohesively as one.

An elderly Jew, a survivor from the European Holocaust, related the following incident which took place in the concentration camp where he was interned: The Germans employed their Jewish compatriots as guards to police themselves. In other words, if something was not perfect, the Jewish guards were taken to task. It was a "no win" situation, whereby the Jewish police were stuck between a "rock and a hard place."

One day, something was taken from the commandant's office. The Gestapo came in en masse, armed to the teeth, demanding the identity of the culprit. "Who is responsible for this dastardly act?" they asked.

"We are all responsible," the prisoners answered in unison. "It is all our fault. We are all prepared to pay for our sin!"

The Gestapo were shocked by this display of unity among the prisoners. This was something to which they were not accustomed. They let them all go back to the block, with no punishment.

כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב לִבָּם אֹתָם לְהָבִיא לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לַה' – '***Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring for any of the work… brought a free-willed offering to Hashem***.' (35:29)

If one follows the translation of this pasuk – "*Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring – brought a free-willed offering*" – seems redundant: "*Whoever was motivated to bring – brought.*" Is there any question concerning their offering?

The commentators respond to this redundancy. I will focus on one such interpretation. **Horav Yehonasan Eibeshitz, zl**, offers a practical explanation. When Moshe Rabbeinu made his appeal for the

Mishkan, the entire Jewish nation responded positively – even the erev rav, mixed-multitude. This created a problem, since the members of the erev rav were now persona non grata, after their involvement in the eigel ha'zahav, debacle. Indeed, they were the initiators of the sin that cost the Jewish People dearly. They had the perverse audacity to lead the nation in serving the Golden Calf. The Mishkan was to serve as an atonement for the Golden Calf. - Here they were once again at the forefront of the tumult to contribute towards the Mishkan. What unmitigated chutzpah!

The nation had no intention of accepting their contributions and allowing them access to the Mishkan. However, there was one problem: How were they going to make up the money which the erev rav would have donated? By not including their donations, there would be a shortfall.

The people came to a decision. The erev rav would not be included, yet there would be no shortfall. Why? The people would make up the difference. They would pay the erev rav's portion from their own pockets, and thereby not permit the erev rav to mix in to their collective atonement. All of them would pay the money, so that the erev rav did not have a role in the Mishkan.

This is what is meant by the pasuk when it implies that Bnei Yisrael gave twice. When the people saw that the **כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה**, every man and woman (referring to the erev rav), came with his or her contribution, Bnei Yisrael immediately upped the ante and gave more money to cover the shortfall.

They put their money where their mouths were. It is easy to refuse the erev rav, but are we willing to pay the tab?

"Happiness is achieved through appreciating the blessings that you already have." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב לִבָּם אֹתָם לְהָבִיא לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לַה' – '***Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring for any of the work… brought a free-willed offering to Hashem***.' (35:29)

This pasuk seems ambiguous. It begins by stating that every man and woman contributed toward the Mishkan and ends by saying that all Bnei Yisrael contributed. Why is there a change in the text? Does the Torah seek to convey a secret message?



Horav Gavriel Ze'ev Margolis, zl, suggests that the Torah implies a fundamental lesson for parents. If we want our children to grow up as committed Jews, we must train them as such. Being an observant Jew is no different than any other endeavor - it takes training. What better time to educate a person than when he is young?

Shlomo Ha'Melech states in Mishlei 22:6, **חֲנֹךְ לַנַּעַר עַל־פִּי דַרְכּוֹ גַּם כִּי־יַזְקִין לֹא־יָסוּר מִמֶּנָּה** - "***Educate a child according to his way, so that when he grows old he will not turn away from it***."

To infuse a child in the mitzvah of tzeddakah, a parent should model the mitzvah and require him to participate actively in the mitzvah. Bnei Yisrael did not come alone with their contributions. They sent their children to bring the money to Moshe. They realized that only through such training will their children continue along the same path.

וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר - "***And the stuff they had was "sufficient" for all the work to make it with some "left over***." (36:7)

The text of this pasuk seems enigmatic. The word "sufficient" implies an accounting of materials for a precise purpose, for which an accurate amount is necessary. "Left over," on the other hand, denotes a surplus of these materials.



Horav Meir Shapiro, z.l., offers a novel approach to resolving this apparent "contradiction." Every Jew contributed towards the Mishkan, each according to his own means. Some individuals wanted to donate more than their resources permitted but were not allowed to do so. There were also probably individuals who had procrastinated, intending to give more before the call came to cease the donations.

The halachah regarding the latter case is clear. When one plans to donate to "*hekdesh*", sanctuary, the intended object becomes sanctified even if the individual had not uttered a word of affirmation.

We note that thoughts are accepted as binding. What happens to these thoughts and worthy intentions? They surely do not vanish into oblivion!

Horav Shapiro deduces that these holy thoughts are transformed into deeds. This is consistent with the statement of Chazal that one who has been prevented from performing an intended mitzvah is viewed by the Torah as having performed it.

Responding to the above problem, he states that the actual donations were sufficient to serve the concrete needs of the Mishkan and its vessels. The "left over" refers to the surplus of good will and intentions, the unrealized aspirations of those who had hoped to go beyond the letter of the law but missed the opportunity. These donations remained a separate phenomenon, hovering above humanity in the spiritual realm.

The airspace surrounding the Sanctuary was also holy, despite its intangibility. How did it receive sanctification if it had no corporeal form? How could the air, which has no tactile properties, become as consecrated as the actual place?

Horav Shapiro responds that this unique holiness was a direct result of the yearnings and strivings of the people whose intended donations had become ensconced in the air of the Mishkan.

We may advance this thought further. When one studies Torah or performs another mitzvah, he creates a metaphysical form of sanctity for which he will be rewarded. The attitude with which he approaches this mitzvah performance is also a source of kedushah, holiness. The resulting kedushah becomes an intrinsic part of the place in which he performs this deed.

For example, one who studies Torah in a certain room creates an atmosphere of kedushah in that room. We suggest that the quality of the of kedushah in that room is consistent with the enthusiasm he applies and the holiness he attributes to his Torah study. The level of kedushah in a given place correlates highly to the attitude towards the mitzvah performance in that place. If the Torah study is cold and insipid, the place will maintain that same sterile form of spirituality. If the Torah study is a manifestation of one's love for and devotion to Hashem's Torah, it will be reflected in a sublime form of sanctity that can be intuitively felt when one enters the room.

וְהַנְּשִׂאִם הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם - "***And the princes brought the Shoham stones***." (35:27)

The Midrash relates that when the princes of each tribe heard that Hashem wanted a Mishkan erected, they suggested that they would supply all the necessary materials for the Mishkan. Moshe responded that Hashem would accept contributions from anyone who was willing to give. The Nesiim then decided, that rather than donate together with Klal Yisroel, they would supply whatever would be lacking.

They underestimated the generosity of the Bnei Yisroel, who gave eagerly and lovingly, so that no more material was needed. The Nesiim were left excluded. Seeking to still have a part in the building of the Mishkan they donated the precious gems for the Eifod and the Choshen. Therefore the Torah omits the letter "Yud" from the word "נְּשִׂאִם" to indicate a failure on the part of the Nesiim.

Although their intentions were honorable, they were wrong to postpone the fulfillment of a mitzvah. The omission or addition of a "Yud" to a name is a very significant change.

We find that Moshe added a "Yud" to Yehoshua's name prior to his departure to scout Eretz Yisroel to save him from the influence of the spies. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the sin which mandated such a punishment.

Perhaps the answer may be found in Rashi's commentary. Rashi explains - וּלְפִי שֶׁנִּתְעַצְּלוּ מִתְּחִלָּה נֶחְסְרָה אוֹת מִשְּׁמָם - "***Since they were lazy, a letter was omitted from their name***". Although they thought their intentions were noble, it was indolence that was the motivating factor for not contributing to the Mishkan.

We may derive from here that often it is a person's subconscious that really regulates his reasoning. It is therefore necessary to be aware of our feelings so that we may seek out the true motivation for our actions.

וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַּיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר - "***And the bringing of the materials was enough for all the work that was to be done, and more than enough***." (36:7)

Upon reading this pasuk, one is confronted with an apparent contradiction. Initially we are told that the bringing of the materials was "enough," implying that the people brought whatever was necessary to build the Mishkan, but not more than that. Then, immediately the pasuk concluded with "and more than enough."

The **Or Hachayim** says- '***If it was enough, it was not extra; if it was extra, it was it was not enough***!' He offers the following resolution: The Torah is informing us of the unbounded love that Hashem has for Bnei Yisrael. Since they brought even more than was necessary, Hashem concerned Himself with the honor due each individual Jew who extended himself and contributed towards the Mishkan. Hashem saw to it that miraculously every contribution was included in the Mishkan's construction.

Consequently, the meaning of the pasuk is, that despite the surplus, Hashem insured that the Mishkan encompassed all that the people had contributed. Miraculously, the receptacle was able to receive more than it could actually contain.

There are two factors which contributed to the people's meriting such a miracle. First, their contribution was purely for the sake of Heaven, free of any personal motives and interests. Second, they performed this mitzvah with amazing eagerness. They all took leave of Moshe with alacrity to bring the material as one. This included every Jew, each one careful not to selfishly deter another fellow so that he could bring a given item in his place.

Be aware that every act which is performed purely for the sake of Hashem is never forgotten Above. It is recognized and recorded in Heaven, and its rewards are forthcoming and everlasting.

Honesty Pays by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt"l



On trial for his life as an accused rebel against the Czarist regime in Russia, **Rabbi David Luria**, famous for his commentary on the Midrash, found himself in a peculiar situation.

The judges trying him conversed with one another in French so that the Russian defendants would not be privy to their secret discussions regarding the case before them. Unknown to them, Rabbi Luria spoke French fluently and would therefore be in a position to arrange his arguments according to the thinking of the judges. But he felt that this would not be honest and so he put his hands to his ears.

When the judges asked for an explanation of this strange act, the rabbi replied in French that he did not wish to dishonestly overhear their secret discussions. - They were so impressed by this extraordinary display of honesty that they decided he was innocent.

Sage Sayings

Source: Mishpacha (with kind permission from the publisher)

While hosting the אַמְרֵי אֱמֶת, ר׳ אַבְרָהָם מָרְדְּכַי אַלְתֵּר זצ״ל, R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld זצ״ל honored him by asking him to sit on a comfortable armchair. The אַמְרֵי אֱמֶת politely declined. Quoting the חָזַ״ל, כָּל מַה שֶּׁאוֹמֵר לְךָ בַּעַל הַבַּיִת, עֲשֵׂה, חוּץ מִצֵּא — Everything your host requests, you should do, except if he asks you to leave," he then added, by way of explanation, " כָּבוֹד אֵינוֹ גוֹרֵם זַיִן אַ מענטש צו אַוועקגיין פון דער וועלט — Honor causes a person to leave this world!"

SEFAS TAMIM
FOUNDATION • Emphasizing Everyday Emes

Chizuk - Inspiration

The Gemorah in Brachos discusses the very high level of Emes (truth) practiced by Rav Safra. This level of Emes is called, "Dover Emes Bilvavo" – speaking truth in one's heart. This means honoring an intention or commitment that one makes to oneself, as if it was actually verbalized and promised to another.

The Gemorah relates that Rav Safra was once sitting in his store when a customer walked in and offered him a price for some merchandise. Rav Safra did not respond because he was in the middle of reciting Kriyas Shema at that moment. Although nothing was verbalized, Rav Safra had resolved to sell the item to the customer at the price that was offered. However, the customer, thinking that Rav Safra was rejecting the offer, offered a higher price. When Rav Safra still did not respond, the customer raised his price again.

This happened several times until Rav Safra finished saying Kriyas Shema and was able to talk. He turned to the customer and told him that he had resolved in his own mind to sell the merchandise at the first price he was offered, and he therefore would need to honor that commitment and not charge him more than that.

Rav Leizer Yudel Finkel ZT"L, the son of the **Alter of Slabodka**, was the Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva in Poland. Shortly after he had re-established the Yeshiva in Jerusalem, he partnered with the **Chazon Ish** to help assist in the launching of a new Yeshiva in Tiberias for Sefardic children. He agreed to split the expenses of the new Yeshiva for the first few months with the Chazon Ish.

After the first few months, one of Rav Leizer Yudel's students noticed that Rav Leizer Yudel continued to financially support the Yeshiva in Tiberias.

The student asked his Rebbe, "Rebbe, how can you afford this? Don't you have your own Yeshiva to support!"

Rav Leizer Yudel responded, "How can I not continue to do so? I promised!"

The student responded, "But I was with you when you made the commitment to support the Yeshiva for the first few months. You never committed to anyone that you would provide support for more than that."

Rav Leizer Yudel responded, "You are correct. I did not promise anyone else that I would continue my support of the Yeshiva, but I made a commitment to myself that I would, and I intend to keep that commitment."

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Saved By Death



We have a principle that the death of a great person can save the lives of many others. **The Chofetz Chaim** had a son-in-law who passed away at a very young age. His daughter asked him why Hashem took her husband, as there are so many other people in the world.

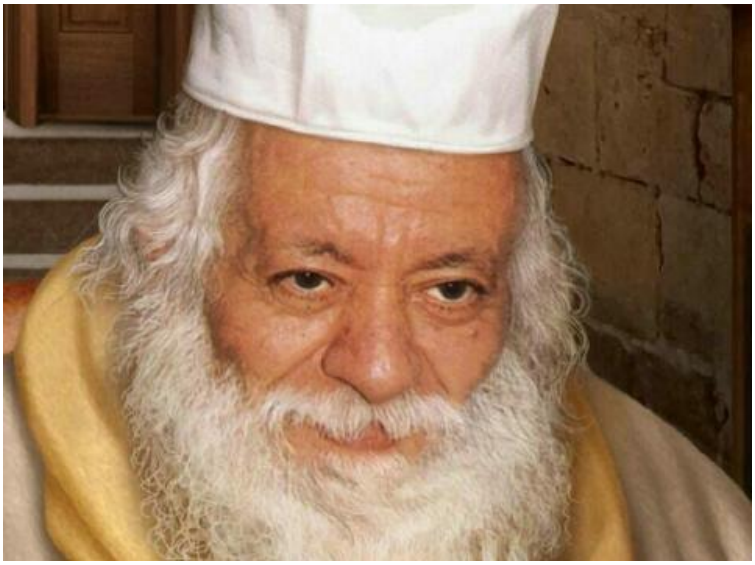
The Chofetz Chaim answered gently, "It was either your husband or a quarter of the world."

The story is told that on Sunday, the 17th of Cheshvan in 1984, the Baba Sali said, "I see that

much Jewish blood will be spilled — children and adults, simple and great people." He then davened and fasted that entire day, despite being over age 90."

The next morning following Shacharis, he announced with a sigh of relief that the terrible calamity was averted as one of the tzadikim gave away his life for the generation.

People who heard this didn't know if he was speaking of himself. As they were wondering the Baba Sali asked which tzadikim of Yerushalayim were sick.



On Wednesday, **R' Mordechai Sharabi** (1912-1984) suffered a heart attack. One of R' Sharabi's students, R' Yosef Dayan asked the Baba Sali to daven to which he responded, "I davened and did many *tikunim* for R' Sharabi but I feel like a wall is blocking me which is preventing my tefilla from ascending to heaven. it seems that Hashem wants to take R' Sharabi's soul and it is impossible to prevent it. - Tomorrow his soul will return to Hashem."

These words came true R' Sharabi's soul zl returned to its Maker on that fateful day in Cheshvan.

The Baba Sali

The Baba Sali's (1890-1984) mother raised him in an atmosphere of kedusha where his crib was brought to the Beis Midrash so that he could hear the sounds of Torah learning even in his infancy. His brother R' Dovid Abuchatzeira who was 24 years older than him became his spiritual mentor.

The Baba Sali's greatness is attested in what happened in 1920 when he was 30 years old. He visited **R' Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri**, also known as the Sabba Kadisha, who lived to be 105. When the Baba Sali entered, the Sabba Kadisha, who was 95 at the time, stood up and asked the Baba Sali for a bracha.



We know that the tefillos of the Baba Sali were very impactful as is illustrated in the following story:

During one Elul the plane R' Yosef Raful was traveling on was hijacked and held in the Jordan desert. His nephew Dovid Raful went to the Baba Sali asking him to daven for his uncle and all the passengers.

When he arrived at the Baba Sali's home he saw the table set for a big meal. The Baba Sali just washed and urged his guests to wash. The Baba Sali said that he was fasting and had not slept since the plane was hijacked but the night before he said that he knew his tefillos were answered.

The Baba Sali was making a seuda to celebrate the occasion and said that they will come home before Rosh Hashana. This is what happened as one hour prior to Rosh Hashana R' Yosef Raful landed in America.

"Hashem is more than happy to give us our heart's wishes – But only on condition that they're good for us." ~ Rabbi Lazer Brody.

The Weekly Vort

● **ויבאו כל איש אשר נשאו לבו** – ***Every man whose heart inspired him came*** (35:21).



The building of the Mishkan and its vessels, the making of its tapestries, the weaving of the garments of the Kohanim, all required incredible skill and craftsmanship, Yet the generation that departed Mitzrayim and entered the *Midbar* found itself without any such craftsmen. The Egyptians did not train the Jews in any crafts, nor did they allow them to develop such skills. Who, then, were the craftsmen of the Mishkan?

Ramban writes that there were Jews who, though unskilled, did have natural ability and were inspired to volunteer for whatever had to be done. They were infused with faith that Hashem would help them to do whatever was necessary to fulfill the task – and so it was.

There are times when the community is sorely in need of help, but no one feels qualified to come forward and provide that assistance. A Jew must know that when he seeks to benefit the community for the sake of Heaven, he is granted special help from Above, and can often accomplish things that seemed to be beyond his capabilities.

● **ויאמר משה אל בני ישראל ראו קרא ה' בשם בצלאל בן אורי בן חור למטה יהודה** – ***Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, 'See Hashem has selected Betzalel, son of Uri, son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehuda'"*** (35:30). **The Daas Zekainim** states that Hashem chose Betzalel, even though Moshe himself expected to be the one to fashion the Mishkan. Why, indeed, did Hashem choose Betzalel?

The building of the Mishkan atoned for the sin of the Golden Calf. Chur was killed by the people who worshiped the calf when he exhorted them to desist from this grave sin. In that merit, his grandson, Betzalel, was chosen to build the Mishkan and its utensils.

The Daas Zekainim in Parshas Ki Sisa explains that for this same reason, the *pasuk* not only refers to Betzalel as the son of Uri, but also mentions that he was the grandson of Chur – as it was in Chur's merit that Hashem gave Betzalel the honor of building the Mishkan. (A Gut Vort)



Take Advantage of the Time

Shabbos Shekalim is approaching. A few days afterwards, will be rosh chodesh Adar. Not long after that will be *Shabbos Zachor*, *Purim*, and other holy days.

We should take advantage of this special time. It would be a mistake to go through these days the same way as the rest of the year. we shouldn't be the same at this time of year as we are the entire year. It is time to go up a notch.

Reb Mordechai is a travel agent who travels often. On one of his trips, he had enough points to travel first class if he added just one hundred shekel. Reb Mordechai struggled financially, but he was curious how it felt to travel first class, so he booked the upgrade.

Reb Mordechai felt like a millionaire on the flight. He sat among the wealthiest people on board and had a comfortable seat (he kept playing with the buttons, trying to find the most comfortable position). He felt special already at the airport. He didn't have to wait in line with everyone else. There was a special agent for fortunate people like himself who flew first class.

A Yid, flying economy class, wanted to see who was flying in the first-class cabin. (Perhaps it was just a matter of curiosity, or perhaps the purpose of his trip was to raise money for *hachnasas kallah*, so he figured he might as well begin his mission on the plane.) Whatever his motives, he waited for a time when the stewards didn't notice and slipped into the first-class cabin.

When he saw Reb Mordechai, he said, "Oh, it's just that shlepper!"

Reb Mordechai said that at that moment, his balloon popped, and he felt like a poor man again. He had almost convinced himself that he was wealthy, and now someone who knew him realized the truth: he was just a poor man.

Reb Mordechai added that he realized then that it wasn't sufficient to *pretend* to be wealthy. If you want to feel wealthy, you have to be wealthy.

The *nimshal* is as follows. Shabbos Shekalim is approaching, a time when we can "take ourselves in our hands," a time we can do *teshuvah* and improve our ways. However, if you just go through the motions and don't change, you will continue to be "just that shlepper."

A bachur sat in the front seat of a bus. An elderly person got on the bus, and the bachur didn't stand up for him to give him the seat. The elderly person wanted to sit down, but he didn't have any complaints about this bachur because he saw that the bachur's eyes were closed. - "He didn't even see me," the elderly man thought.

He waited patiently for the bachur to open his eyes and see him, but the bachur's eyes were closed throughout the bus ride!

The elderly man was impressed. "This bachur is very careful with his eyes," he thought.

When they neared the final stop, he spoke to the bachur (who had finally opened his eyes). He asked him where he learned and to which

chassidus he belonged. He wanted to know which places teach their students so well to be cautious with their kedushah.

The bachur replied, "There is nothing to be impressed with. When I saw you get onto the bus, I quickly shut my eyes. I wouldn't feel comfortable sitting here when I see an elderly person standing!"

This story addresses the people who keep their eyes shut and say they don't see anything.

We know that Shabbos Shekalim and other significant days are approaching; we shouldn't keep our eyes closed and pretend that we don't see anything and that we don't know anything that is going on.

Open your eyes and connect to the holiness of this time.



The *mashpiah* **Rebbe Mendel Futerfas zt'l** told the following story at a Chassidic farbrengen: A Lubavitcher chasid was sent to a Siberian prison surrounded by huge mountains. For several months a year, it was dark there. As usual, his "crime" was teaching children Torah. He didn't have sefarim or any item of kedushah, and his heart was broken.

On his first Shabbos afternoon in this prison, he went outside and was surprised to hear someone singing zemiros. The singing came from a distance, but he could hear it clearly because it was so quiet, and there weren't many trees around to block the sounds.

He followed the sound of the singing and found a Yid with long hair singing Yedid Nefesh with passion, his eyes closed. He was so involved in the song that he hardly noticed that he had a visitor.

They sang songs together for a long time, and then the man with the long hair opened his eyes and greeted his guest joyously. He said, "I am so happy to see you. I have been in Siberia for twenty years now, and this is the first time I've seen the face of a religious Jew."

And then he said anxiously, "I don't have talis or tefillin, and I don't have a shofar. Did you bring an item of kedushah, a mitzvah to perform?"

The chasid replied, "All that I have is *tefillin shel yad*. They saw the tefillin worn on my head, and they confiscated that, but they didn't know that I had tefillin on my arm. Tomorrow, I will bring the *tefillin shel yad* to you so you can put it on."

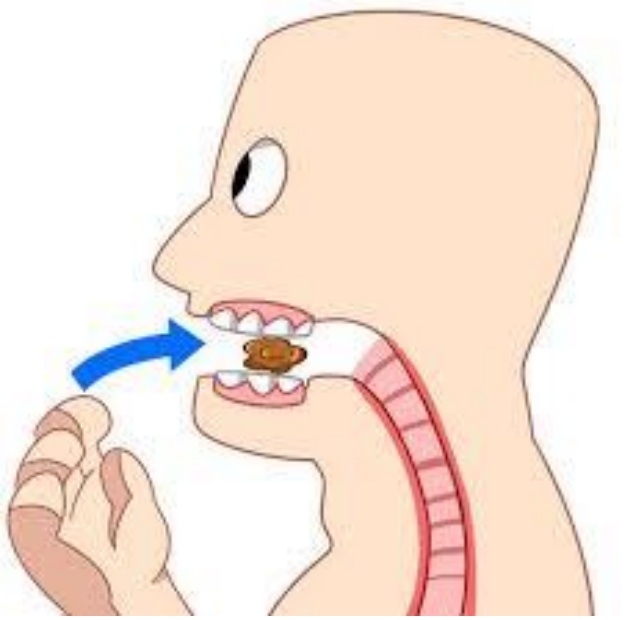
The next morning, this Yid put on tefillin for the first time in twenty years with immense joy and hislahavus. He said the brachah with all his heart, he said the first pasuk of Shema, and when he uttered the word אחד he was niftar.

Reb Mendel Futerfas repeated this story at a farbrengen, and then said, "Everyone should ask himself how he would look after twenty years of living in Siberia. Would he sing Yedid Nefesh and other zemiros on Shabbos afternoon, or would he forget about his connection with Hashem? Will he be searching for an opportunity to perform mitzvos?"

Reb Mendel concluded, "And now that we can keep all the mitzvos, we should certainly keep them all with joy and hislahavus!"

"Tefillah is the very life of the world. Every word of prayer, with every tear that a Jew sheds: It doesn't come back without fulfilling its purpose. It stays with Hashem, Who saves it and takes it out at an opportune moment – when we need it!" ~ Rabbi Shimshon Pincus Zt'l.

דאגות - Worries



A man once entered the Beis Hamedrash looking depressed. We will call him Reb Doeg, as he had many daagos (worries). Reb Chaim (a man full of life) went over to him and asked, "What happened today?"

"The balance in my bank account is very low," replied R' Doeg. "I have so many debts to repay. The situation is terrible."

Reb Chaim replied, "I have a different issue. I distribute products to many homes. I need to be extremely careful as there are dangerous chemicals in these products, and if they get to the wrong place, they can be life-threatening. Every product must be delivered to the exact destination. Not only that, but the road on which they travel is full of potholes and is bumpy and unsafe. - But despite all this, I am calm, so what are you worried about?"

What do you think were the deliveries that he was talking about?

He was referring to the foods that we eat. – Every food contains substances that are meant for different parts of the body. If the food isn't digested properly, and the organs aren't breaking it down well, you can end up very ill and be hospitalized R'l.

If the food doesn't get to where it's supposed to, and goes down the windpipe instead of the oesophagus, it's extremely dangerous. - But nevertheless, you eat calmly! You don't worry that the products will not arrive at their intended destination.

"So why do you worry about other things? The Ribboino Shel Olam Who makes sure that the food goes down in the correct way, will also send you the actual food itself! You eat calmly, so, R' Doeg, why do you worry about money matters?

We say in Birchas Hamazon **הַזָּן אֶת־הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל־בָּשָׂר** – '***Who nourishes the entire world with His goodness, with favour, with kindness, and with mercy. He provides food for all flesh***…'

It seems that we are repeating the same thing twice. – What is the reason for this repetition? - It comes to teach us not to worry about your financial situation and other matters. When you eat, so many things are required to happen:

[When we eat, food passes down the oesophagus and into the stomach, where gastric (digestive) juices break it down further. The partly digested food then moves through the small intestine (small bowel). Here it is broken down even further so the nutrients can be absorbed into the blood stream.

Once nutrients are absorbed by the intestine, they pass into the blood stream and are carried to the liver. The waste products from this process - liquid and undigested parts of food - are then pushed into the colon (also known as the large intestine or large bowel). The colon absorbs the liquid, and the left-over waste forms urine and solid stools (faeces). These collect in the last part of the colon until they are passed out of the body in a bowel movement. - The process of turning the food we eat into the energy our cells need is a complex and beautiful process. It requires precise coordination between all the different organs of the GI tract.]

Hashem ensures that everything works like clockwork. Know that in the same way that **הַזָּן אֶת־הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ** - ***Hashem nourishes the entire world with His goodness***- He also knows your address and what your bank account details are! And you will receive as much money as you need! – Relax!

With His infinite wisdom, Hashem keeps you alive and healthy. – Just rely on Him, and everything will be ok.

"The struggle to have kavanah in tefilla is what makes our tefillos most precious of all." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

The Secret To Good Chinuch Rabbi Shmuel Eidels zt"l, known as the **Maharsha**, was a rav in Poland in the 1600's. He established a yeshiva in the town of Ostrog. The enrollment in the yeshiva grew so that they needed a new building.



One of the townspeople secretly told the manager of the building project that he wanted to donate a large sum of money to pay for the cornerstone of the new building. He wanted the donation to remain a secret.

The bidding began for the honor to pay for the cornerstone of the new yeshiva building. The anonymous bid won with the staggering sum of 500 rubles! No one, except the manager knew the identity of this donor.

The Maharsha was so impressed with the size of the donation and the humble manner in which it was given, that he asked to meet with the secret donor. When they met, the donor said, "I am not a rich man. However, I have no children to take my place so I thought it would be proper to give most of my money to help build the new yeshiva."

The Maharsha was so impressed by this answer that he gave the man a bracha that his wife give birth to a son. One year later, the blessing was fulfilled, and the man's wife gave birth to a son. (Talelei Oros by Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rubin)

Bnei Yisroel responded generously to Moshe's request to donate materials to build the Mishkan. There is a seeming redundancy in the pasuk. The first part of the pasuk stated that men and women brought offerings for the Mishkan. The end of the pasuk seems to repeat the same thought, "The Children of Yisrael brought a free-will gift to Hashem".

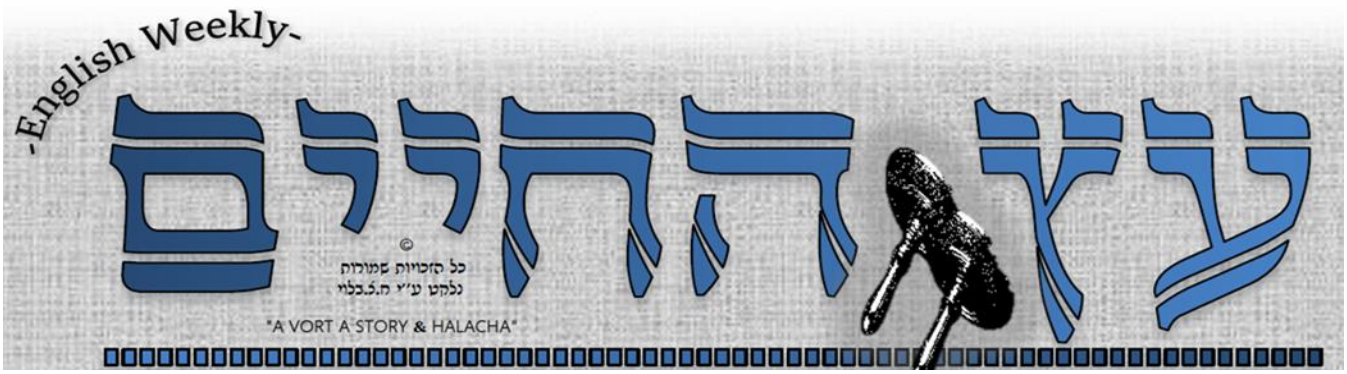
The Chida explains that sometimes a person is inspired to pledge a donation but later has second thoughts. Perhaps he even regrets his pledge. Those tainted thoughts diminish the holiness of his gift. In this pasuk, the Torah is telling us that the inspiration for the myriad of pledges to donate for the Mishkan did not diminish at all.

That is what the pasuk is saying. "The Children of Yisrael brought a free-will gift to Hashem," with the same inspiration that they initially had felt.

Rav Pam zt"l offers a different explanation, based on the Kehillas Yitzchok and the Alshich. He says that the last phrase stresses that when the people responded with such great generosity to build the Mishkan, they were blessed with, "Children of Yisrael", righteous offspring. (Rav Pam on the Chumash by Rabbi Sholom Smith)

The Ksav Sofer says that the last phrase of the pasuk is teaching an additional point. The "Children of Yisrael" does not refer to the offerings of the adults. Rather, it is referring to the offerings of the young children of every man and woman whose heart motivated them to donate. The children of these parents were also motivated to donate to the construction of the Mishkan.

Rav Pam zt"l says that this teaches us the secret to good chinuch. It is not by telling them what to do, while we ourselves do the opposite. It is not by lecturing or forcing them to act appropriately. Rather, it is teaching by example. When we act properly, our children see it. They learn from our actions.



U Snooze U Lose

There was once a merchant who thought to himself that he wanted to also fill his hunger for his **נשמה**, and he left his home and went to learn Torah in the Bais Hamedrash. While he was learning Toras Hashem, a potential customer, a very wealthy man, came to his home and knocked on the door. The merchant's wife answered the door and the fellow **גביר** told her that he was there since he wished to purchase a large quantity of merchandise.

"Is your husband home to do the deal?"

"I'm so sorry," she told him, "My husband is out learning in the **בית מדרש**, if you wish, you can wait until he returns and I am sure he will be happy to help you."

The g'vir had no time for waiting and he went elsewhere to purchase the merchandise that he wanted.

Later, the merchant returned home and when he heard what happened, he turned to his wife and said, "From now on, if someone wants me, please don't make them wait, call for me immediately!"

Sure enough, sooner than later, the merchant was out learning again and there was a knock on the door. This time it was someone coming to collect a loan that the merchant owed. Remembering her husband's words, "not to make anyone wait" she immediately sent a messenger to the **בית מדרש** telling her husband that someone was there to see him.

Upon hearing the message, her husband assumed it was another potential customer, and so he ran to greet him. The merchant raced

his way home, panting and wheezing, completely out of breath. And what does he see when he arrives at his home, lo and behold, the last person that he wanted to see at that moment - a fellow waiting to collect a hefty loan from him!

The merchant turned to his wife in a rage, "How foolish can you be? When the wealthy man came, you didn't call me, even though a large amount of money was at stake, yet, when the collector comes, you come fetch me with such **זריזות** lest I may not get there before he leaves?! You should have done just the opposite! When the g'vir came, that is when you should send a messenger immediately, and when the loan society comes to disturb me, you should have been lazy about it and taken your time!"

Explains the **בן איש חי**, the g'vir coming to the home is compared to the opportunities of mitzvos that come our way. In these situations, don't be lazy and do them a.s.a.p. – right away! Don't let the **מצוה** become **חמץ– מצוה הבא לידך אל תחמיצנה**

When your desire tells you to do some form of **עבירה**, that is when we should use our great tool of laziness to the highest degree. Yes, you keep on pushing it off, procrastinate and procrastinate doing the **עבירה** you want to do until the **יצר הרע** loses patience with you and finds a different "merchant" to do business with.

However, one who does the opposite, when it comes to their desires telling them to sin, they get a forceful **כח** and zest bursting within them to run and do whatever **עבירה** they want to do, whereas sadly, when it comes to any form of **מצוה**, that may come their way, they procrastinate, push it off, and are lazy about it. -"I'll get to it sometime or other if it is convenient…"

Therefore, the lesson is when it comes to Mitzvos don't be a loser and chop arien!

We see this yesod in the sedra. What is better to be a zariz and do the Mizvah right away or to be the one to finish off the Mitzvah?

The answer is that the zariz is far greater. The nesiim made this cheshbon to be the ones to finish off the Mitzvah [so explains the **Ksav Soifer**] and as a result they lost the letter Yud which is one of the letters of Hashem's name.

You snooze you lose. **אַל תֹּאמַר לִכְשֶׁאֶפָּנֶה אֶשְׁנֶה**...

The Heart



We also see throughout the Parsha of the *mishkan* the idea of the lev. Hashem wanted people who gave their lev for the donations of the mishkan. Betzalel was given the chochmah to understand how much lev the fellow put into his donation and based on that decided what to use his donation for.

Rav Chaim M'Volozhin told someone who was donating money to his Yeshiva the same yesod. That according to the intent and the lev of the l'shem shamayim one donates, Hashem will make sure that his donations will be the ones used for the more holy aspect of the yeshiva.

There are people who do not know the translation of many words in the davening, yet they put in their whole heart and their davening is a davening. You have no idea how sweet this is to Hashem even though you do not know the actual meaning of the words. You are talking to Him – You are connecting to Him!

There are many stories of temimusdike people who had no idea what they were saying or doing in their avodas Hashem, but they were doing it from pure temius and it is brought down how special what they did was in front of Hashem.

There is a famous story that happened in them times of the **Arizal**: There was a simple Jew who once came into the shul and put bread behind the paroches of the Aron Kodesh. The Rov was once sitting in the shul and he screamed at him "Mishugenah, that is not the way to serve Hashem!

The simpleton said, "But Rov, Hashem has been accepting my "korban" I check every Shabbos morning and it is gone!"

"Meshuginah! The shamash is probably finding it there and throwing into the dust bin!

The simpleton went home embarrassed and ashamed.

The Arizal sent a message to that Rov that as punishment for discouraging and berating the simpleton he is going to die very shortly. The Arizal said that these breads were the most chashuv korban to Hashem since the Bais Hamikdash was around!

We learn from this story never knock anyone who is serving Hashem b'temimus because his simple avoida may be a trillion times greater than yours.

I heard from **Rav Kalman Krohn זצוק"ל** ;**The Sanza Rov** would not allow them to continue and take out the sefer Torah until the women in the Ezras Nashim would finish crying by the yud gimel middos that we say on Yom Tov, since he said we are surviving because of those tears.

Rav Kalman explained that these are tears to Hashem from the purity of their hearts, even though they have no idea what the words mean! The heart that is brokenhearted and just being poured out to Hashem in pleading and bakasha is so precious and high by Hashem more than you could imagine.

"Prayer is our main weapon." ~ Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

BITACHON POWER!

There is a well-known story about a choshuve Yid who was looking for a shidduch for his daughter. He approached the Rosh Yeshiva and asked him to point out the best bochur.

The Rosh Yeshiva told him, "This one is the smartest boy, that one is the biggest **מתמיד**, that one…" Then he pointed to one bochur and said, "This one is the biggest **מבקש**."

The father of the girl said, "I want the bochur who is the biggest **מבקש**".

That bochur grew to be **the Steipler Gaon**, one of the greatest people of his time.

The lesson from this story is that the secret to greatness is not talents or anything else, rather to become great, the main thing is to have the desire. - The **מבקש** will climb way higher and exceed all of his peers.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

When you read through Parshas Vayakhel, and, for that matter, Parshas Pekudei, one gets a strange sense of Déjà vu, or perhaps, Déjà Jew. They seem to be nearly identical as the Torah repeats all the vessels of the Mishkan, how they were made, of what they were made, and who was to make them.

We go through the Ark and the Menorah and the Table and the pillars. The words sound familiar because we've just read them! Is this like a second Megilla reading for those that missed the first

one? - The truth is, though, that there is a very good reason to go through all these vessels and items again. Let's explain by way of a story:

A young rabbi was visiting the United States from Israel. As he traveled around the country, he endured uncertain schedules, various times of praying, eating, sleeping and waking. Breakfast was a coffee and maybe some cookies behind the wheel of his rental car.

One day, he arrived at a school for his next meeting. Suddenly, there was a knock on his car window. He lowered it and smiled at the young boy of perhaps twelve years old.

"How can I help you?" he asked.

The boy replied, "Are you the fellow delivering lunch?" - The rabbi laughed jovially and said, "I am certainly NOT the delivery driver, but I AM hungry. What's for lunch?" he asked with a big grin.

The young boy shrugged "I don't know," and headed back inside.

A few moments later, the rabbi looked up to see the same boy approaching his car with a steaming bowl of food. Shocked, he lowered the window.

"It's some lunch," said the boy. "You said you were hungry."

The rabbi gratefully took it from the lad and was stunned by the simple act of kindness which made perfect sense but was so unusual. The boy had heard someone was hungry, so he decided to feed him. - It was a remarkable chesed the rabbi would long remember.

What does this have to do with the Parsha's repetition? - Everything.

In Parshas Terumah and Tetzaveh, Hashem told Moshe what He wanted to be in the Mishkan and how to do it. "You shall make" this and "You shall make that." But the later verses have a subtle difference.

Says **Rabbi Avrohom Pam**: In the first pesukim about building the Mishkan, it tells us what they were supposed to do. The latter parsha

tells us that they did it! Instead of saying, "You shall make," it says, "and he made." It recounts to us that every aspect which Hashem outlined should be done, was done. This is surely a lesson worth repeating words for.

Each time it seems to repeat is actually just checking off another goal reached, and another mission accomplished. These are worthy of mention, so the Torah does.

Let us learn from this the importance of not only setting goals but reaching them, and of maintaining our determination to finish the job.

Great Moments in Jewish Invention



When you think of great Jewish inventions, do you think of the laser? Stainless steel? Google? What about Gefilte fish or the Crockpot?

Yes, these are all wonderful Jewish inventions, but this week, we learn of the invention of an item many of us have in our earliest memories – the Tzedaka box!

The Haftarah portion of Parshas Shekalim relates how King Yoash (who became king at the ripe old age of 7) admonished the Kohanim for not properly maintaining the Bais HaMikdash. To provide funds for its upkeep, he took a box, made a hole in its door, and voila! The Tzedaka box was born.

When people came to the Temple, they would put money in the box and it would be used for maintenance and upkeep. Why a door with a hole in it instead of an open box?

Probably not to deter thieves, because it was situated at the Holy Temple. Rather, we may conjecture that the purpose of giving in this manner was a lesson in giving. When you give, don't regret it or try to take it back. The money or kindnesses go one way, but they are always in safe-keeping. The benefit will remain long after the money is gone, so don't try to go back on your gift.

Also, when there's a door on the box, we can't see what's inside. When we give, we shouldn't try to determine if others have given or whether "enough" has been raised. We should focus on doing what we can to help, and not consider what others have done.



Short And Sweet Story of The Week By R' Yoni Schwartz

On one of the busiest days of the year, erev Pesach, **Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT"L**, was battling the clock to complete all his pre-Yom Tov tasks. Suddenly, he got a phone call from an anxious woman, who was worried about whether her blood pressure medication was kosher for Pesach. She asked the Rav many questions. Despite likely being under a lot of pressure, he patiently listened to her with an understanding heart and instructed her that the medicine was allowed and there was nothing for her to worry about.

The next Erev Pesach, as he was again very busy getting ready for the chag, he got the same call from the same woman asking the same questions. With patience and understanding, he opened his heart to her concerns, listened to all her questions as if anew, and instructed her that the medicine was fine. This same cycle happened the next year and the year after that - for twenty years!

One time, this woman forgot to call the Rav. It was just before Pesach and she heard her phone ringing. On the other line was Rav Moshe. He was concerned because he did not hear from her. He was calling to make sure that everything was okay and to remind her that the medicine was one-hundred percent kosher.

Why she kept calling for twenty years is anyone's guess, but why Rav Moshe kept answering was because he knew it meant a lot to her.

Comment: Among the skills of Betzalel that Moshe lists in this week's Parsha, such as being artistic and being a gifted wood worker, Moshe says (Shemos 35:34), "Hashem placed in Betzalel's heart the ability to instruct others."

Why does it say "his heart?" Is not instructing others a skill of the mind?

The answer could be as follows: Teaching requires a lot of patience. What the Torah is telling us here is that having patience for others is no less of a skill than woodwork and fine art; just as teaching is a skill of the mind, it is a skill of the heart even more.

Being a leader or teacher is often stressful but to be one we must develop that golden skill of heart the Torah teaches us, namely, the ability to open ourselves to another person's stress when we are under stress. – This is what Betzalel and Rav Moshe did and they are role models in this area.

Parshah Pearls - Adapted from the P'ninei Torah and the Ma'yanah shel Torah

● Breaking off the Shiduch

כָּל־הָעֹשֶׂה בָּהּ מְלָאכָה יוּמָת - *"Whoever does work on it (the Shabbos) shall die"* (35:2).

To explain the severe punishment for Chilul Shabbos, the **Chafetz Chayim** draws an analogy between Shabbos and a bride.

If a bride returns the gifts that the Chasan sent her, it is a sign that the Shiduch is over.

The Gemara in Shabbos (10a) describes how G-d told Moshe about the special gift called Shabbos that He had put away in His treasury on behalf of K'lal Yisrael.

If Chas ve'Shalom, Yisrael break Shabbos, it is like returning the Chasan his gifts; it is a sign that they have broken their ties with Hashem.

● **Wisdom of the Hands**

The wise-hearted, says the Torah, shall come and do. If a man's wisdom remains in his heart, he is not a wise man but a fool. A wise man is one who puts his wise thoughts into actions.

Wisdom may begin in the heart, but it ends in the hands (see also Pasuk 25). What's more, says the **D'rush ve'ha'Iyun**, it is better to talk less about it, and just do it.

In similar vein, **the G'ro** explains the Pasuk in Mishlei (18) "A wise-hearted man takes mitzvos, whereas the fool's lips cause him to stumble".

The wise man performs the Mitzvos that come to hand at once, before something occurs to prevent him from doing so; whereas the fool keeps on talking about them until that is precisely what happens.

● **No Sooner Said**

וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת ה' - "And every man whose heart lifted him and whose spirit prompted him, brought the gift for G-d" (35:21).

In everyday life, says the **Chida**, there are many people who have good intentions which seem to get lost along the way, when it comes to carrying them out. And it is nothing short of incredible that when it came to building the Mishkan, there was not one person who had the intention of donating, who did not actually do so.

● Wise-Handed



וְכָל־אִשָּׁה חַכְמַת־לֵב בְּיָדֶיהָ טָווּ - ***"And every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands ..."*** (35:25).

In similar vein to what we wrote earlier (see 'Wisdom of the Hands'), there are many people out there who mean well, but who either lack the goodwill or the ability to put their thoughts into practice.

Not so the wise-hearted women of that generation. No sooner did it enter their minds to participate in the construction of the Mishkan, than they got busy spinning the different coloured materials.



"Take Hashem with You!"

Our generation was privileged to have **R' Chaim Kanievsky Zt'l**. Besides for his holy presence, we benefit greatly from the many *sefarim* that he wrote on a wide range of subjects. One of the more common *sefarim* of his is *Shoneh Halachos*, which was actually written by his devoted *chavrusa*, **R' Elazar Tzadok Turtzin Zt'l**.

As a *bachur*, R' Elazar Tzadok learned in the Chevron Yeshiva, and he was very close to the **Chazon Ish**. Once when he was at the home of the Chazon Ish, the Chazon Ish told him, "Lazer, Lazer, do you really think that observant Yidden who, *r"l*, go off the *derech* all of

a sudden take off their yarmulka? No! It happens gradually; it starts a little at a time, they stop this and then that, until eventually they take it off."



R' Elazar Tzadok was totally bewildered. He thought, "Did the Chazon Ish see in me something that is straying from the right path? Why is he speaking to me about this? The Chazon Ish doesn't say things for no reason!"

Broken and distraught, R' Elazar Tzadok left the Chazon Ish's home. For the entire four-hour return trip back to his yeshiva, he was in a complete daze. "What was the Chazon Ish's intent?"

When he finally arrived at the yeshiva, a close friend of his saw him unsettled, bothered, and disturbed. He asked R' Elazar Tzadok, "Lazer, what is bothering you? I see you're not yourself. It seems that something is distressing you. How can I help you?"

R' Elazar Tzadok went on to explain what was bothering him and the strange words of the Chazon Ish. "So why did you leave without asking the Chazon Ish?" his friend asked. "You should have asked the Chazon Ish what he was intending. Head right back to the Chazon Ish's home and ask him what he meant by what he said."

R' Elazar Tzadok took to his advice and made the four-hour return trip to B'nei Brak. When the Chazon Ish saw him, his face lit up. "Why did you run away so quickly? I was talking to you, and you left in the middle of our conversation."

"I wasn't sure what Rebbe saw in me that made him say that," Lazer replied sobbingly. "I was so degraded that I just dashed to the door."

"*Chalilah*," said the Chazon Ish consolably. "That was not my intention. Don't suspect that for a moment. I know that you're a *tzaddik*, and that was not my intention at all. All I wanted to tell you was one thing:

"How does the day of a modest person look? He wakes up, he davens, then he says some *Tehillim*, and he asks Hashem that he should have a successful day in business. And then he leaves shul until *Minchah*. When he leaves shul, he also leaves Hashem in shul, and this repeats itself the next time he leaves. He davens, and then forgets about Hashem in the interim. And this repeats day in and day out.

"This is not the right way to live. We must take Hashem into our day-to-day living, thinking about Hashem, talking with Hashem, and that's the way to live.

"Suppose someone needs a pair of shoes. There's a lot of *siyata d'shmaya* needed to get the right pair. One can talk to Hashem, asking that the right pair should come his way and that it should come easily. He should also daven that it should be of good quality and have a long life. Hashem wants us to turn to Him at any and every time of day." (*V'higadeta*)

● Friendship

One of the most valuable items to **R' Yankel Galinsky** was a letter that he had received. What's the story behind this letter? And what made it so treasured?

There were many tasks that the **Chazon Ish** needed to be done on behalf of Klal Yisrael. He many times approached R' Yankel for the task, since he was a Novardoker, and the students of the Novardok Yeshiva were known for their brazenness in serving Hashem. So,

when he had tasks that required great boldness, R' Yankel was the man. On some occasions, the Chazon Ish sent him to pull people out of the Arab Quarter or the like, and R' Yankel devotedly did these seemingly impossible tasks.



In one of these such letters, when the Chazon Ish requested him do such a mission, he called R' Yankel "*Yedidi*" — my friend. R' Yankel cherished this letter greatly. He saved this treasured letter for a staggering twenty-five-years among his personal possessions. He even requested in his *tzavaah*, will, that it should accompany him in his grave. That is how much he adored that letter.

He explained the reason for attachment to the letter as follows: When he'll come to *Shamayim*, he is not sure what type of *Olam Haba* they'll grant him. But if he comes with that letter, they'll see that he's the "friend" of the Chazon Ish, and they'll grant him special reward.

Many years later, when he returned one day from *Shacharis*, he took the letter, ripped it up, and threw it out. This bothered his *talmidim*: "Why is he ripping that precious letter of his? It was so treasured by him. Why would he throw it in the wastebasket?"

He turned to them and said: "While I was davening, something caught my attention. Toward the end of the *birchos k'rias Shema* in, **עֶזְרַת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ** we discuss the various *nissim*, miracles, that Hashem performed when we were leaving Mitzrayim. We start by mentioning how Hashem killed the *bechorim*, and redeemed His firstborn,

referring to the Yidden, "**וְזֵדִים טְבַּעְתָּ**," *that the empty ones drowned, and* "**וִידִידִים הֶעֱבַרְתָּ**" *and the beloved He crossed through the Yam Suf.*

"As soon as I read this last one, I was overtaken with joy and happiness. I saw that I'm called the '**beloved of Hashem**.' When I thought about it, it dawned on me: how can I treasure that letter that declares that I'm the friend of the Chazon Ish when I have a letter stating that I'm the friend of Hashem? That brings my association to a new level.

"It filled me with such joy that I simply do not need the letter of the Chazon Ish to ensure me of this comfort in being the *yedid* of the Chazon Ish. All that I could have, I get from being the *yedid* of 'Hashem!'"



EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה'

Moshe Rabbeinu gathers all the *Yidden* together. Obviously, he has something very important to tell them. In fact, he speaks about two things. The first is *Shabbos* and the second is the *Mishkan*.

Why does Moshe begin with *Shabbos*? Why does *Shabbos* precede the *Mishkan* which is the holiest place in the world? It is the place where a Jew can go to and truly feel the *Shechina*. It is the greatest

place in this world of *Kirvas Hashem*. One who wishes to experience true *Dveikus* just needed to go to the *Mishkan* or the *Bais HaMikdash* and was overcome with real holiness.



So, why does *Shabbos* come first when Moshe speaks to *Klal Yisroel*?

The answer is because *Shabbos* is even holier than any physical building in the world. All of the 39 *melachos* of *Shabbos*, every single thing that we are forbidden to do on *Shabbos*, is derived from the *meleches HaMishkan*.

Whatever they did in order to build the *Mishkan* is forbidden to do on *Shabbos*. *Shabbos* is not a place that we build, *Shabbos* descends upon the world and one who is wise will experience the greatest closeness to *Hashem* imaginable in this world. It is not a place, but rather a time that one can feel incredible holiness.

The only way to feel true *kedusha* is to tap into *Shabbos*. On *Shabbos* we have two *neshamos* and one body! There is double the amount of *neshama*-power than *guf*-power. One can truly experience serenity and overpower the body with spirituality on *Shabbos*!

In the *zemiros* that we sing and the *tefillos* that we *daven* on *Shabbos* we say over and over "*Shabbos Menucha*"! - The more we tap into this *menucha* on *Shabbos*, the more we will be able to carry it into our week. But we must take that special spiritual power of real *kedusha* and *ruchniyus* from *Shabbos*, because that is the only time it comes into the world.

Our *Mishkan* is a holy place, but *Shabbos* is a holy time that infuses the entire week with an otherworldly *kedusha*. It is our job to know it is here, to think about it, to taste it, to feel it and allow the holiness of *Shabbos* to transform our lives!



When the ***Rachmastrivka Rebbe*** visited Lakewood, NJ, many years ago, a large reception was held in his honor. The *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Bais Medrash Govohah*, **R' Yeruchem Olshin *shlita***, attended the event and sat down next to the *Rebbe*. In his hand he held a large framed photo, which he showed to the *Rebbe*. Of course, all the participants began to crowd around the *dais*, curious to see which picture the *Rosh Yeshivah* was showing the *Rachmastrivka Rebbe*.

R' Yeruchem showed the *Rebbe* the picture and told him that this photo hangs in his home: It was of his grandfather, **R' Isser Zalman Meltzer**, in the midst of saying a *shiur* to a group of *bochurim*, many of whom were visible in the picture.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* said that he never found out who were the people in the *shiur* and being that the *Rebbe* was a *talmid* of his *Zaida*, he was hoping the *Rebbe* could tell him the names of the *bochurim* who appeared in the picture.

The *Rachmastrivka Rebbe* gazed intently at the picture and began to name the *bochurim* one by one. Then he stopped when he reached one face. He smiled and remarked, "*Ich mein ich bin dos*- I think this is me."



Parshah Thoughts – Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

When it was time to erect the Mishkan, the people were unable to lift it up because it was too heavy (39:33, Rashi). Hashem directed Moshe to get involved and act as though he was putting it up, and it would miraculously stand (Medrash Tanchuma §11).



Rav Yaakov Galinsky observes that each of the beams of the Mishkan weighed roughly 4 tons. Therefore, it was physically impossible for anyone to actually raise them up. - Hashem was telling Moshe that it makes no difference if he was actually capable of doing this, he just had to try.

We all have situations where we know that we will not be able to complete a given task, but we have to do the best we can and Hashem will take it from there!

Working on our Middos

Rav Shimon Finkelman related a story about a Bachur named Yaakov. Many people considered him to be the best Bachur in the Ponovezh Yeshivah. He was bright, he worked hard, he was soft-spoken, and he seemed to have a special Siyata D'Shmaya, help from Shamayim.

One day, a man that Yaakov didn't know approached him, as Yaakov was walking out of the Yeshivah. The man said, "Shalom Aleichem, Yaakov. I came here just to say, 'Thank you.' You saved not only my son, but also my Shalom Bayis. Because of you, peace and harmony have returned to my home."

Yaakov didn't understand what this man was talking about. He didn't remember meeting him before, and he certainly never helped anyone work on their Shalom Bayis.

The man saw Yaakov's confusion and then he identified himself. He explained that it had all begun about three months earlier. Baruch, another Talmid in Ponovezh, was not doing well at all. He was sleeping through Shacharis, he was absent from many learning Sedarim, and worst of all, his attitude was having a negative influence on others.

His parents had been contacted by the administration of the Yeshivah, and they were informed of Baruch's poor performance and his disappointing decline.

Financial difficulties had already created friction in the home, and this new report added to it as each parent blamed the other for Baruch's problem.

Yaakov was completely unaware of the issues going on in Baruch's home, but he did notice that Baruch's seat in the Bais Medrash was often empty, and just from looking at him, he knew that something was very wrong.

One day, Yaakov noticed Baruch sitting by himself in the Bais Medrash. This was his chance. He asked his own Chavrusah to learn alone for that afternoon. Then he approached Baruch and, smiling broadly, said, "Baruch, maybe you can do me a favor. Right now, I don't have a Chavrusah for this afternoon. I really don't like learning alone. Perhaps we can learn together?"

Baruch could not think of a good excuse for refusing the offer. Besides, he was flattered that one of the best Talmidim in the

Yeshivah had asked if he would learn with him, and he couldn't turn that down.

The two spent the next four hours learning Gemara in depth. Yaakov discovered that Baruch had a quick, analytical mind, and Baruch discovered a pleasure in learning Torah that he had never experienced before.

For the next two months, Yaakov and Baruch learned together a few times a week. As Baruch became more immersed in Torah, his entire personality changed. He began coming to Minyan for Shacharis, he became increasingly more careful in performing Mitzvos, and for the first time in a long while, he felt good about himself.

One day, Yaakov decided to visit Baruch's parents. He told them, "I just want you to know that your son is quickly establishing himself as one of the best Bachrim in Ponovezh."

The man now told him, "It was this wonderful report that had restored the Shalom Bayis in his home!"

Living With Emunah



Rav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zt"l, would teach his Talmidim that getting angry over things that don't work out the way we want them to stems from a lack of Emunah of the fact that Hashem is running the world.

Rav Meilich Biderman relates a story: There was a Bachur who was having difficulty controlling his anger, and he asked the Mashgiach of his Yeshivah for some help and advice. The Mashgiach told him a Mashal.

Once, a band of robbers boarded a ship, and they pretended to be passengers. When the ship was deep at sea, they secretly observed the captain's cabin to determine when it would be a good time for them to hijack the ship. As they spied, they heard the ship's officers debating whether they should make a quick stop at a nearby island, or just to continue on to their main destination. There was a disagreement about what they should do, and the robbers heard angry shouting coming from inside the cabin. Some sailors wished to make a stopover, while others were in a hurry to get back home, and didn't want to make any extra stops.

The thieves knew that this was a good time to take over the ship. They threw open the door to the cabin and entered it, and within just a few moments, the captain and his crew were handcuffed, and their mouths were covered up.

The Mashgiach now asked the Bachur, "In your opinion, were the sailors still angry with each other?"

The Bachur said that at this point, they weren't angry anymore.

The Mashgiach said, "But what changed?"

The Mashgiach explained to him, "At first, the sailors thought that they ran the ship, and each one felt that he should have the final word. But in the end, they understood that the ship wasn't in their hands at all, and their opinions weren't significant anymore."

The Mashgiach explained, "Similarly, when you know that Hashem is running the world, and you are not, there is never a reason to be angry. Perhaps you may wish that matters were different, but you are not the one in charge. You are not running the world, and you are not running the ship. Hashem is.

Hashem made the situation that you will find yourself in, and Hashem put you in that situation. If you can internalize this and really know it, why should you ever be upset and angry?"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Chofetz Chaim was very careful with his time. In his Sefer, Toras HaBayis (2), the Chofetz Chaim discusses the concept of Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam, that each word of learning Torah is equal to all the Mitzvos of the Torah combined together.

The Chofetz Chaim writes that he checked while timing it, and in one minute, a person can speak two hundred words. Therefore, in just one minute, one can earn two hundred Mitzvos, where each Mitzvah is equivalent to all the Mitzvos in the Torah, and in just one hour, one can learn 12,000 words of Torah!

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Happy Endings - Living with Hashgachah Pratis by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman



Rav Avigdor Miller related two incidents about his personal journey and how his apparent misfortunes eventually turned into blessing, both for himself and Klal Yisrael, who benefited greatly from his immense wisdom and Torah knowledge:

"I was thrown out of the Hebrew school, the old-time Talmud Torah, when I was a little boy. All the other boys weren't thrown out and all of them graduated at bar mitzvah. Nothing spiritually special came of them. But because I was thrown

out, I found a private rebbi who wanted to teach me, and he made a 'mentch' out of me. Finally, he sent me to a real yeshivah."

Hashem links events in completely unpredictable and sometimes unthinkable ways. Because no human can possibly perceive the intricacies and connections that occur behind the scenes, these events can come only from Hashem, directing behind the scenes, weaving it all together in a tapestry whose beauty will eventually become apparent.

Often, however, we cannot connect a devastating or discouraging turn of events to some truly good fortune that will occur — sometimes immediately thereafter. Nevertheless, we should be able to trace the blessings we enjoy to events that have occurred over our lifetime.

Hashem presents events in a way that seems part of nature. Cause leads to effect, which becomes the cause of another effect. He hides His tracks as He manages our lives, so that if we want to see His Presence in the world, we need to exert effort to find It.

When Rav Miller was twenty-four, he wanted a job teaching in a yeshivah. The rebbi who had taught him as a young boy had become the head of the Talmud Torah, and Rav Miller was confident that if he applied to this rebbi, who thought well of him, the rebbi would give him a job.

As Rav Miller waited for his interview, he noticed a former fellow student from his yeshivah, also waiting to interview for the job. Rav Miller didn't worry about the other applicant because he had spent his time playing ball in yeshivah while Rav Miller learned Tanach. However, the other man got the job.

Because of this disappointing [at the time] turn of events, Rav Miller ultimately went to Europe to learn Torah in Slabodka.

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu rescued me again and again," he said when he remembered this "disappointment."

The more we become cognizant of the way Hashem runs our lives, the more we can minimize our initial disappointments or fears and set our sights on the goodness that emerges, even if we cannot fathom at the moment what it might be.

We need to train ourselves to be like a reader who knows that the story has a happy ending. All the trials and travails in the plot do not mar the reader's enjoyment of the story. They merely spur him to anticipate the heroic deeds and wondrous turns of fortune that will reveal that ending.



How to Deal with the Dreams in Your Life by Daniel Keren

One of the featured speakers at the recent Presidents Day Flatbush Hakhel Yarchei Kallah Event was **Rabbi Eytan Feiner**, rav of Congregation Knesseth Israel – the White Shul in Far Rockaway. The topic of his lecture was "The World of Dreams in Halacha and Machshava." - Rabbi Feiner began his shiur with an October 7th Dream and a fascinating **Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein** teshuvah.

In the early morning hours of October 7th, a baal teshuvah who was living in a Yishuv near the Gaza border had a dream in which his rosh hayeshiva was telling him to immediately get up and gather his wife and their two children and get into a car and drive away from his community to safety. Only that morning was both Shabbos and the Yom Tov of Shemina Atzeres, both days when Torah observant Jews are prohibited from doing certain melachos, including driving a car.

When he woke up, he just shrugged it off as a dream and went back to sleep where he fell into a second dream when the rosh yeshiva again warned him even more harshly, even grabbing him by his neck and pleading that he was in mortal danger and must flee the Yishuv.

This time he awoke and confused he woke up his wife and told her of his two dreams and that they should immediately get into a car with their children and drive until they were safe.

After arriving at a community where he felt safe, he parked the car. A few hours later he and all of Israel realized that a terrible attack occurred many of his neighbors unfortunately were killed or injured that same day by Hamas terrorists yemach shemom.

After that terrible day and the Yom Tov ended the shaken baal teshuvah called his Rosh Yeshivah and told him about his startling dreams. He asked then even though the dreams had saved his life and the life of his wife and children, does he have to do teshuvah for the real sin of driving his car on a day that as mentioned before was both a Shabbos and Yom Tov.

The Rosh Yeshiva felt that he needed to pass the shailah to another rabbi and he chose to forward the query to Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein, the brother-in-law of the late posek hador – **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**.

Rav Zilberstein responded by explaining that had the dream turned out to not be true, yes the baal teshuvah would have to repent for following a false dream interpretation. But since the dream was accurate, he had not sinned. But he was correct in driving only so far as he felt he needed to go to in order to be safe and not to do any more desecrations of Shabbos and Yom Tov.

In analyzing dreams, Rabbi Feiner said that most dreams that we have are focused on the past and for those type of dreams, we don't have to be concerned. If, however, the dream focuses on something that will occur in the future, we have to take it seriously as dreams are 1/60th of prophecy.

Rabbi Feiner also said that if a dream occurs on Shabbos or on Rosh Hashanah, one has to take such a dream more seriously. Other points he mentioned include a reference to a statement of the Rif (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Yaakov Alfasi, 1013-1103, a Moroccan Torah scholar,) who writes that Hakodesh Baruch Hu often opts for a dream to be a messenger.



In prewar Europe there lived one of the greatest of poskim: **Rav Yitzchak Elchonon Specktor, zt"l**. From the city of Kovno, he supervised all of European Jewry. He was revered as the final halachic authority of his day. Questions poured into him from the four corners of the globe. However, the greatness of Rav Yitzchak Elchonon was not in his genius, for he was no genius. He was born with normal, or even less, intellectual capabilities. His greatness came from his aspiration and hasmoda.

