TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry

Kosher Signs of an animal



SPLIT HOOVES



CHEW THE CUD



שמיני

לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

ואשתו מרת חנה ב"ר דוד ע"ה

ר'שרגא פייביש ב"ר מרדכי צבי ערליך ע"ה

ר'יעקב ב"ר שלום הלוי פרידמאן ע"ה

ר'חיים דוד ב"ר אלכסנדר הכהן ריטשמאן ע"ה

ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

שמיני

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



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

וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי - *"It happened on the eighth day . . ." (9:1)*

The gemara (Megillah 10b) states that the day on which the mishkan/tabernacle was dedicated was as joyous for Hashem as the day on which Hashem created the world.

R' Shlomo Ganzfried z"l (author of Kitzur Shulchan Aruch) explains this as follows:

Hashem's purpose in creating the world was so that He could reside amongst His creations. And, before Adam's sin, Hashem did just that. However, when Adam sinned, he drove Hashem to ascend to the lowest of the seven heavens.

When Kayin sinned, Hashem ascended higher still, and so on due to the sins of the generation of Enosh, the generation of the flood, the

generation of the Tower of Bavel, the S'domites, and the Egyptians. In all, Hashem ascended to the seventh heaven.

The mishkan was built so that Hashem could again reside amongst men, as the Torah states (Shemos 25:8): "*They will build Me a mishkan so that I may reside amongst them.*"

Thus, the day on which the mishkan/tabernacle was dedicated was as joyous for Hashem as the day on which Hashem created the world. (Apiryon)



וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר. יַיִן וְשֵׁכָר אַל־תֵּשְׁתְּ אַתָּה וּבָנֶיךָ אִתָּךְ בְּבֹאֲכֶם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְלֹא תָמֻתוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם - *"Hashem spoke to Aaron saying, 'Do not drink intoxicating wine, you and your sons with you, when you come to the Ohel Mo'ed, that you do not die — this is an eternal decree for your generations."* (10:8-9)

What is added by the phrase "You and your sons with you"?

R' Yosef Feimer z"l (1796-1864; rabbi of Slutsk, Belarus) explains:

The Halachah is that a rabbi may not issue a Halachic ruling (for example, regarding Kashrut or family purity) for a period of time after he has consumed wine. Nevertheless, he may sit on a Bet Din to rule on monetary matters even after drinking wine. The difference is that a Bet Din has three members; if one is not at his sharpest, the other two can guide him to the correct answer. In contrast, since a rabbi may issue Halachic rulings on his own, he must not have impaired judgment when doing so.

In light of this distinction, one might have thought that only a lone Kohen is prohibited from performing the Avodah after drinking, but that he may do so as part of a group. The phrase "You and your sons" serves to dispel that notion. (Derashot Rabbeinu Yosef Mi'Slutzk p.183)



From the Wisdom of Our Sages . . .



It is said in the name of **R' Yisrael Lipkin z"l** (1810-1883; "**R' Yisrael Salanter**"; founder of the Mussar movement) that there are three things we can learn from the train:

(1) Even a delay of one moment is enough to miss the train;

(2) Getting derailed even a little bit can be catastrophic; and

(3) One who rides without paying the price can expect punishment. (Quoted in Tenu'at Ha'mussar I p.286)

כִּי אֲנִי ה' הַמַּעֲלֶה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִהְיֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹקִים וִהְייתֶם קְדשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי - "***For I am Hashem Who elevates you from the land of Egypt to be a G-d unto you . . .***" (11:45)

With this verse, the Torah closes out the laws of kashrut. Indeed, the midrash states that if one denies the laws of kashrut, he also denies the Exodus. What is the relationship of the Exodus to kashrut?

R' Chaim Yosef David Azulai z"l ("Chida"; died 1806) explains: There are two types of impurity that can affect a person – impurity that enters a person and impurity that surrounds a person. An example of the former is non-kosher food; an example of the latter is idolatry.

Our sages teach that Hashem hurried Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt because they were about to become inextricably mired in the

impurity of Egypt. Chida explains that our ancestors had reached the stage where the external impurity of Egypt was about to become an inherent part of their beings. Hashem took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt before the impurity could enter them.

How then can one allow non-kosher food to enter his body? – This is possible only if one denies the Exodus! (Quoted in Torat Ha'Chida)

יַ֣יִן וְשֵׁכָ֗ר אַל־תֵּ֤שְׁתְּ אַתָּה֙ וּבָנֶ֣יךָ אִתָּ֔ךְ בְּבֹאֲכֶ֖ם אֶל־אֹ֣הֶל מוֹעֵ֑ד - "***Do not drink intoxicating wine, you and your sons with you, when you come to the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting . . .***" (10:9)



The Dubno Maggid says: The Beis Hamikdash was the paragon of beauty, a joy to the whole world (paraphrasing Eichah 2:15). A kohen who drinks wine before entering the Temple acts as if he needs an external stimulus – a foreign fire – to kindle joy in his heart when performing the sacred service.

According to the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yishmael, this was the sin of Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu. (Kol Rinah Vy'shuah to Esther 1:10)

We read in this week's parashah that two of Aharon's sons died in the prime of their lives and on the day that should have been the happiest day of Aharon's life. What was their father's response? וַיִּדֹּ֖ם אַהֲרֹֽן -"*And Aharon was silent*" (10:3).

Naturally, writes **R' Dov Meir Rubman** (Rosh Yeshiva in Haifa; died 1967), we are amazed at Aharon's strength. Incredibly, though, the Midrash appears to belittle Aharon's silence by asking, "What might Aharon have said?" How are we to understand this?



The purpose of this Midrash, explains R' Rubman, is to drive home the foolishness of questioning Hashem. Why was Aharon silent? Because he understood very well that there was nothing to say. No matter how intelligent, how understanding, a person may be, his intelligence is nothing compared to G-d's. As Kohelet (5:1) said, **כִּי הָאֱלֹקִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־כֵּן יִהְיוּ דְבָרֶיךָ מְעַטִּים** "For G-d is in the Heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." (Zichron Meir)

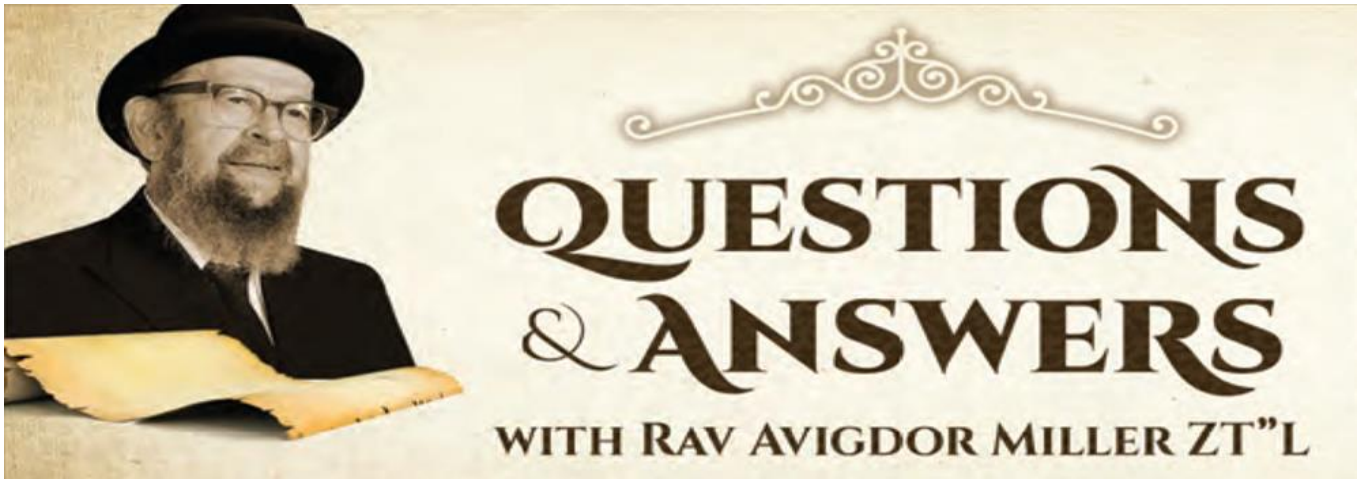
How can one train himself to accept G-d's Will? The Maggid of Warsaw suggested that we reflect on the following: It is obvious to any adult that a toddler cannot understand his parents' thoughts, actions, or plans. - What we must realize is that we are but toddlers before Hashem. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Sha'arei Armon p. 145)

וְשׁוֹר וָאַיִל לִשְׁלָמִים לִזְבֹּחַ לִפְנֵי ה' וּמִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בַּשָּׁמֶן כִּי הַיּוֹם ה' נִרְאָה אֲלֵיכֶם
"And a bull and a ram for a peace-offering to slaughter before Hashem, and a meal-offering mixed with oil; for today Hashem nirah / appears aleichem / to you." (9:4)

Rabbeinu Machir z"l (Spain; 14th century) observes that the Hebrew word "**נִרְאָה** / appears" has the same Hebrew letters as "Aharon" [who brought these sacrifices]. The word "**אֲלֵיכֶם** / to you" has the same letters as the name of the angel Micha-el [who, say our Sages, brings offerings in his role as the Kohen Gadol in the Heavens]. (Avkat Rocheil)

יַיִן וְשֵׁכָר אַל־תֵּשְׁתְּ - "*Do not drink intoxicating wine . . .*" *(10:9)*

Rabbeinu Machir z"l (Spain; 14th century) observes: The Hebrew word "**תֵּשְׁתְּ**" is an acronym for " **תפילת שיכור תועבה**" –"***The prayer of a drunkard is an abomination.***" [This alludes to the teaching in the Gemara (Eruvin 64a) that a person who has drunken a little bit may pray, while a person who is intoxicated may not pray.]





The gemara states that it's a mitzvah to speak leitzanus against avodah zarah. But isn't there a danger for a person who engages in leitzanus that it will become ingrained in his character?

Every good thing has negative sides. Let's say you buy power tools, so you have to be very careful with them. If you have just a hammer and a screwdriver, it's not so dangerous. But if it's an electric screwdriver, you have to be more careful; sometimes you're not thinking, and it might go through your hand.

There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.

Before going into a serious surgery **Harav Boruch Mordichai Ezrachi זצוק״ל** told the doctor as follows "I want you to know that if you are not matzliach or mess up, there is no need to feel an iota guilty since it is not you that could cause anything to happen. It is only ratzon Hashem that will be the cause. So please never feel any feelings of guilt.

However, if you are matzliach and the surgery goes well you must also know that the fact you were matzliach also was not because of you but rather it was also purely from Hashem and you were the one to be his Shliach."



וְכָל־כְּלִי־חֶרֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר־יִפֹּל מֵהֶם אֶל־תּוֹכוֹ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכוֹ יִטְמָא וְאֹתוֹ תִשְׁבֹּרוּ
'***All earthen vessels into which (contamination) falls, all that is within it shall be unclean, and it must be destroyed***.' (11:33)



Unlike wooden or metal vessels that are rendered (spiritually) unclean by virtue of being touched externally by an unclean object, klei cheres, earthenware vessels, become unclean only when the contaminated object is within the airspace of the vessel. External contact of a Klei cheres is not mitamei, does not render the earthenware vessel unclean.

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, explains this halachah as predicated on the notion that only something of value can be rendered unclean. Wood

and metal possess intrinsic value. Thus, they can become unclean. Earth, however, has no intrinsic value, other than the fact that if it is formed into a vessel, the vessel can serve as a container. Hence, the state of tumah, contamination, can apply only when the contaminated object is lowered into/contained within the earthenware vessel. - Its value derives from within.

Man's value also derives from within. In other words, it is not what you are, but what you do or are able to do. External value is of no consequence.

A person who is able-bodied, but does nothing, does not derive much value from his physical strength. One who is endowed with a superior mind, but either does not use it or uses it for frivolous, unmeaningful pursuits, has very little added value as the result of his superior mind. On the other hand, one who devotes himself to spiritual advancement, his value elevates with his achievement.

As Jews, our value system is determined by the Torah. Our Sages define the value of man by teaching us the meaning of wisdom, strength, wealth, honor, etc. It is all about moral, ethical and spiritual strength and the ability and stamina to apply them. The manner in which we act defines our perspective on what we consider significant, worthy, valuable.

Our adherence to Torah values not only defines who we are, but also what we are. Our personal value is grounded in what we value. When we accept spiritually, morally and ethically correct behaviors and values, we have personal worth. When we demonstrate a lack of good judgment in defining our sense of value, focusing on the ephemeral, external and contemporary societal, culturally bankrupt standards, then we indicate a flawed perspective on values, and subsequently denigrate ourselves.

We are created with enormous spiritual potential as a result of the neshamah kedoshah, holy soul, for which our body serves as its container. The soul cannot function on its own. The body without the

soul is, likewise, of no value. They need one another. Quite like the analogy provided by Chazal: Two men: one blind, and one who had no legs. One cannot see where to go, and the other is unable to go. They work out a relationship whereby the blind man carries on his shoulder the one without legs. The blind man serves as the medium of conveyance, while the man without legs is the guide. Together, they are able to safely navigate their way to their destination.

Parents talk about the values they want to see adopted by their children. If we want our children to live a Torah life with Torah values of the highest ethical and moral standards, then we must show them by example how to live.

If our focus in life is personal fame and the pursuit of wealth and pleasure, what can we expect from our children? Our misguided standard of living presents them with a message: This is important to me. This is what I consider to be of value. - How can we expect them to be any different?



וַאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכּוּ אֶת־הַשְּׂרֵפָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף ה׳ - '***And your brethren, the entire House of Yisrael, shall bewail the conflagration which Hashem ignited***.' (10:6)

When we look around today at the Torah world, we are amazed that in a short period of time of some seventy years, we have gone from a nation of broken Jewry, to a world of Torah study unlike anything in previous times.

While the numbers of committed, scholarly Torah Jews have probably increased with the level of Torah study and erudition achieved in our yeshivos unlike anything one can remember, the quality of Jewish commitment, the abrogation of materialism that bespoke the average European Jews, is no longer.

We may know more and daven longer and understand what we are saying, but the quality of davening, the commitment to Torah study

– regardless of one's energy level – is remarkably different. Today, we are a far cry from the world that was. The amcha Yid, Jew whose belief in Hashem was simple but unequivocal, is gone. Today, everything is done with cheshbonos, calculations, justifications and reasons. Then, it was just done!

Obviously, I am leading up to something. In the commentary to Parashas Shemini, the **Yalkut Reuveni** quotes the **Zohar HaKadosh** who writes: 'One who lets down tears (cries) during the reading of the deaths of Aharon HaKohen's two sons will merit not to lose his children during his lifetime.'

While the deaths of Nadav and Avihu constitute an epic tragedy, why does it take center stage to all of the other tragedies that our nation has sustained throughout its tumultuous history?

Speaking about the void left following the Holocaust, the **Ponevezer Rav, zl**, asked this question. He cited the Midrash which quotes Moshe Rabbeinu as implying that Nadav and Avihu had achieved a spiritual plateau greater even than that of Moshe and Aharon.

With this in mind, taking into consideration that Nadav and Avihu died at a relatively young age, had they lived full lives, their spiritual level would have been accordingly way beyond that of Moshe and Aharon.

A leader has a profound spiritual influence on his generation. The greater the leader, the more exalted is his generation. Every generation descends spiritually from its forebears. Thus, had Nadav and Avihu lived, their generation would have achieved an even greater plateau than it did under Moshe and Aharon. So the void left by their early demise is felt by each ensuing generation, which is that much less spiritually accomplished due to the premature loss to our people that they experienced.

With this in mind, let us just for a moment imagine the immeasurable spiritual void left by the loss of the pre-World War II generation

of European Jewry. Thus, whatever we have achieved is nothing – absolutely nothing – to what we would have attained had that tragedy not occurred. That is a sobering thought which should impact our approach to Yiddishkeit. Not only are we not as great as we think – we are not remotely close to what we could have been!

וְאֶת הַחֲסִידָה – '*And the chasidah*.' (11:19)



An interesting name for a non-kosher fowl.

Rashi adds to the ambiguity with his reason for the name chasidah. -This bird performs kindness with others of its species by sharing food with them. This is supposedly a compassionate bird because it shares. Furthermore, its compassion is even noted by its given name – all the more reason that it should be included among the kosher birds.

The Chassidic Masters explains that selective chesed with one's own species, while ignoring the plight of other species, is far from admirable.

Jews are not exclusive in their chesed activities. We help everyone. This bird's name acknowledges its acts of kindness to its own species. Nonetheless, the name does not change the fact that its acts of kindness are flawed. This teaches us that that the reputation one enjoys might not always tell the whole story. When one's chesed is selective, he is acting only to satisfy himself.

Chesed must be selfless and objective. Otherwise, it is not true chesed. One's devotion to his fellow must be total.

I always wondered why the bird is called chasidah with a ה at the end, which implies the female gender. A hay at the end of a word has a similar connotation as a lamed at its beginning. Thus, chasidah can also mean l'chasid – to the chasid. Could the Torah be implying that this fowl is concerned only with itself; that the kindness it performs with others (of its own specie) is only for itself?

Horav Yissachar Dov, zl, m'Belz, related the following anecdote to demonstrate the lengths to which one must go in order to conform to the Torah's standards for performing chesed:

A medical student who had successfully completed his courses and was about to commence his internship was to take a final exam. Prior to taking the written exam, he was to take an oral test based upon a conversation with the dean of the medical school. He was an exceptional student, gifted and talented, an astute and analytical thinker, who should have no problem acing the test.

The dean asked him: "How would you respond to the victim of a stabbing who is bleeding profusely?" The student replied that he would put a certain medicine on the open wound, which would stop the blood flow.

"What if you do not have this medicine available?" the dean asked.

"I would use an alternative salve which works just as well," the student replied.

"And if you have neither the medication of choice, nor its alternative – what would you do?" asked the dean.

"I would grab a piece of cloth, burn it and place its ashes on the open wound," the student quickly responded – quite satisfied with himself.

"Let us hypothesize that there is no available medicine or cloth to burn – what would you do then?" the dean asked.

The young would-be doctor had no answer. All options had been exhausted.

Surprisingly, the dean refused to grant him access to the internship.

The young man was incredulous. He had one of the best averages in medical school. How could he be denied his degree?

The dean replied, "When a doctor cannot locate a piece of cloth/material to burn for ashes, he removes his own shirt and sets fire to it. A doctor who is not prepared to take off his own shirt to save a patient has no business in the field of medicine."

This is how we should relate to the problems of our fellow Jew.

וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן – '***And Aharon was silent***.' (10:3)

Aharon HaKohen sustained a Heavenly blow on what should have been the happiest day of his life. Experiencing such extreme tragedy on a day that should have engendered extreme joy would have destroyed not only a lesser person, but most people. Not Aharon, about whom the Torah writes, **וַיִּדֹּם** - "*And Aharon was silent*."

As the various commentators explain, **וַיִּדֹּם** is much more than silence: it is numbness; no movement; no expression; like an inanimate stone. - Aharon stood there without reacting whatsoever. Aharon was mute, like an insentient object that does not react to external stimuli.

Perhaps there is a deeper meaning to **וַיִּדֹּם**. Clearly, it goes beyond silence, which means that the rest of the body might react. The mouth, which is the seat of vocal expression, however, remains silent. Aharon went beyond this point. He was unreactive, totally unresponsive. What about within Aharon's psyche? Did he experience turmoil within? Was he about to implode, rather than explode?

No – **וַיִּדֹּם** informs us that, throughout his entire being, Aharon remained inanimate, accepting Hashem's decree with equanimity: no questions; no complaints; no expression.

While Aharon HaKohen's reaction is beyond us, as observant Jews who aspire to a greater and closer relationship with Hashem, we wonder how he did it. How does one exhibit such extraordinary self-control that it does not even appear that one is controlling himself?

According to the commentators, **וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן** means that he acted as if nothing had occurred!

The simple, and probably most logical, explanation is that Aharon was on a spiritual plateau so much higher than we are, that he perceived things differently. He neither saw loss, nor did he sense tragedy with the same feeling that we would experience it. Nonetheless, I have always grappled with this, until I recently came across a short vignette concerning **Horav Shimon Schwab, zl**, which illuminated an entirely new perspective on what we would refer to as a numbing experience.



In the beginning of the summer of 1975, Rav Shimon Schwab's brother, Reb Chaim Tzvi (Herman), was returning to the airport following an enjoyable visit with his brother in Washington Heights. As he was entering the airport, he experienced a sudden fatal heart attack.

Rav Schwab was called, and he rushed to the emergency room of Jamaica hospital. He approached the body of his brother which was covered with a white sheet. Ashen faced and visibly shaken, but not uttering a sound, the Rav walked over to the lifeless corpse of his brother, uncovered his face, took one last look and said, "When Hashem Yisborach speaks, we must remain silent!"

This sentence speaks volumes as it addresses every saddening experience, every tragedy, the most unspeakable horrors – they are all expressions from Hashem. The Almighty has spoken.

If we believe that what occurs is Hashem's directive – and, as frum, observant, Torah Jews, this is what we believe – then Hashem has spoken. We must remain silent in the presence of Hashem's speech. One does not reply to G-d. One does not question G-d. We stand in silence, for He has spoken.

This is perhaps to what Moshe Rabbeinu was alluding when he said to Aharon, Hu asher debar Hashem, "It is as if Hashem spoke"; Va'yidom Aharon, "And Aharon was silent." - The Almighty has spoken. We are to do nothing else but remain silent.

וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה֙ תְּשַׁקְּצ֣וּ מִן־הָע֔וֹף לֹ֥א יֵאָכְל֖וּ שֶׁ֣קֶץ הֵ֑ם אֶת־הַנָּ֖שֶׁר – '***These shall you abominate from among the birds, they may not be eaten – they are an abomination; the nesher***…' (11:13)



The נָּשֶׁר, commonly translated as the eagle, is unique among the non-kosher fowl in that its image is on the Kisei HaKavod, Hashem's Throne.

Chazal teach that the image of four creatures are on the throne: man, lion, ox and eagle.

In contrast is the yonah, pigeon, which is a fowl that has its share of troubles, preyed on by other fowl, was slaughtered on the Mizbayach, Altar, and used as a korban, offering.

How do we reconcile the fact that a non-kosher bird achieves such a lofty status, while the kosher bird, which is "pushed around," does not?



Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, zl, offers an insightful explanation. The Kisei HaKavod is the place for "royalty" with the monarchs of each species being represented. Man is the king of Creation, since everything was created for his purpose. The lion rules over wild beasts, the ox over the animal kingdom, and the eagle over the fowl. Above all of them is Hashem, the Melech Malchei HaMelachim, King of Kings.

The pigeon receives nothing. Is this fair? Is this the way it should be?

Rav Zalmen explains that to serve as a korban, offering for Hashem, is of greater import than to have its image on the Kisei HaKavod.- Why is this?

I would assume that having a constant presence on the Kisei HaKavod would have greater significance than a one-time sacrifice, but this is not the case.

Our first error is viewing sacrifice as a one-time experience. Yitzchak Avinu's "almost" one time sacrifice has served as atonement and inspiration for Klal Yisrael throughout the millennia. That dispels the notion of "one-time." - A sacrifice serves as a constant remembrance, a continuous merit on behalf of the one who is sacrificed.

This brings us to the issues of martyrdom, self-sacrifice, and even suffering as a form of sacrifice. The Jew is intrinsically imbued with a covert spark of holiness deeply imbedded within him, which –

regardless of his distance from Hashem – somehow, in some way will rise and begin to burn once again.

In a small European town lived a Jewish butcher who had sadly assimilated himself into the prevailing Christian culture. He sold only non-kosher meat and had no compunction about his store being open on Shabbos. Indeed, the townspeople had no idea that this man was Jewish. He had really succeeded in concealing the identity of his birth religion.

In the outskirts of the city, the Nazis began rounding up the Jewish citizens. They commanded the Jewish prisoners to dig their graves and line up in front of them.

Suddenly, the gunshots coming from the Nazis rifles were heard, and the Jews let out their last cry of Shema Yisrael. Some fell over thinking they had been shot; others stood there in shock, realizing that they were still alive. A few seconds went by, and laughter was heard coming from the Nazis. It was all a sham. The rifles did not have bullets. The Nazis were having fun at the expense of the Jews. They did it again; once again, shots rang out – no bullets – no bodies, just Nazis laughing at the tormented Jews.

While the Nazis were playing their diabolical game with the Jews, the butcher hearing the shots, asked his customer what was happening. "Oh nothing," the customer answered. "They are just shooting Jews."

Hearing this, the butcher tore off his apron and ran to the door, yelling, "They are shooting Jews? I am also a Jew! Shoot me too!"

What took place here? A man lived his entire life in denial of his Jewish heritage, lived his entire life as a goy. All of a sudden, he is prepared to relinquish his life for Judaism? Does this make sense?

Yes. Every Jew, regardless of his or her religious leanings, has a spark of kedushah, holiness, within him. At any time, based upon the right stimulus, that spark will ignite and burn brightly. Thus, a Jew

who for decades denied his heritage, was ashamed of his birth religion, is now prepared to die for it.

It may seem illogical, but it is not. The only illogical aspect of his life was his denial of Yiddishkeit! His spark was ignited, and it began to burn brightly.



In his Eish Kodesh, the **Piaszecner Rebbe, zl**, presents a profound understanding of the meaning of self-sacrifice to the Jew. Unlike secular martyrdom, in which an individual who gives up his life for an ideal, a belief, has performed an honorable, saintly act of devotion which begins and ends with his death, a Jew's sacrifice has a loftier connection to the past.

The Rebbe refers to the Akeidas Yitzchak, Binding of Yitzchak, which was not completely consummated. The test of Avraham and Yitzchak involved their will and intention to martyrdom but ended just short of the final act.

Therefore, writes the Rebbe, every occurrence of Jews being killed by gentiles with circumstances reversed – that is, with the actuality of death taking place, but without the intentional choice of martyrdom – is the fulfillment of Akeidas Yitzchak! It began with the Akeidah, characterized by intention and desire for martyrdom, the conclusion and actualization occurs today. Thus, the Biblical Akeidah, together with all of the subsequent cases of Jews being murdered on account of their Jewishness, all constitute one event.

By viewing the deaths of the Jews of Poland (with whom he was involved) as a fulfillment of the Akeidah, the Piaszecner was

bestowing dignity and meaning upon a circumstance that "some" could (and would) otherwise view as unheroic and unwilled, a meaningless, mechanized death.

In one of his homilies, the Rebbe issues a plea to people to repent, as well as an entreaty to Hashem for salvation in the merit of the martyred Jews whom he refers to as korbanos, sacrificial offerings.

The Rebbe then takes sacrifice one step further – one to which we may all relate. He writes, "It is clear that the same holds true for all sufferings which we endure, which diminish our strength."

He underscores the idea that one's suffering can be granted dignity and meaning when viewed in a sacrificial context – as a personal offering presented in a posture of surrender to Hashem. Now that personal suffering can be viewed from the perspective of quasi-sacrifice, it can serve as a vehicle to encourage the sufferer to embrace his/her suffering through a posture of active acceptance and sublimation, rather than the secular position of passivity and resignation.

One who experiences suffering should not act defeated, on the verge of collapse, but rather, enraptured with vigorous upward movement of the spirit. Thus, the Rebbe explains, the martyr feels no pain, since the individual who is about to be martyred is inflamed with a powerful yearning to surrender his life for the sake of the sanctity of Hashem. He elevates all of his senses and entire physical being by means of that fervor, connecting himself with the spiritual dimension. He becomes divested of his sense of tangible feeling and corporeality, now experiencing nothing but pleasure.

A powerful statement, which gives us a glimpse into the psyche of one who is able to withstand torture, pain, affliction – and even death. He is offering himself up to Hashem, completing the task that our Patriarch Yitzchak commenced.

לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהֹר וּבֵין הַחַיָּה הַנֶּאֱכֶלֶת וּבֵין הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תֵאָכֵל – '***To distinguish between the contaminated and the pure, and between the creature that may be eaten and the creature that may not be eaten***.' (11:47)

Due to the spiritual repugnance associated with maachalos asuros, forbidden foods, they affect and compromise the Jewish consciousness, which is particularly sensitive to spiritual incursion. Thus, a Jew whose body has been satiated and nourished on tarfus, unkosher, unclean foods, lacks the spiritual finesse and ethical/moral qualities inherent to Jews who are spiritually refined.

Throughout the millennia, Jews have sacrificed themselves to remain loyal to the Torah's code concerning the laws of kashrus, maintaining a strong degree of personal stringency in adhering to its halachic demands.

The following episode demonstrates how a grandfather's fidelity to the laws of kashrus impacted the spiritual renaissance of his grandson, some 60-years later. The story begins during the closing days of World War II in one of Germany's infamous death camps:

The Nazis realized that the end was near. They could almost smell the Soviet tanks approaching what used to be their fortress of security. The Nazis quickly began to prepare for their escape.

The commandant of the camp was especially vicious in his virulent hatred of the Orthodox inmates of the camp. To be compelled to run like a frightened animal was sufficient humiliation for him, but, being relegated to run while allowing the hapless Jews to continue living was too much for him to tolerate. He could not allow them to emerge victorious from the camp.

He ordered the guards to assemble all of the Jews, so that he could complete the job he had begun. He did not seem to care about his personal safety – if it meant persecuting and murdering Jews. He looked for the one Jew who had been a constant thorn in his side.

Rav Shraga Moskowitz, zl, had already been an old man when the war broke out. Five years later, his body was aged and broken, having suffered every physical indignity to which the diabolical animals in the guise of men could subject him. He had once been a distinguished Rosh Yeshivah in Hungary, a beloved mentor to thousands. Even during the war, he guided and inspired others, while his own meticulous observance of mitzvos was unwavering.

The commandant made Rav Shraga get down on his knees. He stood before him with a fork of unkosher meat in one hand – and a loaded gun pointed at the Rav's head in the other hand. With anger borne of cruelty, he screamed, "The war is over. I am sure that if you will want to return to your family, you will be able to do so. You may leave now – if you will eat this slice of meat. Otherwise, you will die right here. You have one chance – one choice. What will it be?"

Rav Shraga looked up at the commandant and, with a half-smile on his face, said, "Throughout my internment in this camp, I have been observant of every one of the Jewish laws of kashrus. At times, when stretched to the point of exhaustion, indeed, even when my life was in danger, I refused to eat non-kosher food. I will not succumb to your threats now. My allegiance to G-d is stronger than my fear of death."

The German commandant saw that he had lost the battle. The spiritual commitment of the Jewish rabbi was greater than his fear of death. The Nazi pulled the trigger, and Rav Shraga was martyred al Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying Hashem's Name in his last moments of mortal life.

The story does not end here. It continues some sixty-years later when a successful businessman was calmly sitting in his well-appointed office in downtown Tel Aviv, and the phone rang. It was his wife with a request. She was running late and did not have time to prepare dinner. Could he stop by the restaurant and pick up dinner?

It was a simple request since the restaurant was right around the corner from his office. The man finished his day's work, locked his office and proceeded to the non-kosher restaurant which, in the past, had provided him and his wife with many dinners. He waited in line as the customers were picking up their non-kosher dinners.

Suddenly, out of the blue, this man remembered the story his parents had often related, the one about his saintly grandfather who had rather taken a bullet to the head than eat non-kosher food – and here he was waiting in line to purchase non-kosher meat!

He was not alone, as the restaurant was filled with like-minded, non-practicing Jews gorging themselves with non-kosher delicacies. Something was terribly wrong – either he and all the other customers were not normal, or his grandfather had been insane. One perspective was very, very wrong.

He left the store. Some spark of "normalcy," an inspiration going back sixty-years to the moment when his grandfather gave up his life, took hold of him and guided him back to the observance which he had rejected earlier in life.

Why do so many turn their backs on ancestors who in the past made the ultimate sacrifice to remain committed Torah Jews.? - Sadly, when we view the future without guidance refracted through the prism of the past, the result is a myopic and jaundiced perspective.

Studying Torah late one night in Kovna, R' Yisroel Salanter overhead the conversation of two paupers who were lodging in a side room. One asked the other to accompany him to the well, as he was afraid to go out alone so late at night. The other drowsily mumbled a refusal. Immediately, Rav Yisroel interrupted his own studies and went to the well to fetch water for the pauper. ~ R' Zelig Pliskin

וְאֶת־בַּת הַיַּעֲנָה וְאֶת־הַתַּחְמָס וְאֶת־הַשָּׁחַף וְאֶת־הַנֵּץ לְמִינֵהוּ – '***The ostrich, the jay, and the sparrow hawk, and the goshawk according to its kind.***' (11:16)



The economic situation in Europe between the two world wars was severe. The Jews, who during good times lived from hand to mouth, found this period to be especially disastrous. People worked from dawn until late at night to earn enough to barely support their family. These were the lucky ones who had jobs. The others suffered the pangs of hunger and deprivation.

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, was visiting the Polish manufacturing city of Lodz. A large Jewish population made their home there. Understandably, when a person of such distinction visited, lines of people came to greet him, seek his counsel, elicit his blessing.

A father and his young bar-mitzvah son came to the Rav from Radin. The boy was an excellent student, who possessed a wonderful personality and was G-d-fearing. He presented the entire "package."

The issue was that the boy could not stand idly by while his father worked himself to an early grave. He wanted permission to leave the yeshivah and go to work – like so many others. His father was emphatic: His son was to remain in the yeshivah. The world out there was spiritually bankrupt. A young boy could fall prey to the enticements of the many "isms" that were flaunting their benefits to the unknown. -The father was adamant; the son felt that, with his strong background, he would withstand whatever the yetzer hora threw at him.

The Chafetz Chaim was visibly moved by father and son, each passionately thinking of the other. Indeed, the son added, "With such a father, who is so devoted, how could I go wrong? My education at home has been meticulous, watched over by my dear father. I am strong. I can make it."

The holy Chafetz Chaim replied, "My son, let me share with you a pasuk from the Torah. The Torah lists the various species of fowl which are forbidden to be eaten. Among them is הַיַּעֲנָה, which, according to some, is the ostrich. The Torah mentions a number of birds which are deemed unkosher. Why is it that only concerning the יַּעֲנָה that the Torah specifies that only the bas, daughter, of the adult יַּעֲנָה is prohibited?

The commentators explain that the יַּעֲנָה has a strong constitution. Its stomach is strong as steel; its skin hard as the sole of a shoe. It eats stone and glass shards. Therefore, the Torah does not deem it necessary to prohibit it. It is basically inedible because of its physical composition. The infant, however, having not yet developed, still has soft skin and is edible.

"Yirmiyahu HaNavi laments, בַּת־עַמִּי לְאַכְזָר כַּיְעֵנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר - '*The daughter of my people has become cruel, like ostriches in the desert*' (Eichah 4:3). How does the ostrich manifest cruelty to its young?" asked the Chafetz Chaim.