When the mashgiach in Slabodka wanted to encourage his talmidim he used the following moshol. Imagine a childless couple in a small shtetl. They daven, they cry, they beseech the Ribono Shel Olam, "Please give us a child. We promise to devote him to Your Torah." They go to the yeshivas and beseech the talmidei chachomim to daven for them.

And one day, their prayers were answered, and they were blessed with a little boy. Mazal Tov! Eight days after his birth they celebrated the bris: "And let his name be called in Yisroel Yitzchak Elchonon."

The little boy grew up and went to cheider. He learned aleph beis and sat in class with the rest of the boys. His head wasn't as bright as the other boys, but he sat and learned siddur and chumash.

As he grew, so too did his difficulty in studying. But his parents refused to give up. They put everything into their little boy to enable him to succeed. They hired tutors and spent a small fortune on his education.

His bar mitzvah approached and the melamed worked very hard to teach him his bar mitzvah drasha. It wasn't easy, but he finally

mastered it. He entered yeshiva and with great difficulty, he finished three years. Then he went on to a yeshiva gedolah. His parents, knowing his problem in studying, hired a special chavrusa to learn with him. He was a good boy, but he had it so hard.

But in the end it didn't go. He was 20 years old and his parents finally realized that it just wasn't meant to be. They went to ask for advice and all the "mavens" advised that he should learn a profession. And so it happened. He studied a trade, married, and raised a family. Between mincha and maariv he joined the shiur on mishnayos. He went to the shiurim in gemora and Ein Yaakov and said Tehillim. He joined many chessed organizations. He was an outstanding member of the community.

Finally, the day arrived. His family gathered around him as he prepared himself to pass on to the next world. "Shema Yisroel!" Wailing and sobbing filled the room.

He arrived in Heaven. Flocks of angels came to greet the tzaddik. Yitzchak Elchonon, surrounded by his holy entourage, made his way to the Beis Din. He felt fully prepared to face judgment, having led such a fine and straight life.

He stood before the Beis Din and as they deliberated, he looked around. He noticed two doors. Finding an opportunity to sneak away a bit he made his way to the door on the left. He opened it a crack. Heat poured out and with it the screams of the roshoim. "Oy, Gehinom!" he exclaimed and quickly closed the door.

Then he made his way to the right and opened that door. A wonderful aroma wafted into his nostrils together with beautiful sounds. He opened the door a bit more and was able to see the tzaddikim sitting around, crowns on their heads, enjoying the light of the Shechina.

"Yitzchak Elchonon!" He was being summoned back to the Beis Din. He stood there awaiting the verdict.

"Yitzchak Elchonon. To the left."

"Excuse me. The left? Why left?"

"Nu. Go! Those are your orders. Left!"

"But why!?"

"Yes, yes. We know all your wonderful good deeds, all your chessed. We know everything. However, you will have to go left! And do you want to know why? Because you murdered!"

"Me!? I never murdered anyone in my life! Who did I murder?"

"Yitchak Elchonon. Do you want to know who you murdered? You murdered the greatest gaon of the generation. You murdered the rebbe of the entire Europe. You murdered Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchonon! To the left!"

"To the left because you murdered your potential. You murdered your capabilities. You murdered who you could have been."

"But I tried so hard! I spent years trying and it just didn't go!"

"True. But if you would have just tried a little more, if you would have pushed a bit more, you could have turned yourself into Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchonon, the great gaon in Torah, the poseik of the generation. But you stopped trying. You didn't reach your potential. You failed in what was expected of you. Moreover, you stopped yearning. You stopped aspiring. That was the breaking point. Yitzchak Elchonon. You are a murderer. There's no choice, left!"

With tears in his eyes, he accepted the din and went left.

And on the right side the tzaddikim sat enjoying the radiance of the Shechina. And Yitzchak Elchonon now understood why. Because they aspired, they wanted, they dreamed, and they refused to be broken!

This is what Rav Yerucham concluded. The most important lesson is that we should realize that everything depends upon our ambition; that is the whole person.

Drive Carefully by Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn



In May 1996 Rabbi Mordechai Neugroschel's father-in-law became quite ill. He was taken to the Tel Hashomer hospital in Ramat Gan, where, despite the doctors' efforts, his condition deteriorated. Family members never left his bedside. One night Rabbi Neugroschel stayed at his father-in-law's bedside, prepared to assist and give comfort in any way he could.

After midnight, the nurses encouraged him to get some rest. Rabbi Neugroschel respectfully rejected the advice and remained at the bedside throughout the night. He was tired, but he felt that a family member should be awake and available should any need arise.

At 7:00 in the morning, another family member relieved Rabbi Neugroschel. He collected his belongings, went to a local shul to pray shaharit, and then got in his family van to begin the hour-long ride home to Jerusalem. As he drove onto the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway he felt his eyelids beginning to droop. He listened to Torah tapes as he drove to keep him awake.

After forty minutes, however, even the taped lectures could not counteract his exhaustion. Traffic was heavy. The plodding row of buses, cabs and cars jammed tightly together made his head sag as his eyes closed for a moment. He snapped awake when he realized that his van was coasting close to the embankment on the shoulder of the road.

He was only ten minutes from home. Surely he could force himself to stay awake until then. But suddenly the van was rolling down the side of the hill, plunging into a valley, ripping a tree from its roots, rolling over again and again, until finally it landed on its side against a boulder. Rabbi Neugroschel was pinned against his seat.

Dozens of people saw the van going off the road and made their way gingerly down the hill to help. Police and ambulances converged on the roadside.

Rabbi Neugroschel was helped out of the van. He was dazed and bleeding slightly, but once outside the van he was able to walk unassisted. One man took him aside and said, "The police will be here shortly. Whatever you do, don't tell them you fell asleep. Otherwise, they will suspend your license, give you a big fine and the insurance company won't pay your claim."

Within minutes a policeman was on the scene, and he asked Rabbi Neugroschel what had happened.

Rabbi Neugroschel said, "Officer, I have been driving for nineteen years. I never had an accident and never fell asleep at the wheel. However, I was up all last night at the hospital with my father-in-law, who is very sick. I guess I was just so exhausted that I must have fallen asleep at the wheel."

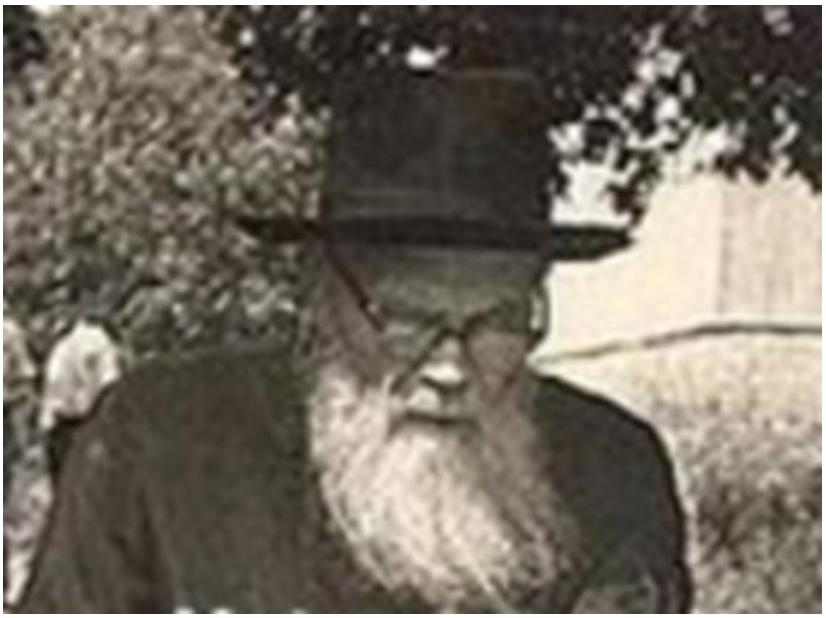
The officer looked at him, at the van and at the roadside above. "The misvah saved your life," he said. "I won't issue you a summons. Refuah shelemah to your father-in-law."

Rabbi Neugroschel thanked the officer, who went on to write his report. [*ArtScroll – "Echoes of the Maggid".]*

Waiting for the Rav to Fast

Rabbi Uren Reich told a story about his grandmother, Mrs. Steinbuch, who lived in London during World War II, and who, like Moshe, strictly adhered to the guidance of her Rav before making life-altering decisions. Mrs. Steinbuch was a young widow in her thirties with nine children, when her husband, Rav Asher Steinbuch, passed away tragically. She brought her children up with tremendous determination that they should grow up to be b'nei Torah with yiraat Shamayim.

At one point, London was being bombed relentlessly by the Germans, and Sir Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of England, made a public announcement that there's going to be a boat going out to America, and they're hoping to take 2,000 English children. It made a lot of sense for her to send children to America. She had relatives there.



She said to the children, "I will not do it without asking a Talmid Chacham his daat and his haskamah. Since her father lived in Switzerland and it was hard to contact him during wartime, she asked Rav Elya Lopian, zt'l.

"Should I send my children to America?" she asked. And he said, "This is a question that needs a goral hagra (a ritual where a big tzaddik opens a chumash for Divine guidance), and I can't do that unless I fast. I will fast on Thursday."

She went to him on Friday morning, and he said he wasn't capable of fasting the day before. "It'll have to wait until Monday." She was very taken aback. The boat was scheduled to leave on Tuesday. She went to him on Monday night, and he said, "Mrs. Steinbuch, I am so sorry. I felt very sick; I couldn't fast, and I cannot do a goral hagra without fasting.

Because she was such a strong-minded person when it came to yiraat Shmayim, she told her children, "It's out of the question for me to do a thing like this, without the haskamah of a Talmid Chacham, and therefore you're not going." There was so much disappointment in the house, but the children trusted their mother's bitachon in

Hashem and her ability to adhere to her principles in waiting for her rabbi's guidance.

A day later, Mr. Churchill made a special announcement on the radio. "I have sad news to share with the English people. The boat that took the children to America was torpedoed by a German submarine, and most of the children on the boat have tragically died.

Mrs. Steinbuch not only set a beautiful example for her children, but a wonderful legacy because they were saved. Moshe did not make any steps in Egypt without consulting the ultimate Rav for guidance, Hashem, and we all benefitted tremendously from his amazing example.



When talking about the building of the Mishkan, the Torah tells, us "every man whose heart inspired him" would donate to the Mishkan.

The Ramban tells us that there were many things that they had to sew and build for the Mishkan, crafted in very specific ways, yet none of these people were professionally trained in any of this work. They just found the ability in themselves to do it.

Every single Jew has endless potential to do great things. With just a little inspiration to do something for the sake of Hashem, all of a sudden, they get the Divine Help from Hashem to unlock this greatness, that others never imagined they could attain.

Rabbi Yaakov Bender, who besides for being the Rosh Yeshiva at Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, was also one of the founders of the Flatbush division of Hatzalah. He would often say "I heard a few times about a man named R' Hershel Webber, who once witnessed a

Jew collapse on the street and die waiting for the slow response of the city ambulances. R' Hershel was so alarmed by this, it inspired him to take a CPR course, and convinced his friends to do the same. Next they bought some oxygen tanks, and that is how Hatzalah, today an internationally recognized organization, was formed.

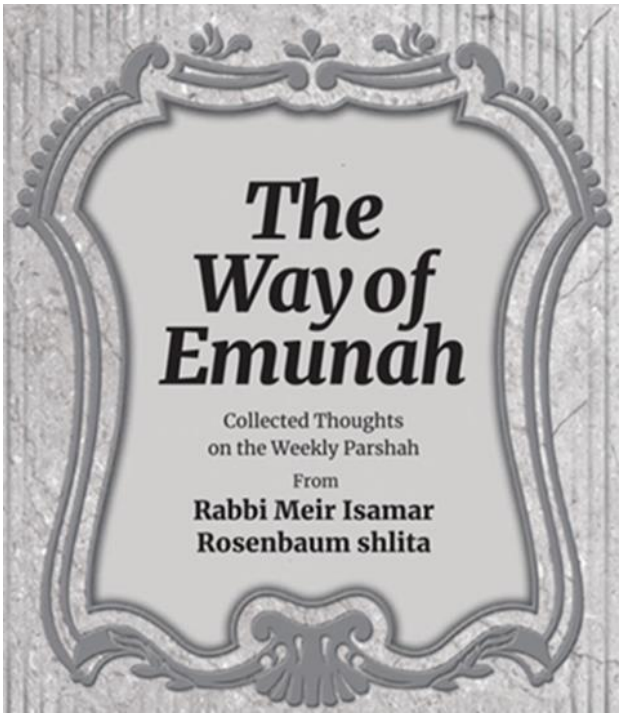
We need to seize the moment and commit to wonderful things even when we have a little strength, we will be amazed at what that commitment can lead to. All it takes is a little inspiration to give us the fuel we need to accomplish our dreams. Let us dream great things, and be inspired to accomplish our dreams.

So let's commit to pray with all our hearts, for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of the hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, medical professionals, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet Shabbat and Chodesh Tov.

R' Paysach Krohn became a Mohel at a young age and found it difficult at first to find work. Trying to support his widowed mother and orphaned siblings at the age of 21, he felt the strain of people not trusting his abilities because of his youth.

One day, a man approached him and said, "My wife is expecting. When she has a baby, YOU'RE going to do the bris!"

R' Paysach got tremendous chizuk and encouragement from this and was able to push on and find opportunities to perform brissim. A few months later, the fellow had a baby - a girl! R' Paysach was still grateful for the confidence the fellow had placed in him. He would later call it, "The greatest bris I never performed!"



וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשֹׂת אֹתָם - *'And Moshe Gathered the Entire Assemblage of the Children of Yisroel and he said to them, "These are things that Hashem commanded to do them."'* (35:1)

● Gathering According to Hashem's Command

The Chiddushei Harim zy"a (Sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh) explains that Moshe gathered all of Klal Yisroel and told them that they should know that the reason they gather is because "this is the thing that Hashem commands."

The only reason Yidden gather together is because Hashem wants us to be united and to love each other.

● Keeping Shabbos All Year

A simple villager once came to the **Sar Shalom of Belz zy"a** and asked for a bracha. The Rebbe asked him, "Do you daven every day? Are you careful with kashrus and shemiras Shabbos?"

The villager replied, "I try very hard to do my best. However, I am forced to admit that I cannot keep Shabbos. I have to work in the fields every day and I cannot take a day off."

The Rebbe chastised him and explained the importance of maintaining the sanctity of Shabbos.

The villager thought for a minute and then said, "Rebbi, I am ready to accept to keep every Shabbos of the year except for during the harvesting season. During that season, it is too hard for me to take time off from my work."

The Rebbe told him: There once was Poritz who made a party for all the landowners in the area. Once they were all drunk, they began to talk about the Jews. Each Poritz praised their Jewish manager they appointed to oversee their lands – and claimed that theirs was the smartest and most reliable.

Finally, the host of the party declared, "My Jew is the most loyal of all! He would do anything I ask of him without complaint!"

One of the guests asked, "Would he even agree to become a Christian if you asked him to do so?"

The Poritz answered, "Definitely!" - He immediately called for his land manager and said, "Moishke, are you loyal to me?"

"Of course," the Jew answered. "I would readily obey any request you make of me."

"If so," the Poritz said, "I order you to renounce Judaism and to accept our faith!"

The Jew began to frantically think of a reply, but he couldn't come up with anything to get himself out of this mess. In his panic, he blurted out, "Okay", and he accepted to become a Christian.

Later, the Poritz called for him and said, "Moishke, I know that you really don't want to give up your Judaism. Therefore, I have good news for you. I give you permission to go back to being a Jew again."

He joyfully told his wife that he had been granted permission to convert back to Judaism. However, his wife was not as happy as him. She asked, "Did you fall on your head? Pesach is around the corner. I have no strength for all the cooking and cleaning, and we don't have enough money for the matzohs, wine, etc. Go back to the Poritz and ask if we can remain Christians until after Pesach is over."

The villager got the message and understood that he had to keep every Shabbos according to halacha.

● **Shabbos Shekalim - The Tefilas Mussaf of the Belzer Rov**

Rav Eliezer Dovid Friedman zt"l (Sefer M'pi Sefarim V'Sofrim, Chelek 1, page 281) relates that **Rav Shalom of Kaminka zy"a** once spent Shabbos with the **Sar Shalom of Belz zy"a**. When he returned home, he was shown a sefer written by an early source that discussed matters of emunah and was made up of "chakiros" (philosophical questions on the Torah).

He said, "If the author of this sefer had ever heard the Belzer Rov davening Tefillas Mussaf of Parshas Shekalim, he wouldn't need to engage in such chakiros in order to have emunah in Hashem Yisborach!"



NEFESH SHIMSHON

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

The first devar Torah this week is about the midah of ka'as, and it is on the pasuk of "You shall not kindle a fire in all your dwelling places on the day of Shabbos." Because anger is a form of fire, and it is especially important not to "kindle" it on Shabbos Kodesh. Anger is an issue that almost everyone struggles with, each person on his own madrigah. It's not a simple matter to just abolish anger.

My father zt"l, when he would speak on the topic of chinuch, would talk about this a lot. As parents, it is much harder to manage anger, because sometimes we need to react to something a child said or did.

But it's not just with the children. Every person, in every area of life, needs to react to unwanted things that happen. And when a person reacts instinctively it leaves a lot of room for ka'as to creep in.

Sometimes, when we react angrily, we can see in ourselves that the anger is not really over the thing we are reacting to. For instance, let's say a child misbehaves. When you react with disproportionate anger, you can see that the anger is not so much about what the child did but is more an outburst of pent-up anger and frustration over something else altogether. It's just that the anger found an opportunity to break out. When this happens, our reaction is out of proportion to the situation.

The solution is to refrain from reacting immediately. We need to forcibly keep our lips closed and hold ourselves back from reacting. Only after some time, when the anger subsides, we can think of an appropriate and proportionate reaction to what happened.

When we overreact, we can be sure that the person on the other end will not be very receptive to what we have to say. He will just see it as an outburst of negative emotion.

Only when our reaction is balanced and well thought-out, will it be accepted, and produce the desired result.

We saw this a lot by my father zt"l. I remember several instances where he needed to react to certain things I did... but he did not react immediately, he kept silent (it was a very disapproving silence!) and only after some time, he would say to me, "Dovi, I want to talk to you about something." And then he would call me to account for what I did, but in a pleasant and calm manner.

Wishing you all the best, with all my heart

Harav Yosef Dov Pincus - Kollel Nefesh Shimshon

● No Fires on Shabbos

לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת ***'Do not kindle fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.'*** (Shemos 35:3)



Besides ordinary, physical fire, there is another kind of "fire" that we should not kindle on *Shabbos,* and that is the fire of anger, as *Chazal* say in the *Zohar*.

In truth, anger is something to avoid at all times. *Chazal* emphasize the evils of anger. They say that someone who gets angry is considered as if he is worshipping idols, and all types of *Gehinnom* take hold of him.

Anger causes greater damage than all other negative things because an angry person loses his better judgment and his self-control, and is thus liable to do every bad thing.

However, there are times when a person needs to get a little angry. For instance, to offer reproval or to stand up for the truth. Also at home there are times when a person needs to get a little heated up in order to direct the members of the household on the right path.

In these situations, it is always forbidden for anger to get the better of him. He should rather do as our Rabbis teach: the anger should be on his face and not in his heart.

This may be compared to someone who kindles a fire in order to warm his home. If it is in the proper amount, it is beneficial, and will not burn down the house.

Regarding this, our verse informs us that even "good" anger should not be kindled on *Shabbos*. Because *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* are days of rest and joy. There is no place for anger on them.

Now, a Jew who engages in Torah study has the aspect of *Shabbos kodesh*. This is because *Shabbos* is the main source of *kedushah* in the world, and also Torah study is the source of life; it is the world's soul.

A person who dedicates his life to Torah study thus needs to minimize anger as much as possible and not get heated up even when it seems to be permitted.

However, things don't always go the way we would like, and we can learn from this, too. There are situations where a person does not succeed in exercising proper self-control, and anger comes over him suddenly and against his will. In such a case, anger should serve as a "red light" for him.

While we are on the subject of anger, let's talk about an area where anger can really flare up, and that is between husband and wife.

Love between husband and wife, *shalom bayis*, is not a matter of a few minutes. It means good, congenial and healthy communication in all areas of life. They do things in full cooperation with each other, and occasionally discuss problems in the home.

The more closeness and intimacy there is, the more anger there is. And none is as close as husband and wife. What should one do in such a situation?

Make up and reestablish the *shalom bayis*. Marriage counselors always say that the fact that a couple is angry with each other does not mean the situation is lost. They can discuss things and work them out. And the first step is to start talking again. When there is no communication, things seem unbearable and nothing can progress. But when the couple starts speaking to each other again, the anger subsides.

If there is so much anger, it is a sign that we simply are not speaking to *Hashem*. It is a sign that there is no *shalom bayis*. This is because *shalom bayis* on its simplest level means that the couple speaks kindly to each other about all matters of life.

When one gives the other a gift, they should say a nice thank-you.

David HaMelech came to the conclusion that there was no communication between *Hashem* and His people. Therefore, he instituted the practice that a Jew should recite one hundred *berachos* every day. In other words, the Jewish People should speak "nicely" with *Hashem*.

If you received an apple, say "thank you." Recite the *berachah* of *borei pri ha'etz*. If you woke up in the morning, and thus received once again the faculty of sight, say "thank you." Recite the *berachah* of *pokei'ach ivrim*.

● Giving without Limits

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וָנֶזֶם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלִי זָהָב - '***The men came with the women. All people of generous hearts brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, private ornaments; all kinds of golden ornaments***.' (*Shemos* 35:22)

It is so wonderful what the Torah tells us about the generosity of the Jewish people for the *Mishkan*. When the campaign was announced for raising *Mishkan* materials, everyone responded right away and brought the most precious things they had.

The response was so massive that those in charge of receiving the materials came and told Moshe, "The people are bringing too much!"

Not only did they already bring more than enough, but they kept on donating more and more, without stop, until Moshe needed to make an announcement that people should stop donating. - It was like the best dream for anyone who ever tried to raise funds for a *moised*.

Imagine you are trying to get donations for a *mitzvah* cause, and you have to make a public announcement to please stop donating because there is already too much money!

Nevertheless, when it came to building the *Mishkan,* the people showed such generosity that after a single announcement, an unending flood of money started pouring in. Also the women, who were quite unwilling to part with their jewelry to make the *Eigel Hazahav,* when it came to building a *Mishkan* for *Hashem* they willingly took off their ornaments and brought them in.

The participation was complete and wondrous, the likes of which we don't find elsewhere in the Torah, and we surely don't see it happening around us today.

It says: **ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם** – They shall make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell within them. - The *Shechinah* came to rest not just in the *Mishkan,* but within the Jewish people themselves.

This entails love and closeness to *Hashem.* The light of the *Shechinah's* presence is the true and lasting life. Its great illumination contains everything good and pleasant. So when the people heard that they have the opportunity to build a House in which they will be unified with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, they simply poured out their gold and silver to attain this purpose, to the point that they needed to be stopped.

Also today we have ways in which the *Shechinah* comes to rest among us. *Chazal* say: Husband and wife, if they behave meritoriously, the *Shechinah* is between them.

We see that most quarrels in the home are primarily about financial matters. The husband might the wife is spending too much, or the wife might want something that the husband doesn't agree to buy.

Also with two friends, if they had a joint financial venture that did not turn out satisfactorily, they are likely to quarrel. This, too, causes the *Shechinah* to depart.

Let us remember our forefathers. Also they felt an attachment to money and possessions. And despite this, they poured out money like it was water, in order for the *Shechinah* to dwell within them. They didn't think twice. They just gave and gave and gave.

It is worth it for us, too, to give up on a little money, and not quarrel about it, so there will be peace in our home and our surroundings. Then *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will bring His *Shechinah* to rest among us and will hurry the *Geulah Sheleimah*.

TheTorahAnyTimes
from TorahAnyTime.com

The Wisdom of Sensitivity



Rav Ovadia Yosef *zt"l* was once in Los Angeles in the 1980s. At the time, there was a young nine-year-old boy who was fascinated with the Chief Rabbi. Hearing that Rav Ovadia would be making a visit to his very own community, the boy was beyond excited to have the opportunity to see the great Torah sage with his very own eyes and attend one of his lectures. The boy's father, moved by his son's wish, promised that he would take his son to one of Rav Ovadia's talks.

But as matters turned out, the week Rav Ovadia was in town, the father needed to be out of town. The boy was broken. "My father told me he'd take me, and now he can't." Seeing her son dejected, the boy's mother decided that she'd take him. After all, she was just as able as her husband was to bring her son some place.

Notably, the family was not religious. By conventional standards, they were traditional in Jewish practice and lifestyle, though they all carried a strong respect for Torah sages, including Rav Ovadia. So it was set. The mother would take her son, and he'd get his hopes fulfilled.

But when they both arrived at the venue, which looked like a yeshiva, they were met with a surprise: Men only. The talk was only catered to boys and men, and not women. The problem was not strictly that in those days—before the advent of cell phones—the mother was concerned about sending her son in alone with so many people. More than that, she'd consider walking her son in if the lecture was catered to a larger spectrum of religious and irreligious Jews, where she'd feel more comfortable entering the way she was dressed.

As mother and son discussed what to do, Rav Ovadia arrived. Exiting the car with a group of others, he noticed the mother and son standing outside the door. "Hello," he said, acknowledging both the son and his mother. And with that, he entered the building.

The boy began to feel that familiar feeling of gloom. For reasons discussed with his mother, it didn't seem like he'd be able to make it inside to hear Rav Ovadia. Until the door opened and out walked Rav Ovadia, his presence and aura awe-inspiring. No one was accompanying Rav Ovadia, the boy noticed. He was alone. Motioning to both the mother and son, he told them to follow him inside.

Rav Ovadia cleared out the entire front row and told them both to sit there. Then, he began his lecture, opening with the words of our Sages, "*Ashrei yo'ladto,*" praiseworthy is the mother who gave birth to a son and brings him to learn Torah. The mother sat there, in the very front, wearing a shirt and jeans as crowds of learned Torah scholars surrounded in their black hats.

Such sensitive perception and wisdom was a hallmark of Rav Ovadia. The contrasting considerations were obvious: how could you bring such a mother and son into a yeshiva, into a crowd of learned yeshiva

students, or how could you not inspire a boy and show respect for his mother who supports his desire to study Torah? The insight to know what to do in a situation like this requires wisdom, not cut-and-dry calculated mathematics.

But this was not the only instance when Rav Ovadia demonstrated his profound degree of sensitivity to the small nuances amidst the larger picture.

Once, Rav Ovadia was invited to speak to a group of esteemed Rabbanim, all known for their extraordinary reputation and knowledge in complex Jewish law. Yet Rav Ovadia launched into speaking about mundane and simple laws, the likes of which were elementary to the caliber of rabbis present at the talk. The rabbis listened along, not wanting to interrupt Rav Ovadia or question his judgment and decision to discuss such basic Jewish concepts.

Following the lecture, the host approached Rav Ovadia and politely inquired if there was an unknown reason he chose to discuss the topics he did, which were far below the average knowledge of those in attendance.

"I know, I know," Rav Ovadiah said. "But everything I was about to discuss, you probably all knew already. It would have been a great learning session together. But then I saw the camera man, who was without a kippa, and I figured that he probably didn't know much. So I figured, who is better for me to teach? The camera man, who knows little, but can walk away having learned something new, or all of the rabbanim who would go on to feel good that they enjoyed some high-level learning. I reasoned that it is more important for the camera man to return home with some Torah."

Such a story should send shivers down our spine as to what refinement of character means and what it means to be a true Torah giant. When someone saw Rav Ovadia or any of the other great Torah sages of our time or the previous generation, they didn't just see someone who was capable of rendering halachic queries with

precision. They saw someone who was wise not just of the mind, but of character. They wouldn't be remembered in history solely for their breathtaking and expansive knowledge like a mathematician, but rather for their remarkable sensitivity and understanding of every Jew, of every beloved child of Hashem.





Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

The pasuk says **לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** – '***You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwelling places on the Sabbath day***.'

We know that you can't make a fire on Shabbos. That's why people have a blech. You cook something with a fire that you started before Shabbos.

The Kli Yakar and others say that this pasuk could be interpreted to mean –'Don't get angry on Shabbos.' The 'Fire of Anger' shouldn't be in your home on Shabbos. Don't have arguments on Shabbos! Shabbos is a time of peace, whether it's with your spouse or children,

or with anybody that you meet. We have more time over Shabbos, and this allows us more time for potential arguments.

This is why the parsha begins with the word **וַיַּקְהֵל** – to gather together. Moshe Rabbeinu gathered the people together as one – to have *achdus* and be united.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky brings in his sefer Emes L'Yaakov that after Moshe Rabbeinu didn't come down from the mountain, Klal Yisrael were so fractured and argumentative, that they didn't only make one Eigel – but each tribe made their own Eigel – There were 12 of them! Each one according to what each shevet wanted!

And that's why the pasuk says right away that when Moshe came down - **וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** - He gathered them together to be more unified.

So, let's make it a point that we should be b'achdus, with no arguments, and just love and care for each other.

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

זָהָב וָכֶסֶף וּנְחֹשֶׁת – *'Gold, silver and copper.' (35:5)*

"Gold" represents the purity and perfection of the *tzaddik*. "Silver" represents the great yearning of the *baal teshuvah* ("returnee" or penitent) for closeness to G-d—a yearning many times more powerful than that of the *tzaddik*, because it is a yearning from afar (*kessef*, the Hebrew word for silver, also means "yearning"). Copper, the lowliest of metals, represents the good deeds of the sinner. G-d's home on earth is complete only when it includes all three. (**The Lubavitcher Rebbe**)

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם.. שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה׳ – 'Moshe assembled the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and said to them . . . a sabbath of sabbaths to G-d (35:1–2)

This teaches us that Moses instituted the practice of assembling on Shabbat to listen to the reading of the Torah. (**Midrash**)

אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אַל־יַעֲשׂוּ־עוֹד מְלָאכָה – 'The people were restrained from bringing.' (36:6)

When so commanded, refraining from doing a mitzvah is no less a mitzvah than doing a mitzvah. (**Alshich**)



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● Why did Moshe instruct Yisrael about keeping Shabbos before instructing them about the Mishkan?

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה׳ כָּל־הָעֹשֶׂה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה יוּמָת (35,2) "***Six days shall work be done, and on the seventh day it shall be to you holy, a day of complete rest to Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death.***"

Behold, the reason why the command concerning Shabbos came before the instructions for the Mishkan I have explained in several different ways in my writings, but here I will explain a different, very simple explanation.

Moshe was concerned that Yisrael might think that since they had made the golden calf, how is it plausible that Hashem would have His Divine Presence dwell amongst them? Indeed, it is brought in the Midrash that the nations of the world made this argument, so there

was a real concern that Yisrael would think this and conclude that the making of the Mishkan was in vain.

Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu first spoke to them about keeping Shabbos, because, as Chazal have taught, if someone observes Shabbos according to halachah, then even if he worships idols like the generation of Enosh he is forgiven. And therefore, since by their observing Shabbos the sin of the golden calf would be forgiven, they could now believe in the Mishkan.

● **What part of an offering is attributable to the person who is giving it?**

קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָהׇ לַה' כֹּל נְדִיב לִבּוֹ יְבִיאֶהָ אֵת תְּרוּמַת ה' זָהָב וָכֶסֶף וּנְחֹשֶׁת (35,5) "***Take from yourselves an offering for Hashem; every generous hearted person shall bring it, Hashem's offering - gold, silver, and copper***."

Another way to explain this posuk is that the only part of the donation that is attributable to the person is his good intentions, that he gives with a full heart. But the giving itself is not attributed to the person, but rather to Hashem, "for Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold, says Hashem" (Chaggai 2:8), as Chazal explained on the posuk "who preceded me that I should pay".

This is what the posuk says: "Take from yourselves an offering for Hashem" - take literally from yourselves and give with a good heart and good intentions. But afterwards, with respect to the actual deed of giving, "every generous person shall bring it, Hashem's offering - gold, silver, and copper". Because the actual giving of gold, silver, and copper is the offering of Hashem and not from the person, because everything comes from Hashem.



◣ Anger-Free Shabbos Skoyler Rebbe

לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת - "***You shall not kindle fire throughout your abode on the Shabbos day.***" (35:3)

Based on the **Zohar**, the **Sefas Emes** said that one is not permitted to get angry on Shabbos even if it involves a mitzvah. One should not light the fire of anger in his dwelling.

On Shabbos, when we are enveloped in its holy light and inner sanctity, we are not permitted to show anger.

◣ Fiery Gossip - Shelah Hakadosh

לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת - "***You shall not kindle fire throughout your abode on the Shabbos day.***" (35:3)

Shabbos is a day of rest on which people have leisure to discuss communal affairs, to talk about their rabbis, cantors, butchers and gabbaim and offer their comments on the way their institutions such as the yeshivah and the mikvah are run.

This is why we are explicitly admonished: "You shall not kindle fire throughout your abode on the Shabbos day." Don't mar your Shabbos rest by kindling fires of evil gossip and contention. This is not the purpose for which the Shabbos was given you. The Shabbos is not only a day of rest, but also a day of moral sanctity.

◣ Quick To Action - Haderash Vehaiyun

וְכָל־חֲכַם־לֵב בָּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וְיַעֲשׂוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ - "***And let every wise-hearted person among you come and make all that Hashem has commanded***." (35:10)

If you want to perform a commandment, do it immediately. Wasting time on ingenious discussions may impede action. Hence, the pasuk tells us: 'Let one who is truly wise and anxious to fulfil G-d's commandments not waste too much time discussing them, but set about at once to translate one's resolve into action.'

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Being a senior doctor in a busy hospital is not an easy job in the best of times. But being a senior doctor in a busy hospital during the notorious Blitz of London during the WW2, was even more challenging. The number of casualties they were dealing with were far from the usual. The wards were rapidly filled with wounded soldiers and civilians; it seemed that as soon as one bed was vacated by someone who was marginally well enough to be discharged, it was immediately needed by several other patients. The scenes in the hospital corridors were ghastly, as the overworked staff attempted to alleviate the suffering of their patients. Medical supplies were in short supply, staff was down to minimal numbers, as all able-bodied men had long been conscripted into the army, and morale was at an all-time low.

All this was going on amidst the nightly horrific bombings that rocked the country and wreaked havoc on so many lives.

Under these circumstances, a doctor who was not only highly qualified but also endowed with a marvellous sense humour and an admirable ability to keep cool and calm under the most stressful conditions was an enviable asset that any hospital would be fortunate to have.

The following story is related by Mrs R Deutsch, a granddaughter of main character in this episode.

St. Mary Abbots Hospital in Kensington, London, was lucky enough to have such a doctor. As anyone who knew the legendary Dr Chaim Alexander Royde ז״ל, could readily attest, he was all these things and more. The beleaguered nurses knew that he was always available with a ready quip and a helpful hand to lighten the atmosphere when things got really tough, and they loved having him around.

Senior doctors had privileges that lower members of staff didn't, and a private room was one of them. Whenever the doctor had to work a late night or an early morning shift, being able to sleep in the hospital in one's own room, was a real boon.

One night, after a long and exhausting day of work, Dr Royde finally went up to his room. Scheduled for the early shift the following morning, he was desperate for a good night's sleep to recharge for another gruelling day. But as he was preparing for bed, he suddenly realized that he had left something vitally important at home. His *tefillin!* How would he be able to *daven Shacharis* without them? To retrieve them in time for *Shacharis* would mean waking up quite some time before his shift was due to start and drive the roundtrip to and from his home in Hackney. The other option was to get dressed again, drive home now, and catch a couple of hours sleep before going back to the hospital. Being the principled *Yid* that he was, this was really the only option, as leaving the trip for the morning and going to sleep without his *tefillin* went against his code of behaviour to always *do the right thing as soon as possible.*

And so, despite his fatigue, Dr Royde made the perilous trip home. The hospital was only about eight miles from where he lived, but driving at night during the curfew meant driving without lights, and London's bombed-out streets were difficult enough to navigate even in daylight, making this a real nightmarish journey.

Eventually he was back on the road, his precious *tefillin* safely in his car. But as he approached the hospital, his way was barred; a ruckus of fire engines, smoke, ash and rubble assailed his senses as the obvious conclusion came to him. The hospital had been hit – and badly, it seemed. Leaving his car at a distance, he managed to pick his way through the debris until he was on the hospital grounds. As he stood and gaped in horror at the deadly scene, he heard loud shrieks as people came running towards him.

"Dr Royde!" Your room sustained a direct hit! You said that you were sleeping in your room in the hospital last night, and we were all sure you were dead!" The nurses who had gathered at the scene were hysterical, filled with grief over the 'demise' of their beloved doctor. And yet, here he was in the flesh, very much alive! (Mrs Deutsch says that this was probably the first – or only – time that her grandfather found himself at a loss for words). Standing there facing the remains of what had once been his room, he was hit by a stark realization that his *tefillin* had saved his life! His insistence on doing *mitzvos* properly, without any shortcuts or looking for any easy way out, was the only reason he hadn't slept in the hospital that night.

"My grandfather went through many other dramatic moments during his long career as a doctor," states Mrs Deutsch. "The incident with his *tefillin*, however was one of his starkest memories of those years. Never again was he faced with an open display of how his *mesiras nefesh* for a mitzvah literally saved his life, and it was a story that became a proud part of our family lore to pass on to future generations."

The moral of the story – don't leave for tomorrow what can be done today, especially when it involves a *devar mitzvah!*

יהי זיכרו ברוך

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Who's Great?

In this week's Parsha (35:22) we learn about the kind-hearted and generous men and women who donated all types of gold and material for the building of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). The pasuk says, **וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים**, which means that the men ascended to the women. Seemingly, the pasuk should have said *vayavo'u ha'anashim im hanashim* – the men and women came together to make their donation. Why the strange verbiage?

I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the **Chiddushei Harim** says something amazing. He says that **וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים** means that the men rose on top. The men superseded the women. The men were superior to the women. Why? In what way did the men surpass the women?

Says the Chiddushei Harim, that previously these men sinned. They were the ones who gave gold for the golden calf, but now they were doing *teshuvah* – they were giving it to Hashem. Since they were doing *teshuvah* they rose on top, and they ascended. They were on a higher level than the women who never sinned.

This teaches us that there's a certain beauty in falling. A person who never sinned – a person who never fell is not as holy as someone who fell but gets back up. Somebody who tasted sin but has the fortitude and resilience to forge ahead and become even stronger, greater, and holier is very special. - Where a *Baal Teshuvah* stands not even a Tzaddik can stand.

Let's realize the power of *teshuvah*. No matter what happened before, we could become even holier, even greater.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Elevated in the Home

וְעָלָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מֵעִירוֹ – (Shmuel 1-1:3). The father of Shmuel Hanavi, Elkanah, used to go up from his city and gather together the people to make the trek up to Mishkan Shiloh. And on those words the Medrash states וְעָלָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא 'And that man went up' means **נתעלה האיש בביתו**, that he rose up to greatness in his home.

Elkanah didn't wait for somebody to promote him to a position of prominence, a 'shteller'. He began in his house when nobody knew about him. He didn't have any great throngs of people coming to listen to him. Nobody was knocking on his door asking him to lead the way to Shiloh. But he didn't wait for opportunity to knock because he knew that his home was that opportunity. And because he was a ben aliyah, the kind of man who didn't stand still, so he jumped at that opportunity. - He inspired himself.

I have no doubt that Elkanah was inspired when he read our parshiyos about the Mishkan. He took that lesson to heart that Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants that as much as possible a home should be built around Him, that the activities in the home should be avodas Hashem. And Elkanah took that as a model. In the privacy of his own home he made it his function, as much as possible, that Hakadosh

Baruch Hu should be the pivot around which everything else revolves. That's how it all started – all of Elkanah's excellence, all of his increase in stature was due only to his own efforts; not by steps he took on the road to Shiloh but by small steps he took on his own private road in life.

At first, all he had was himself, but that was enough. And soon his own avodas Hashem began to overflow and the family became inspired; they saw an enthusiastic husband, an idealistic father. He had a tremendous influence on the bnei habayis. His house became full of the Spirit of Hashem, a place where avodas Hashem is what matters most.

Now once a man begins in that direction, Hakadosh Baruch Hu spurs him on. – If you choose a path in life and you're serious about it, Hakadosh Baruch Hu helps. And so, it began to spread to the neighbors. It was a contagion.

The Medrash says that he became elevated in his chatzer; it means that the next-door neighbors saw what Elkanah was doing and they began to recognize his worth. Not like today when anybody who wants to be frum, so his acquaintances look at him askance. No; we're talking about mevakshim, people who want to be better, and they were inspired. And so it started traveling down the block. And then he became famous in his town.

The neighbors of one chatzer overheard what was going on and they began to do the same thing and after a while it spread throughout the entire town. Everybody became inspired by Elkanah's example. They were all fired with enthusiasm for the service of Hashem.

We had that here once. There was a man from out of town who wanted to learn – he never learned before! And so he joined up our telephone Torah program and he began learning. He learned Chumash. He learned a little Mishnayos, then a little bit Gemara and he liked that way of life. What happened eventually? His wife was influenced; his children too. He came here and began inspiring others

too. He began teaching others too. He was enthusiastic and he made others enthusiastic too. Today he's sitting in a kollel in Eretz Yisroel and now he's learning and teaching all day long. A remarkable story! He's influencing his entire neighborhood today. A man from a small town in Pennsylvania.

And that's what Elkanah did in his town. He put a fire into their hearts. When they saw his devotion to the service to Hashem, it spread in his chatzer and then in his mavoi, and then the entire neighborhood became enthusiastic. Everybody in town was talking about Elkanah and they all tried to follow in the direction that he was traveling. Of course, he must have been a winsome personality, a kindly, friendly person who was interested in his neighbors. I'm sure he spoke to them and inspired them. It was not merely by his secret activities that they were inspired. I imagine that eventually he went out and urged them; and when they saw how sincere he was they began to listen to him, and they began to travel in the direction of Hashem along with him. And after a while he became famous everywhere.

He began the practice of going up to Shiloh through different routes every year. One year he traveled by this road, and when ten people saw Elkanah and his followers singing and going up to Shiloh, they joined in. And then next year, a different route. After a while everybody began practicing again the mitzvah of aliyah l'regel to go to Shiloh three times a year. Eventually the whole Am Yisroel was under his influence.

Three times a year the Jewish nation was singing on the roads and marching up to Shiloh – the place of Hashem was jammed every year. And it was all the work of one man, Elkanah. Now we have to understand that this story is not told for itself. The stories that we're told in the Tanach are supposed to be a model for every Jew. Because every Jew has that opportunity to be an Elkanah – everyone comes into this world to utilize the opportunities available here and

one of the most important opportunities is the home, the career of being nisaleh b'veiso. It's in our homes that all of us have the opportunity to elevate ourselves the same way Elkanah did.

Nobody should ever say, "What do you want from me, Ribono Shel Olam? I'm limited. I wish I had the opportunity; then you'd see what I would do for you. If I were a king, if I was a president, if I was a ruler, I would make the entire nation good! I would make us a nation where Hashem is most important."

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "Fine. Could be. But you're a king in your house, aren't you? I don't mean that you're a tyrant; I mean you're a king – you have opportunities there. Are you utilizing your house? Is your house being made into a place where Hashem is what's most important?" What will happen after that? Could be it'll spread too.

Imagine you live in Boro Park or in Yerushalayim in a big apartment house. You know what that means to live crowded with so many other frum Jews? There's so much opportunity for your idealism to spread. Of course, everybody there is frum, everybody keeps Shabbos and everything else; but you understand that being frum is only the beginning of a career of avodas Hashem. It's not enough – there's much more to accomplish!

Your enthusiasm for Hakadosh Baruch Hu might spread to your upstairs neighbors and your downstairs neighbors, and before you know it the entire building can grow stronger in service of Hashem.

If you're a yeshivah boy or a Beis Yaakov girl, it might spread among your friends. Maybe it will spread more than that, but whatever will be, it always begins with *nisaleh b'veiso*, by elevating yourself in your home by means of making your little domicile a semblance of the machaneh Yisroel where everything revolved around avodas Hashem.

How to do that? Many ways. There are endless ways. But you have to begin somewhere. Let's say with brachos, with thanking Hashem.

It's a good place to start because it's so commonplace. From now on, the brachos you make when you want to put a piece of food in your mouth should be said out loud and enthusiastically. It might be a little embarrassing in the beginning – your wife might think you went off your rockers or your mother might not want you to come back here any longer – but you do it anyhow. And it has an effect; little by little your wife is influenced by that.

Imagine such a home. A couple, they're newly married, and they're sitting down to eat supper and they're thinking – they could say it too – "We're going to thank Hashem now for our food." Imagine such a thing! A husband and wife are eating in their little kitchen and they're thinking about Hashem. And when the children come along – by the way it's never too late to start; even if your children are big boys and girls already – you teach your children to say brachos the same way! You must teach your family to think about Hakadosh Baruch Hu and to be grateful to Him for everything that they have.

When you're speaking to your wife or to your husband and to your children, you're talking always about the kindness of Hashem. "Children isn't it good that Hashem gave us eyes! Isn't it fun to see, to have two cameras that work so perfectly. Kinderlach, let's all say together, 'Thank You Hashem for our eyes!' - "Children look outside, at the sunshine! Hashem is warming us up! And he's also cooking the fruit on the trees for us! The peaches and plums we'll eat in the summertime is because of the sunny day today!"

And all day long in the house, the words "Boruch Hashem," "Boruch Hashem." But not like people say "Boruch Hashem" by rote. Remind your children, "In this house we mean it!" Say, "Children, altogether let's say, 'We love You Hashem.' We love You for giving us a home to live in. And running water too!" And all the children in a chorus, boys and girls should all chime in and say, "We love you, Hashem."

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

Just One Compliment

Everyone in the neighborhood knew Itzik, and everyone knew exactly what would become of him. From a young age, this painfully skinny, malnourished, disadvantaged child could be seen wandering the streets at five He was obviously up to no good, even if no one knew exactly what he in the morning, or alternatively, long after midnight. was doing.

His parents were well-meaning but too distracted by the pressures of raising eleven children in a tiny, squalid apartment to notice Itzik, the boy who fell somewhere in the middle of the family and was too quiet to warrant any attention.

When Itzik was in eighth grade and it was time for him to apply to yeshivos, his rebbi took pity on the boy. Knowing that there was no one to fight his battles, and certainly not his parents, Itzik's rebbi invested enormous efforts to get him accepted into a yeshivah, and eventually one out-of-town yeshivah accepted him.

Years passed. Itzik graduated yeshivah ketanah and entered yeshivah gedolah, another institution in an obscure location. He rarely returned home, apparently preferring the yeshivah dormitory and food to his own home. On rare occasions, we would come across him, usually on Yom Tov, but the boy had pretty much faded from everyone's conscious mind, although once in a while when he did show up, someone would inevitably comment how Itzik had seemingly managed to pull his life together. Someone else would then respond that it was a relief to see that he hadn't fulfilled all the dire prophecies once made of him.

One Shabbos, Itzik appeared in shul together with his father and brothers. The young man, just nineteen, was radiant, and I watched as he was approached by someone, and then nodded and accepted a

handshake and mazel tov. Others followed suit, pumping the boy's hand vigorously and then his father's, and wishing them well.

Could it be? Surely not. He was only nineteen... But there was no mistaking the glow on his face, the distinct glow of a chassan, and as I approached the growing crowd of men, I heard it with my own ears. I joined the crowd of well-wishers and thought to myself, miracles do happen... It was clear my sentiments were reflected by those of many others. Well, everyone gets engaged at some time or other, even kids from dysfunctional homes.

We soon discovered that we were wildly mistaken. Itzik, it turned out, was engaged to a top girl from a solid family who had studied in one of the best seminaries in the country. His future father-in-law was a respected maggid shiur, and the kallah and her family were delighted with their chassan, certain they had snagged a true diamond.

The surprises didn't stop rolling in. On the wedding invitation, which we received in our mailbox along with the other neighbors, an extra line had been inserted inviting all the wedding guests to attend the Siyum Hashas the chassan would be making at his very own chasunah! Although I could hardly call myself close to the family, I decided that, come what may, I would attend this special bachur's wedding.

Approximately ten days beforehand, I happened to see Itzik at the wedding of another neighbor. I was attending as a family friend, and Itzik as a friend of the chassan.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the young man, now taller and broader, wish the chassan's father a hearty mazel tov, and I couldn't help but recall the little boy on the fringe of years ago.

I approached him and engaged him in conversation, and I was impressed to find him a wonderful conversationalist.

At one point, I asked, "Reb Itzik, do you mind if I ask you a question?"

"By all means."

"Itzik, we all remember you back as a child, and we're all so proud of the young man you are today. But can you explain how and when things started to change?" I didn't mention the poverty or dysfunctional family background, but Itzik grasped my intent perfectly and he began his story.

If you had asked me back then, as a hungry, neglected, nine-year-old, where I would be today, the answer would have been very different. I never dreamed I would amount to anything special in life. At best, I would find work stocking shelves in a supermarket, find someone to marry me, and raise a family, but we all know that history tends to repeat itself.

I got into yeshivah ketanah by the skin of my teeth, and I was far from a shining star there either. But then, one night, something happened. It was night seder, which I often skipped, but something that evening made me linger a bit longer in the beis medrash to look up a point that had sparked my interest. I sat there for a few moments on my own, trying to understand the Tosafos, when a shadow fell over my Gemara. I glanced up to find myself gazing into the smiling eyes of Reb Shmuel, my maggid shiur.

"Itzik!" he cried. "Ashreicha! After a whole day of learning, you stay late to review the Gemara! It's rare to see a bachur with such drive!" He smiled at me in admiration and squeezed my shoulder, and for a moment, the beis medrash itself seemed to sing along in joy. But that moment dissipated quickly once Reb Shmuel bade me good night and left me alone with my Gemara.

I don't know what it was, perhaps a yearning to feel that thrill again, but somehow I found myself staying late after night seder the next evening as well. This time, instead of looking up a point, I decided to prepare the gemara we would be learning in Reb Shmuel's shiur the following morning.

One evening led to another, one gemara to the next. In the mornings, Reb Shmuel would beam at me, and his gaze wordlessly whispered in my ears, I see how much effort you're investing in your learning. I'm so impressed. I admire you. You're wonderful. Never in my life had anyone been impressed by me, let alone admired me. Never had anyone told me that I was wonderful.

One morning in the middle of the shiur, I had a kushya. I had already prepared the material the night before, so my mind was open to think further and formulate my own questions on the subject.

Reb Shmuel's face lit up in joy as I presented my question. "Itzik, amazing! You're asking the same question as the Pnei Yehoshua!" The bachurim in my shiur turned around and gazed at me with newfound admiration. Until now, no one had so much as glanced in the direction of quiet, skinny Itzik, but suddenly, I had impressed them as a budding ilui! During bein hasedarim, a bachur from Bnei Brak with whom I'd only exchanged a few words until then, approached me and asked if he could learn with me after night seder. I was overjoyed! Of course, I had been paired with chavrusos over the years, but no one had ever actively sought me out.

The feeling was heady, almost intoxicating. We began learning regularly. At the same time, I discovered how much I enjoyed learning, and the Gemara became my best friend. I knew that Reb Shmuel held me in high regard, and the knowledge that there was someone out there who thought well of me worked wonders for my attention-deprived soul. My chavrusa expanded into a seder during bein hasedarim with another new friend, and I felt happier than I had ever been, not just because I finally had friends, but because I was loving my learning. Reb Shmuel believed in me, and for the first time in my life, I believed in myself, too. I was sure I had the potential to continue climbing the ladder of Torah and to go far.

The more I learned, the more I wanted to learn. The yeshivah's dining room and the games that the bachurim played during bein

hasedarim attracted me less and less, and I felt a constant pull toward the beis medrash. By the time I graduated yeshivah ketanah, I had already completed two sidrei Mishnah independently, and in yeshivah gedolah, I made it a goal to finish Shas.

Itzik paused and looked me straight in the eye, his next words sending a chill up my spine. "You look at me today, and I know that you're amazed. How did it happen? How did Itzik the street kid become Itzik the masmid?" He spoke without arrogance or pride; he only wanted to explain himself and, perhaps, to teach me a lesson.

"It happened because my maggid shiur believed in me. Because he took the time to toss me a good word now and then, to compliment my small achievements, and when the going got tough, to encourage me to strive for more. Instead of despairing of me and allowing me to despair of myself, he taught me to believe in myself. And that made all the difference."

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Righteous Women and Rosh Chodesh

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת ה' לִמְלֶאכֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד - *'And every man whose heart inspired him came, and everyone of generous spirit brought his offering to the Tent of Meeting.'*

The **דעת זקנים** tells us that after the sin of the **עגל הזהב**, the men were dejected and depressed. Previously the **שכינה** was everywhere but now many months later after Yom Kippur it was limited to the Mishkan.

The woman (who did not sin at the **עגל הזהב**) contributed generously to the building of the Mishkan. The women of Klal Yisroel never gave up and remained strong in their faith. They encouraged the men, saying, "Look, maybe it's not ideal, but it's certainly better than nothing."

In respect of this, the women were rewarded that they need not work on Rosh Chodesh. **לפיכך זכו הנשים שלא לעשות מלאכה בראש חדש**

And this is brought down in **שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן תיז סעיף א**. - **ראש חודש מותר בעשיית מלאכה, והנשים שנוהגות שלא לעשות בו מלאכה הוא מנהג טוב** - Rosh Chodesh is a fitting reward, as the waxing and waning of the moon reflects that even in the darkest hour, it will once again recover its full illumination.

Achdus

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – '***Moshe assembled the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael***.' (35:1)

The כלי יקר says this took place the day after Yom Kippur.

Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to embark on the mission of building the Mishkan. But to do so, there needed to be achdus and peace. **The Avnei Nezer** explains that as the Mishkan's construction concluded, Moshe assembled the entire nation for the purpose of teaching them the importance of harmony. The goal of the Mishkan is to serve as the one unifying place, the singular force towards which all the Jewish People focus their prayers and sacrifices.

So, Moshe gathered all the people together when there was harmony- The day after Yom Kippur, when everybody had forgiven each other. (And even financial matters were sorted).

With this Kli Yakar, we can explain an **אור החיים** at the beginning of sefer Shemos: **וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ חָדָשׁ עַל מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַע אֶת יוֹסֵף. וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל עַמּוֹ הִנֵּה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעָצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ** 1:8,9 – **The Ohr Hachaim** asks, "What were Mitzrayim so worried about? Why were they so intimidated by this relatively small slave nation? The Egyptians were the super-power of the day?

Says the Ohr Hachaim: **כי עם זה משונה מכל העמים ... כי באמצעות היותם עם אחד ומיוחד הגם שיהיו מעטים בערך שאר האומות יחשבו לרבים ועצומים מהם לצד שהם כל אחד נותן נפשו על אחיו, וזה ידוע ליודעי ערך מלחמה**

Yes, they were relatively small, but they are considered huge and stronger than other nations because there is unity amongst the Jewish people, and everybody looks out for each other; this concept is known to military strategists as a very powerful tool.

Says the Ohr Hachaim, the reason why Mitzrayim were so worried about Klal Yisrael was because they had unity! Even though they were relatively small in number, they were like one family with one goal. They looked out for each other. – So, they appeared way bigger and more powerful.

Therefore, in this week's sedra Moshe Rabbeinu waits till after Yom Kippur – when the whole nation is unified.

Re-United in Robbers Cave

When I was a student in Hasmonean (yes, I am still trying to graduate!), one of my rebbes had an interesting practice.

If two boys were involved in some sort of teenage spat, he would remove one of the boy's chairs and make them both share a chair. I presume the psychological intention was to remove the animosity between the two boys and create a new common enemy - their Rebbe. The animus towards their Rebbe would soon dissipate and the spat they were previously involved in was long forgotten.

I was remembering this when I came across a vort of **Rav Yakov Kamenetsky** in **אמת ליעקב** on this week's sedrah.

The opening possuk of the parsha begins: **וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – '***And Moshe assembled all the congregation of Israel***.' (Shemos 35,1)

Moshe Rabbeinu gathers the people and reiterates the commandment to observe Shabbos and then conveys Hashem's instructions regarding the building of the Mishkan.

Rav Yaakov explains that the sin of the eigel hazohov in last week's sedrah was the antithesis of Mattan Torah. At Mattan Torah we are told Klal Yisroel were united. - **וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר** – '*And Klal Yisroel camped opposite the mountain.*' (Shemos 19:2)

As Rashi points out, there was total unity - **כאיש אחד בלב אחד**.

In contrast, when it came to the eigel hazohov, there was disharmony. Rav Yaakov cites the Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 10,2) that actually Klal Yisroel made 12 golden calves, one for each tribe, as each wanted a different god.

Why did they each want a different deity? Presumably, conjectures Rav Yaakov, because there was difference of opinion between them, and the tribes could not agree on what they wanted and hence each went their own way.

In order to remedy the situation, Moshe Rabbeinu had to re-unite the people and heal the fractures. To this end he embarked on a new joint communal enterprise – building the Mishkan.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Lessons in Leadership p111) develops this theme and demonstrates the power of this principle in a famous social-scientific research exercise carried out in 1954 by Muzafer Sherif and others from the University of Oklahoma, known as the Robbers' Cave experiment. Sherif wanted to understand the dynamics of group conflict and prejudice. To do so, he and his fellow researchers selected a group of 22 white, eleven-year-old boys, none of whom had met one another before. They were taken to a remote summer camp in Robbers Cave State Park, Oklahoma. They were randomly allocated into two groups.

Initially neither group knew of the existence of the other. They were staying in cabins far apart. The first week was dedicated to team-building. The boys hiked and swam together. Each group chose a name for itself – they became The Eagles and the Rattlers. They stencilled the names on their shirts and flags. Then, for four days

they were introduced to one another through a series of competitions. There were trophies, medals and prizes for the winners, and nothing for the losers. Almost immediately there was tension between them: name-calling, teasing, and derogatory songs. It got worse. Each burned the other's flag and raided their cabins. They objected to eating together with the others in the same dining hall.

Stage 3 was called the 'integration phase'. Meetings were arranged. The two groups watched films together. They lit Fourth-of-July firecrackers together. The hope was that these face-to-face encounters would lessen tensions and lead to reconciliation. They didn't. Several fights broke out with the children throwing food at one another.

In stage 4, the researchers arranged situations in which a problem arose that threatened both groups simultaneously. The first was a blockage in the supply of drinking water to the camp. The two groups identified the problem separately and gathered at the point where the blockage had occurred. They worked together to remove it and celebrated together when they succeeded.

In another, both groups voted to watch some films. The researchers explained that the films would cost money to hire, and there was not enough in camp funds to do so. Both groups agreed to contribute an equal share to the cost. In a third, the coach on which they were travelling stalled, and the boys had to work together to push it. By the time the trials were over, the boys had stopped having negative images of the other side. On the final bus ride home, the members of one team used their prize money to buy drinks for everyone.

Similar outcomes have emerged from other studies. The conclusion is revolutionary. You can turn even hostile factions into a single cohesive group so long as they are faced with a shared challenge that all can achieve together but none can do alone.

Rabbi Sacks concludes: "Team-building", even after a disaster like the Golden Calf, is neither a mystery nor a miracle. It is done by setting the group a task, one that speaks to their passions and one no subsection of the group can achieve alone. It must be constructive. Every member of the group must be able to make a unique contribution and then feel that it has been valued. Each must be able to say, with pride: I helped make this.

That is what Moshe understood and did. He knew that – "If you want to build a team, create a team that builds."

Parah Adumah



The Avodas Yisrael says: Through the reading of Parshas Parah, one gets a spiritual purification.

On Shabbos Parshas Parah, the **Beis Aharon** would say that one must believe just as the ashes of the Parah Adumah purify to offer the Korbon Pesach so too when we read Parshas Parah it purifies each one according to his level, for the light of Pesach.

In the words of **R' Tzadok Hakohen**: Reading Parshas Parah helps to purify one's heart from the impurities of the Yetzer Hara.

"When a situation arises that causes us to worry, we should realize that Hashem wants to grant us something special, so He gives us the opportunity to earn it by overcoming our fears and placing our trust in Him." ~ Beis Halevi, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1820-1892).

Cover Up



Isaac Schwartz is a plumbing-fitting salesman who often travels around the United States. As part of his business, Isaac is involved in bidding on large contracts to supply giant corporations. Isaac is a religious Jew, however, during his business trips he removes his yarmulke, so people have no idea that he is a religious Jew.

Several years ago, Isaac traveled to Chicago to take part in a bid for a large mid-west conglomerate. Isaac packed his samples and his brochures as he had done hundreds of times before. He felt like he was forgetting something as he left the house.

Nevertheless, he was in a rush and so there was little time to think about what he had forgotten. As he boarded the early morning flight, he sent up a prayer that his trip would be successful and that he would arrive and return safely.

Once in Chicago, Isaac rushed to catch a cab to the corporate offices. The bidding was grueling and it lasted throughout the day. Finally, as the day grew long and the sunset approached, Isaac headed back to his hotel room. Exhausted from the traveling and the negotiations, Isaac settled into his comfortable hotel room.

Suddenly, he realized that he had not yet davened mincha. He reached into his coat pocket for his yarmulke and it was not there. He reached into his pants pockets and then his jacket pockets once again it was nowhere to be found. He searched his bags, but he simply could not find his yarmulke. He paced the hotel room right and left wondering what to do.

As he passed by the large mirror in his hotel room, he noticed something on his head. He stopped in his tracks! He looked again and

he felt his face turning red. He reached his hand on top of his head and felt the small piece of cloth; he had found his yarmulke.

He now knew what he had forgotten to do when he left his house. He had forgotten to take off his yarmulke! He had gone the whole day spending hours in negotiations wearing his yarmulke. His face burned with embarrassment.

The next day, he received a phone call with some great news. The corporation had accepted his bid, and they wanted him to sign a very lucrative supply contract. The president of the company told Isaac that they saw that he was a religious Jew and therefore they felt they could trust him.



A Good Name Is Better Than Good Oil

There is an interesting Medrash on the pasuk "See G-d has called by name Betzalel son of Uri son of Chur of the tribe of Yehudah" [Shemos 35:30]. The Medrash references the pasuk in Koheles "A good name is better than good oil" [Koheles 7:1]. The Medrash elaborates that the scent of good oil may precede the oil by a mile or two at most, even if the oil has a very powerful aroma. However, a good name can precede a person even across continents.

The Medrash then asks how far a person must remove himself from contact with the prohibition of Shatnez [the forbidden mixture of wool and linen]. The Medrash answers that even if a person is wearing 99 layers of clothing and none of them are Shatnez, he still may not wear a garment containing Shatnez as the one hundredth layer of clothing.

What is the connection between distancing oneself from Shatnez and the pasuk that says, "A good name is better than good oil"?

Rav Nissan Alpert gives the following interpretation of this Medrash (in his sefer Limudei Nissan):

Every time the Torah introduces Betzalel, it uses the following unique expression: "Look, I've called him by this name…" Why does the Torah give Betzalel such an introduction? The Medrash explains that the reason why Betzalel merited to be the master builder of the Mishkan was not because he had master architectural talents or special artistic ability. Betzalel's uniqueness was that he — for some reason — merited having a 'good name'. The Medrash then emphasizes how wonderful it is to have a good reputation (shem tov). G-d, in choosing someone to construct his dwelling place on earth (the Mishkan), did not want to be associated with anyone who had anything less than an impeccable reputation.

How does one obtain a good reputation? The Medrash answers this question by introducing the matter of Shatnez. The Medrash is teaching that the way a person acquires a good name is not by merely avoiding evil or sin, but by avoiding even the slightest hint of impropriety. It is not sufficient to merely 'play it by the book'. A person must distance himself to the ultimate extent from anything that even smacks of impropriety.

Shatnez is a peculiar prohibition, in that the two substances involved (wool and linen) are completely permitted when taken individually. Only a combination of the two is prohibited. The Torah is teaching us that a person merits a good name by staying away from Shatnez. Avoiding Shatnez represents staying away from anything that has even a minute mixture of something improper.

Those people in our communities who have achieved a good name are people who are above reproach. They have removed themselves from any taint of scandal or impropriety. Impeccable reputations are not achieved by playing it on the edge or bending the rules.

We all know that certain people's handshakes are more reliable than other people's signed contracts. The reason why is because the first group of people stay away from 'forbidden mixtures'. They stay away from the slightest hint of 'non-Kosher' business practices. Ultimately, this is what pays off for them in the long run. When G-d builds a Mishkan, He does not want it built by a person regarding whom people may have suspicions. He wants a Betzalel — a person above reproach, who possesses a good name, which is superior to good oil.



Why Didn't the Mishkan Have a Spare Parts Warehouse?

The Torah says that after Moshe told the people to donate to the *Mishkan*, the voluntary donations surpassed the amount of material required. Moshe Rabbeinu had to tell them to stop bringing material, and they were left with more material than needed. (36:4-7).

The Sforno comments: Hashem stated the exact amount of materials needed to build the *Mishkan*. X amount of gold, Y amount of silver, Z amount of copper, and so forth. He gave a precise measure for every item in the *Mishkan*, specifying no more and no less than the exact amount required for the structure and the *keilim* of the *Mishkan*. The Sforno points out that this was not the case with either Shlomo's construction of the First *Beis HaMikdash* or Herod's (re-)construction of the Second *Beis HaMikdash*. In both those cases, they initially sought out and collected more than enough funds and raw materials, however, in the *Mishkan*, it was the exact amount necessary that was sought – no more and no less.

The Talmud Yerushalmi says that they had duplicates and triplicates of all the keilim in the *Beis HaMikdash*. This was not unreasonable. Keilim break, wear out, and become impure (*Tameh*). Any serious enterprise must maintain an inventory of spare parts. Take, for example, a caterer. He does not keep only X numbers of sets of china

for the maximum number of servings he expects to prepare. He always must be prepared for breakage, loss, or theft. The *Beis HaMikdash* also needed to have "back up" to be prepared for foreseen or unforeseen occurrences.

The question must be asked – did the same problem not exist in the *Mishkan*? Was there no breakage in the *Mishkan*? Why not maintain an inventory of "backup parts" for the structure and the keilim of the *Mishkan*? Why didn't they make extra?

Listen to the following very interesting *Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei HaTosfos* (in Parshas Teruma): The *Aron HaKodesh*, in which they kept the *Luchos HaBris* (Tablets of Stone containing the Ten Commandments), was gold on the outside but wood on the inside. The *Daas Zekeinim* says it would have been fitting for the *Aron* to be made completely from gold. However, since it needed to be made portable and be transported by the Leviim on their shoulders, the *Aron* was made to weigh less. Pure gold would make it much heavier to carry. And even though, the *Daas Zekeinim* writes, *Chazal* say that "the *Aron* lifted up those who were supposedly carrying it", that was not always the case. In other words, there was a period of time when it was that way, but it was not like that forever. The same, he writes, regarding the Golden *Mizbaeach*. It was made of lighter *Shitim* wood and only overlaid with gold on the outside, to make it lighter to carry.

So, the reason they did not have spares – duplicates and triplicates in the *Mishkan*– was because "someone has to *schlep* all this." The Jews moved from place to place during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. When someone needs to *schlep*, you make it as light as possible.

Herein lays a very important principle in Yiddishkeit, which says, in effect, "Do not be a *Tzadik* on someone else's back!" In other words, if someone needs to carry this – we are going to make it as light as possible.

Rav Yisrael Salanter (1809-1883) once came to someone's house for a Shabbos meal. He had to wash for *Netilas Yadayim*. Based on the Gemarah (Chullin 106), the halacha (Orach Chaim 161:4) is that ideally a person should wash *Netilas Yadayim* up until the wrists. In special circumstances (*b'dieved*), a person fulfills his obligation for washing his hands by only washing until the knuckles. Rav Yisrael did not wash his entire hands. He relied on the opinion that he only needed to wash to the point where his fingers bend.

The observers asked him why he was being so lenient with his handwashing. After all, they told him, the Shulchan Aruch ideally requires that water comes up to where the hand meets the arm. Those were the days before running water. The answer was that there was a well down the hill and Rav Yisrael knew someone had to *schlep* the water up from the well to the kitchen. He saw that the hired help was a poor girl who would be the one *schlepping* the water, and he was not going to be a "Tzadik" at her expense! Better, too, to make the *Aron HaKodesh* out of wood rather than gold, because someone needs to *schlep* it.

There is another famous story with Rav Yisrael. When he was older, he no longer went to bake his own matzah before Pesach, but rather he asked his students to bake his *matzas mitzvah* for him. The students asked their teacher, "What are the '*Chumras*' the *Rebbe* practices during the time he bakes matzah?" All sorts of different stringencies are practiced by righteous individuals while baking their Seder Matzahs. They asked Rav Yisrael Salanter which *Chumrah* he was particular about. He told them "Be careful not to yell at the woman who cleans up between every batch of matzah baking. She is a widow. Please do not yell at her. That is my '*chumrah*'!"

This is why there were no duplicates or triplicates in the Mishkan.

Why State The Obvious?

The Parsha begins "And Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them…" [Shemos 35:1]. The section ends some twenty pasukim later with the words: "The entire assembly of Israel left Moshe's presence." [35:20] Moshe told them what he needed to tell them and everyone left.

If this was a Talmudic passage, the Gemara would analyze it, asking, "This is obvious – what is the Torah telling us?" It goes without saying that if Moshe Rabbeinu summoned them to deliver a message, that when he was through delivering that message they would all walk out. Why does the Torah that never wastes words need to include pasuk 20 at the conclusion of the narration?

Rav Elya Lopian says that the pasuk is teaching that when the Jews walked away from Moshe Rabbeinu, it was evident that they had been in the presence of a Moshe Rabbeinu. One does not spend time in the presence of a great Jewish leader without having an indelible impression left upon him. Certainly this is true immediately after the encounter. Often the impression lasts a lifetime.

The pasuk "The entire assembly of Israel left Moshe's presence" teaches that the impression was "written on their faces" and they were a changed people because they spent time with a Moshe Rabbeinu. Rav Elya explains that when we see someone staggering drunk on the street and we ask ourselves "where was he?" the answer is obvious. He was in a bar getting drunk.

So too, when we see a person who was in the presence of a Moshe Rabbeinu, it is evident where the person was. He was in the presence of holiness. Such is the influence of any environment. When one is in a holy environment, when one is in the presence of a holy congregation, when one is with spiritually great individuals, it makes an impression and it makes a difference. And the opposite is true as well.

The Ponevitzer Rav, of Blessed and Holy memory, once offered a great interpretation to a Medrash in Parshas Toldos: Yosef Meshisa was a despicable Jew. He was a traitor to his people. When it came time destroy the Temple, the Gentile invaders were afraid to walk into the Holy Sanctuary. They picked a Jew to walk in first and betray his G-d. Who did they pick? They picked this low-life Yosef Meshisha. They told him to go into the Temple and as a reward, he could take anything he wanted for himself. He went in and took out the Golden Menorah. When the Gentiles saw what he took, they told him that this was too great a prize for a commoner. They told him that he could go back in and take something else that was more appropriate. This time they promised that he could keep whatever he found.

However, he refused to go in a second time. They offered him a bonus. If he went in a second time, they would give him all the collected tax from Judea for the next 3 years. He still refused. "Is it not sufficient that I angered my G-d once, should I anger Him a second time?" They tortured him until he died, but he refused to go back in.

The Ponevitzer Rav asked – what happened to Yosef Meshisa? This was the traitor whom the Gentiles picked as being the most likely Jew to do their bidding in desecrating the Temple. He already went in and stole the Menorah. Now he suddenly became a Ba'al Teshuva and refused to ever do it again, despite the offer of riches and despite the torturing. What happened to him?

The Ponnevitzer Rav explained what happened to him. He was in the Beis HaMikdash for two minutes. He was never the same again. The influence of being in a Holy Place for two minutes changed his life.

If a person is exposed to radiation, he doesn't smell it; he doesn't feel it; two minutes of exposure can change his whole body. Likewise,

one can be exposed to kedusha [holiness] for two minutes and become a different person.

That is what this pasuk is teaching us. The congregation left the presence of Moshe… but they were not the same anymore. They were not the same Jews because they had been in the presence of a great man. Being in the presence of a great man or even being in the presence of a holy place — a Beis Medrash, a Beis Knesses, being in Eretz Yisroel can change a person's life.

This is why environment, friends, and community are so important. Such is the power of holiness. It can change a person forever.

It Is the Thought and the Mode of Giving That Counts

This week, I would like to combine two different parsha insights from two different sources, which both point to the same *mussar haskel* (ethical lesson).

The *pasuk* in Parshas Vayakhel says, "The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, body ornaments – all sorts of gold ornaments – every man who raised up an offering of gold to Hashem." (Shemos 35:22). All types of women's jewelry were brought for the *Mishkan*. The Targum translates that the women actually wore these pieces of jewelry as they went to deposit them in the area where the raw materials for the *Mishkan* were being accepted.

The question is – since the women were anyhow going to give these items to the *gizbar* (foreman), why wear them? When a woman looks at her jewelry box and decides – I can spare this bracelet; I can give away these rings, etc. isn't she more likely to carry the items to the donation center rather than wear them.

I saw an answer quoted in the name of **Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l***, that the women wanted to make a point: The point was "This is not spare jewelry that I have not worn in the last twenty-five years.

After all, styles change and tastes change. This was not a case of the women readily parting with old fashioned jewelry that they did not wear anymore. The women wanted to stress that this was their current jewelry. It was jewelry that they love and still wear. "I want to give it because I want to make a precious donation to the *Mishkan*. I want to show the *Ribono shel Olam* that this is something that I in fact treasure and appreciate." That makes the gift all the more meaningful, because I am literally taking the ring off my finger and giving it for the *Mishkan*. Now my finger will no longer have that ring.

The lesson is that many times in life – especially regarding giving *tzedakah* and *avodas Hashem*– it is not the monetary value that makes it a significant gift. It is the way it is given.

This concept helps us to understand a different set of *pesukim* in the *parsha*, a few *pesukim* later. Two different *pesukim* mention women spinning goat hair to make yarn or cloth. First, *pasuk* 25 says: "Every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands; and they brought the spun yarn of turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, and the linen." This means they donated all these cloths. This is not like going to a fabric shop and buying ready-made cloth. They needed to take the raw material and spin it and make it into linen. Then, *pasuk* 26 says: "All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom spun the goat hair." This is a very similar *pasuk*. The first *pasuk* says they spun it and the second *pasuk* says they took the goat hair and spun it.

There is a difference regarding how this spinning is articulated by the two *pesukim*. *Pasuk* 25 says, "Every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands". *Pasuk* 26 says, "All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom spun the goat hair." Why the difference in language?

Rashi interprets this second pasuk based on a Gemara in Shabbos, that this is speaking about an amazing skill. Rashi explains that the

women had a unique talent in that they spun the goat hair while it was still attached to the goats! Try that at home! I can't even imagine how you would do that. The question is why does Rashi interpret the *pasuk* this way? In fact, in Parshas Teruma, when the Torah says that they brought the goat-hair, Rashi does not mention this idea. Rashi just says there that they brought the hairs of goats! Why does Rashi mention this strange idea here? Granted, this is based on a Gemara in Shabbos (74b) – but why did they do that?

The Seforno says that the purpose of this was to provide the spun goats-hair with an extra special sheen (*zohar nosaf*). Apparently spinning the goats-hair while it is still attached to the goat creates a shinier end product.

The Maskil L'dovid writes that the reason is that it keeps the woven cloth cleaner. Since the goats-hair was not colored or dyed like certain other cloths, it had a tendency to get dirty, so they left it on the backs of the goats in order that it wouldn't drag on the ground and get dirty.

Rav Yonosan Eibschutz gives a third reason in his sefer Tiferes Yonoson: By leaving it on the goats, it was not *mekabel tumah* (because since it was attached to a living creature, it was not susceptible to *tumah* impurity).

Nonetheless, despite all the interpretations, it remains strange that they would spin this yarn while it was still attached to the goats.

We can ask yet another question: *Pasuk* 25 speaks of "every wise-hearted woman" (singular) while *Pasuk* 26 speaks of "women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom" (plural). Why the change from individual women in the first *pasuk* to all women – *lashon rabim* – in the second *pasuk*?

The Tolner Rebbe cites a Gemara and a story to address these questions. I too have a story to relate to this matter.

The Tolner Rebbe tells the story of a young *chossid* in the Ger community in Warsaw. This young man was very poor. He had a baby boy and he made a*Shalom Zachor*. The son of the Gerer Rebbe (i.e. – the son of the Imrei Emes, named Rav Meir Alter, who unfortunately was later killed in the Holocaust) came to the *Shalom Zachor* because he knew this young father. Unfortunately, he arrived late and by the time he came to the *Shalom Zachor*, there was nothing left. No beer. No *arbes* (chickpeas). No cake. Nothing.

In comes the *Rebbe's* son and there is nothing left to eat at the *Shalom Zachor*. Now if this would happen today in America, there would be no problem. You go to the pantry and take out a bag of potato chips or popcorn or cookies. No problem. In Ger at that time, there was literally nothing left in the house. Imagine the situation – the Rebbe's son comes to the *simcha* and there is nothing to serve him.

The father searched high and low throughout the house and he finally found an onion. He took the raw onion and put in on a plate and brought it to Rav Meir Alter and said "Ahh! *A tzibbele far de Rebbe's zun*" (An onion for the Rebbe's son!). The Tolner Rebbe comments: If you were there and saw the *derech eretz* and the enthusiasm and honor with which this father presented the onion to the *Rebbe's* son, you would think he was presenting him pheasant under glass! He was so touched by the fact that the *Rebbe's* son came. The *baal simcha* wanted to honor the Rebbe's son so much that he honored him with a raw onion. The way he honored the Rebbe's son was as if he was serving him the greatest delicacy.

Today, there is a word for this. When I was growing up, either I never heard of this concept or was not aware of it. But when you go to a fancy meal, it is no longer sufficient for the food to taste good. Now there is the presentation. When those of you who are from my generation were growing up, did you ever hear anything about

presentation? You would put the chicken and the piece of *kugle* on the plate, *v'nomar amen*!

This story is about the presentation of an onion. Because if all you have is an onion, but you give it with such *derech eretz* and *kavod*, you can turn an onion into a delicacy.

The Tolner Rebbe also brings the famous Gemara (Kiddushin 32a) "A person can feed his father great delicacies and be deserving of being chased out of the world."

What does the Gemara mean? Someone can feed his father delicacies, but if he does it in a disrespectful fashion, he can lose his *Olam Habah* for that act. On the other hand, someone can force his father to grind at the millstone and thereby earn his *Olam Habah*. (Tosfos explains the case where the father was drafted into the army and the son volunteered to go in place of the father to do the harder work in the army, while the father was left behind to do the grinding that the son would have otherwise done himself). It is literally "the thought that counts" – the presentation that counts!

I remember many years ago when I was in *Kollel*. We did not have much money in those days. My mother-in-law, ob"m, had a birthday. We didn't have the money to go out and buy her a nice gift. So my wife made her a quilt. My wife bought the material and made her mother a quilt. It wasn't even a big quilt. It was the same story as the Gerer *chossid* with the *Rebbe's* son. We didn't have the money. We wanted to give a present. So my wife put her personal love and effort into the quilt, and her mother greatly appreciated that because she knew what kind of effort was put into it.

If you don't have the expensive goods, there is a way to compensate for that. This idea explains our *pasuk* in Vayakhel. The women (mentioned in *pasuk* 25) who were wealthier and could afford the *techeiles* or the *argaman* (expensive cloths) went ahead, wove it and dyed it and presented it. However, these other women (mentioned in *pasuk* 26) were the women who had nothing. All they

had was goat-hair. Of all the contents that were contributed to the Mishkan – gold, silver, brass, *techeiles, argaman*, etc., etc. – the last item on the totem pole was goat hair. What kind of gift for the *Mishkan* is goat-hair? The answer is "We are going to make it special. How are we going to make it special? We are going to weave it in a way that takes an amazing amount of effort. We are going to spin it on the backs of the goats!"

Now, who cares about that? Once it was made into cloth, no one was going to know that. As a matter of fact, these goat-cloths were covered up. No one even saw the finished product. So for whom are they doing this? The answer is, they were doing this for the *Ribono shel Olam*. The *Ribono shel Olam* knows the effort that these women put into this. "I want to make it special. I don't have the money. I don't have the dyes. All I have is goat hairs." How does a person make goat hair significant? The answer is by using a special skill (the Gemara calls it a *chochma yeseira*) to be able to do this.

That is why *pasuk* 26 says "*v'chol hanashim*" (and all the women). I will ask a question: Have you ever tried petting a goat? Have you ever tried grabbing a goat? Whenever I go to the zoo with my grandchildren and we are in the petting area, I try to grab onto a goat's little horns. It takes about two seconds until the goat jerks his head away and I can't hold on anymore. Can you imagine taking a goat onto your lap and then starting to spin the goat hairs? What do you think the goat would say about all this?

The *pasuk* says "and all the women" because no one could do this job alone. It is like branding a cow. It takes three big cowboys to pin down the cow and brand it. The first *pasuk* speaks of "Every woman" (singular) because it was no big deal. An individual woman takes the material. She dyes it. She donates it to the *Mishkan*. Finished! But when you want to do this special act of spinning while the hair is still on the back of the goats – in order to elevate the quality of the gift – you need many women to do it. That is why the two *pesukim* use

different language. The first *pasuk* did not require any special motivation, but the second *pasuk* refers to women who wanted to compensate for their "non-glamorous donation" so it says "all the women *asher nasan leebana osana*" (in plural). This means they were inspired to do this and it took several women at a time to do it. That is why Rashi brings the Gemara in Shabbos here about this special skill. The change of language of *nasa leeban* teaches us that this is something special. Not special in value, but special in effort!

This is the old message of "*rachmana leeba ba'ee*". At the end of the day, the *Ribono shel Olam* wants our hearts. A person may only be able to bring a very inexpensive gift. But if that is all he can do and yet he does it with his heart and soul, it can be even more significant than a more expensive and glamorous contribution.

Laziness May Be Lurking In Noble Decisions Not To Do Something

There is a pasuk in Parshas Vayakhel, which reads: "And the Princes brought the Shoham stones and the Miluim stones for the Ephod and the Choshen" [Shemos 35:27]. Rashi cites a teaching of Chazal — "What prompted the Nesiim to contribute first at the inauguration of the Mizbeach [Bamidbar 7:1-2], while they did not contribute first at the construction of the Mishkan?

The answer is that by the Mishkan, they took the attitude 'Let the public contribute whatever they contribute, and we will complete any shortfall.' Since the public contributed everything that was needed, the Nesiim said 'What is left for us to do?' The only things not yet contributed were the Shoham stones and the Miluim stones for the Ephod and the Choshen and so that is what they brought. Therefore, they made sure to be the first to contribute by the dedication of the Mizbeach. Since they were somewhat lazy in contributing to

the Mishkan, the spelling of the word Nesiim is defective in this pasuk (without a yud between the sin and the aleph)."

Rav Simcha Zissel Brody questions Chazal's assertion that the Nesiim were lazy. Offering to make up any deficit in the Mishkan building campaign does not sound like laziness. It seems very generous! Perhaps it was a mistake or a miscalculation, but why is it described as "laziness"?

Rav Simcha Zissel says that we learn from here something that we should all take to heart. Namely, whenever we have an opportunity to do something or not to do something and we decide to delay, even for the most noble of reasons, we should realize that such an attitude is really based on laziness and inertia.

Rav Simcha Zissel quotes Rabbeinu Bachye Ibn Pakuda's preface to his classic work Chovos HaLevovos [Duties of the Heart]: "When I first decided to write this work, the thought crossed my mind that I was not worthy to write such a sefer. Therefore, I changed my mind and decided not to write it. The decision not to write it brought me some sense of relief and leisure, but I ultimately decided it was only laziness that caused me to come to the conclusion that I should not write it. "Therefore, he did write the sefer and the rest is history. Klal Yisrael is so much richer for that final decision of Rabbeinu Bachye Ibn Pakuda to write and publish Chovos HaLevovos.

Regardless of the nobleness of the reason or justification for not doing something, a person must always carefully introspect and truly consider the possibility that the noble justification was only a fig leaf for a not so noble character trait – namely, laziness.

"Many times, a listening ear can accomplish far more than any speech or sermon." ~ Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

Sanctifying the Mundane is Precious

The Torah tells us that the women donated their mirrors to the Mishkan building fund, and the mirrors were used to make the base of the *Kiyor* [Laver]. **וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַכִּיּוֹר נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת כַּנּוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת בְּמַרְאֹת הַצֹּבְאֹת** 38:8

Rashi quotes *Chazal* that initially Moshe was hesitant to take this donation, because he felt that mirrors were a tool of the *Yetzer Ha'rah* [evil inclination]. Rashi uses a very strong expression. Not only did Moshe Rabbeinu reject these mirrors, "he was <u>repelled</u> by them" (**וְהָיָה מוֹאֵס מֹשֶׁה בָּהֶן**). "How can the mirrors — which are made for sensual purposes — be used for a spiritual purpose in the *Mishkan*?" But the Almighty overrode Moshe's objections, also using a very strong expression in instructing him: "Accept them; for they are more precious to Me than any other donation!"

Rashi explains that in Mitzraim, the men felt they were in a futile situation where it was not worth bringing additional Jewish children into the world. The women were not so pessimistic. They used their mirrors to beautify themselves, went out into the field, and enticed their husbands. As a result, the Jewish population continued to increase. By virtue of the fact that these mirrors were used for such a positive purpose, the Almighty told Moshe that He considered them to be the dearest donation of the entire *Mishkan* fundraising effort.

Rav Dovid Kviat, one of the Roshei Yeshiva in the Mir Yeshiva, asks, what happened to Moshe Rabbeinu here? Moshe considers the mirrors repugnant — he is repelled by them — while the Almighty finds them to be His favorite and most precious donation. How can that be? Moshe usually has a keen understanding of the Will of Hashem. After all, he was Moshe Rabbeinu! How could he be so off base here with his reaction to the mirrors?

Rav Kviat answers that Moshe Rabbeinu was not off base. Moshe's reaction was logical and totally understandable.

However, Moshe Rabbeinu was missing a piece of information that the Holy One Blessed be He possessed. Moshe Rabbeinu, who was in Midyan at the time, had no way of knowing what happened in Egypt regarding the intimate relationships between the Jewish men and their wives. He had no way of knowing that the men were hesitant to have children, and that their wives used these mirrors to encourage them.

The *Ribono shel Olam* knew the purpose that the mirrors served. Had Moshe had this same "inside information" regarding the history of these mirrors, he would also have felt the same way. Moshe saw the mirrors simply as tools to put on eyeliner and mascara. As such, he felt they were a totally inappropriate gift for use in the *Beis HaMikdash*. The Almighty told him, "Moshe, you do not know the whole story. The whole story is that the women built *Klal Yisrael* with these mirrors. These are more precious to Me than anything else."

Reb Zusha, His Rebbetzin, the Seamstress, and the Wedding Gown

In narrating the story of the building of the Mishkan, the Torah says: "They took from before Moshe the entire portion that the Children of Israel had brought for the work for the labor of the sanctuary, to do it; but they (also) brought to him additional voluntary donations each morning." [Shemos 36:3]

Rav Shlomo Kluger asks why the Torah singles out the fact that they collected money from those involved in the work in addition to the donations from "the Children of Israel". Let the Torah state they took money from everybody (which is in fact what happened) and we will know that those who did the work are also included?

He explains the matter with a story:

The daughter of the **Rebbe Reb Zusha** was engaged. The Rebbe's wife, mother of the Kallah, went to the seamstress to order a

beautiful gown for her daughter. Four or five weeks later, the Rebbetzin went back to the seamstress to pick up the gown for the bride. However, she returned home without the gown. The Rebbe asked her what happened. She related that she in fact picked up the gown but that as she was leaving the store, she noticed that the seamstress was crying.

The Rebbetzin inquired why she was crying and the seamstress told her "It is because I also have a daughter who is a Kallah. I wish I could afford such a gown for my own daughter. The Rebbetzin explained to her husband, "I told her on the spot — 'You keep the gown!'" Reb Zusha was overjoyed that his wife fulfilled the mitzvah of Hachnasas Kallah [providing for the needs of a bride] in such a noble fashion.

But then he asked his Rebbetzin, "Did you pay her for the gown?" Reb Zusha's wife was incredulous at the question. "What do you mean did I pay her for the gown? I gave her the gown! Must I pay her for the gown on top of that as well?"

"Indeed you must!" Reb Zusha told his wife. "After all, she did work for you for five weeks, so you must pay her for the gown." The Rebbetzin told her husband that he was right and she returned and paid the seamstress for the gown that she had just "given" her.

Rav Shlomo Kluger related this incident to explain our pasuk in Vayakhel. There were some people who just donated money. But there were people who worked for the Mishkan as well. Did they give money? They could have easily argued, "We worked in lieu of our money. Our contribution to the Mishkan was our effort and labor!" (i.e. — We gave at the office!) That is why the pasuk emphasizes that not only were donations received from the masses of the Children of Israel; they were also received from those who did the labor.

The Key To Success Is Initiative

Parshas Vayakhel contains a verse describing the people who came forth in the construction of the Tabernacle: *"Every man whose heart inspired him (אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ) came and everyone whose spirit motivated him brought the portion of Hashem for the work of the Tent of Meeting, for all its labor and for the sacred vestments." [35:21]*

The Ramban notes that the Mishkan was an impressive structure. However, when Moshe Rabbeinu called forth the people to come participate in its construction, he was taking a big chance. The people were not trained architects or builders. Most of these people did not know the difference between a hammer and a screwdriver. However, the Ramban says that somehow the people found it within their nature to do what they were called upon to do.

The Ramban interprets the expression אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ, literally as "whose heart lifted him up". They had neither the training nor the skill, but they had the inspiration and daring and initiative that it took to get the job done. That is all it took to accomplish what needed to be accomplished. More than skill, a person needs ambition.

The greatest key to success is not necessarily the training. It is the ambition and initiative to do something.

The Mirer Mashgiach, Rav Yeruchem writes similarly: "If one looks at the great people in the world, if one looks at those who have made financial fortunes – most, if not all such people achieved their greatness thanks to their tremendous drive and initiative." Rav Yeruchem further writes that the difference between the Rishonim [Medieval Jewish scholars] and us is not their IQ or intelligence. The difference is that they had a tremendous drive and sense of ambition to know all of Torah. That is what separates them from us!

That is the way it is in every endeavor in life. The people who have the guts and gumption to accomplish the lofty goals they set out for themselves are those who succeed.

Someone recently lent me a book about the Reichman family. In their heyday, the Reichmans were the biggest real estate development company in the history of the world. Many of us are aware of the tremendous generosity of the family – giving out millions and millions of dollars to Tzedaka and Torah causes.

How did they get started in the construction business? According to the book, they had a tile business — the Olympia Tile Company. They sold building material. One day, they decided they needed a bigger warehouse.

They went to several different contractors and gave their requirements for building a new warehouse. The lowest bid that came back was $120,000. Mr. Reichman thought to himself: "I think I can build a warehouse myself for less than $120,000."

At the time, he did not know the first thing about construction. He knew nothing about building. All he knew was that he believed in himself and he believed that he could build a warehouse that would meet his needs for less than $120,000. So it was. He built it for $70,000. He then said to himself, "You know — this is not a bad business." The Reichmans started building one story warehouses. From there they moved on to multi-story buildings. One thing led to another until they became the biggest real estate development company in the world. Why? Because "**נְעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**". It was because of initiative. "I'll try it! I can do it."

When Moshe asked for volunteers to build a Mishkan, people came forth willing to try and determined that they would succeed. Ambition. Initiative. Gall. These are the keys to success. - Such is the beauty and power of initiative and ambition.

Mirrors Appropriate Component of Vessel Used to Sanctify Hands & Feet

Toward the end of the parsha, the verse reads [38:8] "He made the Laver of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of the legions (haTzov'os) who massed at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting." The Kior was the basin in which the Kohanim washed their hands and feet every day at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Moshe constructed the Kior from the 'mirrors of the legions.'

Rash"i here relates a fascinating tradition from the Sages as to the nature of these mirrors: The women of the Jewish people donated their copper mirrors to the building fund of the Tabernacle. Moshe was hesitant to accept this gift. He felt that the object that the women stood in front of to fix their hair and to put on their lipstick was, perhaps, not appropriate to use in the Mishkan. He was about to reject them because he considered them 'made for the evil inclination.'

G-d overruled Moshe. G-d said, "there is nothing more dear to Me than those mirrors; for with those mirrors the women were able to establish masses of legions in Egypt".

When the husbands were out slaving away at the pyramids, they had no drive, no ambition, and no hope for the future. The women went and beautified themselves for their husbands in front of these mirrors. As a result of that, there were masses of the Jewish nation.

"Therefore," G-d said, "there is nothing more important to Me. Take those mirrors and make them part of the Kior."

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch writes that it is particularly fitting and proper that they used these mirrors specifically for the Kior. The Kior was that vessel which was used to "sanctify their hands and feet." On a symbolic level, the idea of sanctifying one's hands and

feet means the sanctification of one's actions. A person has the ability to infuse with holiness that which his hands and feet produce.

The Torah says, there is no aspect of a human being that cannot be elevated, that cannot be infused with holiness. Everything can be holy. It depends what we make of it.

This is represented by the vessel which accomplishes "sanctification of hands and feet." It teaches that one can in fact make holy every single act of one's life — one's work, one's play, one's eating, and one's marital relationship. Everything can be infused with holiness.

The mirrors of those women represented that beautiful moment in Jewish history when women made themselves attractive for their husbands entirely for the sake of Heaven. It is the sensual side of human beings on the highest level. So, G-d said, take those mirrors and put them in the vessel which teaches for all generations that it is possible to infuse every and any part of one's life with a higher level of sanctity.

The Will To Do More Than Is Necessary Pleases the Almighty

The pasuk says, "Moshe commanded and they proclaimed in the camp, saying, 'Man and woman shall not do more work toward the portion of the Sanctuary!' And the nation was held back from bringing. And the work was sufficient for them for all the work, to do it – and having a surplus." [Shemos 36:6-7] Moshe let out a clarion call that there was nothing more to bring, and the people stopped bringing. They already had more than necessary to complete the job.

The Tolner Rebbe says that the **Chidushei haRim** (the first Gerer Rebbe) once heard a very interesting observation from the Rebbe, Reb Bunim: When a person does any type of *mitzvah*– whether it is giving charity or davening, whatever it may be – and the person has the desire and the initiative to do even more than he

has already done – that gives the Almighty *nachas Ruach*. A person's will to do more (when there is really nothing more to do) gives the Almighty a certain satisfaction of Spirit that is even greater than He receives from the basic act itself.

The Eliyahu Rabbah mentions the widespread Jewish custom to sing *Adon Olam* at the end of davening. Where does this come from? He gives a beautiful explanation: When we finish davening, the Satan says "Aha! Do you see? They are finished and glad to go home!" No. We want to stay. What is the proof that we want to stay? It is the fact that we remain by our seats to recite *Adon Olam* after davening concludes. *Adon Olam* appears at the beginning of the siddur. We start davening with it. Therefore, by reciting it after davening, we are proclaiming – I would really want to start davening all over again! The proof? "*Adon Olam*" – this is exactly where I began three hours ago!

The Chidushei haRim says that what happened by the Mishkan was that the people wanted to give even more. Moshe Rabbeinu told the Almighty "There is left over! The people want to give more!" The Almighty says "Go and make of them a *Mishkan haEdus*. Now, I want to reside with them. The resting of the Divine Presence will be amongst those people who possess such a desire (chey'shek) to donate more and more.

"Kindness costs nothing, yet it can be the very thing that saves someone's day. Every person is carrying a story that cannot been seen, a weight that cannot be measured. Compassion is how we lighten the loads we don't even know exist." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)



Along with discussing all the details of building the Mishkan in this week's sedra, the Torah interestingly enough places Shabbos Kodesh right next to the subject of building the Mishkan. What is the reason for this placement?

The Chasam Sofer has a fascinating answer:- Building the Mishkan is one of the greatest things that you can do. In fact, Chazal tell us that it's comparable to the creation of Heaven and Earth and the entire Universe. However, a person in his enthusiasm may get over-excited in building the Mishkan that he may want to continue doing so on Shabbos Kodesh.

And therefore says the Chasam Sofer – The Torah specifically placed the mitzvah of Shabbos Kodesh next to building of the Mishkan to tell you that however great it is to build that Mishkan, Shabbos Kodesh is even greater.

Then, the Chasam Sofer takes it a step further: However great Shabbos Kodesh is given the fact that it is even greater than building the Mishkan, even greater than that is the preservation of human life. Because, we know that we desecrate Shabbos for the sake of human life. Every one of us is greater than Shabbos Kodesh. Human life is more precious than anything else in the entire world. – Why? Because of our intrinsic great value.

It was deep in Russia. The KGB were searching for anyone that had more money than they were supposed to have. They found out about a Jew that had apparently stashed away hundreds of thousands of Dollars. They found out who it was, and they barged into his home,

and ransacked the place. They found all the cash and took it. They said, "Jew, tomorrow we are coming back for you!"

He didn't know what to do. He had nowhere to run. He knew that he still had $10,000 in cash hidden in a secret location. He wanted to give it to his son – Maye his son would escape and have a good life. But he couldn't just give it to his son or even tell his son, as the KGB may have had listening devices planted around the premises. So, he unpicked one of his belts and sewed all the cash inside the lining and restitched it all back together.



The next morning right before the KGB entered to get him, he told his son, "Take this belt, always hold on to it. Never let go of it, as this belt will be the ticket to your success."

The son takes the belt, and they hug for the last time as they part ways.

For the next few years, the son holds on to this belt, and wears it every single day, but he can't understand the blessing that his father gave him. Where's all the riches? What was the meaning of my father's cryptic message?

After a few years of wearing the belt, and having no success, he threw the belt on the floor in frustration. – And there it was. The belt burst open as it hit the ground, and the money started poking out of the belt. He always wondered why the belt was bulky. He opened up the belt and found $10,000 hidden inside.

This was a belt that he had been wearing everyday for years, without realising that his future was contained within.

Says the Chasam Sofer – That's what the Torah means in this week's sedra. – However great the Mishkan is, however great Shabbos Kodesh is, intrinsically, hidden inside every single one of us is tremendous greatness.

Make sure that you use the gifts that Hashem gave you.

Have an amazing Shabbos!

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Marital peace



Each of us has the ability to make our home a Mishkan. When we have peace in the home, the Shechina can dwell there. With this we can fulfil **ושכנתי בתוכם ועשו לי מקדש**. For one's body to function properly it needs to work in harmony. If one limb is sick, it will affect the rest of the body. The same is with marriage.

Many spend more time on the preparation for the wedding- which is only a few hours- than the relationship itself- which is supposed to last a lifetime. To have peace in the home, we need to work on our natural tendencies. After all, in a marriage there are two people that come together from different backgrounds, environments, ideals, families and so on. Each spouse needs to work on themselves for there to be an equilibrium.

Shalom Bayis is opposites getting along. This is shown to us in **עושה שלום במרומיו** - He who makes peace in His heights, as **שמים** - which is **במרומיו** - is a contraction of **אש** and **מים**, opposites.

Some may complain about their spouses. Instead of looking for the right spouse, Be the right spouse, by becoming a better person. "We need to love the one we marry, not marry the one we love."

In Hilchos Mezuza there is an opinion that the Mezuza should be upright and another opinion to have it across. What do we do? We place it slanted. That is neither of the opinions rather a compromise. This is hinting to us that we sometimes need to compromise with our spouse. This lesson is taught by Mezuza since we encounter it before we enter our home.

The Mishna guides us **התקן עצמך בפרוזדור** - prepare yourself in the lobby. This is also marriage advice, as before one enters his/her house, s/he should prepare themselves for the mood their spouse and children are in.

To help us with this, we need to understand the inherent difference between the genders. This is the fundamental reason that causes discord. A man needs to realize that his wife is not a man in a dress and a woman needs to realize her husband is not a woman in pants. A man and woman are the way they appear, think and act based on the source of what they are.

One difference is that a woman embodies the trait of change. Thus, women are **דעתן קלות**, more emotional, able to multi-task and so on. A man on the other hand, personifies being constant. Hence, he focuses on one task at a time, can concentrate on a thought for a while and the like. These traits can be classified under what is known as **לב** and **מח**. A woman is symbolized by the **לב** - heart, emotion. She is like the moon which constantly changes throughout the month. Indeed, Rosh Chodesh is her Yom Tov. Looking closely at the word **לבנה** , we see that it is a contraction of **לב** and **בינה**, the traits of a woman. On the other hand, the sun is constant. That is the male quality. Reversing the letters of **חמה** - sun, we get **המח** - the mind!

39 Labours Or Curses?



The Gemara tells us that the 39 Melachos necessary for the construction of the Mishkan are those that are forbidden on Shabbos. This is indicated by the juxtaposition of the prohibition to do work on Shabbos with the section concerning the construction of the Mishkan.

The Baal Haturim points out that if we count the words from the beginning of Parshas Vayakhel- which speaks about Shabbos- until the word **השבת** (in 35:3), we come to 39! Additionally, being that the word **לעשת** is spelled without a **ו**, it spells **ל . 9 -תשע** (Gematria of 30), alluding to the 39 Melachos. This is what we can't do on Shabbos but can do (**לעשת**) on the 6 days of week (**ו** has a Gematria of 6).

The 39 Melachos are really 39 curses. The 39 are broken up into four parts starting with **סידורא דפת** - the labours that constitute the order of making bread. Putting so much effort to eat bread originates from the curse caused by Adam- **בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם** – by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread. If we calculate the curses that came about because of the sin - including those of the snake, Adam, Chava as well as the ground- we get the number 39!

In fact, **לט** (Gematria 39) means a curse as in Targum Unkolos on **ארור** is **ליט** . On Shabbos we don't do these 39 as it is Bracha- the opposite of **קללה** - curse- as in **ויברך אלקים את יום השביעי** - Hashem blessed the 7th day. Due to the sin of Adam- which caused the 39 Melachos- good and evil became intermingled.

Through the 39 Melachos, we raise the sparks that got mixed in evil. Shabbos, on the other hand, is **מעין עולם הבא** - a semblance of the world to come- a day that is above and beyond- as it is like Adam before the sin, which is shown by the fact that we don't perform the 39 Melachos.

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן

The Ohr HaChayim neighbourhood in Bnei Brak is home to the Ohr HaChayim seminary founded by **R' Moshe Pardo zt"l**, noted educator and master of chessed, in 1952 upon the advice of the **Chazon Ish zt"l**. For Sephardic girls from kindergarten up to high school, the school serves children from disadvantaged homes and gives them a chance to earn a livelihood. The school also helps make shidduchim so they could marry. Ohr HaChayim seminary still exists today, serving 1,500 students.

One Shabbos afternoon, the idyllic stillness of Bnei Brak was broken by the sounds of an automobile driving speedily through the streets. This is a most uncommon sight as cars are not permitted on the streets of the Chareidi city, and it was a wonder that the car managed to get past the metal barriers and onto the city streets. As is common in many places in Israel, the screams of "Shabbos" followed the car wherever it went, but it did little to deter the driver or even slow him down. The man behind the wheel was on a mission and barely even slowed down until he pulled up in front of the Ohr HaChayim seminary.

Instantly, the car was surrounded by dozens of angrily shouting Bnei Brak residents - adults and children alike - all yelling "Shabbos" at the top of their lungs. Of course, the car was muktza so nobody touched it, but the driver inside the car seemed to be genuinely intimidated by the massive crowd he had created with his mad dash through the streets of Bnei Brak.

Suddenly, a formidable man with a long beard walked toward the crowd and called out, "Please, I beg of all of you, move away from the car. Disperse now and leave the man be." It took a few minutes but eventually, the crowd dispersed enough for the young man behind the wheel to cautiously open the door to his car.

"Shabbat Shalom," were the first words out of the mouth of R' Moshe Pardo, as he attempted to put the young man at ease. "Come,

please, you can be my Shabbat guest." "Do you work here?" asked the driver. R' Moshe smiled and nodded. "Okay, good. I need to speak to a student here right away. It's very urgent!" Without missing a beat, R' Moshe said, "Of course. And who might you be?" "I am her brother. I have come to get her. Our father passed away this morning and the family sent me to pick her up and bring her back for the funeral this evening."

R' Moshe knew them. The family was not observant, but the girl's father wanted her to have a better, more religious education, and sent her to Ohr HaChayim. They were so far removed from Yiddishkeit that they didn't even realize it was forbidden to drive on Shabbat and pick up their daughter in preparation for the funeral.

R' Moshe understood the predicament he was in. The family had just lost their father and was in no mood for a religious debate. The young man needed to pick up his sister and would not be denied. The rabbi asked a few more questions to get the man talking but he seemed impatient and wanted her to come outside already. He had a long drive ahead of him and many other details of the funeral to take care of. "Please tell her to come out right now!" he said in strong tone. "I cannot wait any longer."

After a short pause, R' Moshe said, "You know that we are religious Jews here and according to halacha, it is permitted to push off a funeral for a bit if it will allow time for more mourners to arrive and pay their respects to the deceased. Well, you should know that your sister is one of the most beloved and well-liked girls in the school and everyone will want to share in her sorrow, by participating in her father's funeral. I, too, wish to attend, and even deliver a eulogy since I knew your father and I feel I owe it to him. You should not deny me and the hundreds of students here a chance to come to the funeral and share in your family's grief. Since we cannot travel on the Shabbat, please wait until nightfall and then we will come en masse to the funeral."

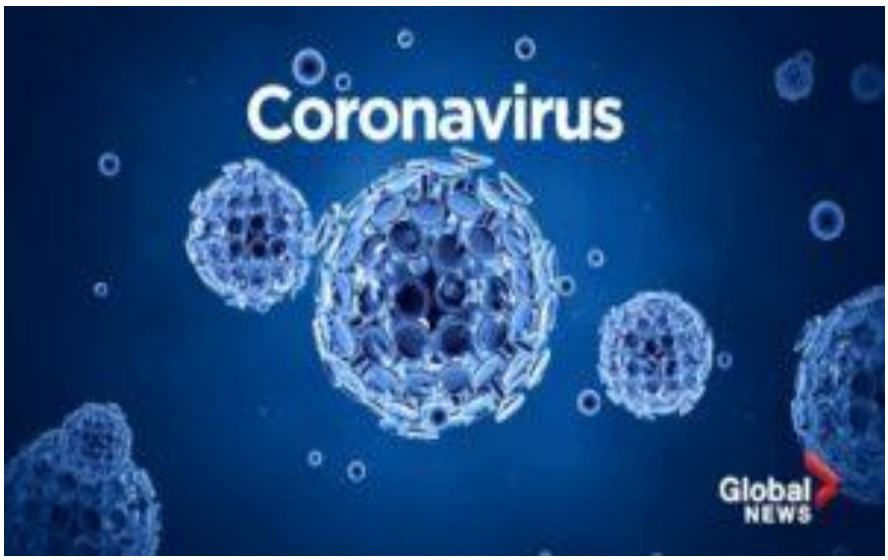
The young man was truly touched at the rabbi's heartfelt words. But what should he tell his family? They were waiting for him. "Please," tried R' Moshe again, "stay until after Shabbat and give us the zechut of participating in your father's funeral."

The young man relented. He stayed at the Pardo home and even ate Seudat Shlishit there. After Maariv and Havdala, R' Moshe himself drove with the young man and his weeping sister back to their home. Following close behind were busloads of girls from the seminary who came to share in the family's sorrow.

Hundreds of people attended the funeral and there was not a dry eye as R' Moshe eulogized the man. He remained close to the family and even brought a few back to Teshuva Shleima!

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

How To Act In These Troubling Times



In last week's parsha, Parshas Ki Sisa, Moshe went up to Mount Sinai to receive the 10 Commandments from Hashem. He didn't return when he was expected to. The impatience of a few resulted in the making of the golden calf. Although very few people were involved in worshipping it, it became a stain of sin for the Jewish People as a whole. **Rashi** says that the Jews thought that Moshe had died atop the mountain. The Satan brought darkness to the world and said that Moshe was dead (**Talmud** Shabbos 89A). The Jews did not believe the Satan until he showed them an image of Moshe's coffin

(**Midrash** 41:10). Hashem gave the Satan the ability to fool some Jews into believing that Moshe was dead. Why did Hashem give him such power? One explanation is that the Jews were on such a lofty level of holiness. To test them, Hashem allowed the Satan greater powers than usual.

In our current situation, shuls and yeshivos have closed. They are our lifeblood. Davening to Hashem and learning Torah are the hallmarks and power of a Jew. Why did Hashem grant the Satan the ability to close them? Perhaps we are currently in a period of tremendous holiness or potential holiness. If we strengthen our prayers, our learning, our kindness to others and our other mitzvos, perhaps we can reach that special level of holiness. Perhaps the Satan was given extra power to try to combat that holiness. Who knows what greatness awaits us, as a People, if we pass this test?

We are experiencing unique events. How can we remain calm when many people are panicking? Is there anything special that we could and should do?

The enemy soldiers surrounded the castle. Their catapults were showering the castle walls with huge stones. The people inside the castle walls were greatly outnumbered. They started to panic. The king was calm. As the enemy crept closer and closer, the people inside felt more and more worried. However, the king remained calm. The enemy came within five feet of the castle walls. The people inside started screaming in fear.

Just then, the king gave a signal and boiling oil was poured down onto the unsuspecting enemy. Those soldiers who didn't die, quickly ran away in pain and in fear. The people inside the castle were saved. They cheered their king. All along, their king had not been worried because he knew that he had a plan of which the people were unaware. Had the people known, in advance, of the king's plan, they, too, wouldn't have been worried.

- **Similarly, Hashem has a plan! Nothing in this world just happens!** Hashem is guiding all the events that occur. We don't know the plan, but we can feel calm knowing that there **is** a plan!
- **Hashem loves each of us more than a parent loves a child!** Hashem is with us "every step of the way". Clearly, Hashem will protect us from any harm. **Hashem does not want anything bad to happen to us!** Anything that does happen is only for our **ultimate** good! We can feel calm knowing this.

  A story is told about a man who travelled with Eliyahu the prophet. One evening, a very poor couple graciously invited them to stay in their home, overnight. They gave up their own straw beds to the guests and shared their meagre rations. In the morning, Eliyahu thanked them. As he past their source of food, a solitary cow, Eliyahu whispered in the cow's ear and the cow dropped dead on the spot.

  Eliyahu's companion could not understand how Hashem could "punish" such a wonderful couple by causing their only source of food to perish. Eliyahu explained that we don't understand the ways of Hashem. Hashem loves us and wants only good for us. Eliyahu explained that their host's wife was supposed to have died that day. It was her time to pass on. Due to her kindness, Hashem took the life of her cow instead of her life.

  If something "bad" occurs to us during these days of unique world events, perhaps it is Hashem's kindness to save us from a worse fate.

  The knowledge that nothing in this world happens by accident and the belief that Hashem loves us and only wants good for us will help us remain calm and feel happy in any situation.

  Is there anything concrete that we can do that can to lessen the bumps in the road as we approach what is ultimately good for us?

The Jewish People have a very special gift and power called **prayer**. When we pray to Hashem with intensity and with our total heart, Hashem often performs untold miracles for us. Our **Torah learning** is another powerful tool of ours. It can protect us, as well as our fellow Jews, from harm. Acting with **chesed**, with kindness, is a hallmark of the Jewish People. Our acts of kindness to each other helped the Jews in Egypt merit salvation and can help us merit our future and ever-lasting salvation. Restraining from speaking negatively about others, **not speaking *loshan hara***, gives us untold merits. including benefitting from the special light that Hashem created during the Six Days of Creation and hid away for the future Tzadikim to benefit from.

- **How will each of us react towards the current challenges?**
- **What one mitzvah can we do or strengthen our observance of doing?**
- **What one character-trait can we strive to improve?**

Our actions elevate and protect us as well as the entire Jewish People. Let's pray with greater intensity, learn a little extra Torah, do an extra act of kindness, and try to refrain from negative comments about others. Let's always remember that Hashem plans everything that happens to us and that Hashem loves us so much!

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשֹׂת אֹתָם 35:1

R' Yosef of Piavnitz ZT"L (Pardes Yosef) would say: "The gematria of the word אֵלֶּה is 36, alluding to the 36 righteous people who exist in every generation. These holy people are likened to a mishkan, and are also "taken" by Hashem as a pledge, for they suffer on account of the sins of the generation."

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

When Is Winning Actually Losing?



שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה' כָּל־הָעֹשֶׂה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה יוּמָת

"On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death." (Shmos 35:2)

Rashi is bothered by the following question: The Torah already warned us about keeping Shabbos. Why was it necessary to warn us again?

Rashi explains (as does the Siporno), you may mistakenly think that building the Mishkan is so important that you are permitted and even obligated to desecrate Shabbos. Therefore, the Torah repeats the prohibition against doing work on Shabbos right before the mitzvah to build the Mishkan. This comes to teach us that working on Shabbos is prohibited even for the great mitzvah of building the holiest of places.

Rav Elchonon Wasserman gave a beautiful parable to illustrate a very important lesson:

An emperor once sent his trusted advisor to a foreign country, to give a message to the king. The advisor was warned not to make any bets. The emperor told him, "Whatever the wager is, do not make it".

The advisor did as he was told. While he was speaking to the foreign king, the king said, "I have never seen anyone as hunchback as you". The puzzled advisor said, "I am not a hunchback!" The king insisted that he was. "I'll bet you one million dollars", said the king. "Take off your shirt and prove it to everyone".

The advisor remembered that he was instructed not to make any bets. He rationalized that this was different. It was a sure-thing; he couldn't lose. Surely his emperor would allow and even appreciate this kind of bet.

The advisor made the bet, removed his shirt and undershirt, and became the happy recipient of one million dollars.

The overjoyed advisor returned to his emperor with his great news. Imagine his dismay when the emperor, instead of praising him, got very angry at him. "Why did you disobey my order? You may have gained one million dollars, but I have just lost ten million dollars. I had a bet with this king that he wouldn't be able to have you wilfully undress in front of the members of his court. You thought you were being wise, while in reality you caused me to lose much more than you gained!"

Rav Elchonon Wasserman said, at times, one may think he is permitted to do a sin because of pure intentions – it's not for my personal gain, but for the sake of Hashem. The above illustrates what happens to such a person. He thought he gained, but in reality, he suffered a huge loss!

We must always follow the guidelines of the Torah. It is not for us to decide that our intentions are so lofty that we are permitted to ignore the Torah's wishes.

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

Torah Tavlin

וְכָל חֲכַם לֵב בָּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וְיַעֲשׂוּ אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ 35:10



Reisha Rav, R' Aaron Levine zt"l (HaDrash V'haiyun) would say: - When a person has the opportunity to do a mitzvah, it is preferable that he does it immediately and does not procrastinate.

Doing a mitzvah with alacrity prevents all kinds of obstacles from arising to forestall the performance of the mitzvah at a later time. That is why the posuk says, '*All the wise-hearted among you shall come*' - one who is truly wise and understand what Hashem wants - 'shall come' - right away, without delay."



Torah Tavlin - Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

וַיַּעַשׂ כָּל־חֲכַם־לֵב בְּעֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֶשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מָשְׁזָר וּתְכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי 36:8

This Shabbos is the first yahrtzeit of the **Baal Machsheves Halev, R' Chaim Yossel Kofman zt"l**. Many of us are either presently quarantined or homebound. It is a good time to reflect on our lives, families, strengths, and Torah values and commitments as well. Yet, with the whole world seemingly gone mad

and many facets of our lives turned upside down, it's kedai to bear in mind the following encouraging vort.

The posuk in Vayakhel says **וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָּל־חֲכַם־לֵב** - ***"And all the wise hearted did,"*** in plural form, yet by each individual posuk, it employs the word **וַיַּעַשׂ** in singular form.

R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l says that although many people partook in the procedures connected to building the Mishkan, there was an underlying feeling of responsibility and urgency felt by each individual "yachid" and although Chazal tell us, "A pot of partners is neither hot nor cold," because each partner relies a bit on the other, here it was not the case. Each person felt a complete responsibility, thereby fully ensuring that the job would get done to perfection.

My machshava here is that sometimes we just go with the flow and follow the masses. It's often easier to just do as everyone else is doing. Perhaps Hashem is telling us - each person - I want your individual unique efforts for Me. Be in seclusion, daven by yourself if you must, but do it with your own personal touch, with zest and geshmak. Talk to Me because it's just the two of us.

Bear this in mind and tell your children. You will see your relationship with Hashem will soar. May this eis tzara pass in peace, and life can go back to a normal flow, thereby bringing us closer to Hashem and to ultimately be the catalyst that hastens the end of this bitter galus and brings Moshiach.

R' Shmuel Rozovsky ZT"L (Ponovezher Rosh Yeshiva) would say: "When the Jews brought the materials for the Mishkan, they brought with them their **נדיבות הלב** - ***'Gift of their hearts.'*** For the main donation that was used to build the Mishkan, was not so much the material items, but rather their overflowing good will and intentions - they gave their hearts!"

Torah Gems

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּצַלְאֵל.. וְאֶל כָּל־אִישׁ חֲכַם־לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן ה' חָכְמָה בְּלִבּוֹ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ

In Parshas Vayakhel, the Torah mentions the **נדיבות הלב** - "generosity of the heart" as well as the **חכמת הלב** - "intelligence of the heart" and the **נשיאות הלב** - "Nobility of the heart" no less than 15 times in various forms. Each term is used to describe the overwhelming generosity and spiritual longing of the Jewish People, who built a holy sanctuary not with tools, nails and supplies, but with their heart and soul. A Jew thinks with his mind but acts by the dictates of the Torah and the flow of his heart which is constantly in tune to serve the Almighty.



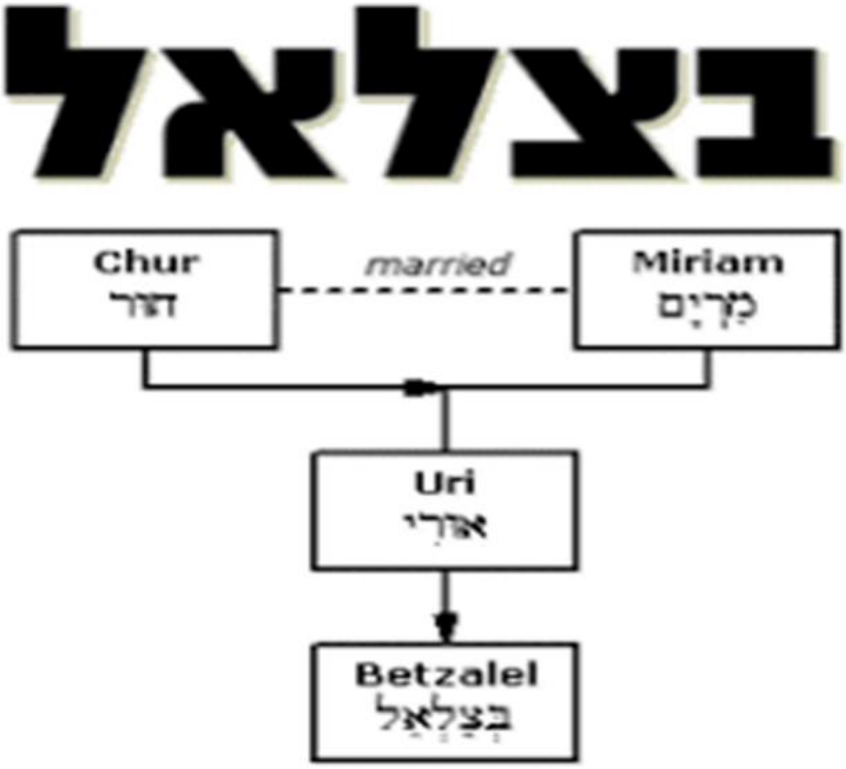
The Chazon Ish, R' Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz ZT"L was once learning Torah in his home with a member of his family. They were deeply involved in a halachic topic when suddenly the Chazon Ish looked up. "Someone is knocking at the door," he said. The man sitting with him shook his head in disagreement. "Rebbi, I didn't hear a thing." He wanted to get right back to their learning without interruption. But the Chazon Ish was adamant. "I am certain that I heard a knock on the door. Please go and check."

The other man got up and went to the door. To his surprise, he found a little old lady standing there. She had knocked so lightly; it was almost impossible to hear. She came into the house and began pouring out her heart to the Chazon Ish. She was a Holocaust survivor and had no family left. She lived in a small apartment and

had no means of support. She spoke for quite some time and made no effort to spare any of the painful details of her life.

The Chazon Ish spoke to her and gave her the encouragement she required. When she left the house, he turned to the other man and said, "I may not have heard the knock, but I felt the beating of a broken heart and it called to me!"

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן־אוּרִי בֶן־חוּר לְמַטֵּה יְהוּדָה 35:30



As we know, Chur, the son of Miriam, was killed while fighting to stop the Erev Rav who were building the Egel. Hashem said, "Since Chur gave up his life in My honour, I am rewarding him that his grandson Betzalel will be elevated to build the Mishkan."

R' Zev Weinberger zt"l says that at times Hashem will store away reward for future generations until He deems that the time is right. The question is, why doesn't this reward include the fact that Chur is distinguished as Miriam's son? My machshava here is based on Rashi in the beginning of Sefer Shemos when the Torah relates the story of the two heroines, Shifra and Puah (Yocheved and Miriam). Hashem rewarded their efforts to save the Jewish baby boys, who were ordered by Pharoah to be drowned upon their birth.

The Torah says, **ויעש להם בתים** and Rashi comments that Yocheved became the ancestress of the Kohanim and Leviim, while Miriam

became the ancestress of Dovid Hamelech. What did they do to distinguish themselves to receive these rewards? After all, they were only acting as human beings should act. However, Chazal are teaching us that they did not act solely as decent human beings - rather, the reason that they did not listen to Pharoah was due to their Yiras Hashem, which protects a person from doing aveiros. Therefore, Hashem rewarded them with a son and grandson by the name of Chur, who was ready and willing to die al Kiddush Hashem when the Jews built the Egel.

Interestingly, Chur's name was not mentioned in the Torah during his act of self-sacrifice. His mother and grandmother, who both acted with similar self-sacrifice, did not have their names mentioned in the Torah either; they were only referred to by their nicknames, Shifra and Puah.

We see that this was their way of life, with no special accolades for being so unique. Chur's reward was that his grandchild was selected by Hashem to build the Mishkan. He was a grandchild of Yocheved, Miriam and Chur as well, and their reward was Betzalel - who built the Mishkan which bore witness to Klal Yisroel's forgiveness.



Parsha Parables - Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Going the Extra Smile

Building a sanctuary is difficult enough. Getting people to donate has been, historically, even more difficult. That, however, was not the case concerning the Mishkan. The Torah in this week's portion tells us that everyone contributed to the cause. Men and women brought gold and silver. They brought personal items and family items. Copper mirrors were donated as well as bracelets, bangles and baubles. Those who had wool and linen came and those who had dyes donated.

Before the pledges began arriving, the Nesseim (the heads of the tribes) were so confident that the goals would not be met, that they pledged to fill the gap of any missing funds. They were shocked to learn that there was almost nothing for them to contribute! So much of every item was donated that an announcement was made, ordering the entire nation to halt their generosity. (It may have been the first and last of its kind!)

But what interests me is one other group of people that the Torah mentions as contributors. "And all those who Hashem inspired with wisdom to do the work. They took in front of Moshe the donations that the Jews brought for the work of the Mishkan, and the brought an additional offering each morning" (Exodus 36:2-4). Why did the Torah single out that these people brought something to the Mishkan? Didn't everybody?

The Story



The daughter of **Rabbi Zusia of Anipol's** was engaged. As poor as he was, Reb Zusia and his wife scraped together enough money for a seamstress to sew a beautiful gown for the bride-to-be. After a month the gown was ready, and Reb Zusia's wife went with her bundle of rubles to the home of the seamstress to get the finished gown. She came home empty-handed. "Where is the gown?" asked both the Rebbe and his daughter, almost in unison. "Well," said his wife, "I did a mitzvah. When I came to pick up the gown, I saw tears in the eyes of the seamstress. I asked her why she was crying and she told me that her daughter, too, was getting married. Then she looked at the beautiful gown that she had sewn for me and sighed, "if only we

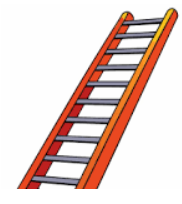
could afford such beautiful material for a gown." Reb Zusia's wife continued. "At that moment I decided to let the seamstress have our gown as a gift!" Reb Zusia was delighted. The mitzvah of helping a poor bride was dear to him and he longed for the opportunity to fulfil it.

But he added one question to his wife. "Did you pay her for the work she did for us?" "Pay her?" asked the wife, "I gave her the gown!" "I'm sorry," said the Rebbe. "You told me the gown was a gift. We still owe her for the weeks of work she spent for us." The rebbitzen agreed and, in addition to the gift of the gown she compensated the seamstress for her work.

The Message

The men and women who toiled laboriously could have said that they had done their share. After all, they crafted and wove the beautiful utensils and tapestries of the Mishkan. Yet that was not enough for them.

In addition to the work they did, **Rabbi Shlomo Kluger** (1786-1829) explains, they contributed too! They did not stop their commitment with their work for the Mishkan. The Torah tells us that they, too, gave each morning. The efforts of individuals were crowned by their relentless generosity. In addition to their time and their skills, they gave their possessions. In a generation that looks to abdicate responsibility and commitment, it is wonderful to read about men and women who searched for more ways to give -- and found them!



The Soul's Ladder

Tefillah is the ladder of the soul. When a person prays, he awakens the hidden yearning of his neshamah to cleave to its Source. ~ The Maggid of Mezritch.

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וָנֶזֶם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלִי זָהָב 35:22



A sales rep from a large company was once driving in a rural upstate county when he pulled into a gas station and asked the gas station attendant, "Tell me, what are the people like in the next town up ahead?" The attendant scratched his head and said, "Well, what were the people like in the town you just came from?" "Awful people," the man responded. "Rude, cold, hostile, abrupt, unfriendly. They wouldn't give me the time of day." "Well," said the attendant as he pumped the gas, "I'm sorry to say it, but you're going to find exactly the same sort of people in the next town up ahead."

A bit later, another driver pulled in, heading in the same direction as the first. "Hey, friend," he called out, "What are the people like in the next town up ahead?" The attendant said, "Well, what were the people like in the town you just came from?" "Wonderful people," the second man responded. "Friendly, warm, helpful, patient, kind. They went out of their way to help a stranger." "In that case," replied the attendant with some country wisdom, "I'm happy to tell you that you're going to find exactly the same kind of people in the next town up ahead."

The women donated their jewellery towards the purpose of building the Mishkan. And yet, they refused to give their jewellery for the Golden Calf. Their refusal emanated from pure motives as they truly wanted no part in that terrible sin.

R' Avraham Pam zt"l derives from here an important concept known as, **מעשים של אדם מוכיחים זה את זה**. This means that the actions of a person in one area can reveal something about his actions in another

area. In this case, the women's willingness to part with their jewellery for the Mishkan, revealed their pure intentions when refusing to do so for the Golden Calf.

When the command went out for Bnei Yisroel to bring their valuables as donations towards the construction of the Mishkan, they came in droves and brought an overflow of gold, silver and every imaginable precious item. Almost immediately, there was too much and now Moshe had to retract his command telling the people to stop bringing supplies. The people were eager to give and didn't want to stop.