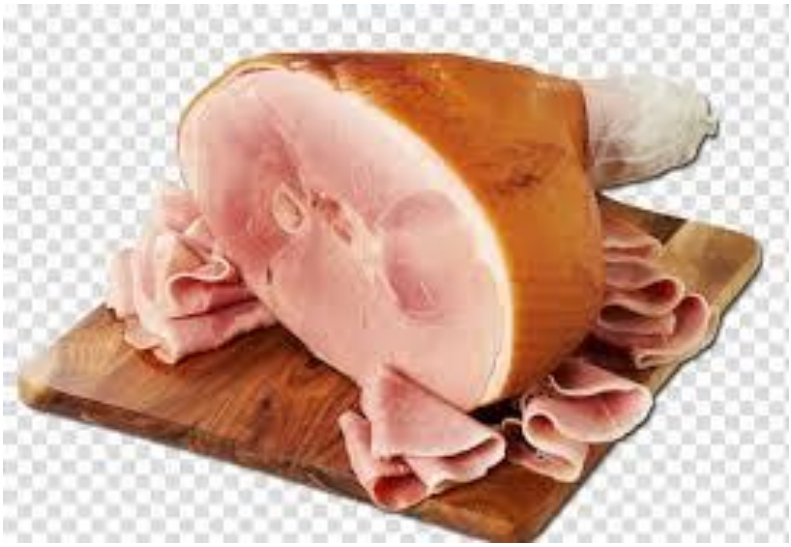
"The ostrich chicks come to their mother begging for food, and she gives them what she thinks are delicacies, stones and broken pieces of glass. True, for the mother whose food pipe is like steel, these might be considered delicacies, but the chick will die as a result of a compassionate mother. Its food pipe will be torn, its stomach destroyed. The mother will be guilty of killing its child, when all she wanted to do was feed her a delicacy.

"You probably understand, my son, what I am teaching you. Your father is an adult who has become accustomed to the secular environment that permeates and infects the streets. He is strong,

having spent years battling successfully to transcend its deleterious influence. He can handle the 'broken glass and stones.' You are young and delicate. You cannot and will not survive such an onslaught on your spirituality."

What was true then increases in intensity in contemporary times. Parents think their young, delicate children can handle the street. They even bring it into their homes via the various virtual and not so virtual media available today. Perhaps the parents have a stronger constitution; their children, certainly, do not. Why should we be guilty of the cruelty of the ostrich?

וְאֶת־הַחֲזִיר... טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם "***And the pig…it is unclean to you.***" (11:7)



Professor Daniel Chavelson was a living tragedy. A brilliant scholar, who became an apostate and converted out of the faith in order to advance his secular status, he enjoyed the respect and friendship of a number of rabbinic leaders. He continued to study Torah on a consistent basis, maintaining an active correspondence of halachic responsa with these rabbis.

When the **Netziv, z.l.**, was questioned about this enigma – an individual who, although a heretic, was still held in esteem by many observant Jews, he sighed, responding with the following story:

One day the wife of the town's wealthiest man became seriously ill. This woman was very special and G-d-fearing. They sent for the greatest physicians, the most erudite specialists to find some cure for her illness.

The doctors all came to the decision that in order for her to live, she must eat meat from a pig. Understandably, both husband and wife vehemently refused to consider such a cure. Unfortunately, the situation appeared to be very bleak, as her health slowly deteriorated. She was literally at death's door.

When the rav of the community heard this, he immediately went to the woman and insisted that she partake of the forbidden food. - "Not only are you permitted – you are obligated to eat from the pig if it will cure you," exclaimed the rav.

"Hashem wants us to live, not to die."

Reluctantly, the woman accepted the rav's ruling, and said that she would eat from the pig.

As the rav was leaving, the woman asked, "I have one request. I would like, at least, to have the pig slaughtered by a shochet, ritual slaughterer." - The rav held back a smile and agreed to permit the pig to be slaughtered.

The shochet slaughtered the pig. The women now requested that the lungs be examined to make sure there were no adhesions that would "disqualify" the shechitah. Indeed, there was a questionable adhesion on the lobe of one the lungs.

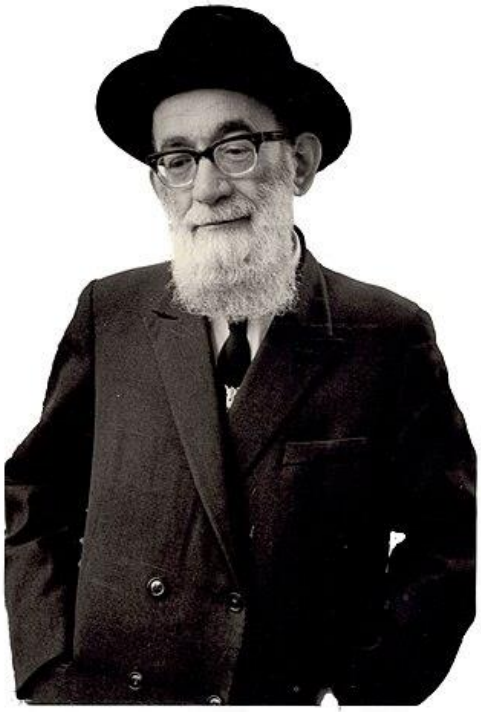
The shochet did not know what to do. He went to the rav, who carefully examined the lung. He said, "This is a difficult decision to make, for if this were the lung of a kosher animal, I would not hesitate to render a decision of kosher. This is the lung of a pig, however. How can I say kosher on a lung, if the rest of the animal is not kosher? When all is said and done, this is a pig! I cannot say kosher on a pig."

It was not necessary for the Netziv to explain the implication of this story regarding the "scholarly" apostate. A kosher lung does not render a pig kosher.

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמֻתוּ לִפְנֵי ה'. וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן - "***A fire came down from before Hashem…and they died before Hashem…and Aharon was silent.***" (10:2-3)

As the joy surrounding the inauguration ritual reached its zenith, tragedy suddenly struck. Aharon's two oldest sons died during their performance of an unauthorized incense service. Aharon's classic response – or lack thereof – attests to his greatness, his nobility and his resolute faith in Hashem. He accepted Hashem's Divine decree. He was silent. He did not exhibit any form of emotion.

Hashem's decree is not to be questioned, because the answer is above us. Chazal tell us that *misas tzaddikim*, the death of the righteous, is "*m'chaper*," atones for our sins. This idea is derived from the fact that the Torah juxtaposes the laws of the Parah Adumah, Red Heifer, to the death of Miriam. We infer from this that just as korbanos, sacrifices, atone, so does the death of a tzaddik.



Horav Gedalya Eiseman, zl, commented on this Chazal, when he spoke shortly after a G-d-fearing woman was brutally murdered during an Arab terrorist attack. If the Torah is conveying to us the idea that a tzaddik's death atones as completely as a korban, why did it not record Miriam's death in those parshiyos that address the laws of korbanos intended for atonement, such as the sin-offering or burnt-offering? Why is her death chronicled adjacent to the Parah Adumah, which serves essentially as a vehicle for taharah, ritual cleanliness?

He explained that the Parah Adumah is the classic example of a "chok," mitzvah whose rationale and meaning are beyond our

understanding. We accept it just because it is Hashem's command. We do not ask, because we will not receive an answer. We accept the reality because that is part of being a Jew: we accept Hashem's decree – unequivocally.

This same idea applies to the death of a tzaddik. We hope that no one dies. We pray that tragedy not befall anyone, but when it occurs to a tzaddik — when someone who is devout, pious, virtuous and saintly is taken from our midst, usually under heartbreaking circumstances — we ask: Why does tragedy befall such a special person, such a young soul, such a saint who has already suffered so much? -The only response is that it is a Divine decree, and we do not question the Almighty.

The Parah Adumah is an anomaly. Just as it defies human rationale, so, too, do the deaths of the righteous raise questions for which there is no logical human response. It is a test of our faith and trust in the Almighty. -That is the essence of Judaism.

Aharon HaTzaddik set the standard for response to tragedy. It was a day of heightened joy in which he, as Kohen Gadol, was intimately involved.

Others have learned from him not to permit personal tragedy to override the joy and sanctity of Shabbos or Yom Tov, Hashem's days of joy.

A very poignant example is provided by the following inspiring story: The Rema in Orach Chaim 288:2 writes, "One who feels pleasure (i.e., finds relief) when he cries, in order to soothe his heart's pain, may do so on Shabbos." Nonetheless, many great and simple Jews do not give into emotion and do not express their grief on Shabbos, so as not to disrupt the joy and sanctity of the holy day.

Horav Rephael David Auerbach, was one such person. A terrible terrorist explosion rocked Yerushalayim. His son, Aharon Meir, and another young man, Arye Yosef Sheinfeld, were two of its victims.

They were rushed to Hadassah Hospital on Erev Shabbos – both mortally wounded. As night fell and the Shabbos Queen was ushered in, Ahraon Meir Auerbach lay in his bed suffering indescribable pain. Hundreds of splinters of glass riddled his body, terrible burns tortured his skin, as the blood so vital to life was continually ebbing from his wounded body.

In a nearby room, his father welcomed Shabbos with what seemed to be his usual serenity and joy. Earlier that day, his whole life had been shaken at its very core when he heard the news of the explosion. Knowing that his son would be on his way home exactly at that time, he could barely control himself through the hours of worry and uncertainty. His worst fears were confirmed: his son lay mortally wounded in Hadassah. He rushed to the hospital, only to be told by the doctors that there was no hope for his son's life.

Many yeshivah students came to give blood for their friend, but it was to be of no avail. Shabbos arrived, and Reb Rephael David donned his Shabbos clothes to welcome the Shabbos with joy. "Shabbos is not a time for tears," he said, his voice filled with faith and reassurance. He ate his Shabbos meal, sang zemiros, the traditional Shabbos songs, his face radiating an inner glow, a joy endemic to one who serves Hashem with love.

The hospital staff peered into the room, shocked in disbelief. Here was a man singing Shabbos songs, while his son's life slowly ebbed away. Just minutes before he had been filled with worry and anguish over his son's condition. How could he have transformed so radically?

They did not understand what Shabbos meant to Reb Rephael David. He sat by his son's bed all through the night, praying silently – never weeping.

In a nearby room, Aryeh Yosef Sheinfeld, the other victim, breathed his last breath. Everyone was in shock – except Reb Rephael David, who told them how to move the body and care for it on Shabbos.

In the morning, Reb Rephael David and his wife stood by their son's bed, reciting Shema Yisrael as their son's holy neshamah, soul, rose and soared Heavenward. He did not cry – and he instructed all those present that it was Shabbos. One should not cry.

Suddenly, he began to sing Ein K'Elokeinu, There is no one like our G-d. As he sang, memories rose up before him. His son was only fifteen-years-old, but he had accomplished so much. An exceptional student, he was the apple of his father's eye. A budding Torah scholar, he had mastered hundreds of pages of Talmud. He had had a bright future, but now his brief life had come to a tragic end. Yet, Reb Rephael David's faith in Hashem was not shaken. He was resolute in his belief. His voice continued firmly: Mi K'Elokeinu, Who is like our G-d?

Reb Rephael's older son arrived after a long walk. But it was too late. His father greeted him with the bitter news, immediately adding, "Remember, you cannot cry. It is Shabbos Kodesh."

The hours went by, and Reb Rephael constrained himself. He did not allow his emotions to overwhelm him. He ate Seudah Shlishis, as he always did. After all, it was Shabbos. He waited a little longer. The Shabbos Queen withdrew: Shabbos was over. Only now did a fountain of tears stream forth, as fifteen years of love – pent up throughout the Shabbos – poured from him. This was Aharon's student.



וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה תְּשַׁקְּצוּ מִן־הָעוֹף לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ שֶׁקֶץ הֵם. וְאֵת הַחֲסִידָה - "***These shall you abominate from among the birds, they may not be eaten…the chasidah***." (11:13,19)

What a beautiful name – chasidah! Rashi says that the chasidah truly was a bird that performed chesed, kindness – with members of its own specie.

This is not an admirable trait. We Jews do not believe in selective, discriminatory, chesed. Rashi's use of the words עִם חֲבֵרוֹתֶיהָ, its

"friends", seems to lend itself to a deeper thought. The term '*chaver/chibur*' means connection. When two people are connected with each other, they are considered chaveirim. The connection is of an equal and positive nature. There is something in common between the two. *A reyah* is a stronger form of friendship. In any event, the term chaver refers to someone who sees things in the same manner that I do. We are connected because we agree with each other.

This implies that the chasidah acts kindly only with those it can call a chaver, with whom it sees "eye to eye." The chasidah represents the individual who acts kindly with those that are like him: they dress like him, they pray in the same shul where he prays, they believe in the same approach to serving Hashem as he believes. In short, they are of the same '*weltanschauung*', they share the same perspective and world view. Is that so bad? After all, there is just so much money and time to go around. Why not stay focused on one particular group – "my people"?

First of all, this is not chesed. Chesed means to act benevolently towards others. One who discriminates, does not act kindly towards others – he acts kindly towards himself!

I think Rashi is emphasizing another point with the word chaver. What is the greatest chesed we can perform for another Jew?

Even greater than physical chesed is spiritual chesed. Should we ignore another Jew just because he is not as observant as we are? What are we doing about his lack of observance? Is the Jew who is not shomer Shabbos, Shabbos observant, any better off than the observant Jew who is living in a state of poverty? - There is no greater form of abject poverty than the Jew who is "empty of mitzvos!"

Perhaps, if we would view our non-observant brethren in this light, as Jews in need, we might reach out to them and perform the ultimate chesed - spiritual chesed.

We must remember that our "*chavrusashaft*," connection, with all Jews is the fact that we are all bnei Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.



The Klausenberger Rebbe, z.l., was a towering tzaddik whose overwhelming love for all Jews was legendary. It was after the war, after the accursed Nazis had decimated so many of our people, that the Rebbe's boundless love came to the fore.

The American liberators supplied him with a vehicle and a driver. The Rebbe went to all the little villages surrounding Feldafing, the DP camp where he was stationed, with the slogan, "***I am looking for my brothers***."

There were Jews there that were hidden during the war who had completely given up hope of ever being reunited with their people. The Rebbe gave them hope; he gave them courage to carry on.

Many survivors followed the Rebbe to Feldafing, but really had no desire to go. They had food given to them by the Americans. They had support. So, why would they want to follow the Rebbe? Many even went so far as to say that they had suffered long enough as Jews. They no longer had any desire to continue living as the oppressed people.

The Rebbe convinced them, slowly – very slowly and with great patience – that it was the right thing to be with other Jewish survivors.

Once, the Rebbe encouraged a young teenager to come with him to the camp. The boy resisted because he was sure the Rebbe would

not let him go to the movies. The Rebbe was not deterred. He promised the boy that when life returned to some sort of normalcy and a movie theatre was opened for the survivors – he would give him the money to purchase a ticket. - The boy joined the Rebbe, who later kept his word and bought the boy a ticket to the movies. The Rebbe's love eventually brought the boy back to Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe did not lecture the survivors. He understood their questions and inner struggle. He showered them with love and kindness, and these were the keys to opening their hearts and souls to return to Hashem. The Rebbe comforted everybody. His motto was: "***If you are a Jew, you are my brother! I will do everything that I can for you***."

There were dozens of young orphans in the camp with no one to care for them. The Rebbe felt it was his obligation to see to their physical and spiritual needs, in the same manner that a biological father cares for his child.

The story is told about a young girl who, due to her abject poverty, walked around the camp without socks. Upon seeing her one day, the Rebbe took off his own socks in the middle of the street and gave them to her. "It is unbecoming for a Jewish girl to walk around this way," he said.

While this narrative demonstrates the Rebbe's love and caring, it also underscores his love for the Jewish People. A Jewish girl does not walk around without socks!

As mentioned before, the greatest chesed is the one that stretches across the great divide that exists between those that are observant and those who, for whatever reason, have not yet been fortunate enough to see the true way a Jew should live. The Rebbe did not care about a person's past or present – only his future.

An American official once related to the Rebbe that there was a group of Hungarian Jewish girls in one of the DP camps who were

acting inappropriately, in a manner indicating that they had completely forgotten their roots.

The Rebbe spared no time, and he immediately left for the camp in search of these girls. He spoke to them like a loving father. With compassion and understanding, he was able to convince them to leave the camp and return with him.

The Rebbe established a school for these girls, all of whom had been raised in observant homes. At times, when depression took hold of them, and the girls would cry bitterly about their lives and the losses they had experienced, the Rebbe would listen intently and offer soothing words that healed and encouraged.

Probably the greatest tribute to the Rebbe was that all the children called him by one name – Tatte. They were attached to him like a child to a father, since, he was truly a spiritual father to them.

It would have been so easy to let apathy take control, and religious differences continue to breach Jewish unity. It took a great man to tower over these differences, to see beyond the petty and inconsequential, and look at the Jewish neshamah, soul, in its pristine beauty. - Indeed, it takes a great person to focus upon the areas that unify us, rather than our differences.

"Even one altruistic moment in an entire lifetime makes it all worthwhile. From your every small victory, the heavenly angels glow in admiration, for this is a feat even the highest of them could never achieve. G-d Himself laughs and says, "See what My child has done with the world I have made! For this I brought the universe into being!"

Whatever good you've managed to squeeze out of your time on Earth, discard your worries and cherish that. If the One Who made you celebrates it, so should you." ~ Rabbi Tzvi Freeman.

וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה תְּשַׁקְּצוּ מִן־הָעוֹף לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ שֶׁקֶץ הֵם. וְאֵת הַחֲסִידָה - "***These shall you abominate from among the birds, they may not be eaten…the chasidah.***" (11:13,19)



One would think that with a name as impressive as chasidah, a derivative from chesed, kindness, this bird would rate a high standard of kashrus. - Why is it included as a non-kosher fowl?

Commenting on the Talmud Chullin 63a, Rashi attributes the name chasidah to the kindness it displays towards members of its species by sharing food with them. Yet, its comparison is not recognized.

The Chidushei Ha'Rim explains that it directs its kindness only towards its own species / fellow. In other words, chesed is not a commodity that we control at our pleasure. If someone does not fit into our criteria for chesed, if he is not one of our fellows, then we do not perform chesed for them.

That is not the Torah's perspective on giving. Chesed is a G-d-given mandate. Those whom Hashem has made fortunate enough to do chesed to benefit others, should view themselves as a conduit for helping all who are in need.

We may derive another lesson herein. Performing chesed is not necessarily a sign of kashrus. The fowl must conform to the laws of kashrus, it must have the necessary signs that deem it kosher.

Perhaps this might serve as a lesson for us. While performing humanitarian acts of kindness is certainly a valuable trait, it does not mitigate non-conformance to Jewish law. One will receive his due reward for his act of benevolence. Unfortunately, he will also have to answer for ignoring the rest of the Torah.

אֶת־הַגָּמָל כִּי־מַעֲלֵה גֵרָה הוּא וּפַרְסָה אֵינֶנּוּ מַפְרִיס טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם. וְאֶת־הַשָּׁפָן כִּי־ מַעֲלֵה גֵרָה הוּא וּפַרְסָה לֹא יַפְרִיס. וְאֶת־הָאַרְנֶבֶת כִּי־מַעֲלַת גֵּרָה הִוא וּפַרְסָה לֹא הִפְרִיסָה טְמֵאָה הִוא לָכֶם – '***The camel, for it brings up its cud, but its hoof is not split, the hyrax, for it brings up its cud but its hoof is not split..., and the hare, for it brings up its cud and its hoof is not split.***' (11:4, 5, 6)



The Torah identifies those animals that have only one siman, sign, of kashrus. Interestingly, the Torah seems to employ the three tenses concerning the lack of split hooves in describing the animals: past, present, and future. The Torah says, **אֵינֶנּוּ מַפְרִיס** --"it does not have split hooves," in the present; **וּפַרְסָה לֹא יַפְרִיס** --"it will not have split hooves," the future; **וּפַרְסָה לֹא הִפְרִיסָה** -- "it's hooves were never split," in the past. What is the significance of these three expressions?

Ma'ayanah shel Torah cites one of the gedolei ha'mussar, who infer a noteworthy lesson from this pasuk. When one is about to declare an individual or an organization tamei, spiritually unclean, it is imperative that we take everything into account--not simply the present situation.

All too often we are quick to pass judgment, criticize, and perceive the present negativity of an individual. The Torah exhorts us to view people and issues in a total context. Let us look at the past! Do certain factors in one's past mitigate his present status? Is he merely a victim of circumstances, or did his past influence his present behavior?

Even if the past looks bleak, if we cannot ameliorate his present activities by looking back at his past, then we should look to the future in order to ascertain whether one still exists. Perhaps sometime in the future, this individual will perform teshuvah, repentance. - Before rendering a decision of tumah, we should confirm that all hope has been lost.

We may add that in dealing with circumstances involving a person's life, it is imperative that we be aware of all of the issues. Just because an individual did not do well in the past in a specific scenario--school, teacher, home, or community, we should not accept this as a definitive indication for the future. We should not smugly pass judgment upon a student simply because we have not been a successful teacher. Perhaps we are not the best teacher for that student. Others might have succeeded where we have failed.

I once heard a fascinating thought from **Horav N.Z. Dessler, Shlita,** who related it in the name of **Horav Leib Chasman, zl**:

A carpenter works with wood. Consequently, during the course of the day, wood chips will fall to the ground. As he walks around his shop or worksite, the carpenter will be stepping upon wood. Thus, the glazier, who works with glass, will be stepping upon glass. A mechanech, Torah teacher, works with Yiddishe neshamos, Jewish souls. If he is not careful, he will step upon the neshamos that fall by the wayside!

As transmitters of Torah from one generation to the next, we must reflect upon our awesome task and its overwhelming component responsibilities.

"There is no place devoid of Hashem. Just as hashem fills the heavens and the earth, so does He fill the hearts of human beings." ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

וְאֶת הַחֲסִידָה - "***And the Chasidah (stork)***." (11:19)

It seems strange for a bird to have a name which is connected with chesed, kindness. The Talmud in Chullin 63a remarks on the bird's name and states that, indeed, it is a bird which demonstrates kindness towards members of its own species. One may wonder why the Torah saw fit to prohibit such a "compassionate" bird from human consumption. After all, if we are what we eat, is compassion not a character trait everyone should seek to possess?

There are a number of answers to this question. Probably the most notable is one attributed to the **Imrei Emes**. He states that the chasidah does indeed perform kindness with members of its own species. It does so, however, only with members of its own species. - Selective kindness is not a character trait worthy of emulation.

Horav Naftali Tropp, z.l., suggested another explanation which was appropriate for the time in which he was living. He lived in Russia under the rule of the Bolshevicks who preached the socialist idealogy of taking from the rich to support the poor. - Horav Tropp explained that the chasidah is an unclean bird because it sustains the members of its species with food it steals from others. This is not chesed !

Torah dictate demands that in the course of performing kindness, we do not harm or steal from one to help another. This type of "chesed" is nothing more than glorified larceny. Perhaps this is why it is called chasidah. Its name is its greatest fraud. In an effort to justify its nefarious behavior, it emphasizes its "kindness." By calling attention to its "humanitarianism," it hopes to conceal its deception and victimization of others.

We would do well as human beings to follow the standards set forth by the Torah for determining unclean animals and fowl -- and to apply these principles to our own conduct.

אֶת־הַגָּמָל כִּי־מַעֲלֵה גֵרָה הוּא וּפַרְסָה אֵינֶנּוּ מַפְרִיס טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם. וְאֶת־הַחֲזִיר כִּי־ מַפְרִיס פַּרְסָה הוּא וְשֹׁסַע שֶׁסַע פַּרְסָה וְהוּא גֵּרָה לֹא־יִגָּר טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם - "***The camel, because she chews the cud, but parts not the hoof, she is unclean to you... and the pig, because he parts the hoof... but chews not the cud, he is unclean unto you***." (11:4,7)

The Midrash notes that even when Hashem describes the impure characteristics of the unclean animals, He identifies their pure features before mentioning the reason for their uncleanliness.

This seems enigmatic! The Torah is listing the various unclean animals, such as the camel and the pig. Why does the Torah specify their pure characteristics altogether? What purpose can be served by this?

Horav Yerachmiel Shulman z.l. derives an important lesson from this seeming verbosity.

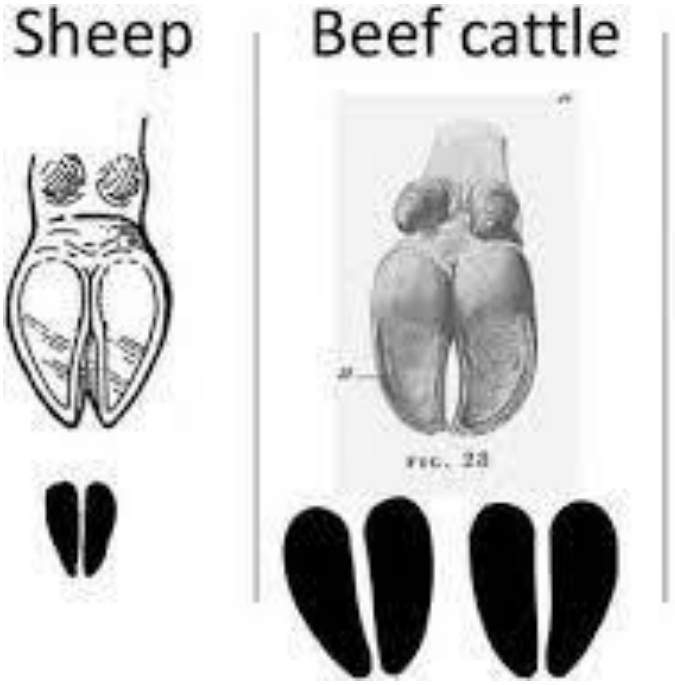
The Torah teaches that when we are about to render the pig, camel, or any other unclean animal unacceptable for Jewish consumption, we must be considerate not to "embarrass" them more than absolutely necessary. If we must cite their apparent unclean characteristics, it must be preceded by mention of their clean characteristics. This is the Torah's way of demonstrating sensitivity for an unclean animal. How much more so are we obligated to show concern in dealing with human frailties and shortcomings!

Man is created in the image of Hashem. Inasmuch as he can deviate from his observance of Torah and mitzvos, we must be extremely prudent in dealing with his imperfection. When we prepare to judge our fellow man, we should take note of his virtues prior to reflecting upon his deficits.

"Emunah means seeing the world as a reflection of Hashem's infinite wisdom and love." ~ Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner.

כֹּל מַפְרֶסֶת פַּרְסָה וְשֹׁסַעַת שֶׁסַע פְּרָסֹת מַעֲלַת גֵּרָה בַּבְּהֵמָה אֹתָהּ תֹּאכֵלוּ

"***Whatever has a split hoof and is wholly cloven footed and chews its cud among the beasts, you may eat.***" (11:4)



The two features stated in this pasuk are signs which identify permitted animals. No reason is stated as a rationale for their permissibility.

The Abarbanel suggests that animals which chew their cud are not capable of crushing and chewing up bones. Consequently, they feed on plants, and they do not have the ferocity of wild animals. Their split hooves do not have claws, suggesting that these are peace-loving and relatively harmless animals. Indeed, these animals reflect the traits of compassion and mercy, which are the hallmarks of the Jewish personality.

In a similar sense, **Rabbi S.R. Hirsch z.l**. explains that two instinctual acts are essential to the life of an animal: the search for food and the struggle for survival. Indeed, these two activities are indispensable to human life. For the Jew, however, although they are essential, they must be subordinated a more sublime goal.

Those animals whose distinct features and organs reflect these two functions (the claws of the wild animals and the stomach that quickly and indiscriminately digests all swallowed food) are excluded from consumption by the Torah. Hooved animals and those that chew their cud exhibit a form of "refinement," which is integral to the Jewish character.

These two prerequisites for kashrus contribute to the development and perpetuation of Klal Yisrael's dignity and distinctiveness.



The Miraculous Rescue of the Chassid, Rabbi Menashe Koenig Z"L

Stanislawow Ghetto, Shvat 5704 (1944), 80 years ago by Yaakov Rosenfeld - Ganzach Kiddush Hashem

Menashe Koenig and his friends in company 12/3 were forcibly employed in the restoration of the railroads that were destroyed by the Russian bombings and the partisan attacks.

250 young Jews from Hungary worked hard as part of this work group. They were tasked with replacing the stone infrastructure and installing new tracks, each one weighing a ton.



Jewish partisans place explosives under a railroad track on which the German trains would pass.

The "safety and security" rules normally accepted in these jobs were of course not practiced there around the town of Stanislawow in Western Galicia. The forced labourers were not given rest periods, they did not observe the proper order of the height of the rail bearers – a basic condition for the survival of those doing this job (since the correct way is to line up according to height, otherwise, all the weight falls

on the tallest in the group – as mentioned: a whole ton!). The boys stood in order of their names: Adler, Brent, etc. in alphabetical order…

There was not a day when members of the group did not fall, collapse, or die as a result of this arduous work.

The arrangement was that every two or three hours, one was allowed to go out if necessary, to a distance of about a hundred meters, and Menashe Koenig would take advantage of this opportunity every day. He would walk a hundred meters away from the group, stand in a corner, and put on a tefillin and pray.

Menashe Koenig did this for a month until it aroused the suspicion of the soldier who was in charge of the group, and one day in the middle of his prayer, Menashe Koenig felt the eyes of the soldier fixed on him, pouring out streams of fire. Menashe very quickly realized that the soldier was following him and caught him red-handed!

"You cheater!" he yelled.

"You lied to me that you were going out of need, and you just went to pray! Now you will learn a lesson."

And while speaking, the healthy and strong gentile slapped the thin and weak Menashe hard on the face, once and twice, until Menashe almost collapsed from the force of the blows.

At that moment, the tortured and persecuted Menashe forgot the fact that a Jew who is forced to work under the "Jewish Law" no longer has any rights. He also forgot that by virtue of the military emergency law, on a battlefield in the middle of the war, any company commander can do whatever he wants, and as a sole judge with full authority he has the power to sentence one to death by firing squad.

His blood rose to his head. The grief, anguish, and bitter insult that had been his lot for the past three years broke out in him without

restraint. He took the pickaxe, his working tool, and in a fit of rage struck the soldier's head, and he collapsed under him in a swoon.

Only then did Menashe understand what had happened here. He was shocked and dizzy, and knew that evil had befallen him.

In the meantime, the soldier woke up and called for help, and it did not hesitate to come.

Soldiers stationed nearby jumped on Menashe and handcuffed him. The commander ordered for him to be brought back to the camp and to be imprisoned in a dungeon.

Menashe waited for the evening roll call in the camp, when it was customary to conduct the show trials, and as customary, the punishment determined by the company commander would swiftly be carried out.



Chassidic Jews performed forced labour

In this case, it was clear to everyone that the punishment meted out to a Jew who dared to attack his superior and try to murder him would be immediate death. In general, at that time, the death penalty was often used for "disciplinary problems," even of Hungarian soldiers, since the Germans and their Hungarian assistants had already begun to lose at the front and for any crime of breach of discipline or "undermining the fighting spirit", certainly for "rebellion," they would kill regularly.

Menashe sat in the dungeon and began to understand the meaning of his actions. He realized that his life had come to an end, but he felt

no remorse for what he had done. He awaited his death with composure, and prepared for it with faith.

The bitter news struck the other members of the company with astonishment, more than they mourned the bad fate of their friend, they worried about themselves… They understood very well what the consequences of the event would be on the treatment of them by the camp commanders. Who then had the strength for new troubles?

Dr. Diamant, an intellectual Jew from Budapest, was far from a life of Torah and mitzvahs. He and his friends were hostile to Menashe Koenig and his pious friends, but over the course of many days, the ice broke between them and after sharp conversations and debates, there was a rapprochement between them, until they grew fond of Menashe and affectionately called him "Rabbi Menashe."

They, who at heart were very far from a life of Torah and mitzvahs, suddenly saw the integrity of their hearts and the purity of the faith of the charedi group. They began to understand that they were like "tinok shenishba" (uneducated religiously), and not only that, but the group of "intellectuals," led by Dr. Diamant, would consult with Menashe and vent their worries and troubles to him.

Now, when Dr. Diamant heard about what Menashe had done and the punishment that awaited him, he stirred his mind with ideas and tricks regarding how to save Menashe from certain death, until the idea occurred to him. He waited for exercise time and then came to talk with the camp commander, with whom he had a certain relationship by virtue of his position as one of the members of the camp secretariat.

Dr. Diamant simply went out of his way for Menashe Koenig. He cried in front of the camp commander and sobbed bitterly, until the commander softened and asked him what he thought he could do in such a situation, since there was no escape from carrying out the death sentence in the face of such a serious act. - Dr. Diamant waited for this question and then said:

"In my opinion, the soldier who was beaten by the Jew must also be punished, at least by the denial of his military ranks, and this is because he did not defend himself properly against the attack of an unarmed Jew. This laziness has no place on the battlefield! The punishment must be carried out here and now so that the other soldiers learn to be more careful and aggressive."

An hour passed and the commander called Dr. Diamant and said to him: "I feel came straight from Heaven… because a moment after I informed the soldier about the need to lower his ranks, he burst into tears and said to me: 'Honorable Lieutenant General! Who told you that the Jew beat me, after all, only he and I were there. I simply slipped and fell on my head, and out of anger at the Jew who caused this, I ordered him handcuffed and locked in a dungeon…'"

In the early evening, in a "trial" held during roll call, the soldier claimed his new version, and the verdict was determined immediately: **two hours hanging**.



Roll call of Jewish slave labourers

The hanging was carried out like this: the victim's hands were tied behind his back and hung on a tree trunk. His legs were raised about 20 cm above the ground, and every time the victim fainted, they would lower him and sprinkle water on him, and the doctor would check his heart, then they would hang him again until the next fainting, and God forbid… There were many whose souls gave away during the punishment, and this too was taken into account.

Menashe fainted four times during the hanging!

As a result of this punishment, Menashe received two weeks off, during which he received a double food ration. It took him eight months to fully recover from this experience, but his life was saved.

He was further tortured in body and soul until he was able to see the liberation with his own eyes and immigrate to the Land of Israel, where he rehabilitated and was able to build a glorious home.

32 years passed, and one day, when Menashe Koenig was in a synagogue in the United States, where he had gone for the marriage of his nephew Rabbi Yitzchak Pinchas Freind, the gabbai approached him and asked him his name. He wanted to grant him an aliyah.

He answered: "Menashe ben (son of) Chaim"

The gabbai turned pale and began to stammer.

"Koenig?"

"Yes…" Menashe answered in embarrassment.

"From the 12/3 company?"

"Yes!"

Then the survivor gabbai let out a chilling roar and burst into tears.

"And we were sure that on that day you were killed for in sancitification of G-d's Name…"

Indeed, Menashe later heard from several sources that a rumour circulated among members of the labour company that he did not survive the last hanging.

The gabbai was a survivor from the same company and therefore became very emotional when he suddenly saw the dead man standing in front of him, alive and well…

Rabbi Shlomo Farhi – Wings of Faith – A Prayerful Encounter that Changed Two Lives Forever



There was a Rabbi in Bnei Brak who was teaching his community about the power of Tefillah. He shared with them a story that happened with him.