Why did Moshe feel it necessary to limit their good intentions and charitable donations? What would have been so terrible had there been left over donations? In the city of Vizhnitz, members of the city council decided to organize a public gathering promoting chinuch and other educational issues that were plaguing the city.



They came to the **Vizhnitzer Rebbe, R' Chaim Meir Hager ZT"L (Imrei Chaim)** for his blessing. Knowing his customers, the Rebbe insisted that the gathering must be kept separate, with a mechitzah dividing the men and women attendees. "But Rebbe," the organizers protested, "Times have changed. If we put up a mechitzah, people won't come." "Sure they will," said the Rebbe with a smile. "We see that when Moshe Rabbeinu told the people to bring their donations for the Mishkan, the posuk tells us, 'The men came with the women' - together, in mixed company. Moshe was unhappy

about this breach of tznius and immediately ordered, 'Men and women shall no longer bring'-in order to halt the proliferation of co-mingling. What happened? The people listened and stopped coming. And you know what? 'There was enough for the work ... and a surplus.'" The Rebbe concluded, "Ensure the level of tznius at this gathering, and not only will people come - but you'll also have a surplus!"

35:31 וַיְמַלֵּא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹקִים בְּחָכְמָה בִּתְבוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה



There was once an article in the Reader's Digest 1990, entitled, "Rajan's Monster Memory," about a man from India who had a phenomenal memory. At first, he would use his gift to memorize train and bus schedules and amaze his friends. After a while, he saw there was nothing to be gained from this, so he decided to use his talent to make it into the Guinness Book of World Records. He memorized the mathematical formula for Pi (the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter which is about 22/7 or 3.14...) which in decimal form goes on infinitely, and beat the world record. When asked why anyone would need to know that, he answered that "No reason. It was just for the challenge of it."

In sharp contrast, **Rabbi Zelig Pliskin** writes about **R' Eliyahu Kletzkin zt"l**, a rabbi who also had a phenomenal memory. He could recite mathematical formulas, including Pi, with no problem. He realized though, that this did no one any good. So instead, he used his memory to assist others by memorizing the schedules of trains,

buses and ships all over the world. This way he could aid people who planned trips and he certainly did.

This underscores the difference between Torah wisdom and plain knowledge. The person without Torah used his talent for his own glory. The idea of helping others didn't dawn upon him. R' Kletzkin only thought about using his gift to help others, even though he didn't take any glory for himself. Torah is not just a garment that you take off when you leave the Beis Medrash. It is incorporated into one's self, it is there to refine one's Middos. It teaches one how to interact with others in the world, how to control his animalistic desires, and learn to be satisfied, not jealous of others.

35:5 קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָהׇ לַה' כֹּל נְדִיב לִבּוֹ יְבִיאֶהָ אֵת תְּרוּמַת ה'



Dani was a bochur learning in Eretz Yisroel. His dira (apartment) was off Rechov Malchei Yisroel in the busy Geula neighbourhood of Jerusalem. As anyone who has ever been there will attest, the street is inundated with panhandlers ("schnorrers") with their hands out looking for charity. It often feels as if these collectors have taken up "permanent residence" there! There was one Israeli-Russian fellow who was so persistent that he would follow anyone he may have missed down the block in the hope of soliciting a few shekel.

One day, Dani felt that this man was literally hounding him as he followed him down the block. Dani crossed the street to avoid him, but the man followed. Finally, seeing that he could no longer avoid him, Dani turned around and told him, "Adoni (Sir), I gave you

yesterday. I walk by here every single day but I can't give you every time I see you!" The man looked at him innocently and replied, "I daven everyday beseeching Hashem for my parnassa. But he never tells me, 'Sorry, but I gave you yesterday!'

Giving charity to a poor person is akin to Hashem providing us with our sustenance. In the desert, explains **Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik zt"l**, the command to Bnei Yisroel to give Tzedakah presented a unique challenge, since there were no "poor" or needy people who lacked sustenance. Hashem provided miraculously for all the needs of the people. He constantly provided Mann, water, and other necessities. Thus, in order to implement a commandment to give charity, a project was required to which the people would give a donation. The Mishkan was the project that Hashem selected for this purpose.

Peace – שלום



What does a kettle have to do with peace? The Meforshim explain that water and fire are opposites, they cannot be together. But when there is a kettle separating between the water and the fire, then fire and water can coexist. Therefore, the kettle represents peace, because sometimes some amount of division is needed for the sake of making peace. The husband spending less hours in the house (and instead, spends more hours in the beis medresh studying Torah) is often a good recipe for shalom bayis.

Another counsel for shalom and for overcoming anger, is humour. **Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l** was giving a drashah in his yeshiva.

There was a nudnick, who wanted to disturb the class. He interrupted Reb Chaim and asked, "Why are the mouth and the eyes located within the face, while the ears and the nose protrude?" Reb Chaim replied, "The ears and the nose protrude in order to hold up the eyeglasses," and continued teaching. With wisdom and humour, he didn't allow this man's question arouse his anger.

A person once came home to an angry wife. His wife shouted and hollered, and then she took a bucket of water and poured it over him. He said that he wasn't surprised. "After thunder and lightning generally comes the rain." He overcame his anger with humour.

Rebbe Hershel of Ziditchov zy"a had a segulah, to help keep peace in the home on Fridays. He said that having the Shabbos table all set by midday (chatzos hayom) is a segulah for shalom.



35:3 לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

After the United States entered World War II, an amended Selective Service Act, signed by President Roosevelt, required that all men between the ages of 18 and 64 register for the draft. Leizer Cohen, a Chicago native who was born and grew up in the midwest, was thirty-six years old, married with three children. As prescribed by law, he had registered for the draft years earlier, but he was never selected. Leizer didn't even consider the possibility that he would be needed to serve. But when Leizer received an official-looking letter from the U.S. Armed Forces, he read it and his face slowly lost its colour until it matched the white paper in his hand. Indeed - it was a draft notice!

Leizer was overage, much older than the usual recruits, and had a full family, but apparently the Army was understaffed. Leizer read

the letter with dismay: He was to report to the downtown Chicago induction center the following Saturday morning at 08:00 hours. An ominous line at the end of the letter, made him blanch: "Anyone who fails to respond to this summons will be arrested and prosecuted."

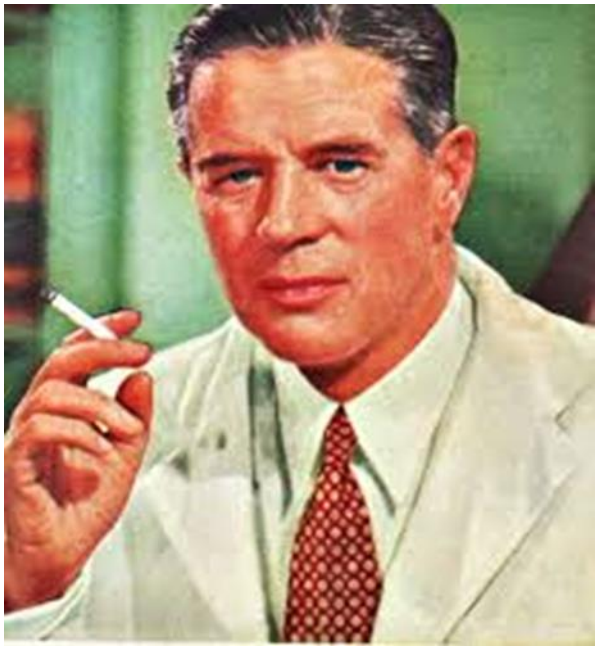
"On Shabbos?" Leizer whispered to himself. "What will I do there? Even if I arrive Friday eve before nightfall, how will I daven with a minyan? There are no Jews downtown!" But there was no getting out of it. He knew how serious this matter was and if he was selected, he would summarily be inducted to serve in any one of the theatres of war. And this was just the beginning! How would he keep Shabbos as well as observe all the mitzvos, if he was drafted into the army?

Despite his misgivings, Leizer had no choice but to gather his belongings on Friday afternoon and prepare to spend Shabbos in a downtown hotel. He brought along Shabbos provisions; candles, wine, challah, a siddur and a chumash. As the sun set over the Chicago skyline, Leizer found himself chanting the Friday night prayers - slowly, meaningfully, but in total solitude.

After his lonely Friday night meal, Leizer took out his chumash to review the weekly Torah portion, Parshas Vayakhel. He was tired from the long week. He reached the posuk, "Do not kindle a fire in all your dwellings on the Shabbos day." He read the words over and over but sleep quickly overtook him and he fell asleep. Leizer awoke the next morning, his heart heavy with dread. After davening in his hotel room, he joined thousands of people at the induction centre waiting to be examined by the Army doctors. Late in the afternoon, Leizer was seated opposite an Jewish psychiatrist, named Schwartz. After some routine questioning, Leizer voiced his misgivings about joining the army, but the doctor just shrugged, unmoved.

Leizer watched him reach into his pocket to pull out a cigarette. As the match flared in the doctor's hand, the words of the chumash from the night before flashed before his eyes: "Do not kindle a

fire...” “Hey, doctor, you are Jewish, right? Why are you smoking on Shabbos?” Leizer admonished him.



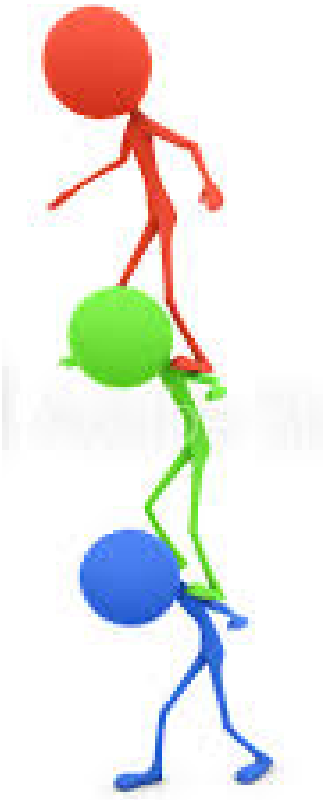
The doctor stopped writing in mid-sentence. Then, he looked up slowly and rolled his eyes. “Listen, it’s been a long day. Will you give me a break?” But Leizer did not give him a break. He continued to expound on the prohibition of lighting a fire on Shabbos, that it was absolutely forbidden, and how could a Jew dare do such a thing?

As Leizer ranted on, the doctor furiously scribbled a few notes on the file in front of him. “Here,” he said, interrupting Leizer mid-sentence. “Take this to the doctor in the next room.” Another Jewish doctor. Leizer handed him the file and sat down. The doctor looked down at the note, then peered up at the man standing before him. “What is your name?” he began. Leizer responded dutifully to each question until suddenly, this doctor, too, took out a cigarette and lit up. The posuk again flashed again in Leizer’s mind, “Do not kindle a fire...”

Leizer couldn’t hold himself back. “Doctor, you look Jewish. Why do you smoke on Shabbos? Surely you know it’s forbidden for a Jew to light a fire on the Shabbos, the holiest day of the week?” The doctor shook his head in disbelief. “Oh, boy! You’re too nervous for the United States Armed Forces. We don’t need guys like you. Go home.” Relieved, Leizer left the army induction centre. He was so excited to be exempt that he ran - practically danced - all the way home, where he told everyone about the great redemption he had experienced.

35:1 וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל





A man once spotted an unusually beautiful and rare bird with feathers of every possible colour, perched at the crest of a huge tree that was impossible to climb. When the King of the land heard about the bird, he decided that he must capture it. He ordered many, many people to come to the forest where the tree was located. One was to stand on the shoulders of the other until they were able to reach the perch of the beautiful bird and then bring it to the King.

All went well for a while, but the entire procedure was arduous and time consuming. Some of the people at the bottom of the human ladder became bored and disillusioned and lost sight of the task at hand. Weary and disgruntled with the amount of time it was taking, they began to walk away. Well, of course, the entire human ladder toppled to the ground, injuring those on the highest sections. The King had wanted that his people should be banded together with a common purpose, but in the end, nothing was gained.

Moshe called together the entire Klal Yisroel for the purpose of uniting the people with one purpose; to build a Mishkan to house the Shechina. At Har Sinai, the Jews were perfectly united - **ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר** - but during the sin of the Golden Calf, they became undone, and one turned on the other.

Now, it was time to reunify the people. **The holy Baal Shem Tov ZT"L** said that unity in prayer is of the utmost importance. "When Jews are bound together in prayer," he said, "there is so much good. But when they disband, each going his own separate way, everything falls. What we hope to achieve, is lost."



For the construction of the Mishkan and its accoutrements, the Jewish women "stepped up" and took a central role in the process. Rather than allowing their considerable talents to languish unused, the women recognized that they have a responsibility to themselves and to society to use their abilities to benefit others.

This is the story of an incredible woman and her amazing gift to mankind. Irena Sendler [1910 –2008]. An unfamiliar name to most people, but this remarkable person defied the Nazis and saved 2,500 Jewish children by smuggling them out of the Warsaw Ghetto. Her courage enabled not only their survival but also generations of their descendants.

In 1942, the Nazis herded hundreds of thousands of Jews into a 16-block area that came to be known as the Warsaw Ghetto. The Ghetto was sealed, and the Jewish families ended up behind its walls, only to await certain death. Irena Sendler, a non-Jewish health worker, was so appalled by the conditions in the Ghetto that she joined Zegota, the council established to provide aid for Jews organized by the Polish underground resistance movement and directed the efforts to rescue Jewish children.

To be able to enter the Ghetto legally, Irena managed to be issued a pass from Warsaw's Epidemic Control Department (WECD) and she visited the Ghetto daily, re-established contacts and brought food, medicines and clothing. But 5,000 people were dying a month from starvation and disease in the Ghetto, and she decided to focus her efforts on helping the Jewish children get out.

For a young mother like herself, persuading parents to part with their children was in itself a horrendous task. Finding families willing to shelter the children, and thereby willing to risk their life if the Nazis ever found out, was also not easy. "Can you guarantee they will live?" Irena later recalled the distraught parents asking. But she could only guarantee that they would die if they stayed.

"In my dreams, I still hear the cries when they left their parents." Irena began smuggling children out in ambulances. She recruited at least one person from each of the ten centres of the Social Welfare Department. She issued hundreds of false documents with forged signatures and successfully smuggled almost 2,500 Jewish children to safety and gave them temporary new identities. Some children were taken out in gunnysacks or body bags. Some were buried inside loads of goods. A mechanic took a baby out in his toolbox. Some kids were carried out in potato sacks, others placed in coffins. Irena had a remarkable record of cooperation when placing the youngsters. "No one ever refused to take a child from me," she said.



The children were given false identities and placed in homes and orphanages. Irena Sendler carefully noted, in coded form, the

children's original names and their new identities. She kept the only record of their true identities in jars buried beneath an apple tree in a neighbour's back yard, across the street from the German barracks, hoping she could someday dig up the jars, locate the children and inform them of their past.

In all, the jars contained the names of 2,500 children. But the Nazis became aware of Irena's activities, and on October 20th 1943 she was arrested, imprisoned and tortured by the Gestapo, who broke both her legs. But no one could break her spirit. Though she was the only one who knew the names and addresses of the families sheltering the Jewish children, she withstood the torture, that crippled her for life, refusing to betray either her associates or any of the Jewish children in hiding.

Sentenced to death, Irena was saved at the last minute when Zegota members bribed one of the Gestapo agents to halt the execution. She escaped from prison but for the rest of the war she was pursued by the Nazis. After the war she dug up the jars and used the notes to track down as many of the children as she could in order to reunite them with relatives scattered across Europe. Unfortunately, most had lost their families during the Holocaust in Nazi death camps. The children had known her only by her code name Jolanta. But years later, after she was honoured for her wartime work, her picture appeared in a newspaper. "A man, a painter, telephoned me," said Irena, "'I remember your face,' he said. 'It was you who took me out of the Ghetto!'"

"Bitachon is not just for the big things in life, but for the small things as well. We should trust in Hashem for every detail of our lives, knowing that He is always watching over us." – Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה' וכו' 35:2

In the mid-1970's, a visiting rabbi once gave a lecture in Miami, Florida, on the life and accomplishments of the famed **Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ZT"L**. He described the life of the great sage who lived a humble life as a shopkeeper in the tiny Polish village of Radin, yet was recognized throughout the Jewish world as a great tzaddik and leader.

There was another story that he wanted to tell, but he only knew part of it. As he stood at the lectern and looked about, he decided that he would tell it anyway. He rationalized that even an unfinished story about the Chofetz Chaim would have a meaningful message.

He began to relate an incident about a teenage boy in the Chofetz Chaim's yeshiva who was found smoking a cigarette on Shabbos. The faculty and student body were shocked, and some of the hanhalah members felt that the boy should be immediately expelled. However, when the Chofetz Chaim heard the story, he asked that the boy be brought to his home.

At this point, the rabbi interrupted the narrative and said, "I don't know what the Chofetz Chaim said to the boy. I only know that they were together for a few short minutes. I would give anything to know what he said to this student, for I am told that the boy never desecrated the Shabbos again. How wonderful it would be if we could

relay that message - whatever it was - to others, in order to encourage them in their observance of Shabbos."

The rabbi then continued with his lecture. After his talk, the hall emptied of everyone except for one elderly man, who remained in his seat, alone with his thoughts. From the distance, it seemed he was trembling, as if he was either crying or suffering from chills.

The rabbi walked over to the elderly man and asked him, "Is anything wrong?" The man responded, "Where did you hear that story of the boy and the cigarette on Shabbos?" He did not look up and was still shaking. "I really don't know," answered the rabbi. "I heard it a while ago and I don't even remember who told it to me."

The man looked up at the rabbi and said softly, "I was that boy." He then asked the rabbi to come outside, and as the two walked together, he told the rabbi the rest of the story.

"This incident occurred in the 1920's when the Chofetz Chaim was in his eighties. I was terrified to have to go into his house and face him. But when I did go into his home, I looked around with disbelief at the poverty in which he lived. It was unimaginable to me that a man of his stature would be satisfied to live in such surroundings.

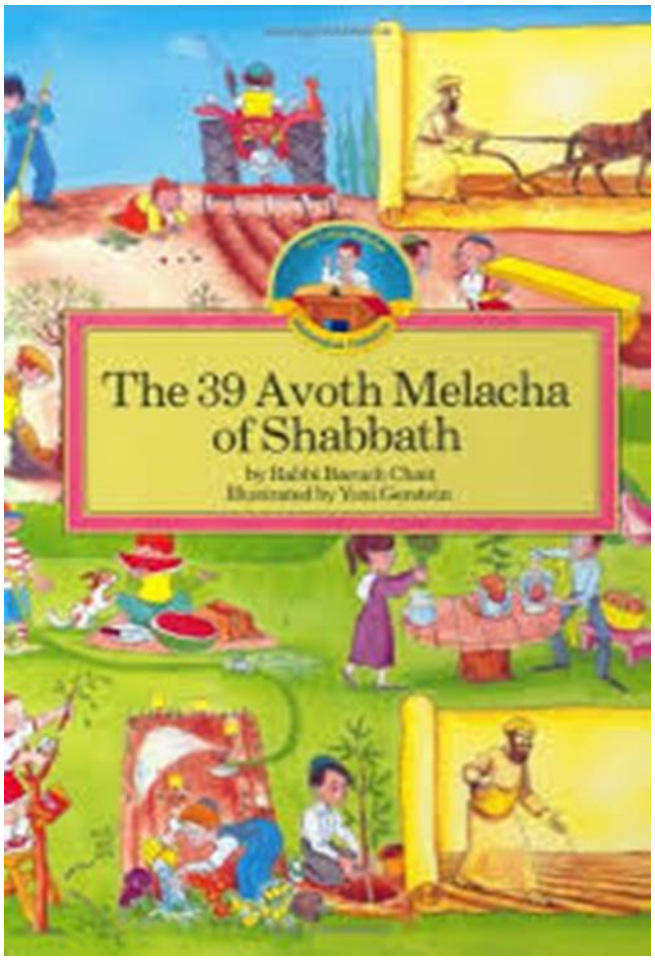
"Suddenly he was in the room where I was waiting. He was remarkably short. At that time, I was a teenager, and he only came up to my shoulders. He took my hand and clasped it tenderly in both of his. With my hand in both of his, he brought my hand up to his face, and when I looked into his soft and saintly face, his eyes were closed for a moment. "Then, he suddenly opened his eyes and they were filled with tears.

He said to me in a hushed voice full of pain and astonishment, 'Shabbos!' He started to cry. While he was crying, he repeated with astonishment, 'Shabbos, the heileger Shabbos!' Over and over, he repeated this refrain and my heart started pounding.

I became more frightened than I had been before. Tears streamed down his face and one of them rolled onto my hand. I thought it would bore a hole right through my skin. When I think of that tear today, I can still feel its heat.

I can't describe how awful it felt to know that I had made the great tzaddik weep. But in his rebuke - which consisted only of those few words - I felt that he was not angry, but rather sad and fearful. He seemed frightened at the consequences of my actions." The elderly man then caressed the hand that bore the invisible scar of a precious tear. It had become his permanent reminder to observe the holy Shabbos for the rest of his life.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



This week's parashah begins with Shabbos. It says, **אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשֹׂת אֹתָם... שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה'** ***these are the things that Hashem commanded... six days you shall work, and on the seventh day it should be holy..."***

From the words **אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים**, the gemara (Shabbos 97) derives that there are thirty-nine melachos (types of work) which are forbidden on Shabbos. **אֵלֶּה** is gimatriya 36. **דְּבָרִים** is plural, thus adding another 2. The **ה** at the beginning (of **הַדְּבָרִים**) adds 1 more. Together, they equal 39, indicating the thirty-nine types of work that are forbidden to be done on Shabbos. Thirty-nine is gimatryia **טל** (dew). The Torah tells

us that the man that fell in the desert was covered and packaged within dew. As Rashi writes, (Shmos 16:13) "The **טל** (dew) fell on the ground, the man fell over it, and then **טל** fell on top. It was like the man was packaged in a box."

The holy sefarim tell us that we still receive man until today, only in the desert it was packaged within **טל** (dew) and today it is packaged within the **ל׳ט** (thirty-nine) types of work that people do. The daily mann, comes in a more physical form than it was in the desert, and it is concealed within the thirty-nine forms of work. As we know, the mann didn't fall on Shabbos. Similarly, we don't perform the thirty-nine melachos on Shabbos.

However, although parnassah doesn't come on Shabbos, Shabbos is the source and the root of our parnassah. **The Chasam Sofer zt"l** said that this is alluded to in the passuk, שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלַאכְתֶּךָ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ ***"six days you will do your work, [but] the seventh day is holy…"*** Everything comes from the seventh day. We work during the week, but parnassah comes from the holiness of Shabbos.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל *And Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel* (35:1) רש״י: ויקהל משה – למחרת יום הכפורים - *And Moshe Assembled – the days after Yom Kippur.*

In the Sefer "Shmuos Tovos" it is brought in the name of **Rebbe Moshe of Kubrin, zt"l**, that by assembling Israel on the day after Yom Kippur, Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to hint to them that not only on Yom Kippur do all of Klal Yisroel need to have love and brotherhood for each and every one through their requests for forgiveness, but even the day after Yom Kippur they are obligated to continue and maintain these good characteristics. *(Umatuk HaOhr)*

Run Like a Deer

In Pirkei Avos (5:20) יְהוּדָה בֶּן תֵּימָא אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר, וְקַל כַּנֶּשֶׁר, וְרָץ כַּצְּבִי וְגִבּוֹר כָּאַרְיֵה, לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמָיִם "Reb Yehudah ben Teima says, 'Be brazen like a leopard, swift like an eagle, run like a deer, and be strong like a lion to do the will of your Father in heaven."



Reb Shimon Sofer zt"l asks, After stating that one should be swift like an eagle, why does it say the slower pace, "run like a deer"? In modern terms, this would be like someone saying, "Be quick like a jet, and also like a car." Where do we find in Tanach that a deer runs quickly, that the mishnah uses it as an example?

Chazal tell us (based on the final passuk of Shir HaShirim) that the nature of a deer is that when it runs away, it repeatedly turns its head back to look behind it. Reb Shimon Sofer said that the Mishnah is telling us to be swift in avodas Hashem like an eagle, but one should also adapt the nature of the deer who keeps looking back.

This means that even when one is growing in his avodas Hashem, swift like an eagle, he still shouldn't forget to look back and see others who are in need. His spiritual growth shouldn't cause him to lose sight of others.

Living Jewish



Earring, nose ring, finger ring and bracelet (35:22) חָ֚ח וְנֶ֔זֶם וְטַבַּ֖עַת וְכוּמָ֑ז . These items were donated for the Sanctuary to teach us important lesson in raising our children:

Earring - We must listen carefully to the Torah's dictates on child rearing, and must always hear what our children are saying to make sure they are receiving a good education.

Nose ring - We must "smell out" our children's friends, to make sure that they are positive and not negative influences.

Finger ring - We must point, so to speak, with our finger, the right path to follow, and explain the dangers of straying from that path.

Bracelet - We must use our arms, that is, all of our strengths and resources, to ensure that every Jewish child receives a strong Jewish education. *(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

When the Pnei Menachem of Gur *zt'l* was *niftar*, people found approximately 200 siddurim in his possession. He changed siddurim often, apparently to bring freshness into his *tefillos*.

The depths of the Pnei Menachem's ways are beyond us, but it is a reminder to constantly seek newness in *avodas Hashem*.

Never think your actions are insignificant. Every deed has repercussions in heaven and affects the brilliance of the spiritual lights above. ~ Sefer Nefesh Hachaim.

L'Maaseh A Tale to Remember



The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt"l, strived to always be honest throughout his life, in every situation. Once he was travelling by train to a neighbouring city. As the train rode on, the conductor would come by and collect the fares and tickets from the passengers. Rav Segal began his trip in the second-class economy section, as he had purchased a ticket for a seat there. However, during the trip, the other passengers were very loud and roudy, and Rav Segal could not concentrate on his learning, so he moved to the first-class section which was quiet and had many seats available. He hoped the conductor would come through the first-class section and collect the fare from the passengers, and he would pay the extra fare then.

Rav Segal turned to his Sefer and learned undistracted for the rest of the trip. When he reached his destination, he realized that the conductor had not come by. He proceeded to the stationmaster, so he could pay the difference in price for the better seat. Despite being told repeatedly that it was unnecessary to pay the extra fare, Rav Segal insisted on paying the money. As Rav Segal left the ticket booth, the stationmaster exclaimed, "That man is one in a million!"

"The reward for attending a funeral is limitless." ~~ Talmud, Sota

Parshah Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Many commentaries ask what the relationship is between the laws of Shabbos and those of the Mishkan, as they are juxtaposed in this week's Parshah (35:2,4).

Rav Shimon Sofer answers based on the Gemara (Shabbos 119a). The Gemara states that one who properly observes Shabbos merits wealth. By observing Shabbos and receiving the riches, Bnei Yisroel would be capable of contributing towards the Mishkan! So too, we can also attain wealth by properly showing respect to Shabbos.

A Will and a Way

Beztalel, this week, is introduced together with his impressive linage (35:30). The Da'as Zekainim asks why it is so important to know that he came from Uri, Hur, and Yehudah. We know that the Mishkan was built after the Jews sinned with the egel ha'zahav. They did teshuvah and received the second luchos. After all that, Hashem said, "build me a place in this world to reside in".

Chazal teach us that the Mishkan was to atone for the egel ha'zahav. Amongst the terrible things that happened at the egel ha'zahav was

the murder of Hur. He protested the making of the egel and was therefore killed.

Shockingly, of all the people to build Mishkan, Betzalel is the last person. His own grandfather was killed because of the egel, and now he is charged to build something which atones for that sin! This shows the great desire Betzalel had to be part of this project. He was willing to forgive the Jews for the murder of his grandfather. A greater ratzon creates even greater siyatah dishmayah.

Parsha Pages

לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת Do not kindle a fire in any of your homes on the day of the Shabbos *(35:3)*



It is a well-known historical fact that a group of deviant bnei Yisroel, called Tzidokim, prohibited lighting a fire before Shabbos for it to burn on the Shabbos. They derived this from their incorrect understanding of our verse.

Rabbeinu Meshulom, a Rishon, met some of these people and brought a proof that they were wrong. In Bereishis 2:3 the verse says, "And Elokim blessed the seventh day." In which manner did He bless it? If we look at the curse that Iyov pronounced, (3,6), "As for that night, let darkness seize upon it" we can deduce the blessing that is its reverse. We can deduce that the blessing is the opposite which is that the night needs to be well illuminated. From this we see that the night of Shabbos must be illuminated. And since we all agree

that igniting a fire on Shabbos itself is prohibited, it must be that we illuminate Shabbos with lights that were lit before Shabbos begins.

It is interesting to note that the numeric value of "tzidokim" is equal to the numeric value of "ner." Further, the Tzidokim did not have hot food on Shabbos since they did not use fire on Shabbos at all. Therefore, most Jewish communities have a custom to specifically serve a hot dish on Shabbos day in order to demonstrate our belief in Torah sheb'al peh that a fire lighted prior to Shabbos can be used on Shabbos (as a source of heat, as a source of cooking, or as a source of illumination).

Special Skills - based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin



Betzalel was appointed to construct the Mishkan, the portable sanctuary. The Torah states וּלְהוֹרֹת נָתַן בְּלִבּוֹ ***"And he put in his heart to teach."*** *(35:34)* What lesson do we learn from this?

The Ohr Hachayim, 1696 - 1743) answers: There are people who have special knowledge and skills, but do not want to teach them to others. Therefore, the Torah praises Betzalel because he was willing to share his knowledge with others. A person who desires knowledge only for his own honour will be reluctant to share what he knows with others. The more people who have the same knowledge the less special he will be. If a person realizes that his knowledge and skills

are gifts from the Almighty, he will readily pass them on to others. He wants to accomplish the most that is possible, and if more people have that special knowledge, more will be accomplished. Your willingness to share what you know with others is a sign of your true inner attitudes towards your wisdom.

A Fire On Shabbos

לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת



We see in this week's **פרשה** that **משה רבינו** gathered the Yidden and repeated what Hashem had taught him. **משה רבינו** told the Yidden about keeping **שבת** and specifically mentioned the prohibition of lighting a fire. **משה רבינו** didn't mention anything else that Hashem had taught him. He then spoke in length to the Yidden regarding the construction of the **משכון**.

It is very interesting that all **משה רבינו** had to say was limited information about **שבת** - he was in **שמים** for a total of 80 days. If he was already mentioning **שבת**, why did he only tell the Yidden about not lighting a fire?

While the **גמרא** already discusses why the detail of fire is mentioned and **רש״י** explains the connection of the **משכון** and **שבת**, it still begs an explanation of why **שבת** was the only **הלכה** mentioned. It should have stated many **מצות**, like we see last week, and then state **שבת** and the **משכון** together so that we can learn the relevant **הלכות** from it.

We need to understand the concept of **שבת**, of the **משכון**, and of fire to see how they all relate to each other. We have already seen

in **פרשת תרומה** that the **משכון** represents a frum home and even more so, it represents the life of a frum Yid. There are so many details about the **משכון** and in the daily life of a person. One often gets overwhelmed of having to deal with all the details and distractions. He often asks what the point and purpose is of dealing with all these non-essential details in his life. The **משכון** was made up of all the details listed in the **תורה**. It was needed for its construction and its function. If one detail was missing, it would invalidate everything.

Hashem is telling us that every single detail in one's life is essential for the existence of the world. We don't understand why it is this way, but this is how Hashem made it. One can get lost in the detail and lose sight of the big picture, the connection to Hashem. **שבת** is the essence of connection. No work is performed on this day. One gets to 'catch his breath' on this day. He gets to fortify his connection to Hashem. It's Hashem's day that he shares with us.

We need to ask though, if **שבת** is a day to connect to Hashem, why then do we eat so many meals? It should have been like **יום כיפור** where one desists from eating so that he can fully connect. **שבת** teaches us that one can try to connect to Hashem within the physical world and will find Him there. When one is immersed in this materialistic world and finds Hashem there, he then reveals the holy sparks hidden within. One can think that he loses by keeping **שבת**; he doesn't get to accomplish anything, he needs to close his business, and he can't even plan for the week ahead. However, Hashem is telling us that the opposite is true; the more one doesn't work the more he gains. Just like fire.

The nature of fire is that it consumes the material it possesses. The very same act of destroying creates something useful and beautiful. The fire lights up its surrounding, warms an area, and is used to cook. Fire is essential to the world's existence. How would a person classify fire; destructive or creating?

The apparent answers are that it depends on the circumstances. When fire is purposely lit in a controlled manner it creates but when it happens in the wrong place and time it destroys. This is why **משה רבינו** mentioned this one and only **מלאכה** in this **פרשה**. It's to teach us that although we're immersed in materialism on **שבת** such as eating 3 meals, sleeping, and with general **עונג שבת**, if it's done correctly, it is like fire. Fire always destroys something, but you gain much more than its destruction.

Being involved in materialism is destructive but when doing it the right way and believing that we're doing the **רצון** Hashem one gains so much more. Hashem is telling us not to light a fire **שבת**. The day is so holy that there's no need for fire; no need to destroy anything in order to elevate the mundane to holy. **שבת** itself does that, if we believe in the **שבת**.

Now one understands this **פרשה** very well. The **משכון** and its details are to teach us that every detailed aspect of one's life is for and with a purpose. We need to find Hashem within our detailed, busy, and confused day. Every detail we're busy with is meant to be just like the **משכון** with all its details. **שבת** teaches us that we must let go of everything and connect to Hashem. The wording of the **פסוק** is **שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה** - ***six days you will work***. It's like we have no choice in the matter. Hashem wants it this way. But Hashem is also telling us that there's a seventh day.

There's a point to all of this. The point is to sanctify ourselves and our actions and connect to Hashem. The fire teaches us not to despair. It destroys yet at the same time creates something beautiful. One often feels that life is destroying him. However, he doesn't realize that this is what's creating the light of Hashem in this world. The greater the destruction the greater the light. The greater the light the more **שבת** one has even in the weekday.

Women… Don't Worry You Had A Job To Do Too!!!! Written By Benjamin A Rose



Is it just me or do women sometimes feel left out of many Jewish practices? "Why do I have to dance on this side of the mechitsa?" or "why can't I daven from the amud?" or "why can't I learn all day?" or even worse why do women think that they can be Rabbis?

This weeks sedra gives women plenty to be proud of. They were able to use their talents and helped build the mishkon!

The pasuk (35:25) says that all the talented women spun the wool for the Mishkan. The pasuk also points out that all the work for the Mishkan was done by Nidiv Lev, generous volunteers. The Chasam Sofer asks, since a woman's earnings belong to her husband (gemora kesubos) how can she volunteer her services if it doesn't belong to her?

He answers that the reason why Chazal decreed that a woman's earnings should go to her husband is because he supports her. In the Midbar where everyone lived from "Mannah" that fell from Shamayim, the men had no claim on the earnings of their wife. Therefore the women were free to use their talents for the task of building the Mishkan.

See women are useful!!!

"Where is G-d? Wherever He is allowed in." Kotzker Rebbe

Shabbos: The ultimate medicine!! by Benjamin Rose



We find that the mitzva of Shabbos is highly praised when we keep it. However when we don't, Hashem says (Yeshaya 1) "Chodsheichem UMoadaichem Sanah Nafsi" my heart despises your special days. Why the drastic emotions for this particular mitzva?

The Dubno Maggid explains with a Mashal. A very wealthy man had chronically sick children, so he hired a top doctor to permanently stay with them. He loved the doctor very much as he tended to the children and always came up with the perfect medicine to cure them. One day one of the children became deathly ill and although the doctor prepared medicine that would save his life the child refused to take it.

As the child's health deteriorated and he hovered near death the father became very angry with the doctor and couldn't hide his contempt for him. The doctor asked the father, "Why are you angry with me. It is your child's fault that refuses to take his medicine." The father answered that if there was no medicine, he could accept his son's fate but because the doctor prepared medicine that can save his life and he won't take it, when he sees the doctor and is reminded of this, his the pain is double.

The Dubno Maggid continues. Hashem gave us the Mitzva of Shabbos which is a medicine that cures our soul from all the ills from during the week. Hashem, our Father in Heaven, wants us, his dear children to take this medicine to restore our good health. If we don't use this

medicine to save our neshama Hashem looks at it in despair saying that they are worthless and they just add to his anguish.

Shabbos is the ultimate medicine. Make sure to follow the instructions.

Rabbi Y Richtman - Hearts of the Wise

Wise Hearted (Shmos 35:10) is the one prerequisite to be able to participate in the building of the Mishkan. **R'Chaim Shmulevitz** asks, Wisdom is in the mind not the heart. The heart is the source of our desires not our wisdom. Why does the Torah associate wisdom with the heart? In addition, one may ask: How did anyone have the wisdom or the skill to build the Mishkan? For the last 210 years the Jewish were involved in back breaking labour.



The answer is that all that is needed comes from ratzon, a yearning, to be involved in building the Mishkan. If a person has ratzon, then the wisdom will be granted to him. Hence the pasuk says you need to have desire in your heart, and then you will get the wisdom. How does one having a yearning for something make him privy to this wisdom?

The word ratzon- **רצון** is the same letters as tzinur- **צנור** which means pipeline. When one aligns his yearning to the will of Hashem, then he will receive the help from Hashem which is needed to accomplish this goal.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld - A Man of Principle

Undergoing a rigorous program which eventually led to the top two candidates receiving reputable positions as top-paid judges, tireless hours of studying and apprenticeship were expended by a select group of university students. Included amongst them was a religious Jew. Over time, numerous students had been weeded out of the program in the face of their counterpart colleagues, and by now only six students remained, this Jewish man included.

With the final interview just days away, the pressure could be felt. Preparing for what would become a life-changing meeting, this religious Jew readied himself as best as he could. He was set on impressing the interviewers and making a good argument as to why he would best fit the role of an honourable judge.



However, he faced one dilemma: should he wear his yarmulke to the interview or not? Unsure if wearing a head covering would be to his betterment or detriment, he wavered in his decision. Going back and forth in his mind as to what he should do, he remained unsure.

Finally, the fateful day arrived. Putting himself together, he entered inside the building where his interview was to be held. Remembering his inner debate as to whether he should go through with wearing a yarmulke or not, he began removing it from his head and putting it back on several times. "Yarmulke on, yarmulke off, yarmulke on, yarmulke off…" were the words racing through his mind. Already anxious about the interview, the fact that he was uncertain what to do with his yarmulke only added to the uneasiness.

But then he finally decided. He was going to wear it and not be deterred by the potential consequences. Going through with the

interview, by its conclusion, he felt he had done very well. And indeed, he had. But the interviewers had one thing to tell him.

"We have looked through your credentials and previous work, and see a stunning resume. We don't see any reason not to accept you for the position. However, there is one issue which we noticed that particularly caught our attention.

"We have cameras located all throughout our building for security purposes. We observed that as you were walking inside on your way towards the interview, you frequently took off and put on your head covering. We then realized that as a religious Jew, you were most likely wavering back and forth as to whether you should or should not wear your head covering. "But that, sir, is the problem. As a judge, one of the most important qualities is principle. Whether you decided to wear your head covering or not is not of concern to us as much as your lack of deliberation and confidence in who you are as a person. You must be someone who strictly adheres to what you believe to be true and unwaveringly stick to it. As a judge, when you realize what is just and pronounce a decision, you must be sure of yourself. There is no room for doubts or questions. We are very sorry sir, but on this account, we cannot accept you."

One of the most important qualities we can ingrain within ourselves is being confident and comfortable with who we are as a person. Oftentimes, we question if people will respect and appreciate how we present ourselves, our value system and our self-worth. But then sometimes we learn that, indeed, others would have found much merit in us keeping true to our inner selves. We need not vacillate when it comes to standing firm and dedicated to our life principles.

A person should not let a single day pass by without articulating at least once – "I love You Hashem." ~ R' Avigdor Miller Zt'l

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



The parashah begins with the words **וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, ***"Moshe gathered the entire community of Bnei Yisrael"*** **וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה׳ לַעֲשֹׂת אֹתָם**:***"and he told them, 'This is what Hashem commanded you to do…'"*** (Vayakhel 35:1).

Tzaddikim explained this passuk figuratively, that Moshe gathered the nation and told them "Hashem commanded you to gather," because it's a wonderful thing when Jewish people come together peacefully and with brotherly love, to serve Hashem as one entity.

ויקהל is gematriya **מקוה**, implying that when Yidden get together, they become pure, like someone who immersed in a mikveh. **The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zt'l** teaches: **רחץ** (purifying in a mikveh) is gematriya **צבור**, community, because being part of a loving and peaceful community purifies like a mikveh. **צבור** is also gematriya **רחמים**, compassion, because when Yidden get together, Hashem's compassion is aroused.

The Tanya writes, "I heard from my teachers that should an angel be among ten Yidden, even if they aren't speaking Torah, that angel will become terrified because of the presence of the Shechinah, until it disintegrates and ceases to exist.

The Shem MiShmuel writes b'shem **Rebbe Dovid of Lelov -**"Where there are ten Yidden, even an angel will melt from fear, because every place where there's ten Yidden, the Shechinah is present."

The Kiyor



All utensils of the Mishkan have a shiur, a size, how high and how wide they should be. The exception was the kiyor, the water basin, made from mirrors. That didn't have a shiur. Each mirror that was donated was used to make the kiyor, because the mirrors were especially precious to Hashem. As Rashi (38:8) writes, "Moshe didn't want to use [the mirrors] because they are used for the yetzer hara. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him to accept them. ***'They are more precious to me than anything else.'"***

Why were they so precious? The **Ramban and Ibn Ezra** explain that it's because the women altruistically donated these mirrors. The Ramban writes, "These women were serving Hashem. They abandoned the pleasures of this world and gave their mirrors away as a donation. Every day they came to the entrance of Ohel Moed to pray and to hear the mitzvos."

The Ibn Ezra writes, "Because it is the way of all women to beautify themselves, to look at a copper or glass mirror every morning, to fix the **פאר**, decoration, on their heads… There were among the Jewish women who served Hashem, who turned away from the pleasures of this world, and they gave their mirrors away as a donation…"

Reb Avraham ben HaRambam writes that the women threw stones at their mirrors to break it, and then they donated the pieces to Moshe to build the Mishkan.

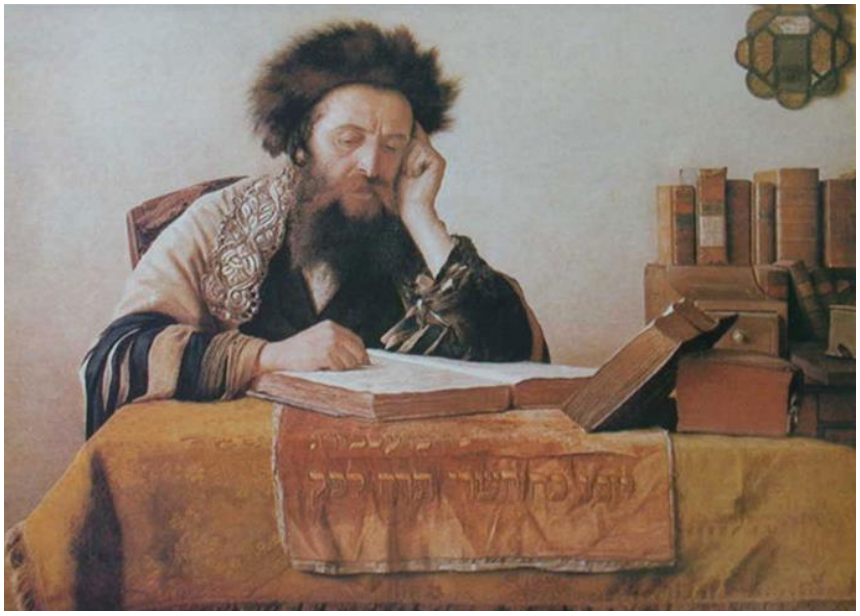
Only Three Coins From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



Boruch was in trouble. His daughter was twenty-five, getting older every day and he had no dowry to offer a prospective groom. In fact, he, as all the Jews in the area, barely had enough to live on.

And it was all because of the cruel *Poritz* (Landowner), who not only charged ridiculously high rent but also regularly imposed bizarre fines and taxes on the Jews to cover his lavish lifestyle and gambling debts. - To top it all off, one day a matchmaker came up with a good suggestion for his daughter!!

Indeed, it was a good suggestion, but all poor Boruch had to offer were debts! And the 'suggestion' himself was in the same economic bracket.



With no alternative Boruch set out by foot to see the great tzadik (holy Jew) **Rebbe Elimelich of Lizhensk** [One of the foremost pupils of the Magid of Mezeritch, the successor of the Baal Shem Tov] for help.

Two days later he was standing before the *tzadik* humbly pouring out his heart. The Rebbe heard the story and, smiling with assurance, told him that there was nothing to worry about. He then took three ten-kopek coins from his desk drawer and put them on

the table before Boruch as if to say, 'Here's what you've been waiting for'!

Boruch looked at the coins and almost began to cry from confusion. It made no sense. Thirty kopeks was close to nothing. There was no possibility that Rebbe misunderstood what he said. But thirty kopeks? A wedding with one musician costs at least ten thousand kopeks (1000 rubles]. What could he possibly do with thirty kopeks?! But, reminding himself that the Rebbe certainly knew what he was doing and hoping that the Rebbe didn't notice his dismay, he took the coins as though they were worth millions, forced a smile and a thank you, and tried his best to look grateful as he backed out of the room. Trotting slowly on the road towards home, he couldn't help thinking negative thoughts. What would he tell his wife and daughter? What would he say to his friends? To the groom? The groom's family? The matchmaker? This was the end--no one can make a wedding with thirty kopeks!

As he was leaving the city boundary, disillusioned and depressed, he heard someone yelling "Stop! Stop!" in the distance from behind him. He turned and saw one of the Rebbe's chasidim running after him waving his arms.

'Aha!' he thought to himself. "The Rebbe had been testing me! He wanted to see how I would react. What a fool I was for doubting! For sure he has now sent the rest of the money!" The chasid arrived, still huffing and puffing as he began to speak.

"The Rebbe sent me to say that he wants you to give back one of the coins. He said he gave you too much." Boruch was too stunned to say a word. He mechanically took one of the three coins from his pocket and handed it over. The chasid put it in his own pocket and then with a brisk 'Thank you, have a good journey,' hurried back to the city, leaving the perplexed Boruch alone to resume his trip--ten kopeks poorer. Now he was even more confused. And he worried that his bad thoughts would slowly drive him insane! But then a

famous chasidic saying popped into his mind: "Think good and it will be good."

An hour later, trying to keep positive, he saw up the road a group of three young ruffians huddled over a bonfire off to a side. "*Oy*!" he thought to himself. "This means trouble." But this time, instead of cowering as usual, he remembered his resolution, and picturing his Rebbe's face, he stood straight, smiling.

When the gentiles noticed him, they stood up and approached. One of them held up a leather bag. "Hello there, Jew! Want to buy a good purse?"

He shook their hands, took the bag and had a look. It was truly a fine piece of work, well sewn with golden inlays. He opened it to have a look at the lining, and lo, there was a bunch of notes of large denominations in German currency! He counted. There were twenty! A fortune! The peasant boys must not have had any idea what they were, but he recognized them.

"Sure, you can have the pictures too." They said. "Just give us thirty Kopeks and it's all yours."

Boruch almost fainted! Thirty kopeks? Why that is exactly what the Rebbe had given him at first! But now, "Oh, no! All I have is twenty!" he thought to himself and began to get depressed and confused again, as always. But the two coins in his pocket reminded him to be positive. He remained calm, closed his eyes and prayed for an idea. And suddenly he had it!"

"Listen fellows. You know what?" he heard himself say confidently, "I don't have enough for the bag. But I'll give you twenty kopeks for the pictures."

The boys looked at each other, trying to hide their glee. What a fool! Twenty kopeks for paper? Now they could sell the purse twice!

They took the coins, shook his hand again and let him take the paper pictures, while they gladly held on to the purse.

As soon as Boruch was out of their sight, he took out the bills and counted. Twenty bills, each worth the equivalent of five thousand kopeks. He was rich beyond imagination! He and his daughter's marriage were saved. What a miracle! But when he arrived home his wife, although overjoyed, reminded him that he couldn't take the money until he was sure it was ownerless.

So a few days later he returned to Lizhensk, first to find out if anyone there who knew to whom the purse belonged, and if not, to give the Rebbe a big donation and invite him to his daughter's wedding. But before he reached the Rebbe's house he felt someone staring at him. He turned to look and it was one of those gentile boys that had sold him the 'pictures', but now he was bandaged and beaten. Reb Boruch nodded and the boy began to talk.

"Hello again, Jew. You're the one we met with the purse, right? Well you'll never guess what happened. As soon as you left we got into an argument about how to divide the coins and the purse--you know, who gets what. Well, somehow the purse fell into the fire and one corner burned off. So we just left it there to finish burning. Who would buy a singed purse?

"Then, about five minutes later this huge carriage comes storming up from the direction of the city, stops where we are, and who gets out but that devil the *Poritz*. He was screaming about his missing purse.

"Well, when he saw the remains there in the fire he started cursing, jumping around and screaming at us like a mad man. All for a stupid purse! He began beating us with his cane and ordered his servants to do the same. What a maniac! For a lousy purse? And he's supposed to be a rich man!

"Then he jumped into his carriage and drove back to where he came from. Lucky you that you didn't buy the purse, and that he didn't continue straight, in your direction. If he would have seen you he

probably would have killed you. He hates you Jews. He almost killed us!"

Suddenly Boruch understood. If he would have had the third ten-kopek coin to buy the purse, the *Poritz* would have continued down the road, found him with the purse and maybe even killed him. Now, it was clear that the *Poritz* gave up all hope of recovering the money, thus relinquishing ownership. The money was his to keep!

The twenty kopeks the Rebbe gave Boruch was just enough money to make him rich and to keep him safe and change forever his attitude about seeming bad luck.

A- For Effort



The **נשיאים** brought the precious stones for the choshen as a donation. The Gemara in Yoma (75a) says that the stones were carried by the clouds, and they came through a nes. The Or Hachaim (in parshas Terumah) says that the items that were donated to the Mishkan were listed from most valuable to least valuable: (25:3-4) gold, silver, bronze, and then the different typed of threads. However, if these stones were more precious than anything listed previously, why are they are not listed first?

Since these stones fell from the clouds and it took no effort for the **נשיאים** to gather them, they are no longer so important. Only things that one has to work for our considered important.

Don't cheat - keep Shabbos!- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה׳ For six days you shall do work, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem (35:2)

The Chofetz Chaim once asked why this verse, which describes Shabbos, needed to begin with the words "For six days you shall do work", why not just begin with "The seventh day shall be holy for you"?

He answered that this verse teaches us that the success of our six days of work is solely dependent on the extent to which we make Shabbos a holy day of complete rest. Therefore, explained the Chofetz Chaim, if one desecrates the Shabbos, his work during the week will not succeed.

The Chofetz Chaim once illustrated this lesson with the following analogy:

There was once a simple farmer who arranged to sell all of his wheat to a wholesaler. Since there were so many stalks, the wholesaler told the farmer that he would make things easier and place a penny in a bowl every time a new bundle was loaded onto his cart. At the end of the harvest, the wholesaler would count each penny and exchange them for the full price of the bundle. As the days went on, and the wholesaler's bowl steadily filled with pennies, the farmer could not take his eyes off the pile of coins that faced him every time he placed wheat into the wholesaler's cart. One day, the farmer could not contain himself any longer and when the wholesaler's back was turned for a moment, he reached his hand into

the bowl and grabbed a handful of pennies, elated at the small fortune he had acquired.

With this analogy, the Chofetz Chaim shows that even though this foolish farmer thought that he was gaining, he was really only cheating himself. So too, someone who works on Shabbos will ultimately see no gain. He may be elated at the small fortune that he has acquired, but in the long run, it will not be worth anything compared to what he could have received.

More Thoughts that Count for Parashat Vayakhel

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ On the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day (35:2)

Rabbi Bunim once said: There is no other mitzva as all-encompassing as that of sukka. A person actually enters the mitzva with his whole body, his clothes, and even his shoes.

Rabbi Shlomo Leib of Lentashna responded: The mitzva of Shabbat is even greater. One need not lift a finger to bring it on; Shabbat arrives by itself. And the holiness of Shabbat totally encompasses everyone and everything for more than 24 hours.

וְכָל־חֲכַם־לֵב בָּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וְיַעֲשׂוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ All the wise-hearted among you shall come and make all that G-d has commanded. (35:10)

When a person decides to do a mitzva, it is preferable to do it immediately, as the opportunity presents itself, and not procrastinate. Doing a mitzva with diligence and alacrity prevents all kinds of obstacles from arising to prevent the performance of the mitzva at a later time. That is why the verse says, "All the wise-hearted among you shall come"--one who is truly wise--"shall come"--without delay. *(HaDrash Vehaiyun)*

Mirror Mirror… Written by Yehuda Katz

וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַכִּיּוֹר נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת כַּנּוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת בְּמַרְאֹת הַצֹּבְאֹת ***He made the Laver of copper, and its base copper,from the mirrors of the legions…….(38:8)*** (The Laver was a copper basin from which the priests were required to wash their hands and feet before the service)



The Rabbis (zecher Labrocha) learn that the copper used to make the Laver was from the mirrors the woman used to adorn themselves in order to encourage their enslaved husbands to procreate. Even these the woman did not withhold from the Mishkan. G-d told Moishe to accept these mirrors because in G-ds eyes they are more precious than anything else donated. (Refer to Rashi)

We can learn a very valuable lesson from these copper mirrors…. The way a person looks at an object and uses an object has the ability to transform it from being ordinary household objects to holy spiritually infused objects.

All objects can be used for good or chos vesholom evil, depending upon the persons perspective. A person must develop an Eyin Tov" (a beneficial eye or perspective) to be able to look at any object and see the potential good inherent in it. The Jewish woman understood that through these mirrors a nation will be born and multiplied. By developing a "good eye", it will perhaps help us look at the world differently, and thus bring more holiness into our lives.

The Conservative Cantor's Matzos By Y Grossberger

In the early days of Internet, I subscribed to an online forum dedicated to halachic discussions. The members of this forum came from a wide spectrum of Judaism, and debates often raged over different halachic and Torah issues.

One contributor to this exchange was a Conservative cantor from Nevada who quickly became known for his outspokenness and opinionated liberal views. On one occasion, he posted an article he had written about Jewish marriage, which was not exactly according to halacha.

I felt compelled to reply and set the record straight. The cantor responded to my rebuttal, sparking a candid and heated debate. Eventually, this led to a general discussion of other topics concerning Torah and Judaism, as well as personal conversations about our families.

Around Pesach time, the conversation turned to matza, and I asked my friend how he had conducted his seder. He replied, "Well, since the point is to remember the story of the Exodus, I actually eat whatever I can get a hold of to symbolize the matza."

He did not seem concerned that the matza be kosher for Pesach. Despite his objections, I sent him a box of shmura matza for the seder. After Pesach, I got an e-mail from my friend who, in typical fashion, complained that all the matzos had come broken and were also pretty tasteless.

Nevertheless, the following year he contacted me and requested that I again send him matza. This began an unlikely tradition that continued for many years. Notwithstanding all of his rejections and criticism of Orthodox values, he used the matza every year and came to look forward to it. He even showed his appreciation by sending me flowers.

This man had a daughter who had rebelled against the family values she had been brought up with, and, as a student of the University of California at Berkeley, became deeply immersed in the unhealthy culture that was popular at the time. She had also rejected even the limited Jewish values she had seen at home.

Her parents were very worried about her, and she had not been home for a number of years, not even for the holidays. Eventually, this girl's restlessness and searching spirit drew her to Israel where she ended up in a girls seminary for baalei teshuva in Jerusalem.

After a few months of study, she felt it was time for her to make a final decision: She could either stay in the seminary adopting a frum lifestyle, or she could leave it behind and return home and continue soul searching. She decided she needed a break to think things over. She was comfortable with what she had been taught but was not sure she had the conviction and personal strength to make such a drastic lifestyle change.

It was now shortly before Pesach. Her madricha in Israel, although unhappy to see her go, asked her to at least take home the basic necessities for Pesach that she might not have at home, primarily matza. She declined and said, "Why should I bother? If G-d wants me to have matza, He will send me matza."

Apprehensively, she departed and flew home to her parents planning to spend time reflecting on her options at this critical junction of her life. She hoped that somehow she would be guided into making the right choice.

To her utter bewilderment, the first thing she noticed as she walked into her home was a box of shmura matza sitting on the dining room table. She could not believe her eyes. Her own ultimatum had been fulfilled:

"If G-d wants me to have matza, He will send me matza," and lo and behold, there it was!

Having not been home for Pesach in a number of years, she was absolutely astounded that her family had a box of authentic shmura matza waiting for her! The hashgacha protis, the Divine providence, was undeniable, and she strongly felt that Hashem was answering her challenge and showing that He cared about her intimately.



She had no idea how the matza got to her home, and at that point, she really didn't care; all she could think about was the sign that Hashem had sent her.

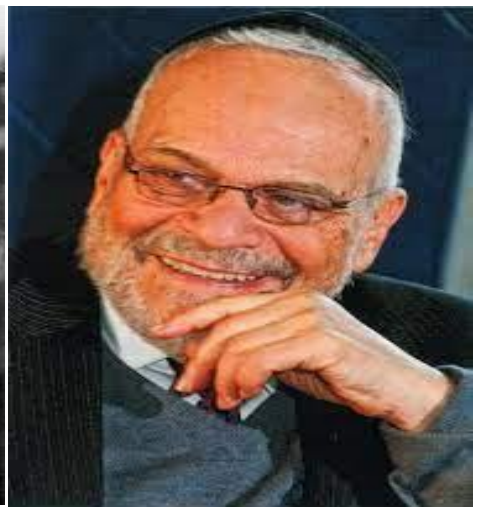
After Pesach, she immediately returned to Jerusalem to complete her studies and to fully embrace Yiddishkeit with all her heart and soul. Today, this girl is the mother of a beautiful family and works in kiruv with her husband, a rabbi, teaching other Jews about Yiddishkeit.

Many people had told me that I was wasting my time and money sending these matzos to a Conservative cantor. For my part, I simply felt that a Jew should have matza for the seder, not a chometzdik substitute. What I did not know was that I was not only sending matza for this cantor; I was sending it for his daughter and eventually grandchildren, as well.

The lesson I learned from this is that we just have to do our small part and not give up. Hashem will take care of the rest. You never know the effect of your actions. Our mission is to do, and Hashem will accomplish!

What Are You Going to Do For the Children of Israel?





Rabbi Yitzchak Halevi Herzog

Rabbi Berel Wein

A modern-day example of a great person inspiring one to greatness was recorded by **Rabbi Paysach Krohn** a few years ago when he interviewed **Rabbi Berel Wein**.

It was 1946, and **Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog, O"BM**, Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael was visiting Chicago. The building was packed, standing room only, as the Rav first gave a Torah class and then addressed the gathering which consisted of lay people, Torah scholars and Yeshivah students.

After concluding his class, Rav Herzog turned to the Yeshivah students and addressed them – exclusively. "I have just returned from Rome," he began, "where I met with Pope Pius. I had with me the names of 10,000 boys and girls whose parents had placed them in Catholic institutions or with families for safekeeping during the terrible war.

"The parents knew that they would probably not survive; their hope was for their children. I said to the Pope, 'Give me back these children! These are our children! You are well aware why they were given to you. Now we ask you to return them to us – where they belong.'

"The Pope said, 'I cannot give you even one child.'

"I pleaded with him, but he refused to budge. 'We have a rule,' he said, 'that once a child is baptized, it cannot be revoked. He cannot

leave for another religion. All of these children were baptized. They are now ours!'

"I pleaded and I begged, but he refused to listen to my cries."

Suddenly, Rav Herzog began to weep incessantly, unable to stop. He put his head on the lectern and wept mournfully. Everyone in the shul was silent, almost afraid to say anything.

When the Rav raised his head, his face tear-stricken and red, he looked like a lion. He looked at us the students and called out, "I cannot do anything for those 10,000 children, but what are you going to do for the children of Klal Yisrael (the Jewish children)? It is your responsibility to help raise the future of our people! What are you prepared to do about it? Are you listening? Will you remember what I am asking of you?"

He repeated himself, "What are you going to do for the children of Klal Yisrael?" When the Rav finished the students all lined up to shake his hand. "When he took my hand," Rabbi Berel Wein, who was present, said, "he looked me straight in the eye and asked, 'Are you going to forget what I said? Will you remember what I said? What are you going to do for the children of Klal Yisrael?"

Rabbi Wein concluded, "Every time I am tired, every time that I am about to put down my pen – I am haunted by those words: 'What are you going to do for the children of Klal Yisrael?'"

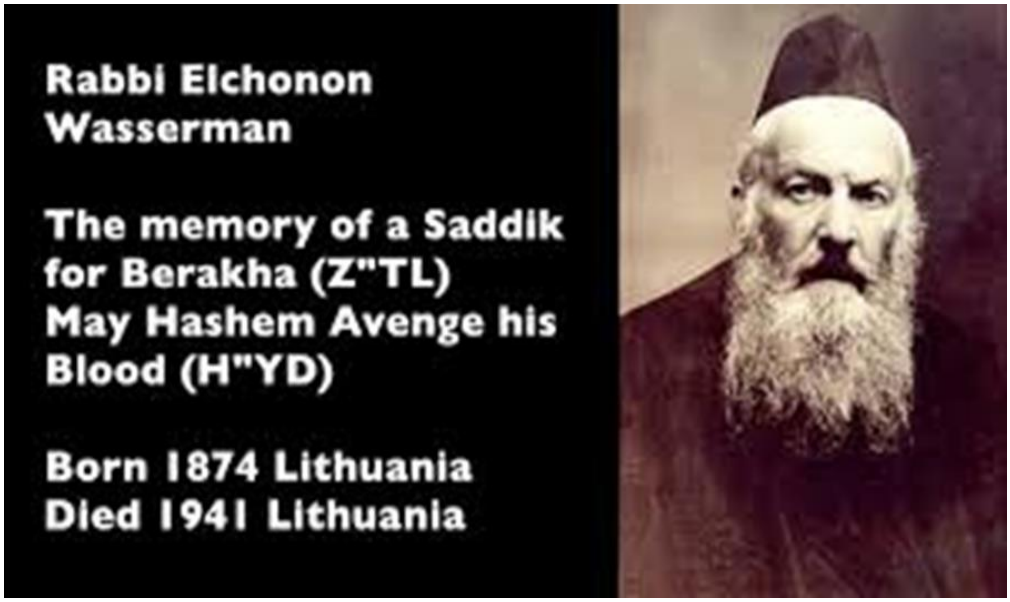
Emuna in Every Situation

A Jew does not ask, "Why is this happening?"

A Jew asks, "What does Hashem want from me now?"

~ R' Elya Boruch Finkel zt"l.

Why the Chofetz Chaim Celebrated His Birthday



Someone once told **HaRav Elchanan Wasserman, Zt"l H'yd**, that **the Chofetz Chaim** had just celebrated his 70th birthday. Rav Elchanan couldn't believe that his modest Rebbi would ever celebrate or allow anybody else to celebrate his birthday.

Research of the matter revealed that there was indeed a celebration for the 70th birthday of the **Chofetz Chaim**, however for a different reason. The Chofetz Chaim explained that all his life he was worried that he would be niftar young, despite how careful he was with Shemiras HaLashon. Since he spent his whole life advocating the zechus of Arichus Yomim for being careful with Shemiras HaLashon, an early petirah would cause a great Chilul Hashem.

For this reason, he celebrated his 70th birthday, since past this age he felt his death would not be a cause for a Chilul Hashem. This is the greatness of our great Gedolim--who only celebrate Kavod Shomayim.

"The journey of life is a chance to build a relationship with Hashem. Every step we take, every descision we make, brings us closer to Him." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

Why the Rabbi Ate the Whole Pot of *Cholent* Himself By Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin



Reb Avigdor Halberstam, the brother of Reb Chaim of Zanz, was once the honored Shabbos guest of one of the prominent citizens of some township. The custom in those parts was that the householder would pass the whole pot of *cholent* to his distinguished guest, who would be asked—by way of compliment, as if he were the host—to apportion the steaming stew into the plates of the members of the family.

As the *cholent* was passed to him, Reb Avigdor caught a whiff of it, tasted it, then tasted it again, and again—until bit by bit he finished it all, leaving nothing for the others at the table. Then he asked: "Is there perhaps a little more *cholent*?" And this, too, he finished, down to the last spoonful.



The host and his family were dumbfounded—but it was known that *tzaddikim* see a spiritual mission in eating, revealing the sparks of sanctity that are hidden in the things of This World. And who would be so bold as to pretend to guess at the hidden things that *tzaddikim* relish…?

But some of his disciples were present, and in all the time they had known him they had never observed him serving his Maker in *this* manner. So they gathered up the courage and after some time asked him to enlighten them as to the hidden things that he had relished in that *cholent*.

"I am sure I can trust you with the explanation," he said. "By mistake, the maid in that household flavored the *cholent* with kerosene instead of vinegar. I could smell it and taste it. I gathered that if our host and hostess would find out, the defenseless girl would never hear the end of it and possibly lose her job as well—and she's a penniless orphan, poor thing. So I ate up the *cholent* and let them think of me whatever they please. Why should an orphaned waif have to suffer abuse?"

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-*Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

On this Shabbos, parshas **ויקהל-פקודי** we are going to be bentching the Chodosh Nissan – the month of geulah. And it leads us to think about many of the events that are happening now. If you look at this weeks parsha, after the completion of the building of the Mishkan, the workers could not erect the Mishkan. It was tremendously heavy, and they just couldn't physically lift it up.

Moishe Rabeinu, up until now, did not have a share in the actual creation of the Mishkan. The Riboino Shel Olam wanted him to have the honour of its assembly and erection. Hashem told Moishe, "attempt, try to put it up. You are not going to manage to carry this out. It will stand on its own, but at least try so that it will appear to on-lookers that you were the one who erected it."

If you think about it, it is very interesting. Just like all the builders of the Miskan were rewarded for all of their work, Moishe Rabeinu was also rewarded for the actual *hakomas HaMishkan* – erection of the Mishkan.

The question is, why? Moishe Rabeinu didn't even do anything. The Riboino Shel Olam did it. All Hashem told him to do was - to try. In reality, if we think about it, it is such a simple idea. All of us are only able to perform any mitzva, because the Riboino Shel Olam enables us to do so. If He wants us to daven with a minyan, we will daven with a minyan, if He wants us to go to the *beis hamedrash* to learn, then we will do so. The Riboino Shel Olam is constantly sustaining the world and every single human being in it. But without *siyata dishmaya*, we wouldn't be able to do anything.

The only difference in the case of the erection of the Mishkan, was that it was an open miracle. However, every mitzva that we do, is also an open miracle. But sometimes we don't realise it. And the reward that we receive, is not because of the result, but because of the effort that we make. Moishe Rabeinu made the effort, and he was rewarded as though he did it himself.



This is an unbelievable thing, because most of us around the world are going into this Shabbos and are in the same boat. We don't understand the situation that we are in. Most of us are going to stay at home all day and daven learn and eat at home on our own with our families. We have to understand and realise, that The Ribonoi Shel Olam put us in this situation for a purpose. Everything is *hashgocho pratis* - everything comes for a reason.

We don't like change. It reminds me of a guy who opens up his sandwiches for lunch, at one o'clock every day when he goes to work, and he says, "oh no, peanut butter again!" And this goes on, day in, day out. His co-workers see this, and say, "why don't you ask your

wife to change what she puts in your sandwich?" He replies, "you don't understand, it's not going to help – because I make my own sandwiches."

The whole world is always to blame, but why should I change?

We have a Shabbos right now, that every single one of us can accomplish the *Rotzon hashem*. Yes, we want things to be different and the world to be a different place and things to change. But stop! It is all about us. Every single one of us can accomplish and be *mekayem* what the Riboino Shel Olam wants from us. And yes, to daven at home is more difficult, and we don't have the same *kavana*. But the question is, are we changing? Here is our opportunity in the month of Nissan – the month of *geula*, as Chazal promised that this could be the month. We are at the stage, where the Riboino Shel Olam is giving us every opportunity by taking away all our distractions. Going out of the house, meeting up with other people. No, it is about what can you do in your home. Your home is you. You have to change.

This is what I think the message is here. We should be zoche, b'ezras Hashem to come out of this situation and that the Riboino Shel Olam will give us everything that we need and simcha and health in our lives.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

From our Sages

קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָה ***Take from yourselves an offering***. (35:5) The words "from yourselves" show one should not say he will wait until he is rich to give his donation. Rather, he should take from what G-d has given him now. (**Tz'enah Ur'enah**)

The Girl Who Didn't Want to Sell on Shabbos



Rav Yitzcak Zev Soloveitchik tells a story of a girl that grew up secular and decided to become religious. However, her parents were against this lifestyle change and wanted her to act as they did, so she quietly and secretly kept the Torah as best as she could. Her parents owned a housewares store and one Friday, they told their daughter that they had to go out of town for a day and wanted her to open the store on Saturday. Not wanting to cause conflict, she didn't say anything and her parents left.

Right before Shabbos, she went to the store and prepared whatever she could so that she could avoid desecrating Shabbos. She turned on the lights and set up the store for the next day before Shabbos arrived. On Shabbos, she walked to the store and sat there with her siddur, davening that no one would come in so that she could keep Shabbos.

For most of the day her prayers worked, and there were no customers. She didn't know how she would explain the empty register to her parents, as they surely wouldn't believe that no one came in all day. Then, sometime before the end of Shabbos, a man came in, looked around, and found a five dollar item that he liked. He asked her the price, but she, not wanting to conduct business on Shabbos, told him it was five hundred dollars so that he would leave.

The man was incredulous and said, "How can this cheap item be five hundred dollars?" She said to him, "If you don't want to buy it, you don't have to." However, the man really wanted it and tried to get her to lower the price, but she wouldn't budge. He left and returned a few times, trying to negotiate the price, but the girl stood strong.

She said, "If you wait a little, my parents will soon be back and you can deal with them", but the man wouldn't give up. She kept trying to push him off, and the man kept negotiating, until finally, the man agreed to her price. Meanwhile, the girl noticed that Shabbos had ended.

She said, "I can sell it to you now, but only at the five-dollar price. The reason I asked for such an exorbitant amount was because I didn't want to sell it on Shabbos. Now that Shabbos is over, I can sell it to you at the regular price."

The man however said, "I can't do that. Once I said I would pay a price, I have to pay it", and he put five hundred dollars on the counter, took his item and left. The girl praised and thanked Hashem! She didn't have to desecrate the Shabbos, and she made a tremendous profit!

When she told her parents what happened, they understood that by her keeping Shabbos, she actually made more money than they would earn in a month. They too saw the beauty of Shabbos and that they wouldn't lose out, and decided to start keeping Shabbos also! ("*Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights" compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

"The journey of life is not always clear, but Hashem is the lighthouse that guides us through the storm. With faith in Him, we can navigate any challenge." – Rabbi Noach Weinberg

Divrei Torah Ba'er Heitev

Rav Yisroel Meir Kagan, The Chofetz Chaim ZY"A, was a great Tzaddik and Goan. It was said about two great Tzadikim of that generation; The Tzidkus of the Chofetz Chaim hid his Gaonus, while the Gaonus of **Reb Chaim Brisker ZY"A** hid his Tzidkus.

Once the Chofetz Chaim was on a train and his hand was at the open window. As the train moved the glove on the hand of the Chofetz Chaim fell out of the window. The Chofetz Chaim immediately tossed the glove of his other hand, and he exclaimed as follows: One day someone will pass the train tracks and find the glove that fell. If only one glove was there, what can one do with a single glove- therefore I quickly tossed the second glove, so the finder shall have a pair of gloves! When Tzaddikim do Chessed, it is fully done.

The Beis Halevi ZY"A, who was Rov in Brisk was once asked before Pesach the following question by a resident of his city. "May one use milk for the Arboh Kosos that one is obligated to drink at the Seder on Pesach night?" The Beis Halevy immediately gave the fellow money for wine and meat etc., explaining, "if you want to use milk for Arboh Kosos, obviously you don't have money for Fleish, (and other needs for Pesach).

A Yungerman once went to the Debreciner Rov **Rav Moshe Stern ZY"A**, before Kadeish on Pesach night, to ask a Sheiloh. The Rov was accompanied by many family guests, he nevertheless asked his question in the stature of time but felt badly for doing so. As the Yungerman headed to leave, the Debreciner Rov called him over and told him, "You should never feel uncomfortable to ask a Sheilloh."

Everyone's Rebbe - The Debrecener Rav wasn't only the rav of his kehillah; he became the posek for every Yid in Boro Park and beyond. His magnetic personality attracted people from all sectors — from Oberlanders to Litvish from chassidish to American-born.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – A Life Full Of Life



The Moon, Renewal and Nissan

In Birchas Hachodesh we say Hashem who redeemed our forefathers from slavery to freedom (**מעבדות לחרות**), may He redeem us soon. What connection does this have with the moon?

The moon symbolizes renewal. Indeed, the word **חדש** and **חידוש** share the same root. The Midrash tells us **יהודה** had 30 kings and princes come from him as is indicated by his name which yields a numerical value of 30. The 15th one was Shlomo Hamelech- the pinnacle. In his time there were no wars. Actually, **שלמה** is rooted in **שלמות** - completion and **שלום** - peace. Moreover, he is called **איש מנוחה** - man of rest. **מלכות בית דוד** is compared to the moon as it states **כירח יכון עולם** ; like the moon, it shall be established forever, since there are 30 days in a month just as there were kings and princes. The moon is complete on the 15th of the month and Shlomo was the 15th. Just as from the 15th of the month the moon wanes, likewise from Shlomo on, it waned down. We are similar to the moon which disappears at the end of each month but returns and grows to its fullness. We suffer exile but always renew ourselves. Indeed, we say in **יעלה ויבא** on Rosh Chodesh- ...**וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך**

R' Chaim Shmulevitz once asked a holocaust survivor how he survived five years in the camps. He responded that when he looked at the moon he thought of renewal and said to himself the Jewish people will have a renewal and these circumstances will eventually change. With this we can explain why Birchas Hachodesh talks of

redemption since the moon represents renewal and as we say in Kiddush Levana ...**להתחדש כמותה** - to renew themselves like the moon. Therefore, **החודש הזה לכם** was specifically said in Mitzrayim- since we got revitalized there as we went **מעבדות לחרות**

The first Mitzva given to us was **החודש הזה לכם**. It is the **ראשית** - beginning, so it is given to us when we were a **ראשית** in becoming a nation. Moreover, this occurred on **ראש חדשים**, Nissan, the beginning of the months.

This Mitzva symbolizing renewal was given to us in Nissan- the month of renewal. The following are some connections between Nissan and renewal.

1) After a harsh winter which ends in Adar, plant life begins (after the seed rots) which is in Nissan- **חדש האביב** month of springtime. Nature blossoms and renews itself. Indeed, we say **ברכת אילנות** - Bracha on trees in Nissan.

2) The Gemara tells us in Nissan we were and will be redeemed. In a similar vein, it says that in Nissan the Beis Hamikdash will be built.

3) The Haftora on Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach deals with the revival of the **עצמות היבשות** - dry bones.

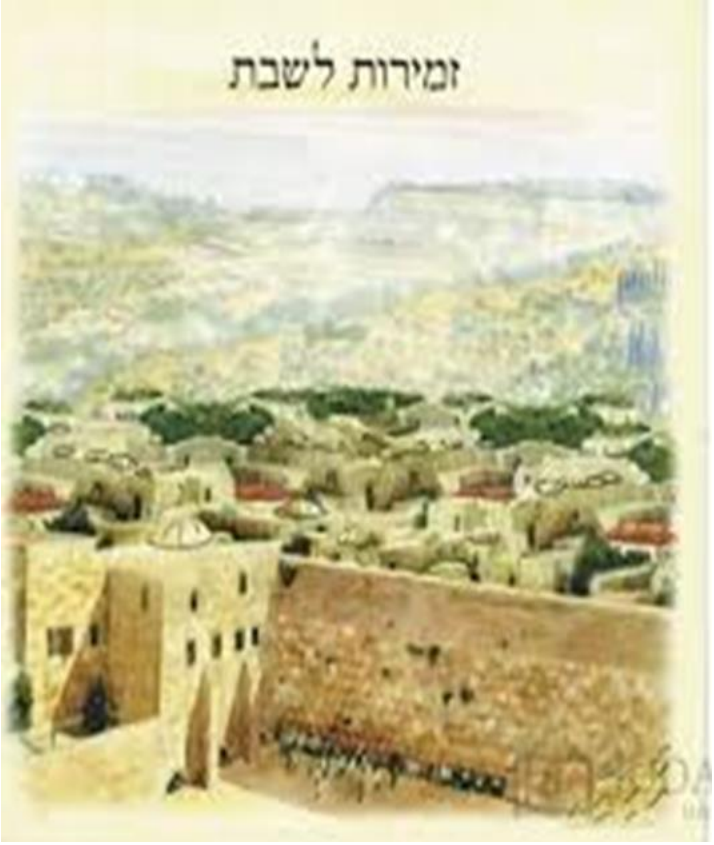
4) **The Tur** teaches us that Techias Hamasim will take place on Pesach.

5) If one didn't see a friend for 12 months he says **ברוך...מחי ה המתים** - (and Nissan is the 1st of the 12 months).

6) **The Beis Yisrael** tells us from the **Chidushai Harim** that in Nissan there is Hischadshus in one's Torah.

7) The 12 Shevatim correspond to the 12 months. Yehuda corresponds to Nissan. Moshiach- who brings renewal- comes from Yehuda. Let this Rosh Chodesh herald in a renewal and an end to all our Tzaros.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



Rebbe Mordechai Nadvorna *zt'l* said, "There's a *malach* that has a thousand tongues. When he sings, the music is outstanding. But Hashem has greater pleasure from a Yid when he puts his hand behind his ear and sings *zemiros* Friday night."

Although the *malachim* serve Hashem better than we can, but our *avodas Hashem* requires effort (for example, to sing, one has to consciously make an effort to put aside all one's worries and get involved in praising Hashem) and that is why it is way more precious to Hashem than the perfect *zemiros* of the *malachim*.

More Thoughts that Count for Parashat Vayakhel

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ On the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day (Ex. 35:2)

Rabbi Bunim once said: There is no other mitzva as all-encompassing as that of sukkah. A person actually enters the mitzva with his whole body, his clothes, and even his shoes.

Rabbi Shlomo Leib of Lentashna responded: The mitzva of Shabbat is even greater. One need not lift a finger to bring it on; Shabbat arrives by itself. And the holiness of Shabbat totally encompasses everyone and everything for more than 24 hours.

A Segulah for Parnassah

Many Yidden follow the custom, established by the **Kozhnitzer Magid *zt'l***, to say the following three stories on Shabbos HaChodesh as a *segulah* for *parnassah*, and specifically to have all their needs for Pesach:

Story #1



A precious ring was stolen from a king, and the king announced that anyone could help in the search, and the king will provide them with the money they need to search for the stolen ring. A poor Yid realized that this was his opportunity to get the money he badly needed to buy his yom *tov* needs. He told the king's secretary that he wants to devote himself to find the thief and that he needs money to search. The secretary gave him a bundle of money. The Yid used that money to buy matzos, wine, meat, and everything his family needed for *Pesach*.

A priest called Dayeinu, who was also a sworn anti- Semite, told the king, "The Yid isn't using the money for the search. A Jewish holiday is approaching, and he is undoubtedly going to use the king's money for his own needs. "He is guilty of two offenses," Dayeinu explained to the king. "He is stealing the king's money, and he also deserves to be punished for deceiving the king." The king replied that he wouldn't punish the Yid without evidence.

Dayeinu said, "On the night the Jews celebrate the Seder, we will go to this Yid's home, and you will see for yourself how your money is being spent." The night of the Seder arrived. The king and Dayeinu went to the Jewish quarter, and from a distance, the priest pointed out the illuminated house of the Yid. "The candles to

illuminate his home were bought with your money. Now, let's go inside to see the expensive foods he prepared…" The king said, "Before entering his home, I want to eavesdrop from outside the window."

At that time, the family was singing *Dayeinu*. The father recited each stanza, and the family answered loudly, "*Dayeinu*." The king told the priest, "You have it all wrong. The Yid is speaking with his family about who stole the ring. And they all agree that you, Dayeinu, stole the ring!"

Then the king shouted, "Soldiers! Quick! Arrest Dayeinu!" Dayeinu's home was searched, and the diamond ring was found. Dayeinu was hung; so shall all the enemies of Yisrael be lost forever. "And this Yid had all his Pesach needs in abundance."

Story #2

A *poritz* said to one of his Jewish tenants, "You are fortunate that I rent my tavern to you, so you can earn your livelihood from people who visit the tavern for a meal or a drink. What would you do without my help? Your family would all be hungry. You should thank me."

The Yid replied, "My *parnassah* comes from Hashem. Right now, it is coming via the tavern that you rent to me, but Hashem has other ways to support me. Therefore, my gratitude goes to Hashem alone. Hashem feeds the entire world, from the largest animals to the smallest creature, and He supports me as well."

The *poritz* replied, "I never saw anyone so ungrateful. I do so much for you, and I don't even receive a thank you. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll rent out the tavern to someone else. If it's Hashem who is supporting you, let's see if He can support you without the tavern!" This happened shortly before Pesach, and the Yid didn't know how he would have money for *yom tov*. But he trusted that Hashem would provide for him and his family.



The *poritz* had a pet monkey that was always by his side. The *poritz* would sit in his office counting gold coins, with the monkey right next to him, watching. As the *poritz* counted each gold coin, he would bite it to test if it was gold. The monkey thought he was eating the coins.

Once, when the *poritz* wasn't around, the monkey ate one gold coin after the other until the monkey died. The *poritz* was very upset when he heard that his monkey died because he loved his monkey dearly. He didn't know why it died. He told his servant, "Throw the dead monkey into the home of the Jew that used to run the tavern." This was to express his anger at the Yid, who didn't want to admit that the *poritz* was helping him with his *parnassah*.

The Yid heard something crash into his house and went to see what it was. He found the dead monkey on the ground, and near it were many gold coins. When the monkey was tossed into the Yid's home, its stomach split, and the gold coins spilled out. At the night of the Seder, the *poritz* said to his servants, "Let's go to the Yid's house. I want to see how he is faring. I'm certain he is sitting in the dark, eating almost nothing at all because I'm not helping him with his *parnassah* anymore." They were amazed to find the house well lit, and fish, meat, and all kinds of tasty foods on the table.

The *poritz* couldn't contain his curiosity. He knocked on the door and asked the Yid where he had the money to buy all of this. The Yid related the story that happened; a dead monkey came crashing through his window, and out of the monkey's belly fell many gold coins. Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent me this fortune, so I should have money for *yom tov*, and there's enough money left over for the rest

of the year." The *poritz* replied, "Now I know that you were correct. Hashem supports you and the entire world with His kindness."

Story #3



There was a very high tax on imported alcoholic beverages in Poland. A Yid was once bringing barrels of spirits into Poland, hoping that he could pass the border without declaring the spirits. But he was caught, and the barrels were confiscated. A date was scheduled for his trial. The Yid went to **Rebbe Elimlech of Lizhensk**, and expressed his worries regarding the upcoming court case. "You have nothing to worry about," the Rebbe told him. "Tell the court the barrels are filled with water." At the court case, he said, "Honourable Judge, I don't know why I'm on trial, and I don't understand why I'm being suspected of committing a crime I never committed. The barrels are filled with drinking water."

The judge was surprised to hear this. The barrels' contents were tested, and they saw that it was true; there was only water inside. They let the Yid take the barrels and continue his way. He returned to Rebbe Elimelech and said, "I was freed from imprisonment and from paying a significant fine, but now I have a great loss. I invested a lot of money to buy the spirits, and now there is nothing in the barrels other than water.

Rebbe Elimelech *zy" a* told him, "You have nothing to worry about. The barrels have spirits in them." The Yid sold the spirits and earned a lot of money. "He had all his needs for Pesach, in abundance." So

shall Hashem grant us *parnassah b'harchavah*, and we should merit seeing the materialization of the prophecy (*Michah* 7:15) "As you left Egypt, so shall I show you miracles," speedily in our days, amen.

Vechol Maaminim- Seven Hundred Brachos Each Week

ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה׳



Sefer Matamim Hachadash (Inyanei Shabbos 21) writes: One who is careful to make one hundred brachos a day merits to accumulate seven hundred brachos over the course of the seven days of the week. The name of the day of Shabbos alludes to this as **שבת** is an acronym for ברכות- **ש״ת** [700] that are completed on this day.

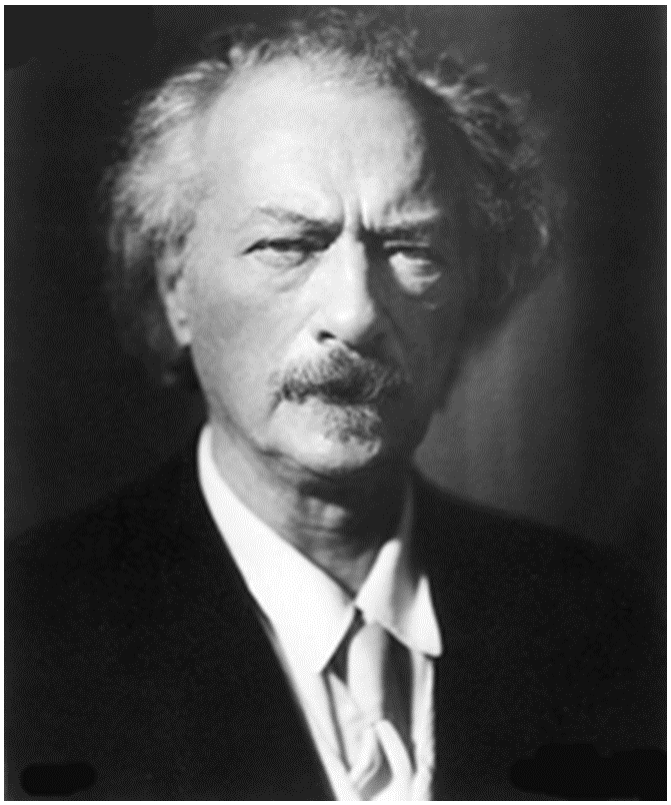
Harav Yitzchak Avraham Shlomo Mijalled of Baghdad, added that one can find an allusion to this in this passuk: **שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה - ימים** is numerically equivalent to 100. If you make meah (100) brachos on the six days of creation and on Shabbos, then **וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה׳** on Shabbos, which completes the week, you will have accrued **ש״ת ברכות**.

"בשבילי נברא העולם"

"Whatever you do is important in the eyes of Hashem, and those are the eyes that matter. Never make a mistake about it, you yourself are the purpose of creation. You are not one in a million – You're the only one." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

With the Help of the Maestro - Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ "Every man whose heart inspired him." (35:21)



Apart from being Poland's prime minister (1919), Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941) is one of the greatest pianists of the last two hundred years. A large part of his success comes from his tremendous stage presence and charisma.

In 1891 the pianist sets out on a tour of the United States, which brings him great acclaim. His name at once becomes synonymous with the highest level of piano virtuosity.

America becomes the place Paderewski tours most often (over 30 times in 50 years) and his second home. At one of his performances at the Metropolitan in New York City, there sits a lady named Sally Goldstein, together with her five-year-old son, Joey, neatly decked out in his tuxedo.

Sally wanted Joey to be a pianist, so she thought it worth the high price of a ticket in the stalls for Joey to hear the master. Sally catches sight of an old friend in the row behind them and starts to talk to her. Joey becomes a little impatient and so he gets up from his seat and wanders towards the front of the theater toward a door marked NO ENTRY.

Unable to read, Joey blithely saunters through the doorway. At that moment the lights started to dim. An expectant hush grips the audience. And out into the spotlights walks… Joey Goldstein! The

crowd starts to murmur, but Joey, seeing the beautiful large Steinway in the middle of the stage, toddles over to it. He hikes himself up on to the piano stool, gives a casual flip of the tails to his tux, and with tremendous aplomb begins his favorite piece, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." "Plink plonk plink plonk, plink plonk plonk."

The crowd becomes agitated — where is Paderewski? Just then the master comes on stage, goes straight to the piano, and, placing his two relatively enormous hands on either side of Joey's, he says quietly to the boy, "Young man, you're doing fine. Just keep going!"

And with this, Paderewski begins to interweave the most sublime harmonies and counterpoint into Joey's plinks and plonks. They play on together. The piece rises to a crescendo, and as they strike the final chord the audience rises to a standing ovation.

Paderewski leads Joey down to the front of the stage where they both bow deeply to the ecstatic applause of the audience.

"Every man whose heart inspired him." From where could slaves who had spent hundreds of years in crushing captivity find the artisanal skills to construct something as fine and sophisticated as the Mishkan?

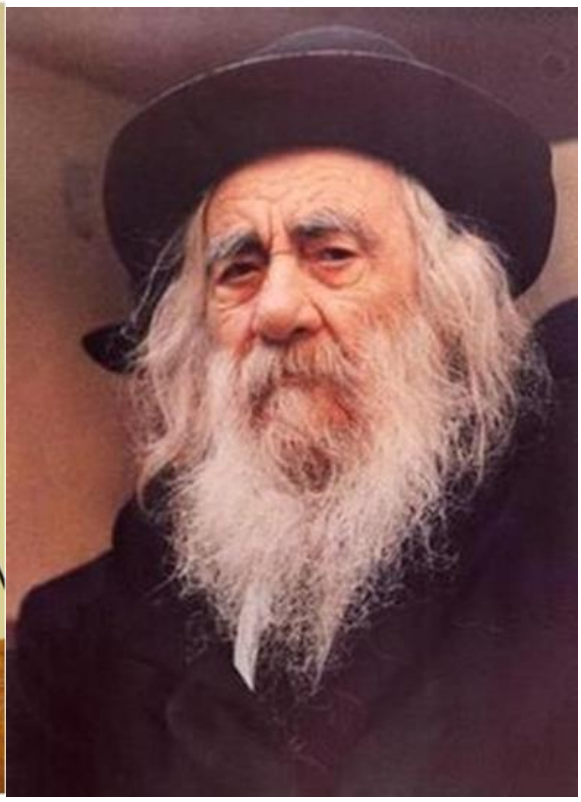
When a person tries to serve G-d, even though his efforts are about as sophisticated as a nursery rhyme, G-d says, "You're doing great! Just keep going!" Out of our feeble attempts He builds the sublime. As long as we are sincere and humble the Maestro will elevate our paltry efforts into something we never dreamed possible.

"Emunah is the anchor that keeps us steady amidst the storms of life, providing solace, strength and a sense of purpose." – Rabbi Shlome Wolbe.

A Commitment Towards Keeping Shabbos



Rabbi Shlomo Brevda



The Steipler Gaon

The following story of mesirat nefesh as told by Rabbi Shlomo Brevda shows the sacrifices made by our gedoliim and the previous generations that they had to endure in order to keep the Shabbat and should be an inspiration for us to realize the wonderful gift that we have today to be able to keep the Shabbat properly and without suffering....

The Steipler Rav, Horav Yaakov Kanievsky, zl, was a gaon and a tzaddik. His brilliance and encyclopedic knowledge of Torah was only overshadowed by his righteousness and total devotion to serving Hashem. Prior to his engagement to the sister of the Chazon Ish, he shared an incident with her that happened to him in Siberia. He felt it was important that his intended be fully aware of his mesirat nefesh for mitzvot.

As a solider conscripted into the Czar's army, the Steipler was forced to perform back-breaking labor in the frigid cold of the Siberian winter. Regardless of the overwhelming toil and below-

freezing conditions, he performed the difficult work because he knew it was the only way that he could continue to serve the Almighty. The problem was that army demanded that everyone work seven days a week. This obviously created a problem on Shabbos.

The Steipler emphatically declared that by no means was he going to work on Shabbat. The Russian officer did not need more than one insolent Jew who had the gall to refuse his orders. He predictably flew into a rage, typical of the anti-Semitic brute that he was. Suddenly, he stopped screaming, as a diabolical smile crossed his face.

Yes, he would grant the Steipler's request on the condition that the he pass a little test. If he could prove himself to be a strong warrior, he would be permitted to observe Shabbat. The test was "simple." The captain ordered his soldiers to form two rows opposite each other, arming themselves with wooden planks. The Steipler was to "attempt" to make it from one end of the row to the other as the soldiers beat him mercilessly with their planks. If he survived the ordeal, he would be allowed to observe Shabbat.

The Steipler understood the situation. He was probably risking his life, but Shabbat was worth the ordeal. He put his hands over his head as protection, whispered a heartfelt prayer and forged ahead. The guards began to beat him with all they had: no mercy, no sensitivity, just pure brutal malevolence. The pain was intolerable, but the reward of keeping Shabbat was the pot of gold at the end. Inch by Inch, he trudged forward, blinded by pain and covered with blood. He reached the end of the line and collapsed.

With a faint smile on his lips. He made it! The Shabbat that he cared about so much must have surely protected him. The captain reluctantly gave in to the Steipler's demand to observe Shabbat. The Steipler lay on the ground, bloodied and broken. Nobody bothered to pick him up, but he did not care. He had

triumphed over the cruel officer. He had triumphed over the yetzer hara, the evil inclination. He had won Shabbat Kodesh!

The Steipler concluded the story, looked at his intended kallah and asked, "Are you prepared to join me in a continuous quest of self-sacrifice for Torah and mitzvot? This is the life I plan to lead." The future rebbetzin, the mother of today's pre-eminent gaon, Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, replied in the affirmative, and they became chattan and kallah.

There's a famous saying that goes "As much as the Jews kept Shabbat, the Shabbat kept the Jews!" The Shabbat that we keep today and that we kept throughout the generations is the secret that has kept the Jewish people alive as a great nation until this very day.

Revach L'Neshama - When Money Doesn't Matter

In Parshas Vayakhel the Torah tells us about the mad rush to donate to the Mishkan. Men and women came, and came... and came. They brought all their finest items including the jewellery that they were wearing at the time. They brought so much that Moshe Rabbeinu had to send messages throughout the camp commanding them to stop bringing.

Were they so generous by nature? Did money have no value to them? **Rav Shimshon Pincus** says that on the contrary we find that when it came to giving money like by the Korban Tomid, Moshe had to persuade them to give. We also see that by the Eigel the women refused to part with their jewellery.

So what was the secret of the Mishkan that made everybody wildly generous? It was the chance to have Hashra'as HaShechina, says Rav Shimshon. When the Shechina dwells among us everything is beautiful, and life is wonderful. It is the ultimate state of being in this world and there is no pleasure that compares to it. They knew

this and therefore they eagerly emptied out their vaults for this opportunity.

Rav Shimshon adds that even today there is an opportunity for Hashra'as HaShechina. How? "Ish V'Isha Zachu... HaShechina Beineihen", if a man and women build a harmonious home Al Pi Torah, the Shechina dwells with them.

Interestingly, says Rav Shimshon, most domestic discord is over money. Either the husband gets angry when he feels his wife spends too much or the wife is angry because her husband refuses to allow her to spend.

If we understood that we have a chance to bring the Shechina to our homes and live in bliss, every husband would throw all his money at his wife and the wife would spend nothing, simply to merit Hashra'as HaShechina. Our forefathers also deeply cared about money, but they knew where to draw the line. They knew that even money doesn't compare to harmony and bliss.

By putting Sholom in our home and sholom with our business partners and friends ahead of money, we to will be zocheh to Hashra'as HaShechina and a Bais HaMikdash Bimheira Biyameinu.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky - Bringing Bnei Yisroel Back Together Again

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, *Moshe assembled the entire congregation of the B'nei Yisroel* (Vayakhel 35:1).

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky - Emes L'Yaakov explains that the Chait HaEigel brought out divisiveness in Klal Yisroel, the opposite of the Achdus they displayed at Har Sinai. He brings the Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 10:2) that says that there were 12 Agalim with each Shevet making their own Eigel. He explains that they were unable to agree exactly what the Eigel should be like. Therefore Moshe's

first order of business going forward was to reunite Bnei Yisroel. To this effort he gathered them in an assembly united as one. Similarly although the three mitzvos commanded to Bnei Yisroel upon entering Eretz Yisroel are to anoint a king, wipeout Amalek, and then build a Bais HaMikdash, nevertheless Moshe went straight to building a Mishkan in the midbar, skipping the other two. The reason was because after seeing how quickly they came apart after being leaderless for just a few hours, he wanted to immediately give them a place where they can connect to Hashem in a time of need.

Revach L'Neshama - A Mishkan With a Broken Heart

וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר The pasuk (36:7) says that after all the donations were made to the Mishkan they had enough (Dayam). At the end of this pasuk it says, "V'Hoseir," and there was even more than they needed. So which is it; was it exactly enough or did they have extra?

The Iturei Torah brings from Sichos Tzadikim that if there were exactly enough and no more, each person would become full of pride thinking that his contribution to the Mishkan made it all possible. "Without me there would be no Mishkan." This would make the Mishkan a place where Hashem's Shechina would definitely not rest, since Hashem does not dwell among the haughty.

However, if there were more than enough materials and some were left out of the actual building then each person would be broken-hearted thinking that his contribution may have been left out, and he has no share of the Mishkan. This made for the ideal sanctuary for Hashem's Shechina, as it always finds rest among the broken hearted. - Therefore, the pasuk tells us that the amount of materials donated was exactly enough to build a Mishkan for the Shechina. Why? Because there was excess.

Revach L'Neshama – Rav Shimon Schwab - A Building Duo Of The Biggest & The Simplest



"There were two main contractors working on the mishkan together," says **Rav Shimon Schwab**. "The first was the Betzalel. He was a child prodigy, who Moshe admitted defeat to, and acknowledged that he was privy to special secrets of the Heavenly Court. He also came from the finest lineage in Klal Yisrael being from the Shevet of Yehuda, the grandson of Chur, who was a leader of Bnei Yisrael, who died Al Kiddush Hashem at the hands of the mob by Chait HaEigel, and the great grandson of Kalev ben Yefuneh.

His second in command was Oholiav ben Achisamach, a total unknown. The Torah never mentions any great details about him or his family. In fact, he came from Shevet Dan, from the Pechusim of the Shevatim. Apparently," says Rav Schwab," he was a simple Yid, a Yarei Shamayim, and was a straight and thoughtful person.

Hashem made this odd team to teach us that while the Bais HaMikdash is made by a great man with a fine Yichus, it is also made by a simple Jew who is a Tzaddik in Hashem's eyes. The reason is that we must understand that Hashra'as HaShechina is for every single Jew to be together with Hashem."

"The best way to gain happiness is not to look for it." ~~ Moses Montefiore

Revach L'Neshama - Take Along Junior For The Ride

הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לַה׳, ***Bnei Yisroel brought a Nidava to Hashem*** (Vaykhel 35:29).

הֵבִיאוּ is a plural Lashon. They did not come alone. But who did they come with? **Rav Mordechai Hominer** (Chinuch Malchusi) writes that they came with the children so that the children will learn what it means to do a mitzva and see it put to action by their parents.



Very often we are eager to take our children to their childish places, but when we go to our own business, our own business of mitzvos we prefer to leave them home because they are a nuisance. When we go to bake Matzos they need to be warned not to go to close to the oven or bother the people baking. When we buy Aba Minim we don't want to pay for the most expensive esrog whose pitom they have broken. When we build a Succah we don't want them to nail us in forehead.

The Torah teaches us that it is a wonderful chinuch opportunity to take them with you and let them either participate in your mitzva when possible and if not at least come along for the ride. Even just witnessing your mitzva can leave a deep impression on them that will pay dividends years down the road.

Of course it will take prior planning to make sure it doesn't turn into a disaster, but with a little intelligence and a bit more patience it can be done and should be done. It is a Chinuch opportunity they should not miss.

Revach L'Neshama - Tzedoka From Deep Down

קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם;"Take from yourselves a separation as a donation to the Mishkan." 35:5

What does this peculiar word **מֵאִתְּכֶם** - **"from *yourselves*"** come to teach us? Isn't it obvious that the donations are coming from yourselves? **The Kli Yakar** answers, many times people give Tzedoka only because of social pressures. They feel that they must give because it would be embarrassing to say "no" to the prominent Rosh Yeshiva who came to his house. Or at an appeal in his Shul, it would be disgraceful for him if he does not announce that he too is giving a substantial sum to this worthy cause, after all his buddies threw around the "big numbers". Such donations are not *Mayitchem* - from *yourselves*. It is not *you* giving the money, rather the social pressure of *others*.

The pasuk is telling us that for the donations of the Mishkan it should be purely yours. Whatever you give should be what ***you*** would like to give, not what you would like ***others*** to think that you gave!

Revach L'Neshama - Husbands And Wives Stand On Line To Donate To The Mishkan

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים (Vayakhel 35:22). Rashi explains the men came together with their wives to make donations to the Mishkan. Why did the wives come with them?

The Be'er Mayim Chaim explains that the halacha is that a woman needs permission from her husband to give anything other than a small donation to tzedaka and needed to bring her husband in order for her gift to be accepted. The reason why the husband could not bring it himself is since they were donating their wives jewellery they could not do that without their wives consent. Therefore the duo was needed for the donation to be accepted.

The Maskil L'Dovid says that the men did not want to come alone because only a short time before they had donated large amounts of gold to the Eigel and were afraid that their donation would not be accepted. They therefore wanted to mix their donation together with that of their virtuous wives, who did not participate in donating to the eigel, in order that it would be accepted.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Yehonoson Eibshitz - Other Shabossim Miss The Mark

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן, ***on the seventh day you will have the holy day of Shabbos*** (Vayakhel 35:2).



Shabbos is only for Klal Yisroel as we say in SHmoneh Esrei "V'Lo Nisato Hashem Elokeinu L'Goiyei Aratzos".

Rav Yehonoson Eibshitz points out in Yaaros D'vash that the mitzvos in the Torah are copied by the non-Jews in one form or another. Interestingly not a single religion keeps Shabbos. While Christians keep it on Sunday, the Muslims keep it on Friday.

It is no coincidence, says Rav Yehonoson, that no one chose to make their religion's Shabbos on Shabbos itself. Despite the fact that they all believe that Hashem created the world in six days and then rested, not a single one thought to do it after the six weekdays! Why? Because Hashem gave Shabbos as a special gift to us and would not let anyone take it away!

Revach L'Neshama – The Treasurer For The Mishkan & The Accounting Firm Of The Eigel

וְהַמְּלָאכָה הָיְתָה דַיָּם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר (Vayakhel 36:7). Interestingly, points out the Pninei HaTorah (Iturei Torah), that by the Mishkan which was a huge building project, there was surplus of materials at the end. Yet, by the Eigel where a massive amount of gold was collected, and all they made was a simple golden calf ,the Torah doesn't mention anything about a surplus.

By the Mishkan Moshe Rabbeinu was the treasurer, and not even a single prutah was squandered. However, the *honourable* members of the Eigel committee were people of questionable repute, and mysteriously not a single drop gold was left over."

Revach L'Neshama – The Belzer Rebbe - There Comes A Point When Enough Is Enough

After the Bnei Yisrael brought their generous donations to the builders of the Mishkan, they came to Moshe and told him (Vayakhel 36:5), ***"The deluge of donations is more than they need for the mishkan."*** מַרְבִּים הָעָם לְהָבִיא מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה לַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשֹׂת אֹתָהּ

Moshe promptly issued an order to Bnei Yisrael to stop bringing more items. **Rav Yehoshua Rokeach, the second Belzer Rebbe** asks, "Why all the nervousness about the overflow of donations? If people wanted to give, would it not be a good idea to accept it, and keep it in the coffers for future use?"

He answers that a Ba'al Teshuva cannot go overboard. Teshuva must be done completely, but not more than is needed, or else it will have a negative impact on the person going forward. The Mishkan was a kapara for the Chait HaEigel through Bnei Yisrael's donations. When Bnei Yisrael brought all that needed to be brought, the gabbaim got nervous when they saw the pace maintaining its

frenzy. They immediately notified Moshe, who put an abrupt end to it, making sure things did not get out of hand and keep things in perspective.



Vedibarta Bam - By Moshe Bogomilsky

ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל" – "*And Moshe assembled the entire Israelite community.*" (35:1)

QUESTION: Rashi writes that the gathering took place on the day after *Yom Kippur*. Why is it necessary to know when the assembly took place?

ANSWER: Moshe is known as the most humble person who ever lived *(Bamidbar* 12:3). One might ask, did not *Shmuel HaNavi* personally visit different communities and sit in judgment, in order not to trouble the people (I Samuel 7:17), while Moshe caused the people to come to him?

Perhaps Rashi wants to answer this question as follows: As King of the Jewish people, Moshe was entitled to the highest respect and forbidden to relinquish any due honour. When the Jewish people sinned with the golden calf, Hashem demoted Moshe. On *Yom Kippur* he was forgiven and reinstated as King. Moshe was indeed the most humble person who ever lived, but since he was speaking to the Jews after *Yom Kippur* — at which time he was already reinstated as the King — it would have been a lowering of his dignity to go around personally to visit the Jewish people. Consequently, it was proper to gather the people together via messenger. (**פרח לבנון**)

Vedibarta Bam



לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת" "You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day." (35:3)

QUESTION: Why is it customary to eat *cholent* on *Shabbat?*

ANSWER: In the times of the Sages of the *Gemara* there was a group of people known as the "*Tzedokim*" (Sadducees). They accepted only the Written Torah and refused to follow the explanations and interpretations rendered in the Oral Torah. Their philosophy was that Torah should be translated literally. According to them, the *pasuk* "Do not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on *Shabbat*" forbids one to have any fire burning during *Shabbat*, even when kindled before *Shabbat*. Thus, on *Shabbat* they would sit in the dark and eat cold food.

To demonstrate that we have no affiliation with the *Tzedokim* and their erroneous theories, we intentionally let food cook on the fire during *Shabbat* and eat it for the afternoon meal.

The importance of eating hot food on *Shabbat* is mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*O.C* 257:8), which states that one who does not observe this custom should be investigated for heresy.

"Bitachon is knowing that even in the darkest moments, Hashem's light is shining upon you. Trust in His love and guidance, and you will find strength in every challenge." - Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra.

Vedibarta Bam



לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת "***You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day.***" (35:3)

QUESTION: Why does the Torah single out this prohibition and not any of the other 39 major forbidden activities?

ANSWER: Heated arguments are like fire: Unfortunately, they destroy many homes, partnerships and relationships. When people are busy, they do not have time to argue and fight.

Because *Shabbat* is a day of rest, the Torah warns, "Beware not to kindle the 'fire of dispute' on the *Shabbat* day. Keep yourself busy with Torah study and *davening and* avoid idleness." (**של"ה**)

* * *

It is interesting to note that the last letters of the words "**תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם**" spell the word "**שלום**" — peace. This hints that, especially on *Shabbat*, we should make every effort to keep the peace. (**בית יעקב**)

אין עוד מלבדו

"There is nothing outside of Hashem. He is the source of everything, and everything exists only because He continually wills it so." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk.

Vedibarta Bam

***"וכל הנשים אשר נשא לבן אתנה בחכמה טוו את העזים" "All the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun the goat's hair."* (35:26)**



QUESTION: Rashi says, "This was a special skill, for they spun the goat's hair upon the backs of the goats."

Hashem's instructions for the *Mishkan* do not require that the goat's hair be spun on the back of the goats. Why does the Torah convey to us the technique by which the women spun the goats' hair?

ANSWER: The Torah is teaching a very important lesson: When people possess special talents it is important for them to remember that Hashem blessed them with these talents so that they may be used to make this world a dwelling place for Hashem.

Since there were women who were blessed with the unique skill of spinning hair still on the backs of the goat, they utilized this skill for the holy purpose of making a *Mishkan,* in which Hashem would dwell. (**לקוטי שיחות**)

R' Eliyohu Meir Bloch ZT"L (Peninei Daas) would say: "The rest we experience on Shabbos is not just a rest from work on that day alone. Rather, it gives us the ability to feel calm and peace of mind throughout all the days of the week."

Vedibarta Bam

וכל הנשים אשר נשא לבן אתנה בחכמה טוו את העזים: והנשאם הביאו את אבני השהם ואת אבני המלאים *"All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom spun the goat hair. The leaders brought the shoham stones and the stones for the settings."* (35:26-27)

QUESTION: What is the connection between the women spinning the goat hair and the *nesi'im* bringing their contributions?

ANSWER: Rashi cites Rabbi Natan *(Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:16) that the word (**נשאם**) is spelled without a "**י**" because the leaders were lax in bringing contributions for the *Mishkan*. Originally, they waited to see what would be lacking, intending to give everything still needed. Seeing that the people gave in abundant measure, they immediately brought their generous offering of *shoham* stones and stones for the settings.

The Torah emphasizes that unlike the *nesi'im,* the women acted with *zerizut* — zeal and alacrity — for the building of the *Mishkan*. They hastened to do the spinning while the hair was still on the goats because they were too impatient to wait for the hair to be shorn off and delivered to them.(**עיטורי תורה - גבורי ישראל**)

Vedibarta Bam

ועשה בצלאל ואהליאב וכל איש חכם לב אשר נתן ה' חכמה ותבונה בהמה לדעת לעשת את כל מלאכת עבדת הקדש לכל אשר צוה ה' *"Betzalel shall carry out — with Ahaliav and every wise-hearted man within whom G-d had endowed wisdom and insight to know and to do all the work for the labour of the Sanctuary — everything that G-d had commanded."* (36:1)

Question: In lieu of "*baheimah*" — "in them" — it should have said "*bahem.*" From this the *Midrash Rabbah* (48:3) derives that Hashem had endowed wisdom and insight also in the *beheimah* —

animal. Why was it necessary that there should be wisdom in the animal?

Answer: The women spun the hair while it was on the goats (Rashi 35:26). It was necessary for the animal to possess wisdom so that it would cooperate when used for this kind of difficult spinning. (**כתב סופר**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ולהורת נתן בלבו הוא ואהליאב בן אחיסמך למטה דן" - *"And He has put it into his heart that he may teach, both he and Oholiav son of Achisamach of the tribe of Dan."* (35:34)

Question: Why is it necessary to mention Betzalel's teaching ability?

Answer: In the times of the *Beit Hamikdash* there were a few families and individuals who were uniquely talented in preparing things for the *Beit Hamikdash*. The Gormu family was expert in the baking of the *lechem hapanim*, the Avtinus family was talented in preparing the*ketoret*, etc. (*Yoma* 38a). The sages were very upset with them for refusing to convey their skills to others.

Betzalel and Oholiav were blessed with exceptional architectural talent. They did not consider this to be a personal asset, but rather something to pass on to others.

When Hashem blesses a person, it's incumbent upon him to convey to others his divine blessings and talents. Therefore, the Torah praises Betzalel for sharing his knowledge with others. (**אור החיים**)

"If you need to hide something—something is wrong." Kotzker Rebbe.

Vedibarta Bam

"והנשאם הביאו את אבני השהם" ***"The nesi'im brought the stones of shoham."*** **(35:27)**



QUESTION: The word *"nesi'im"* is written without a *"yud"* because in the beginning they did not contribute to the *Mishkan.* They thought, "Let the other Jews first give what they can, and whatever is lacking we shall complete." Due to their failure to take the initiative, the letter *"yud"* was omitted from their title (Rashi).

Why the letter *"yud"* and not any other letter?

ANSWER: In Hebrew, one way to change a word from singular to plural is to add a *"yud."* For example, the word "**פתיל**" means "a thread" and the word "**פתילי**" means "threads." "**נשיא**" means "a Prince" and "**נשיאי**" means "many Princes."

Originally, the *nesi'im* decided not to participate with *Klal Yisrael* in the *Mishkan* construction. Therefore, while everybody was contributing generously to the construction, they stood idly on the side. Hence, the letter *"yud,"* which indicates plurality, was omitted from their name. (**אבני אזל**)

"The purpose of prayer is not to receive what you asked for, but to transform you into the person who deserves it."

Vedibarta Bam

"ויעש את הכיור נחשת ואת כנו נחשת במראת הצבאת" - "*He made a Laver of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of the legions.*" (38:8)

QUESTION: King Shlomo made ten Lavers in the *Beit Hamikdash* and we are told their sizes (I Kings 32:28); why were there no instructions given as to the size of the Laver of the *Mishkan*?



ANSWER: The Laver was made exclusively from the brightly polished pieces of copper the women used as mirrors, and not from any of the other donated copper. Moshe was reluctant to accept them because they were made to accomplish the ends of the *yeitzer hara* (Evil Inclination) — to incite lust. Hashem told him, "These are dearest to Me, by means of these the women established many legions of offspring in Egypt."

The Torah does not give a specific size that the Laver should be because every single mirror had to go into it, no matter how big it would become — so sacred were those mirrors. (**אבן עזרא**)

The Chofetz Chaim teaches that if one conducts himself regularly to be a person that does Chesed and looks to help others, his Tefilos will certainly be accepted before Hashem, and Hashem will fulfill his requests! (Ahavas Chesed 2:6)

Vedibarta Bam

"איש ואשה אל יעשו עוד מלאכה לתרומת הקדש ויכלא העם מהביא" ***"'Man and woman shall not do more work toward the gift for the Sanctuary.' And the people were restrained from bringing."*** **(36:6)**

QUESTION: Why was it necessary for a complete cessation of donations? It could have been proclaimed that the people continue bringing, and the additional contribution would be kept in reserve for future charitable needs.

ANSWER: Moshe notified the Jews that no further donations were needed for the construction of the *Mishkan;* but if they wanted to contribute, the materials would be kept for future charitable purposes. The Jewish people are great performers of *gemilut chasadim* — deeds of kindness — and they continued to donate generously, relying on Moshe's discretion.

The term *"am"* refers to *"Eirev Rav"* — the mixed multitude of people who joined the Jews when they left Egypt. It was they who stopped giving because they were only interested in donating for the building of the *Mishkan,* something for Hashem, but not in benefiting another person. (**פניני התורה בשם ר' שלמה ז"ל קלוגער**)

Parshah Thoughts -Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל The *parshah* begins (35:1) with Moshe gathering the people together. **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, *zt"l***, observes that this occurred after the sin of the Golden Calf, which was an *aveirah* that set a separation amongst the Jewish people. Moshe's actions are significant as a first step, because gathering everyone together stresses the need for *achdus*, unity.

Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

זהב וכסף ונחשת (לה:ה) ***'…Gold, silver and copper'*** (35:5)

The *Chasam Sofer* writes that these words include a *remez* for all the days the Torah is read.

7 = **זהב: ז** - Shabbos— the seventh day of the week.

5 = **הב** and 2- Monday and Thursday— the second and fifth day of the week.

כסף: כ stands for Yom **K**ippur **יום כִּיפּור** ; **ס** for **S**uccos **סוכות**; **פ** for **P**urim **פוּרים** and **P**esach **פֶּסח**.

נחשת: נ stands for ***n**eiros*, candles— a reference to Chanukah ; **ח** **נרות חנוכה** stands for Rosh **Ch**odesh and also includes Rosh HaShanah **חודש** ; **ש** is for **Sh**avuos **שבועות**, **Sh**emini Atzeres **שמיני עצרת**, and **S**imchas Torah **שמחת תורה**; and **ת** is ***T**aanis*, fast days **תענית**.

One of the students of the *Chasam Sofer* explained a possible connection between the words *'gold, silver and copper'* and all the days of Torah reading throughout the year. There is a *minhag*, that when one is called to the Torah for an *aliyah*, it is customary to donate some money to the *shul* and this *pasuk* may be the source for that! (*Chaim Shel Torah*)

Parshah Thoughts by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The *Kiyor* was made of the mirrors which the women donated (38:8). The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* quotes the *Maggid* of Mezhritch who explains that a mirror gives a person the ability to notice their flaws. As the *Kohanim* started their day in the *Bais HaMikdash*, they would wash at the *Kiyor* and see their reflections. This would give them the chance to think about their flaws and get them to do *Teshuvah* and fix their ways.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



Once at *Shacharis*, the ***Bais HaLevi*** approached a young man and told him that his *tefillin* were *pasul*. The young man was quite surprised, since the *Bais HaLevi* only saw him from across the *shul* and couldn't possibly have seen his *tefilin* very well.

The *Bais HaLevi* advised him to remove them right away and have them checked immediately. The young man followed the advice and went to the local *Sofer* to have his *tefillin* checked. Sure enough, the *sofer* told him that the *tefillin* were invalid because they were missing a letter. The young man was astounded!

He returned to the *Bais HaLevi* and asked him how he had known about the problem, when it was concealed inside his *tefillin*?

The *Bais HaLevi* replied, "Our Sages teach us that when one looks at the *Tefillin shel Rosh*, he should feel a certain inspiration to have fear of Hashem. When I looked at your *tefillin*, I didn't feel anything and I realized that they must be defective. Looking at your *tefillin* should have stirred within me an awe of *Shamayim*, but clearly, that doesn't happen when the *tefillin* aren't *kosher*!"

The Measure of a Person

"A person's greatness is not measured by the heights he reaches, but by the depth of what he overcomes." ~ Rav Yitzchak Hutner.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR VAYAKHEL

The Power of One Person By Rabbi Yossi Benoussan



Rabbi Zalman Deutscher

I stumbled onto this story through Divine Hashagacha; the Ribono Shel Olam handed it to me. I feel humbled to share this story, yet I feel it is a message that must be passed on to the world. Shimon was a little boy of three years old when his family moved to the United States from Uzbekistan. Although the family knew that they were Jewish, but that is where it ended.

Shimon knew nothing at all about his glorious heritage and background. Shimon knew so little about his heritage, to the point that he told me that when he was a young boy, he wanted to buy his mother a gift. Jingling the few dollars that he had in his pocket, he walked into the store to pick out a present. After much deliberation, he chose for his mother a necklace with a cross on it.

Excited, he brought it home and handed it to his mother. His mother's first reaction was shock. Then she recuperated, laughed and threw it aside. "Thank you so much, sweetie," she smiled.

When Shimon reached school age, he enrolled with all the other boys in his area to the local public school in Queens – However, as he was getting older, his parents started realizing how grim the situation was. Their child knew nothing about Yiddishkeit!

A few rabbis got involved and Shimon started attending JEP. Rabbi Zalman Deutscher started applying pressure and encouragement and

eventually, Shimon was transferred out of public school and sent to yeshiva.

I have been working in kiruv for many years, both in kiruv rechokim and kiruv kerovim and I can tell you this. When a person has the zchus of transferring a child out of a public school and putting him into a yeshiva, it gives them such a high that no drug on earth will give him; the knowledge that he just saved that person's life.

However, these stories don't end in middle; they continue with ups and downs. In life, there are constant struggles and so when Shimon reached high school, he transferred back to public school.

I never spoke to Rav Deutcher about this, but I'm sure that there was a moment over there when Shimon returned to public school that Rav Deutscher said to himself, "That's it – I lost this boy." There probably was a feeling of failure and of lost hope.

However, we do not realize the power we have. And Rav Deutscher did not stop. He kept going and going and going. He kept encouraging Shimon and his parents. He kept bringing him into JEP and inviting him to participate in all the Jewish after-school programs.

Life success stories are written very, very slowly. A person does not see the fruits of their labour right away. Slowly but surely, Shimon started coming around. Eventually, Shimon himself started doing kiruv. He was mekarev his younger brother, Reuven, and his parents. He had an uncle who was also very avidly involved in his kiruv process.

Shimon grew up to be a sincere Torah Jew. Today he has a beautiful family, and it is heartwarming to see him surrounded by wonderful religious children, nieces and nephews. - Who is Shimon?

Shimon's name is Shimon Kol Yaakov. Shimon and Reuven started a little website a few years ago called ***TorahAnytime.com***. They have affected hundreds of thousands of Jews with Torah shiurim.

Rabbi Deutscher could have slept in that day and say, "That's not my problem! If that kid wants to go back to public school, let him! His parents don't see the value of our heritage, so I'll let him go!"

We have no right to give up on any one of our children just because he spit us in the face or just because he went back to his old ways! Stories do not happen overnight! They take a lifetime! And it is our honour to be a part of those stories!

The Hot Water Urn By Rabbi David Ashear



Many years ago, Rabbi Kalman Greenwald donated a hot water urn to benefit those who come to visit Kever Rachel. He donated it L'ilui Nishmat his Aunt Dina bat Yehuda who did not leave over any children after her. There was a request written on the urn to please say Berachot L'ilui Nishmata.

Over time, that urn was replaced by a much bigger one, one that connects to a water source directly and replenishes on its own. The one donated by Rabbi Greenwald was put into storage.

Recently, on Tuesday, the 23rd of Shevat, Parashat Mishpatim, close to evening time, the new urn suddenly stopped working. They couldn't get it to start again so they went to the storage room and brought out the one donated L'ilui Nishmat Dina bat Yehuda. There were three other urns at that time in storage, but this is the one they happened to get.

That urn was used Tuesday night and Wednesday, the 24th of Shevat. Then, on Thursday, someone who knew how to fix things tried to operate the new urn again. Strangely, all he did was plug it into the wall and it started working again as if nothing was wrong.

Afterward, they realized the 24th of Shevat was the yahrtzeit of that woman, Dina bat Yehuda, who the other urn was donated for. It was so clear that, Min HaShamayim, the other one stopped working right before her yahrtzeit and was fixed right after it. It was all calculated and set up by Hashem so she could get the merit of the people's Berachot on her yahrtzeit.

Everything is Min HaShamayim, what we have and what we don't have, but our attitudes are up to us. We have the ability to be happy, with the Emunah that Hashem is always doing best.

The Case of the Lost Valise



The Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneersohn, zt"l, 1860-1920) once was travelling to Petersburg by train. When he reached his destination he claimed all of his baggage except one valise which was nowhere to be found. His attendants searched the entire train station, but that suitcase which contained several important books was lost.

Several days later the Rebbe was visited by a young man named Reb Avrohom Eliahu Guarary. The young man was newly married and had invested his considerable dowry in a business which had unfortunately failed. Now, he was left with only one thousand rubles and had come to seek the Rebbe's advice.

No sooner had he entered the room when the Rebbe said, "Ah, Reb Avrohom Eliahu will bring me back my suitcase from the train

station!" He handed the young man the claim and sent him off, unaware that the case was missing.

The train station was deserted and Reb Avrohom stopped to have a smoke. He noticed a man watching him and staring at his pack of cigarettes. "Do You smoke?" Reb Avrohom asked the man.

"Yes," he replied.

The young chasid offered the gentile a cigarette and they were sharing a smoke together when the man asked, "What are you doing here at such an hour?"

Reb Avrohom replied affably, "There is a rabbi by the name of Schneersohn visiting, and I am here to pick up his suitcase."

"That's a handy coincidence. You see, I'm the warehouse manager. Why don't you give me your baggage ticket and let me see if I can find your case."

The manager went into the large warehouse and instructed his workers to bring him the suitcase, but to his consternation, they couldn't find it. He ordered them to check each piece of baggage carefully. Sure enough, they found the valise lying behind a large crate. Reb Avrohom thanked the man profusely and returned to the Rebbe, valise in hand.

The Rebbe was very happy to receive his lost suitcase and said to the young man, "I am now in your debt. How can I help you?"

Reb Avrohom poured out his whole story of the ten thousand ruble dowry which he had lost in an unsuccessful business. Now he had only one thousand rubles and wanted to know how to make the most of it. The Rebbe advised him, "Go to the city of Koritz and there G-d will provide you with a livelihood. Just make sure that you bring along food for the trip."

Reb Avrohom returned to his wife and told her what the Rebbe had said. His wife baked and cooked all kinds of delicious foods for his

journey, and they chatted excitedly about the success they faithfully anticipated.

Reb Avrohom arrived in Koritz on a hot, humid day. He decided to cool off by taking a swim in the Black Sea. After the refreshing swim, he sat down on the beach to eat some of the delicious food his wife had packed. He noticed another Jew nearby and Reb Avrohom, being a friendly type, offered him some of his wife's food. They struck up a conversation and Avrohom told the stranger the story of his failed business and the blessing he had received from the Rebbe.

"I would like to help you," said the man. "Come back here tomorrow. I'm going to bring a friend with me. Perhaps between the two of us, we can figure out a way to help you out. But don't forget to bring along some of your wife's great cooking," the man added, smiling.

The next day the three men met and concluded a deal. "I have decided to sell you my entire shipment of cigarette papers for a thousand rubies," said the friend. "I hope you are successful and make a big profit from it." They shook hands, and went their separate ways. Reb Avrohom headed for the town of Kremenchug to



claim his goods. That town was a center of cigarette manufacture and there he would be able to sell the papers. He headed for the factory of a certain Reb Tzvi and made him a proposal: "I will sell you my entire stock for ten thousand rubles," he said.

"What! The paper is worth two thousand at the very most."

"No," replied Reb Avrohom, "I want to recover my whole loss. I will take ten thousand or nothing." And it was impossible to move him.

Reb Tzvi listened to the young man's whole story and decided he would go to Koritz himself and try to make a similar purchase. But when he arrived, he was disappointed to find that there was no cigarette paper to be had. In fact, there was a severe shortage in the whole city. The seller had given Reb Avrohom his last lot for the thousand rubles out of pity for the young man.

Reb Tzvi lost no time. He telegrammed Reb Avrohom, requesting him not to sell his supply of cigarette papers to anyone else. He then rushed back to Kremenchug and paid the asking price of ten thousand rubies.

Having recovered his loss, Reb Avrohom returned to the Rebbe for further instructions.

"But, Reb Avrohom Eliahu," said the Rebbe this time, "my debt to you is already repaid!"

The Incompetent Apprentice By Asharon Baltazar

Occupying a seat in the front row of the Etz Chaim Yeshiva in Volozhin attested to rare genius, and young **Yosef Dov Soloveitchik** (1820-1892) was a perfect example. He spent his days poring through thick volumes, his aptitude for study legendary. He is remembered as the rabbi of Brisk, which remains associated with his unique style of study until this very day.

While he had no trouble navigating Talmudic waters, halacha and its real-world ramifications still felt somewhat foreign to him. It was this strong desire to master the practical application of his Talmudic acumen that ultimately pushed him outside the yeshiva walls.

Word of **Rabbi Shlomo Kluger** (1785–1869), a leading halachic authority with a reputation for being unashamedly bold, blunt, and

passionate, reached him. Although he lived in Brody, questions from all over Europe streamed his way. Yosef Dov longed to meet him.



But a vast distance separated him from his dream. Yosef Dov was in Volozhin, a Belarussian town, and Brody lay down south in Ukraine. He owned nothing but the clothes on his back, and hiring a wagon for such a long trip was a luxury reserved for the wealthy. But at last Yosef Dov formed a plan. Dressed in a peasant's outfit he managed to obtain, he approached the market frequented by coachmen and loudly offered his apprenticeship in exchange for a trip to Brody.

One driver agreed to the proposal and immediately began to make good use of his new apprentice. The wagon axles required a fresh layer of grease and the horses needed to be groomed and fed. Everything proved difficult for Yosef Dov, who didn't know the first thing about wagons or horses, and it took repeated attempts before he satisfied the critical eye of his employer. Reeking strongly of horse, with grease-streaked arms, Yosef Dov had lost any semblance of a yeshiva student. But it was worth it: a merchant soon hired their wagon for a trip to Brody.

Hardly able to contain his excitement, Yosef Dov bridled the horses, thinking: "Soon I will meet Rabbi Shlomo Kluger!"