He was travelling abroad to speak at an outreach convention. As they get to Ben Gurion airport, they gather together various people to make up a minyan for Arvit.

They just begin Shemona Esray, when over the 'tannoy' comes the following call, "Final call for flight 175, please make your way immediately to gate 34."

People rushed the Amidah and finished in record time. Faster than it takes to turn the pages.

Some people can stick it out. Some did a 1,2,3-minute Amidah. I managed to do an 8-minute Amidah, as I was in the middle of Tefilla, and I couldn't just run away.

We ran and just made it onto the plane, except for one woman who was still praying with intense concentration and seemingly in no hurry. I was one of the last people on the plane. I told the steward that there was one passenger who was in the middle of prayers, and would they please hold the plane for a few more minutes.

He said that he can't delay the boarding, as they would miss their slot.

A couple of minutes later, there was an announcement – "Everybody please disembark the plane immediately – there is smoke coming from the cockpit, and we need to investigate the cause right away."

I got off the plane and start searching for this woman. I found her in exactly the same place we left her. She was just saying, **עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו** ! Unfazed!

Within a short while, they allowed everybody back on the plane. Now she's perfectly on time, and she sits in her seat comfortably. The plane takes off.

I went to her seat, and I asked her, "I was very impressed with the way you were praying, with total concentration and unhurried under the circumstances – you would have for sure missed the flight. How come you didn't rush or get nervous and anxious when you heard the final call?"

She replied, "I'll tell you the truth, I'm 30 years old, and all my friends are already married. I'm struggling to find a shidduch, so I decided to accept upon myself for 30 days to daven with the utmost concentration and focus on every word of the tefillah. So, it takes me quite some time to pray."

"When I heard the message over the 'tannoy', I thought to myself, - this is Hashem testing me. Boruch Hashem I had the Emunah that even if I missed the flight, I would have done the correct thing. And as you can see, I am now on the plane together with everybody else."

I saw that there is something going on here, so I went up to the steward and asked him, "Tell me, what happened in the cockpit just after I asked you to wait a few more minutes?"

The steward said, "I'll tell you the truth. They saw some smoke in the cockpit and for safety reasons we had to get everybody off the plane. They checked it out, but they couldn't find the source of the smoke or any other problem. They ran every test. They couldn't find anything wrong, so we called everybody back on the plane."

The steward who happened to be Jewish, was amazed at the girl's devotion, and how in the end, she made it onto the plane in a miraculous way. What faith and strength of character.

I said to the steward, "If you are interested, I am speaking at various conventions on the topic of praying with meaning, Judaism and faith, why not come to hear one?"

The steward said, "I would love that."

He came to the lecture, and it completely turned his life around. He decided that he wanted to learn more about Torah. He took a sabbatical, and he studied in yeshiva for a year. He became a fully-fledged religious person.

One day, the guy gets a phone call with a suggestion for a shidduch. A magnificent girl who would be a perfect match. He goes out with the girl, and he is amazed that it is this same girl from the airport who prayed at that time in order to get married! - He married her and lived happily ever after!

They couldn't figure out what fire made that smoke, but I know – the fire of a sincere Tefillah in the soul of that girl!

Fascinating INSIGHTS



Butterflies

With the butterflies already beginning to appear, let's present different Torah insights connected to this unique creature.

R' Yisrael Pesach Feinhandler was asked concerning a butterfly that got caught in a spider web, if it was a Mitzva to take the butterfly out because of *Tzaar Baalei Chaim*?

He answered that there was no Mitzva to save the butterfly. Among the reasons is that the nature of animals is that there are predators and prey. So just as if a lion attacks a deer, *Tzaar Baalei Chaim* doesn't mandate a person to save the deer, so too one doesn't need to save the butterfly in this case, since it is the nature of the world.



What are some lessons we can learn from butterflies?

We know that a caterpillar begins its existence on the ground with its feet, incapable of flying, but later transforms into a flying butterfly, after undergoing a series of natural events where it decomposes completely and then regenerates itself. This metamorphosis hints to what will transpire at Techias Hamaisim where a decayed and decomposed body will spring back to life in a more glorious form.

A man who saw a cocoon noticed the butterfly inside trying to make its way out of the tiny hole. The butterfly struggled to no avail. Feeling sorry for the butterfly, the man cut a large opening through which the butterfly could leave. The butterfly exited but its body was contorted, and its wings were shriveled. This is how the butterfly lived its entire life — small, shriveled and unable to fly.

It is the struggle to exit the cocoon that has the effect of transforming fluid from the butterfly's body to its wings which is how they develop. Although he thought he was doing a favor by ending the struggle, really he thwarted its growth.

Struggles we go through enable us to develop wings so that we have the ability to reach great heights. We must realize that just over the hill is a beautiful valley, but we must climb the hill to see it.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Rebbe Hershele of Ziditchov zt'l recommended spreading the Shabbos tablecloth Friday before midday as a segulah for shalom bayis.

As a segulah for refuah, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l advises that wine and challos should be on the table already on Friday morning, before daybreak.

החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים

The Ahavas Shalom *zt'l* writes, "Don't think that it is only in Nisan [that the entire month is like *rosh chodesh*]. The same is true for the other months. Because when someone observes *rosh chodesh* properly the entire month becomes like *rosh chodesh*. As [the saying goes], **גופא בתר רישא אזיל**, the body follows the head. If the head, *rosh chodesh*, is good, this influences the entire month.

Therefore, it is proper for the wise to serve Hashem properly on *rosh chodesh*, which will make the whole month good. Even if just one hour on *rosh chodesh* is kept correctly, the entire month will be imbued with the holiness of *rosh chodesh*.

"One should always perform mitzvos joyously, for there is no happiness greater than that of fulfilling Hashem's commandments. It is said that G-d holds such joy in higher regard than the mitzvah itself. One who performs a mitzvah without joy does so not out of love for G-d, but either out of fear of Him, or habit, or the desire to impress others. - One who rejoices in a mitzvah is surely motivated by love of G-d and His commandments." ~ R' Eliyahu Kitov.



הוא היה אומר

R' Mordechai Gifter *zt"l* (Pirkei Torah) would say: **וַאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכּוּ אֶת הַשְּׂרֵפָה** - Why do we cry at a moment of death? Why do we shed tears? This is the natural state of things. Men are born. They live. They die. What is there to cry about?

The **Ramban** says that this is not the natural state of things. Man was made to live forever in the joy and the Countenance of the Almighty in *Gan Eden*. Death signifies that things are not working according to the natural course of Creation. It is unnatural and unordinary. This is why we are moved to tears."

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L מחשבת הלב

The Torah describes the tragic demise of Nadav and Avihu, and states **וַאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכּוּ אֶת הַשְּׂרֵפָה**. The simple understanding is that *Klal Yisroel* should mourn the tragedy.

When a *tzara* befalls us, it is referred to as a **שְׂרֵפָה**. The way to extinguish a fire is with water. Hence, our tears that flow like water, can serve as the "dousing agent" for this purpose. When *Hashem* sees the tears we shed on behalf of our fellow brethren, both locally and globally, He collects them and uses them to snuff out the flames.

As we usher in *Chodesh Nisan*, let us *daven* for *besuros tovos, yeshuos u'refuos* for all, and the final *geula, b'karov*. **בְּנִיסָן נִגְאֲלוּ וּבְנִיסָן עֲתִידִין לִיגָּאֵל**

משל למה הדבר דומה

אל תשקצו את נפשתיכם ... (יא-מג)



One day, a *chavrusa* of **R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l***, who taught in a local *cheder* in *Petach Tikva*, asked if he could substitute for a day. R' Chaim agreed to help his friend and showed up to teach the class of fourth graders.

After R' Chaim taught the boys a single *Mishnah* in *Bava Metzia*, a student raised his hand. R' Chaim anticipated a question on the *Mishnah*.

"May I go to the bathroom?" the boy asked.

"Of course!" R' Chaim enthusiastically responded, sensing a teaching moment. "When someone feels a need to go to the bathroom, there is an obligation to go right away because it says, "*You shall not make yourselves abominable.*"

A wave of understanding swept through the classroom as the other boys immediately sensed R' Chaim's inexperience. One by one they raised their hands to be excused from class for a variety of reasons. Soon only one student remained.

"Don't you also need the bathroom?" R' Chaim asked.

"Actually, I do," the boy replied, "but I don't want to leave the *rebbi* alone with no students."

"I think you should go to the bathroom immediately," Rav Chaim suggested. "Then we can both leave the classroom, and I can go back to the *Lomza Yeshivah* to continue my learning there!"

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם וְהִתְקַדִּשְׁתֶּם וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי וְלֹא תְטַמְּאוּ אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם – '***For I am the L-rd your G-d, and you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, because I am holy, and you shall not defile yourselves…***'

Our commentators offer a range of suggestions to explain why the *Torah* permits certain types of food but prohibits others. However, the very fact that we are forbidden to eat certain food items enables us to enjoy what we are permitted even more. And in doing so, we recognize *Hashem*, thank Him, and deepen our relationship with Him through *hakaras hatov* - gratitude.

As **R' Eliyahu Lopian *zt"l*** expresses in **Lev Eliyahu**: "*To fulfill the Torah, it is not necessary to fear Heaven greatly, but to possess the virtue of gratitude. This virtue alone will lead to the fulfillment of the whole Torah. As the posuk states at the end of the laws of Kashrus: 'You shall sanctify yourself, and you shall become holy, for I am holy.' - By abstaining from forbidden foods and appreciating all the more what we may eat, we come closer to Hashem.*"

The JDC, The Joint Distribution Committee, was a Jewish relief organization founded in 1914 through a $50,000 donation from Jacob Schiff, a Reform Jew. The JDC was involved in relief work and provided financial help to the great *yeshivos* in Europe. Although the organization was founded and run by Reform Jews, they attempted to help all Jews who needed assistance.

In October of 1929, after the Stock Market Crash, the world descended into the Great Depression. The JDC was forced to limit its financial assistance, including its aid to the *yeshivos*.

As the financial support decreased, some of the *yeshivah* directors felt that the Joint should continue to prioritize the *yeshivos* in the allocation of its now limited funds. They felt that directing money to other causes other than supporting the *yeshivos* was indicative of the Joint's bias against the *yeshivos*.

They decided to approach the holy **Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan *zt"l***. They asked him, "*Rebbi*, the Joint wants to eliminate funding to the *yeshivos*. What should we tell them? How should we protest this terrible decree?"

The *Chofetz Chaim* looked surprised at the question and answered, "What should you tell them? You should tell them 'Thank You' for all the support they have given these last fifteen years. They are not *frum* Jews, yet they supported *yeshivos;* we must show them *Hakaras Hatov*, gratitude. Never forget there is no limit to *Hakaras Hatov*."

Fast-forward almost a century and across the Atlantic to Passaic/Clifton, New Jersey. In July 2021, the world had been in the throes of the Coronavirus pandemic for over a year. *Congregation Ahavas Israel* led by **R' Ron Yitzchok Eisenman *shlita***, removed almost three-quarters of the chairs from the three *Batei Medrash* to maintain the social distancing ordinance.

The *Shul* was sparsely populated and looked and felt barren. Finally, the day arrived, and with the permission and encouragement of their medical expert, the seats could be reset to pre-pandemic mode. The issue was how to organize a team to reset the three *Batei Medrash* to their original form. Hundreds of chairs needed to be moved. - The *gabbai* asked for volunteers. However, the job would be gruelling and challenging and was not a job for middle-aged, out-of-shape men.

The appointed time arrived, and the *gabbai* looked worried. "How will the seats be moved?"

Suddenly, as if angels dropped from *Shamyaim*, a group of *bachurim* from the *Mesivta* of Clifton arrived and began a coordinated and systematic effort. In a matter of minutes, all three *Batei Medrash* were restored to their pre-Covid places.

These boys come to learn in the *Shul* every Friday night and *Shabbos* day. They are *Masmidim*. Although they came during their lunch

break, each one of them has an additional *seder* during that time. They sacrificed their own precious learning time to help out the *Shul*.

That evening, Rabbi Eisenman spoke to their *Rebbi*. "I am so grateful to you. Your boys are shining examples of what a *Ben Torah* should be. Thank you so much for coming with them to set up the *Shul*."

The *Rebbi* looked at me surprised as he said, "What do you mean? Every Friday night and *Shabbos*, you allow us to use the *Shul* for learning. We benefit greatly from the *Shul*; isn't it only right that we give back to the *Shul* when it needs our help. Is *Hakaras Hatov* a small thing?"

He looked at the *Rebbi*, and suddenly it dawned on him. "Rabbi Yaakov Mordechai Zaks, aren't you an *einekel* - a direct descendent - of the *Chofetz Chaim*?"

Rabbi Zaks smiled and said, "Yes, I am, and as I have heard many times from my father, who heard from his mother, and she from the *Chofetz Chaim*, "Never forget there is no limit to *Hakaras Hatov*."

בס"ד

למודי משה

Full of Love

וַיִּקְצֹף עַל־אֶלְעָזָר וְעַל־אִיתָמָר בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַנּוֹתָרִם לֵאמֹר. מַדּוּעַ לֹא־אֲכַלְתֶּם אֶת־ הַחַטָּאת בְּמְקוֹם הַקֹּדֶשׁ - ***"Moshe was angry with Elazar and with Isamar, the sons of Aharon that were left, saying: Why have you not eaten the sin-offering in the place of the sanctuary."*** (10:16-17)

The Rambam rules (*Hilchos Deios* 6:7) that a person who sees his friend transgressing or engaged in inappropriate behavior is

required to rebuke him and explain to him the error of his ways. The Rambam adds that this must be done in a soft voice and gentle manner, making it clear that the criticism emanates solely from a pure desire to assist and benefit his friend.

In fact, **Rav Chaim Volozhiner** maintains that a person who is only able to deliver rebuke in an angry, condescending manner is exempt from this mitzvah based on the requirement of the Rambam.

A beautiful hint to this concept is found in our verses. The Torah tells us explicitly that Moshe was angry at what he perceived to be an incorrect judgment on the part of Aharon and his sons. Nevertheless, the first letters of the words of his actual criticism spell out **מלא אהבה**– 'full of love', hinting that even as Moshe carried out what he perceived to be his Divine obligation to protest their actions, he did so in a way that demonstrated his love for them and his pure motivations. (R' Ozer Alport)

I Used to Eat Kosher – No More!

דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֹאת הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלוּ מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ
"Speak to the Bnei Yisroel, saying: These are the creatures that you may eat among all the animals on earth." (Vayikra 11:2)

The following is an incredible story that was told over by Rabbi Avraham Gross, former Rav of Shaarei Hatikva *Shul* in Washington Heights?

After forty-seven years being the Rav of the Shaarei Hatikva *Shul*, I moved to Eretz Yisroel. About twelve years before my move, I served as chaplain in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Every day I would receive a printout from the hospital's computer of all the Jewish patients.

But everyone knows that computers aren't foolproof, and many Jewish patients never made it onto the list. So, on my rounds

through the wards, I would look at the names posted on the doors of the rooms, looking for those that were likely to be Jewish.

One day I passed by a room and perused the names listed. My attention was immediately drawn to one name in particular. It was the family name of a most illustrious *talmid chacham* of pre-World War I Europe, one of the Gedolei Hador. I knocked and was beckoned inside. The patient, an elderly Jewish man, sat on his bed.

"Good morning," I said as I introduced myself as the chaplain of the hospital. "I couldn't help but wonder about your family name. Are you by any chance related to Rabbi So-and-so?"

"What! So, you knew my great grandfather?!"

"I know my beard is grey, but I'm not that old. However, I have studied from his works, and he was really a very great scholar."

On his tray were the hospital utensils and the remains of his breakfast. I looked at the tray and his eyes caught my stare.

"Rabbi, I guess you're wondering about my breakfast. Well, to tell you the truth. I used to keep kosher. But no more! I used to keep Shabbos… but no more! I used to *daven* and lay *tefillin*… NO MORE!"

I looked at him and with a pained voiced I answered, "You must have suffered a terrible tragedy."

For a moment he was silent and looked down, seemingly lost in his thoughts. "I had a son. He was twenty years old when he got sick. My wife and I stayed by his bedside the whole week. On Friday afternoon we bid him goodbye and hurried home so my wife could light Shabbos candles before sunset. Right before she lit, we got the phone call. Since then, I have had nothing to do with Yiddishkeit."

I looked at him and, after a moment of silence, said, "So you're angry at G-d."

"You bet I am!" was his reply.

He continued talking about this for about ten minutes and I empathized with his pain. I was struggling within myself, searching for an answer. I prayed silently to the Ribbono Shel Olam for help. Then I got an idea.

"What was your profession?"

"Me? Why, I was a justice of the Supreme Court of the Borough of Queens. I sat on the bench for over twenty years. And do you know, that in all of that time the Federal Supreme Court only repealed two of my cases. That says a lot. I researched all my cases, and my ruling was overturned only twice."

He did not realize it, but he had just played into my hands.

"That is a wonderful record. I bet you disappointed a lot of people. Every trial has two sides. You decided against one of them. And the lawyer who lost must have muttered under his breath. Of course, he would not say anything out loud. That would be contempt of court. But outside the court he must have cursed you and your decision. He probably felt that you were terribly wrong in your judgment, had not sized up the case properly, or had misconstrued the evidence. But you stuck to your guns. You had researched the case thoroughly and you were absolutely convinced that your decision was the law. It did not matter that the other person did not understand. That is the law. The law is often cold. It is harsh. It is difficult to accept. It often hurts and is painful. But that is the law!

"G-d is the ultimate Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Universe. Many times, He must hand down decisions that we puny mortals cannot, for the life of us, fathom. It does not make sense. It looks wrong and harsh. But G-d knows better. He has taken everything into consideration; all the past and future. All the ramifications have been accounted for. In the end, He has made His decision, and we have to accept it. You know why? Because that is the law! It hurts, it is painful. We do not understand. But that is the law.

"You lost a son. It was a very great tragedy. You have suffered overwhelming grief. But you were a justice of the Supreme Court. You understand. That is the law."

He stared at me for a moment, and then dropped his head. He repeated over and over again, "That is the law. That is the law."

He raised his head. "You know, Rabbi, no one ever explained it to me that way. That is the law. I must accept it. Because that is the law."

He looked at me and asked, ***"Do you think I can get kosher food in this hospital?"***

זכרו תורת משה

לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל

HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

The Right Thing



● The Rescue

A debate broke out between the Rozovsky family and the residents of Grodno regarding who would take over after **Reb Michal David Rozovsky,** the Rav of Grodno, passed away. The Rozovsky family wanted **Reb Yehoshua Heshel**, the older brother, to replace the Rav, but the townspeople wanted **Reb Shmuel** to become the new Rav, as they felt he was a greater *talmid chacham* and was thus more fitting for the position.

They decided to ask **Reb Chaim Ozer**, *zt"l*, to rule the quandary. The two opposing sides were scheduled to come to Reb Chaim Ozer at ten in the morning. Eight o'clock, that morning, Reb Shmuel came to Reb Chaim Ozer, telling him that the matter was not up for debate. "There's no need for deliberation," he told Reb Chaim Ozer. "I've decided not to be the Rav; my older brother should be the Rav."

Two hours later, the delegation arrived at Reb Chaim Ozer's desk. They discussed the issue, and Reb Chaim Ozer ruled in favor of the older brother, Reb Yehoshua Heshel.

A year later, the city was still not at peace with Reb Yehoshua Heshel. The community eagerly yearned for R' Shmuel, because of his brilliance, charisma, and personality. Reb Shmuel realized that as long as he lived in Grodno, his personality would cast a shadow over his older brother, preventing Reb Yehoshua Heshel's influence from spreading to the community. Although his older brother was fitting for the position, the city wouldn't fully accept him as long as Reb Shmuel lived there.

Reb Shmuel made a *goral haGra* (using a Chumash to know what to do and where he should go). The *goral* fell on the *pasuk* telling Avraham to leave his homeland and settle in the land that Hashem would show him.

Reb Shmuel understood that this was telling him to move to Eretz Yisrael to protect the dignity of his brother. He came to Eretz Yisrael without family, but he felt that it was a worthwhile sacrifice for his brother's honor and for avoiding *machlokes*.

Some years later, the war broke out. The Germans killed the entire city of Grodno *al kiddush Hashem*, including Reb Yehoshua Heshel. Reb Shmuel, however, was the sole survivor of his entire family.

He ended up becoming the world-famous Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovezh, whose brilliance lights up the entire world. Where did his salvation come from? It came from avoiding *machlokes*.

This story teaches us (a) you never lose from being *mevater*. Reb Shmuel was *mevater* becoming the Rav, and that saved his life. (b) Even when things seem bad, it's all good. In Grodno, Reb Shmuel was appreciated and sought after; in Eretz Yisrael, he was a stranger. But that move and those hardships saved his life. All the Torah that he taught and continues to teach through his *sefarim* and students is the product of those initial difficult years in Eretz Yisrael.

● The Unforgettable Cheque

The Ponovezher Rav *zt"l*, known for establishing Torah in Bnei Brak by setting up his yeshiva there, would travel around by foot collecting enormous sums for the establishment and maintenance of his enterprise. Returning from a fundraising trip, the Rav stopped by the *bimah* in the yeshiva and showed the onlooking crowd a check given by one of the wealthiest individuals of Frankfurt. On it was written an enormous sum, enough to sustain the yeshiva for about half a year.

"When I arrived in Frankfurt, I knocked on doors one by one. In one house, they opened, and in other they didn't; and so I moved from house to house. One day, Hashem summoned a special *askan* who informed me that it was not proper to go around by foot. 'The Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovezh shouldn't be going door-to-door. Sit in your house, and we shall arrange for you meetings, as is customary with important people, and this is how you will reach your goal."

When the *askan* came to speak with one of the very wealthy people and described to him the activities of the yeshiva, the rich man said: "Tomorrow at eight o'clock, I'll be traveling out-of-town. Please have the Rosh Yeshiva come to the train station at a quarter to eight, and we'll 'sort out' the matters."

"For the first time in my life," says the Ponovezher Rav, "I woke up at seven o'clock. I immediately calculated that if I daven with a

minyan, I'd 'lose' the meeting with the rich man, as he was heading out-of-town. Better that I daven at home, I figured, as the *talmud Torah* of the yeshiva was on the line, and its worth forsaking davening with a minyan for the learning of the entire yeshiva.

"However, I immediately rejected that thought, as Chazal say that '*No one listens to Me and loses*!' (*Midrash Rabbah*, *Reeh* 45). I will go to shul, daven properly with a *minyan*, and Hashem will get me the money I need from another place.

"I finished the davening at 8:30. I thought to myself, 'I'll do my part by going to the train station. Maybe my salvation will grow from there, or from some other place, but I shall do my part. Indeed, I got there at 8:45, a whole hour after we were supposed to meet.

"Five minutes later, the rich man came running in, excessively apologizing for making me wait the full hour. 'I'm so sorry I delayed. I feel so bad. I want to compensate you, so I'll give much more than what I'd anticipated giving you.' - "He then gave me this cheque, which you can see will finance the yeshiva for six months."

"I did not come to show you this cheque as a proof to the words of Chazal. We all believe the words of Chazal, and they don't need support. Rather, I'm here to show you that not only are there no losses from keeping the Torah; instead, we gain many times over. Had I hurried and davened without a *minyan*, I would have arrived at the train station at the appointed time, and after waiting for him without him showing up, I would've left with no donation.

"Rather, only because I davened with a *minyan* did I end up being there at the time he showed up and receiving the cheque, plus much more. This is why I'm standing here to tell you this story.

There are many times where we think that by avoiding doing what's right, we'll gain. But, in essence, when we follow what the Torah says, we come out the winner."

● The Tzitzis Story!

One of the famous publicized stories after the attack of Simchas Torah is how a pair of *tzitzis* saved a group of soldiers. The story goes like this:

A *yesomah* from Eretz Yisrael approached **Rav Chaim Zaid** saying that she has 6,000 shekels in her savings. She wanted to use that money to buy pairs of *tzitzis* for Israeli soldiers. Rav Chaim took the money and bought 127 pairs of *tzitzis*.

When they approached the army base to give the *tzitzis* to soldiers, they were not granted entry because they had word that a terrorist was hiding somewhere in the area. Instead, Rav Chaim and his assistants were forced to throw the *tzitzis* over the fence to soldiers standing on the other side. And so they did.

When the bag with the *tzitzis* was being thrown into the base, a wind came and blew it in a different direction. Seeing something in the air flying toward him, the terrorist who'd been hiding in the area suspected that a grenade was being thrown at him. He ran out of his ambush, was spotted immediately, and was shot on the spot.

Reb Yaakov Rahimi repeated this story in English, and several weeks later, he got a call from a wealthy man in Florida. "I'd like to be the 'father' of this orphaned girl," he told R' Rahimi. "Let me know when this orphan gets married. I'll cover the expenses of her wedding. Such an orphan! I want to be the one bringing her to her *chuppah*, and I'll buy her an apartment in Yerushalayim as well!"

The girl is now engaged, and her wedding will be paid in full *b'ezras Hashem*, and she'll have a beautiful apartment in Bayit Vegan! She took her life savings and used it toward a mitzvah, not knowing where her basic expenses would be paid for, and we all see how Hashem gave it back more than a hundred times! You never lose out from doing the right thing!



שמואל זנויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry)

Teaching is only half of the act of education

דָּרֹשׁ דָּרַשׁ מֹשֶׁה -"*Moshe's sermon is needed*" (10:16)

Many parents nowadays complain that they are doing everything they could to instil high moral principles in their children, but today's young people are not ready to listen. Similarly, many teachers also lament the fact that, despite their attempts to instil moral standards and values in their students, they do not succeed at all in influencing their behaviour. why?

The answer to this is found in the interpretation of these three words: דָּרֹשׁ דָּרַשׁ מֹשֶׁה -"*Moshe's sermon is needed*". These words are exactly in the middle of the Torah; The word "Drush" ends the first half of the Torah, and the word "Drash" begins the second half.

Sages say that "drush" means to teach. However, this is only half the task; the second word, "drush", means "to give a personal example", to demonstrate the things we teach. This is the second half of the task of education.

It's not enough to only study, the individual must educate others, young or old, in the right ways of thinking and doing.

"Don't confuse humility with low self-esteem. Recognize the good and the potential within you and be proud of it." ~ Rabbi Moshe Polter (1938-2005).

וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּיטַב בְּעֵינָיו - "***And Moshe heard and it was good in his eyes***." (10:20)

On one Shabbat, a rabbi invited his guest, also a rabbi, to speak before the people of his congregation. That rabbi was tired and weary from the hassle of the journey and felt that he was unable to make demands in public; but he did not want to hurt his friend.

Therefore, he quoted the verse **וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּיטַב בְּעֵינָיו** - "And Moshe heard, and it was good in his eyes," and added: "Moshe was always teaching, and the people were always listening; However, in the verse before us, Aaron is the one who spoke, and Moshe listened - and was very happy. - Since I am also constantly talking and teaching, I would now like to hear what you have to say."

The Art of Listening

It is very important that we all cultivate the art of listening. Parents talk all the time to their children, and teachers talk all the time to their students; however, if we want our children and students to listen to us, we must come the moment when we too must listen to what they have to say to us.

The previous **Lubavitcher Rebbe**, in the last years of his life, was so ill that he could only speak in a whisper. However, he continued to give lengthy lessons to his followers, who crowded around him so that they could hear every word.

Once a famous speaker came to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and when he heard the learned Rebbe speak to his followers and students in a whisper, he was very surprised.

"I don't understand," he said, "I have a thick and strong voice, but when I speak for more than half an hour, the people start to get bored and complain, whereas your Rebbe can hardly speak, yet you all lean towards him to catch every word he says and listen to him for hours and hours."

"It's simple," said one of the Hasidim, "we listen to him for many hours because we all know that if one of us would speak with the Rebbe, the Rebbe would lean towards him and listen to him." - Only those who know how to listen properly can also teach properly.



Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהֹר וּבֵין הַחַיָּה הַנֶּאֱכֶלֶת וּבֵין הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תֵאָכֵל - '***To distinguish between the impure and the pure, and between the creature that may be eaten and the creature that may not be eaten***.' (11:47)

A wise man once said: In the Aleph-Bais, the letter 'Ayin' precedes the letter 'Peh'. The word 'Ayin' in Hebrew means 'eye', and the word 'Peh' means 'mouth'.

This teaches that anything that you are about to put into your mouth, the obligation is on you to use your eyes to investigate if it is fit to eat, and anything that comes out of your mouth, the responsibility is on you to investigate, and see if what you are about to say is appropriate or not. (Umatuk HaOhr)

Someone who brings just one chair for himself is merely a shlepper. But one who brings two, one for himself and one for a friend, is a ba'al chesed. ~ R' Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz zt"l

The Sun Set at Noon - Ganzach Kiddush Hashem



90 years since the days of mourning for the passing of one of the great men of his generation, the genius Rabbi Meir Shapira z"l

The revered and mighty leader whose vision and power of leadership illuminated the face of the Jewish world in all corners of the world, passed away after a short illness exactly ninety years ago. His untimely departure shook the hearts and hurt Jewish communities everywhere.

There are few leaders who have left such a strong mark on the earth as this historical leader, whose influence for nearly a hundred years

has been growing, becoming more and more praised, and his bright, influential and conquering character continues to shine light in the lives of hundreds of thousands.


№ 246 „Lubliner Tugblat" 20 נראש

לובלינער טאגבלאט

כל ראש לחלי, וכל לבב דוי!

מאיר שפירא זצ"ל

האב"ד ור"מ דק' לובלין יצ"ו

הישיבה הקדושה העולמית ישיבת חכמי לובלין

יום לוית מנוחתו כבוד הוסבעה על יום א' וירא

The Lubliner Tagblat newspaper on the day of Rabbi Shapira's death

Much has been written about the character of the rabbi, and Ganzach Kiddush Hashem's exhibit "Light of Lublin" touched the hearts of thousands of teenagers, as well as the study kits and commemorative works of Ganzach Kiddush Hashem that deal with the character and legacy of the rabbi z"l.

Ninety years have passed since those days of mourning, and now is the time to take out from the archives photos and documents from that period and be moved by the sounds, the echoes, the impressions and the feelings that accompanied those distant days.

As well, we think about the horrifying thought that millions of Jews who courageously lived at that time did not know that within a few

years the vast majority of them would no longer be here…Above, to the firmament of Heaven, they would soon rise from infernal tortures and murder, and very soon they would meet the revered leader in the yeshiva in Heaven.



The funeral on Lubartoska Street



His original grave in Poland today (he was reburied in Israel)



אבל גדול ליהודים!

נאנצער כלל ישראל, שטעהט געבראכטע אויף געבויגען פאר'ז פרישען קבר פון
מנהיג און מאור הגולה, דער לובלינער רב זצ"ל
אונזער צער, גרויס איז דער חורבן, שר וגדול נפל היום בישראל דער וואס
ן לעבעז מקריב געווען פאר'ן יודישען פאלק, איז אזוי יונג און טראגיש אוועק,
ארעז פון אונז. צובראכטע איז דאס יודישע הארץ, צוועהטיגט אונזער געפיהל,
מען בעוויינעז מיר אויף בעקלאגען את השרפה, אשר שרף ד'
מוזען אבער געדענקען איז דעם געוואלדיגען אחריות, וואס ליגט אצינד אויף
יסער לובלינער רב איז נישטא, אבער
כמי לובלין" לעבט אוז מיר מוזען זארגען פאר איהר קיום!
פינאנסיעלע לאגע איז זעהר קאטאסטראפאל אויך וועז דער רב זצ"ל האט אלעס
געטראגען,
הילפיגער חוב אצינד אויפ'ן נאנצען יודישען פאלק.
מוזען אויסקויפען אונזער גלייכגילטיגקייט ביז איצט — וואס מיר האבען איהם
אזוי שוער ליידען — יעדער מוז געבען זיין „כופר-נפש" פאר'ז דאזיגען
אדורכגעפירט ווערען איז
ימי אבל אריזיגע פאלקס אויף דעקלאריעז זיך
שערע התחייבות'ז לטובת „י ח ל". אוז מיט איינמאליגע
סומעז.

“A Great Mourning for the Jewish People”



Oberrabbiner M. Schapiro
Lublin

יחי צבא ישראל המנצח!

לשנה טובה תכתבו
ותחתמו לאלתר לחיים

Herzlichste Glückwünsche
zum Neuen Jahr!

Familie Kmell

“Long live the victorious Israeli army” – A Rosh Hashana greeting card from survivors with an image of Rabbi Meir Shapira



The Chachmei Lublin yeshiva's desperate call for help

L'Maaseh

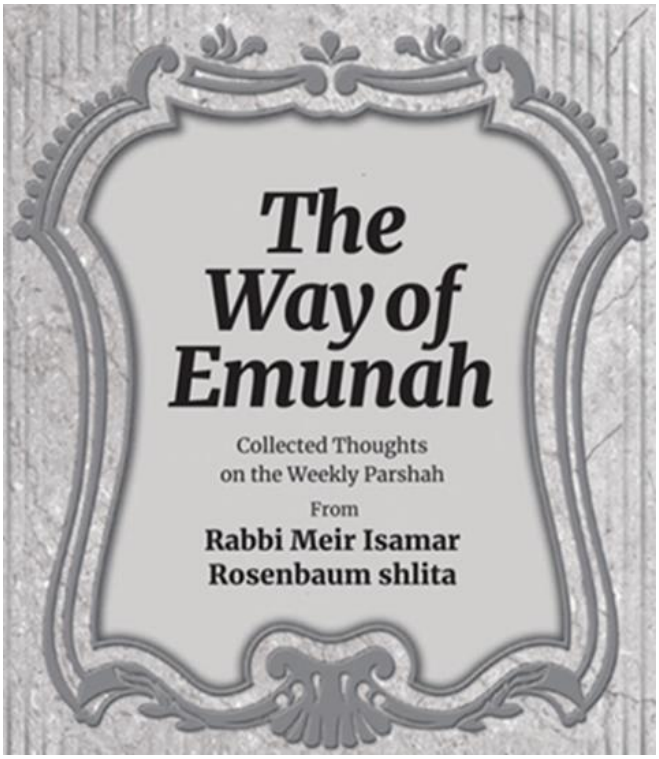
A secular Jew from Ramat Gan had a two-year-old child who developed a rare blood disease and the doctors had no cure to offer. In desperation, he followed someone's advice that he seek a beracha from **R' Chaim Kanievsky zt"l**.

After hearing the request for a beracha, R' Chaim said to change the boy's name from "Ron" to "Aharon" and that the father should take upon himself to learn a mesechta together with his friends, none of whom, were shomer Shabbos.

Thirteen years later, the entire group gathered for a siyum on the entire seder moed. Aharon, now a perfectly healthy yeshiva bachur was attended, and R' Chaim also graced the occasion, together with the entire chabura of his father's friends who were now all shomer Torah u'mitzvos, in the merit of R' Chaim's beracha and sage advice.