From his perch on the wagon, Yosef Dov occupied himself with Talmudic topics, barely paying attention to the rolling landscape. A loud bark pulled him out of his reverie when the driver stopped the wagon and shouted at him to take the reins while he snatched a nap. As the horses trudged along the worn path, his excitement

continued to bubble. He could barely focus on the road. *He was going to meet with Rabbi Shlomo Kluger!*

What should they talk about?

The possibilities buried in the Talmud and its pages of commentaries stole Yosef Dov's attention rather easily. He no longer felt the pull of the horses nor heard the clopping of hooves. Even as the horses veered off course, Yosef Dov held the reins limply and continued to stare ahead, happily lost in his own head.

His turn at navigation came to an abrupt end when the wagon struck a ditch on the side of the road, and the rudely-awakened wagon driver realized why he was unfamiliar with this part of the road to Brody: It wasn't the road to Brody.

He began to bellow scathing insults, swinging his fists, and hammering the young man who was still oblivious to the trouble he had caused.

"You'll never be a wagon driver!" he shouted as he slapped the young man's hands off the reins.

Yosef Dov lowered his head and said nothing. The wagon driver was right. He had neglected his responsibility and disrupted the journey.

When Yosef Dov finally disembarked in Brody, parting with a murmured apology, he started asking passersby about the famous rabbi. But his questions (and filthy attire) were met only with raised eyebrows. Clearly, no one sympathized enough with the urgency of a coachman's apprentice who wished to meet their rabbi.

When he finally managed to locate the home, Rabbi Kluger invited him inside. Yosef Dov's thoughts came spilling out, and an excited conversation revolving around a difficult Talmudic topic ensued. Rabbi Kluger soon saw that the young man before him was no simple apprentice, but a brilliant prodigy. He invited Yosef Dov to remain as his guest and also provided him with a fresh change of clothes.

On Shabbat, Rabbi Kluger tried to convince his guest to address the crowd of synagogue-goers, but Yosef Dov demurred. He wasn't much of a speaker. Rabbi Kluger, however, insisted, and Yosef Dov acquiesced.

His erudite and engaging talk created a favourable impression; a throng lined up to shake his hand in admiration when services were over. One man approached with tears in his eyes and had trouble meeting Yosef Dov's eyes.

"Please, forgive me," muttered the wagon driver from Volozhin. "I had no idea who you were, and I request forgiveness for wronging you."

"There is no need for forgiveness," said Yosef Dov warmly. "You were right, after all. It's hard to imagine me being a wagon driver!"

A Time to Fall - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

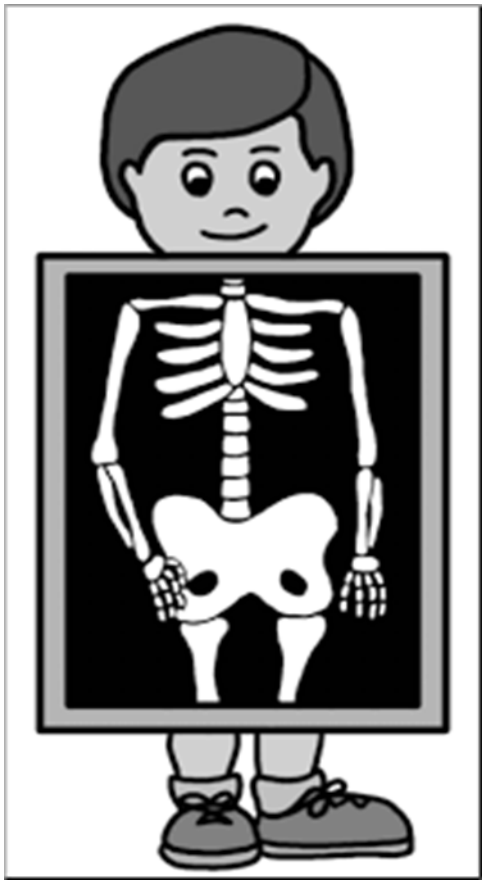
Every day after class, the devoted teacher, Reb Gedalyah, sits with his students on the school steps, just to spend time with them. He does this to truly understand his students, so he can know how to help them.

The other teachers in the cheder tell Reb Gedalyah to stop this practice because he is losing his break, without getting paid for it. They also claimed that it isn't good for the students to be so friendly with their teacher.

But Reb Gedalyah believed that his practice was important, and he would keep it every day. Once, on a rainy day, however, he slipped down the stairs, and couldn't get up.

Hatzalah was called, and he was brought to the hospital on a stretcher. Reb Gedalyah asked himself, "Why did this happen to me? I'm moser nefesh for my students, despite that all my comrades make fun of me because of it. Is this my reward for my devotion?"

But he immediately stopped those morbid thoughts, and repeated to himself that everything is for the good.



The doctors took x-rays and other exams, and discovered he has a broken rib, but that wasn't the main problem. He also had two failing kidneys. They told him, "If you didn't come to the hospital now to treat your kidneys, you wouldn't live another hour." They asked him why he hadn't come earlier to the hospital to treat his failing kidneys. He answered he didn't have any pain at all.

(This was unusual. Generally, a person in his state would be in excruciating pain.) He began dialysis, and some days later underwent a transplant. In retrospect, it was understood that his fall saved his life, and that it was for his good.

Rav Tzvi Hirsch Broide's Litigates Against His Wife

One time the wife of **Rav Tzvi Hirsh Broide**, the son-in-law of the **Alter of Kelm** , suspected the orphan who helped her with her housework of stealing something from the house. She berated her about this. Her Husband Rav Tzvi Hirsch told her that since the girl is an orphan she cannot antagonize her, but if she believed she had a real claim she should take the girl to Bais Din.

His wife agreed and set up a date with Bais Din. When the time came, his wife got ready to leave the house. She saw that he was also getting ready to leave. She told her husband that he need not come with her to Bais Din since she is perfectly capable of speaking to Bais Din herself.

Rav Tzvi Hirsch said to her that he was not going to Bais Din on her behalf, but rather to defend the poor girl who had no one to defend her and was not capable of defending herself.

Maasei Emunim - An Innocent Tefillah That Made Waves Far Away



One who passes through the centre of the city of Dallas, Texas, cannot miss the impressive building right in the middle of the city, which casts a bright Jewish light on all its surroundings. The Jewish Centre building in Dallas serves as a beacon for thousands of Jews who live in Texas, many of whom have discovered the meaning of being Jewish for the first time.

There is an exceptional story behind the building, which was shared by the renowned mashpia, **Harav Elimelech Biderman, shlita**: When Rabbi Moshe Rodner, shlita, was given semichah he decided to move to Dallas, Texas, with the purpose of dedicating his energy and talents to disseminating Judaism in the city. Dallas, despite its large size, was virtually a spiritual desert for the tens of thousands of Jews who lived there. Specifically for that reason, Rabbi Rodner decided to settle there, in the hope that he would be able to infuse the city with a Jewish spirit and ignite flames from the embers that still glowed in many Jewish hearts.

At first, he rented a small apartment in the city centre, and began to conduct activities and various shiurim. He hoped through these to forge ties with the local Jewish community in an effort to organize a community. But he didn't seem to have mazel. Almost every conceivable obstacle stood in his way. Whenever he tried to do something, he was met with bureaucratic and financial difficulties that prevented him from realizing his aspirations. So for a long time, he lived in his modest home, trying and failing over and over, until he was all but ready to give up.

The change came suddenly, almost 'like in the books.' Rabbi Rodner was eating dinner one night with his family, when he heard a quiet knocking at the door. He hurried to open, assuming it was likely another one of the dozens of people who came to the door to ask questions on the subject of Judaism. His home had become known as an address for anyone seeking answers or assistance. But this time, it was something else.

An elderly person stood at the door, dressed in a most dignified fashion. He identified himself as a local Jew seeking to hear a bit more about the meaning of being a member of the Jewish people, and to find out how he could learn about his ancient heritage. Queries such as this infused Reb Moshe with renewed strength.

He invited the man to sit down in his modest living room, and for a long time, he spoke to him at length and answered all his questions. Rabbi Rodner explained that Judaism is not merely a nationality, it also obligates those who are Jewish to conduct their lives according to specific instructions conveyed at Har Sinai, thousands of years ago, and yet which are still in effect to this day. The Rav's words fell on an attentive set of ears. The words were gentle, but decisive, and the man felt his Jewish heart coming to life, and tears coming to his eyes.

At the end, Rabbi Rodner happened to mention the many difficulties he was encountering in his efforts to disseminate the light of Torah

and Yiddishkeit to the Jews of Texas. He made his remarks innocently, with no special intentions. But in response, the man stuck his hand into his jacket pocket and took out a leather-bound chequebook. Then he pulled out a gold pen, and wrote a cheque, folded it and handed it to the Rav.

Rabbi Rodner was surprised, but when he looked at the cheque he was stunned into silence. The sum was extraordinary, by any stretch – six million dollars! "I don't want there to be any difficulty in your path to realize your very important objectives," the man said. "With this donation, you can build a nice building from which you can disseminate Torah and Yiddishkeit, not only in Dallas, but to all of Texas."

Rabbi Rodner was so moved and shocked that he could hardly utter a sound. He just about managed to politely bid the man farewell, and to stammer a few words of thanks, and the man went on his way. In the coming weeks and months, Rabbi Rodner was very busy looking for a suitable plot of land and hiring a team to plan the building to meet his unique needs in an optimal fashion. He consulted with the donor every step of the way, but a few weeks after the donation, the man passed away suddenly. Apparently with his donation, he had completed his purpose in this world.

In an emotional hesped that he delivered at the levayah, Rabbi Rodner revealed what the donor had told him a short time after he had made the donation: "You probably want to know what led me to give such a huge donation without being asked," the donor said to him. "So, it was some time ago, on a rare visit that I made to Israel. Late at night I came to the Kosel. The scenes were all new to me, but the scene that took me most of all was of an elderly Jew standing near the ancient wall and praying with such fervour, as tears streamed from his eyes, and his face shone with purity.

"For many long moments, I could not tear my eyes away from this man, who for me, symbolized all that Judaism stands for. It

appeared that the pleasures of this world meant nothing to him, and he drew all his life directly from an Upper Source. I was so impressed that I wanted to go over to him and talk to him, and even become a follower perhaps, but the hour was late, and I had to leave.

"When I returned home, after a moving visit, the first thing I did was find out if in Dallas there are also such Jews. Someone directed me to your house, and I spoke to you, and honestly – I was not disappointed…And you know the rest of the story…"

This huge donation that Rabbi Rodner received did not just turn up out of the blue. It was the direct result of a warm and genuine tefillah from the depths of the soul of an anonymous Yid, who surely has no idea what he did. But in its merit, thousands of Jews have become closer to Torah and mitzvos, and the tremendous zikui harabbim, the public merit, continues to this day.

The Holy Wooden Spoon



The author of the sefer **"Ohel Dovid"** lived in dire poverty. Once, the **Chasam Sofer** was visiting in his city, and he went to visit him. When the Chasam Sofer entered his house, the Ohel Dovid was in middle of eating, and he saw that he was eating his meal from a simple plate made out of wood and even his spoon was wooden. The Chasam Sofer was astounded; he simply could not fathom such dire poverty.

The two began conversing, and in the midst of the conversation, the Chasam Sofer picked up the wooden spoon and examined it in wonder. The Ohel Dovid didn't understand that the Chasam Sofer was simply

shocked that by the fact that he was eating from such simple utensils and concluded that he must really admire the spoon.

He began worrying that there was a possibility that the Chasam Sofer may stumble in the prohibition of "Lo Tachmod." Quickly, the Ohel Dovid said, "I'm giving you the spoon as a present with a full heart."

The Chasam Sofer loved to repeat this story, emphasizing how this tzaddik was so pure that it didn't even enter his mind that the Chasam Sofer was simply bemoaning the fact that he was forced to eat from these simple wooden utensils. (Shaal Avicha Veyegadcha)

Peninim On The Torah



ויבאו האנשים על הנשים
The men came <u>with</u> the women. (35:22)

The *Ramban* interprets *al ha'nashim*, **with** the women, as indicating that the men were ancillary, secondary to the women. The jewellery detailed in this *pasuk* was primarily women's jewellery. As soon as they heard the call for donations, the women came to donate.

Targum Onkeles translates *al ha'nashim* as, *on* the women, implying that the women came bedecked in their expensive jewellery, removed it there, and donated it to the *Mishkan*.

Why did they remove their jewellery only after they arrived at the area designated for donations?

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, explains that the women sought to convey the message that despite the fact that they liked their jewellery, and they would otherwise be more than happy to hold on to it, Hashem's *Mishkan* took precedence. They were not donating old, worn-out clothes that no one wore anymore. They were contributing their updated, fashionable jewellery, because they wanted to give their best to Hashem.

Furthermore, *they* brought the jewellery themselves, to demonstrate that it was their decision – not something their husbands forced them to do.

This is the manner in which we should give *tzedakah*, charity: because one wants to share his best, his most loved – not something that he wants to rid himself of.

Likewise, with regard to Torah study. One should not regret the worldly pleasures that he is relinquishing in order to learn Torah. The time he devotes to Torah study should be his most prized time, which he happily defers to what is most important to him – Torah study.

Peninim On The Torah

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ *On six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you.* *(35:2)*

Shabbos is much more than one of the 613 *mitzvos*. It attests to Hashem as the Creator of the world. We rest in recognition of Hashem's "resting" from Creation. We tend to gloss over another element of Shabbos. *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 2) relate: "The *Shabbos* came before Hashem and said, 'Everyone has a partner, but I do not.' Hashem replied, '*Knesses Yisrael* is your partner.'

When *Klal Yisrael* stood at *Har Sinai*, Hashem said to them, 'Remember the *Shabbos* to keep it holy.'" Each of the six days of the work week is considered a "work day," a day of creative mundane

activity. Each of these days was assigned the adjunct of a working day. It required *kedushah*, holiness, another day to complement it, a day to help it to actualise its potential, establishing three sets of partnerships. *Shabbos*, however, was bereft of a partner. Its potential could not be realised thoroughly in order to grow in sanctity. Only *Klal Yisrael* could achieve this goal.

One does not turn his back on a partner. It is a relationship of mutual sharing in which two people (entities) enhance and complete one another. This concept should define our relationship vis-à-vis *Shabbos*. One might conjecture that laxity in *Shabbos* observance is a deficiency to be found in those who do not practice *mitzvos*. Specifically, because *Shabbos* is the soul-mate of *Klal Yisrael*, even the observant have difficulty doing justice to one aspect of *Shabbos* observance.

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, relates that one *Erev Shabbos,* he noticed his neighbour walking into the apartment building carrying two heavily-laden shopping bags. He was certain that he was transporting delicacies for his *Shabbos* meal. This was confirmed (he thought) when the man smiled to him, and said, "My *Oneg Shabbos, Shabbos* delights."

Since the man practically invited him to look in the bag, *Rav* Galinsky peeked to see what types of goodies his friend had bought. He was shocked to see that this man's idea of *Oneg Shabbos* was newspapers and magazines.

While it is not *halachically* inappropriate (*Shabbos* should be a day for Torah and *tefillah*), it is a sad commentary concerning this man's perception of *Oneg Shabbos*.

In his inimitable manner, the *Maggid* presents an analogy to describe the man's obtuseness. On the day of a king's coronation, the future monarch sought to do something for the benefit of his kingdom. He met with his advisors and suggested that every citizen be allowed one request which he would fulfil. His advisors countered that would

break the royal treasury. Instead, they suggested that for one hour each week on a specific day, whoever presented his wish, would see it fulfilled.

Two days prior to the designated day, the lines were forming. People slept on the street. They would do anything to get in during that hour – which would allow for only so many people. Once the hour passed, regardless of the length of the line, the king's benevolence would halt.

The awaited moment had arrived, and the gates to the palace were opened as the people edged forward. Suddenly, out of nowhere, someone pushed through and went to the head of the line. How did he do it? He was the town leper, afflicted with the contagious, dread disease, covered from head to toe with pus-filled boils emitting a noxious odour.

Everyone was careful to give the intruder a wide berth. The guards were not prepared to permit this man, with his decrepit soiled clothes and foul-smelling body, to enter the palace. They scrubbed him from head to toe, gave him clean clothes and sprayed him with a powerful deodoriser. He was now as ready as he would ever be to greet the king.

"How can I help you?" the king asked. "My master, the king, I have a miserable life," the man began. "My wounds are painful; their odour drives people away from me. The only food that I eat is derived from the scraps that I find in the rubbish. I do not enjoy anything in life, except for one thing: When I scratch my skin, I have some pleasure. I wait for that moment.

There is, however, a problem. I am unable to reach my back. I ask that the king arrange for me to obtain two long brushes with which I will be able to scratch my back." The king agreed and had the royal scribe enter the leper's order for two brushes.



When the king saw the smiles on his advisors' faces, he asked them why they were laughing at this wretched man. They replied, "This man had a one-time opportunity, a chance of a lifetime, to ask the king to provide him with a specialist that would heal his pain and restore his body to its original healthy self. Instead, he asked for brushes. How pathetic!"

The leper looked at them and said, "No one tells me what to do. I want brushes! You will not deprive me of my two brushes."

Shabbos is Hashem's gift to His People, a gift which provides us with the opportunity to be with Hashem through prayer and study. Instead, this man's notion of *Oneg Shabbos* is reading a newspaper. He would rather have the brushes than the cure.

TORAH Sweets

The Accomplished Life Is Much Closer Than We Think - Rabbi Moshe Klein

A man was walking across the road when he was struck by a car. The impact was on his head which caused him to be comatose for two days before he finally regained consciousness. When he opened his eyes, his wife was there beside him. He told her: "You have always been beside me. When I went for all the major interviews and failed to clinch any of the jobs, you were there beside me, cutting out more ads for me to apply."

The wife got emotional while he continued, "Then I started work at this little firm and finally got to handle a big contract. I blew it because of one mistake. And you were there beside me. Then I

finally got another job after being laid off for some time. But I never seem to be promoted and my hard work was not recognized. As such, I remained in the same position from the day I joined the company till now. And you were there beside me." The woman's eyes brimmed with tears as she listened to her husband. "And now I had an accident and when I woke up, you were here beside me. There's something I'd really like to say to you..." She flung herself on the bed to hug her husband, sobbing with emotion.

"You know," he said. "I think you really bring me bad luck."

There are some people who have accomplished a lot in life and others who have failed at everything possible. Then, there is the group that always underachieves. Either due to a mistaken/false belief in themselves – or blaming others for their lost opportunities – many don't live up their potential and accomplish what they are meant to. Based on an idea our Parsha, we can challenge this belief and learn that major accomplishments are within reach.

In this week's Parsha, Vayakhel, we find that the Jewish nation brought a donation every day to the Mishkan (Tabernacle) to the point that the wise men came to Moshe and told them (Shemos 36:4-5), "*The people are bringing very much, more than is enough for the labor of the articles which Hashem had commanded to do.*" For some reason, this excessiveness was not needed. Moshe, in turn, made a cease-work order.

The Torah (ibid, 36:7) records that their efforts "*had been enough and more than enough*" and the people had stopped bringing. **The Ohr HaChaim Hakodesh** asks a question on this seemingly "contradictory" terminology. Was there enough or was there more than enough? It can't be both!

The Ohr HaChaim answers that this is coming to teach us the great love that Hashem has for His people. Hashem was concerned for the honor of each and every person who exerted themselves to bring

something for the Mishkan and Hashem didn't want any effort to go to waste. Although there was too much, Hashem made a miracle with the stuff that was unnecessary, in the end, there was an exact amount that was needed for the Mishkan.

There is a tremendous lesson hinted here. The Mishkan was the work of the Jewish people to bring Kedusha (holiness) into this world and that's why Hashem wanted every single member of the nation to be involved. The greatness wasn't in the items that were brought. Rather, it was in the desire the Jews had was the key component to bring down the Divine Presence, writes **Rav Tzadok Hakohen**. Each person brought what they felt was good. Although it may have looked like it was the bottom line and not the desire that was necessary, at the end of the day, it turns out that just the right amount was brought. If **everyone** didn't end up bringing their item, there would've been something missing.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל "Raise the Heads of Bnei Yisrael" (30:12)

The Rebbe of Ishbitz *zt'l* taught:

An animal's head is the same height as its body, representing that an animal can't use its mind to rule over its body - he can't control his natural urges. However, a human being holds his head above his body because he can use his mind to decide what he should do and what he shouldn't.

We attain this ability on Shabbos Shekalim when Moshe Rabbeinu comes and raises our heads.

The old model of travel was with animals. People rode horses and donkeys, or the horses pulled their chariots, and so on. Today, people ride in cars, trains, and airplanes. When the railroad system was first introduced, **the Shinover Rav *zt'l*** explained that people used to be greater than animals, therefore they rode on animals. Today, they aren't greater than animals anymore, but they are still greater than *domeim*, nanimate objects. So, they can ride on metal trains, but they don't have the right to ride animals.

A *bachur*, whose spiritual level was declining, asked **Reb Shalom Shwadron *zt'l*** for permission to travel to a particular place that was inappropriate for a yeshiva student. Reb Shalom Shwadron replied, "If you can answer my questions, you can go there." The *bachur* agreed.

Reb Shalom asked him, "It is better to be a human, or is it better to be an animal?"

The *bachur* replied, "Animals eat outdoors, they rummage through the garbage, they never wash up… It is certainly a greater honour to be a human being."

Reb Shalom showed him that there is another way to look at things. Animals lead tranquil lives. They find their meals wherever they go. They don't get into *machlokes*. They never have to take medication. But, on the other hand, humans have financial problems and get into disputes, one day with one person and the next day with another…"

"I never thought about that," the bachur said. "Perhaps it is better to be an animal. I wish I were an animal." Reb Shalom told him, "You don't have to worry about that. You are a perfect animal." Because if you can't control your urges, you are no different than an animal!"

A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.

Saying Of The Week - Rabbi Menachem Lomner



"People aren't objects so don't manhandle them."

The Torah (Shemos 35:1) says Moshe Rabbeinu gathered the Jewish people. Rashi (ibid.) points out that the word "*vayakhel*" really means that Moshe made them gather. A leader doesn't gather people with his hands, but with his words.

Here is something to think about when dealing with people: gentle words are the most important tool. Speaking softly and sensitively gets more accomplished than words of intimidation. Let us practice this approach as much as possible and witness just how effective it is!

Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, Zt"l, related a story that explains how the **Maharal of Prague** ascended to greatness. When the young Maharal became engaged to his wife, his future father-in-law promised a large dowry that would allow the budding Talmid Chacham to learn for many years. Unfortunately, he suddenly lost all his money. The Maharal's bride wrote him a letter, explaining that as her father could no longer afford to give what he had offered, the Maharal could end the engagement. He answered that he would never embarrass a Jewish girl by backing out of the shidduch. He agreed to wait until she could save up a little money to support them, and that would allow him to continue his learning.

The kallah understood very well how fortunate she was to be engaged to such a Talmid Chochom! She began selling homemade

baked goods in the marketplace, thus providing for her family and saving up money for her marriage. One day, a decorated soldier walked by and grabbed some bread from her basket. She chased him down and asked him why he had taken the bread without paying, as she needed the monies to support her family.

The soldier explained that he had not eaten in three days! He took off his coat, handed it to her, and told her that if he did not return in three days, the coat would be hers. Three days later, when the soldier had not returned, she examined the coat and found a pouch of precious stones in one of the pockets! She was able to get married with this money, and the Maharal was able to devote his entire days to complete Torah study, subsequently becoming the great Maharal MiPrague.

Comment: The Torah (Shemos 25:22) says "The men came with the women", as the women of Klal Yisroel led their husbands to donate gold and silver ornaments to the Mishkan.

***The Ramban** explains that the women knew well how fortunate they were to have the opportunity to donate to the Mishkan, so they rushed ahead of their husbands to give away their beloved jewellery and be part of this great Mitzvah!*

The page of Segulas and salvations

By Rabbi Rafael Avitan Shlita

Shabbat Shekalim

This Shabbat is special. Shabbat Shekalim is very special for the promise it has. Shabbat Shekalim doesn't just have a promise for yeshuot-salvation, it has a sworn statement for yeshuot for everything that you need, you can get this shabbat.

Let's imagine that any great tzaddik from our history, such as the Baba Sali, Rabi Nachman of breslev, the Ben Ish Chai, the Ba'al

Shem Tov, Rabi Shimon bar Yochai, or any of our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak or Yaakov, not only promise that you'll receive your salvation they swear that you'll receive it, how powerful is that statement?

On Shabbat Shekalim, do you know who swears to us that we'll have our yeshuot? Hashem the Master of the world, personally guarantees it!

What's the source for this?

Our sages tell us in medrash tanchuma parsha Ki- Tisa that Moshe Rabbenu said to Hashem... "Master of the world, after I pass away from this world won't I be remembered anymore?"

Meaning? Moshe Rabbenu was assigned to collect shekalim from the children of Israel, and with those funds, korbanot- animals for sacrifice were purchased. While we have the Beit Hamikdash- the holy Temple, we have korbanot, now that we don't have it, we don't bring sacrifices.

"So after I pass away" Moshe is saying, "I will no longer be remembered?"

Hashem responds to Moshe Rabbenu חייך - Your life- (a phrase to used when making a swear). "I swear, just like you stand here right now giving them Parshat Shekalim and raise up their heads. It'll be the same, year after year, that when they read this parsha in front of Me- you (Moshe) are standing there, raising their heads up."

This means that Hashem Himself swears (guarantees) to Moshe Rabbenu that every year when we come to parshat Shekalim, just like this week, you Moshe will stand over each and every person from Am Yisrael and you will raise his/ her head. What does it mean to raise his /her head? Someone who is lacking in something, a shidduch/zivug, parnassa, someone who has health issues… he/she will not walk around with their heads up high with pride, rather they will walk around with their heads facing downward.

Hashem makes a promise that on this Shabbat, Shabbat Shekalim, Moshe Rabbenu will stand there with Am Yisrael and make their heads rise with joy. It is the Shabbat during which Hashem swears to make everyone stand tall with satisfaction and "their heads help up high".

Not only is it Shabbat Shekalim it is also Shabbat Mevarchim for Rosh Chodesh Adar II.

What should one do?

-One should try to make it a point to go to Shul Shabbat morning in order to listen to Parashat Shekalim. Before listening to the Torah portion, one should have kavana and pray to Hashem the following: "Hashem, just as I am listening to the parasha, help me. Please take me out of my misery, which is causing me to walk around with my head facing down. Take me out of my low and bring me to a better place where I will be happy, and which will cause me to walk around with my head up high." We are essentially asking Hashem to accomplish his vow that he will give us what we lack. (Whoever is unable to get to shul over shabbat should read Parashat Mishpatim, found in Shemos Perek 30 Passuk 11-16 inclusive).

-After hearing (or reading) the Torah portion, one should read Perek 100 in Tehillim 7 times.

-Ask for all your needs, everything that is causing you to walk around with your face facing down, ask Hashem to give you all the things you are lacking. This Shabbat is your chance to get Hashem's promise for salvation

"Time is rare and precious and money cannot buy it." ~~ Rabbi Yaacov Emden

Torah Tavlin

זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל־הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מַחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ 30:13

In the early 1950's, the various walks of life in Jewish neighbourhoods in Brooklyn were quite different than it is today. The mood of the Jewish community was not very content, as people were desperately trying to rebuild what they had lost in the previous horrifying years of the war.

In one particular shul, every morning, a crowd of solicitors would gather outside to collect their measly dollar in order to sustain themselves and their families for the day. The more fortunate would try to help by giving a few cents or maybe even a nickel!



Every morning as **HaGaon HaMekubal, R' Yitzchok Hoffman zt"l** would walk out of shul in the morning, he would hand his son, Pinchos, a nickel to give to one of the "meshulachim." Young Pinchos took a liking to one particular individual and every day he would hand him the nickel.

One day, however, Pinchos decided to give the coin to someone else. Upon seeing this, R' Yitzchok handed his son another nickel and told him to give it to the "regular" recipient. Then, he taught him a very valuable lesson. "My son, you must learn that a person must never stop giving charity," explained R' Yitzchok. "If you started giving to one person, you don't ever stop. Even if you want to give to another cause, you add it on to your capitol, but you don't stop giving someone for no reason!"

R' Pinchos, now a prominent member of a respectable community in his own right, recalls this lesson from almost seventy years ago! It

is embedded in his lev vanefesh and frequently, he gives it over to the younger generations.

The half shekel that was given year in year out in the Bais Hamikdash was the bare minimum requirement and was mandatory. Charity too is mandatory. Give, give, and don't stop giving, and Hashem will give you too!



R' Chanoch Henach Hakohen of Aleksander zt"l would say:

"The significance of the Machatzis Hashekel, in which Klal Yisroel were commanded to give a half shekel to the Mishkan, corresponds to the holy, pure half of a Jew, his G-dly soul, a part of Hashem (**חלק אלוק ממעל**). But one still need to rectify the second half, the body, and purify it and elevate it through Torah study and good deeds."



Salvation In The Merit Of Shabbos

The Medresh (*Tanchuma Tisa* 3) writes: Moshe said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Ribono Shel Olam! When I die, no one will mention me!"

Hakadosh Baruch Hu replied, "I swear, just as you are now standing and teaching them *parashas Shekalim* and you raise their heads, so will it be every year: When the nation reads this *parashah* before Me, it is like you are standing there and raising their heads."

What does it mean to have a raised head?

When a person experiences hardship, his shoulders droop, and he walks bent over. But when we read this *parashah*, Moshe lifts our heads, and we stand erect. This means, on this Shabbos, all our problems will be resolved. The truth is, every Shabbos has this *segulah*.

The Shem MiShmuel writes in the name of his father, the **Avnei Nezer *zt'l***, "For all problems, the salvation comes from Shabbos.

Even if someone has an ill person in his home, if he can refrain from complaining and from thinking about his troubles, he will be healed."

He proves this from the following Chazal (*Shabbos* 12.): "When one visits the sick on Shabbos he says **שבת היא מלזעוק ורפואה קרובה לבוא** -'Shabbos we don't shout, and the *refuah* is coming quickly.' Reb Meir would say, **יכולה היא שתרחם**, and Rashi explains that the merit of Shabbos can bring you compassion, by honouring Shabbos and refraining from having *tzaar* on this day."

The Gemara discusses an ill person. However, it also applies to all kinds of troubles and problems. If one doesn't have *tzaar* on Shabbos, this in itself will bring him Hashem's compassion, and the tzaar will disappear (*Shem MiShmuel*).

Reb Yitzchak Parchi writes, "We saw with our own eyes people who had a *tzarah* before Shabbos, and on Shabbos they forgot about their *tzarah* entirely, and were happy with Shabbos, as it is proper to be happy on Shabbos. They didn't have any distress or worries on Shabbos because of their *tzaros*, and they merited that they were saved from their troubles in miraculous ways."

On Shabbos, one is supposed to feel **כאילו כל מלאכתך עשויה**, as if you have nothing to take care of, and everything is perfect in your life (Rashi, *Shemos* 20:9).

When one practices this on Shabbos, it actually becomes so. Everyone should find ways to be happy on Shabbos and avoid being sad. Shevet HaKahasi (vol.3 180) writes that **Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l*** didn't put on new shoes on Shabbos. He first wore them on the weekdays so that they would be broken into a little before Shabbos. He didn't want to feel the discomfort on Shabbos. We should also seek to avoid feeling distress on Shabbos.

Shabbos is (*Bamidbar* 10:10), **יום שמחתכם**, a day of joy, and when we are happy on Shabbos, the *tzaros* doesn't return.

Food for Thought By Rabbi S. Y. Zevin

A serious-minded chassid once came to visit **Rabbi Elimelech of Lyzhinsk**, who sensed that his guest had not yet learned to refine and elevate his appetite for food. He decided therefore to invite him to join him at breakfast. The chassid felt honoured indeed. The table was set with rye bread, salt, and a bread knife, and they washed their hands and pronounced HaMotzi, the blessing over bread. The Rebbe bit off a little from his slice, and had barely swallowed it when he began to complain to himself, addressing himself by the diminutive Yiddish form of his name: "Melech, Melech! Just look how you're eating, and with what ugly desire you're chewing the bread. Why, you want to swallow up all the bread at once! You really are worse than an animal." But then he answered himself as follows: "No, I don't eat out of animal desire, but simply to satisfy my hunger, for if I don't eat, I won't be able to study Torah and serve my Maker."



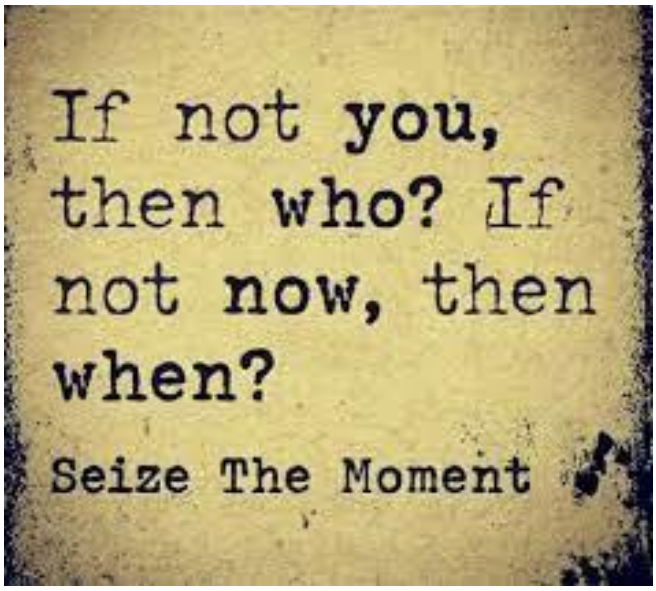
He cut himself another morsel of bread, and again, this time before swallowing it, chided himself in a harsh undertone: "Melech, Melech! Whom do you think you're fooling? Whom are you trying to convince that your only intention in eating is to keep your soul alive so that you can serve your Maker? It's all a bunch of lies! Just look - every part of you is fraught with animal desire, and if you could, you would swallow your whole meal in one gulp. How could you bring yourself to lie, and say that you eat for the sake of heaven?"

After a thoughtful pause he again answered himself in a sober whisper: "No, in fact it is not an animal urge that impels me to eat.

But what is there to be done? I am fashioned of physical matter, a creature of flesh and blood, and I am obliged to pay this material body its due, otherwise it won't want to serve me. So I do have to eat bread, but simply because of the necessity of keeping myself alive." And with that he gave himself another slice. Overhearing the muttered monologue, the guest's heart was humbled within him. He would make a fresh start! Rebbe Elimelech thereupon rounded off his breakfast by reciting the Grace after Meals, confident that his novel prescription had accomplished its purpose.

Torah Compilations with Yossi

When talking about the building of the Mishkan, the Torah tells, us "every man whose heart inspired him" would donate to the Mishkan. The Ramban tells us that there were many things that they had to sew and build for the Mishkan, crafted in very specific ways, yet none of these people were professionally trained in any of this work. They just found the ability in themselves to do it.



Every single Jew has endless potential to do great things. With just a little inspiration to do something for the sake of Hashem, all of a sudden, they get the Divine Help from Hashem to unlock this greatness, that others never imagined they could attain.

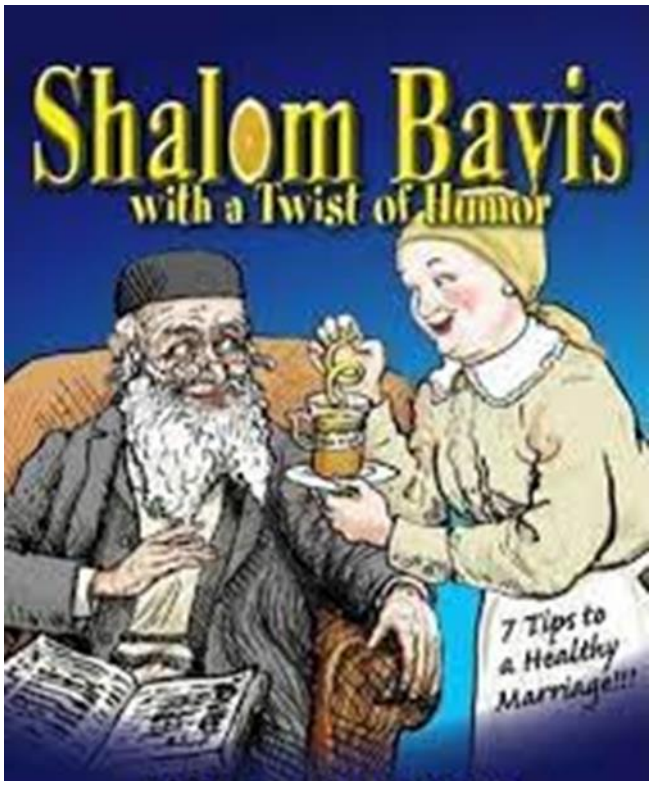
I heard a thought about this from Rabbi Yaakov Bender, who besides for being the Rosh Yeshiva at Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, he was also one of the founders of the Flatbush division of Hatzalah. He would often say "I heard a few times about a man named R' Hershel Webber, who once witnessed a Jew collapse on the street

in Williamsburg and die waiting for the slow response of the city ambulances.

R' Hershel was so alarmed by this, it inspired him to take a CPR course, and convinced his friends to do the same. Next they bought some oxygen tanks, and that is how Hatzalah, today an internationally recognized organization, was formed.

Friends, we need to seize the moment and commit to wonderful things, when we have a little strength we will be amazed at what that commitment can lead to. All it takes is a little inspiration to give us the fuel we need to accomplish our dreams. Let us dream great things, and be inspired to accomplish our dreams, with great fire like never before.

Torah U'Tefilah – Rabbi Shmuel Winzelberg



Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh- Chapter 7: Yom HaShabbos

שֶׁיִּשְׁתַּדֵּל לְהַכְנִיס שָׁלוֹם בֵּין אִישׁ לְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּבֵין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ 12. *One should try to bring peace between a man and his wife, and between one another.*

Hillel teaches us in Pirkei Avos (1:12) that one should strive to be a Talmid of Aharon HaKohein, to love peace and pursue it. We learn in Masechta Kallah Rabbasi (3:4) the righteous actions of Aharon. When he heard of two people who had a quarrel, he would go over to one of them and say to him, "May peace be upon you, my master!" The person would reply, "Peace be upon you, my master and teacher! What does my master seek here with me?" Aharon would then say,

"Your friend has sent me to you to appease you, because he feels bad that he offended you."

Immediately, the man would reflect to himself, "A righteous person like Aharon has come to appease me!" He would exclaim, "My master! It was I who offended him!" Aharon would then go to the other individual and say the same thing to him. Later, when the two would meet, they would say to each other, "Please forgive me for the offence that I did to you!" and there would be peace between them.

Similarly, when Aharon heard of a husband and wife who had an argument, he would go to the husband and talk with him, until he wanted to go and make peace with his wife. Because of this, all of Klal Yisroel loved Aharon.

Additionally, the Torah tells us that when Moshe Rabbeinu passed away, the Bnei Yisroel cried for him (Devarim 34:8). But when Aharon passed away, the Torah says that all of Bnei Yisroel cried for thirty days (Bamidbar 20:29), which teaches us that even the women and children cried for him. Furthermore, it has been taught that when Aharon passed away, eighty thousand young men named Aharon followed his body. They were the children of the couples who had gotten into an argument that Aharon had helped to restore their peace and harmony. In gratitude to Aharon, these parents named their sons after him. This was why all of Klal Yisroel loved him.

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, and Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt"l, once issued a letter where they especially asked that we be very careful, in these perilous times, not to cause pain or suffering to one another. They pointed out that in the generation of the wicked king Achav, the Bnei Yisroel were victorious over their enemies because there was no Machlokes, no strife or fighting, among each other. They therefore requested that we should put in greater effort to make peace among ourselves.

Rav Shalom Shwadron, zt"l, would relate the following story. **Rav Zelig Braverman, zt"l**, used to learn together with a certain man

who had very bad eyesight. One day, this man opened up his heart and told his sad tale to Rav Braverman. "I have a very difficult time at home. My wife insists that I help her with the housework, but because of my poor eyesight, this is impossible. However, she really needs the help, and she won't take no for an answer. When she sees that I have not done what she requested of me, she insults me terribly, and it literally breaks my heart. I don't know how to change the situation. Please help me!"

A few days later, the man arrived in a much happier state of mind. He said, "Rav Zelig, you must be Davening really well to help me. Today, my wife did not insult me at all. On the contrary, it appears as though she no longer has any complaints, and Baruch Hashem, my Shalom Bayis has returned!"

However, the truth was that this man did not know just how hard Rav Zelig had worked to restore their happiness. Rav Zelig had been observing this couple's comings and goings and had learned that when the husband went to Shul to Daven, the wife went out to shop. The moment he realized this, he let himself into their home and got to work. Rav Zelig washed the dishes and cleaned the floors and did all the jobs that the wife had asked her husband do.

When the wife later came home, she saw that her husband had done his chores after all. Meanwhile, the husband thought that his wife had finally seen how hard it was for him to do those jobs, and she had taken care of the tasks herself. Naturally, each admired the other for this sacrifice, and there was peace once again between them.

When Rav Shalom Shwadron told over this story, he remarked, "It is astounding to what lengths the Gedolim would go to, to ensure that there would be peace in Jewish households. They were truly students of Aharon HaKohein, who not only loved peace, but they pursued it!"



Diversity is a Tapestry – Rabbi Asher Sinclair

Imagine a world where everyone looked the same. Same eyes, same expression, same hight, everything the same. Wouldn't that be a great world. We would all get along so well.



And yet Hashem created the exact opposite. A world where everyone is different to everyone else. We are all different hights. We have different interests. We have different personalities. We all have different strengths, different weaknesses, and different opinions.

All these differences lead us to discord, lashon hora and sinas chinam. So why did Hashem create so many differences?

The Chofetz Chaim said that the bracha of **בּוֹרֵא נְפָשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחֶסְרוֹנָן** means that Hashem created a myriad of different people and each one of us has our own strengths, but more importantly, our own weaknesses.

A doctor can't farm, so the farmer will have to help make his food. The farmer never went to medical school, so the doctor will have to help heal the farmer.

Hashem created a giant tapestry of different people so that we all need each other. And that brings us to fulfil our purpose in this world, to create a world of kindness- **עולם חסד יבנה** and fulfil the purpose of being here.

The next time you get frustrated by a person who is so different from you, realise that Hashem made him or her different, so that they can play a starring role in the world's tapestry of kindness.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk - Great Moments in Jewish Invention



When you think of great Jewish inventions, do you think of the laser? Stainless steel? Google? What about Gefilte fish or the Crockpot? Yes, these are all wonderful Jewish inventions, but this week, we learn of the invention of an item many of us have in our earliest memories – the Tzedaka box!

The Haftarah portion of Parshas Shekalim relates how King Yoash (who became king at the ripe old age of 7) admonished the Kohanim for not properly maintaining the Bais HaMikdash. To provide funds for its upkeep, he took a box, made a hole in its door, and voila! The Tzedaka box was born. When people came to the Temple, they would put money in the box and it would be used for maintenance and upkeep.

Why a door with a hole in it instead of an open box? Probably not to deter thieves, because it was situated at the Holy Temple. Rather, we may conjecture that the purpose of giving in this manner was a lesson in giving.

When you give, don't regret it or try to take it back. The money or kindnesses go one way, but they are always in safe keeping. The benefit will remain long after the money is gone, so don't try to go back on your gift.

Also, when there's a door on the box, we can't see what's inside. When we give, we shouldn't try to determine if others have given or whether "enough" has been raised. We should focus on doing what we can to help, and not consider what others have done.

Russia Invades Ukraine

The Vilna Gaon (Rabbi Kremer, Rabbi Eilyahu ben Shlomo Zalman, Gaon Rabeinu Eliyahu, GR"A) (1720-1797) in the 1700s, predicted that before the arrival of Moshiach, Russia will become a superpower. Why is this?

There is a Kabalistic explanation. Russia is from the klipa of tumah (shell of impurity) called Dubiel; which in turn originated from Paras (Persia) and Edom.

The Vilna Gaon concluded that when Russia enters the Crimea (Ukraine) this is a sign that Russia has reached its peak and one should start to soon hear the "bells" or shofar sound] of Moshiach. He went further to mention that when Russia enters Constantinople (Istanbul) Turkey, that will be the time to put on Shabbos clothes and to go out and greet Moshiach.

The current year 5,776 is one year after the most recent "Shemita year in Eretz Yisrael. The Talmud teaches that the year after Shemita, Moshaich ben Dovid will arrive.

"Man was given two ears and one tongue, so that he may listen more than speak."

Matzav.com

Ikvesa Demeshicha: Rav Elya Ber Wachtfogel Dons Shabbos Clothing as Russian Warships Move In



Rav Elya Ber Wachtfogel, *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshiva Gedolah Zichron Moshe of South Fallsburg, put on *Shabbos* clothing last week when he heard news of the movement of Russian warships. The response of the *rosh yeshiva* is based on a *Kabbolah* that he has that when the Russians cross the Dardanelles River, it will trigger the start of a series of events before *Moshiach* comes, and therefore, in his words, "*Men ken shoin untun Shabbosdike kleider*."

Rav Elya Ber recently told a *talmid*, "I've been waiting for this moment for 70 years."

Matzav.com learned from those close to Rav Elya Ber that he first heard this *kabbolah* when he was 10 years old from his father, the *mashgiach*, Rav Nosson Wachtfogel. Rav Nosson heard it from Rav Doniel Movoshovitz of the Kelmer Talmud Torah, who heard it from the Alter of Kelm, who heard it from someone who heard it from Rav Chaim Volozhiner, who heard it from the Vilna Gaon.

"Make sure to include yourself in the list of things you need to take care of this week." ~ Based on the teachings of Hillel HaZaken (Midrash, Vayikra Rabbah 34:3).

The Circle at Your Shabbos Table - Rabbi Yitzchok Landa

Highlights from the Midrash



Where did the Nesi'im get the precious stones used for the Avnei Shoham and Avnei Milu'im?

• **Targum Yonasan** says the stones were in the Pishon River, and they evaporated into rainclouds. The clouds brought them to the desert, where they fell.

• **Midrash Rabbah** and the Gemara (Yoma 75a) say that the jewels fell with the mann, and the Nesi'im collected them and saved them.

• **Maharam MiRottenberg** writes that the jewels fell with the Mabul and were passed down to Bnei Yisrael.

• **Midrash Chemdas Yamim** records that the jewels were carried into the Yam Suf with the rivers that flow into the sea, and they were spit out by the waves as the Yidden passed through.

• **Chasam Sofer** explains that the stones were considered a donation by the Nesi'im, even according to the opinion that they fell with the mann, because the Nesi'im had to give up some of their share of edible mann to make space for the jewels.

"Attitude is a choice. Happiness is a choice. Optimism is a choice. Kindness is a choice. Giving is a choice. Respect is a choice. Whatever choice you make makes you. Choose wisely."

The Gift of Shabbos – Rabbi Yaakov Rachimi

This week's sedrah begins with the words **וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.** Moshe rabeinu gathered all the Yidden together. Why?

Chazal say because he wanted to teach them about Shabbos- **שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן**

The greatest gift that we have is Shabbos. Why? Because a person has to understand, that it is to take a break from the rat-race of the world. A person works six days a week, but remember, who gives you the money? Hakados Baruch Hu. What is the reminder? Shabbos.

Shabbos is a day that we focus on Hashem. You can't cook, you can't drive, you can't write etc. Hashem limits us in what we can do, so that we can zoom in and focus solely on Hashem. Shabbos is like a meeting with Hashem. Life is about serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu. "The money that you made the rest of the week" says hashem, "comes from Me. "This displays the fact that Hashem runs the world. Shabbos is the big sign that says, "In G-d we trust." Thank You Hashem for giving us the beautiful day of Shabbos, to remind us how awesome it is to serve You, and that life is all about Torah and mitzvos.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn- Project Mesorah

As I speak to all of you today, you know very well what's going on in Ukraine. And how many Yidden are in trouble in Kyiv and other places are on the run. The reason why I tell you this, is because I think that there is an element of **עמו אנכי בצרה** – We should try to feel their pain. Of course, davening and giving tzedakah is a fabulous help. But I want to tell you a different way, and this is what I plan to do this Shabbos.

There is an absolutely incredible **Klei Yakar**. It says in the Pasuk 37:12 **וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ מִסְגֶּרֶת טַפַּח סָבִיב וַיַּעַשׂ זֵר־זָהָב לְמִסְגַּרְתּוֹ סָבִיב** . Bezalal made

a מִסְגֶּרֶת - moulding around the Shulchan. On top of the moulding, he made a זֵר־זָהָב – a golden crown. A very similar Pasuk is written in parshas Trumah 25:25 וְעָשִׂיתָ לּוֹ מִסְגֶּרֶת טֹפַח סָבִיב וְעָשִׂיתָ זֵר־זָהָב לְמִסְגַּרְתּוֹ סָבִיב .

The Klei Yakar says that there is great significance in the מִסְגֶּרֶת - moulding around the Shulchan. Because when you eat food at the Shulchan, a person has to be careful to not be over-indulgent in the manner that he eats.

And then he says something so phenomenal. That the זֵר־זָהָב – the golden crown that is on it, represents the Birchas hamazon that we say afterwards. He says, that we make three brachos. ז=זון, ה=הארץ, ב=בונה . Now, I would say that as part of עמו אנכי בצרה , we should eat a little bit less food this Shabbos. Feel the pain of the Yidden in Ukraine. Don't forget that **The Baal ShemTov, the Maharsha and Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Berditchev** are all buried there. This is a very holy place.

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וַיְמַלֵּא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹקִים בְּחָכְמָה בִּתְבוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה

He imbued him with a G-dly spirit, wisdom, understanding, knowledge — and in every craft." (35: 31)



The Torah testifies that Hashem granted Betzalel a "G-dly spirit, wisdom, understanding, knowledge —and in every craft." Yet the Torah then says that Betzalel "thought thoughts," which implies, writes **Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira**, that Betzalel still needed to use his own mind to create the Mishkan. If Hashem filled him with all

the knowledge and skills that were needed, what did Betzalel need to think about?

Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira answered that even with all the knowledge in the world, Betzalel still needed to use his own creativity in applying those talents in the most effective way. Essentially, therefore, it was Betzalel's creativity which contributed towards the building of the Mishkan — the place where Hashem would be most manifest in the world.

So too, each of *us* have been granted incredible and unique talents and tools to make Hashem's presence more manifest in the world. Yet, it is still up to us to reveal those skills and work out *how* to apply them. Perhaps the Torah is teaching us in this verse that the way to do this is to "think thoughts" — contemplate how we can use our abilities and creativity to bring Godliness to the world.

In fact, **Rav Chaim Shmuelevits** would often repeat this message when he spoke before Neila on Yom Kippur, that anyone who has not lost at least one night's sleep over Hashem's lack of presence in the world and what *he* can do about it has no place standing before Hashem on this Holy day.

Machshava Tova - Rebbi Garfinkel Lakewood Cheder

Boruch Hashem we were zoche to speak to **Rav Getzel Fried Shlit"a** this week and he told us a very Geshmak'e vort.

The word **ויקהל** is Gematria the word **מקוה**. - A gathering of Klal Yisroel together has the Kedusha and Tahara like a Mikva.

When **Rav Ahron of Chernobyl Zatza"l** was very old and not able to go into the Mikva, he would go into the Shul with his Talmidim and say that it was like going into the Mikva – **מקוה ישראל השם** - a gathering of Klal Yisroel brings the Shechina.

Working on our Middos

Rav Yaakov Bender said over a story that happened with his Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, zt"l**, of the Mirrer Yeshivah. There was a Bochur in the Yeshivah who struggled with an addiction. A few Bachurim approached Rav Shmuel and insisted that this Bachur be expelled from the Yeshivah.

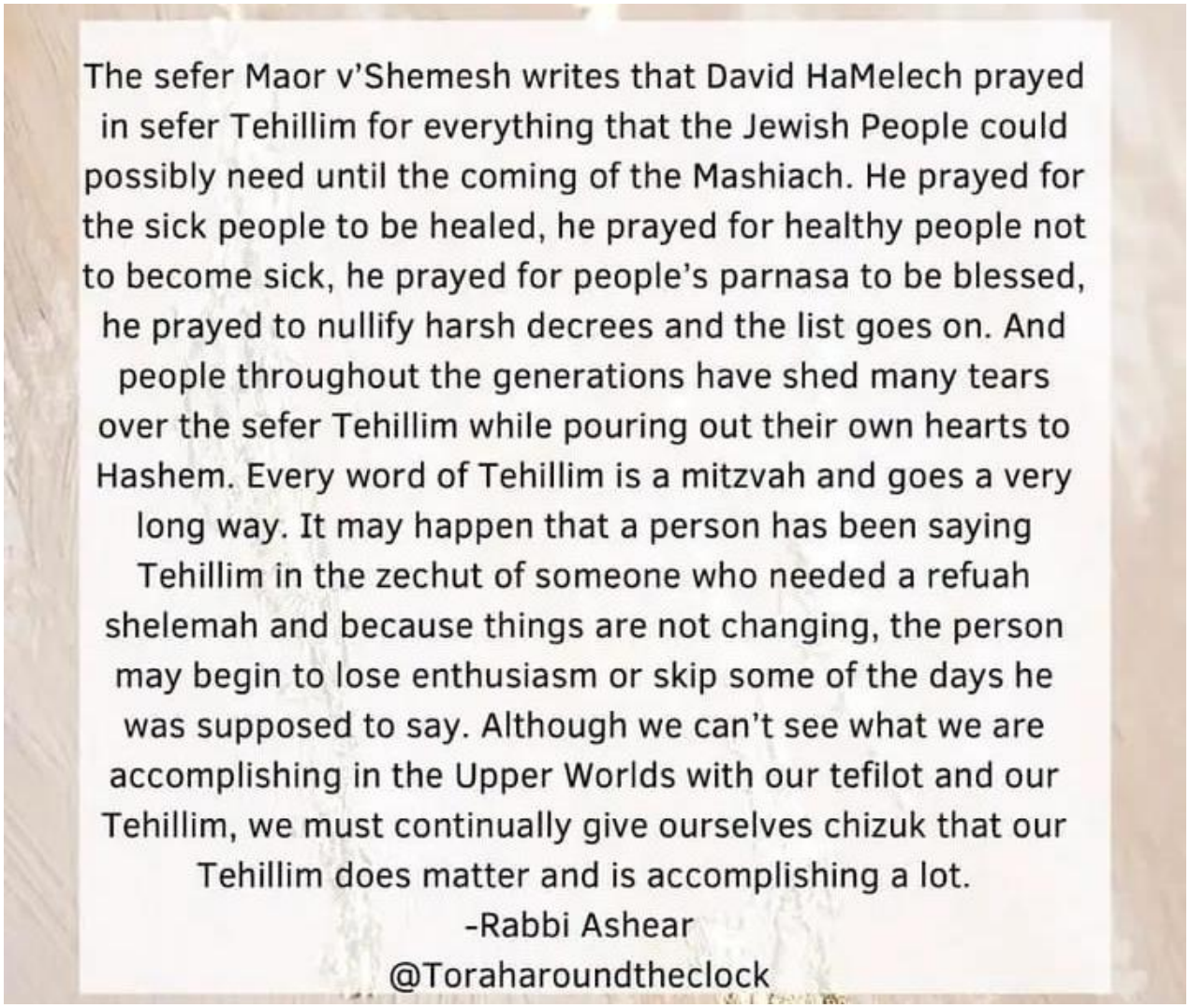
When he heard this, Rav Shmuel got very emotional. He looked at them and asked with determination, "Did you fast forty Ta'aneisim before you came here to speak to me? If not, then I'm not ready to throw him out!"

Rav Bender said that he learned from this the tremendous sacrifice Rebbeim make for their Talmidim. Much later, Rav Bender related this story at the Shivah for Rav Shmuel Berenbaum. He said, "I know who this Talmid is, and in fact, I was standing next to him at the Levayah. Today, he is a Choshuveh Talmid Chacham."

Rav Bender related this story at the annual dinner for Yeshivah Darchei Torah. During that time, there was a boy in the Yeshivah who was faltering. It had reached a point where the Rebbeim involved felt that it was soon time for a call to this boy's parents, and suggest that they find a more suitable Yeshivah for him.

However, after a few weeks, this boy started to improve in every aspect. His learning improved, as well as his Davening, and his interaction with other boys was doing much better as well.

The Menahel, **Rav Zevi Trenk**, called his mother and inquired as to what contributed to her son's sudden change for the better. She answered that she heard Rav Bender say the story of Rav Shmuel Berenbaum at the dinner and she thought to herself, "If Rav Shmuel can fast for a Talmid, then I can surely fast for my son!" She said that she started to fast forty fasts, and that is when she saw her son started improving!



Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Celebrating From Afar

In 1778, **R' Akiva Eiger** (1761–1837), just 17 years old, married. Unfortunately, most of his family including his parents could not attend the wedding. Among those who were unable to attend was his uncle, **R' Wolf Eiger** (1756–1795), one of the renowned Jewish leaders at the time. Instead he sent a letter. He writes, "All of the leaders of the city are rejoicing together at the celebration made on your behalf."

R' Akiva Eiger responded to this letter: 'A thousand thanks to my master regarding what he did, to rejoice on the day of my wedding publicly, which is a sure sign to the strength of his love, though I don't know why [he celebrated like this]…'

A similar story took place with R' Avraham Grodzinski (1883–1944), the mashgiach of the Slabodka yeshiva, when he was visiting Warsaw.





He suddenly glanced at his watch and began to sing and dance. He explained, "At this moment one of my students is getting married in Slabodka. Although I am unable to participate personally at his wedding and fulfil the great mitzvah of gladdening the chosson, nevertheless I am rejoicing even from afar, as I feel very happy for him."

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez - וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

The gathering together of the B'nei Yisrael, and the first command of the mitzvah of Shabbos, hint to the true kedusha of Shabbos.

During the week, we are busy with **מלאכה**. We are preoccupied with business, livelihood, and other things. On Shabbos, we take a break from our hectic daily routine. We have time to gather together in shul and daven for hours. We have plenty of time to sit at a shiur uninterrupted, or with a chavrusah…

These are 'gatherings' of kedusha which we have time for on Shabbos. On this special day, we have the great opportunity to get closer to Hashem and the Torah.

The letters of וַיַּקְהֵל spell out: **וּ-בַיּוֹם הַ-שְּׁבִיעִי יִ-הְיֶה לָ-כֶם קֹ-דֶשׁ - שמנה לחמו**.

The Beis Hamikdosh



Harav Matisyahu Solomon said over in the name of his Rebbi, **Reb Elya Lopian** - A fellow is walking, and he wants to go see the King. He's walking in a beautiful garden with magnificent flowers. The landscape is breath-taking, trees, and a gorgeous, gorgeous display of bushes. It's like a botanical garden of incredible magnificence. - As he gets closer and closer, his anticipation builds and whets his appetite. Imagine what the palace will look like. Then he walks into a clearing and he looks, and he sees the palace is a disaster. It's completely destroyed. There's nothing there. It's impossible to even imagine that it's there.

He asked, how could it be? I saw somebody lives here. Why would there be such beautiful landscaping if no one lived here? The fellow answered, you don't understand. The palace is under construction, and that's the reason why it looks like such a disaster, but one day the palace will truly be magnificent.

Reb Elya Lopian says that we say in **עָלֵינוּ, הוּא אֱלֹקֵינוּ אֵין עוֹד**'. We established that there is a Creator to this world. **בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת**', in the heavens above and the earth below. There is no shaila in our mind that there is a Creator. If that's the case, then Ribono Shel Olam, ' **עַל כֵּן נְקַוֶּה לְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ לִרְאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתִפְאֶרֶת עֻזֶּךָ**'. We await to see your palace. Currently we understand it's under construction. But because we recognize that there's a creator, we know that there's going to be a palace built there. If you look around

the world, we see such incredible beauty in the world. We have so many gifts that we can appreciate.

But we also see chorban. We see destruction and disaster and tragedy all around us. Sometimes collectively for the Jewish people and sometimes in our very own lives. But we must know that since the Ribono Shel Olam has proven that He is here and He's our Creator, and the landscaping is so magnificent then one day very soon, we will be zoche to see all of that chorban, all of that tragedy gone forever.

The building that is under construction, whether it's our own lives, or the building of the Beis HaMikdash will iy"H be completed and it will be more beautiful than we could have ever imagined. We await for that day.

L'Maaseh

A troubled boy wanted a fresh start in a new place so **R' Kalman Krohn zt"l** took it upon himself to arrange for a ticket to Eretz Yisroel and funds to pay an avreich to learn with him everyday, and he told the boy not to let him down.

A short while later, the boy had a major setback and did something he shouldn't have had. R' Kalman heard about it and the boy knew that he had found out, and dreaded facing him.

A few days later, the phone rang and it was Rabbi Krohn. "You know how to become a millionaire?", R' Kalman asked, and without waiting for an answer, continued, "I'll tell you!

A smart investor buys stocks which are on the rise. When they go down a bit, he doesn't sell them, but holds on and makes a fortune. I invested in you and I know that even though you slipped, you will rise again, and I will be rich!"

The boy remained learning in the Mir Yeshiva for over ten years!

Law and Order By Rabbi Yechiel Spero



The following story took place on a moshav in Israel that was comprised mostly of shomer Shabbat families. All workers in the moshav knew that they had to stop their work before Shabbat. Working on Shabbat was simply not an option. One Friday evening, however, one of the members of the moshav ran into the shul in a frenzy.

Right outside the limits of the moshav, a team of construction workers repairing the road were still working as Shabbat approached, and they appeared to be in no rush to leave. This member of the moshav had pleaded with the crew to wrap up now and return on Sunday morning but they would hear nothing of it. The bulldozers, dump trucks and other miscellaneous vehicles rumbled along, and a crowd of protesters quickly gathered. Something had to give, as the two sides were on a collision course.

Finally, the confrontation came to a head as a man in his late fifties, heavily tanned and sporting a healthy build, stepped forward. As foreman on the site, he declared that he would be more than willing to continue the job on Sunday as long as he received orders from the "Big Boss." And as of yet, he had not. Hearing this, the uproar increased, with no apparent resolution in sight.

Suddenly, a diminutive man stepped forward. Everyone knew Moshe, but he was a quiet person who rarely drew attention to himself. Moshe made his way to the front of the crowd and

addressed the foreman, "You're waiting for a notification? Is that what you're waiting for?"

Moshe rolled up his sleeves and it appeared that he was preparing for a fight – although he was the least likely person to revert to physical assault. By now Moshe was standing front and center, staring at the foreman, passion in his voice and fire in his eyes. "Do you need a certificate that we are all Jews and that the Torah commands us to keep the Holy Shabbat?"

Bracing for the inevitable, the group prepared themselves for the battle of words to escalate into a full-blown fistfight. But suddenly Moshe thrust his arm forward, "Here it is! Branded into my arm! It is my membership number. It was burned into my arm in Auschwitz so that I would never forget that I am a Jew! No matter what, no matter when!"

Pointing to his arm, Moshe screamed, "This is where it is written. Here it is! Is this not enough of a command from our Supervisor that we can never work on His Shabbat?!" Moshe, his eyes filled with tears, stopped; his heavy breathing could be heard by all. His pain and pride had joined together in one unforgettable moment. Then, slowly, Moshe rolled down his sleeve, turned, and walked away.

Suddenly the foreman ran after him and grabbed him, "I know! I also know!" He too rolled up his sleeve and bared the numbers tattooed on his arm. They stared together at their numbers, and then cried on each other's shoulders. The entire assemblage watched the awesome sight of these two survivors sharing an eternal, unspoken bond. Members of the same "club," the emotional foreman hugged his new friend and promised that not only would he stop working now, but he would never work on Shabbat again!

After all, the "Big Boss" had given the order. (Touched by a Story)

Short And Sweet Story Of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin



Reb Yisroel Grossman was once learning with the **Brisker Rav, Harav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, ZT"L**. Two ten-year-old boys entered the Rav's study and stated that they had two questions to ask the Rav. The Brisker Rav welcomed them with a smile and said that they should ask. They asked the first question as the Rav listened intently.