Every Jew goes through trials and challenges throughout his lifetime, and while we cannot know Hashem's full reasoning for anything, one definite aspect of any difficulty is that it propels us into tefilah. While it true that one can daven and thank Hashem for the good he or she receives, few and far between are those who are propelled into the highest levels of tefilah because of the good in their lives. Even the avos and imahos were barren and Chazal reveal to us that Hashem made them so in order to inspire them to daven. Certainly then, we can use any challenge as an impetus for prayer and understand that this may be the main reason for it (*Adapted from Sha'arim ba'Tefilah, Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus zt"l*)



וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' תַּעֲשׂוּ וְיֵרָא אֲלֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד ה' - '***And Moshe said, "This is the thing that Hashem commanded to do." And the honor of Hashem will appear to you.***' (9:6)

● Feeling the Sweetness

The Rebbe of Kobrin zy"a (quoted in Kisvei RaMam) explains that there are times when a person does not feel enjoyment from his avodas Hashem. No matter how hard he tries, he cannot feel any sweetness or enthusiasm for his avodah.

The solution for this problem is to continue serving Hashem without any feelings of hisorerus, and, in the end, one will come to arouse himself and to feel inspired.

This is what Moshe Rabenu told Klal Yisroel. He advised them regarding how to serve Hashem by saying that they "the thing that Hashem commanded, they should do." And once they serve Hashem

simply because He commanded them to do it, "the honor of Hashem will be seen on them", meaning that they will come to feel the sweetness and joy of serving Him.

וַיֹּ֤אמֶר מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶל־אַהֲרֹ֔ן קְרַ֖ב אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּ֑חַ וַעֲשֵׂ֞ה אֶת־חַטָּאתְךָ֣ וְאֶת־עֹלָתֶ֗ךָ וְכַפֵּ֥ר בַּעַדְךָ֖

'And Moshe said to Aharon, Approach the altar and perform your sin offering and your burnt offering, atoning for yourself' (9:7)

● Why Aharon Was Chosen to be Kohen Gadol



Rashi says that Moshe had to order Aharon to approach the Mizbeach because Aharon was bashful and afraid to approach. Moshe said to him: "Why are you ashamed? For this you have been chosen!"

Sefer Degel Machaneh Efraim asks in the name of his grandfather, the **Baal Shem Tov zy"a**, how Aharon was convinced by Moshe's words. How did being told that he was chosen for this job make him less bashful?

He answers that Moshe was telling Aharon that he was chosen for this job because he was bashful and afraid to approach Hashem. Hashem desires a humble person, and that is why He chose Aharon to be Kohen Gadol.

Thus, Moshe told him that his trait of bashfulness was the reason he was appointed to be Kohen Gadol and only one with this trait could do this job.

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמֻתוּ לִפְנֵי ה' - '***And a fire came out from before Hashem and it ate them and they died before Hashem***.' (10:2)

● The Lesson of the Deaths of Nadav and Avihu

On the very day that the Mishkan was erected, a terrible tragedy occurred and the two tzadikim, Nadav and Avihu the sons of Aharon, suddenly died.

Sefer Otzros Hatorah quotes **Sefer Shaarei Armon** as asking why Hashem specifically chose to punish them on this joyous day. Why would He mar the great joy that Klal Yisroel had been eagerly anticipating? Why couldn't He punish them tomorrow?

He answers with a moshol of a king who wanted all of his subjects to be happy. To this end, he hired experts to build nice house, parks, orchards, etc., for them all to enjoy. This led many people to move to his kingdom.

One day, the king came to inspect the city and to see if everyone was truly happy. The residents arranged a festive reception for the king, including a lavish feast. In the middle of the feast, the king turned to his subjects and asked, "Is everyone here happy with everything I made for you?"

Everyone answered that they were very happy. The king then asked, "Does anyone have any complaints?"

One man got up and said, "Yes. I have a complaint. There is no doctor in this city!" - The king immediately said that he would send them a good doctor.

When the new doctor arrived in town, everyone came to greet him, dressed in their best finery. The king himself attended the reception in honor of the doctor. The doctor was very surprised by all this honor and thought to himself: It seems like these people don't know what a doctor does. They seem to think that I am a miracle worker who can make the blind see and revive the death…

In the middle of the reception, the king asked, "Is every resident of the city here?"

The people looked around and discovered that one man was absent because he was sick in bed. The king then said to the doctor, "This is your chance to prove yourself. Go take care of this sick man."

The doctor went to the man's house, checked him and gave him some medicine. - A short time later, the man died.

All of the residents were very upset. They asked, "Is this the great doctor that was supposed to be able to heal people?"

The king was very angry at the doctor, and he told him, "From what I've heard, this was not a serious illness. Why did the patient die?"

The doctor replied, "I killed him!"

The king was shocked by the answer until the doctor explained, "If I would have healed this man, it would have been very detrimental for all of the residents of this city. They would have believed that I can cure any ailment, so they wouldn't have taken care of their health. I wanted them to know that my abilities have a limit. They had to know that I cannot cure everyone!"

The king accepted his answer and recognized its wisdom.

The nimshol is that before the Mishkan was erected, the Jewish people were careful to avoid aveiros because they had no way to atone for them. But once it was erected, there was a danger that they would think that they are now free to do whatever they want, and they can always go to the Mishkan for a kaparah.

In order to ensure that no one had this mistaken idea, Hashem caused the great tzadikim, Nadav and Avihu, to die specifically on the day that the Mishkan was inaugurated. Klal Yisroel learned from this that they must still fear sin and stay away from aveiros.

OHR HAMERCAZ

Divrei Torah on the Daf, Parsha and more from members of R' Stefansky's Daf Yomi Shiur given in Mercaz Daf Yomi



PARSHA THOUGHTS

By Mordechai Sapoznick *Flatbush*

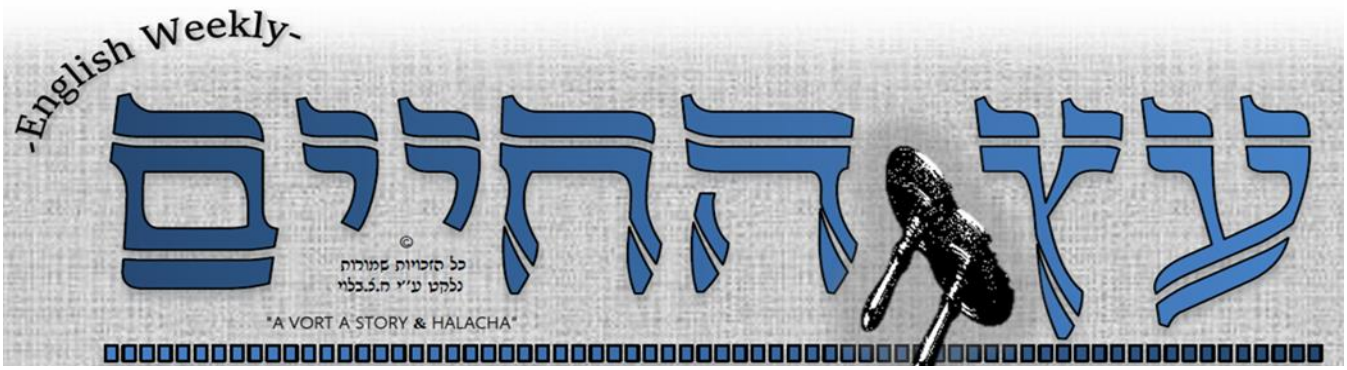
L'zecher Nishmas Harav Chaim Leib Halevi Epstein ZT"L



The פָּסוּק says "וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן" - And Aharon was quiet." The Menorah Hamaor says that when Aharon's two sons, Nadav and Avihu, died, he was quiet and didn't complain to Hashem. As a reward, Aharon was zoche to bench Bnei Yisroel with Birchas Kohanim. The gematria of the word וַיִּדֹּם is sixty, and there are sixty letters in Birchas Kohanim.

Dvar Torah from ספר פרשה פשעטיל

The First Mitzvah when Shabbos is ushered in is the kindling of the Shabbos lights. - **The Ohr Hachayim** explains: Hashem created the world to last 6 days, and every Shabbos the world receives an injection of renewed creative strength to last for another 6 days. At Creation, the first thing that was brought into being was light. Therefore, the first mitzvah at the arrival of Shabbos is the kindling of the lights, to correspond with the light that was the first creation. ~ Tzemach Dovid as quoted by R' Dovid Meisels.



Live On and On!

There was once a slave who was very loyal to his king. One day the king told him, "Since you have been so loyal all these years I want to free you. Here, I am writing this document and you can travel to a distant land where you can live as a free man."

The king escorted his slave and waved good-bye. The slave came to the port and showed the captain his document of emancipation and he boarded the boat. While sailing, the boat hit sudden storms. The boat tossed the people back and forth until the point that the boat just snapped in half. All the people were thrown into the stormy sea. This slave grabbed onto a plank of wood and held on for dear life!

The following day the slave found himself thrown onto an island. Soaked from head to toe, his clothing tattered, he made it onto the island. He walked and walked until he saw footsteps. He followed the footsteps until he saw some men. When the men saw him they screamed in joy "Adoinee HAMELECH! Adoinee HAMELECH!"

The slave was very confused to say the least he thought he was dreaming. But he wasn't. As he came into the town, he saw the entire town was waiting with Shabbos clothing. As he passed they all screamed, "Long live our king! Long live our king!"

They came to a beautiful castle and showed him his throne. He could not believe his eyes. They gave him royal robes and showed him to his room.

The next day, after having a good night sleep, from the moment he woke up he had a few servant asking him what he needs. After

getting ready, he ate breakfast and they took him to his throne. The first mishpat came and since he was the king he had to paskin.

After a few days the slave had enough of the shpiel and he called over one of the ministers. He said, "Can we go on a walk together!" The minister felt so honored that the king asked him and they went for the walk.

On the walk the king asked the minister, "Tell me the truth what is going on here?"

The minister explained "On our island each king becomes king for one year. After the year his crown is knocked off and he is shipped away to a distant land. After he is gone we all wait for the first man to come onto our island and he becomes our new king!"

The king heard this and he asked the minister, "Is there anything I can do to prolong my stay?"

"No. This is the rule of our land!"

"Are you sure there is nothing I can do?"

The minister was wise and he told the king as follows, "Since you are the king you can appoint many workers to build you the most beautiful palace ever in the land that you will be shipped to when your time is up."

The king asked, "Did previous kings do this as well?"

"No. They did not. They were too busy enjoying this island being a king that they did not utilize the time and resources to build themselves a place in the next land!"

The king heard this and he immediately got to work and sent many workers and lumber and everything he would want and need when he would no longer be the king. He was so focused on the next island that he barely had time for the island that he was on. He had so much waiting for him that he was almost excited to get there but at the same time he knew that as long as he was king he could continue

building.

One day, as he was sitting on his large throne a man dressed in black came and knocked off his crown and schlepped him away to the land. However, when he got there all of the luxuries that he sent there were all waiting there for him to enjoy!

We are sent down to this world for 120 years and we are the kings over our guf and Neshama. One day, after 120, we will lose that malchus.

Now, on this world, is when we can decide if we want to indulge in the excitements of Olam Hazeh and waste our time or we can work hard learning Torah, keeping all the mitzvos properly, thus, building and building and sending and sending our trucks and trucks of lumber and building ourselves the most magnificent mansion [so to speak] in the Next World where we will enjoy eternally all the toil of our effort that we did in avodas Hashem, all that we accomplished on this island – the island called earth.

[Mashal Heard from Rav Kalman Krohn זצוק״ל]

TorahAnytimes Newsletter

Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi - Life-Saving Blessings

A religious couples' retreat was being held near the Dead Sea in Israel. It was a spectacular venue, featuring an array of inspiring speakers and relaxing amenities. For one attending couple, this was a particular treat. With twelve children and living in a small, two-bedroom apartment in Har Nof, the getaway was an extremely rare and unusual outing.

Friday night rolled around, and the attendees took their seats across the dining room for the meal. But that's when the question arose. The husband, conscious of guarding his eyes, was less than

keen on surrounding himself with men and woman, scattered around in a mixed seating arrangement. His wife, understanding of her husband, still preferred if they'd be able to remain seated downstairs in the main dining room instead of isolating themselves in their hotel room upstairs and needing to haul the food there. They decided to pose the question to Rabbi Chaim Zaid, who was in attendance.

Strictly speaking, he advised, the man would be able to lower his gaze and avert looking at anything he didn't want to. That way, he'd be able to provide his wife with a more relaxed evening and not compromise on any halacha. "By the same token," continued Rabbi Zaid, "let me tell you a rule I learned from my rebbe, Rabbi David Abuchatzeira. He told me that any time in life you have a nisayon (test) and you need to push yourself out of your comfort zone to overcome it, Hashem in Heaven is ready to give you a pool of beracha (blessings). He is just waiting for the small opening to be created through your small measure of mesirut nefesh (self-sacrifice), and with that, bountiful blessing will pour forth."

Hearing this, both the husband and wife were convinced to move several flights upstairs to their hotel room.

The dining hall was located in the basement of the hotel, with their room seven flights upstairs. This translated into both husband and wife needing to make the tiring trip up with whatever food they wanted.

But then it happened. As the wife made her way down the hallway to their room, she heard a scream. It wasn't a familiar sound; it wasn't her husband. It was coming from a nearby building. A man was screaming for help, desperately.

Immediately, the husband and wife followed the trail of noise and arrived at the man's room. He had been coughing and was covered in a pool of blood. Hatzalah was immediately phoned and a helicopter called to the site to airlift the man to the local hospital in Beer

Sheva. Thank G-d, he was given immediate medical attention and survived.

The husband and wife had been the only ones around at that time. Had they not, who knows who would have heard the cries of the man and who knows if he would have survived.

After recuperating, the man came to understand just who this couple was that saved him. He inquired and inquired until he figured out why they had decided to eat upstairs in their room instead of the dining hall, where they were when he was screaming, and who their family included. And then he called Rabbi Chaim Zaid.

"I heard what happened and I understand that with your input, the couple who saved me decided to eat upstairs in their room instead of downstairs. I'd like to ask you something. I have one son who lives abroad and is extremely wealthy without any need for money. But I have an apartment in Har Nof that I haven't been sure what to do with since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. It's a six-bedroom apartment worth a few million. Is it tzedakah if I would give it to this couple?"

"Of course it is," said Rabbi Zaid. "They have twelve children and are living in tight quarters in a two-bedroom apartment. They're poor and things are very difficult for them. If you would be able to assist them, it would be a very generous display of tzedakah."

The man transferred ownership of the Har Nof apartment to this couple without any other questions.

When I spoke to Rabbi Zaid about this, he told me, "I just came back from the Chanukat HaBayit (home dedication) this couple just made, and it's absolutely true. They really do own the apartment entirely, legally."

It might be hard to believe, but when we follow Hashem's word, especially when it's hard, we open the channels for extraordinary blessing. One day this husband and wife were struggling with a large

family in a tiny apartment, and the next day they were blessed with a beautiful house.

Don't look at your struggles as homework. They are opportunities for blessing. Hashem is giving you many chances to overcome difficulties in your life, and they are no less than golden opportunities. When they're viewed from that vantage point, they are embraced as vistas for breakthrough, and we looked forward to them instead of away from them.

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי – *'It came to pass on the eighth day.'* (9:1)

That day was as joyous to G-d as the day on which heaven and earth were created. (**Talmud, Megillah 10b**)



וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי – *'It came to pass on the eighth day.'* (9:1)

The number seven represents the cycle of creation; the number eight represents the "circumference"—that which lies beyond the perimeter of time and space.

This is why the Divine Presence came to dwell in the Israelite camp on the eighth day. This is also alluded to in the saying of our sages (Talmud, Erchin 13b) that "the lyre of Moshiach has eight strings." (**Keli Yakar; Shaloh**)

וַיִּקְחוּ בְנֵי־אַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אִישׁ מַחְתָּתוֹ... וַיָּמֻתוּ לִפְנֵי ה׳ - '***Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer . . . and they died before G-d.***' *(10:1–2)*

בְּקָרְבָתָם לִפְנֵי־ה׳ וַיָּמֻתוּ - "***They came close to G-d and died***" (16:1)

They approached the supernal light out of their great love of the Holy, and thereby died. Thus they died by a "Divine kiss" such as experienced by the perfectly righteous; it is only that the righteous die when the Divine kiss approaches them, while they died by their approaching it.

Although they sensed their own demise, this did not prevent them from drawing near to G-d in attachment, delight, delectability, fellowship, love, kissing and sweetness, to the point that their souls ceased from them. (**Ohr HaChaim**)

וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן – '***Aaron was silent.***' *(10:3)*

Because Aaron was silent, he was rewarded that G-d spoke exclusively to him (see below, verses 8–11; ordinarily G-d spoke to Aaron only in conjunction with—or through—Moses). (**Midrash Rabbah**)

Said Rav Papa: The merit of attending a house of mourning lies in the silence observed. (**Talmud, Berachot 6b**)

In youth, one learns to talk; in maturity, one learns to be silent. This is man's problem: that he learns to talk before he learns to be silent. (**Rabbi Nachman of Breslov**)

"The more we recognize Hashem's role in our lives, the more opportunities He gives us to see it. By acknowledging His presence, we open ourselves to see his guidance even more clearly." ~ Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein.

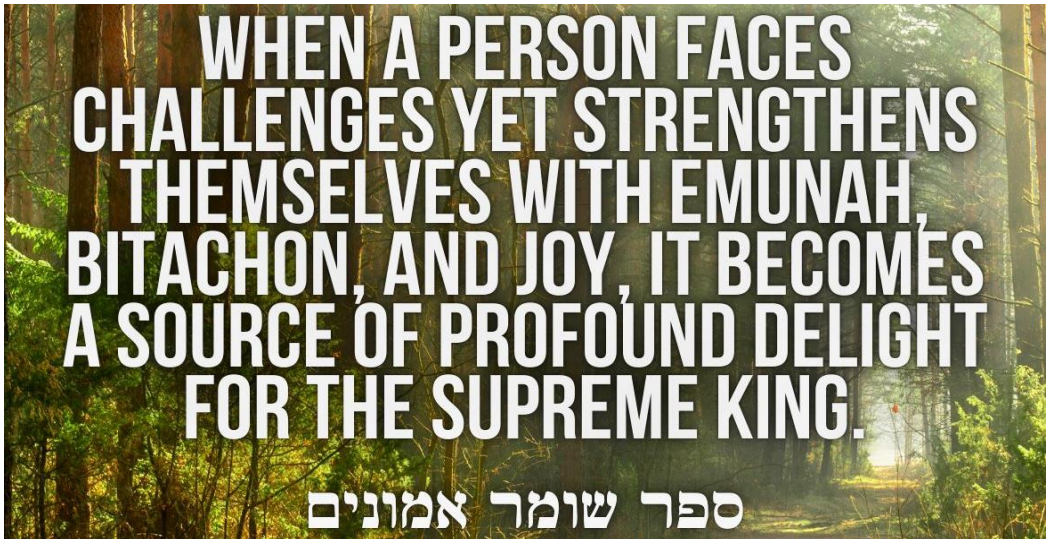
זֹאת הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלוּ מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ – *'These are the animals which you may eat . . .' (11:2)*

The birds and many of the mammals forbidden by the Torah are predators, while the permitted animals are not. We are commanded not to eat those animals possessive of a cruel nature, so that we should not absorb these qualities into ourselves. (**Nachmanides**)

וְכָל־כְּלִי־חֶרֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר־יִפֹּל מֵהֶם אֶל־תּוֹכוֹ.. יִטְמָא וְאֹתוֹ תִשְׁבֹּרוּ – *'Any earthen vessel into which any of them fall ...shall be unclean.' (11:33)*

The worth of a utensil of wood or metal is not only in its function as a container—the material of which it is made also has value. So contact with any part of it, including its outside surface, affects its ritual state. On the other hand, an earthen utensil, whose body is mere earth, has value only as a *container* - accordingly it is affected only by what happens to its inside. Indeed, its inside is therefore even more susceptible to contamination than that of other utensils.

Man is an earthen vessel ("*G-d formed man out of the dust of the earth,*"—Beraishis 2:7). His worth lies not in his material exterior, but in its content. He should therefore regard as significant only what pertains to his inner self. (**The Rebbe of Kotzk**)





◣ Simply Because He Said So - Tiferes Shmuel

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' תַּעֲשׂוּ וְיֵרָא אֲלֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד ה' - "***This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do; then the glory of Hashem may appear to you.***" (9:6)

Every commandment has countless deeper implications and meanings, and even people capable of discerning some of them must realize that whatever they know is still only a drop in the bucket compared to the wealth of meaning inherent in any one of G-d's commands. It is therefore best to perform the commandment for no other reason but that G-d bade us do it.

This, too, is Moshe's message to the Jews: "This is the thing that Hashem commanded" - Do it because it is what G-d commanded you. Don't try to find other reasons, for you'll never understand all its deeper implications. But if you'll do it simply because it is G-d's will, "the glory of Hashem may appear to you."

◣ Unimaginable Acceptance - Chasam Sofer

וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּיטַב בְּעֵינָיו - "***And Moshe heard [Aharon's explanation], and it was pleasing in his eyes.***" (10:20)

Moshe was pleased with Aharon's subdued reaction to his personal tragedy. When Aharon "held his peace" (10:3) at the time of his two sons' death, one could have attributed his silence not to resignation to G-d's will but to grief and bitterness too powerful to express. But when Moshe saw that Aharon's mind was clear enough to be able to

discuss laws, make distinctions between them and render decisions superior to his own, Moshe was satisfied that Aharon's silence was not due to the numbness of shock and grief, and he was pleased that his brother had so calmly and willingly accepted Heaven's decree.



Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

This is another story was about a special relationship a talmid had with his Rebbe and was related to me by the talmid himself.

Whenever the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva zt"l came to London, Reb Mordechi Mozes z"l (or his brother, Shimshon להבח"לח) would drive the Rosh Yeshiva wherever he needed to go.

Rav Tuv organisation were launching a campaign in London to help Yidden who were refuges from Iran after the fall of the Shah, and had invited the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva as quest speaker. Rabbi Segal travelled to London by train, and was met at the station by Reb Mordechai, who drove him to the venue where the *mesibah* was taking place. At the hall, the Rosh Yeshiva was guided to sit next to the Guest of Honour, Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, the Minchas Yitzchok, zt"l, who had come specially from Yerusholayim to grace the event. During their conversation, Rav Weiss told the Rosh Yeshiva that he would be travelling to Manchester after the event on the 8.15 train. The Rosh Yeshiva said he would also be travelling on that same train, but needed to visit a *choleh* in hospital, but looked forward to travelling together.

After giving his *drosho*, the Rosh Yeshiva left the hall, and Reb Mordechai drove the Rosh Yeshiva to the visit the *choleh*. The Rosh Yeshiva went into the ward and spoke to both the Choleh and the family, the latter asking the Rosh Yeshiva to speak to the doctor, too. After waiting some time, he did get to speak to the doctor, explaining the importance of not switching off any machines; he then spoke to the family again. By the time he emerged from the ward,

ready to go to the station, it was already quite late. Reb Mordechai suggested to the Rosh Yeshiva that he stay overnight and take an early train in the morning, to which the Rosh Yeshiva replied, "I came to London to be *mechazeik de Olam*. I also was involved in *bikkur cholim*. Tomorrow, I have to be in the Yeshiva for davening and also to give Shiur. And all that should be decided by a goy? I say we go to the station, and leave what should happen to the *Eibishter*."

Reb Mordechai relates that they arrived at the station well passed the 8.15 departure time. He walked with the Rosh Yeshiva across the concourse and on to the platform. The Manchester train was still there. Reb Mordechai helped the Rosh Yeshiva on to the train, and as soon as he closed the door, he heard the guard blow his whistle, and the train started to move.

However, our story is not finished. The following Sukkos, Reb Mordechai was in Eretz Yisroel and one evening of Chol Hamoed he went to the sukkah of the Minchas Yiztchok where the Dayan was conducting a *Simchas Beis Hashoevoh seudoh*. Reb Mordechai stood in the doorway surveying the scene in front of him for several minutes, when the gabbi came over to him and told him that the Dayan wished to speak with him. The Dayan gave Reb Mordechai a hearty *sholom alecheim* then told, "Ich vil as du zolz *eiber suggen die maser mit de Rosh Yeshiva.*" (I want you to say over that story with the Rosh Yeshiva).

"Well, I did," says Reb Morchechai. "I told over this story to the crowd that filled the Dayan's sukkah. And when I finished, the Dayan got up and spoke in Yiddish. "You should know that the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva didn't do a *moifes,* but that he lived his life with an *Emunah Peshutoh*. Once the train started on its journey, the Rosh Yeshiva came and sat near me and related all that had transpired."

The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva would often advise people to 'you do what you have to do, and leave the rest to the Eibishter.' Those of

us who were privileged to know the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, can attest to the fact that he practiced what he 'preached'.

The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva's yahrzeit is on Monday 22nd Shevat

יהי זיכרו ברוך

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

How to Fight Anger

דָּרֹשׁ דָּרַשׁ מֹשֶׁה - ***"And Moshe thoroughly investigated…"*** (10:16)



This Pasuk, which is the midpoint of the Torah says *"Dorosh Dorash Moshe"* (Moshe expounded or investigated). It then says וַיִּקְצֹף (and he got angry).

I heard from Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita, that perhaps this is to teach us a lesson in self-discipline. Before one gets angry, he must be *Dorosh Dorash* -he should totally scrutinize the situation as Moshe was not only *Dorosh*, rather he was *Dorosh Dorash*. - Moshe went above and beyond and really investigated the situation.

Even so, Moshe Rabbeinu was criticized for getting angry. How much more so should we work on being patient and not prone to anger!

The Committed Soldier



In this week's Parsha (9:7), Aharon the Kohen Gadol was supposed to perform the inaugural service at the Mizbeach (altar), but he couldn't bring himself to do it. Moshe had to tell Aharon to go close to the Mizbeach.

Why? Why did Moshe have to tell Aharon to go to the Mizbeach? What was going on?

I heard from my father Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the answer is that Aharon was intimidated and bashful. His sin with the golden calf was on his conscience and he was plagued with utter remorse. He did not feel worthy of holiness and serving at the Mizbeach.

In fact, the **Minchah Blula** shares something amazing. He says that Aharon couldn't approach the Mizbeach because he had hallucinations. He had visions that the golden calf was hovering on the Mizbeach. Therefore, his brother Moshe has to say to him, draw close to Mizbeach. Moshe cajoled and coaxed Aharon to serve at the Mizbeach and tells him, don't let your past haunt or torment you. It's time for a new beginning.

What a lesson for us. We should never let our past errors take hold of us. We also build images. We also have preconceived notions and even hallucinations from our past that come to haunt us and prevent us from growing. We must grow and become greater. We can change. We have the potential to shine anew. Let's work on ourselves!

One Rosh Hashanah morning, **Rav Shimshon Pincus** stepped outside the Beis Medrash for a moment and spotted his student who was crying in the corner of the hallway. Rav Shimshon approached the boy, placed an arm on his shoulders, and asked him why he looked so sad. The boy looked up and told his Rebbi that he tried very hard to improve himself, but he felt that his efforts had fallen short.

Rav Shimshon told the boy a personal story: During the Yom Kippur War, I was in the emergency room in Shaarei Tzedek hospital with one of my children when I suddenly noticed a commotion. Many doctors were gathered and conversing together, they appeared to be discussing an important matter. I soon found out that a soldier had been shot with a bullet that ended up in his leg and it needed to be safely removed.

After the doctor successfully removed the bullet, he told the soldier that the surgery was complete and that he was free to go home. The young man grimaced in pain as he tried to slide off the operating table. Beads of sweat formed on his forehead, and he looked questioningly at the doctor. - "Home? You think I'm heading home? I was shot and lost this battle, but there is still a war going on and my fellow soldiers need me back on the battlefield." - This brave and strong soldier hobbled out of the room and headed back to the front lines.

Rav Shimshon concluded the story and said "I am not convinced that you haven't stumbled. I know that you may have fallen. However, just because you have fallen it doesn't mean that you can't get back up. Losing a battle doesn't mean that you've lost the war. We are fighting a war in there and I don't want to head back in without you. We need you to fight alongside with the rest of us!"

Together the Rebbe and student walked back into the Beis Medrash to "fight" alongside one another.

Let's show ourselves that we are great and that we should never give up on ourselves. Let's make for ourselves a much greater future, a

much more beautiful life ahead. Even if we've lost the battle, that doesn't mean we need to lose the war. When we do fall, we must not feel hopeless or helpless. We must stand up and go to war again!

Parakeet Kiruv



Yossi is one of the heads of a particular Kiruv outreach organization. During one of the seminars geared towards welcoming uninitiated Yossi approached a man and asked what inspired him to come to the Jews and providing a crash course in fundamental Jewish knowledge, event to find out more about Judaism.

"You won't believe this story. A few weeks ago, a parakeet perched itself on the windowsill of our children's room. The kids took the bird into their bedroom, enjoyed playing with it, and noticed that the bird strangely said two things over and over. One was 'Good Shabbos' and the other was 'Amen!'

Later that week - just for fun - the kids set a Shabbos table for him on Friday night. They repeated the same Shabbos table preparations for their newfound friend the following week and continued doing so again over the next month. We all just sat around laughing as he said, 'Good Shabbos' in front of the beautifully prepared table.

Eventually, my wife asked me why we don't do a real Shabbos. I had no good answer, so we decided to come here and check things out."

Yossi smiled and curiously asked, "Is the parakeet green with a yellow streak on one side?"

Uh, yeah, he is. How did you know?

"Is part of his tail missing?"

Why, yes - it is!

Yossi laughed as his suspicions were confirmed. "That's our parakeet. He flew out of our house a few weeks ago. - If you want to bring him over, I'll show you that he will say my children's names as they walk past him."



● Anger and Self Control

The Rambam (Deios; 2:3) says that anger is one of the few qualities of character that are ossur for a man even in a medium way. Anger is so perilous, so harmful, that you should aim for the extreme – there's no aspiring to walk the middle road when it comes to ka'as.

The Chachomim advise us to go against our nature – we should undertake an attitude in life of trying to avoid anger no matter what. You should train yourself not to become angry even when it would appear to be justified. Even if somebody would hit you or embarrass you, you should act like nothing happened. And what's remarkable about the middah of anger is that unlike other middos where you're

expected to come back to the derech ha'emtazai, when it comes to ka'as there's no going back to the middle of the road. He should go against his nature and continue in this way for a long time until the quality of wrath is uprooted – and once he achieves that, he never should move away from that extreme. Anger is too dangerous for walking the middle path.

Dynamite, you know, is a wonderful invention. Let's say you're trying to make a road, and you come to a rocky hill that's standing in the way of your new throughway. Now, it's going to be a problem if you'll have to make a detour around every mountain, so you take sticks of dynamite and you blow the rock out of the way to make a path through the mountain. But suppose you work dynamiting mountains for the Department of Highways and now you come home, and you're locked out of the house – you can't find your key and your wife is out somewhere. So will you take a piece of dynamite that you have in your work truck and put it near the door to blow the door open? No, you can't use such extreme means – dynamite is not for that.

Now, let's say this man dynamites the door open and now he's in the house. It doesn't end there – a man like that never knows when to stop. When the door is finally opened, he explodes with emotional dynamite: "Why did you lock the latch from the inside? I was trying to get in all this time! Of course I tried the key! Don't you have any consideration for me? I'm standing outside in the freezing cold!

Don't people here think about things before they do them?!" A man like that is the biggest failure there is. He's a terror! Nobody wants him there! His wife and his children wish he would go back to work. And that's because he's using his dynamite in the wrong place.

Are you going to carry dynamite sticks in your pocket and every time someone tries to get in your way, you'll throw a stick of dynamite at him? No, you can't throw dynamite around indiscriminately and you can't use anger indiscriminately either – that's how a house is destroyed. And so, once a man realizes that anger is a very powerful

medium, that should only be used very infrequently, so he makes up his mind, "I'm going to put the dynamite in the basement, in the locked cabinet, and not use it except for extreme cases." He doesn't walk the middle road when it comes to anger – although it's made for a purpose, nevertheless it must be put away and taken out only for the most dire emergencies.

Now, there are many people who take their anger out of the locked cabinet all too often; some people don't ever bother closing the cabinet at all and it becomes a sickness of the soul that has terrible repercussions for a person.

● Our Noble Diet

All of the worms and snails and oysters and all the other delicacies that the gentiles are so happy to pay big money to eat; they sit and eat in a restaurant to the sound of music as they're ingesting worms and slimy things that look like – did you ever see an oyster? An oyster and milk?

A man once described the experience to me. It was something slimy, he said. It was nauseating. It looked like somebody had emptied the contents of his nose into the milk. The disgusting things that the nations eat – and even the less disgusting things – for them it's all right but not for us. **כל ישראל בני מלכים הם**, All Jews are princes, and therefore what the common multitudes eat is not our diet.

It means that every time you eat kosher food, every time you check for a hechsher, it's a demonstration of your greatness; a reminder of your elevated status. That's what the Gemara says, **המעלה אתכם**, *it's a great aliyah for them that they're forbidden to eat sherotzim*. It's such an elevation that Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "If I took you out of Mitzrayim only for one thing, that you shouldn't eat these things that goyim eat, it's worth that." It means that's the whole business! Although there's a whole Torah waiting for us but for this alone it would be enough – if no other purpose was achieved by taking you out except this one, to put this stamp of royalty on you that you

cannot eat these things, it was worth coming out of Egypt. And therefore the Jew realizes that kosher is everything to him. **וָאַבְדִּ֥ל אֶתְכֶ֖ם מִן־הָעַמִּֽים**, I have separated you from the nations.

That's said in our parshah of forbidden animals. You cannot eat these forbidden animals because I have separated you from the nations. That's your greatness. That's your mark of distinction. And therefore we don't look down on dietary laws.

Some Jews ridicule, they say "The Orthodox are only kishke Jews, only intestinal Jews. All they worry about is food, kosher food." But it's not a small thing. It's important; very important, very, very important. What you eat, that's what you are. It's a mark of royalty. And the Torah itself says that. That's the sign of distinction from the nations of the world and we won't give it up. We'll hold onto that badge of royalty forever.

Here's a rich man and he could eat in all the restaurants but he's sitting and eating a sandwich in his office because he's a prince. A person is traveling for business, and he doesn't know where to go for lunch. Even if has to fast all day long he's happy. That's a mark of a prince! And that's why when a person passes a salumeria, an Italian delicatessen, and he see in the window all kinds of appetizing baloney, if he says, "Oh well, it's not kosher," that's a missed opportunity. Because according to the principle of the Torah, he should say, "Baruch Elokeinu shehivdilanu min hatoim. I thank You Hashem. You gave me a privilege not to eat that." - You look at the window, at the dried wurst hanging from the ceiling and generate a certain feeling: "Feh! I'm too aristocratic for such food."

And so if you see a gentile salumeria or you see someone standing on the street corner selling hotdogs and a goy comes over and gives money and buys a hotdog and eats it, so you should think, "Hashem is feeding him." So for the umos ha'olam – alright. Let them eat treif salami and hotdogs and snails. That's very good. But we look down on this, "Feh! We are aristocrats!"

You never thanked Hashem for elevating you by means of your diet? Don't miss that opportunity; as you're walking on the avenue look for a seafood place where you'll be able to exercise your mind in this noble activity of understanding what Hakodosh Boruch Hu did for us. When you see snails in the window, don't just pass by. Think, "Boruch Hashem!"

You should get the attitude that it's undignified for you. It's for gentiles to eat lobster. Gentiles can eat pork. For a Jew, not only it's ossur, but it's a descent to the bottom of the social ladder.

● The Real World

Our successes in life are almost always sobered by the hand of Hashem one way or another. We don't have all the wealth we'd like to have. We're not having the fun in life we'd like to have. Most of us feel that we're being deprived. There's always some unhappiness that creeps into our lives. We have grudges against people; we feel we've been wronged. People don't appreciate us; we're rejected and so on and so forth — all the things that make a person unhappy.

And don't think it's only you, or only certain people. No, everybody has some unhappiness like that. And so, it's a good question: What happened to Hashem's Goodness? Find me someone whose life is not visited with disturbances! There is no such thing! The disappointments, the troubles, and the turbulence are constant.

Every family, every individual, suffers in various ways in this world — I know all about it. I get the phone calls all the time. People are ringing my bell constantly. I know much more than you do. Troubles with parnassah, shalom bayis, shidduchim, sickness, fighting with neighbors and mothers-in-law, debts, and everything you could imagine — and more. Life is full of difficulties for everyone — even the "fortunate" ones suffer in this world.

And that's one of the most important explanations for all the disappointment and unhappiness that we see in this world — this

world is not the final goal, and we have to be reminded of that. We need to be reminded that there's another place, where the enjoyment will continue forever. And there, the enjoyment will be in such a form that we will never tire from it; we'll always be happy with that pleasure, and it will continue forever.

And so, what happened on that Yom Hashemini was no mishap — it was part of the eternal plan of Hashem in this world, to interject sadness in the midst of great joy. And the purpose was to teach them, during their great joy, that you must always remain focused on the principle that true unadulterated joy is reserved for the Afterlife.

Whatever sin the two sons of Aharon may have committed, the severity of their fate and the sadness it brought upon the people was decreed beforehand, to teach the Am Yisrael forever and ever this lesson of supreme importance — the great fundamental lesson of Olam Haba. It was the plan of Hashem that especially on this great day of joy, the Am Yisrael should be reminded of the true joy that they live for, of their true purpose in life. And it is davka sadness that comes about during moments of great joy that accentuates most effectively this great teaching of Olam Haba.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is talking to the holelim — that's us — He's talking to us all the time, and He's saying, אַל תָּהֹלּוּ, don't lose yourself in the addictive happiness of this world. Remember that you are here only to prepare for the World to Come.

"You have something special and unique to contribute to the world that no one else throughout history ever has or ever will." ~ Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin (1823-1900).



Forbidden Foods by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

The verse in this week's Parsha, which discusses the prohibition against eating forbidden foods, uses a very unique phraseology. Hashem commands us to keep this commandment because, **אני ה' המעלה אתכם מארץ מצרים** – "You should keep these laws because I am the G-d who brought you up from Egypt.

I would like to explain why the Torah seems to place such an emphasis on the laws of human consumption. Regarding all other commandments in the Torah, there are none which are internally imbued in the body. When a person desecrates the holy Shabbos, while his crime is severe enough to warrant the death penalty, he has not really internalized any sin. On the other hand, when a Jew eats something forbidden, that food continues to be digested by him and on a cellular level, will eventually become part of his body. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the Torah places such a severity on the perpetrations which have to do with food.

Indeed, the word **טמא** is translated by Onkelos to mean "Closed". We know that when one ingests non-kosher food, that food seals off his soul's ability to connect with its' creator. With this understanding we can now comprehend why the commandment to only eat kosher foods is in the same verse as the reminder that Hashem took us out of Egypt. The entire purpose of our exodus from Egypt was to witness the splitting of the sea, to receive the Torah, and eventually be let into the land of Israel. This process was supposed to be an escalating experience with each crescendo greater than the last.

Similarly, each and every Jew's personal ascent is dangerously dependant on what he has consumed. So long as he is careful about

what he eats, he will have the continual ability to grow, but the minute he ingests a non-permitted food, he will instantaneously halt his potential for growth.

There was once a man who approached the Rambam with a particularly perplexing philosophical issue that his entire community had with their belief in Hashem. After listening patiently to this man's query, the Rambam responded by questioning this person who the community Shochet was. The man, visibly shaken, asked the Rambam why he needed to know who the Shochet was in order to respond to the question. The Rambam replied that this man's question was based on a fundamental principle which was heretical and since the community was a respected community who certainly only ate Kosher food, he was therefore inclined to believe that the community must be consuming meat which was slaughtered improperly to have gotten to such a belief.

To understand the spiritual effect that non-kosher food has on a Jew, one must realize that impure food produces the same spiritual results as poison would produce on the body. Just as one who had food which had a 1 in a 10,000 chance of having poison in it wouldn't dream of feeding it to his kids and would rather throw it out, thereby suffering the financial loss. Similarly, it would behoove us to take the same precautions when it comes to the Kashrus of food.

R' Moshe Shapiro relates an intriguing story about the **Brisker Rav** who was once dining with a wealthy philanthropist in his home in Switzerland. As the two of them were eating, it became known to the Rav that there was a slight possibility that the food he was ingesting didn't meet the standard of his many stringencies. When he heard this, he, apparently instinctively, vomited out his entire lunch. When the people sitting around glanced at their host to gauge his reaction, they were surprised to see him sitting in awe of the deep fear of heaven that his illustrious guest possessed.

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

The One-Hour Trip

It was Rosh Chodesh, and once again, the rosh kollel was short on funds. His wan features and the dark rings beneath his eyes told of his frustration and anguish, and as he distributed the money he'd managed to scrape together to some of the avreichim in his kollel, he wondered how much longer he could go on.

One member of the kollel, Reb Yehoshua,* watched him from the side. He needed the money, too, and badly, yet seeing the exhaustion and torment in his rosh kollel's eyes, he couldn't bring himself to ask. I'll manage another month. But something has to be done.

The following morning, Reb Yehoshua approached the rosh kollel and offered to travel abroad on behalf of the kollel. He was charismatic and an engaging speaker, and, most importantly, he spoke English. The rosh kollel accepted the offer in heartfelt gratitude, and one month later, Reb Yehoshua flew to the United States on behalf of the institution.

His initial trip was a great success, and Reb Yehoshua raised a large sum of money and even recruited several donors willing to contribute monthly to the kollel. His efforts allowed the kollel to expand to include additional avreichim, and one year later, the rosh kollel opened a second branch. Within a decade, the once-struggling kollel had expanded into a flourishing network with branches in cities across Eretz Yisrael.

Before embarking on any journey abroad, Reb Yehoshua would approach Rav Aharon Leib Steinman to request his brachah, and indeed, he enjoyed bountiful siyata d'Shmaya.

Until one day. Reb Yehoshua embarked on his periodic trip abroad, never suspecting that things would be any different this time around. Yet the rounds among his steady patrons did not prove

lucrative. One donor had just invested his liquid funds into a venture; another had recently suffered a serious financial loss; a third was marrying off his son that night and was unavailable to meet.

His trip was drawing to a close, and Reb Yehoshua hadn't raised a fraction of the requisite sum. With no choice, he requested a bank loan to cover the monthly stipends, but when the next month rolled around with no significant funding, the rosh kollel and long-time avreich knew they were in deep financial trouble. They appealed to the bank manager for an additional loan, but the latter turned them down adamantly.

"You've already borrowed a quarter of a million shekels, and the loan is overdue. In good conscience, I can't allow you to borrow any more from us.'

Distraught, Reb Yehoshua approached Rav Steinman and wept, "Rebbi, what should I do? I have a quarter of a million shekel debt to pay for the kollel, and no means of paying it!"

Rav Steinman's reply shook him to the core, revealing a paramount lesson in avodas Hashem. "Too much hishtadlus causes a lack of siyata d'Shmaya," said the gadol. "When a person works too hard, it is a sign that he does not trust sufficiently in Hashem, but in his own hishtadlus. You are working too hard, and this is why you've benefited from less siyata d'Shmaya. The more trust you have in Hashem, the more you'll see His brachos and help in your life."

"But what should I do?" the avreich pleaded.

"Go to America, for one day."

For one day?! The cost of a ticket alone is close to two thousand dollars! Yet Rav Steinman had stated his position and Reb Yehoshua would not contest it.

Immediately upon landing in New York, Reb Yehoshua commenced a series of phone calls to arrange appointments, but once again,

several of his donors were unavailable that day and asked if they could meet with him the following day.

I'm already here, he reflected. What's the difference if I stay one more day?

By the end of the trip, he'd raised one hundred twenty-five thousand shekels, exactly half of what he required. Returning to Eretz Yisrael, he returned to Rav Steinman and reported his partial success.

"It's a start," Reb Yehoshua said with a sigh, "but there's still a long way to go."

"How long were you abroad?" Rav Steinman surprised him with the question.

"Two days."

"But I told you to go for only one. You raised one hundred twenty-five thousand shekels for the first day that you were abroad and listened to me, but you forfeited the other half when you chose to remain the second day."

It was Elul, and before long, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur came and went. On Motza'ei Yom Kippur, Reb Yehoshua approached Rav Steinman and plaintively expressed, "Rebbi, I need money for the avreichim. I can't leave them without funds for Sukkos. I still owe one hundred twenty-five thousand shekels to the bank, but why should the avreichim suffer because I was remiss?"

Replied the gadol, "You'll make it up. This time, you're going to America, not for a day, but for one hour. Stay in America for one hour and then turn around and get back on a plane. This will prove your bitachon, and prove you know you have no control over anything."

One hour?!

Swallowing his objection, Reb Yehoshua asked only, "Does the hour include airport and travel time?"

"No. It doesn't include the time you spend in transit. But keep the time that you spend actively collecting to one hour."

After his previous fiasco, the avreich knew better than to protest. On his way out of the rav's home, he passed a large store selling esrogim. Approaching the seller directly, he requested to see the nicest esrogim available, adding that he was willing to pay handsomely for his purchase. The merchant showed Reb Yehoshua a box of perfect esrogim, and he chose one particularly beautiful one, planning to bequeath it as a gift to one of the gvirim on his upcoming trip.

Six hours later, Reb Yehoshua boarded a plane to New York.

Landing at JFK, he collected his rental car at the terminal and headed for Brooklyn on his way to a gvir he'd arranged to meet. On the way, he recognized the house of another gvir he'd visited in the past and who'd once made a significant contribution to the kollel. Reb Yehoshua was aware that it was often difficult to reach this donor, but thought, If I'm here anyway, why not give it a try?

On a whim, he slowed to a stop, finding parking right outside the house. He walked up the path to the stately corner home and knocked on the door, which was opened almost immediately by none other than the gvir himself.

"Can I help you?"

"I brought you an esrog." Reb Yehoshua said the first thing that entered his mind, extending the box to him as a gift.

The man opened the box, his eyes widening in appreciation. He lifted the esrog and examined it carefully, marveling at its remarkable beauty and perfection.

"I've never seen such a beautiful esrog before," the gvir said. "How much do you want for it?"

"One hundred twenty-five thousand shekels."

The gvir grew incensed. "Are you crazy? You want thirty-five thousand dollars for an esrog?"

"Personally? I want nothing. But our kollel desperately needs these funds to pay the avreichim before Yom Tov."

The gvir called his rav, presented the situation, and the rav advised him to donate the money to the kollel.

Ten minutes later, the avreich left the gvir's home with a check for forty thousand dollars-and a powerful lesson on the force of pure bitachon in Hashem, and the unfathomable wisdom of our gedolim.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Moshe Mordechai Biderman, zt"l, was a Rebbe in Yerushalayim. Almost every day at around one o'clock, he would look at his watch and yell out, "It's almost one! It's almost one!" - No one knew what he was talking about.

Finally, one day, someone asked him what he meant by saying that. He explained, "When I look at my watch and see that it is almost one, I don't think about the time. I think that Mashiach will be here any minute and the whole world will know that Hashem is One! Any minute now, Hashem will be declared King over the entire world, and everyone will know that Hashem is One and His Name is One! And when that happens, there will be no more confusion and questions, and everything that happens will all make sense.

When I see the time and it is almost one, I get very excited and I have to shout out, 'It's almost one!' because I know that Mashiach is almost here, and Hashem will be known everywhere as the One true King!"

Kiddush Hashem

There once was a Roman shepherd named Duklat Chazira, whom the Jews treated with great contempt. To their surprise, Duklat Chazira gradually became a powerful figure in the Roman empire, until he ascended to the throne itself.

The former shepherd did not forget the insults he had endured from the Jews, and he resolved to use his newfound power to take revenge. - When he informed the Jewish sages that he planned to avenge his honor, though, the chachamim persuaded him to relent.

This story, Talmud Yerushalmi (Terumos 8:4), is cited by meforshim as an illustration of the Mishnah's teaching in Pirkei Avos, "Ein lecha adam she'ein lo shaah – There is no man who does not have an hour." - Any human being, no matter how powerless or insignificant he may seem, may one day rise to a position of great power or influence.

This is yet another reason to be extremely cautious in our dealings with others: There is no telling when an insult or slight may come back to haunt us.

I believe that the non-Jews in our society were not born with anti-Semitic leanings that make them eager to join forces against the Jews whenever a controversy or tension erupts. - When we witness hostility, it probably can be traced back to some chillul Hashem that they experienced years earlier, and that left them predisposed to become antagonistic to us when a pretext arises.

We must be extremely cautious in our interactions with the outside world, keeping in mind that if we offend others or give them grounds to resent us, our actions may lead to immense harm.

But the inverse is also true: When a person creates a kiddush Hashem, the positive impact can be beyond anything he can imagine.

A case in point is the story of Raoul Wallenberg, the legendary Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Jews from death at the hands of the Nazis during World War II.

Wallenberg risked his life for the sake of his efforts, which eventually cost him his life; he was arrested toward the end of the war while trying to save a group of Jews and was never heard from again.

What led him to his extraordinary heroism? It was discovered after the war that Wallenberg had spent a few months in Israel (then known as Palestine) several years before the war had begun.

He had been sent to the country, which was then under British control, by his parents, in order to learn about the British banking system. While in Israel, Wallenberg shared a room in a boarding house with a Jewish young man who had fled to Israel from Germany to escape Nazi persecution.

The two roommates developed a close friendship, and Wallenberg was invited to participate in many Shabbos meals and other Jewish activities, which led him to develop a deep appreciation for Yiddishkeit and the Jewish people.

The two friends parted on good terms, and while Wallenberg's roommate never saw him again after those days, he was certain that their warm relationship had inspired the diplomat's rescue efforts.

That young Jewish refugee had no inkling at the time that his friend would one day save thousands of Jews from annihilation. He could never have imagined that his kindness toward the young Raoul Wallenberg would bear remarkable fruits many times over.

But this should be a lesson to all of us: Just as a negative word can have the most devastating effects, a positive gesture can one day lead to enormous good. This makes it even more vital for us to take care to act honorably in all of our interactions.

Never let yourself believe that a passing compliment or word of thanks will not make a difference.



104 Fever and There For A Talmid – Rabbi Shlomo Landau

One day, **Rav Shach Zt'l** who was well into his old age woke up and was feeling ill. They took his temperature, and it was already a fever at 104 degrees. His grandson was helping him out, and giving him Tylanol etc.

While his grandson was helping, he mentioned to his grandfather that on his way up, he had passed a particular bachur in the yeshiva who was pacing back and forth on Rechov Raavad (later renamed HaRav Shach Street in his honor.)

Now, Rav Shach knew this bachur. This bachur was from a non-religious family and was a Baal Teshuvah who took things to the extreme, and he had literally destroyed the relationship that he had with his secular family, who no longer respected or appreciated him. It was a really bad situation.

Chances were, that if this bachur was pacing up and down outside, there must have been another family blow up, and he was pondering whether to disturb Rav Shav to ask for his advice.

When Rav Shach heard this, he said to his grandson, "Please pass me my clothing, I must get dressed."

"But Zeidi, you have a 104 fever, you can't go downstairs!"

Rav Shach ignored him, and continued getting dressed, saying, "I'm going downstairs to talk to the bachur."

The grandson said, "But, in this situation, surely he can wait, or at least I can ask him to come up here."

"I'm sorry, but I must insist on getting dressed and going down to the bachur."

With superhuman effort, Rav Shach who was 100 years old, dressed himself and went downstairs to talk to the bachur, and then afterwards returned to his apartment.

It happened to be that this conversation was pivotal, and whatever Rav Shach said to the bachur, he took to heart, and it was the catalyst for the family and the bachur repairing their relationship.

Rav Shach shared with his grandson his thought process: What he did, why he got dressed, and why he went down with a 104 fever instead of bringing the bachur upstairs.

Rav Shach said like this:- "This situation is a really difficult situation. By the 'laws of nature', it was difficult to sort this out. The rift between them and the lack of understanding and communication between them, was so bad, that there wasn't anything that I could really do to repair it. That being the case, I needed Hakadosh Baruch Hu to go beyond nature and do something so spectacular to remedy the situation. - This doesn't happen when we act in a regular fashion. I needed to show Hashem that I was acting with true mesiras nefesh – to show Him my sacrifice for my talmid, when I was feeling so ill. – And that's what happened!"

You must know, that Rav Shach's entire formula for the success of his talmidim was his mesiras nefesh for them!

"Hashem knows your strengths, your weaknesses, your challenges, and your deepest desires. And He loves you exactly as you are." ~ Based on the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Yisrael ben Eliezer (1698-1760).

The holy **Chofetz Chaim Zt'l** once warned his son to be extra careful how he acted in public, for as a talmid chacham, he was under greater scrutiny which could cause him to make a chillul Hashem.

"But Tatteh, who says that I'm a talmid chacham?"

The Chofetz Chaim answered, "Believe me, for a chillul Hashem, you're enough of a talmid chacham!"

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Lofty Laughter





Why do we laugh when we encounter absurdity? The answer is because the soul, originating in a realm of absolute truth and clarity, recognizes the contradictions of this world as illusions. When faced with the absurd, it experiences a foretaste of its true home—the world of truth—and responds with laughter at the distortions of this fleeting reality.

The gemara recounts that Eliyahu Hanavi told R' Beroka of two particular people destined for the next world. Their merit? They were comedians who uplifted those who were downcast and used humor to reconcile people involved conflict. By making others laugh, they were not merely lifting their spirits; they offered a taste of something beyond the pain and struggle of this world, a connection to a higher reality. In doing so, they provided a glimpse of heaven itself. Consequently, it was fitting that they were destined to be eternally bound to that higher world.

Accrue a Crew

On the day of his Bar Mitzvah, a boy receives the title *bachur*. What is the idea behind this?

This is because from that moment of his Bar Mitzvah onward, he is granted true free will (*bechirah*). Until then, he is considered a *katan* and does not yet possess a *yetzer tov*.

Another explanation is that the term *bachur* is related to *bachar* — "chosen"— signifying that upon reaching Bar Mitzvah, he becomes a more integral part of the chosen nation.

Chizuk - Inspiration

During World War II, **Rabbi Eliezer Silver zt"l** (1882-1968) traveled across Europe to rescue Jewish refugees and orphans. He was President of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada and was instrumental in saving thousands of lives through the Vaad Hatzalah (Rescue Committee).

One of the most striking stories about Rabbi Silver concerns his integrity with charitable funds. After the war, he raised substantial amounts of money for orphans and refugees. One day, a visitor found him sitting in his small, modest apartment with two separate phones for two separate phone lines.

Curious, the visitor asked why he needed two phones. Rabbi Silver explained that one line was for his personal calls, while the other was strictly for his charitable work. He refused to use even a single penny of the charity's funds for his personal needs—not even sharing a phone line.

This meticulous care with other people's money—especially charitable funds—exemplified Rabbi Silver's extraordinary level of integrity. Even in something seemingly minor like a shared phone line, he understood that true honesty means being precise in the

separation between personal resources and those entrusted to him for the benefit of others.

Rabbi Silver's dedication to rescue work and his unwavering ethical standards made him one of the most respected rabbinic authorities in America during the mid-20th century. His story continues to inspire people to maintain absolute integrity, particularly when handling resources meant for those in need.

Short Story of The Week by Yoni Schwartz

As **Rabbi Joey Haber** visited a school in Cleveland, he walked into the office of the head of the school, Rabbi Dessler, the grandson of **Rav Eliyahu Dessler, ZT"L**. As he was waiting, he noticed a strange picture - some businessman with **Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l**.

Normally, if a person has a picture of a gadol, it's either just the gadol or a picture of himself with him, not some random person. When Rabbi Dessler returned, Rabbi Haber inquired about the picture and was told the following story:

"My father," said Rabbi Dessler, "had a stroke about fifty years ago. That businessman is Mr. Irving Stone, the person whose name is on the blue Artscroll Chumash. He and my father were very close. So, when my father was very sick and in critical condition, Mr. Stone flew out to get a bracha from Rav Moshe Feinstein. That is a picture of him getting a bracha from Rav Moshe for my father.

However, that's not the end of the story." "About six months later, on Erev Rosh Hashanah, my father got a call: 'Hello, this is Moshe Feinstein. I've been praying for you every day since your stroke. I want to know how you're feeling and that you're doing okay.'" - Despite being one of the world's busiest men, on one of the year's busiest days - Erev Rosh Hashanah - Rav Moshe still made the time to check up on another Jew in need.

Living in Silence – Rabbi Paysach Krohn



In this week's sedra, we have the very sad story of when two of Aaron Hakohen's sons died.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, Harav Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam became one of the youngest rebbes in Europe, leading thousands of followers in the town of Klausenburg, Romania, before World War II. His wife, eleven children and most of his followers were murdered by the Nazis while he was incarcerated in several concentration camps. After the war, he moved to the United States and later to Israel, rebuilt Jewish communal life in the displaced persons camps of Western Europe, re-established his dynasty in the United States and Israel, founded a Haredi neighborhood in Israel and a Sanz community in the United States, established a hospital in Israel run according to Halacha, and rebuilt his own family with a second marriage and the birth of seven more children.

In addition to his achievements in rebuilding the Sanz-Klausenberg dynasty and establishing many communal institutions, one of the Rebbe's most far-reaching accomplishments was his establishment of "Mifal HaShas" ("Talmud Factory") in 1982. This worldwide project encourages thousands of Jewish men and boys to study copious amounts of Talmud and Shulchan Aruch and complete written tests on 20–30 pages per month in return for a monthly stipend. Mifal HaShas continues to operate today worldwide.

When people asked him how he managed to get through all the challenges that he experienced and had the strength of character

to go on and re-build his life and the lives of others, he responded as follows: בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי ***'In your blood, live!', 'In your blood, live!'***. - People didn't understand what he meant by this.

He explained that the word דָּמַיִךְ comes from the same root as the word דם which is the same as in the pasuk in this week's sedra - וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן – '*And Aaron was silent*'. I was only able to survive and get through all the challenges was בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי **–** only by being silent, and not asking any questions of Hashem, was I able to live. I had total Emunah and bitachon in what transpired. I only focused on the positive and not on the negative.

This is what we all have to do. Everyone has challenges in life. We must focus on the positive and have Emunah and bitachon in Hashem.



Why Did the Torah Need to Mention "Fins" as a Kosher Sign for Fish?

Towards the end of Parshas Shmini, the Torah gives us the list of permissible animals, fish, and fowl. There is a very simple rule for identifying kosher fish: Any fish that has both fins and scales is kosher. Any fish that does not have both fins and scales is not kosher. The Gemara in Tractate Chulin (66b) states: "All fish that have scales, have fins." In other words, there is no such thing in all of creation as a fish that has scales but does not have fins. There are certainly fish that have fins and not scales, as we well know, but the reverse is not true. The Gemara asks, if that is the case, why does the Torah say: "Anything that does not have fins and scales in the water is not kosher?" Let the Torah

merely say that any fish that has scales is kosher! (We would automatically know that it also has fins.)

The Gemara answers, "to magnify Torah and to exalt it." (*l'hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira*). In other words, in truth, it was not necessary to provide the extra detail about fins, once we know that scales are a kosher sign for fish. It was just provided as a literary flourish to expand the Torah and exalt it.

This is a strange Gemara. Anyone who has learned Gemara — and even someone who has only learned Chumash with Rashi — knows that out of every single letter that is extra in the Torah, the Rabbis felt a need to expound and learn out new laws and teachings. Literally, from an extra letter we darshen entire halochos. There are countless discussions where one tanna uses an extra word to teach us one thing and then the Gemara inquires how the second tanna will account for this extra word (implying that every extra word — even every extra letter — needs to be accounted for). Why doesn't the Gemara simply answer in all these cases that the extra letter or word appears "l'hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira?"

We could condense many tractates in the Talmud this way! Maybe Bava Basra would not need to be 176 *blatt* long. Maybe we could get it down to 100 *blatt*. So much of Talmudic discussion is spent analyzing exposition of extra words and letters! What is going on here with this answer in *Chullin* as to why we have the superfluous teaching that scales and fins make a fish kosher?

I saw in a sefer a wonderful interpretation quoted in the name of a Reb Aryeh Tzvi Frumer [1884-1943; Poland]. Today we are familiar, perhaps, with most of the fish in the world. But even today, every once in a while a marine biologist comes up with new species of fish that are first being discovered now. Certainly in Talmudic times, if you asked a scientist, "Is there any fish in the universe that has scales and does not have fins, no scientist would go out on a limb and

say "there is no such thing!" Perhaps the same could be said even a hundred years ago! How would he know? Who can say, "I have knowledge of every single species of fish that will ever be discovered"? Science is empirical. Facts need to be discovered. Nobody can say definitively something is true of every single species of fish, because nobody has seen every single fish in the world.

Yet, the *Ribono shel Olam* tells us (in the Oral Law) "there is no such thing in all of creation as a fish that has scales and does not have fins." Why does He tell us this? *L'Hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira*. To beautify and to glorify the Torah! No scientist in the world can make a statement like the Gemara makes, that there is no such thing as a fish that has scales and does not have fins. But the Gemara can make such a statement because it is based on oral tradition — person from person back to the Almighty (who transmitted the Oral Law to Moshe at Sinai).

This is why the Gemara utilizes the expression *l'hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira* here. It testifies to the glory of the Torah's wisdom, since only the Torah could definitively know such a scientific fact.

In The Way A Person Wishes To Go, That Is How Hashem Will Lead Him

There is an interesting Medrash on the pasuk יַ֥יִן וְשֵׁכָ֖ר אַל־תֵּ֣שְׁתְּ - "Wine and strong beverage do not drink" [Vayikra 10:9].

The Medrash cites an incident involving an alcoholic. His addiction was so bad that he would sell everything he owned to support his habit. He ultimately even sold his own furniture and household utensils in order to buy wine. When his children saw what was happening, they decided that they had to do something dramatic to demonstrate to their father the destructiveness of his behavior.

When he was totally drunk, they tied him up and carried him out to the cemetery and left him there. They figured that he would sleep off his drunken stupor there, and upon waking in the morning, would see where he was, and become shocked by the fact that he found himself in a graveyard. Hopefully, he would thereby get the message that alcohol was killing him and would stop drinking.

The Medrash says that while he slept, a caravan containing barrels of wine passed by. Suddenly pirates approached to descend upon the caravan. The caravan had to speed away at a fast speed. In their haste, they allowed a barrel of wine to bounce off a wagon. It rolled into the cemetery and landed right near the head of the sleeping drunk father.

When their father awoke the next morning, he saw the barrel of wine next to his head and started drinking all over again until he was stone drunk once more. The children arrived at the cemetery the next morning and saw the situation. Frustrated, they said, "Even here, G-d does not allow you to break your habit. Since He gives it to you, we do not know what to do to counteract the Will of G-d." In other words "This is fate. G-d wants you to be a drunkard and there is nothing we can do about it."

What is the point of this Medrash? What is it trying to tell us with this story?

Rav Eliyahu Dessler writes that the lesson of the Medrash is that G-d helps a person do whatever he wants to do. In the way a person desires to go, that is how he is directed from above. If one wishes to become a righteous person, G-d will help him to become a righteous person. If one wishes to be an evil person, He will find ways to let you be an evil person. If one wishes to be a drunkard, G-d will provide him with a barrel of wine right next to his head.

But one might ask – don't we all want to be righteous people? Who does not want to be a Tzadik? Don't we all want to be Torah scholars? And yet we see that G-d does not make it so easy for us!

So, Rav Dessler asks, what is the difference between the drunkard and us? G-d provided the barrel of wine to the drunkard, but we are not so easily provided with what we need to become righteous and scholarly. We sometimes find it so difficult to sit down and learn. We find it so difficult to daven with proper intent. We find that so many things that we want to do are so difficult for us to achieve!

The difference, Rav Dessler said, is that the drunkard was willing to sell his furniture, willing to sell every last thing he had for another drink. When the will is that strong, it indicates that the person REALLY wants something. When someone REALLY wants something, G-d makes it easy for him to acquire it. Unfortunately, many times, our desire to do the right thing — to learn, to pray, whatever it may be — is not as strong as the will for the alcoholic to have their next drink.

Moshe's Premonition That "Something Like This" Was Going to Happen

Parshas Shemini contains the tragic event of the sudden death of Aharon's two eldest sons, Nadav and Avihu. *Chazal* note on the opening words of the parsha ("*Vayehi b'yom hashemini*") that the term "*Vayehi*" connotes pain. In this context, tragedy struck on the eighth day (which coincided with *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*).

Just as Aharon was taking over the job as *Kohen Gadol* and his sons were taking over the jobs of serving as the *Kohanim*in the *Mishkan*, Nadav and Avihu brought an "*eish zarah*" (foreign fire) and were struck down right then and there. Whenever I read this parsha I think to myself, imagine if there was a *Chanukas Habayis* of a *Bais Haknesses*. Everyone is dancing. It is a beautiful moment in time, and then suddenly a beam from the roof collapses and hits someone on the head and kills him on the spot. It would be an untold tragedy. People would never look at that shul the same.

How much more so in this case. Aharon's two eldest sons die, righteous leaders of Israel, right there in the *Mishkan*! It must have had a horrible effect.

The pasuk says: "Moshe said to Aharon: Of this did Hashem speak, saying: 'I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me, thus I will be honored before the entire people; and Aharon was silent." (Vayikra 10:3). Rashi writes: "Aharon my brother, I knew that this House would be sanctified through those who were closest to the Omnipresent. I figured it would be through either me or you. Now I see that they (Nadav and Avihu) were greater than me or you."

This is a very powerful, yet enigmatic statement by Rashi. "I knew that this had to happen." What does that mean? Can it mean that a tragedy **needed** to happen? Why would a tragedy need to happen upon the inauguration of the *Mishkan*? We never consider such a possibility when we plan a *Chanukas Habayis*!

The Dubno Maggid in his Ohel Yakov gives a beautiful parable explaining what it means when Moshe said "I knew that this was going to happen."

Imagine that a country wanted to build a world class hospital, the greatest hospital the world has ever seen. Again, it would have the latest technology, the best staff, the best equipment, all the '*hidurim*'. And of course, it would need to have the greatest doctor in the world. Since this is the capital city, the city that is going to put all other cities in the world to shame, and since this is going to be the hospital that is the most world-renowned medical center, it needs to have at its head the greatest doctor to walk the face of the earth.

And so it was. On the day they cut the ribbon to go into the city, everything opened as planned. People were overwhelmed by the beauty. One fellow started not feeling well on this first day of the inauguration of the city. He complained of a headache. He went into the hospital and became the first patient in the hospital. Of course,

the head of the hospital, this world-renowned doctor treated him personally. (It is just a headache. "Take two aspirin and call me in the morning.") A few days later, the person died. He died in the best hospital in the world, in the greatest city in the world, under the care of the best doctor in the world, from a headache yet! What happened? How did this go wrong?

The Board of the Hospital gets together to analyze what happened. It is so embarrassing. The mayor comes to join in the investigation. The head doctor gets up and says, "The fact that this person died is the most fortunate thing that could have happened to this city."

He explained: If we have the greatest city in the world, the most pleasant city to live in, and we have the best hospital in the world, everyone will say "I don't need to take care of myself. I can eat without caring about my weight gain. I don't need to watch my cholesterol. I don't need to monitor my blood pressure. I don't need to exercise. I have no worries about my health because I live in the city with the best hospital in the world. If I get sick, I will go to the hospital and be treated by the best doctor in the world and everything will be fine."

The doctor said that this is why it was important, and even helpful, that the first patient in the hospital died. This lets people know that such calculations are incorrect. Someone can have the most beautiful city, the greatest technology, the greatest hospital with the greatest equipment and the greatest doctor, but you still need to take care of yourself.

The Dubno Maggid explained the *'nimshal'*: *Klal Yisrael* now had a *Mishkan*. A *Mishkan* is a place where *Korbonos* are brought. The people might figure that now we can do whatever we want. All we need to do now is go to the *Mishkan*, bring a *Korban*, recite the *Vidui* (confession), *v'Nomar Amen*! (*L'Havdil*, this is a phenomenon found in the Catholic Church. Catholics feel that they can do anything that they want, go to the priest and say "Forgive me

father, for I have sinned" and their sins are atoned for, without even needing to fast on Yom Kippur!)

People might think: We have a *Mishkan*. We can now do anything that is forbidden and be guaranteed forgiveness. So Moshe Rabbeinu told Aharon that it was important to disabuse the masses of such a notion. More importantly, Heaven needed to teach a lesson that it is crucial to be careful with the *Mishkan* and its holiness. If not treated with the proper deference, the *Mishkan* itself can kill. This thing that people think is the cure-all and panacea for all ills may actually cause fatalities, if people don't act properly.

That is what Moshe Rabbeinu meant when he said "I knew that this House would be sanctified through those who were close to the Omnipresent." – The *Mishkan* is akin to radiation. It is very powerful. It has much positive potential, but someone who is not careful with it may be killed by it.



No Such Thing As Private - R' Joey Haber

A number of years ago, there were a few families that got together for a Melaveh Malkah. In the middle of the meal, one of the wives was very annoying. So, the host told everybody that he had to go upstairs for a few minutes to attend to his baby. Two minutes later, his wife also said that she had to go upstairs to see to the baby.

The pair of them went into the baby's room and he said to his wife, "I can't deal with that woman, I can't believe that she's even in our house! She's so annoying, everything she says just isn't nice. I can't believe what kind of person she is. It's really ridiculous."

And his wife says, "Yes, and I don't know why we had her over. I can't believe she came. What are we going to do? She's so annoying."