When they finished, he thought for a few minutes, then responded that it was a very good question and that he didn't have an answer.

The children got excited that their first question was so good that they presented the second question with gusto. Again, the Rav replied, "Another very good question, to which I also don't have an answer!"

As the children began walking out of the room, the Rav told them, "Tell your parents that you came to me, asked your questions, and that I said that I didn't have answers."

Reb Grossman was stunned. The great Brisker Rav, who fielded the toughest questions from great Torah scholars around the world, couldn't answer the questions of two 10-year-old boys?!

He asked the Rav for an explanation, and the answer he received is a core lesson in educating our youth. The Rav said that we see many young students who shine with great potential, who learn well, and seem to be destined for greatness. Yet, after a number of years, they lose their love for learning and peel off into other interests and ventures.

Why is that? Because when they were young, nobody appreciated them, and no one showed them any deference nor interest. Therefore, these disillusioned young men feel that "If no one values or treasures us, why should we push ourselves to learn?"

The Brisker Rav explained, "I showed interest in these boys and their questions. I made as if I could not answer their queries. Now they will return home, tell their parents with pride how they "stumped the Rav" and their will to learn will be re-energized.

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlit"a, asked his father-in-law, **Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l**, for advice on how to address the Shidduch crisis. Many wonderful young men and women are having great difficulty in finding their Bashert.

Rav Elyashiv replied, "There is one, and only one piece of advice. And that is to Daven."

Rav Zilberstein responded to him, "They have been Davening for quite some time already, to the point that their lips are dried out."

Rav Elyashiv said, "Let them continue Davening, and they will see Yeshuos, salvation from Hashem." Rav Zilberstein then took this same question and answer to **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt"l**, and asked his question. "They claim that they have not stopped Davening, and yet, they have not seen any sign of salvation. How can we understand this?"

Rav Shteinman got up from his chair, went over to the bookcase and removed a Navi, Melachim II, and turned the pages to Perek 4, which relates the story of Ovadyah HaNavi's wife, who cried out to Elisha HaNavi, "Your servant, my husband, died, and you know that he was a man who feared Hashem. The creditor that we owe much money to has seized my two sons to become his slaves, as reimbursement for the debt."

Rav Shteinman said, "The Radak writes that Ovadyah's wife Davened 265 Tefilos, and only then, after she had Davened this amount of times, did she merit to have her Tefilos answered.

This means that had she Davened only 264 times, she would not have received a response from Shamayim. This teaches us that one can cry with fiery passion, Davening to Hashem 264 times, and still remain unsuccessful.

Why is that? Because it is that next Tefilah, the 265th Tefilah, that would be the finishing touch, the one that Hashem is waiting for. The only option is to continue Davening with the same level of feeling and emotion. At a certain point, it will happen!"

Sanctifying His Name By Rabbi Shraga Freedman

If a person lives with the sense that he has a mission to accomplish even in the context of his (seemingly) mundane business dealings, he can be capable of performing earth-shattering acts of kiddush Hashem. That is exactly what took place at the closing of one extraordinarily lucrative business deal on the West Coast of the United States after years of intense negotiations.

The parties were about to conclude the deal, and the buyers and sellers had gathered in a conference room to work out the final details. One of the major investors was a Mr. Gershon Kamin (name changed) of New York, a man whose participation was critical to the deal and who stood to earn a fortune from its successful conclusion.

During the course of the final discussions, Gershon became very disturbed by one of the attorneys working for the other side. The man was simply unable to refrain from using vulgar language. Every other word he uttered was an expletive of some sort. Gershon politely asked the lawyer to refrain from using profanities, and the man promised to do his best. But the use of such language was

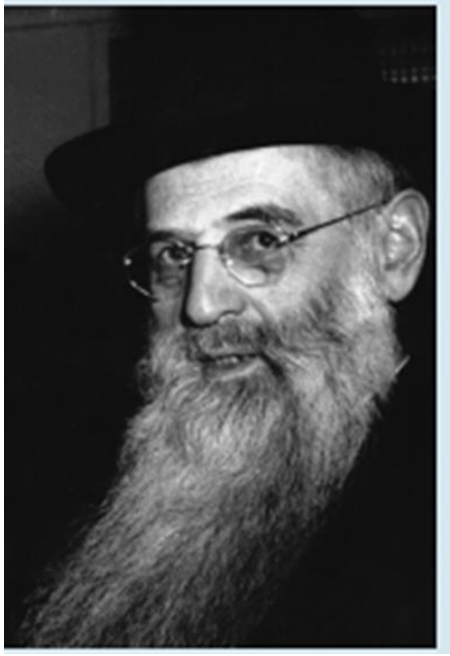
apparently deeply ingrained in his personality, and the lawyer continued to slip.

Finally, Gershon grew incensed and warned the lawyer, "If you utter even one more profanity, the deal is off!"

It did not take long before the lawyer inadvertently let slip an offensive word again, and Gershon simply stalked out of the room, scuttling the entire, unimaginably lucrative, deal.

Larry Fisher (name changed), another religious Jew who was present at the proceedings, was shocked by Gershon's abrupt departure. Larry was aware of the years of hard work that had gone into the deal. Where had Gershon derived the inner strength to make such a sacrifice? Larry lived with this question for several years, until he happened to hear a lecture from a noted rav that delivered the answer.

The rav told a story about a man named Gershon who had been learning at the Telshe Yeshivah in Ohio, decades earlier. 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 degree.



On his last day in the yeshivah, Gershon was learning diligently, 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 yeshivah'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. After the lecture, Larry approached the rav and asked, "By any chance, was the boy in your story Gershon Kamin?" Shocked, the rav exclaimed, "How did you know that?"

"Because I saw with my own eyes just how deep an impact the rosh yeshivah's message left on him," Larry replied. Years after that fateful encounter, Gershon was able to sacrifice the deal of a lifetime because the rosh yeshivah's words had infused him with a sense of mission even within the context of his career. In any profession or field, every Jew can do the same.

[Reprinted from At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book - Living Kiddush Hashem.]

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, once attended a meeting that was held in a conference room in a hotel in New York. At the meeting, they took a break for Minchah, and in the middle of Chazoras HaShatz, someone came to tell Rav Moshe that he had an urgent phone call from Eretz Yisroel. However, Rav Moshe did not move.

"Rebbe, there's a phone call from Eretz Yisroel," the man repeated. "It's urgent!" Still Rav Moshe did not budge. Rav Moshe waited for the person behind him to complete his Shemoneh Esrei, and only then did he leave to accept the phone call. Later, someone asked Rav Moshe why he hadn't stepped out immediately. Rav Moshe replied,



"There was a wall behind me, didn't you see? I can't walk through a wall!"

Rav Moshe explained, "The Halachah is that it is forbidden to step back when someone behind you is Davening Shemoneh Esrei, and I couldn't move because someone was still Davening." For Rav Moshe, Halachah was a wall!

Etz Hachaim – The Test of a Leader



Towards the end of World War I the Germans were still occupying Brisk. **The Brisker Rov** who was about 30 years old had just become the Rov since his father **ר' חיים** had just been **נפטר**. The community was in middle of davening on **ראש השנה** and a senior German officer marched into the **בית כנסת הגדול** of Brisk with two soldiers, it was **פחד פחדים** !

They wanted to speak to the Rabbiner (Rov), however the young Brisker Rov was in middle of davening **שמונה עשרה**. The soldiers stood next to the Rov waiting for him to finish, and he wasn't finishing. The officer got impatient and asked the other Yidden to hurry up the Rabbiner since they didn't have time to wait. He continued to speak loudly next to the Rov and explained that they caught a yid and they suspected him of being a spy for the Russians. Now they were waiting to hang him!

The yid had requested that they bring the Rov to say vidui with him. They had some pity on him, so they came to get the Rov.

The German soldiers were now waiting to bring the Rabbiner to this Yid. Yet if the Rabbiner would continue davening they didn't know how much longer they would wait.

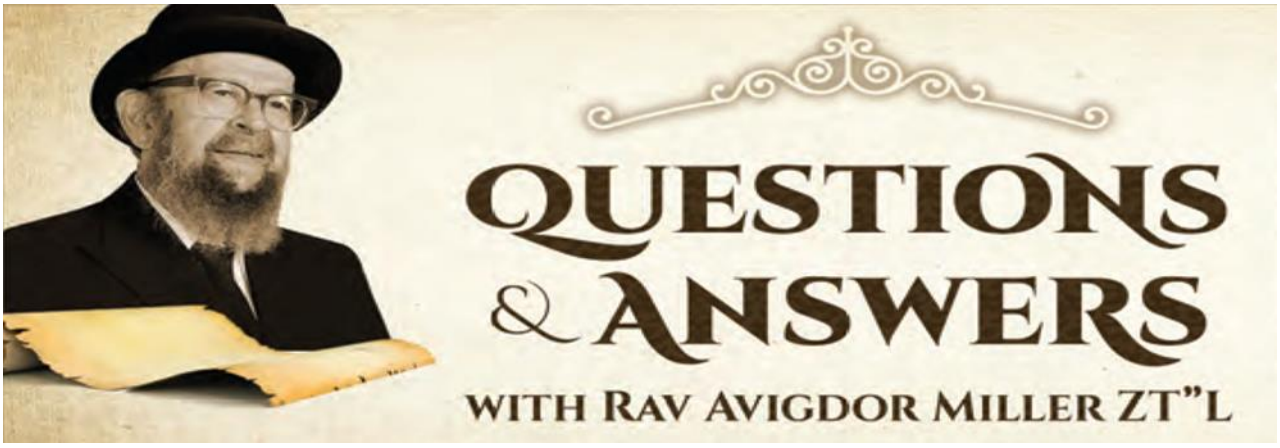
The Brisker Rov kept on davening, paying no attention to the "tumult" around him. No-one could understand why the Rov wasn't finishing his **שמונה עשרה** since he had never davened for so long! The **קהילה** was terrified of what the soldiers could do!

Just then a yid decided that this young Rov didn't know what he was doing and he had to take matters into own hands. He told the Germans that he was also a Rabbiner and he could help them. This yid went with the officers, said vidui with the suspected yid and the yid was hanged.

As soon as they left, the Brisker Rov finished his davening. The **קהילה** asked the Rov why he wouldn't end his davening for the soldiers. The Rov answered that it was a **מפורש הלכה**, that if the **גויים** come to take a yid (who did nothing wrong) to kill him, **you're not allowed to give him up!** Even if all the yidden of that city will be killed!!

The Brisker Rov continued to explain that as soon as he would finish his **ש״ע** he would be giving up this yid! "**I will daven forever**," continued the Rov, "so as not to give up a yid."

After **ראש השנה** they heard that shortly after they hung this yid, the Germans got a telegram that they caught the real spy! If they would have waited, **he could have been saved.** Since this yid took matters into his own hands instead of trusting the Rov, he allowed a yid to be killed!





Why do Jewish males have names of beheimos temeios, of non-kosher wild animals? I'm thinking in particular about the name Dov, the bear, and Aryeh, the lion?

Now, when you see a bear walking down the street at night, you're not going to walk up and shake hands with him. If you see him even five blocks away, you'll stop a taxi and you'll take it in the other direction. If there's no taxi, you'll climb the telegraph pole.

A Jew has to be a bear. A bear means he has to be a hero. He has to be strong and he has to be willing to go into combat for the honor of Hashem. A Jew has to be a lion. He has to be strong-willed and fearless like a lion. A Jew has to be all the good things.

'Binyamin ze'ev yitrof' (Vayechi 49:27). Not only we give names but Hakodosh Boruch Hu, by means of His prophets, gave names like that. Binyamin ze'ev yitrof. He's a wolf. A wolf is hungry, always hungry, and Binyamin is hungry for mitzvos. He's hungry to serve Hashem. He doesn't serve Hashem like somebody who has to do it; he can't help himself so he forces himself. No; for avodas Hashem he has an appetite like a wolf. When a wolf eats up a sheep, he doesn't do it leshem mitzvah, like somebody who ate a lot on erev Shabbos and now on Friday night he's not able to eat any more but what can he do; he has to sit down at the seudah and eat some more.

No! He's hungry for mitzvos. That's why you call him a wolf. And therefore, all these names represent certain desirable characteristics of service of Hashem.



Why did the second Beis Hamikdosh last ten years longer than the first one and it was also bigger than the first one?

And one answer is: What's the reason for a building in general? A building in general is to impress the people they should learn about emunah in Hashem.

The presence of Hashem is demonstrated by the Beis Hashem. And so Hakadosh Baruch Hu, when he gave them a new chance, gave them a bigger building. He said, "Maybe this time, you'll make a better job of it. But you're not as great as the old generations who learned from a smaller building. You need a bigger impression to be made on you. He gave them a bigger building and he gave them ten more years of Beis Hamikdosh.

But even then, it didn't achieve the desired result. But the purpose was, it's like a physician who comes and gives you a dose and it doesn't have the desired effect, so he increases the dose. And the dose in this case was a bigger Beis Hamikdosh with longer years. But finally, since it didn't have the desired effect, so He discontinued the treatment.

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

Rabbi David Aaron - Tefillah

Of course, Hashem hears our prayers and answers, but He is waiting for us to hear our prayers and mean them. Prayer is not passive, it is proactive. Through prayer we must inspire ourselves to take action and make changes within ourselves, our community and the world. When we change ourselves for the good, we let G-d's never-changing love for us and His abundant blessings become manifest in our lives.

The more we praise Hashem and acknowledge that He is the source of all blessings and truly want those blessings in our lives the more G-d's blessings flow into our lives.

Prayer is not about changing G-d's mind. G-d's mind is steadfast. He only and always loves us and wants to shower us with His blessings. Prayer is about changing our selves. Prayer is about attuning our will to G-d's will and making our selves receptive to receive His loving presence and blessings into our lives.

Hashem is waiting to hear from us and invite Him into our lives.

Act the Part - Mr. Michael Rothschild



One day, Norman Wiskosky decided he wanted to be a pilot. He just felt it. You know that feeling when something is just the right thing to do? Well, first off, he changed his name to Brad Tucker. Now, that sounds like a pilot name, he told himself. Then he went online and purchased the coolest pilot clothing and glasses. Then he took voice lessons, so when he would say, "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, this is your pilot speaking," it would sound mature and not whiny.

Norman, I mean, Brad, did everything to look the part of a pilot. Except for one thing: he never learned how to fly.

In the first words of the sefer Tomer Devorah, the author, Rav Moshe Cordevero, sums up our goal in this world: A person is supposed to resemble His creator. We, little human beings, are supposed to resemble the Master of the universe, Hashem. If that's Hashem's expectation of us, then that is what we're capable of.

Rav Cordevero notes that though we could look like Hashem, we also need to act like Hashem. And the main part of resembling Hashem is not looking like Him, but acting like Him. Sometimes we could be like Norman. We could dress the part, live in the right neighborhood, and go to the right school or yeshiva, but we never learn to fly.

To Hashem, the externals are just that: externals. Hashem wants our hearts a more than anything else. He wants us to act like Him.

Sharks in the Tanks - Rabbi Eli Scheller

Every country has their food that they're into. The Chinese, they have sushi. Polish people, they have paskha and kishka. Americans, French fries and ketchup. English people, they have tea every day.

And what about the Japanese? They need fresh fish every day.

There was once a man named Hiroshi, a Japanese man. He used to sell fish and make some money. But because everybody was fishing, eventually, the fish from the shore were getting depleted and he had to go far out to fish. Knowing this, Hiroshi procured a big boat that could go far out to the deep seas, and spent hours and hours at work. Though successful in catching fish, he was surprised that everybody stopped buying anything from him. "Hiroshi," they said, "this doesn't taste fresh anymore!" And he knew why. It was hours and hours until he got to the ocean and then even longer until he returned ashore.

He decided to purchase large freezers and install them on his boat. He paid a large sum of money, and with that, he'd freeze the fish, and then defrost them right before he came back. He went on to advertise it as fresh fish.

But nobody purchased the fish yet again.

He didn't understand why, until a few customers informed him. "Your fish tastes of freezer burns," they said At this point, Hiroshi needed to come up with an idea to turn things around. So he thought about fish tanks. He'd transport the fish there as soon as he caught them. That'll keep them fresh, he knew.

But, yet again, the customers were less than satisfied. "There's a sour taste to it," they said. "How could that be?" Hiroshi continued asking several people what they sensed the reason was. Until an old man came along, and he let Hiroshi in on the secret.

When the fish are in the water, they are swimming around constantly, moving against the waves and running away from the sharks. This affects the taste of the fish. But, you see, when the fish are in the fish tanks on the boat, they just sitting there for ten, twelve hours, barely moving around. That too affects the taste. It gives them a sourness.



I have an idea, said the old man. Put sharks in the fish tank on your boat. The fish then will have to constantly swim around to save their lives.

Hiroshi had nothing to lose. He was able to get some sharks, put them in the fish tank, and while the sharks ate some fish, all the other fish swam around constantly. When they got back to shore and people tasted the fish, they were hooked. "This is the best fish I've ever tasted,"

they said, nearly salivating. The people were pleased and so was Hiroshi.

And all thanks to the sharks.

The same is true in our lives. When we sit down and do nothing, it makes us feel sour. It lends itself to depressed feelings and low energy. But when we're moving around constantly, it infuses us with animated, positive energy. Think of two year olds who are moving around constantly and always smiling.

Knowing this, Hashem will often place a shark in our tank. And that shark are the problems that come up in our lives. Everybody has problems. And truthfully, they keep us moving, they keep us growing. They force us, uncomfortably, out of stagnation and into something greater. And even when we don't move and we sink into the wallows of depression, that very immobility will eventually – when it hits us – grant us the impetus to start moving. Sometimes we need that too.

When we keep the momentum, that satisfies our inner spirit to grow. It's the shark within that keeps us swimming forward in life.

For Eternity - Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l



The commodity of the Next World is very much unlike that commodity in this world. There, in Gan Eden and Olam Haba, where our souls live on for eternity, life is filled with the merits of our Torah study, kindness and good deeds.

In this world, however, the yetzer hara convinces us to busy ourselves with things that are here today and gone tomorrow. Those things which live on only in this world and don't carry on become the allured focus of our attention.

The yetzer hara comes to you as a friend. But friends and fun start with the same letter. "I got you a new phone, I got you a new car…" And you're thinking, "This is my best friend. Life is great! This is amazing!" But the whole time, the yetzer hara's knows that G-d put you into a beautiful bank vault, called the world, where you can make a blessing on a piece of chicken or a glass of soda that will last for eternity, and yet you're chasing after something that will wither with time.

This is an amazing world. There are billions of dollars in mitzvos waiting for every one of us. Every blessing, every mitzvah, is a vault.Take advantage, and you'll be thanking yourself for eternity.

Rabbi Label Lam - Face of the Company

More than forty years ago, one of my teachers mentioned that every country and every nationality produces something different, something special for the world. Some are providing oil and others coffee. Some provide cheap labor. And some make good scotch and write interesting poetry. What is it that the Jewish people are producing?



Kiddush Hashem, he answered. Just like when a cop gets out of his car, he represents the law, or when the Amazon driver shows up at your door, he is the face of the entire company. Similarly, each and every one of us is an ambassador and representative of Hashem in this world.

שמואל זנוויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry)

Shabbos and the six days of work

"***Six*** שֵׁ֣שֶׁת יָמִ֗ים תֵּעָשֶׂ֤ה מְלָאכָה֙ וּבַיּ֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י יִהְיֶ֥ה לָכֶ֖ם קֹ֣דֶשׁ שַׁבַּ֣ת שַׁבָּת֔וֹן לַיהוָ֑ה ***days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to Hashem***" (35:2)

There is a direct connection between the Shabbat day and the six days of work. Hashem created the world in six days, and on the seventh day he rested. So, how was Shabbos created?

Jewish tradition says that at the time of creation, the Shabbat day had no existence or animals. But initially there were twenty-eight hours in each of the six days of the week; During the week that in order for the seventh day to live it needs time, each of them contributed four of their hours, and thus the Shabbat day received twenty-four hours of life.

In other words, the Sabbat received its vitality from the contributions of the six days of work. When the days of the week are full of love, generosity and honesty, then the Shabbat day is holy.

On the other hand, if during the six days of the act, our homes are full of hatred and deceit, we will not be able to feel the holiness of the Shabbat. Shabbat is a direct product of everything we do during the six days of the week.

More than Judaism is interested in what we do on one day (Shabbat), it is interested in what we do on the **בששת ימי המעשה**. If we live properly **בששת ימי המעשה**, it is much easier to make the seventh day a holy day.



" No one needs reminders of their flaws and failures. They need you to remind them how good and wonderful they are.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ״ל- נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ The men came with the women; every generous hearted person brought…

Rashi says that the men and women came together to donate various things for the Mishkan.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner's mother was known to have been a very righteous woman. In fact, she was given a bracha to have two children, who would light up the world with their Torah. (Rav Chaim and Rav Zalman – about whom the **Vilna Gaon** said, "He is not a person, he is a malach.")

Rav Chaim's father had a comprehensive library of Sefarim, which was very rare at that time.

The Shaagas Arieh, was once in need of looking up something in a particular Sefer. He went to the house, and he was engrossed in learning from the Sefarim library there.

It just so happened that just at that time, Rav Chaim's mother was going through labour pains, but she was reluctant to disturb the gadol ha'dor, and made sure to be as quiet as possible, so that he could totally focus on his learning.

The Shaagas Arieh was not privy to this fact, until he was later told about it. When this was related to him, he was so overwhelmed, that he gave this special bracha to Rav Chaim's mother.

"With Emunah, we can access a source of strength and courage that comes from knowing that Hashem is on our side." – Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת – '***You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwelling places on the Shabbos day***.' 35:3



Why is this the only melacha spoken about explicitly in the Torah?

The Mishna Ukszin (3:12) tells us **לֹא מָצָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא כְּלִי מַחֲזִיק בְּרָכָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּא הַשָּׁלוֹם** – that The Riboino Shel Olam didn't find any other receptacle that would hold bracha in this world – other than peace.

Hashem wants us to know, that whenever there is an opportunity for bracha, the way to ensure that we receive it, is to be **בשלום**.

The Chasam Sofer says that we all know that Shabbos is **מקור הברכה**. (Zohar on Yisro) - **כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**. This is why the Satan will do anything to try to ensure that there is a lack of peace between us, over Shabbos – to impede this bracha.

This is what the Torah is telling us over here - **שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה** - for 6 days the work will be done for you, there is bracha ready and waiting for you – if **וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ**. But you have to ensure something integral - **לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** – Don't allow the fire of **מחלוקת** to permeate Shabbos!

The Shlah Hakodosh says at the end of parshas Vayekhel: **לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** -This is hinting to the fire of machlokes and the fire of anger. A person must be very careful to never ignite them. And especially on Shabbos Kodesh.

The Ben Ish Chai (Vayeira) says from **The Chidah**: "When it comes to Mincha on Erev Shabbos, it is an opportune time for a husband a wife to start fighting and having arguments." – Because this is exactly when the Satan wants to trap us. So this is an important time for us to seek peace. And this will ensure that we get the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

.1 ויקהל	.2 משה	.3 את	.4 כל	.5 עדת	.6 בני	.7 ישראל	.8 ויאמר	.9 אלהם	.10 אלה
.11 הדברים	.12 אשר	.13 צוה	.14 י.ה.ו.ה	.15 לעשת	.16 אתם	.17 ששת	.18 ימים	.19 תעשה	.20 מלאכה
.21 וביום	.22 השביעי	.23 יהיה	.24 לכם	.25 קדש	.26 שבת	.27 שבתון	.28 לי.ה.ו.ה	.29 כל	.30 העשה
.31 בו	.32 מלאכה	.33 יומת	.34 לא	.35 תבערו	.36 אש	.37 בכל	.38 משבתיכם	.39 ביום	.40 **השבת**

If you look through from the beginning of the Parsha untill the first word **הַשַּׁבָּת** you will count 39 words that precede this. This is a remez to the 39 melachos of **שַׁבָּת**. [Baal Haturim]

The pasuk says, **שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַה׳** 35:2 **Rashi** and the **Ramban** learn this juxtaposition of Shabos to the building of the Miskan to tell us that it was prohibited in building the Mishkan on Shabbos.

The Alshich asks that as we know, some korbanos **were** brought on Shabbos, so why couldn't the construction of the Mishkan take place, on which these korbanos were brought?

The Nesivos (Nachalas Yaakov) suggests the following answer: We know that many parts of the building of the Mishkan itself were brought about miraculously, with Hakadosh Baruch Hu's assisstance.

Wheras the korbanos that would be brought upon the Mishkan was a **מעשה בידי אדם**.

So Hashem says, "If these are My creations – just like I did not create the world on Shabbos, similarly the Mishkan which is mostly My creation, will not be built on Shabbos." It is **מעשה השם**. However, when it comes to the **מעשה בידי אדם** that can be done without My assisstance, - that is very choshev to Hashem, and is therefore permitted to be done on Shabbos.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ... *'Every man whose heart uplifted him came, and everyone whose spirit inspired him to generosity brought the offering*...' 35:21

The Ben Ish Chai says that in order to be able to donate to the Mishkan, and for that donation to be accepted- it requires not only that a person was inspired to give, but a person also needed a **נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ** – to be uplifted.

The Ben Ish Chai says, that when a person wants to give tzeddaka, The Yetzer Harah will always try to ensure that it is not given willingly – **בשמחה**. We must try to overcome this – as they did at the time of the Mishkan.

Tefillah

The Megaleh Amukos teaches: Hashem's name (Yud Keh Vov Keh) is gematriya 26. We say Hashem's name 26 times in Shemonah Esrei. 26 x 26 = 676, the same gimatriya as the word **רעות** [suffering].

This implies that by davening the Shemonah Esrei all forms of suffering are annulled and disappear.



כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב לִבָּם אֹתָם לְהָבִיא לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה... הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לַה׳ ***Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring for any of the work… Bnei Yisrael brought a free-willed offering to Hashem****. (35:29)*

Upon reading the *pasuk*, one is struck by its redundancy. What is the difference between *kol ishv'ishah*, every man and woman, and *Bnei Yisrael*? Are they not one and the same?

The *Chida*, *zl* explains this with a pertinent analogy. Often a *shul* has an appeal on *Shabbos* for badly needed funds to support an important project. In the heat of the announcement, people tend to get carried away and, wanting to "keep up with the Joneses,'" pledge more than they would normally give.

At first, the donor is very proud of himself. After all, everyone else, even the wealthy members, has pledged only £100. He, on the other hand, has pledged £500. This warm feeling lasts throughout the davening and even on the walk home, when everyone smiles at him and pats him on the back.

When he arrives at home, however, and the accolades no longer accompany him, he asks himself, "Am I out of my mind? First of all, I do not even have that kind of money. Why did I pledge so much more than the wealthiest members of the *shul*?"

This hindsight, bitter feeling, gnaws at him until he decides, "Done! I will pay this time. However, never again! The next time an appeal occurs, I will think twice, even three times, before I make a pledge."

The *Chida* explains that, concerning the appeal for the *Mishkan,* the people had no regrets. From the "pledge" made by any man or woman, until the moment that they brought the cheque it was all with an

unusual free-will to donate for the building of the Sanctuary. Since contributing to *tzedakah* consists of two stages – the pledge and writing the cheque – the Torah repeats that everyone was on the same page from start to finish.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, offers a practical explanation which should give us something to consider with regard to our own *avodas ha'kodesh*, service to Hashem. A father goes to perform a *mitzvah*, do his children accompany him to watch, learn, and participate?

The father goes to purchase a *lulav* and *esrog*. Where are his children? Why should they not be inspired seeing how many people attend, how much they spend (regardless of their income), how meticulous and uncompromising they are in looking for an *esrog mehudar*, beautiful *esrog*?

A father goes to bake *matzos*. Where are his children? Why should they not develop a love for *mitzvos*?

Tzedakah often occurs at home, when a solicitor, a *Rav*, *Rosh Yeshivah*, representative of a Torah institution/organisation, pays a visit. Should the children not develop a love of sharing with others?

I remember, ***Reb* Yosef Feigenbaum, *zl***, sharing with me his father's (Reb Moshe) manner of giving *tzedakah*. I came by one night, past the children's bedtime, to solicit for a local learning project for *rebbeim*. It was then an innovative idea that would require the support of forwardthinking individuals.

Reb Yosef was optimistic about the idea and prepared to give us a cheque. Before he wrote the cheque, however, he asked his wife to call the children downstairs.

A few minutes later, their five children came down in their pajamas, and they all took a seat at the table. *Reb* Yosef explained to them that he wanted them to watch and share in the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*. This is how he was raised, and this is how he raised his children. It

is, thus, no wonder that each of them has in them their parents' commitment to *harbotzas haTorah* and *ahavas Yisrael*.

Concerning the donating process for the *Mishkan,* it was not only the Jewish man and woman/parents that participated. It was also (all) *Bnei Yisrael*, the children, whom their parents brought to observe and experience the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.

As an aside, we cannot overstate the impact parental behaviour – both positive and negative – has on their children. Making a positive impression grants our children a head start on the road of life. They are equipped for their journey because their parents have taught them by example how one should live.

This is the concept of *d'mus d'yukno shel aviv*. Yosef saw an image of his father, the Patriarch Yaakov. He saw what a Jew should look like and how he should live. This image protected him from the sin. The flipside is a warning to parents: Your children are watching. What message do you want to send to them? How do you want them to remember you?

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

It states (35:3), **לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת** , "***Do not kindle a fire in all your dwelling places on the Shabbos day***."

The *Zohar* says this is referring to the fire of anger. We must be cautious not to turn on this fire on Shabbos because then we will lose all the brachos and wealth that can come from Shabbos.

The Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that on Fridays, the yetzer hara works extra hard to get people angry and put them in a bad mood to prevent them from receiving Hashem's brachos.

Therefore, the Torah obligates us, **לא תבערו אש... ביום השבת** , that we should avoid anger on Shabbos.

The Remak zt'l and others teach that during the weekdays, for the sake of *chinuch* and other needs, one is permitted to pretend to be angry, but one is never allowed to feel actual anger in his heart. However, on Shabbos, even a mock, external expression of anger is prohibited.

Once, early Friday morning, the **Beis Aharon zt'l** was traveling with his son, Reb Asher, when they saw smoke coming out of every chimney. The women of this town were already up, baking and cooking for Shabbos.

The Beis Aharon said to his son, "Women could obtain *ruach hakodesh* from their cooking and baking for Shabbos, but anger ruins it.

The Bardichover Rav zt'l said the same statement regarding cleaning for Pesach. When women clean for Pesach, they should attain *ruach hakodesh*, but anger ruins it.

The Reishis Chachmah zt'l writes in the name of his teacher, **the Remak zt'l**, that erev Shabbos, we should prepare large *lecht*, make the bed, and remove all cobwebs from the home. "And I will reveal a secret: These [cobwebs] are the *kelipos* that try to ruin the shalom bayis."

The Kaf HaChaim (*siman* 250) says to remove the spiderwebs before the 5th hour of the day (an hour before *chatzos*) because that is when the light of Shabbos begins to shine.

Rebbe Hershele of Zidichov zt'l recommends spreading the Shabbos tablecloth Friday before midday as a segulah for shalom bayis.

For a segulah for refuah, **the Chofetz Chaim zt'l** advised that wine and challos should be on the table already on Friday morning, before daybreak.

Reb Efraim Wachsman Shlita had a melamed who survived the Holocaust. When the children of his class misbehaved, he would

shout at them in a foreign language, which the children assumed were curses in Hungarian.

At the end of the year, some children asked him mechilah for causing him distress to the extent that he would curse them in Hungarian. He replied, "Chas v'Shalom! I never cursed you. The words I said were (39:10-13) **סַמְקָן יַרְקָן וּבַרְקָן... אִזְמָרַגְדִין שַׁבְזִיז וְסַבְהֶלוֹם... קַנְפֵּרִי טַרְקִיָא וְעֵין עֶגְלָא... כְּרוּם יַמָּא וּבוּרְלָא וּפַנְטֵרִי** , which are Unkelos's translation for the twelve stones that were placed in the choshen. The twelve stones represent the twelve shevatim. To help me not become angry with you, I reminded myself that you are all holy Yidden, compared to diamonds and gems set in the choshen.

The holy sefarim say that when your wife or daughter etc., do something wrong on Erev Shabbos (he/she cooked the wrong food, didn't clean properly, and there are countless other examples), you shouldn't become angry. Be aware that the culprit is the yetzer hara, as he desires to stir up a fight in your home on Fridays.

With this awareness in mind, it will be easier for people to avoid becoming angry at this time.



Simple Minded!

The Tzemach Tzedek relayed the following story: In a neighboring town of Yerushalayim, there lived a simple man. He didn't know how to daven or learn. Every week, he would come to town to sell the produce from his farm. After finishing, he would go to the Rav in town to ask if there were any upcoming Yomim Tovim he should know about—both to make sure he wouldn't come on a day nobody would be buying, but also to learn about the Yom Tov.

One time, when he came to town, much to his surprise, he saw that the streets were empty. As he continued on toward the market

where he sold his goods, his wonder got even stronger, as even the stores were closed.

"Why are the streets empty and the marketplace closed?" he wondered. "Did the Rav forget to tell me about an upcoming Yom Tov? Is today possibly Shabbos, and I lost calculation?!"

When he saw a Yid coming down the street holding his tallis and tefillin, he was comforted that at least it wasn't Shabbos. "Excuse me," he asked the man. "Why are all the stores closed and the streets empty?"

"Today is a taanis tzibbur," the man answered, and continued on his way. The farmer accepted the explanation, but it disturbed him greatly. "Why didn't the Rav tell me about this when I was last in town?" he wondered. "I already ate today and davened the wrong tefillos!"

Leaving his donkey and his produce, he ran to shul to ask the Rav why he wasn't informed of this upcoming fast day the last time he had been by the Rav.

"Today is not a calendar fast," the Rav told him. "You're surely aware of our lack of rain. When the heavens seem to be shut for us, then we call for a day of fasting, so that we can call out to Hashem and beg for His mercy."

The innocent man wasn't convinced. "I don't see the need for such a burden on the people."

"Well, how else do you suggest we deal with the problem?"

"When I sense that my field isn't getting enough rain," the man told the Rav, "I turn to Hashem and I say, 'Father, we are in need of rain!' Soon after, the rain starts coming."

"If so, then do the same now," the Rav requested of him. Diligently, the farmer then went over to the corner, turned to Hashem and said,

"Father, Your people need rain. Do You want them to die from drought?!"

Soon after that, dark clouds started to form, and plentiful rain came down. (Tiferes L'Moshe, p. 57)

This incredible story shows the great power of a simple-minded tefillah. Hashem is there for each of us, and is ready to give us all the good in the world. This innocent tefillah has even a greater ability of being answered, as it comes with no complicated calculations or caveats. Simple belief in Hashem listening to us and His desire to fulfill our needs is what brought about the yeshuah for this farmer in even an abnormal fashion.

The gift of tefillah is given to each and every person. What this means is that Hashem is telling us that EVERY SINGLE PERSON, without exception, can merit great She merited good children because of her heartful... yeshuos. When approaching Hashem with simplicity, knowing that Hashem listens to each and every one of us every time we turn to Him, our reliance on Him is strengthened, and we will be granted our requests.

Clueless!

An additional story that brings out this concept is relied by the great tzaddik, **R' Gamliel Rabinowitz**: There was a particular family whose mother had raised them on a kibbutz that merited to see every one of their children grow to become great talmidei chachamim and rabbanim. What was the secret behind their success?

Their great-grandmother had grown up behind the Iron Curtain in Russia, and therefore never received any formal Yiddishe education. She knew nothing of Torah or mitzvos, but there was one thing she remembered from her mother: lighting Shabbos candles on Friday night.

Although she hadn't known what Shabbos was, she nevertheless would light candles on Friday night. She also recalled her mother davening with great kavanah for her children's success after she lit, and so that was all that this daughter continued doing.

Not knowing much, when she was able to leave and come to Eretz Yisrael, she initially settled in a kibbutz far from where any frumme Yidden lived, and became inculcated in the ways of the chilonim.

When it came time for her to light Shabbos candles and daven for her children, with her simplemindedness, she davened that they should grow to be like B.G., the big rasha. She was convinced that he was the biggest tzaddik of the generation, as he had been the one chosen to run the country.

One day, she saw that B.G. had made a trip to the heilege **Chazon Ish**. At that meeting, the Chazon Ish persuaded him to drop his terrible plans for policies that went against the spirit of Yiddishkeit. When she heard this, she understood that there must be someone more special person than B.G. (as she didn't know the difference between the two!).

So, her Friday night tefillos switched to now request that her children be as great as the Chazon Ish, since she figured that he was an even bigger tzaddik if he had been able to persuade B.G.

As a result of these tefillos, she merited that her children and grandchildren should be outstandingly special and devoted to Hashem and his Torah!

R' Gamliel Rabinowitz explained that we learn from this story the effect of the tefillah of even a simple woman, coming from the depths of her heart. She merited to raise outstanding children and grandchildren without even known the basics of Yiddishkeit.

Hashem listens to everyone's tefillos, and thus she was able to get such a wonderful family. How much more power do we then have?

Baruch Hashem, we who were given the proper chinuch and are able to serve Hashem properly are certainly able to access this wellspring of berachah. The more we believe in the power of our tefillos, the more we'll see their results (Tiv Hischazkus, Hallel V'hoda'ah, p. 449).

א מינוט מיט ר׳ מיילך שליט״א

A very fine bachur once came in to **Rav Shlomo Zalaman Auerbach Zt'l**. Like everybody else, he had his ups and downs, and he was going through a rough time then. He felt he was at breaking point. He cried about his spiritual state, how he had been doing better in the past and how he was really struggling now.



Rav Shlomo Zalaman said to him,"Let's visit a tailor shop."

At the tailor, the bachur saw the most beautiful fabrics. Rows and rows of the most exquisite materials. Then he saw the tailor take a pair of scissors and start cutting up the fabric into various shapes and sizes.

Rav Shlomo Zalaman asked the bachur, "Tell me, what does it seem like the tailor is doing?"

"It looks like he is destroying the material! He is taking a beautiful piece of fabric, and cutting it up into little pieces! Look what he is doing, he's ruining a magnificent piece of material! – Why is he cutting it up?"

The tailor said, "Calm down; just wait and see."

After an hour or two of cutting – as the bachur is watching in growing frustration, the fabric started resembling a sleeve. Slowely, the

pieces were coming together, until eventually it turnrd into a beautiful coat!

Rav Shlomo Zalman then asked the bachur, "Tell me, if not for all the cutting and snipping, wouldit be possible to end up with such a beautiful coat?"

"Of course not," replied the bachur.

"So too", said Rav Shlomo Zalman, "acquiring greatness isn't possible without the 'cutting and snipping'! Without falling and struggling, you can't grow into a great person."

"Just like you realise that the tailor can't produce a beautiful coat without cutting – which you thought at first looked like the tailor was ruining the fabric- A person also cannot reach greatness without first going through struggle a failure!"

whY I Matter
בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)
Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

וַיַּקְהֵל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל "***Moshe assembled the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael.***" There, Moshe commanded Bnei Yisrael to observe Shabbat.

R' Tzaddok Hakohen Rabinowitz z"l (1823-1900; Chassidic Rebbe in Lublin, Poland) writes: This assembly may be likened to another gathering, when Yaakov told his sons (Bereishit 49:1-2), "***Assemble and I will tell you what will befall you at the End of Days. Gather yourselves and listen*** . . ."

Midrash Rabbah relates that Yaakov cautioned his sons to avoid Machloket / dissension. He said, "If you are united, then I may tell you about the End of Days." Similarly, writes R' Tzaddok, Moshe wanted to tell Bnei Yisrael about Shabbat and the Mishkan, but first he told them that they must be united.

R' Tzaddok explains: The Mishnah (Uktzin 3:2) teaches that there is no "container" like Shalom / peace and harmony for holding a blessing. Where does Shalom come from?

The Gemara (Berachot 64a) teaches: "Torah scholars increase Shalom in the world." At first glance, writes R' Tzaddok, the study of Torah appears to be inherently argumentative, and Torah scholars seem to always be engaged in Machloket. However, the prophet writes (Zechariah 8:19), "Love Emet / truth and Shalom!" When debates amongst Torah scholars are pursued with the goal of seeking Emet, the result is Shalom.

R' Tzaddok concludes: [Such debates are, particularly, a feature of the Torah She'be'al Peh / "Oral Law"–today, the Talmud.]

The Zohar teaches that Shabbat is a propitious time for occupying oneself with the Oral Law–not just for scholars, but for everyone. And, the Mishkan–where Hashem spoke to Moshe– was the source of the Oral Law. Therefore, Moshe preceded both of them with a gathering focused on Shalom. (**Pri Tzaddik**)

The Lechem Haponim

אֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְאֵת לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים ***And the Shuchan (table) and all its implements, and the Lechem Haponim/Bread of the Surfaces*** (35:13)

The building of the Mishkan was completed Chanukah time and yet it wasn't put together until Rosh Chodesh Nisan, some three months later. Surely the bread would of spoiled and become moldy by then?

The weekly baking of the bread required special talent and craftsmanship. Betzalal therefore had to create a sample at the time of the building of the Mishkan. This sample was used by others, to learn how to bake the bread. Although it was baked at the time of the building of the Mishkan, it was not put on the Shulchan. The

first bread that was put on the Shulchan was baked at the time the Mishkan was put together.

The Gemara in Shabbos says that there was no baking necessary for the building of the Mishkan - only cooking. It involved the cooking of various dyes that were used in building the Mishkan. So we can see what the Gemara means. The only baking was for the bread. And the bread baked at the time of building the Mishkan was only a sample - not the real thing. (**The Netziv**)



כָּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וָנֶזֶם וְטַבַּעַת Everyone who is generous of heart brought arm band and nose ring and finger ring (35:22)

The Midrash says When Bnai Yisroel made the golden calf the Pasuk says that they took off their jewelry and brought it ... when they built the Mishkan the Pasuk says that those who were generous of heart bought jewelry. It is thus apparent from the Midrash that the bringing of their gold for the Mishkan was an atonement for the calf.

The Gemara in Kedushin says that Rabbi Akiva, when he would come to a certain Pasuk would cry and say: if a person intends to eat traifa meat and instead unknowingly eats kosher meat needs an atonement for his sin, how much more so a person who intents to eat traifa and eats traifa needs an atonement?

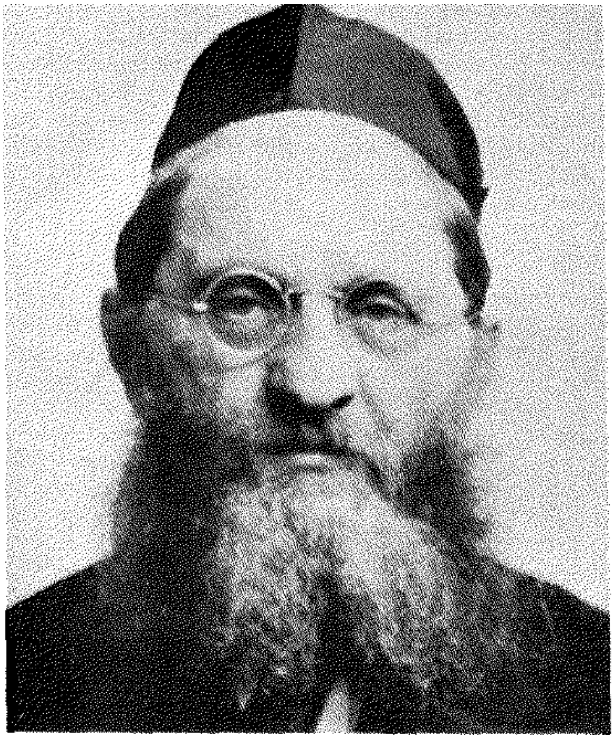
What is Rabbi Akiva's point? It is obvious that if one who intents to eat traifa and eats traifa needs an atonement? What is Rabbi Akiva teaching us?

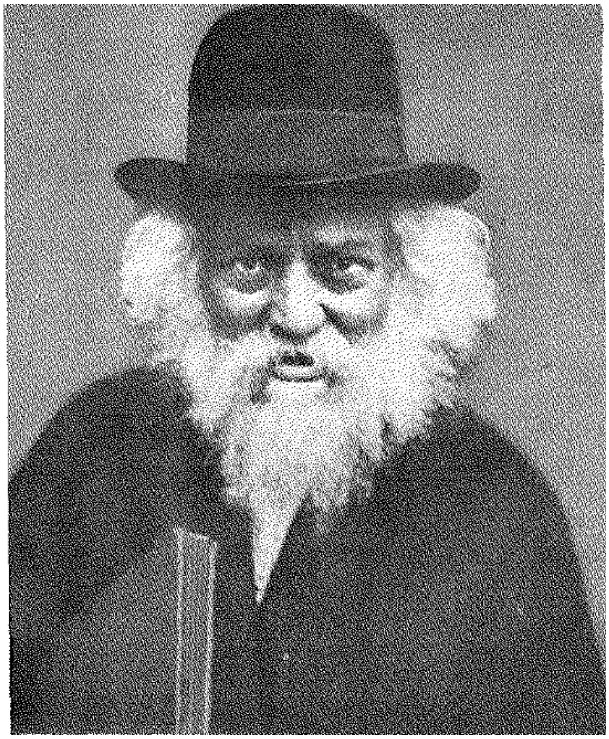
Rabbi Akiva is teaching us that of course a person who intends to eat traifa and eats traifa needs an atonement. But that person needs an atonement for two sins. The first for eating. But he also needs an atonement for his intention to eat traifa. That Rabbi Akiva learns from the example of one who intends on eating traifa and ends up eating kosher. His only sin in one of intention and yet he needs an atonement.

That's what the Midrash is teaching us. Bnai Yisroel gave their gold for the calf. They atoned by bringing gold for the Mishkan. But their sin was also their intention to build the calf. For that they atoned by being generous of heart - the correct intention when they brought the gold for the Mishkan. (**Taam Vodaas**)

Yahrtzeit of Rav Reuven Grozovsky Z"tl Adar 22 5718/1958 – The Jewish Observer Archive 1980

The Kamenitzer Partnership Rabbi Baruch Ber Leibowitz (40 years since his passing) and Rabbi Reuvain Grozovsky Zt'l



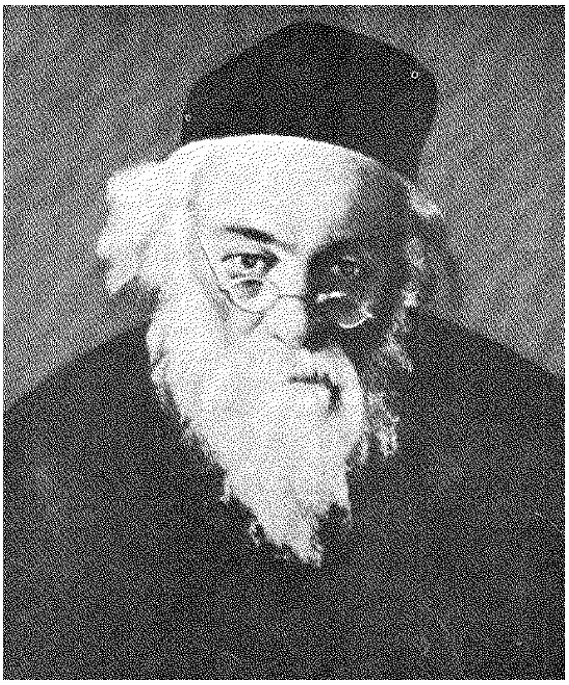


It is impossible to appreciate the great rash yeshiva of Kamenitz Rabbi Boruch Ber Leibowitz without taking into account his son-in-law, Rabbi Reuvain Grozovsky, for their two lives were inseparably woven together in divine service.

Reb Boruch Ber's love for Torah was so overwhelming that it seemed to determine every thought, word, and gesture-leaving nothing of the original Reb Boruch Ber, it seemed. This deep involvement began in his earliest years.

When Reb Baruch Ber was but four years old, his mother noticed that he was crying during his tefilla. *She pointed it out to her husband,* ***Rabbi Shmuel Lebowitz*** *(Rabbi of Slutzk at the time), asking him what was wrong. He replied: "I am certain that he's crying because he has difficulty in understanding Torah as much as he'd like to."*

Reb Shmuel took his ten year old Baruch Ber to a specialist for an examination because the boy was suffering crippling tension headaches. "He has only one cure," the doctor said. "He needs hours and hours of unstructured free time in the fresh air. Turn him loose." Baruch Ber listened in disbelief. The Rabbi thanked the doctor, and took his son by the hand. "Let's hurry," he said, "You're already an hour late for your Gemora class!"



When only sixteen, he was accepted in the world famous yeshiva of Volozhin, under the tutelage of **Reb Chaim Soloveitchik**. Reb Chaim once commented, "***None of my disciples are foolproof. You can successfully challenge any one of them – except Reb Boruch Ber***."

A prestigious rav *once took him to task for not checking into the status of the local* mikva *in Kamenitz, while he was* rosh yeshiva *there.* "I *depend on the local* rav,''. *he replied.*

"But shouldn't your limud *(study) come to* l'maasseh *(practical application)?"*

"For l'maasseh *I'm satisfied with one outstanding* talmid chacham *over whom I've had an influence."*

"Such as , . , ?"

"Such as Reb Aharon Kotler!"

He once remarked, "What can compare to my situation?" I wake up in the morning, and it's as though I have the Shagas Arye, K'tzos HaChoshen, and Rabbi Akiva Eiger (all classical commentaries) waiting for me at my bedside! I can't wait to wash my hands and arise to my riches!"

Seeing a copy of Rabbi Akiva Eiger's commentary of Mesechte Kidushin for the first time, he excitedly pronounced the "Shehechiyanu" blessing (reserved for special, first time experiences).

Enter Reb Reuvain

There was almost a parallel between Reb Boruch Ber's loyalty to Reb Chaim, and that of Reb Reuvain Grozovsky to Reb Boruch Ber. Reb Reuvain's practical nature, however, placed him in yet another relationship with his *rebbe.*

Reb Reuvain was the son of the leading *dayan* (rabbinical judge) of Minsk, Rabbi Shimshon (hence he was known as "Reuvain Minsker"). He had studied in the Yeshiva Knessess Yisroel in Slobodka (a suburb of Kovna) under the renowned *"Levush Mordechai"* and the giant of the Mussar Movement, Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel, (The Alter of Slobodka).

Many students, including Reuvain Minsker visited the other yeshiva located in Slobodka, Knesses Bais Yitzchok, to hear the *shiurim* delivered by Reb Boruch Ber ... Eventually (in 1919), Reb Reuvain became the son-in-law of Reb Boruch Ber-and his life companion. He moved with him from the Vilna suburb of Lukishuk, where Reb Boruch Ber had maintained his yeshiva, to Kamenitz, where they-and the yeshiva flourished until World War II.

Since Reb Boruch was constantly "climbing Yaakov's ladder" to heaven, ever higher in his Torah studies. He required someone with both feet on the ground to hold the ladder for him, steady, firm and secure. The Rebbetzin took care of his personal needs, and the rest

was up to Reb Reuvain. Without Reb Reuvain there never would have been a yeshiva in Kamenitz, nor would Reh Boruch Ber's writings ever have been edited or published (as *Birkas Shmuel).* Nor, for that matter, would they have had anything for his family to eat.

Yet Reb Reuvain was always "hidden among the vessels," behind Reb Boruch Ber. Full of humility, he stood in awe before his father-in-law and *rebbi,* aware of the Torah giant he served.

Reb Reuvain was himself qualified to climb that same ladder. *A gaon,* a thinker, a *baa/ mussar,* he had become a *gadol ha Torah* (a Torah sage) in his own right. Yet, in some ways he was held back by the burdens that he carried. Indeed, people wondered where he found time for all his undertakings: In addition to carrying the financial burden of the Yeshiva in Kamenitz, he never missed delivering his weekly *shiur* in the yeshiva. It was obvious that he put great effort into preparing the *shiur,* as the grasp, the depth, the sweep of his treatment of the subject matter testified.

A Battle-Ground for "Neshamos"

Reb Reuvain waged a life-long campaign to save *bnei Torah* from the trends of the time. Czarist Russia provided young Reb Reuvain with many a battleground. Minsk was where Reb Reuvain practiced his own private campaign against all these trends-especially against the Socialists (who later became Communists).

As a student in Slobodka, which was then still part of Czarist Russia, he recruited a number of *bnei Torah* from his hometown, Minsk, to join him in Slobodka where there was less danger of turning "sour."

One recruitee was Yankel "Dolinover," whose family had moved into Minsk from Dolinov. He was an unusually bright youngster when Reb Reuvain got hold of him. To this day, *Kial Yisroel* has been benefitting from that "Yanke!," now known as **Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky**.

Another of Reb Reuvain's charges in Slobodka was the *illuy* (genius) Arke Sislovitser, whom he had brought to Slobodka at the tender

age of fifteen. (When the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein, said his *shiur,* Arke would stand on the bench-he was too small to see when on the floor-and challenge the Rosh Yeshiva in middle of the *shiur).* Years later, "Arke'' became better known as **Rabbi Aharon Kotler**.

When another Yanke! Dolinover (cousin of the first one) arrived in Slobodka, the *Alter* asked Reb Reuvain to learn with him, for the *Alter* knew that the teenager had promise of greatness, and trusted Reb Reuvain to handle the task of guiding him. Today he is known as **Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman** , Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Israel in Baltimore.

When the yeshiva in Mir was in danger of falling apart, Reb Ely a Baruch Kamai sent an emergency call to the *Alter* of Slobodka. The *Alter* immediately dispatched ten *"Kozak'n"* (cossacks) led by Reuvain Minsker. These great *lomdim* (scholars) and *baalei mussar* saved the yeshiva.

In the Service of Klal Yisroel

Reh Reuvain maintained a keen sensitivity to the needs of *Kial* throughout his life. He was always a man of strength in every sense of the word, never afraid of a fight. When a local ballgame was planned on *Shabbos* in Vilna, he was the first to picket, to demonstrate . . . to be arrested.

Reb Reuvain was extremely active in Agudath Israel affairs. He often quoted Reb Chaim Brisker: "Without the Agudah, the situation would be impossible; 'they' would dominate everything, G-d forbid!"

He never missed a convention or a Knessia Gedolah. He did not seek to speak, but preferred to work behind the scenes; he made certain that all resolutions were written properly and lobbied to see them passed.

Gedolim, including the **Chofetz Chaim, Reb Chaim Ozer, and the Gerer Rebbe**, would listen to his opinion, for they knew that his method of thinking mirrored that of Reb Boruch Ber.

Partnership in Poverty

Reb Reuvain lived a life of property, even by European standards. Four families lived in one two-story house in Kamenitz. Reb Boruch Ber, his son Reb Yaakov Moshe, and his grandchildren took up the entire downstairs. Reb Reuvain and his family lived in the attic-like upstairs.

When Reb Moshe Bernstein, the younger son-in-law, came with his family, Reb Reuvain shared the upstairs with them. So Reb Reuvain and his four children lived in three small attic rooms (divided by cardboard barriers) and a small kitchen.

He surely deserved a house of his own, but he was responsible for the yeshiva finances and was keenly aware that the yeshiva could not afford it. Besides, he wanted to be near his father-in-law/rebbi, available at a moment's notice.

Reb Boruch Ber often stood at the foot of the stairwell calling "Reuvain," and there was Reb Reuvain.

Rebbetzin Grozovsky, taking cues from her mother on how to take care of a *gad al,* kept the children out of his way so he could concentrate on preparing the *shiur,* keeping up correspondence with the *gedolim* on matters of *Klal Yisroel,* and receiving visitors.

The yeshiva had no dormitory and no dining hall. Students would room and board in private homes (half the town made a living from the yeshiva). Every student would receive a *chaluka* (stipend), the amount for each decided by Reb Reuvain, who based his judgment on the ability of the parents to provide support. Russian *talmidim,* however, were cut off from their families in the Soviet Union and received full support, including clothing expenses. Neither Reb Reuvain nor his children wore new clothes until every Russian boy had a new suit and shoes.

The day arrived when funds were so low that he was forced to cut down on the *chaluka.* Mordechai Astriner, a senior Russian talmid,

struck the right chord. He said: "Rebbe, with the chaluka that Reb Reuvain gives us, we can only learn Gemora and Rashi - For Tosfos we need more strength."

Reb Boruch Ber thought for a moment, then walked over to the stairs calling, "Reuvain, they are absolutely right! For *Tasfas* one needs more strength!" Then and there the decision was made to appeal to Jews in America. The two would travel to raise funds. [When the two passports arrived from the Ministry in Warsaw at the local police station, the local Police Commandant announced that he personally would deliver them to *''Jasno Wielmozny Pan Rabin"* (Most Honorable Sir Rabbi). When Reb Baruch Ber heard that the Police Chief was coming, he put on his *kapota* {long coat) and hat. "One must show *kavod* to *malchus* (honour to the government)," he declared.]

Together in America

As America was celebrated as the *"Goldene Medina,''* Reb Boruch Ber expected to raise $100,000 on these shores. *"Pashel* (simple)," he said. "All we have to do is find one hundred brethren that will donate $1000 each. What if we can't find one hundred donors? So we'll find 1000 brethren who will donate $100 each, and we'll still raise $100,000."

As it turned out, they arrived in 1929, at the start of the depression. People had no jobs, and the term "taxdeductible" was meaningless.

Fortunately, they found a native of Kamenitz in New York who had lived in America for some time: the late **Rabbi Yitzchok Tendler**, rabbi of the Kamenitzer Shul in New York and *rash yeshiva* in Yeshiva Rabbi Jacob Joseph, who volunteered to help them. His task was immense-bridging the gap between two spiritual giants and the land of materialism and secularism. To this, add raising funds during the depression. The results could not be very lucrative.

Health Problems

Reb Boruch Ber could not bear being called "Rabbi Leibowitz"- instead of *"Horav"* or *"Rebbe."* When in Philadelphia in those pre-refrigerator days, Rabbi Tendler was about to leave their place of lodging for a meeting, but first he warned Reb Boruch Ber not to eat the chicken the hostess was preparing to serve them. "It will make you sick, Rebbe." Apparently the iceman had not made his delivery that day, and the chicken had a slight odour. That night Rabbi Tendler heard the old Rosh Yeshiva pacing back and forth, obviously quite sick. He finally went out of his room and asked him, "Rebbe, I begged you not to eat the chicken. Why did you?"

Reb Boruch Ber replied, "You really think it's from the chicken? It's from hearing 'Rabbi Leibowitz, Rabbi Leibowitz' all day that I'm sick!"

The difficult *kashrus* demands on their food intake had an ill effect on the two men, but mostly on Reb Boruch Ber, so Rabbi Tendler took him to his doctor for an examination. While waiting, the old Rosh Yeshiva sighed. Rabbi Tendler asked if his pain was so severe, to which he replied, "No, it's just that I forgot my *Gemora,*" - He never travelled without a *sefer.*

One might say that Reb Reuvain had three teachers: Reb Moshe Mordechai Epstein of Slobodka, under whom he studied during his formative years; Reb Baruch Ber, who had the greatest influence on him; and Reb Akiva Eiger, whose works Reb Reuvain would study day and night. Reb Reuvain's *shiurim* were therefore sharp, deliberate, much attention devoted to detail, with an evaluation that weighs all sides of an issue.

A Gesture Toward Chassidim

Across the street from my (R' Chaim Shapiro) *stranzye* (lodging) was the Kobriner Shteibel. The Chassidic element in the yeshiva would gather *there* every Friday night for *Kabbolas Shabbos.* Because of

the variety of Chassidic backgrounds among the boys, they would sing *every* stanza of *"Lecho Dodi"* with a *nigun* from a different *rebbe-nine* stanzas, nine *nigunim.* Such sweetness! I began to *daven* there *every* Friday night.

Then I learned that on a coming *Shabbos* the Kobriner Rebbe was to visit his Chassidim in that *shteibel.* I decided to *see* the Kobrmer.

When I returned to the yeshiva after the Kobriner *tisch* Reb Reuvain spotted *me:* "You, a *chassid?"* He peered at me over his glasses, gave a strange twist with his hand, and walked away.

My *chavrusa* observed the exchange from a distance. "What was it all about?" *he* wanted to know. "What was *what* about?" I asked, astonished. He explained, "Whatever he told you was an entire *shmuess-the* look above the glasses was anger, and the twist of the hand, a rebuke." He had analyzed every nuance.

Actually, Reb Reuvain was never *against chassidim,* or he would not have accepted them in the yeshiva. On the contrary, he was very *close* to those *chassidic rebbes* who were *gedolei Torah,* when dealing in the affairs of Agudath Israel. He merely found fault that a *misnagid*,a son of a baal mussar who had been his former chavrusa, should at all be attracted to Chassidus .

The Slonimer Rebbe would always call on Reb Boruch Ber when he was in Kamenitz. Reb Boruch Ber and Reb Reuvain would then reciprocate with a visit to the Rebbe.

On one of his visits the Rebbe insisted that Reb Boruch Ber and Reb Reuvain are also Chassidim. "What actually is a Chassid?" asked the Slonimer, "but a *Yid* that has a *rebbe.* The Rosh Yeshiva has a *rebbe* Reb Chaim Brisker - and Reb Reuvain has the Rosh Yeshiva for a *rebbe."*

Last Days of Kamenitz

In September 1939, Poland fell in just a matter of days. The German army entered Kamenitz Erev Rosh Hashana. Unlike other towns,

where they murdered Jews, in Kamenitz the Nazis behaved civilly. People attributed it to to the *zechusim* of the Rosh Yeshiva and the yeshiva. The town was totally cut off from the outside world. Radio Warsaw was silent, no newspapers, no news. Then the Germans announced their retreat, to hand over the territory to the Russians 'in accordance' with the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Reb Reuvain was in despair, for he knew the Russians too well; the Bolsheviks would never tolerate a Torah institution. This was the end of the yeshiva. Besides, the Bolsheviks had a personal account with him from his younger days in Minsk, during the birth of the Communist regime. He had been an outspoken opponent of the *Yevsekes* (Jewish Communists), fighting them tooth and nail. And he knew that the Bolsheviks had exhaustive records on everyone. Where could the yeshiva be moved?

Reb Baruch Ber insisted on moving the yeshiva to Vilna, but this did not seem to make any sense: the same Bolsheviks who occupied Kamenitz were occupying Vilna. (Some thought that he chose Vilna because in his old age he wanted to be near his father's burial place, but it would have been out of character for him to be so selfish.) ... A delegation of *baalei battim* came to him crying, "Rebbi, are you forsaking us? Will you leave us to the Bolsheviks?" He cried with them and decided not to leave.

Then a special messenger arrived from Vilna with an order from **Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski** that the entire yeshiva should come to Vilna at once, even if it meant traveling on *Shabbos!*

One by one, the students slipped out of town, unnoticed by the local Communist regime. Some went to Brisk, some on foot to Zabinke, the nearest train station (25 klm. from Kamenitz)-all the way to Vilna. But the Russians kept a watchful eye on the house where Reb Boruch Ber and Reb Reuvain lived. They knew of their value to *Klal Yisroel* and to American Jews, so they waited for instructions from Moscow on how to deal with them.

One dark night, friends placed the old Rosh Yeshiva and his family on a wagon and sneaked them out to Brisk and then placed them on the train to Vilna. Shortly afterwards, Moscow declared that they were handing over the ancient capital of Vilna to the free Republic of Lithuania as the price of the treaty permitting Soviet bases on the Lithuanian territory. People remembered Reb Baruch Ber"s wish to move to Vilna -how puzzling it was then and how clear it was now.

In Vilna, Reb Boruch Ber fell ill. His family and students were gathered around his bed, but Reb Reuvain asked everyone to *leave* the room. After a while he came out. and asked Reb Yaakov Bobrovski and another disciple to go inside to be present at the last moments. Reb Reuvain himself walked outside and burst into uncontrollable weeping. The man who never revealed his emotions was crying like a baby ....

In his eulogy, Reb Reuvain cried out, "Who will answer our questions? Who will clarify our doubts?" Quoting the Prophet Elisha's words about Eliyahu, *"Avi, Avi, rechev Yisroel."* The cemetery in Vilna is overcrowded with graves full of the remains of *tzaddikim.* Miraculously, they found a little space next to his fathers grave, and there Reb Boruch Ber was buried.

On His Own

For the first time Reb Reuvain was on his own, no more hiding "behind the vessels." By the order of the Lithuanian authorities, he *moved* the yeshiva to Rasein (Raseinai) in Lithuania proper.

He dispatched his brother-in-law, Reb Moshe Bernstein to *Eretz Yisroel, [*where he founded the Kamenitz Yeshiva in Jerusalem.] perhaps in hope of finding a way to move the yeshiva there. He himself went to America in hope of saving the yeshiva there.

In the meantime, the Russians tightened their grip on the little country. When Reb Reuvain applied for an exit visa, the Russians confronted him with a personal dossier, containing a detailed

description of his activities from his early days in Minsk, through his doings in Poland, to the very last day in Rasien. He was resigned to being arrested and shot, yet by some miracle they let him leave the country.

Arriving in America, he immediately began to stir up the Jewish communities on behalf of the Vaad Hatzala. His family was accustomed to poverty, but they did not even have a roof over their heads when they arrived in New York.

Eventually Reb Reuvain succeeded **Rabbi Shlomo Heiman** as Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, headed Bais Medrash Elyon in Monsey, New York, and became chairman of the *Moetzes Gedolei haTorah* (Council of Torah Sages of Agudath Israel of America).

Although disabled by a stroke in 1951, he still exerted a strong influence on the yeshiva and Jewish affairs. After his passing in 1956, his children published *Shiurei Reh Reuvain* which are studied in yeshivos around the world.



If the women did not take part in the **עגל**, why did they feel a need to give their jewellery for the Mishkan in the first place?

One answer I heard from a choshuveh Yid from Sanhedria, he said a beautiful answer. If the women would not have donated to the Mishkan, people may have said, "You know why the women did not give their Jewellery for the **עגל** ? Not because they are so chashuv! Rather it was because they cannot let go of their precious jewellery!

Only now that we saw how they were so happy to give by the Mishkan did it reveal retroactively that it was because of their unbelievable

chashivus that they were unwilling to take part in the **עגל**. It was the sin of the **עגל** that they did NOT want to be a part of!

The Ben Ish Chai says that the nature of people is, that when they donate to a cause, the first time they do it with **שמחה** and enthusiasm. As time goes on the feeling dwindles away and a person gives with less and less happiness.

However, the opposite outlook is the truthful one. The Ben-Ish-Chai says each time we have the opportunity to give again, [even for the same cause], we are meant to multiply our happiness. The Ben-Ish-Chai says that this concept is hinted to in the word **כ-ס-ף**. The letter **כ** = 20: **ס** = 60: **ף** = 80.

Each letter in the word **כסף** has a higher numerical value, which hints to this idea that each time one gives his "**כסף**", he is meant to become even more and more and more **בשמחה** !

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP] - Feel Their Love!

The pasuk in this week's parsha (Shmos 35:3) says, **לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** "***You shall not light a fire throughout your habitations on Shabbos***".



Most commentators explain this literally, that you may not light a fire on Shabbos. **The Shaloh HaKaddosh** in his sefer, Shnay Luchos HaBris (as quoted by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin in Love Your Neighbor), says that the word "fire" in the pasuk also alludes to the destructive fire of anger and disputes. Especially on Shabbos, one should be exceedingly careful not to grow angry or become involved in disputes.

Some commentaries say that erev Shabbos, Friday afternoon, is a time when people may get angry more easily, in their rush to prepare for Shabbos.

The Talmud (Shabbos 30B-31A) tells a story. Two men made a bet that whoever could make the sage, Hillel, angry would get four hundred zuz. One of the men went to Hillel's house on erev Shabbos and asked him a nonsensical question. Hillel answered calmly and returned to his erev Shabbos preparations. For a second time, the fellow knocked on Hillel's door, again disturbing Hillel, with another nonsensical question. This went on once more. Hillel maintained his composure and did not get angry!

Perhaps the following dvar Torah by **HaRav Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l**, will help us, in some way, to avoid getting angry at others, especially at our loved ones.

The Midrash Tanchuma (Shmos 12 and 13) says that when all the work of the Mishkan was complete, the only thing remaining to be done was for the Mishkan to be erected. Then Hashem's Holy Presence would dwell within it. However, no one was able to erect it. Neither the wise men nor Ohaliav or Betzalel, who were in charge of its construction, could do so. Therefore, the Jewish people felt much anguish.

The people voiced their frustration to Moshe. They showed Moshe each part of the Mishkan. Moshe agreed that it was all done properly, according to the proper specifications. Therefore, they asked Moshe, "Then why can't the Mishkan be raised?"

Moshe felt their pain. He felt terrible anguish that they could not erect the Mishkan. Why did Hashem cause this failure?

Moshe Rabbeinu had felt personal pain that he had not been asked by Hashem to participate in the actual building of this holy structure. In actuality, Hashem had saved the raising of the Mishkan for Moshe to do.

The Rosh HaYeshiva zt"l asked, how could it be that Moshe, with all his wisdom, did not realize that raising the Mishkan would be his share in it? Moshe had felt pain that he had not been actively involved. One would think that Moshe would have felt joy knowing that obviously Hashem was saving this for him. Yet, the Midrash seems to indicate that Moshe only felt anguish but no joy, by the fact that the Mishkan could not be raised. Why was that?

The Rosh HaYeshiva zt"l explained that Moshe was overwhelmed by the pain and anguish that the Jewish People felt due to their inability to raise the Mishkan. That pain, for others, so overwhelmed him, that his own personal pain, his desire to participate, was totally dwarfed. How could he feel joy when the Jewish people felt anguish?

Perhaps the reason that Moshe felt the pain of his people to the exclusion of his own personal pain was because of his tremendous love for his people. He loved the Jewish people so much that his personal pain was negligible compared to their pain.

We should make a conscious effort to increase our love for our fellow Jews. When our hearts are filled with love of them, our own ego and self-love will be reduced. That will help us to refrain from getting angry at others, even when they seem to deserve it.



וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ -*They came, every one whose heart stirred him up*...(35:21)

The Torah relates this in wonderment. Imagine, we are to consider, among all the millions of Jews, there was not one who planned on making a contribution to the Sanctuary yet never got around to it! Every Jew's intention was carried out and actualized. This is in contrast to today, when unfortunately, most good intentions remain in the realm of potential... (**The Chida**)

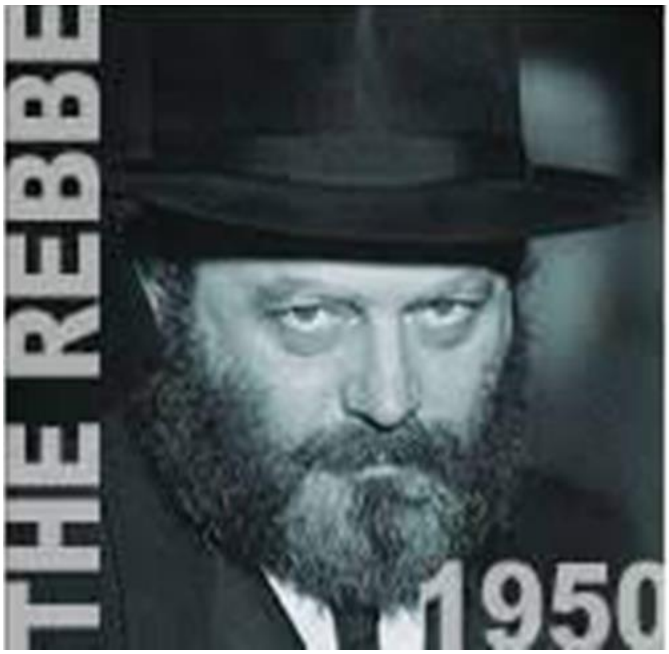


TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

תורה תבלין

The following story was retold by Rabbi Sholom Ber Avtzon. On Kingston Avenue, between Eastern Parkway and Union Street, in Brooklyn, NY, there was a store called Mr. Mikes Hat Store. Mr. Mike was a very friendly and pleasant individual who served the community.



In the 1950's, when this story took place, Lubavitch was not yet a large community, and Mr. Mike developed a warm relationship with many of the local chassidim. During those early days, the **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson zt"l**, would walk up Kingston Avenue on his way to visit his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, who lived in an apartment two blocks away from 770, on the corner of Kingston and President. As the Rebbe passed by Mr. Mike's store, he would raise his hand in a gesture of greeting, like a salute, and touch his hat.

Day after day, the Rebbe would pass by and salute and Mike would wave back. After a while, however, Mr. Mike noticed that the Rebbe didn't salute the other Jewish storekeepers as he walked by. He would just nod.

Like many of the Jews who lived in Crown Heights at that time, Mike was not really "observant," and usually went bareheaded in his store.

He began to wonder if perhaps the Grand Rabbi was politely trying to give him a message. Perhaps he was pointing towards heaven and reminding him that there is One above, and we should conduct ourselves accordingly. Perhaps he was touching his hat to suggest that it might be a good idea for someone selling hats to wear one.

As this thought passed through his mind, Mike suddenly felt a tremendous appreciation for the Rebbe's sensitivity. If the Rebbe was in fact trying to tell him something or send him a subliminal message, it was in a very friendly and respectful way, without embarrassing him in front of others, leaving it up to him to decide if his gesture was merely a greeting, as most people would think, or perhaps it was something more.

Mike decided that more likely it was the latter, and that the Rebbe was showing him great respect. So one day he decided that with all the hats and caps he had in the store, he would also begin to wear one in order to cover his head, and see what the Rabbi's reaction would be.

Immediately, he put on the first cap that came to hand. The next day, he waited for the time that the Rebbe would pass by, which might have been around 6 pm. He looked through the window to see what the Rebbe would do. Sure enough as the Rebbe passed by, instead of raising his hand in a salute, the Rebbe greeted him as he greeted all of the other storekeepers with a nod.

Mr. Mike was tremendously happy to see that his intuition was correct. His respect and admiration for the Rebbe intensified greatly.

After a period of time, which could have been weeks, months or even years, Mr. Mike finally picked himself up and went into 770, and asked if he could meet with the Rebbe. He had no concept of what Yechidus with the Rebbe meant. He just wanted to meet the Rabbi he had come to admire so very much.

He was given an appointment right away. Entering the Rebbe's room he said, "Rabbi, I didn't come to ask a question or ask you for anything in particular, or even request a blessing. I just want to express my friendship for you and give you a hug, if you will allow me."

The Rebbe smiled, stood up from his chair and walked in front of his desk. He stood a few inches away from Mike. Mr. Mike got up from his seat and placed his arms around the Rebbe and gave him a hug.

To his astonishment, the Rebbe in return gave him a big heartfelt hug of his own. Mike realized that their feelings of friendship and admiration were mutual. His joy and happiness had reached an all-time high.

Leaving his room, Mike decided that he could no longer remain the same as he had been until then. He said to himself, "This great Rabbi genuinely loves me just because I am a Jew. I guess there must be much more to Judaism than I thought. Perhaps it has meaning and purpose. Maybe I should really begin being more observant."

That Friday afternoon, Mr. Mike closed his store for Shabbos for the first time, and never looked back.

Sparks Of Shabbos

The Torah treats Shabbos very severely. A person could chas v'sholom burn an entire sefer Torah with hundreds of names of Hashem during the week but not be liable for his life, yet if he lights a candle on Shabbos, he is liable.

Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt"l explains that if a surgeon stitches up a wound on a person's leg and is off by a few millimeters, the person might be scarred, but it is not the end of the world, but if a heart surgeon is off by a small fraction, the person will die, because his life depends on his heart.

Shabbos is the source of all beracha, and the heart of all kedusha. Desecrating it threatens the kedusha of the entire Torah, and is therefore not to be taken lightly.

Perhaps this is why we define a person as observant if he is shomer Shabbos, because without Shabbos, his Torah and mitzvos lack a heart!

Post Purim Message – Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman

The holy day of Purim is behind us, but there is a tremendous take-away message that will resonate throughout the year.

After Haman's decree to annihalate all the Jewish people was announced, Morderchai pleads with Esther to help. 'Please go before Achashverosh to plead on behalf of Klal Yisrael.'

Esther tells Morderchai, "I can't just walk into the palace in front of Achashverosh - I will be putting my life in jeopardy. Everbody know that anybody that appears before the king unsummoned will result in an immediate death sentence. And I haven't been summoned into the king's chamber in the last 30 days!"

When Morderchai senses Esther's hesitancy, he tells her, "If you keep silent at this time, the yeshuah for Klal Yisrael will come from another source. And who knows, the fact that you were appointed to be queen – this is your destiny and mission in life. – And you are about to squander it! This will go down in the annuls of history that you let this once in a lifetime opportunty slip right through your fingers!"

To illustrate this point, I would like to share with you a fascinating story about the **Ponovitcher Rav**.

Besides being a great gaon and a tzaddik, he was also know as a prolific fund-raiser. [**The Satmar Rebbe** once said, "***Scientists are constantly debating whether there is life on other planets – I have clear proof that there is no life there, otherwise, the***

Ponovitcher Rav would have been there to raise money for his yeshivah!"]

He was a very dynamic and charismatic speaker. He would travel from town to town and make appeals for his yeshivah.

One time, (Parshas Shemos) he arrived in a certain city in America. The whole city was abuzz, and on Shabbos morning the shul was packed. Right before Kriyas HaTorah, the gabbai gives him the signal to go up and speak.

As he is about to approach the podium, the Rav of the shul goes over to him, and tells him, "Ponovitcher Rav – you should know that in this town we have a custom that any tzeddakah that gets collected here – stays here for local moisdos only – therefore we are not going to give any money for Ponovitch! However, since you are a great and inspiring speaker, please go ahead and give your speech anyway!"

The Ponovitcher Rav wasn't fazed. He got up to the podium, and said, "I had a speech prepared, but the circumstances have changed, so let me share with you another thought that I have on the Parsha.

When Moshe Rabeinu was put in a basket in the Nile River, the pasuk says, וַתִּתְיַצַּב אֲחֹתוֹ מֵרָחֹק לְדֵעָה מַה־יֵּעָשֶׂה לוֹ - ***His sister stood from afar, to know what would happen to him***. (Shemos 2:4)

Asked the Ponovitcher Rav, 'This child had a mother, father and brother – where were they? They just abandon Moshe, and walk away and don't look back? Miriam was there – but where was Amram, Yocheved and Aron? Why didn't they stick around to see what the end result would be with Moshe?

And he said something incredible.

The Gemara says that Miriam was a prophetess. She knew with *nevuah* that her mother would give birth to a son (Moshe) that would become the saviour of Klal Yisrael. Therefore, she knew all along that somewhere, someway, somehow, little Moshe would be saved from the river.

She knew that Hashem would perform a miracle on his behalf and would rescue him. So, Miriam stayed behind because she wanted to witness the miracle first-hand. She wanted to observe, who would be that person who would be zoche to physically carry out Hashem's mission, and pull Moshe out of the river.



When bas Pharaoh came along and stretched out her arm, and it expanded like elastic, Miriam was rewarded for her patience. She was able to see this amazing miracle happen right before her very eyes.

The Ponovitcher Rav turns to the crowd, and says, "Let me tell you something – the Ponovitcher Yeshiva will survive. In fact, it will thrive and will outlive us all. The only question is, '***how?***' Who will have the zechus to do it? Who will have the foresight and the wisdom to want to be part of it?

And that is why I travel around from town to town – to meet those lucky people – all those Miriams around the world, who want to witness and have the zechus, to be part of this great legacy."

And indeed, his words proved to be prophetic.

Morderchai told Esther, "Regardless of whether you plead our case before Achashverosh or not – either way, Klal Yisrael will somehow be rescued. Hashem will perform a miracle. So, why don't you want to be the heroine of the Purim story for all eternity?

The Gemara in Mesechta Megillah says that Esther petitioned the chachamim to have Megillas Esther included as part of the 24 books

of T'nach. And Klal Yisrael should read it, and recount the story every year on Purim.



And perhaps, the reason why Esther wanted the story to be written down for posterity was to teach us this important lesson.

There are times in our life, when we are presented with an opportunity to acomplish something truly remarkable. But it may require of us to make a major commitment of our time or resources. And, we might be hesitant, and come up with all sorts of excuses – and pass up on it.

And who knows, if this was our specific mission in life – Hashem put us down here on this world, at this time and this place – for just this moment.

Maybe, if we only just go a bit more out of our comfort zone, we could not only accomplish the task, but excell at it.

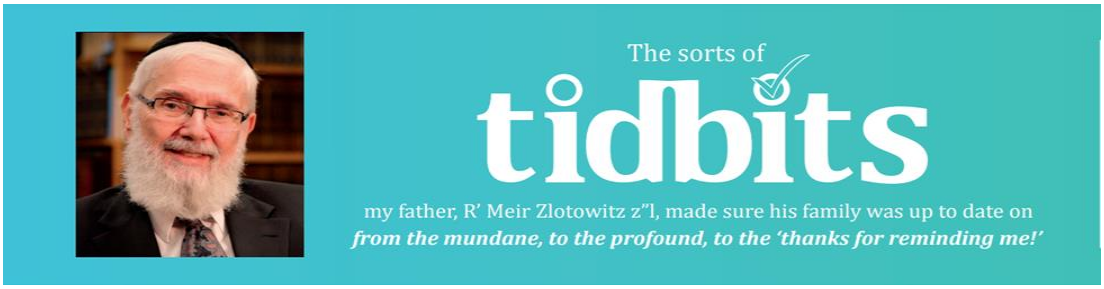
If Esther would not have risked her life, and gone into the king to plead on behalf of Klal Yisrael, Hashem would have found another shliach to get the job done – there still would have been a Megillah. But it might have been Megillas Channah or Megillas Dinah – and Esther would have become just an obscure foot-note in Jewish history.

So, when opportunities come knocking on the door, you be the one who steps up to the task.

Parsha Thoughts By Mordechai Sapoznick

The Torah tells us a detailed counting of the amount of gold and silver that was donated for the building of the **מִשְׁכָּן** . Why is it so important to have a detailed counting of what was donated for the **מִשְׁכָּן** ?

The Ohr HaChaim answers that it is to teach us that when someone does a mitzvah, it is worthwhile to count every detail that one does in order perform that mitzvah, because he will definitely be rewarded for all of it by Hashem. [**ספר פרשה פשעטיל**]



For the Shabbos Table

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת ה׳ ***"Every man whose heart inspired him came; and everyone whose spirit moved him, brought the portion of Hashem" (Shemos 35:21)***

Here the Torah describes the contributors to the construction of the Mishkan, as "Nesa'o Libo" and "Nad'va Rucho". What are these descriptions referring to?

The Ramban explains that nedivus halev refers to those who contributed materials and nesa'o libo refers to the Chachamim who performed the actual work. The Ramban writes that in Mitzrayim the Bnei Yisrael worked only with brick and mortar. Nevertheless, this team of Chachamim were able to work skillfully with gold, silver and other fine materials.

The Torah acknowledges that in the case of Betzalel this was a direct blessing from Hashem that he be granted this ability. But how did Betzalel's assistants acquire their newly found talents?

Some understand Ramban to be saying (see Sichos Mussar [**Rav Chaim Shmulevitz**]), that those who were nasa'o libo and came forward with dedication to this avodas Hashem of building the Mishkan, were granted the abilities to fulfill the tasks that they undertook.

The same applies in all areas of avodas Hashem. One who possesses a true desire and dedication to rise to the task will merit Divine assistance to fulfill his goals. Even one who seems lacking in talent will merit Divine assistance and blessing to be able to grow and achieve. See also **Chofetz Chaim** [Toras Habayis ch. 7].



This Shabbos we read Parshas Hachodesh, which begins with **הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים**. As Rashi says at the beginning of Chumash Bereishis, this is where the Torah could have begun, since it is the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people.

It is the mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh, by which Beis Din declares which day is considered Rosh Chodesh, and sanctifies it as such. But why is this the first mitzvah? Why is it so important that the Torah could have begun here?

The following is how my father Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l explained it (his yahrzeit falls in Nisan) and it is indeed a wonderful explanation.

It touches on the great controversy between Jews and the other nations regarding what a human being is.

Other nations see a homo sapiens as a kind of animal that has a particularly high IQ which grants him capabilities other animals don't have. The Jewish outlook is that a human being is a unique creation that differs in its essence from the animals. And what makes humans unique? What makes them essentially different?

Only a human being can develop a relationship with Hashem and attach to Him. This is due to the power of free choice that only humans have. A human can choose attachment, deveikus, to the Creator.

Every human is presented with two options, namely, to turn to Hashem and attach to Him, or to turn in a different direction. And this is what the sun and moon are all about, which brings us to the subject of Rosh Chodesh.

At the end of every lunar month, the moon completely disappears from our sight. When the new month begins, this is the moment when the moon starts to turn toward the sun, causing the moon to be "born" and become partially visible. From them on, it grows and grows.

The moon represents the Jewish people. We need to face ourselves toward Hashem, just as the moon turns toward the sun. We must not turn in another direction, chas v'shalom. This mitzvah is basic to being a Jew, and this is the Torah's first mitzvah, because being Jewish is all about choosing to turn toward Hashem. Whether we will do so is the choice that stands before us at all times.

The first mitzvah is to turn toward Hashem.

This is especially connected to the month of Nisan, in which Pesach falls, because Pesach is the birth of the Jewish people. As soon as a person is born, he needs to get facing in the right direction. We are like the moon. Only if the moon faces the sun does it have light. If it faces away, it disappears. Only if a Jew sets himself up to face

Hashem will his life be illuminated. Otherwise, it is just darkness. True light and happiness is turning toward Hashem.

May we have the wisdom to make the right choice, and, like the new moon of Nisan, turn to Hashem ever more.

Wishing you the best with all my heart, Harav Yosef Dov Pincus.



Giving Without Limits

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וָנֶזֶם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלִי זָהָב
The men came with the women. All people of generous heart brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, private ornaments; all kinds of golden ornaments. (*Shemos* 35:22)

It is so wonderful what the Torah tells us about the generosity of the Jewish people for the *Mishkan.* When the campaign was announced for raising *Mishkan* materials, everyone responded right away and brought the most precious things they had. They donated gold, silver and copper, as well as jewels and precious stones of various types. The women even took off their jewelry and brought it in for the *Mishkan.*

The response was so immense that those in charge of receiving the materials came and told Moshe, "The people are bringing too much!"

Not only did they already bring more than enough, but they kept on donating more and more, without stop, until Moshe needed to make an announcement that people should please stop donating.

It was like the best possible dream for anyone who ever tried to raise funds for a *shul* or *yeshivah.* Imagine you are trying to get donations for a *mitzvah* cause, and you have to make a public announcement to please stop donating because there is already too much money!

And don't think our forefathers disregarded money. In the beginning of *Parshas Tzav, Rashi* explains that the word **צו**, with which the

parshah begins, urges people to do as commanded even when it costs them money.

People were always attached to their possessions and always felt it hard to part with them.

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* looked for judges to appoint over the people, he didn't have trouble finding candidates who were wealthy (and thus had no need to flatter and favour rich and important litigants) but he did have a hard time finding ones who were dispassionate toward their possessions.

Nevertheless, when it came to building the *Mishkan,* the people showed such generosity that after a single announcement, an unending flood of money started pouring in.

Also the women, who were quite unwilling to part with their jewelry to make the *Eigel Hazahav,* when it came to building a *Mishkan* for *Hashem* they willingly took off their ornaments and brought them in.

The participation was complete and wondrous, the likes of which we don't find elsewhere in the Torah, and we surely don't see it happening around us.

Maybe it was because building the *Mishkan* was not a *mitzvah* like other *mitzvos.* It says: **ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם** – They shall make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell within them.

The *Mishkan* caused *Hashem* to dwell within the people themselves. The *Shechinah* came to rest not just in the *Mishkan* but within the Jewish people. This entails love and closeness to *Hashem.* The light of the *Shechinah's* presence is the true and lasting life. Its great illumination contains everything good and pleasant. So when the people heard that they have the opportunity to build a House in which they will be unified with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu,* they simply poured out their gold and silver to attain this purpose, to the point that they needed to be stopped.

Also today we have ways in which the *Shechinah* comes to rest among us. *Chazal* say: ***Husband and wife, if they behave meritoriously, the Shechinah is between them***.

We can see that most of the quarrels in the home are usually about financial matters. The husband thinks the wife is spending too much, or the wife wants something that the husband doesn't agree to buy. Also with two friends, if they had a joint financial venture that did not turn out satisfactorily, are likely to quarrel. This, too, causes the *Shechinah* to depart.

Let us remember our forefathers. Also they felt an attachment to money and possessions. And despite this, they poured out money like it was water, in order for the *Shechinah* to dwell within them. They didn't think twice. They just gave and gave and gave.

It is worth it for us, too, to give up on a little money, and not quarrel about it, so there will be peace in our home and our surroundings. Then *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will bring His *Shechinah* to rest among us and will hurry the *Geulah Sheleimah*.

MEOROS
HATZADDIKIM
Lights Of Our Righteous

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן "***Six Days Work May Be Done But On The Seventh Day It Is Shabbos***"

(35:2)

Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apta Mezibuz

In Sifsei Tzaddikim, the Apta Rav is quoted asking the following question: We know that Chazal teach us that certain mitzvos are equivalent to all the other 613 mitzvos. For example, the Medrash Tanchuma (Ki Sisa 33) teaches us that keeping Shabbos is equivalent to the entire corpus of Torah, and similarly the mitzva of tzitzis and

others are also considered equivalent to the whole Torah. But how can we expect any one person to fulfill such a mitzva with all its details and intricacies? Each mitzva has many details and together such mitzvos amount to myriad details and minutiae.

Chazal say (Medrash Toras Kohanim Bechukosai 26:8) that a single individual who does a mitzva cannot compare to many masses who do so. The reason for this, explains the Apta Rav, is that just as all the souls of the Jewish people all originate from one source, so do all the Taryag mitzvos come from one source. The mitzvos that are equivalent to the entire body of Torah come from that same source as well. Since Jewish souls and the mitzvos all come from one shared origin, though it is impossible for one person to fulfill all the mitzvos with all their myriad varied details and minute aspects, there are individuals who perfect and keep the details of specific mitzvos. Some people are extremely careful in keeping Shabbos and others in fulfilling the mitzva of tzitzis; still others are extremely careful to fulfill and keep the mitzvos of tefillin, sukkah or lulav.

When they all come together as one body and all keep Shabbos, together for example, then each one adds his own personal part that reflects his stringencies, minhogim and other aspects of the mitzva. Each person adds his light to the collective whole, causing the mitzva to be completely fulfilled.

The Apta Rav explains that this is why our Parsha begins with the mitzva of Shabbos. Although the Parsha deals primarily with the Mishkon and the safeguarding of Shabbos refers to abstention from the work involved in building the Mishkon, nonetheless the kedusha of Shabbos teaches us that the mitzva of Shabbos is one performed and kept together as a unified gathered body where no one of Klal Yisrael can be left out. Thus, no work for the Mishkon can override Shabbos.

Chazal say (Berochos 55a) that Betzalel knew how to combine the letters of the Hebrew alphabet through which heaven and earth

were created, which means that his holy work helped fashion heaven and earth back so that they could exist as they once did – pristine before Odom's sin. After Odom HoRishon's sin, the land was cursed with thirty-nine curses and the handiwork of Maasei Bereishis was blemished. The thirty-nine categories of work in the Mishkon rectify the thirty-nine curses (Tikkunei Zohar 12a, Introduction). When we keep Shabbos and refrain from the thirty-nine categories of forbidden work, this is an even higher rectification and greater tikkun to the thirty-nine curses. Then we add a great spiritual light and transform the lamed-tes (thirty-nine) curses into tes-lamed or Tal Berochos – thirty-nine blessings – of spiritual dew!

The Zohar (ibid.) teaches us how the kedusha of Shabbos creates the dew of redemption and resurrection called Tal Techiya and all manner of shefa (abundance) descends upon Klal Yisrael through keeping Shabbos.

This is why the pasuk begins with Moshe gathering all of Klal Yisrael together and warning them to safeguard and keep Shabbos together. Only later does Moshe command them regarding the Mishkon, because the primary reward and delight of Shabbos comes from the same tikkun as the Mishkon. (Sifsei Tzaddikim Manuscript edition from Rymanow Vayakhel)

Rebbetzin Sara Schenirer (Adar 26, 5695 / 1935 - 88th Yahrzeit)

A seamstress in Cracow, she became keenly aware of the spiritual poverty of the growing generations of girls, so she created a school, and clothed the naked souls of generations to come.

A Polish-Jewish schoolteacher born on July 15, 1883, Sara Schenirer became a pioneer of Jewish education for girls. Highly intelligent, with a strong desire to study, as a young girl, she was envious of her

brothers' opportunity to learn and interpret the Torah and wished she had similar opportunities.

Recognizing her interest in education, her father provided her with a steady stream of religious texts translated into Yiddish. Her situation was not unique as opportunities for women's education in those years were sparse. The assimilation of her girlfriends troubled her and in response to her efforts to stem the tide of assimilation, they began to call her "the little pious one."

Self-taught but keenly aware of the glorious role women had played in Jewish history, Sara decided to initiate some type of educational activity for the women of her community.

When a lecture series which she organized for adult women failed to improve the situation, Schenirer began to dream of establishing a school for young girls. By 1939, there were more than 250 schools with an enrollment of more than 40,000 students in Bais Yaakov schools.

Although she never had any children of her own, her students considered her their mother and greatly revered her. Tragically, most of her students lost their lives in the Holocaust, but a few surviving students transplanted her mission and ideals in their new homes in the US and Eretz Yisroel. Her vision inspired not only her generation but each successive generation since and more than one million students have benefited from Sara's belief in the Jewish woman.

When she took ill and was admitted to the hospital for an operation, she wrote: For the first time in twenty-three years I did not daven be'tzibbur, and did not spend Shabbos with my girls.

No wonder she was called "the female version of the Chofetz Chaim".

She was only fifty-two when she passed away on the 26th of Adar, 5695 (1935), but she enjoyed the great satisfaction of seeing the widespread success of her revolution Leshem Shomayim (for the

sake of Heaven). She was not blessed with children of her own. And yet she was a mother. In fact, one could rightly say that no mother in our generation had as many children as she did.

When she departed this life in 1935, hundreds of Jewish girls walked behind her aron, toward the Cracow cemetery, and wept with heartrending cries, as one does for one's own departed mother. And when news of her petira became known throughout the cities and towns of Jewish Poland, thousands of Jewish girls tore kria and sat shiva as if for a mother.

The very same year, hundreds of young Jewish mothers named their new-born daughters Sora, after a woman, who – two decades earlier – was still an unknown Jewish seamstress, but who had since become Rebbetzin Sora Schenirer, the legendary mother of a new Torah-true generation of Jewish women in pre-war Eastern Europe.

Rav Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowitz Tiferes Shlomo (Adar 29, 5626 / 1866 - 157th Yahrzeit)

They called him the Tzaddik and author of the book "Tiferes Shlomo" of Radomsk. He is Grand Rabbi Shlomo Hakohen Rabinovitch of Radomsk (Tiferes Shlomo) - First Radomsker Rebbe. His book "Tiferes Shlomo" (1867-69) is considered one of the classic works of Chasidism and which is constantly being reprinted. He became Rov of Radomsk in 1842. Many wondrous stories are told about him.

Once **Rav Yosef of Neustadt** came to visit the Tiferes Shlomo in Radomsk. As the two tzaddikim sat side by side enjoying each other's company, Rav Yosef asked if the Tiferes Shlomo could share an anecdote from his rebbe, **Rav Fishel of Strikov** since the Tiferes Shlomo was one of his disciples. The Tiferes Shlomo related how strong was Rav Fishel's emuna (faith) in hashgacha pratis (Divine Providence). "He always believed that anything and everything that happened was directly related to him and specifically for his sake.

For example, when the weather turned cold, the frost would make immersion in the mikvah a formidable ordeal. He would say: "I believe with full faith – b'emuna sheleima that this a test from Hashem whether I will immerse despite the cold and discomfort; but - know, you Evil one, yetzer hara that you will not dissuade me nor block me from serving Hashem!"



Another story the Tiferes Shlomo shared was that before retiring to bed each night, Rav Fishel would take a glezzeleh bronfen (a glass of brandy or liquor) in hand and wish Hashem, "***L'Chaim! L'Chaim Ribono Shel Olam sheAta MeKor HaChaim veChai HaChaim - a gitte Nacht! L'Chaim, L'Chaim Master of the World; You are the source of all life; I wish you a good night***!"

He wished Hashem L'Chaim and a good night in Yiddish. Rav Fishel even once explained the reason behind this unusual minhag (custom) of his: "You must know that there are sick Jews everywhere in the world, and oftentimes it is at night that suffering intensifies.

I attempt to bring some relief to them with my L'Chaim to Hashem based on the principle that He suffers in our suffering. I wish Hashem a good night, if He wants a peaceful night free of pain and distress, He must heal all the Jews' suffering first! And so, I drink to Hashem and wish Him a good night – Gitte Nacht!" (**Siach Sarfei Kodesh**)

"There can be no faith without truth." ~~ Zohar

Rav Yaakov Yosef Twersky (Nissan 2, 5728 / 1968 - 55th Yahrzeit)

Rebbe Yaakov Yosef Twersky of Skver (1899-1968) was a leading Rebbe in the United States. Born in Skvyra, he served as Rebbe in Kalarash (Călăraşi, Romania). After the Holocaust, he reached New York, where he established his community in a distinctive neighborhood – New-Square, community reputed until this day for its conservative character, preserving authentic Chassidic Judaism like it was in the European Shtetls before the Holocaust.

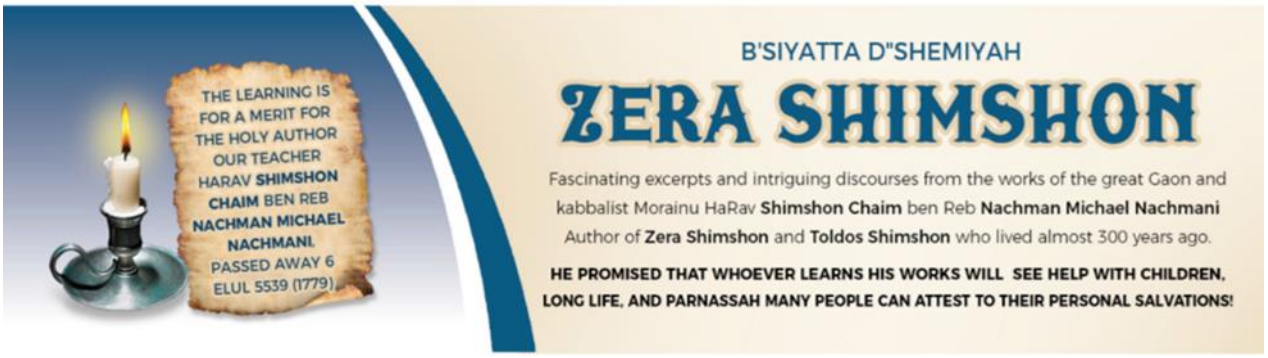
His Appreciation Of The Ohr Hachaim

From when he was just six years old Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver studied the entire commentary of **the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh** on the weekly Parsha, all by himself. He would constantly speak about how important the study of the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh is and once remarked: "***Ich veis nisht viazoy ich valt gekent a'durech di letzteh fiftzig yohr ohn Ohr HaChaim – I don't know how I would have survived the last fifty years of my life without the Ohr HaChaim***!" (Toldos Yaakov Yosef Skver p. 22)

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver used to say, "The first Chassidishe sefer is the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh." (Be'or HaChaim p. 241) Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver used to say that every word in the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh is an entire body of Yiddishkeit and that there is almost no Chassidus of which the Ohr HaChaim is not the bread and butter of its basis to the extent that one can fully and truly say that the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh is the one sefer that has been most widely accepted by the most Chassidim (Nachlas Tzvi Kovetz 7 p. 52)

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver used to say that every word of the Ohr HaChaim is like a whole Torah in and of itself. He even said, "One cannot be a full-fledged Jew without studying this holy sefer!" If ever a bochur suffered a downturn in his Yiras Shomayim, the Rebbe ordered him to study the Ohr HaChaim even on non-mussar topics, because he said that studying his holy words was a segula to work on the soul.

Rav Neta Freund once told how every year on Simchas Torah, Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver would complete the Ohr HaChaim and then begin studying it anew from Bereishis. He then danced with the sefer Ohr HaChaim in hand like we dance with a Sefer Torah. Whoever witnessed this event can begin to understand the profound connection that Skverer Chassidus has with the Ohr HaChaim.



וְכָל־חֲכַם־לֵב בָּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וְיַעֲשׂוּ ***Every wise hearted person among you should come and make etc***. (35:10)

The Zera Shimshon asks - why is the beginning of the passuk in the singular tense? It should have said **וכל חכמי לב בכם**, all wise hearted men etc. This way, the end of the passuk would fit grammatically since the end of the passuk is also in the plural tense. Or, the whole passuk could have been written in the singular tense, **יבוא ויעשה**?

Why does the Torah begin the passuk in singular tense and end in the plural tense?

The Zera Shimshon answers by first explaining a Gemara and a passuk that are directly related to the situation we find ourselves in today. The passuk says (Yeshaya 26:20), 'Go my nation into your rooms and close the door behind you. Hide for a brief moment until the wrath passes.'

The Zera Shimshon asks - first of all, how do we know that Hashem's wrath will pass in a brief moment? Secondly, why do we need to be told to wait until the wrath passes?

Every normal person knows to take precautions at a time that there is wrath (in whatever form the wrath may take). Staying inside to avoid the wrath is something that we should not have to be cajoled into doing? (!!!)

The Zera Shimshon explains that the passuk is in reality an answer to a question that arises when learning the following Gemara. The Gemara says (Ta'anis 11a), that one who separates himself from the Tzibbur, community, during the times of suffering, does not merit to be redeemed when the Tzibbur is delivered from their tough times. Locking oneself off from the world during a time that requires one to do so would seem to some as separating themselves from the Tzibbur. If so, how can the passuk command to 'go into your rooms and close the door behind you'?

It is this, that the passuk in Yeshaya is coming to address. The passuk is saying that although you may be separated from the Tzibbur, nevertheless, do not stop praying for their salvation.

One should believe that his private Tefilla, when done with intense concentration, can bring salvation to the entire community, even though he is stuck in his house. The passuk teaches this by saying, 'hide for a brief moment until the wrath passes'.

It is not to tell us to stay out of danger. We do not need a passuk to tell us this. Rather it is to give us Chizuk that although we are required to stay holed up without the power of the prayers of the Tzibbur, nevertheless, we still have the power to pray to nullify the decree. This is why the passuk says that the wrath will only be brief - because of the prayers of all those holed up, on behalf of all other Jews.

With this, the Zera Shimshon explains the grammatical change in the passuk in this week's parsha. The passuk begins in the singular tense, hinting to the person that is serving Hashem by himself. The passuk ends off in the plural tense to teach us that even while alone,

one should have the whole Tzibbur in mind. This adds the merit of the entire Tzibbur to his prayers and makes them much more potent.

The Zera Shimshon ends off that this in fact, should be the way one does all of his (personal) Mitzvos (even not during the times of distress). Whether it is Tzitzis, Tefillin, Tzedaka etc. one should always do his Mitzvos with the all Jews in mind.



Zera Shimshon - The Limud That Brings Yeshuos

אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶת־אָהֳלֹו וְאֶת־מִכְסֵהוּ אֶת־קְרָסָיו וְאֶת־קְרָשָׁיו אֶת־בְּרִיחֹו אֶת־עַמֻּדָיו וְאֶת־אֲדָנָיו ***The Mishkan covering, its tent (roof) and the top covering***... (35:11)

From here, the Zera Shimshon derives an interesting rule in grammar. When listing a number of things, only the last item listed is preceded by the word 'and'. With this rule in mind the question is why the Mishna in Avos does not follow this rule.

The Mishna says (4:16), there are three crowns, the crown of Torah and the crown of Kehuna (priesthood) and the crown of kingship. Here, the Mishna does not follow the universal grammar rule and inserts the word and before the last listed crown?

In order to answer this, the concept of the crown of Torah must be explained. The crowns of Kehuna and priesthood are crowns that their bearers wear at all times. (The crowns mentioned in the Mishna do not refer to the physical crowns, rather they refer to the title.) The king is a king at all times and so is the Kohen/Kohen Gadol. The crown of Torah however, seems to be something that one cannot 'wear' at all times like when he eats, sleeps etc. However, this outlook is incorrect.

The way to view these activities is as the Torah itself says (Vayikra 18:5), 'you shall live by them'. A person must do what it takes to live, this too, when done as prescribed by the Torah - is Torah. Thus, the crown of Torah can be with a person at all times if he lives by the directives of the Torah even when he cannot study Torah.

As well, the crown of Torah is not limited to any group or individual. This is true regarding the most distinguished person and of the most undistinguished person; everyone can have a share in the crown of Torah.

This means that even the king or the Kohen, besides for already having their respective crowns, they can also attain the crown of Torah. Therefore, the Mishna adds in the word 'and' right after the crown of Torah to bring out this point - that the Kohen or king is not limited to only his crown. He can also merit the crown of Torah too.

This is therefore also teaching that anyone can merit the crown of Torah since it is not limited to anyone of any standing.



Zera Shimshon - The Limud That Brings Yeshuos

לְחַבֵּר אֶת־הָאֹהֶל לִהְיֹת אֶחָד - To connect the tent to make it one *(36:18)*

On this passuk, the **Zohar** (Shemos 20b) explains this passuk to be referring to when the world was created.

The Zohar explains that everything that was created in Heaven (e.g. angels that sing praises to Hashem), there is something in this world that was created to mirror it (the Jewish people that sing the song

of Torah) and in the sea as well (the Liveyasan which also sings praises to Hashem).



This is how the tent -the world, is one. Using the concept, the Zera Shimshon explains the Mishna that teaches (Avos 5:19) how a person should serve Hashem and the Mishna uses different examples of animals and their traits as examples of how one should act to serve Hashem. (We will only discuss the example of the Leopard).

Originally, even the animals that are today predators, where not this way when they were created. Firstly, this is seen by the way the Navi describes how the animals will dwell together after the arrival of Mashiach and the examples are how all the predators will lives peacefully with the very animals that they always prey on (see Yeshaya 48:13).

As well, at the beginning of time when one only sheep was created the lion did not devour the sheep. In Noach's Teiva too, the animals had to have lived together peacefully, otherwise the lions etc. would have devoured the weaker animals. In fact, the passuk at the beginning of creation implies that the diet of all animals would be vegetation (Bereishis 1:30).

Therefore, the fact that there are animals of prey today is only due to the sins in the world which warped certain traits in these animals that are now destructive traits. When the world will be completely rectified, these warped traits will revert back to their original form.

Tying this back into the idea mentioned by the Zohar, the Zera Shimshon says that these animals were created only to benefit the world, not to create destruction. This is because, as the Zohar

taught, whatever was created in this world has a similar creation in Heaven and there is no destruction force in Heaven. It must be therefore that the flaw is due to actions done in this world.

In the aforementioned Mishna, the Tana used these animals to illustrate how one should use the positive traits that animals of prey have. In the case of the Leopard, the trait is brazenness.

Brazenness in this case refers to perseverance. The passuk describes the Leopard (Yirmiya 5:6) as diligent and perseverant. The brazenness seen today is because the sins of the inhabitants of the world which cause this trait to be flawed and used in a destructive way; not because this is the intrinsic nature of the Leopard.

Therefore, the Tana is showing us the correct and original trait of these animals and how they can be adopted by us to serve Hashem properly.



Rav SF Zimmerman

Parshas Vayakhel and Pikudei appears to be just a repetition of Terumah and Tetzave. But we know that in the Torah there's no such thing as extra pesukim, words or even letters. So how's it possible that we have 214 pesukim that are seemingly superfluous?

Rav Pam Zt'l says as follows: Parshas Vayakhel and Pikudei are totally different, because in parshas Terumah and Tetzave the pasuk says – וְעָשִׂיתָ (***and you shall make***), whereas in Parshas Vayakhel and Pikudei it says – וַיַּעַשׂ (And he made).

Very often in life, we make plans, but often we don't see them through. How often do we fulfil our aspirations?

The chidush of Moshe Rabeinu was, that he was told to do things (וְעָשִׂיתָ) and he turned it into a וַיַּעַשׂ. – He completed the task at hand. How did he do this?

Because the pasuk says: וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ - When we follow in the ways of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, then we can turn all the וְעָשִׂיתָ in our lives into וַיַּעַשׂ!

CONGREGATION ISRAEL OF SPRINGFIELD

Rabbi's Message

Parshas Vayakhel (and next weeks parsha, parshas Pekudei) seem to be extremely repetitive. The Torah, which is so careful about every word, goes over all the specifications and measures of the Mishkan which it already detailed in parshiyot Terumah and Tetzaveh.



Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook explains that the Mishkan was destined to be the place where the Jewish people were to have their rendezvous with G-d's presence in this world. It was to be a place where they could express their love for one another – the Jews through offering the korbanot b'ahavah and G-d by accepting our offerings and by revealing miracles daily.

When two human beings love each other and plan to meet, they review the details over and over again to make sure that there are no miscommunications and that the meeting will take place as planned. This, teaches Rav Kook, is why the Torah repeats all these details. By doing so, it captures the love which Hashem has for us

and His desire that everything be just right for our meetings with Him.

Rav Avraham Pam offers a different idea. Although there is a lot of repetition, there is one slight change that makes all the difference in the world. In Terumah and Tetzaveh the Torah says again and again, "וְעָשִׂיתָ" – "And you should make." In Vayakhel and Pekudei it states, "וַיַּעַשׂ" – "And they made." That, says Rav Pam, is the message of the repetition. There are so many details in the building, the vessels and the articles of clothing. "וַיַּעַשׂ" teaches us that the Jews fulfilled every single one of those details. They did not veer from Hashem's plan even one tefach.

It is easy to hear the word "וְעָשִׂיתָ" and get excited, resolve, or even plan to carry out Hashem's command. It is much more difficult to follow through with diligence, precision, and inspiration. But our ancestors did just that.

A powerful message emerges from these two answers, for "From the day the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, the Holy One blessed be He has only the four cubits of halacha in His world." Halacha is extremely demanding and requires attention to seemingly insignificant details. Human nature questions whether we really have to worry about every minute detail. Shouldn't it be enough if we carry out the command as best we can?

Vayakhel and Pekudei teaches us that wanting or generally trying to fulfil Hashem's will is just not enough. We must be vigilant of all the little details because they are part of a relationship. And when we're talking about an important relationship every last particular is crucial.

As we read Vayakhel we must recommit ourselves to study our majestic halacha in all its beautiful detail and keep in mind that, ideally, both its study and practice are meant to be labours of love.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Chazal (Shabbos 12b) says that the Shechinah dwells above an ill person's head. שֶׁשְּׁכִינָה לְמַעְלָה מֵרֹאשׁוֹ שֶׁל חוֹלֶה

The Maharal adds that the Shechinah is above every person who feels downtrodden, suffering, and low. The meforshim explain that the sick (and likewise, the people who feel downtrodden and broken) realize that no one can help them but Hashem. They feel entirely dependent on Hashem, and therefore they merit that Hashem is with them. Whereas, when a person thinks that he can manage on his own, this causes Hashem to depart from him.



Parshas Hachodesh: Impossible Contribution

There is a perplexing statement made in the Gemara (Menachos 45a) based on this week's Haftorah: וְחִטֵּאתָ אֶת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ . ״חַטָּאת״? עוֹלָה הֵיא! אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן פָּרָשָׁה זוֹ אֵלִיָּהוּ עָתִיד לְדוֹרְשָׁהּ – [The prophet says to] offer a chatas in the Temple at the new moon (Yechezkel 45:18), yet the Torah says to offer a fully-burned olah (Bamidbar 28:11), so we await Eliyahu to explain.

Why didn't the Almighty provide clear instructions?

Rav Mendel Hirsch (p. 557) beautifully explains that even if the prophet's instructions for the final temple are beyond our current understanding and require Eliyahu's explanation, the Almighty gave these words to encourage us to do our best, wherever we may be, to visualize the temple and bring our redemption to reality.

"You never know what you can do until you try."

משל למה הדבר דומה

כֹּל נְדִיב לִבּוֹ יְבִיאֻהָ אֵת תְּרוּמַת ה׳ – *'Every generous hearted person shall bring it.'*

Once, while taking a walk through the bustling streets of Flatbush, **R' Avigdor Miller *zt"l***, strolled past the imposing, magnificent structure of the *Mirrer Yeshivah*. Gazing up at the impressive structure, he turned to the *talmidim* accompanying him and casually remarked, "You know, this is the Miller Mirrer building."

The "Miller" building? His followers knew Rav Miller lived a life of deep simplicity and frugality; they had no idea he possessed the immense wealth required to dedicate such a monumental *Torah* center, let alone that he had contributed to its funding.

Seeing their bewilderment, Rav Miller smiled and explained his profound perspective: "If *Hashem* would grant me five million dollars, I know with absolute certainty that I would gladly give a large part of it to the *Mirrer Yeshivah* to build *Torah*. Since *Hashem* knows the absolute truth of my intentions, He considers it in Heaven exactly as if I myself sponsored this building."

When Moshe gathered the entire Jewish nation to collect materials for the *Mishkan*, the *Torah* repeatedly emphasizes a specific trait: *"nediv libo"* and *"nadva rucho,"* describing one whose heart and spirit motivated him. This teaches us that the *Mishkan* wasn't built merely from physical gold, silver, and copper; rather, it was constructed out of the pure desire to give.

Even when someone lacks the physical funds, they can still possess this profound willingness of heart. To *Hashem*, that sincere, heartfelt desire is the ultimate contribution. When a person genuinely yearns to perform a *mitzvah* but is held back by circumstances, in the heavens it is credited as if he had performed the deed.

בס"ד

למודי משה

The *pasuk* in *Parshas Vayakhel* says, **וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כֹּל נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וָנֶזֶם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלִי זָהָב וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵנִיף תְּנוּפַת זָהָב לַה׳** - "*The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, body ornaments – all sorts of gold ornaments – every man who raised up an offering of gold to Hashem.*" (*Shemos* 35:22).

All types of women's jewelry were brought for the *Mishkan*. The Targum translates that the women actually wore these pieces of jewelry as they went to deposit them in the area where the raw materials for the *Mishkan* were being accepted.

The question is – since the women were anyhow going to give these items to the *gizbar* [foreman], why wear them? When a woman looks at her jewelry box and decides – I can spare this bracelet; I can give away these rings, etc. isn't she more likely to carry the items to the donation center rather than wear them.

I saw an answer quoted in the name of **Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l***, that the women wanted to make a point: The point was "This is not spare jewelry that I have not worn in the last twenty-five years. After all, styles change and tastes change. This was not a case of the women readily parting with old fashioned jewelry that they did not wear anymore. The women wanted to stress that this was their current jewelry. It was jewelry that they love and still wear. "I want to give it because I want to make a precious donation to the *Mishkan*. I want to show the Ribbono Shel Olam that this is something that I in fact treasure and appreciate."

That makes the gift all the more meaningful, because I am literally taking the ring off my finger and giving it for the *Mishkan*. Now my finger will no longer have that ring.

The lesson is that many times in life – especially regarding giving *tzedakah* and *avodas* Hashem – it is not the monetary value that makes it a significant gift. It is the way it is given.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

A gutten Erev Shabbos, my dear friends of Project Mesorah. This is your friend Rabbi Paysach Krohn, speaking to you, Erev Shabbos Parshas, Vayakheil-Pekudei.

In Vayakhel, we have a pasuk that has the same Pasuk as in Parshas Terumah (25:20). And it talks about the golden Kruvim. And it says, **וַיִּהְיוּ הַכְּרֻבִים פֹּרְשֵׂי כְנָפַיִם לְמַעְלָה סֹכְכִים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו אֶל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת הָיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים** (37:9) - The golden Kruvim, the wings, which were on top of the Oren Kodesh, on top of the Oren, they spread towards heaven, towards L'mayla. But on the bottom, there were two faces, a little boy and a little girl. And they faced each other.

And the Kovno Rav, **Rabbi Yitzchak Elchonon Specter** said that this is a symbol of what Klall Yisrael is all about. On one hand, our hands have to be stretched l'maala towards HaKadosh Baruch Hu with teshuva, davening and learning. But on the other hand, we cannot forget that we are not only **בֵּין אָדָם לַמָּקוֹם**, we are also **בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ**. And that's why the two children are **פְּנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו**, one caring for the other.

And that's what a Yid has to be - To maintain a spiritual focus upward towards Hashem, whilst remaining connected to one another, supporting and caring for each other as a community.

We must embody this balance as we approach the month of Geulah (redemption), hoping for a time of peace and the end of ongoing conflict. Have a great Shabbos.

Parsha Pearls

Making a Fire on Shabbos, לֹא־תְבַעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת - *"Do not light a fire on the day of Shabbos"* (35:3).

Rabeinu Efrayim interprets the Pasuk to mean that one would cause outbreaks of fire by desecrating the Shabbos - a hint that the desecration of Shabbos causes conflagrations.





Horav Yisroel Friedman Shlita - Letters Of Chizzuk During The Coronavirus Pandemic

רב ישראל פרידמן רב קלויז טשארטקוב מנשסתר

מכתב התחזקות

ערב שב״ק ויקהל פקודי פר׳ החודש תש״פ

Many people have requested to hear divrei chizuk during this difficult period that we are now in, locked in our houses, and all the shuls are locked and public tefillos and shiurei Torah have been closed down.

It is worthwhile quoting a letter that was written by the Belzer Rebbe (Reb Yehoshua Rokach zt"l) to the first Vizhnitzer Rebbe zt"l when he was very ill, in which he writes as follows:

"I was very concerned to hear that his close chassidim are worried that his honour might consider fasting on Yom Kippur, how can I believe such a rumour about a holy person like him. Surely, Hashem who has commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur has also commanded us 'venishmartem lenafshoseichem' that we guard our health.

I remember that when my father zt"l (the first Belzer Rebbe Reb Sholom Rokeach) was ill, we went around with a worry that he might

not want to eat on Yom Kippur, but in his great righteousness, he hurried as soon as Kol Nidrei was over and commanded that he be brought food to eat as much as he needed, and he proclaimed 'I hereby am fulfilling the wish of my Creator, and he ate with such a simcha the likes of which we never saw on him, only when he ate the matza at the seder and shook the lulav on Succos.

Therefore no doubt his honour will also be diligent in this mitzvah to guard his health and obey the advice of the doctors, especially a great person of his honours stature to whom Klall Yisroel looks up to for guidance, and he will be extremely careful not to fast, lest others learn from him and thereby put their lives at risk".

Similarly, we are all now obligated with a very great and lofty mitzvah of **ונשמרתם מאוד לנפשותיכם** - to look after our health and wellbeing, and although we cannot daven with a minyan or go to a public shiur, now is not the correct time to worry and be upset that we have been deprived from these mitzvos that have been taken from us, rather we should be besimcha that we have been given a great and holy mitzvah of 'venishmartem moed lenafshoseichem' to fulfill the wish of Hashem in accordance of the way we have been instructed in the Torah, and so the Gerer Rebbe zt"l the Chidushei Harim told his son when he was very ill, that his obligation is now to keep the mitzva of 'Uvacharta Bachaim' "**ובחרת בחיים**" to choose life, and to strengthen himself with a will to live and be healthy to serve Hashem and keep His Torah.

Yesterday I spoke to the Boyaner Rebbe shlita and I asked him to tell me some divrei chizuk that I can relay to others and he said to me as follows: The first thing a person needs to know are the words of Dovid Hamelech in Tehillim (chapter 131) **כגמול עלי אמו כגמול עלי נפשי** - 'Like a small baby who feels safe and secure in his mothers arms', so we are in the Hands of Hashem who He is a merciful Father, and we must not allow ourselves to fall into a panic.

The Rebbe also added that in the Torah it is written **ושמרתם את המצות** "veshermartem es hamatzos" you shall guard the matzos to ensure they are kosher lePesach and have not in any way had their kashrus compromised.

We know how careful we are every year to make sure that under no circumstances even the tiniest speck of chometz should come into contact with our pesach food. If this is true about the matzos, how much more careful do we all have to be regarding our health as the Torah has exhorted us "**ונשמרתם מאוד לנפשותיכם**", the shemirah has to be **מאוד** way above the level of care and stringency of guarding the matzos. We cannot afford and we are not allowed to take any chances or liberties with our health, and we are all obligated to listen and to obey the rulings of the government and the health officials.

But at the same time we are also all obligated to know that together with the shmiras haguf has to be a shemiras hanefesh to strengthen ourselves in Torah and Tefilla, and not to constantly need to know all the time the latest news. The month of Nissan is coming, we have to prepare bechol yom sheyovo, to believe that Moshiach can come any day, any hour any minute! (until here is the message of the Boyaner Rebbe Shlita).

It is written in the name of the Apta Rov zt"l to explain the possuk "**ונשגב ה' לבדו ביום ההוא**" "And Hashem will be exalted on that day" that in order for Moshiach to come, we all need to come to the understanding and the realization that we have no one to turn to except for Hashem Yisborach. In this Corona pandemic, we have all been aroused to the words of the Novi Hoshia (chapter 14) who tells Klall Yisroel to repent and return to Hashem, Assarya will not save you, your fast horses will not spirit you to safety.

"**שובה ישראל עד ה' אלקיך וכו' אשור לא יושיענו על סוס לא נרכב**"

Similarly we have all come to the realization that neither America nor England, not the U.N. the E.U. Nato etc. etc. can stop the virus, we have no fast horses with which to run away to a safe haven, planes

are grounded and travel has come to a halt and there is nowhere to run to as Dovid Hamelech exclaimed (Tehilim chapter 139) "where can I go and to where can I flee from before you" - **אָנָה אֵלֵךְ מֵרוּחֶךָ וְאָנָה מִפָּנֶיךָ אֶבְרָח**

The gemara (Baba Kama 60:) tells us that in a time of a plague one has to stay at home and the gemara quotes two pesukim in support of this ruling. The first possuk is a possuk we are all familiar with, and is written in connection to Makos Bechoros **ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר** and you shall not leave your house until the morning. Whilst the plague of Makos Bechoros was raging the Yidden all had to stay indoors so as not to be affected.

The gemara then quotes a second possuk from **ספר ישעיה** go my people into your homes and shut your doors behind you **לך עמי בא בחדריך וסגור דלתיך בעדך**. The gematria of "Corona" **קורונה** is 367 which is exactly the gematria of the words **עמי בא בחדריך** My people go into your rooms!

We should take a chizuk from the words of this gemara that this possuk of **ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר** is written regarding the very last night that Klall Yisroel were in Golus in Egypt and in the morning they went out to freedom, so we have to daven and have emunah that this corona pandemic should be the very last trial that we have to deal with in our long and hard golus and it should herald the beginning of the Geula speedily in these days

ומי שעשה נסים לאבותינו וגאל אותם מעבודת לחירות הוא יגאל אותנו בקרוב ויקבץ נדחינו מארבע כנפות הארץ חברים כל ישראל ונאמר אמן.

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן

The Beis Aharon teaches: Never dismiss a moment as insignificant. A single moment can earn an entire Gan Eden, and Hashem gives us many such moments throughout our lives.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

A famous Maggid was asked to lecture in a prosperous and modern city. Before he was to speak, he was told to consult with the synagogue's president to go over the agenda. The Maggid met the president who was sitting in a richly upholstered leather armchair behind a mahogany desk.

"Rabbi," said the president, "you have a reputation as a remarkable speaker. One who inspires crowds and - might I say - makes waves. Pray tell me, what are you intending to speak about in our town? This is a very distinguished community, and you must be careful. We surely would not want to offend anyone with even the slightest rebuke."

The Maggid promptly replied, "I intend to talk about Shabbos observance." The president's face turned crimson. "Oh, no, dear rabbi, please. In this town, such talk will fall on deaf ears. We all struggle to make a living and Shabbos is just not in the cards. I implore you. Talk about something else."

"I can talk about kashrus," said the Rabbi. "Don't even bother," begged the president, "there hasn't been a kosher butcher in this town for years."

"Okay. How about Tzedaka?" offered the Maggid. "Charity? Give us a break," laughed the president. "Do you know how many shnorrers visit this town each week? We are sick of hearing about charity!"

Meekly, the Maggid made another suggestion. "Tefillah - prayer?" "Please," retorted the president. "In a city of 1,000 Jewish families, we hardly get a weekday minyan. The synagogue is never filled except on the High Holy Days. No one would be interested."

Finally the Maggid became frustrated. "If I can't talk about Shabbos, and I can't talk about tzedaka, nor discuss kashrus or tefillah, what do you want me to talk about?" The president looked

amazed. "Why, rabbi" exclaimed the president. "That's easy! Talk about Judaism!"

The Maggid looked at him hard. "In this week's parsha, we find the concept of Shabbos in general, and some of its detailed laws in particular, directly in the middle of the architectural directives of a most glorious edifice, the Mishkan. The Torah is telling us that although we may build beautiful palaces in which to serve the Almighty, however, if we forget the tenets of our faith, those great structures are meaningless. A Jew must remember that without Shabbos, without kashrus, without tefillah, or tzedakah, a great sanctuary is no more enduring than a castle in the air!"

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Let's Stop Meeting Like This - The Pnei Menachem shares a lesson about how Jews should come together.

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת ויקהל**. About a week ago, the **סקווירא רביצין** from New Square in America passed away, and her brother, the **ווישניצער רבי** in **בני ברק**, was sitting **שבעה**. Among the many people who came to be **מנחם**, to console him, was **רב שאול אלתר שליט"א**, the **גור ראש ישיבה**.

When he came in, he asked if he could share a story. The **ווישניצער רבי** agreed, and he said that his father, the **פני מנחם**, the previous **גור רבי**, once received an invitation to a wedding from a family named Weinfeld. Rabbi Weinfeld was a publisher. He had the famous publishing house **אשכול** that many people are familiar with. And the **גור רבי** would get many, many invitations to **שמחות**.

He usually wouldn't be able to go, but he would often try to call or write a note. In this case, he decided to go to the wedding, which was puzzling because he wasn't known to have any particular connection with the Weinfeld family, Rabbi Weinfeld.

So he came to the wedding. Rabbi Weinfeld was surprised and delighted, and he was also curious. He asked him, "I'm so happy that the **רבי** came. Can I ask why you came?"

He said, "I'll explain to you. The first time I met you was a little while ago when you were sitting **שבעה**, and I came to be **מנחם**, I came to console. I said, 'I don't want that to be the only time that we've met. I want it to be that our meeting would be at **שמחה** instead of at a time of mourning.'"

It's something very important for us to learn, especially in these times. Many people have mentioned that in times of tragedy and adversity, we're getting together with many people we wouldn't have got together with before.

What the **פני מנחם** was trying to teach us is we shouldn't let it be that way. We have to stop getting together only in times of tragedy, but take advantage of times of joy, and times of meaningful events that we can share together, and let those be the events that bring us together.

פרשת ויקהל, the very word **ויקהל** means to gather together, the entire community of **עם ישראל**. That was part of the purpose of the **משכן** and later the **בית המקדש** in **ירושלים**, the city of **עיר שחוברה לה יחדיו**, the city that connected everyone together.

May **השם** help us have happy events and no more sorrowful events, and may we be able to join with each other together in our own **ויקהל** and getting together in **ירושלים**, hopefully, in the joy of the rebuilt **בית המקדש**. Wishing everyone a wonderful **שבת**.

'Nothing grows from the ground unless seeds are planted first. The 'seed' of falsehood must be buried before the truth can sprout forth!' ~ R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk ZT'L.