They are both talking together alone in the room. After a few minutes, they both came back down, pretending that they had finished taking care of the kid. They walked back into the dining room, but everyone there were sitting in complete silence. The only thing you could hear was…. The static of the baby monitor! Everybody in the room heard every single word they said!



They thought that they were alone in the baby room having a private conversation, but the baby monitor was picking up the sounds and broadcasting it all to those in the dining room.

Chazal writes - **אפילו שיחה קלה שבין איש לאשתו מגידין לו לאדם בשעת הדין** – *'Even a simple conversation between a man and his wife will be told to a person at the time of judgment.'*

Even when you have a private conversation with your wife or kids, and there is nobody else there listening in, says the Gemarah… the monitor is on! – Hashem is always listening. There is no such thing as a small conversation out of a Jewish mouth.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Rav Ovadiah And The Grocer

Close to fifty years ago there was a very special talmid chacham in Yerushalayim named Rav Yosef Bar Shalom. The poverty in Yerushalayim in those days was terrible, and the Bar Shalom family hardly had food to eat. When their seventh son was born, they realised that there was no way they could afford to host a meal for the bris milah, even for just a minyan of ten people. They decided that they had no choice but to, quietly, bring the baby to the mohel's house, and have the bris done there in private without a minyan.

The Bar Shalom family lived in the same neighbourhood as Rav Ovadiah Yosef zt"l. A few days after the birth, Rabbanit Yosef asked Rabbanit Bar Shalom how the baby was, and why they had not heard any details about the upcoming bris. Rabbanit Bar Shalom was embarrassed to admit that they were planning just to have the bris at the mohel's house without any guests, since they could not afford to pay for the meal.

When Rav Ovadiah heard about their plans, he said, "We cannot let this happen. Rav Shalom is a talmid chacham; we have to help them. Go tell her that they should make the bris in shul as normal, and we will host the meal for them."

Rabbanit Bar Shalom was overjoyed with the good news. "And what about the Brit Yitzchak?" asked Rabbanit Yosel. Brit Yitzchak is a Sephardic custom to invite guests to the baby's home on the night before the bris. They learn special passages from the Zohar together, and refreshments are served.

When Rabbanit Yosef saw that the Bar Shaloms would not be able to afford that either, she told her husband, who told her to go to the local grocery store and buy everything that they would need for the Brit Yitzchak, too.

The owner of the grocery store was an honest and decent Jew, but when he heard that Rabbanit Yosef was buying food for the Bar Shalom family, he apologised and explained that he could not give her any food for them. "They already have a debt here of 3000 liras (old Israeli currency), with no way to pay it. I would like that debt to be taken care of first."

The Rabbanit explained the situation to Rav Ovadiah, and he told her to tell the grocer that he wanted to speak with him.

When the Rabbanit told the grocer that Rav Ovadiah wanted to talk to him, he did not waste a moment. He closed the store straight away and hurried over to Rav Ovadiah's home.

Rav Ovadiah greeted the grocer warmly and then got down to business. "Tell me something. How did the Bar Shalom family work up such a large grocery bill? Did they buy extravagant amounts of expensive delicacies? Or was it just from basic essentials?"

"They never bout anything but the very basic things, like bread and milk, and once in a very long while some cheese," answered the grocer.

"Let me ask you another question. What is the most important thing in the world?" asked Rav Ovadiah.

"The Torah, of course. Nothing is more important than Torah," answered the grocer.

"Now listen, my dear friend. Rav Bar Shalom is a great Torah scholar, who learns Torah all day and night. They really don't have any way to pay their bill, so let us make a deal. If you forgive their debt, I promise that in the merit of your great sacrifice for the Torah, b'ezrat Hashem, you will be blessed with a son who will be a great Torah scholar."

The grocer, who was himself a pious Jew with great love for Torah and Emunah in talmidei chachamim, accepted Rav Ovadiah's deal, made the sacrifice and forgave the debt. Not only that, he even donated everything that the Bar Shaloms would need for the Brit Yitzchak. Rav Ovadiah placed both of his hands on the grocer's head and blessed him that he may merit to have a son who would grow to become a Torah scholar.

The Brit Yitzchak was held admidst great rejoicing, as was the bris milah the next day. No one there knew about the deal between Rav Ovadiah and the grocer, or what lay behind it.

Years later, Rav Bar Shalom was appointed at Rav Ovadiah's recommendation to be the Chief Rabbi of Bat Yam (a city near Tel Aviv).

Forty-seven years later, after the entire incident of the grocery debt had long been forgotten, Rabbanit Bar Shalom dreamed that she saw the grocer's face and remembered in her dream about the 3,000-lira debt that had never been paid.

She woke up in shock, and the memory of the debt gave her no peace. True, the grocer had never asked for the money, but they still owed it to him.

Early next morning, she called her son Rav Eliyahu Bar Shalom, who lived in Yerushalayim, and told him about her dream. "Please go find the grocer and tell him that, Baruch Hashem, we are not able to repay our debt. We ask his forgiveness and want to pay however much we owe."

Rav Eliyahu went to where the grocery store used to be but discovered that it had closed long ago. The entire neighbourhood looked very different than it did when he was a child, so he went in search of the grocer's home. A few hours later he found it. He knocked on the door, and was ushured to see the grocer, who was now a very old man, lying in bed sick and weak.

Sitting next to the grocer was someone Rav Eliyahu immediately recognised as a close friend, who was a renowned and exceptional Torah scholar. "What are you doing here?" asked Rav Eliyahu.

"This is my father," he answered

Rav Eliyahu knew nothing about Rav Ovadiah's promise to the grocer years ago. He felt that it would be inappropriate to start by discussing the debt, so he first asked the grocer how he merited to have such a great Torah scholar for a son.

With a slow and weak voice, he explained. "Forty-seven years ago, there was a talmid chacham who worked up a debt of 3000 liras in my grocery store. Chacham Ovadiah called me and asked me to forgive the talmid chacham's debt, since he was so devoted to Torah

and could not afford to pay. In exchange, he promised me a son who would also be a great talmid chacham."

Rav Eliyah was amazed. "Do you remember the name of the talmid chacham who owed you the money?" he asked.

"Yes, his name was Chacham Yosef Bar Shalom," answered the grocer.

"I am his son," explained Rav Eliyahu. "Last night my mother saw you in a dream and remembered our debt. Now, Baruch Hashem, we are able to repay it, and she sent me to look for you, in order to do so."

The grocer was overcome with emotion, and Rav Eliyahu could tell that he was on the verge of tears. "My dear friend," said the grocer, "there is no way in the world I could take that money. I have already been paid in full." With that he raised a hand, with great effort, and pointed towards the son sitting next to him. "Here is my payment," he said. "Chacham Ovadiah's promise was kept in full. I sacrificed some money, and was rewarded with the greatest blessing a person could ever receive in this world or the next."

(Note that this meeting took place just ten months after Rav Ovadiah's passing – 3rd Cheshvan 5774/Oct 7th 2013).

Rav Eliyahu was also moved to tears. In the name of his family, he asked forgiveness from the grocer, praised him for his kind-heartedness and for his distinguished son, and parted with kind words and good spirits.

Just a few days later, when Rav Eliyahu was walking down the street in Yerushalayim, he was struck by the sight of a huge sign announcing the death of the righteous grocer. Hashem had sent his mother the dream just in time, so that he could go visit the grocer before his passing, ask forgiveness for the debt, and bring the matter to a close.

But there is another chapter to this story.

Rav Eliyahu was in charge of a charity fund in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood of Yerushalayim, which gives generous stipends to families of Torah scholars. A few years before his meeting with the grocer, he noticed the grocer's son as a promising young scholar destined for greatness, whose livelihood was sparse.

Rav Eliyahu arranged for a monthly stipend for him, which over the course of several years had allowed the budding talmid chacham to focus all his energies on Torah, without the burden of financial hardship. Of course, at that point, he had not been aware that this was the son of the grocer who had forgiven their debt.

It is amazing to see how Hashem runs the world. The grocer forgave the debt of the Bar Shalom family. In return, not only did Hashem reward him with a talmid chacham for a son, but the Bar Shalom's son helped support the grocer's son in his studies, to help him fulfil the potential for greatness that Rav Ovadiah had promised. In the most amazing way, the money the grocer had forgiven was returned to his son.

מה גדלו מעשיך ד', מאד עמקו מחשבתיך *How great are Your deeds, Hashem! How deep are Your thoughts!*

But let us remember the most important moral of this story, which lies in Rav Ovadiah's question to the grocer when he first offered his deal. "What is the most important thing in the world? What is worth the sacrifice of a fortune of money? The holy Torah!"

טוב לי תורת פיך מאלפי זהב וכסף - *The Torah of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.*

Good Shabbos

Aaron Leitner

True Humility - Rabbi Jeremy Golker

Parashas Shemini recounts the tragic deaths of the two elder sons of Aaron Hakohen - Nadav and Avihu. Aaron is silent in face of his tragedy. Aaron and his two remaining sons are in mourning and are therefore 'Onenim'. There is a discussion between Moshe Rabeinu and Aaron as to which korban should be brought, and whether the korban should be eaten or burnt. - Moshe is critical of Aaron for not following what he thinks is the correct procedure. Aron then responds to Moshe and explains why he did what he did. **וַיְדַבֵּר אַהֲרֹן אֶל מֹשֶׁה . הֵיִיטַב בְּעֵינֵי ה' וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּיטַב בְּעֵינָיו** *'Would it have pleased Hashem?" Moshe heard [this], and it pleased him.'* (10:19,20)

Rashi famously says **הוֹדָה וְלֹא בוֹשׁ לוֹמַר לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי. וַיִּיטַב בְּעֵינָיו** - Moshe admitted that Aaron was correct, and was not ashamed to admit his error. Moshe frankly said to Aaron, "You are right! And I am wrong."

פלא יועץ טעות – says, **"There is no human being in the world who doesn't make a mistake. It shouldn't be an embarrassment for a person to admit that he's wrong. But for a person to pretend and overlook that he made a mistake, or to deny his mistake, that's a terrible embarrassment. If he doesn't recognise that he made a mistake, then he's just a fool. But if he recognizes that he erred, but he's just embarrassed to admit it, and wants to perpetuate his mistake, he's making it even worse. He knows the truth and should just admit it. And there is no one greater than Moshe Rabeinu who admitted his error. - It is better to be embarrassed in this world than in the world to come."**

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach once gave a trial Shiur Klali trying out for a role in Kol Torah. **Rav Yona Mertzbach** (the founder of Kol Torah) asked him a question, and Rav Shlomo Zalman said, "I don't know the answer!"

He was sure that he had missed this special opportunity but was really surprised when he got the job. Many years later, Rav Yona

Mertzbach told him, "You got the job because you were man enough and intellectually honest to say – 'I don't know!'

The book called "B'ahavah, Benny" tells the fascinating life story of Reb Benny Fishoff. A story of a young man, sole survivor of his family after the Holocaust, who took the richness of his youth as a Gerrer chossid in Lodz, through to Shanghai and eventually to the executive suites of the New York City skyscrapers.

Reb Benny embodied the cleverness and perception of the old-time Poilishe Yidden. And he used his warmth and wisdom to help countless Jews with money, advice and overflowing love.

A young friend of Mr Fishoff was upset about a negative business experience and shared his hurt feelings with Mr Fishoff.

"But he signed a contract, how could he just break it?"

Mr Fishoff nodded empathetically and shared one of his wise aphorisms. "Contracts are for honest people," he said, "and they are there to remind you of the terms of the agreement, but nothing more. A difficult person can always find a way around a contract, so the only solution it to learn from the mistake and avoid doing business with him again."

It was important to Mr Fishoff that his younger friends understand that some deals are bad, and it is best to move on from the people and methods that led to failure.

"The filing cabinets in this office," he would tell grandchildren, "are filled with records of bad deals. We hold on to them too, because it is important to remember."

Making mistakes is human. We all do it. Our parsha shows us that greatness is acknowledged when we make a mistake. And having the strength of character to admit to our errors and respond and learn from them.



In honor of **R' Zecharia Wallerstein ztl's** yahrtzeit (Rosh Chodesh Iyar) L'zecher nishmas R' Zecharia Shimon Ben R' Yitzchak HaCohen z"l.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu married Klal Yisrael and gave us a wedding band, two luchos of sapphire. He asked the malachim what he could give the kallah in the yichud room. He looked in his treasure house for the most precious item he could find. He found it. The malachim said, "no, that's not for human beings, that belongs in shamayim, it's too precious." but Hashem said no, this is my gift to them. I have nothing better than this. And its name is...shabbos. ~ R' Zecharia Wallerstein.

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

Prayer has to come from your heart. It's got to come from, "Hashem, I don't need this, I don't need that, I just need You!" - If that's your prayer, you don't even have to tell Him what you need. Because if my daughter says, "Dad, I love you more than anything else in the world, I just need you," I'll take care of what she needs. She won't have to ask me. I'll ask her what she needs. ~ R' Zecharia Wallerstein.

"How did Rabbi Wallerstein achieve so much in just 24 hours? It was because he never thought about himself. It was always about other people. He loved Yidden and couldn't bear to see anyone suffer... His office was always open for meshulachim, and although they kept coming back, he never turned anyone away. He was a dynamic person who could, just by talking to you, sense what you were capable of achieving and make you believe it. That was the secret of his success." --Miriam, Rabbi Wallerstein's longtime office manager.



Teasing The Future Gadol - R' Yechiel Spero

Moshe grew up in Russia. He was a young boy, a brilliant little child. And his father decided that before he sends him to cheder to learn gemarah, he should master chumash, he should master mishnayos. And finally, the day arrived, and Moshe was brought to the cheder to learn gemarah for the very first time.

He sat down in the room with the other cheder children. His rebbe asked him to read the first word of the gemarah. The first word is a word that we are all very familiar with. Very often the gemarah will start with this word - **איתמר** '*It was said*.' But Moshe was not familiar with gemarah, and when he saw the letters of that word, he read it differently. He read it as 'Isamar' as in a name in the chumash.

'Isamar' – When he said that word, everyone burst out laughing. The rebbe stopped them all and he said, "Well, this child is exceptional in chumash, and he doesn't know that this word can be read in one of two ways, either 'Isamar' or 'Itmar'. Never laugh at another child. Never laugh and scoff and whisper about the way a child reads."

Who was this Moshe? - This Moshe would grow up to be the Gadol Hador – **Rav Moshe Feinstein!**

And if you think that this story might just be a legend, the story was written my Reb Moshe himself in the introduction of the 8th chelek of Igros Moshe. And he writes that he learned two very powerful lessons from this story.

The first lesson he learnt was that sometimes you have to see things from someone else's perspective. They were so sure that the word was 'Itmar' when really the word could also have been read as

'Isamar'. And he said that it's also important in halacha to see different perspectives.

And the second lesson is, never, ever, ever make fun of the way a child does something, or for that matter, an adult.

You have to be so very careful. Can you imagine if Chas Ve'sholom little Moshe would have been so embarrassed that he would have run home, never to return. The world would have lost Rav Moshe Feinstein!

Netzor – Guard your tongue and speak carefully – Because words matter!



Rav Mattisyahu Salomon felt it was so important to constantly think about what Hashem does for us and to thank Him. Once, R' Mordechai Levi walked into the room where the Mashgiach was sitting and asked, "Vos macht der Mashgiach?" How is the Mashgiach doing? "Hodu laShem ki tov!" was Rav Mattisyahu's answer. "Nu," R' Levi said cheerfully, "vos ken zein besser?" What could be better than that?

And Rav Mattisyahu replied, "Ki l'olam chasdo!"

Throughout his life, the Mashgiach was cognizant of the chessed that Hashem constantly did with him and was always full of gratitude to Hashem. This sense of deep gratitude and simchah remained with him even in his later years when things were very difficult.

During those years, too, if someone asked him how he was — and everyone knew that he was really not well — he would always answer "Hodu laShem ki tov ki l'olam chasdo!"

Flashes of Inspiration by Rabbi Shlomo Landau - Unlimited Miracles

Yaakov Chaziza is a shomer Shabbos and shomer shemittah farmer who lives on a moshav in northern Israel, along the Lebanese border. For Yaakov and his neighbors, the constant threat of terror is simply part of daily life. The Chazizas, like the other hundred-plus families living on the moshav, support themselves through livestock and orchards. But unlike most of the other families, who are largely secular and distant from Torah observance, Yaakov is steadfast in his Yiddishkeit. He often tries to inspire his fellow farmers toward Shabbos observance and faithfulness in shemittah, though not always with success.

One year, Yaakov and three other farmers were assigned a large plot of land to produce hay for the livestock. The field had no irrigation system, so their entire crop depended on rainfall. They plowed, seeded, and waited. But the rains never really came. Harvest time drew near. The moshav didn't own a hay harvester, so one was rented. It arrived late on Friday, and the rental company allowed them only one day. The implication was clear: The harvest would have to be done on Shabbos.

Yaakov refused outright. "There is no way I will be mechallel Shabbos," he declared firmly. The other farmers argued. If they waited, the harvest would rot. This was their one chance. But Yaakov stood his ground. - On Shabbos, the three went ahead and harvested their portions of the field. Yaakov's section remained untouched.

That Monday, as the farmers worked to bale their meagre yield, the skies suddenly opened. Torrential rains poured down. Their already small harvest was ruined, soaked, and rotting. But Yaakov's unharvested field began to grow. And grow. When the time finally came to cut Yaakov's hay, his field had produced more than enough to cover not only his share but the portions of all four farmers.

The story spread through the moshav like wildfire. This wasn't an ancient neis from Tanach, this was a miracle in their very backyard. So powerful was the impact that the community reopened its long-shuttered beit knesset. Slowly but surely, families began keeping mitzvos.

Sensing the moment, Yaakov posted signs around the moshav announcing a shiur he would be giving. To his amazement, the majority of the men showed up. Week after week, the shiur grew, eventually replacing the moshav's decades-old Wednesday night social gathering in the community hall.

Yaakov was overwhelmed with gratitude to Hashem for the miracle of his produce and the even greater miracle of his neighbors' awakening hearts. But there was yet another miracle, one Yaakov himself never knew.

For months, Lebanese terrorists had been spying on the moshav, plotting a major attack. They had carefully studied the villagers' routines and concluded that the Wednesday evening social gathering in the hall, when nearly all the men were gathered in one place, would be the ideal moment to strike. On a Wednesday night, they cut through the fence, crept into the moshav, and hurled explosives into the "packed" social hall.

The impact was devastating, levelling the building and shattering windows throughout the moshav. But the terrorists had made one critical mistake. The hall was empty. All of the men of the moshav were gathered elsewhere, sitting in the newly reopened shul, listening to Yaakov's shiur.

What they thought would be a massacre was nothing more than an ineffective explosion. Once again, the Ribbono shel Olam had shielded His people with an unmistakable neis.

Humiliation

Chacham Harav Yisroel Abuchatzeira *zt"l*, better known as the **Baba Sali** (literally meaning? 'Praying Father') was renowned for his ability to work miracles through his prayers. People came from all over to seek his guidance and blessing, and quite often they were in for a surprise.

Once, after assisting someone in dire need of help, the man came back with a pickup truck full of produce as a gift. Instead of thanking the fellow, the *Baba Sali* harshly rebuked the man, who was startled. He refused to take the fruit and eventually ordered the man to leave.

The man, distressed and humiliated, followed suit, and despite being utterly baffled by the turn of events, he loaded his produce back onto his truck and drove home without asking any questions.

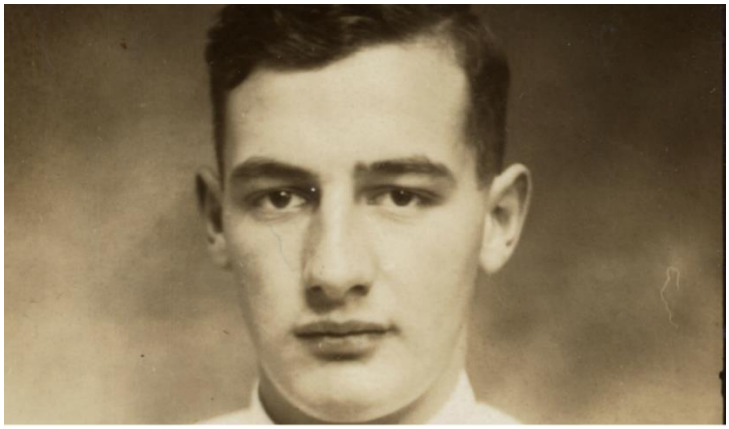




On his way, an Arab shot an explosive in his direction, and the missile fell directly into the back of his pickup truck! Miraculously though, the explosive landed inside one of the crates containing fruits and vegetables, exploding there. The produce absorbed the blast, saving the man's life.

Later, the *Baba Sali* explained that the man had entered his home with a decree of death hanging over him. Only through the "humiliations" he received and accepted in good faith, could the decree be overturned.

Herbert's Roommate By Rabbi Boruch Brull



Herbert's roommate in 1935

Palestine was a haven for thousands of European Jewish refugees escaping from the Nazis, yemach shemam. Among these refugees was Herbert Froehlich, a young man who arrived from Germany in 1935. He rented a room in Haifa from a woman who owned a boarding house. After Herbert had lived there for many weeks, the woman asked him if he would accept a roommate. Realizing that his landlady needed the extra income to offset the difficult economic situation, Herbert readily agreed.

As fate would have it, his roommate turned out to be the only non-Jew in the boarding house. Being a good-natured fellow, Herbert welcomed his roommate warmly and they established a close friendship as well as a mutually deep respect for one another. Herbert learned that his roommate's parents had sent him to Palestine from Sweden in order to learn the British banking system. After being invited to join in various Jewish trips and activities, including Shabbat meals, Herbert's roommate gained an appreciation for the Jewish religion and the Jewish people.

After several months, Herbert's roommate completed his education in Palestine and prepared to return to Europe. As the two friends tearfully bid each other farewell, Herbert's roommate removed his ski cap from his head, handed it to Herbert and said, "I want you to keep this as a sign of our everlasting friendship."

Just a few years later, the world turned a blind eye as six million Jews were slaughtered in Europe during World War II. Only a small number of gentiles stood up to save Jewish lives. Among these heroes was a young secretary at the Swedish Diplomatic Mission in Budapest named Raoul Wallenberg. He was instrumental in saving

thousands of Jews by securing visas for them. To this day his whereabouts are unknown, as Raoul Wallenberg was arrested by Russian soldiers during the last days of the war. It is believed that he died in one of Stalin's prisons or in Siberia.

Many could not understand Raoul Wallenberg's unusual sensitivity towards the Jewish people, but Herbert Froehlich did. You see, Raoul was Herbert's roommate. Herbert believed that Raoul's association with his Jewish friends in Palestine was instrumental in creating his tremendous desire to help the Jews. As for Herbert, he never forgot his friend Raoul and wore his ski cap every night, even as it tattered and frayed with age. Thousands of lives were saved, no doubt in part because one Jew made a Kiddush Hashem. (Feldheim book – "For Goodness' Sake")

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz shared an amazing story about a woman who had no connection to Judaism. She only knew of one thing that she had heard from her grandmother, that when lighting candles on Erev Shabbos, she should cry and request to have good children.

In her naiveness, she did not know the meaning of good children, so she prayed that her children should grow up to be like the prime minister at that time, who was Ben Gurion.

Around then, the prime minister went to visit the **Chazon Ish** regarding the draft, and this was publicized in the media. When this lady heard this, she thought that if the prime minister went to visit the Chazon Ish, then the Chazon Ish must be more distinguished than the prime minister! Therefore, she started Davening that her children should be like the Chazon Ish, and Baruch Hashem her Tefilah was accepted. She has a very distinguished son who now teaches Torah in Eretz Yisroel!

Rabbi Moshe Komornick

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל אַהֲרֹן קְרַב אֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ... ***And Moshe said to Aharon, "Approach the Altar…"*** (9:7)



Rashi writes that Moshe said to Aharon, "Approach the Altar" because Moshe saw that Aharon was "embarrassed and scared" due to the Altar's appearance being somewhat similar to the golden calf he was partly responsible for. Therefore, Moshe said to Aharon, "Why are you embarrassed? For this, you have been chosen."

The simple understanding of Moshe's reply was that Aharon should not be embarrassed to offer sacrifices on the Altar because Hashem had clearly forgiven any misdeed he may have done. However, the **Ksav Sofer** notes that although Moshe saw that Aharon was "embarrassed and scared" he only says, "Why are you embarrassed?" He does not mention Aharon being scared. Surely, asks the Ksav Sofer, Moshe should have said, "Why are you embarrassed *and scared*? For this, you have been chosen."

The Ksav Sofer answers that in fact Moshe *did* address Aharon's fear, because, whereas Aharon's "embarrassment" was over the golden calf, his "fear" was over becoming haughty having been appointed to such a lofty position.

Therefore, Moshe said, "For this you have been chosen," because the Gemora says that a leader's reign is only able to last if he has something in his lineage that will keep him from being haughty. Therefore, Moshe addressed Aharon's embarrassment and fear by telling him that he should not be embarrassed to approach Hashem

for he had been forgiven, and because he now had a "blemish" to keep him humble, he should no longer fear.

We see therefore that the danger of becoming haughty even applies to the greatest of men. As such, great care must be taken towards staying grounded. Whether we are in a position of prestige because of our work, wealth, lineage, or community position, if we really want it to continue, we too should look to our past and remember that Hashem raises the lowly and it is for this reason we have been chosen. With this in mind, we are bound to overcome our embarrassment, overcome our fear, and fulfil our role appropriately and with success.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt –Speak or be silent



Hashem created us with two lips to allude to the two functions of the mouth: to speak in Torah and to be silent as in **וכאלם לא יפתח פיו**; like a mute who doesn't open his mouth. These two are represented by Moshe and Ahron. Moshe symbolizes Torah since he gave the Torah to us. Ahron, on the other hand, symbolizes silence as it states in our Parsha **וידם אהרן**.It is not for naught that we request **אלקי נצור לשוני מרע...מרמה**- guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully.

One who uses a calling card knows that his minutes are limited. He therefore doesn't speak unnecessarily. Indeed, the **Rambam** tells us that Rebbi never spoke **שיחה בטילה**; idle chatter. The Avodas Yisrael says **וכל כלי פתוח...טמא הוא**; any vessel that has no cover fastened to it is contaminated, refers to the mouth. It therefore can be interpreted that one who has that type of mouth, is a sign he

is impure. We need to realize **יחיל ה' מדבר קדש** - Hashem yearns (**יחיל**) to hear holy words from us, says R' Michel Zlochover.

In whose portion is the Beis Hamikdash found? Binyomin. Why? Because he used his mouth properly, as the Midrash tells us. This is what the Beis Hamikdash is as it is called **תל תלפיות** because **תל שכל פיות פונים**; the hill to which all mouths turn.

The Chofetz Chaim would say just as with weapons one needs to keep it fresh for it to always be available to use, the same is with our mouth as this is our weapon- **אין כחו אלא בפיו**; our power is with the mouth.



Kosher Pig

R' Bachaye, among others, tells us that in the future the pig will be Kosher. We know that one of the 13 principles of faith (**אני מאמין's**) is that the Torah will not be exchanged nor will there be another Torah from the Creator- **לא תהא מוחלפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת**. So how is it that in the future the pig will be Kosher if the Torah says it is **טמא**; impure?

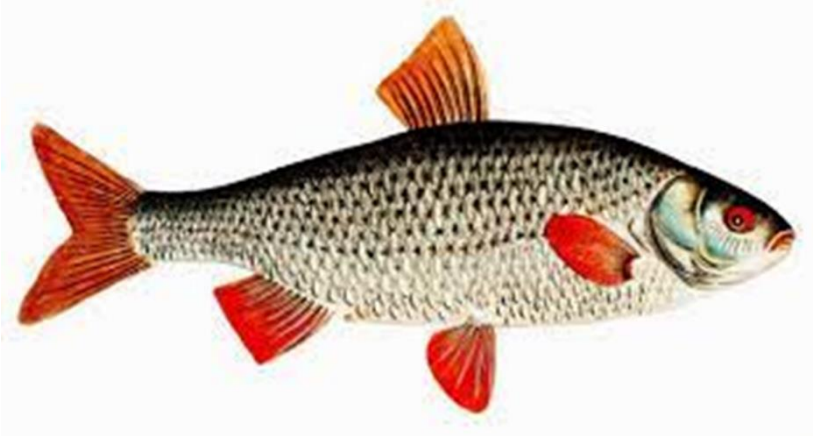
1) The Pasuk states **והוא גרה לא יגר טמא**; doesn't chew its cud. **The Ohr Hachaim** infers that as long as it doesn't chew its cud it is impure. However, in the future it will chew its cud thereby becoming permitted to us.

2) **R' Menachem Mendel of Rimanov** tells us that prior to the sin of Adam nothing was **טמא**. After the sin, many species became more physical, and it became forbidden so that we shouldn't contaminate ourselves. That is, until the future when there will be a great spirit that will be showered on all flesh as then even the pig will be pure.

3) **The Baal Shem Tov** says that the Torah is unchanging. For the time being, the Torah is clothed in stories such as Lavan and Bilaam. In the future, however, we will see how Hashem will express Himself differently.

4) **R' Yeshaya Hertz of Dinov** (1838 – 1885) writes in his Sefer **הנותן אמרי שפר** one reason why we are forbidden to eat that which is **טמא** is because we are unable to elevate the sparks of Kedusha that lie within them and as a result it would contaminate us if we would consume them. However, at certain times we do have that power. Consequently, we can comprehend why Esther ate **דחזירי קדלי** ; pork that she received from **הגי**, the custodian of the maidens. Similarly, in the future we will have this power and therefore the pig will be Kosher.

It Is All In The Torah



We are taught that we can only eat fish that have fins and scales. The Mishna teaches any fish that has scales has fins, but there can be a fish that has fins without scales. Therefore, if we find a fish with scales, even if it doesn't have fins at the moment, it may be eaten. This is because it had fins and fell off or it will grow fins. How could the **חכמים** be so sure of this? Maybe on a different continent there would be a fish without fins but has scales? Today, there are over 30,000 species of fish and not one has only scales without fins!

This is nothing to be amazed by because since the Torah said it, it must be that way as the Midrash tells us that Hashem looked into

the Torah and created the world. Consequently, anything in the world is the way it is because it is sourced in the Torah.

The Gemara records that Rabban Gamliel said that he had a tradition that the renewal of the moon took place not before 29 days, 12 hours, 2/3 of an hour and 73 parts of an hour (which equals 793 parts) from the previous one.11 So the new moon occurs every 29 days, 12 hours and 793 parts. That is, every 29.530594 days.

Recently, NASA came up with their calculation of the time between one moon and the next: 29.530588. That is almost identical. Yet our **חכמים** told this to us thousands of years ago, without the technology that is available nowadays to help us with this.

In another astounding revelation the Midrash foretells that the Kosel Maaravi will never be destroyed. This is astonishing since in the past 2,000 years, Yerushalayim has been conquered 18 times. This prophecy is reinforced by the fact that Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdash with its walls were completely destroyed by the enemies and as it says **ציון שדה...יער**; Tzion will be plowed over like a field, Yerushalayim will become heaps of rubble and the Temple Mount will become like stone heaps in the forest.

Any doubts that the Torah is of Divine origin?!

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt"l, as he walked along the street, he was always careful to greet other people first, before they could greet him.

If a man approached him with two children on Shabbos, they didn't get one "Good Shabbos" greeting from Rav Yehuda Zev, they got three. First the father, then a greeting for each young child!

Anger With Love



The Pasuk tells us Moshe got angry at Elazar and Isamar by saying why didn't you eat the Korbon Chatas in a holy place since it is **קדש קדשים**; most holy. **The Yismach Yisrael** (1853-1910) tells us this anger was rooted in love, as it wasn't an internal anger. He shows us an allusion to this in the words **בַּמקום מָדוּע לֹא אֲכַלתם אֵת הַחטאת הַקדש** as the initials spell **מלא אהבה**- since Moshe was filled with love when he got angry.

R' Yisrael Salanter once came to Kovna and found a Torah student bedridden due to illness. He asked the people in this person's shul they don't take better care of him to which they replied their community doesn't have money. He then screamed at them- 'you should have sold the fancy cover of the **ארון** and used the money to help this person.' Although R' Yisrael Salanter appeared to be angry, someone overheard him whisper to himself 'external anger only, external anger only.'

יַיִן וְשֵׁכָר אַל־תֵּשְׁתְּ ***Do not drink intoxicating wine .(10:9)***

The Hebrew word **תֵּשְׁתְּ** is an acronym for "Tefilat shikor to'aivah" - "The prayer of a drunkard is an abomination." [This alludes to the teaching in the Gemara (Eruvin 64a) that a person who has drunken a little bit may pray, while a person who is intoxicated may not pray.]

Mitzvos Give Life



We are taught that Nadav and Avihu offered an **אש זרה**- foreign fire that was not commanded by Hashem.

The Sifsei Tzadik (1848-1920) explains this is why they died since every Mitzva we do needs to be done with strong desire and thirst to the extent that we remain with no physical energy to exist. However, the Mitzva itself gives us life which enables us to continue living, thereby not dying from the actual performance of the Mitzva. This is the meaning in **וחי בהם**; the Mitzvos give us life. Being that Nadav and Avihu were not commanded by Hashem (**לא צוה אתם**) to offer this **אש זרה**, when they did it with complete Mesirus Nefesh, they were left without any physical life thereby causing their deaths.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

When **Rav Zusha of Hanipol, *zt"l***, was on his deathbed, his students found him crying. They tried to comfort him by telling him that he was almost as wise as Moshe *Rabbeinu* and as kind as Avraham *Avinu*, so he was sure to be judged positively in *Shamayim*.

He replied, "When I get to *Shamayim*, I will not be asked, 'Why weren't you like Moshe, or why weren't you like Avraham?' They will ask, 'Why weren't you like Zusha?!'"

Too Wicked



The Pasuk states **ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל**; ***I shall be sanctified among the Israelites.***

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky points out that it doesn't say **תקדישו את שמי**; you shall sanctify Me, rather that Hashem's Name shall be sanctified. This indicates that one fulfils this Mitzva regardless of whether or not he intends to make a Kiddush Hashem. Whenever a person acts in a way that results in a Kiddush Hashem, he is credited for creating a Kiddush Hashem, although it may have been far from his intention.

The Gemara tells us that the descendants of Sisera learned Torah in Yerushalayim, the descendants of Sancheiriv taught Torah in public and the descendants of Haman learned Torah in Bnei Brak. In what merit did these extremely wicked people deserve this? Because they all caused a Kiddush Hashem- the miracle of Purim and Megilas Esther which publicizes the miracle and so on. That is, although their intent was to destroy the Jewish people. Their efforts resulted in the causing of the glorification of Hashem in the world.

"Bitachon is not a passive acceptance of whatever happens – But an active trust in Hashem's plan for us." – Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel.

Why Do We Do It

The pig is listed among the non-kosher animals in our Parsha. Elsewhere, Rashi tells us one shouldn't say that I am disgusted by pork (pig meat)…rather I wish I could eat it, but Hashem decreed upon me not to.

Looking at it from this perspective, we can view our service of Hashem in a different light. When we act in accordance with what we are commanded, we should repeat to ourselves we are doing this because it is a decree of Hashem.



In this light, after Pesach the **Gra** would make a special effort to taste Chametz in addition to refraining from eating Matza with which he fulfilled his obligation with on Pesach. This was to show it was not for his pleasure rather because it was a decree of Hashem. Likewise, the **Sanzer Rebbe** would make Havdala after Pesach with beer.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

11:13 וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה תְּשַׁקְּצוּ מִן־הָעֹוף לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ שֶׁקֶץ הֵם

The Torah lists 24 species of birds that may not be eaten by a Jew. **The Ramban** says that the common denominator of all non-kosher birds is their cruel nature. Rashi explicitly describes this cruel behaviour by saying that these treifa birds seize their prey with their claws and lift them off the ground to eat them. Hashem forbade these birds because by consuming their flesh, one actually imbibes this cruel nature into their body, and it has an adverse effect on their character. The expression, "You are what you eat" is true in a very real and spiritual sense.



R' Moshe Wolfson shlit'a explains that the essence of every single Jew is their holy neshama and we all believe in Hashem just by virtue of the fact that we received the genes of Avraham Avinu. We are **מאמינים בני מאמינים** and nothing can ever take that away. So why are there thousands of Jews who are assimilated and claim to be atheists? Where is their "Pintele Yid"? Where is their Avraham Avinu gene?

He explains that a Jew never loses his Jewish identity, but he can bury it so deeply that he doesn't feel connected to it unless something happens to bring it out. A person who says he doesn't believe in Hashem is called a **כופר**. The word "kofer" means to cover **וכפרת** just as the Kapores was the "covering" for the Aron Hakodesh, and Yom Kippur (**כיפור**) is the day Hashem "covers" our sins. A Jew claims to be a kofer and does not believe in Hashem simply because his heilege neshama is covered over and over with sin. R' Wolfson says that two sins which most desensitize a Jew from his holy neshama are immorality and eating non-kosher food! Immorality breaks down the innate sensitivities of a Jew and eating treif fills

the soul with impurity! The neshama of a Yid can never be sullied or damaged. A Yid always has the potential to be great and holy, but the neshama can be covered and therefore a Yid can act with cruelty and harshness that is not inherently Jewish!

It would behove us to be exceedingly careful about what we place in our mouths so that we will never regret a cruel or nasty remark that might come out.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

How Dare You Criticize ME -It Was YOUR Fault!



מַדּוּעַ לֹא־אֲכַלְתֶּם אֶת־ הַחַטָּאת בִּמְקוֹם הַקֹּדֶשׁ כִּי קֹדֶשׁ קָדָשִׁים הִוא וְאֹתָהּ נָתַן לָכֶם לָשֵׂאת אֶת־ עֲוֹן הָעֵדָה לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם

"Why didn't you eat the sin-offering in the Sanctuary, seeing it is most holy and Hashem gave it to you to bear the sins of the congregation, to make atonement for them…?" (Vayikra 10:17)

Tom was thinking, "My boss, John, has such nerve! True, last month's business decision just caused the business to lose 10 million dollars. **John was the one** who made the decision. It wasn't me! No way that I am taking the blame! John should accept the fact that he was the one who made the mistake."

Tom's reaction was automatic and understandable. No one likes to be criticized. It puts us on the defensive and makes us feel bad. We feel compelled to respond to protect our sense of worth. It's

especially true if the criticism is totally unjustified. If it was totally his fault, what nerve he has, to blame me!

Tom was 100% correct. However, because he didn't control his reaction, he lost his job. Where was he going to find another job with such a high salary? Too bad that Tom couldn't accept the criticism quietly.

It was the eighth day of the celebration of the Mishkan. It was the day that the Mishkan would be permanently set up. The joy of the day was marred by the Heavenly deaths of two of Aharon's sons. Aharon was somehow able to control his grief to be able continue his duties on this special day. Various sacrifices were brought on this day. Moshe found out that the Rosh Chodesh sacrifice was burnt and not eaten. Moshe got "angry" (one of the very few times in his life that he displayed anger) at Aharon's remaining two sons, Elazer and Itamar, for burning instead of eating this korban. "Why didn't you eat the sin-offering in the Sanctuary, seeing it is most holy and Hashem gave it to you to bear the sins of the congregation, to make atonement for them…?"

The great leader, Moshe Rabbeinu, rebuked Elazer and Itamar for doing the wrong thing. Moshe even told them to respond and explain their actions. Their to the criticism was silence. They didn't say anything to defend their actions. They could have responded to Moshe, since they had acted correctly in not eating the korban (as Moshe later admitted). Yet they did not.

Rashi explains that they felt it wasn't respectful to respond to the rebuke of their teacher. They also felt that it was a lack of respect to respond in front of their father (Their father should be the one responding and not them. Aharon did respond soon after).

Elazar and Itamar were rewarded for their herculean effort of not responding to criticism. **One opinion in the Midrash (13:1)** is that their reward was a personal message from Hashem. Another opinion explains that this act saved their lives, as they were destined to die.

Our G-d given task in our lifetime is to come close to Hashem through learning Torah and performing mitzvos. We are also supposed to refine our character traits. In order to properly refine our character traits and have personal growth, we must be willing to accept criticism. We must be willing to listen objectively and change, if need be. We must be open to listen and examine our actions carefully, if we are told that we erred. We must do this even when we feel we are totally correct.

"Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfills the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things." -Winston Churchill

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP] -Which Path Should We Take?



יַיִן וְשֵׁכָר אַל־תֵּשְׁתְּ ***"Hashem spoke to Aharon. When you or your sons enter The Tent of Meeting, do not drink wine or other intoxicating beverages, lest you die." (10:8-9)***

The *Netziv* explains that a regular kohain must be in a state of joy and happiness when he does a service in the holy Temple. That happiness must result of his awareness of and closeness to Hashem. It may not come from an artificial stimulant.

The Midrash (12:1) warns against the danger of too much drinking. "If a person drinks too much wine, he will end up selling all that he owns to keep up his addiction to drinking."

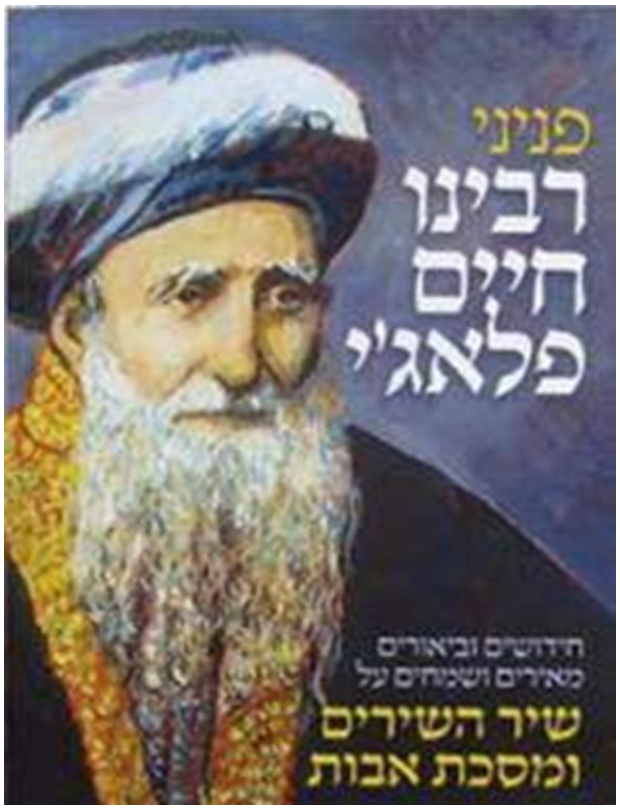
Unfortunately, we see this problem, with alcoholism and with drug addiction. Even if the addiction stems from sadness or depression, the good feeling is fleeting, and the results can have serious consequences. If we do feel depressed or unhappy, we are told to go learn Torah. That will bring us closer to Hashem and will help us feel true joy.

The Midrash relates a story: There was a man who spent so much money on his drinking habit that his family members were worried they would soon become penniless. They thought of a fantastic plan. The next time their father was drunk, they took him to the nearby cemetery. They hoped that when their father became sober, he would be so shocked to find himself in the cemetery that he would realize his problem and stop drinking. Their plan may have worked were it not for a strange happening. A caravan passing near the cemetery was attacked. As the caravan quickly left the area, a large barrel fell and rolled next to the sleeping, drunk father. When the father awoke, he was surprised to find the faucet of a barrel of wine right next to his face. Excitedly, he put his mouth on the faucet and kept drinking, right there in the cemetery.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler commented, we see from here the principle that **Hashem leads a person in the way he wants to go.** The events that led to the person to find the wine in the cemetery were so unusual that they were almost miraculous. Rav Dessler continues, "If this is so when a person wants to do something which is improper, **how much more so will Hashem lead one on the way when a person has a strong will to do what: is good. The greater our desire to do something, the more successful we will be. We should increase our desire for spiritual matters and Hashem will give us special help to lead us in that path and help us achieve our goal.**

Based on a dvar Torah by *Rabbi Zelig Pliskin*

Torah Tavlin



Chacham Rabbeinu Chayim Palagi zt"l (Kaf HaChayim) would say: **קָרַב אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעַשׂ** 9:7 - Rashi tells us: ***'Aharon שהיה אהרן בוש ויירא לגשת was embarrassed and afraid to approach the Mizbeach. Moshe said to him: אמר לו משה למה אתה בוש, לכך נבחרת-Why are you ashamed? For this you have been chosen!'***

Moshe lost the Kehunah when Hashem told him to go to Pharaoh and be His messenger to take the Jewish people out of Egypt, and he refused a number of times.

Hashem took away Moshe's right to serve as Kohen Gadol. Now, Moshe tells Aharon, 'Do not refuse or be ashamed to do the Avodah. This is what you have been chosen to do and if you refuse like I did, you will lose this golden opportunity, much like I did!"

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The *sefarim* teach that in the summer the *yetzer hara* becomes stronger. This is one of the reasons we read *Pirkei Avos* on Shabbos afternoons in the summer. The *mussar* of Pirkei Avos tames the *yetzer hara*. Perhaps, for the same reason, we have the mitzva sefiras ha'omer at this time of year. Sefiras Ha'Omer increases our desire for *kedushah*, and that gives us strength to fight the yetzer hara.

וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־הָעָם 9:23



Two men were shipwrecked on a deserted island and not knowing what else to do, they agreed that they had no other recourse but to pray to G-d. In order to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island. The first thing they prayed for was food. The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruit. The other man's parcel of land remained barren. The first man prayed for clothes and more food. The next day, like magic, all of these were given to him.

The second man still had nothing. Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man boarded the ship and decided to leave the second man on the island.

As he was about to leave, he hears a booming voice from Heaven. "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?" The first man replied, "These blessing are for me since I prayed for them. His prayers went unanswered, so he does not deserve anything." "You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked him. "He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for him, you would not have received any of My blessings." The first man asked, "What did he pray for that I should owe him anything?" "He prayed that all your prayers be answered."

As soon as the Mishkan was inaugurated, Moshe began to daven for the people. His prayer was that Hashem should accept the work of their hands. When people daven for one another, Hashem is happy

with their prayers and is more apt to accede to them. We should take a lesson from Moshe who did not think about himself or his needs but rather what was important for the Nation. When we daven, let us ask Hashem to bless others - and then we will be included in the blessings.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן הוּא אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה׳ לֵאמֹר בִּקְרֹבַי אֶקָּדֵשׁ וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָעָם אֶכָּבֵד וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן 10:3



The Torah and our Sages praise Aharon HaKohen after the death of his sons for his silence.

The Mashgiach, **R' Shlomo Wolbe zt"l,** discusses the art of silence. He wrote: "We teach a child to speak. Once we teach him to speak, this becomes his nature, to speak and to chatter without end. Do we teach this child how to be silent as well? Behold, silence is also a tool." Silence can be an expression. It can be a tool, and through it one makes a statement. R' Wolbe is teaching us that when it comes to children, we must teach and encourage the tool and skill of silence just as we teach the tool and skill of speech. The following story teaches us about the power of one's silence. It took place during the Second World War, in Bergen -Belsen.

On Friday, the eighth of Av, 1944 (5704), someone lit a mattress on fire in the camp and burned it to a crisp. The Nazis were incensed over the loss of goods and in retribution decreed that no Jews would receive any food that entire day.

There was one woman in the camp who was well-known for her kindness and dignity. This was no ordinary woman; she retained her

modesty when others didn't bother. She kept her head covered the entire time she was in the camp even though she could have wrapped herself with the extra cloth to keep out a bit of the winter chill. Even when she became ill and could barely walk due to her exhausted and starved state, she could always be found tending to the sick in the hospital ward.

One day, she heard weeping and found another lady lying in critical condition. She asked what she was crying about, and the sick lady answered feebly that she had finally gotten a bit of milk to drink, but it was so cold that she was unable to drink it. (When one is dying of starvation and typhus, the frustration and despair this situation would cause is unimaginable.)

What did the woman do? She took the cup of milk and walked outside. A few minutes later she came back in, her face smudged with soot and her eyes red; but in her hand was a cup of warm milk. She had warmed it over a fire she lit from scraps of paper and bits of wood she had gathered, one by one. She did this despite the prohibition the Germans had placed on lighting fires. This righteous woman would not pass up the opportunity to aid the sick. On that fateful day, when the Germans refused to provide any nourishment to the inmates of Bergen-Belsen, the woman was only looking out for children. Somehow, she managed to obtain some oats which she cooked into porridge to feed some children, including her four-year-old daughter.

Sadly, though, just as the porridge was cooked and ready to be served, she was caught by two of the kapos, who threatened to report her to the Nazis. She would have to appear before a tribunal that very night - Friday night - to answer for her "crime."

The tribunal did not involve the Germans. The judges were Jews themselves who served the Nazi overlords slavishly. They felt empowered and did not allow the Jews to do anything that would

anger the Germans. In this case, how dare this woman cook for her children against the regulations?

They made short work of the trial and the woman was "sentenced" to two days without her bread ration, which she would have to hand over to the kapos. Throughout the mock "trial" the woman refused to utter a word. She did not even bother to deny several of the trumped-up charges, which were totally untrue.

When she was released, she walked back to her barracks, where her relatives and friends were waiting for her. Upon her arrival, she told them what had happened and what her sentence was.

The people in her barracks asked her why she had not defended herself against the false charges, but she gave no answer, and instead became quite upset and agitated. A while later, one of her sons, Rabbi Yonah Emanuel, was bold enough to ask her again why she had refused to say anything in her defence. Why hadn't she at least argued that on that day there was no food, and she couldn't let her young daughter and other children starve? These extenuating circumstances might have led them to give her a lighter sentence.

This time she responded, "The judges, the prosecutor, the defending attorney, and the court recorder were all Jews. They pretended to conduct a real trial and they used an actual person to capture each word. It was a sham, but it looked real. The recorder was writing down everything - each word that I would have spoken was causing a Jew to write on Shabbos! I had to keep silent. It is better to be hungry a while longer than to cause another Jew to desecrate the Shabbos."

"To worry over sin is itself a sin. It leads to melancholy [sadness], which makes true penitence – Teshuvah, impossible." ~ Sipurei Chasidim

The Apter Rav, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heshel zt"l (Ohev Yisroel) would say:



"The reason for the minhag to pierce the challos with keys on the Shabbos after Pesach, and for making shapes of keys on the challos (Shlissel Challah), could be based on the fact that Bnei Yisroel stopped eating the Mann after the initial conquest of the Holy Land, after the Omer offering was offered on the Second Day of Pesach, as it says, "*And on the morrow of the Pesach they ate from the old produce of the Land,*" (Yehoshua 5:11). Chazal tell us, "*On the day after Pesach they ate, but until then they did not eat.*" (Kiddushin 37b)

This means that this was the time when Bnei Yisroel began to eat from the produce of the Land, and they needed parnassa for the first time, as until now they had the Mann. It is known that everything has a gate in heaven, and we pray that Hashem should open up the gates of parnassa. This is where the minhag arose to make the shape of a key on the challos, to hint that Hashem should open the gates of parnassa for us."

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"Master of the Universe, You have cast Your children into galus to cause them to repent. I emphatically declare, though, that this way will not make them improve! - Try instead to send Moshiach, and see how they run after You!"

Concepts In Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

אֶת־ הַגָּמָל כִּי־מַעֲלֵה גֵרָה הוּא וּפַרְסָה אֵינֶנּוּ טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם 11:4 מַפְרִיס טָמֵא הִוא לָכֶם



Most animals do not have any simanim. Only four animals have one kosher sign while lacking the other. Chazal tell us why the Torah stresses that they have only one kosher sign - it is a lesson in chinuch. One must first note a positive aspect before criticizing a negative attribute. When a father must punish a child for misbehaviour, he should not immediately criticize the child. He should first mention a good attribute of the child and then present the problem. This is a lesson we can learn from the way the Torah describes the non-kosher status of the four animals that have only one siman. The Torah first presents the positive aspect of the camel, by specifying that it chews its cud, and then describes that it is not kosher because its hooves are not split. By the Chazer (pig) the opposite is true - its hooves are split but it is not kosher because it doesn't chew its cud.

R' Avraham Pam zt"l recalls a story where a prominent Rav, a father of one of his Talmidim, was told that despite his son's intellect, he wasn't doing as well as he could. Upon hearing this, the father asked to call in his son to discuss it. R' Pam immediately regretted telling the father, nervously awaiting the man's reaction. When the father arrived, he called over his son and said, "Your Rebbi just told me how well you're doing, but if you tried harder, you could be an excellent student!" The boy's face lit up.

After this meeting there was a marked improvement and he developed into an excellent student. Had the father sharply criticized the boy in front of his Rebbi, the talmid might have

become angry at his father and at his Rebbi, and very little would have been accomplished. Instead, the father's wise mussar built up the boy's self-esteem for himself and his Rebbi, while at the same time communicating the need for improvement.

From this, we can learn the proper method of good criticism as an art that can be applied. Harsh criticism rarely works and is sometimes counterproductive. When criticism is given in a positive way it can be a means of great improvement both in middos and avodas Hashem. May we always consider a child's feelings while criticizing him for his behaviour - just as the Torah first presents a positive aspect before a negative.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

אֶת־הַגָּמָל כִּי־מַעֲלֵה גֵרָה הוּא וּפַרְסָה אֵינֶנּוּ מַפְרִיס טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם 11:4



The Torah describes three animals which are **טָמֵא** (impure) since they have only one kosher sign. However, by the camel (**גָּמָל**), the posuk says that its hoof is not split **אֵינֶנּוּ מַפְרִיס**, present tense. About the rabbit (**שפן**) it says in future tense that it's hoof will not split **לא יפריס**, while it describes the hare **ארנבת** as its hoof was not split **לא הפריסה** in past tense.

R' Yissochar Frand shlit'a teaches us a great Mussar lesson in the name of **R' Yisroel Salanter zt"l**. He says that all three posukim end with the Torah telling us that the animal is impure. This teaches us that before you judge something or someone as **טָמֵא**- "impure" - you have to know his past, present and future. We must not be quick to judge others unfavourably because we really do not know the entire

story. If we see someone acting improperly, or we THINK it is improper, it just might be that we don't know what happened before, what is going on right now or what is about to happen! We all have a special mitzvah to emulate Hashem. The Name of Hashem - "Yud Kei Vav Kei" - represents the middah of rachmanus. We know that these letters represent the concept of past, present and future. In fact, it is because Hashem knows EVERYTHING that happened, happens and will happen to a person that He is the quintessential **רחמן**.

Hashem knows our past, present and future and therefore Only He is truly Merciful! One of the ways to practically have mercy on people and judge them favourably is when we see someone doing something that looks "impure," we should remember that perhaps we THINK it is wrong because we don't see the whole picture! We don't know the past, present and future. May we all be zoche to judge each other favourably. It is truly the foundation of mercy and kindness.

וְאֶת־הַחֲזִיר כִּי־מַפְרִיס פַּרְסָה הוּא וְשֹׁסַע שֶׁסַע פַּרְסָה וְהוּא גֵּרָה לֹא־יִגָּר טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם 11:7

In an attempt to belittle him, a Catholic Bishop once accosted **R' Yonason Eibeschutz zt"l** and asked him a question. "Your religion makes no sense. Why is it that if a live chicken eats an entire litre of butter, he remains kosher and Jews can eat it, but if that very same chicken is then cooked in a pot and the tiniest smidgen of butter falls into the pot, it becomes forbidden? If you people are so intelligent, how do you reconcile this?"

R' Yonason quickly replied. "What? And your religion is any better? If you were to take a pig and cook it in a pot, and the tiniest smidgen of dung or dirt falls in, you would throw that pot out in a second and not touch the food. You would consider it disgusting! And yet, when this very same pig is alive, it rolls around in the most disgusting piles of manure, ingesting dirt, dung and every other form of detestable abomination - and that you have no problem with?"



There is probably no animal as disgusting to Jewish sensitivities as the pig. It's not just because it may not be eaten: there are plenty of other animals that aren't kosher either, but none of them arouse as much disgust as the pig. The swine is the ultimate symbol of loathing; when you say that someone "acted like a chazir (pig)," it suggests that he or she did something unusually abominable.

Chazal tell us: "Ten measures of plague came to the world and pigs took nine of them." **The Rambam** writes that pigs wallow in the muck and eat revolting things. Were Jews allowed to eat pork, they would raise swine and thereby introduce filth into their homes. The purity of Klal Yisroel, both on a hygienic and spiritual level is distinguished from the other nations, and avoiding such abomination is what sets us apart.

Torah Gems

The Rambam lays down a general, if not inclusive and ultra-important principle, with regard to kosher and non-kosher animals: "If an unclean animal has an offspring resembling a clean animal, even if it has cloven hoofs and does chew its cud, and completely resembles an ox or a sheep, it is forbidden for consumption.

The rule is that the offspring of an unclean animal is unclean, and the offspring of a clean animal is clean." This ruling is based on the words of the gemara: "*That which goes forth from the tamei (unclean) is tamei and that which goes forth from the tahor (clean) is tahor.*"



R' Meir Shapiro ZT"L of Lublin points out that there are two exceptions to the above ruling; namely, milk and honey. Milk originates from the blood of an animal, as Chazal teach us that the blood of the female becomes decomposed during the nursing period and it eventually turns into milk. Nevertheless, milk is still considered Tahor - clean, and worthy of consumption. Similarly honey, which is produced from the "unclean" bee, is nevertheless deemed "clean" and permitted to be eaten.

Based on this, the Lubliner Rov declares that the title אֶ֣רֶץ זָבַ֤ת חָלָב֙ וּדְבָ֔שׁ- ***"Land flowing with milk and honey"*** that the Torah attributes to Eretz Yisroel is not simply an adjective extolling the land in general terms, but rather it is a perfectly suited description of its virtues. Just as milk and honey have the peculiar distinction of being "clean" although derived from that which is "unclean," so too, the Land of Israel is imbued with the characteristic of transforming that which is "unclean" - an idolatrous nation emerging from the depths of impurity, into that which is "clean."

R' Simcha Zissel Ziv ZT"L (Alter from Kelm) would say: יַ֥יִן וְשֵׁכָ֖ר אַל־תֵּ֣שְׁתְּ 10:9- Chazal tell us: 'One who drinks a Revi'is (3-3.5 oz) of wine should not render a halachic ruling.' (Eruvin 64a) Although we do not find that drinking such a small amount of alcohol can actually impair one's ability to think clearly, nevertheless, if the Torah and the Sages understood it this way, then it must be relevant.



For example, if a person leaves over a few crumbs from a loaf of bread, it's no big deal. But if someone leaves behind a few ounces of gold from a valuable artifact, you can be sure he'll want it back. The laws of the Torah are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world and one must be careful with the slightest law to make sure it does not go awry."

וְאֵת הַחֲסִידָה

A man was sitting at home resting when he hears a knock at the door. He opens the door and finds a homeless man standing there. The man extends a filthy, grimy, calloused hand and asks, "Can I have a dollar for some food?" The man hesitates for only a second and then does what any good person would do: pulls out his wallet and hands the beggar a dollar, and quickly sends him on his way. The homeless man is already halfway down the street when he hears someone calling after him, "Wait, wait!" He turns to see the same man waving him down. The man catches up to the beggar and then hands him another dollar.

Upon returning home, the man's wife is standing in the doorway looking at him questioningly. "I'll explain," he says. "When I first opened the door and saw a smelly, raggedy, grimy man standing in front of me, I felt uncomfortable. I hurried to give him a dollar because I wanted to get rid of him as soon as possible. But after he left, I realized that I didn't give him the dollar for him, I gave him the dollar for me - because I felt uncomfortable. So I wanted to give a second dollar - this time for him!"

The chasidah is a bird so named because it does great kindness (chessed) with its friends. **The Chiddushei HaRim** explains that the



chasida's generosity is limited to its own circle of friends, to the exclusion of others. Such partisan kindness is not what the Torah wishes us to practice. Chessed cannot be predicated on an expectation of return. A real friend sometimes gives and sometimes takes, but never keeps score. True kindness extends beyond one's own circle of family and friends - true kindness extends indiscriminately to everyone. Otherwise ... you serve no one but yourself!

The Yalkut Shimoni writes: *"Tzaddikim are in the habit of accepting Hashem's treatment of them as justice ... Moshe told Aharon, 'Aharon, my brother, your sons died only for the sake of His holy Name.' .... Aharon remained silent and was rewarded for his silence. From here, they said, 'Anyone who accepts (his decree) and is silent, it bodes well for him.'"*

The following story was told over in a shmuess given by the legendary Maggid, **R' Yaakov Galinsky ZT"L**. The famous French general, turned emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, conquered large portions of the European continent. Then he turned his sights on Russia. When the second campaign was launched, winter had already begun. As everyone knows, Russian winters are brutal. Napoleon besieged one city but was not successful in bringing it to its knees. After a week of siege, and then a second, the city still did not succumb. Heavy snow fell, causing more trouble for him. One morning, one of his

generals came to him and said, "Your majesty, we cannot go on this way. We must either advance or leave the field. Our soldiers, camped out in open fields, are freezing to death and beginning to rebel."



Napoleon said, "I have already considered the situation, and here is what I have decided. You and I will take off our army uniforms and disguise ourselves as simple peasants. We will slip into the enemy's city and see what sort of conditions prevail there. If we see that they are organized and they still have food, we will leave this place, as it is clear, we cannot win. If not, we will know that they will soon fall into our hands, and this knowledge will encourage our soldiers."

The next day, Napoleon and his general, dressed as simple peasant farmers, set out on the side roads leading into the city. They bypassed guards and sentries and eventually made their way into the centre of the city, where they entered a restaurant for a bite to eat.

The establishment was jampacked with patrons of all sorts, including a garrison of Russian soldiers. Napoleon strained to hear their conversation at a nearby table. "What will become of us?" he heard one soldier say out loud, "The kitchen is bare. It's a week since we've eaten bread. We'll all die of hunger!" A second soldier responded, "A week? I haven't tasted fresh bread in almost a month!"

Hearing this, Napoleon was encouraged. Suddenly, he noticed one of the soldiers sitting in the restaurant looking at him and telling his commanding officer, "I am absolutely certain. There is no doubt.

That man sitting in the corner of the room is the great Napoleon!" The two Frenchmen became nervous, as the commanding officer asked him how he could be so sure. "I was once in a certain city when Napoleon held a military parade, and I saw him clearly. That is him, I am fairly certain. If you don't believe me, why not go over to him and ask to see his papers?" Well, this complicated matters. Napoleon and his general were frightened. It seems they were caught - with no way out of this predicament.

But suddenly, the French general sitting opposite his commander roused himself and began to berate the smaller man (Napoleon was notoriously short) at the top of his voice: "What is taking you so long? Bring me some beer already! How long must I wait? I gave you money. Did you decide to keep it all for yourself?"

The Frenchman made such a scene that everyone in the establishment began to laugh raucously. Slapping the Russian soldier on his back, they told him, "Ha! Is this the Napoleon you're imagining? Apparently, your mind doesn't function properly when it is starved!"

Instantly, the real Napoleon stood up and ran to fetch the beer. Along the way, he tripped and fell down. The French general came over to him and slapped him. "I don't want to see your face around me! Now get out of here!" With the general still beating Napoleon, the two made their exit from the restaurant and ran for their lives. Not slowing to even look back, they ran as fast as their legs could carry them until they arrived back in the forest, to the French army camp.

Upon their return to base, the general approached the emperor and said, "Your majesty, please forgive me for striking and humiliating you." But Napoleon was incredulous. "Are you kidding? Have you any need to beg my forgiveness? You saved my life! Had you not degraded and struck me, I would already be hanging from the gallows. I owe you a thank you!"

At times, we receive a few slaps from Hashem. But, says R' Yankel, being exposed to mortification and scorn, you never know how much you have profited!

The Gerrer Rebbe, R' Avraham Mordechai Alter ZT"L (Imrei Emes) would say:



"'Whatever moves on its belly (גחון) you shall not eat; for they are an abomination.' According to tradition, the Hebrew letter 'vav' (the third letter in the word גחון) is the exact middle letter in the entire Torah.

This hints to us that even if one studies hard and has already learned half of the Torah, he must not consider himself great or be boastful. Don't let your chest swell - you should still consider yourself as low as a creature that walks on its belly in the dust."

R' Pinchos Halevi Hurvitz ZT"L (Ba'al Hafla'ah) said:

"When I was appointed Rov of the great city of Frankfurt, I imagined that it was my funeral procession and the large crowd that was present were the people escorting me to the cemetery. This prevented me from any feeling of arrogance."

An Arab once came to the Sephardic Gaon, R' Shlomo Duran ZT"L and asked, "Why do Jews wash their hands before praying and eating?" "Because we believe that purity is attained from water," replied R' Shlomo. He added that our rabbis understood the posuk, "You shall sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy" as referring to hand washing before and after eating, respectively.

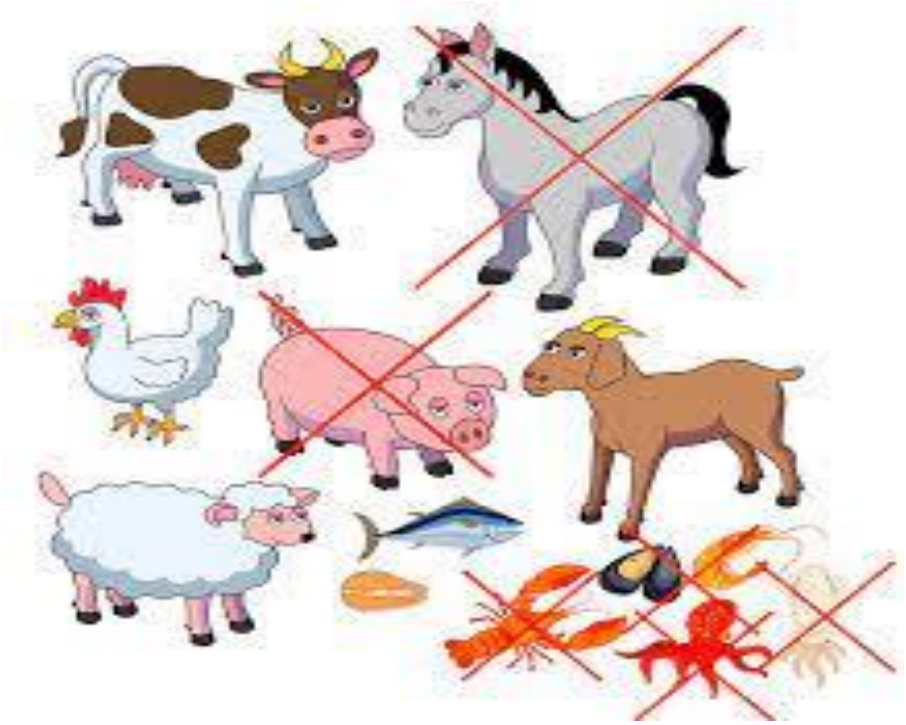


The point of these washings is for sanctity and purity. "If so," mocked the Muslim, "Our purity is, in fact, greater than yours! We Muslims wash our heads, hands and feet before each prayer service, while you just pour a small amount of water over your hands!"

R' Shlomo smiled and said, "You should know that purification through water works only for one who is pure at his core. Chickens spend their lives pecking at trash, and yet everyone eats their meat; at the same time, frogs spend their lives on water and virtually no one eats them." The Arab's face turned black.

The rabbi turned to his students and said, "This is true not only regarding water, but also regarding Torah. Chazal say, 'Just as water raises a person from impurity to purity, so do the words of Torah.' This applies only to Jews, who are sacred and pure, believers and children of believers. Gentiles may not study Torah, because it will not help them at all!"

Living Jewish - Kosher Signs



The Torah portion, Shemini, discusses the pure animals that we are allowed to eat, and the impure ones that we are forbidden to eat. The Torah gives two signs to recognize a pure animal: it chews the cud, and it has split hoofs. One of the reasons offered for the dietary laws is that everything a person eats is transformed into blood and flesh, becoming an integral part of that person. The Torah thus prohibits certain foods in order to prevent man from assimilating the evil characteristics of the forbidden food. If there is a prohibition against eating animals which do not chew the cud and do not have a split hoofs (in order to preclude assimilation of the characteristics of those animals), it follows that the proper conduct for man should be one that embraces the concepts of a split hoof and chewing the cud. The hoof must be split entirely, from the top to the very bottom. The hoof is divided into two, to indicate that our walking on this earth, i.e., our mundane involvements, must include two basic principles: drawing near to oneself that which is good and proper and pushing away that which is not. But the sign of a split hoof by itself is not sufficient. There must also be the sign of chewing the cud.

One must very carefully "chew over" every mundane activity which one intends to undertake. One must clarify and determine, once and again, whether to do it altogether, and if so, how to do it. Only then

will the action itself be a "pure animal" - something which can and is used for our spiritual mission in life.

Regarding fowl, we do not rely on signs alone, but we also require a tradition affirming that species' purity. Off hand, one could ask why we need such a tradition. Observing the signs would seem sufficient. However, this comes to teach us that one cannot rely on one's own intelligence. It is possible to study the Code of Jewish Law and even follow a course of behaviour which one's own intellect determines to be "beyond the letter of the law." One must follow the tradition.

The Hebrew word for tradition is mesora, which is related to the word mesira - devotion and being bound together. In order to follow the Jewish tradition, we must be devoted to and bound together with other Jews and Torah leaders who can teach us the ways of our tradition. *(Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.)*

From our Sages

וַיִּשָּׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־יָדָיו וַיְבָרְכֵם אֶל־הָעָם ***Aaron lifted up his hands to the people and blessed them (9:22)***

Why did Aaron, not Moshe, bless the Jewish people? The Divine Presence could only rest in the Tabernacle after the sin of the Golden Calf was atoned for. Aaron was the one who had to effect the atonement, as it was he who was ultimately responsible for the sin having been committed in the first place. Therefore, he was the one to bless the people. *(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Bnei Yissaschar teaches that the greatest tzedakah is to teach Torah to someone who is poor in knowledge.

A Segulah for Good Children



The Chasam Sofer zt"l gives us a segulah for raising good, ehrlicher children. He says that when parents honour others, their children will grow up to be talmidei chachamim and tzaddikim. When parents look down at others, it weakens the children's potential for their spiritual future. Children should be raised in a home where parents respect others. The children should hear their parents praising their fellow man, and they should witness how their parents refuse to speak (or even hear) anything derogatory about G-d fearing yidden. This will be conducive for the children's spiritual growth. One of the Chasam Sofer's sources is the gemara in Nedarim (81.). The gemara asks, "Why are the children of talmidei chachamim rarely talmidei chachamim themselves?..." We would assume that a child raised in a talmid chacham's home should also become one. He saw his father studying Torah every spare moment, and he saw his father's love for Torah. Most probably, the father taught him a lot of Torah too. However, the gemara says, it is rare that the child will become a Torah scholar. Why?

The gemara gives several answers. One answer is, "It is because they call people donkeys." Their greatness in Torah can cause them to look down on others. As the Rashi commentary on Nedarim explains, "They don't honour others; they disgrace them, because of the Torah they have." This results with their children lacking Torah knowledge.

The Chasam Sofer explains that it isn't only Torah knowledge that the children will lack, they will also be deficient in yiras Shamayim. So, the formula for raising good G-d fearing children is to imbue the home with respect for people.

The Chasam Sofer concludes with a promise, "Practice seeing the qualities in others, and you are guaranteed that your children will not fall off the derech, and they will not die in their younger years."

Slowly but Surely

This week, the Torah tells us about the **שמונה שרצים** (the eight small animals) that cause tumah when they are dead. They are, "The weasel, the mouse, the toad… The porcupine, the koach, the lizard, the snail, the mole…" (11:29 Rashi).



The Koznitzer Magid zt"l said that **שרץ** can also mean, "that runs." So, the passuk is teaching us that rushing is tumah (impurity) because when one believes that everything is destined by Hashem, there is absolutely no reason to rush.

HaRav Kahanaman, the Ponevezher Rav zt"l, was in the Diaspora, collecting money for the Ponevezh Yeshiva. He called up one wealthy donor and asked for a meeting. This philanthropist replied, "I have to catch a train early in the morning. Meet me at the train station eight thirty, and I will give you a donation."

Sometime later, the Ponovezher Rav realized that it would be impossible for him to daven shacharis with a minyan, and also be on

time for the meeting. He had to choose one over the other. His first thought was that he should forgo shacharis with a minyan for a day, since it was tzorchei rabim; he needed money for the yeshiva. But on second thought, he decided that he would daven with a minyan. He finished shacharis and arrived at the train station at nine o'clock. It was late, he knew, but he decided to try anyway. Perhaps he might still meet him. The philanthropist came and asked for forgiveness. "I was delayed this morning, and I missed the train. I"ll have to wait for the next train. I thought that you wouldn't be here anymore. I am glad that you waited for me…" and he gave the Ponovezher Rav a very large cheque, enough to support the yeshiva for about a half-year.

The Ponovezher Rav showed the cheque to the yeshiva bachurim, and said, "I am not telling you this story so you should know that one doesn't lose out by being careful to daven with a minyan, because that is obvious and simple. I am telling this story so you shall see what one gains by davening with a minyan. Because if I would have davened alone, and rushed to the train station, to be there at eight thirty, I would wait some time, see that the philanthropist isn't showing up and I'd leave. By not rushing, and by davening with a minyan, I merited receiving this cheque."

Migdal Ohr - J. Gewirtz

וְאֵת שְׂעִיר הַחַטָּאת דָּרֹשׁ דָּרַשׁ מֹשֶׁה וְהִנֵּה שָׂרָף 10:16

"Moshe inquired insistently about the he-goat of the sin offering for behold it was burned!"

When Nadav and Avihu died by Divine action, Aharon and his remaining two sons were now in a category of mourning that might have precluded them from eating from the korbanos. Three sacrifices were offered, two were one-time offerings while the third, the goat of Rosh Chodesh, the new month, would be offered

again the following month. It was this third goat that Aharon decided not to eat from, and which he had burned. When Moshe inquired about this, he was not precisely sure what the halacha should have been. He was upset that he did not have time to discuss, reflect, and rule on the matter before it was done. Aharon, for his part, explained his position, while Moshe offered his.

The two of them essentially had what **R' Tzadok HaKohain** writes was the first "Talmudic discussion" in the Torah, in which reasoning was used to interpret the breadth and applicability of the halacha in question. Interestingly, this verse is the halfway point of the Torah in terms of word count, with one instance of the word **דרש** the end of the first half, and the second instance of the word **דרש** beginning the second half. This is significant for several reasons.

First, we learn that when there is a division, one ought to seek out and try to find a way to unify. Peace is so important that one cannot simply assume there is no common ground, but rather he must find a way for them to join together.

Secondly, this proves what the Gemara says in Kiddushin (30b) that two people studying Torah together can be bitter enemies, but they will end up loving each other. Though Moshe and Aharon disagreed on the applicable Halacha, they were able to grow in respect and love for each other, despite being on two sides of the law.

Finally, the fact that the Torah is divided between the same words is a commentary on the fact that you can have two opposing views, and both are Torah! Right or wrong are usually a matter of perspective. Intriguingly, the Mishna says that we are to listen to the sages even if they tell us that right is left. But how can that be when we KNOW they are wrong? Let us ask why it says they tell you right is left. Why not up and down? Right and left is actually very specific. When we are facing each other, my right is the other person's left. We are both correct; it just depends on how you look at it. The Mishna meant to tell us that the chachomim have a better

perspective on life and we should listen to their guidance. We do this by seeking the truth and learning the Torah, as did Moshe.



One day, a man hung a poster on the bulletin board in his shul stating that ***R' Yaakov Kamenetsky*** *had ruled that one may not lick the glue on the back of an envelope. Presumably, the glue was made from non-Kosher animals and was therefore prohibited. Someone else saw this and asked R' Yaakov about the psak. "I didn't rule that way," he said. "Why do you think I did." They called in the fellow who posted the sign. "True, the Rav did not 'say' it in so many words, but I saw him sealing an envelope. Instead of licking it as most people do, he licked his finger and used that to seal the glue. Clearly he held that the glue is not kosher and thus problematic!" R' Yaakov smiled and replied, "I did lick my finger instead of the envelope. But it was because I had a cut on my tongue!"*

The Number 8

The sedra is called shemini; meaning 'the 8th.' **The Maharal** points out that the number 7 represents the natural world. There are 7 colours in the spectrum (rainbow) and 7 days of the week – representing filling the dimensions of time and space of our natural world. And the number 8 means being above nature. This is why the bris milah is on the 8th day; for that is our showing of our supernatural connection to HaShem. And the supernatural Chaunkah miracle was eight days too, as were there eight days to the inauguration of the mishkan; the supernatural means of 'housing' HaShem in this world.

Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l and his chassidim were visiting the home of the daughter of **Rebbe Boruch of Mezibuzh**.



When they were ready to leave, they were in a great rush. The chassidim were packing the bags quickly, because they had to go somewhere fast. At this time, Rebbe Moshe Kobriner asked the rebbetzin, "Tell us something that you remember, from your father Rebbe Boruch'l."

She said, "My father would always say, **א יוד טאר זיך נישט יאגען**, "a Yid mustn't be in a rush." Rebbe Moshe Kobriner immediately told his chassidim that there is a change of plans, and they needn't rush. He told his chassidim to slower their pace. They would leave when they are ready and prepared.

When they left the home, they heard that there was a band of robbers waiting outside to ambush them, and to steal their money. If they would have rushed, they would run straight into their trap. But because they didn't rush, the robbers saw that they weren't coming out and decided to leave.

The Baal Shem Tov said *one should abolish the rushing*. There are times when one should rush (for example, to get to a Torah shiur or to tefillah on time) but often the calm and tranquil route is preferred. It allows for time to recognize all the kindness that Hashem bestows, and it allows for time to think about the matters that are important in life. Trust in Hashem, and know that He is in charge, and lead your life **על מי מנוחות** with tranquillity.

Hashgacha Pratis story for the whole family - A good deed never goes unrewarded.



On Thursday, December 21, 1988, Pan Am flight 103 crashed over Scotland, one hour after it departed from London to New York. All 258 people on board perished. Sholom carries his airline tickets from that flight in the shirt pocket over his heart, as witness to the miracle of his rescue.

Just before the flight, Sholom suddenly suffered terrible pains in his back. He was forced to enter the hospital to undergo a routine two-day treatment for a slipped disk. In this way he could make his flight on Thursday to attend a family simcha in New York on Thursday night.

Sholom was quite surprised when R' Chaim, the Rav of his shul, came to visit him in the hospital on Tuesday. Sholom, was already feeling better, and was ready to be discharged. He was, after all, not really ill. As they spoke, R' Chaim strongly advised Sholom to change his flight to Wednesday, the day before his scheduled Thursday flight, so that he could arrive early and leave himself time to rest. Then he could properly dance at the simcha, without being overly exhausted. Sholom changed his flight, in deference to R' Chaim's care and concern for him.

Later, R' Chaim himself admitted that he could not explain why he had suddenly gone to visit Sholom in the hospital, who was only in for

minor treatment. This in itself is enough of a miracle. But the miracle of Sholom's rescue really began many decades before.

When the Nazis y"s were rounding up men and boys to send to forced labour camps, a certain young yeshivah student hid in a double hideout in an apartment. He spent his days learning Torah. A woman in the apartment across the hall, whose husband had already been taken away, supplied the young man with all his needs. She saw it as a privilege to protect him since he was learning Torah. She would warn him to remain in his hiding place when she saw soldiers approaching to conduct searches.

Once the young man was standing in the hallway when he heard stomping boots running up the steps. His blood froze! The woman motioned to him to come into her apartment, pointing to a seemingly ridiculous hiding place – behind her opened front door.

When the SS men entered, the woman opened her door wide, standing calmly while leaning on the door. They had come to search for any men who might be in the home. The woman insisted there were only small children at home. They overturned the house, ranting and raving all the while. They threatened repeatedly to kill her and her children if she was hiding anyone. The young man almost died from fright. He wondered why she was sacrificing her life and that of her children for him.

Finally, the SS left. The young man endured the horrors of the war, but came out alive, thanks to the self-sacrifice of the remarkable woman. The young man? R' Chaim. The woman? Sholom's grandmother. Decades later it was R' Chaim's turn to save his saviour's descendant. *(There Is No Such Thing as Coincidence)*



"Think good and it will be good" -Tzemach Tzedek



Why I Matter

אֶת כָּל־עֹרֵב לְמִינוֹ ***Every raven according to its kind*** *(11:15)*



The raven is forbidden to be eaten, yet the dove is kosher. This is because what we eat has an effect on our character. During the time of Noach the raven proved itself to be heartless and selfish while the dove was revealed to be modest and compassionate. At first the raven was sent from the Ark to find dry land, but instead it busied itself looking for food while everyone on the Ark was anxiously awaiting its return. Afterwards, Noach sent a dove which carried out the mission properly. (*R. Dov Aryeh Berzan)*

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

The Mechaber writes (260:2) that as Shabbos approaches, we should be extra careful to speak nicely and softly to each other. By speaking gently instead of raising our voices, everyone stays calm and happy, and things get taken care of in the proper way (Mishnah Brurah 260:10). The Meforshim write that there is a special Yetzer Hara that was created just to make people argue and fight on Erev Shabbos. He takes advantage of the pressure everyone has of getting ready on time and causes people to lose their patience and snap at each other. By being aware of this Yetzer Hara's mission, we can avoid the pitfalls and not fall into his traps and stay calm every Erev Shabbos!

Rabbi Yosef Richtman - Soft Spoken

The Torah describes the different simanim that make an animal kosher. It is understood that if the animal is missing one of these simanim it would be deemed unfit for a Jew to eat.

Why was it necessary for the Torah to expound for the camel, rabbit, and pig that they have only one siman that makes them kosher, yet they are still tamei (11: 4-7)?

Rav Pam zt"l answers that we learn a lesson in how to rebuke from these pesukim. When one needs to criticize or reprimand someone they shouldn't just open with harsh words. Rather they should find a way to compliment or encourage and only then criticize. Rav Pam sees this lesson from the way the Torah first describes how this animal has a kosher trait and only then does the Torah criticize it for being not kosher.

Say It If You Mean It

After all the korbanos were brought on the eight day, Aharon blesses the Jewish people. What happened that he felt the need to bentch them now, more than any time before?

A Kohen can only bless the people when he loves them, and they love him. We know Aharon played a role in the golden calf and it is possible that he felt anger towards the Jewish for forcing him to be part of it. Also the Jewish people might have been angry at Aharon for taking part in the golden calf.

Now, that the mishkan was finished, the korbanos were brought, and Hashem forgave the Jewish people. The shechinah is residing amongst them, there was a love that enveloped all the people. Now was a perfect time to bentch the people. To bless someone with your whole heart you must have a good feeling towards that person.!

Parshah Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



A clay vessel can only become impure when something impure falls inside of it (11:33). Metal vessels, however, become impure even when they are touched on the outside by impurity.

The Ma'ayanah Shel Torah quotes the Kotzker Rebbe who observed that this difference seems to be due to the value of the vessel. A clay vessel has no real value on its own, as its contents define its value. A metal vessel does have its own value. We too, who are formed from the earth, define our value based on what we choose to fill ourselves with.

Why were Nadav and Avihu punished? by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם And a fire went out from before Hashem and consumed them (10:2) The Gemora explains that Nadav and Avihu deserved to die because they were once walking behind Moshe and Aharon, when Nadav turned to his brother Avihu and said, "When will these two old people die so that me and you will lead the generation?"

This account is very perplexing; how could the sons and Aharon look forward to their father's and uncle's death? Furthermore, Nadav and Avihu were themselves giants in Torah and the most suitable candidates to take over from Moshe and Aharon as the leaders of the Jewish People if they would have lived. Were these great people so conceited that they could not wait until they had become the leaders of the generation?

Rav Yosef Salant answers that of course we cannot say such things about such great people, whose level of greatness we cannot come close to understanding. The reason why Nadav and Avihu were thinking such thoughts was solely in their deep desire to come close to Hashem in a way that was not possible unless they were leading the generation. This is because they knew that the leader of a generation is only given as much greatness as the generation is worthy of. At the same time, they knew that only this generation would reach such a lofty level of holiness and appreciation of Hashem, unparalleled until Moshiach arrives. Therefore, it was only through the greatness of *that* generation would Nadav and Avihu be capable of reaching the highest level of connection with Hashem. It is for this reason that they expressed a desire to lead the generation while the generation was still on a high level of holiness.

However, now that we see that their intentions were only positive and geared towards holiness, we must ask, why were they punished?

Rav Yosef Salant answers that that on their level of greatness, such thoughts were inappropriate.

We can take this idea further and suggest that such thoughts of personal greatness at the expense of others is not a character trait of a true Torah leader. In fact, we see quite the opposite from Torah leaders throughout the generations who give up so much time and energy for others when they could be sitting in the Beis Medrash probing the depths of Torah and developing a deeper appreciation and connection with Hashem. Therefore, we can suggest that since

Nadav and Avihu demonstrated that they did not possess this character trait to the extent was required of the next leaders of the generation they were prevented from inheriting the leadership from Moshe and Aharon.

Mrs. Sarah Karmely - A Wife's Blessings

ויברכו את העם וירא כבוד ד׳ And they blessed the people and the glory of Hashem appeared (Vayikra 9:23)

I once received an email from a woman named Amanda living in Ashdod. Born in Canada, she eventually went on to marry an Israeli man and permanently move to Israel. Life was going relatively smoothly, and only became that much better when she gave birth to her first child. Delighted and eager to build a family, she and her husband were overjoyed when the child was born. It was not too long thereafter that she in fact was expecting her second child. But then life changed.

Suddenly losing his job, her husband was out of work and understandably troubled. With little money to provide for his family, his marriage life began to suffer. Tension and arguments became commonplace in the home and matters went from bad to worse. Continuing to search for work, after much time and effort, he finally found a job working at a construction site.

But their relationship within the home did not become any better. As the wife became quite upset and frustrated with life in general, she began despising her husband. Angry both at her husband and G-d, she became less religious and contemplated running away from her husband. But already with one child and carrying another, she was unsure where to go and what to do.

She decided she would go speak to Chani Freidman at the local Chabad house. Perhaps, she thought, Chani could help her pull through everything. Sitting together with Chani, she began to pour

out her heart. "Is my marriage over? I don't love my husband and I want to leave. What should I do?" Gently looking back at her, Chani handed her a book I had written.

Reading through my book, she was moved by one particular article I had written in which I describe a family relative of mine who lives in Yerushalayim with fourteen children in a two-bedroom apartment. Despite the cramped living quarters, the family is happy.

In the article, I write about one of my visits to the family. Sitting down at the table early in the morning with the husband and wife, we all enjoyed a cup of tea. After a little while, it was time for the husband who owned a Jewish bookstore to go to work. As he got up from the table and began to head out the door, his wife followed him. Looking on as her husband began walking away from the house, she placed her hand on the Mezuzah.

And then she began to bless him, "Hashem, please take care of my husband, protect him, bless him, give him parnassah and grant him success." After doing so, she returned to the table and took a seat. Having never seen a wife act in such a way for her husband before, I myself was quite impressed. "Sarah," I said, "I have never seen such a thing before. What you do is beautiful." "Of course," she replied, "don't you know? If a woman blesses her husband, he will have success. If she doesn't, he will not."

As Amanda read this anecdote of mine, it suddenly dawned on her. "Why am I being so selfish? My husband is doing the best he can; why should I be upset with him?" And so, she decided to implement into real life what she had read in my book. Every single morning, without fail, as her husband would head out the door to work on his construction site, she placed her hand on the Mezuzah and blessed him.

One time, however, Amanda's baby kept her up all night. And, as could have been expected, by the time morning rolled around and the time arrived for her husband to leave the house, Amanda remained

fast asleep. While her husband did not wish to awaken her, he quietly left the house. But that did not mean he would not receive his daily blessing.

Immediately upon waking up and realizing what had happened, Amanda ran to the telephone. Her husband did not have enough money to afford a cell phone, so communication was kept to the landline. Dialing the office of the construction site, a woman secretary picked up on the other end. "Can you please call my husband to the phone? I need to speak to him." "Ma'am," the secretary said, "your husband is on a scaffold right now and is three flights up. It is hard for him to come down to the phone now. Can you call back later?" "No, no, I must speak to him now," she urgently pressed.



Receiving the message that it was his wife on the phone, the husband, wishing to maintain his shalom bayit which had been improving, descended from the scaffold and entered inside to answer the call. Picking up the phone, Amanda began profusely blessing him and wishing him a wonderful day. Taking in the kind words of his wife, all the husband could say was, "Amen." Hanging up the phone, the husband was glad he had come to the phone. His wife's words touched his heart.

But he was even gladder he had come to the phone when he turned around.

Right before his eyes, the scaffold upon which he was standing just minutes before came crashing down. Shocked and not sure if he was dreaming or seeing reality, all he could think about was his wife and her blessings.

While we may question the efficacy of blessing another and sincerely asking that Hashem protect him or her, the truth is that it goes a long way. And in particular, the heartfelt prayers and tears shed by a Jewish wife and mother for her family pierce the heavens. Bringing blessing to her husband and children, she not only protects them in the home, but even outside the home. Indeed, even while facing a dangerous and precarious situation, a Jewish woman's prayer rains down blessing and saves lives.

Are you a man or a mouse? - by Benjamin A Rose



One of the unkosher birds listed in Parshas Shemini (11:19) is the "Chasida", the stork. Rashi says that it is called Chasida from the word "Chosid", pious. Why, Rashi says the reason is that the stork does Chesed with its friends and it shares its food source rather than hoard it for itself. When it comes to the mouse however, the Yerushalmi (Bava Metzia 3:5) describes it as a "Rasha" because it not only eats the homeowner's food it also calls its friends to eat.

Why the unbalanced treatment between the two of these generous creatures? **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** answers that the Chasida's food comes from Hefker it is not taking from anyone else.

However, the mouse steals his food from people's homes. Robin hood may have only been trying to help the poor, but he went about it the wrong way. Reb Chaim says that from here we learn an important lesson.

If you do Chesed on someone else's expense you aren't a chossid of a man; you are a wicked mouse.

"The TorahAnyTimes" Newsletter

Rabbi Dovid Kaplan - Explosive Blessings



As the meal ended at the banquet of one kiruv organization and dessert was served, platters full of watermelon came out. Seated at this elegant banquet was a man who had taken significant strides in Judaism. After noticing the refreshing watermelon placed before him, he took one slice and recited the blessing, "Baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam she'hakol nihiye bidvaro."

Sitting just next to him was one of the outreach rabbis. Realizing that the man had erred and made the blessing of she'hakol on the watermelon instead of the correct beracha of ha'adama, the rabbi politely informed him that although it is wonderful to make blessings, he had made a mistake. "I make she'hakol," the man insisted. "And why is that so?" inquired the rabbi. "I'll tell you why," replied the man.

During the 1973 war in Israel, I was positioned in the Golan Heights with my platoon. As Syrian tanks surrounded us, we knew it was the

end. We were hopeless. Looking to say some prayer, we all fell silent. None of us knew anything about Judaism. There was one soldier, however, who did know one thing: how to make the blessing of she'hakol. And so, he said aloud, "Baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam she'hakol nihiye bidvaro," as did the rest of us after him. Just then, someone released a shot and blew up a Syrian tank. All we heard was "Baruch atah Hashem… she'hakol nihiye bidvaro" BOOM and down went the tank.

"Rabbi, if it's good enough for Syrian tanks, it's good enough for watermelon."

Such is the power of a bracha. It truly is like an explosion as it reverberates in Heaven and brings down to the world an abundant flow of blessing.

Everything Hashem Does Is Only Good! – *J. Rahmey.*

The following story was told by Rabbi Eli Mansour written in this month's Community Magazine. It's the story of a Holocaust survivor, who is currently a baker, living in New York. His whole family perished except for him and his little sister.

He tells the story of how, after losing his parents, that he felt responsible for the fate of his little sister. Every day before he would go to work, he would rebuke her to be very careful and stay out of the Nazis' path.

One day, he returned home from work, but his sister wasn't there? She was gone! He found out that a couple of SS Nazi officers had come and taken her. He was a young kid, but he became overcome with emotion, he stormed down to the Nazi headquarter, screaming in German, "*Where's my sister?*"

The commanding officer hears the commotion and comes stomping down, with all his medals and decorations bouncing on his uniform. The soldiers tell the officer that this little Jew is claiming that we

picked his sister up today, and he says he's not leaving until we release her.



The officer looks down at the boy laughing and says, "*When you grow hair on the palms of your hands, that's when you'll see your sister.*" In other words, you'll never see her again!

The Jewish youth stands there, turns to the Nazi and calmly opens his hand to display a hairy palm. - The officer cries out, "*Satan! The devil is here!! Get this kid out of here and let his sister go!*" They open the door and the sister falls out on him. They make their way back to the ghetto and eventually escaped and survived the perils of the Holocaust.

He explained that when he was a child, he burnt his hand and the doctor did a skin graft from a part of his body that grew hair, eventually from this he had a hairy palm. He said that his whole life, he was bothered why would Hashem do this to him. "*Why do I have to be a freak?*" His palm was such an embarrassment.

"*Now I understand! This was all pre-ordained from Hashem in order to save my sister.*"

May we all realize that while the sacrifices we make for Hashem and our Torah can sometimes be very difficult, Hashem hand-picked these tests and difficulties for us to triumph over and grow stronger in our devotion to Him. We must know that these tests and adversities are ultimately for our benefit! Today we celebrate the amazing test that Queen Esther had to overcome which we all benefit from until this very day! Amen!

Shabbos Stories for Parshas shemini

The Brisker Rav And His Guest



Late one night, a traveller walked into Brisk and made his way to the home of the **Brisker Rav**, who greeted him warmly. The man asked if he could stay for the night, and the Brisker Rav, who was known for his Chesed, was delighted with the opportunity to accommodate. He prepared food, made a bed, and catered to his guest's every need.

The man, realizing that the famed Brisker Rav was doing everything himself, would not allow the Brisker Rav to lower himself to serve him, and he strongly protested to this.

The next day, in Shul, the Gabbai noticed the guest and wanted to give him an Aliyah, but the Brisker Rav asked the Gabbai to give him Hagba'ah, instead. When the guest was about to pick up the Sefer Torah, the Brisker Rav made his way to the Bimah and stopped the guest from picking up the Torah. The Brisker Rav said, "Please don't trouble yourself. It is quite heavy!"

The guest argued, "But it is not a trouble, it is a Z'chus!"

The Brisker Rav smiled and replied, "And so is serving another Jew and doing the Mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim!"

The Brisker Rav taught that even though some Mitzvos take effort, it is still a great Z'chus to perform them! (*Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

The Two Turkish Merchants Who Settled in Yerushalayim



Two merchants from Turkey came to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Yerushalayim. Every morning they studied together for several hours before they went off to work. They never missed a day.

They made a pact that whoever dies first would come back to tell the other what he saw in heaven. One died, and after quite some time, came to his friend in a dream.

He said, "A human being made of flesh and blood and living in the world of falsehood can't understand what's happening in heaven. But there is one thing that I can tell you: After I died I was brought to the heavenly court, and at my side were my parents and grandparents. Good malachim placed my mitzvos on the scale. Demons (malachei chavalah) were amassing my sins on the other side of the scale and Hakadosh Baruch Hu was the judge.

"My fright was immeasurable because the scale was tipping towards the side of sin. Suddenly, an iron wall separated me from the demons, and an announcement came forth, ordering me to go to Gan Eden.

"I didn't understand how this happened. I asked the malachim, 'Why am I permitted to go to Gan Eden? What about all my sins? This is the world of truth. How were my sins overlooked? And why did an iron wall separate me from the demons?'

"The malachim answered, 'The wall was created by your kviyas itim l'Torah. You had a set time to learn Torah, and you never missed

those times. This became the wall that protected you. If you would have missed occasionally, or if you would interrupt in the middle of your studies, there would be breaches in the wall, and the malachei chavalah would be able to pass through. But since you never missed, you had a strong protection, and now you can go to Gan Eden.'

"The reason I didn't come earlier," the friend said, "is because it's difficult to get permission to leave Gan Eden to come to Olam HaZeh. But I kept asking for permission so I could keep my promise, and they finally let me. Heaven decided that it is good that I should come back to the world to tell you what happened, so people will know how special it is when people have set times to study Torah every day." *(Torah Wellsprings: Rabbi Biderman.)*

The Infertility Doctor Expert By Rabbi David Ashear



Every day in the Amida, three times a day, we request from Hashem "please, save us from being shamed," whether by other people or whether because of a circumstance. And then we give the reason why Hashem should save us from shame: "**כי בך בטחנו** - because we're relying on Him."

We're coming to Hashem for help, and when He helps us, there is no shame. When Hashem helps, there is no greater honor to the person, experiencing Yeshua from the Boreh Olam. To access Hashem's Yeshua, we really need to believe that He is our only salvation and that He could help, no matter how difficult it seems and no matter what anybody else says.

Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan was married for three and a half years without being Zocheh to have children. He and his wife went to many

doctors and all of them pretty much said the same thing - it didn't look good.

There was one doctor that people were saying was the last stop. He helped countless couples, and if he wouldn't be able to help, then nobody else would. He didn't take any insurance. They traveled to the Upper West Side of Manhattan and paid $1500, out of pocket, just for the consultation.

Then, throughout all the testing and procedures, the Rabbi said he and his wife were put through a lot of shame and, after the doctor made his assessment, he sat them down in his office and turned to them and said two words, "It's impossible."

The Rabbi said that it's been twenty years since that meeting and those words are still reverberating in his head. The Rabbi replied, "Doctor, I appreciate your opinion, but there's still a G-d in the world. I have Him. Nothing is ever impossible."

The doctor tried to tell them not to get their hopes up, because there really was no hope.

The Rabbi and his wife then walked out of the office, and then walked out of the building and, as they were on the steps, his wife burst out crying. She said, "That's it, it's over. We have to accept our fate."

The Rabbi immediately tried to give her Chizuk saying, "The doctor has no say. He's just an opinion. We have a Father who can help us. We need to rely on Him. Never give up." They got back into the car. They traveled to Brooklyn.

The Rabbi needed to run into a Sefarim store to pick up a few Sefarim. There were no parking spaces available so he told his wife, "I'm going to pull up next to a pump. Please wait in the car for a few minutes so we don't get a ticket." The Rabbi came back and nobody was in the car, and there was a big ticket sitting on the windshield. The Rabbi had to admit, he was very angry - he asked his

wife just to stay there for a few minutes. He took the ticket and put it into his pocket.



A short time after, his wife came back and she looked much happier. She had gone into a store to get something that would cheer her up, and when she got back, she said to her husband, "Wow, we didn't get a ticket!"

The Rabbi held back from saying anything and, instead, he told her, "Yeah, look how much Hashem loves you." He gave her Chizuk, he lifted her up and, Baruch Hashem, amazingly, just thirty days later, after that meeting with the doctor and a lot more heartfelt Tefilot, they found out that his wife was expecting.

When they called back that doctor and told him the news, his first response was, "It's impossible; you're mistaken." But there was no mistake. Against all odds and against all doctors, Hashem took them out of shame and they experienced the glory of Yeshuat Hashem.

May Hashem send Yeshuot to all those who need. Let us strengthen ourselves and believe that, no matter what, Hashem could always help.

"We live in a state of emergency, where the fires of confusion are raging. When a fire is burning, everyone is responsible for helping his fellow man."~ The Rebbe

The Very Sick Man's Question





Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner and Rabbi Meir Shapiro

Rav Elimelech Biederman brings a phenomenal story told over by Rav Zicherman of Kiryat Sefer, Israel, who was the rav of Mainei Hayeshua Hospital in Benei Brak a number of years ago.

One day the great **Gaon Harav Wosner, zt"l**, author of Shevet Halevi and one of the Gedolei Hador paid a visit to the hospital. In his honor the entire staff of the hospital gathered together along with the sick people and their families. When Rav Wosner was there Rav Zicherman mentioned that today he was asked a question by a very very sick person who is 50 years old and cannot move a single limb in his body without the help of a staff member.

The person asked if he should recite the daily blessing of Sheasa li Kol Tzarki (He provided all of my needs for me). He said, that in his case, He apparently does not have all of his needs provided for.

Rav Wosner understood the situation and immediately went up the few flights to the patient's room.

As the great Rabbi entered the man tried making a move as if he was standing up in honor of the Rabbi.

As he was attempting to do so he sighed and laughed sighed and laughed (apparently due to the strain of trying to get up and from the disappointment of not being able to do so).

Rav Wosner commented, "What you did just now you reminded me of the story that I personally witnessed 80 years ago when Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin took me with him to visit a person that was very very sick and his situation was very dire.

When **Rav Meir Shapiro** entered the room the sick person, with all the strength that could muster up put on a happy face and began smiling. Rabbi Shapiro asked him what he was so happy about. The person answered that in truth he is obligated to stand up for the Rov, to shower upon him all kinds of honor, to serve special drinks and so on.

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu has prevented me, as due to my sickness, I do not even have the power to move a limb. Therefore I am doing everything that is in my power, to honor the rabbi, namely, to smile.

That I will do in the best way that I possibly can, for if this is the only thing within my ability to do, then this is my mission from Hashem at this very moment. Hashem wants me to honor the Rov in the way that I can and if I have done so I have successfully fulfilled the task that Hashem has placed upon me at this very moment.

That is what the sick man said to Rav Meir Shapiro, zt"l.

This is relevant to you as well, concluded Rav Wosner. I have heard that you have asked a question regarding the blessing of "Sheasa li Kol Zarki". Please know, that if you are doing everything in your ability at this time, your actions are worth much much more than any other healthy capable person, for you are certainly fulfilling Hashem's mission to the fullest.

And that is why you can bless the blessing of "Sheasa li Kol Tzarki". Because Hashem has given you everything you need at this very moment to fulfill His mission.

The sick man heard these special words from the Rabbi and was so encouraged that within a few days he was walking on his feet.

The True Definition of Reciting Kaddish for a Parent



Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz writes a story: "The Chazon Ish highly valued those who undertook to serve the Torah community. An incident at the outset of my public career showed me just how highly, though.

I travelled to Bournemouth, England, for Rosh Hashanah of 5713 (1952) to collect money for a very worthy organization. In those days, many well-to-do people spent Yom Tov at resort hotels in the area.

Prior to Maariv on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, I was invited to speak in the Shul of one of these hotels. Those gathered responded to my speech with generous pledges. But when it came time for Davening, I could not help but notice that the Mechitzah that was set up was very questionable as to whether it was Kosher or not, and I wasn't sure if I should Daven with them.

I opted for the seclusion of my room in the hotel, and I went to Daven there. In addition to missing Tefilah B'Tzibur and Davening with a Minyan, I failed to say Kaddish for my father, whose Yartzeit is on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. The next morning, I was able to locate a more suitable Minyan to Daven with, but because I had not recited Kaddish the night before, I forgot to recite it in the morning Davening as well.

In fact, the entire Yartzeit of my father passed without my reciting Kaddish once. When I remembered my failure to recite Kaddish for my father, I was overcome with remorse, and I blamed my public activities which had brought me to Bournemouth in the first place.

In my despondent state, I took my failure to say Kaddish for my father as a sign from Shamayim that I should abandon my work for the public. My resolve on that point was firm. When I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I went to the Chazon Ish to inform him of my decision to abandon public issues, and my reason for it. I told him that I intended to return to the Bais Medrash, which was where I had been before I was asked to work in public service.

After hearing the explanation for my decision, the Chazon Ish astonished me with his response. He told me, 'I do not accept what you said. You did recite Kaddish!'

I assumed that the Chazon Ish had misunderstood me. I once again repeated the story of what had happened to me in England, and I added for emphasis, 'I did not say Kaddish.'

It then became clear that the Chazon Ish had indeed heard me clearly. He said to me, 'You are mistaken. You did recite Kaddish. What do you think the purpose of reciting Kaddish is on a parent's Yartzeit? When a child sanctifies the Name of Hashem in public, he is causing pleasure and bringing honour to the Neshamah of his parents.

"What more pleasure could there be to your father than what you did? You gave up on your own personal comfort to travel to a foreign country, where you had to Daven without a Minyan on Rosh Hashanah as part of a mission on behalf of the public? There is no greater Kaddish than that!'

When I heard those words from the Chazon Ish, my resolve to retire from public life dissolved entirely. As it turned out, I was Zocheh to keep up my work for another thirty-three years!" [Rabbi Lorincz

served in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) from 1951-1984 as a member of the religious party Agudat Yisroel.) (*Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg)*

A Time for Purity

According to some countings of the 613 mitzvos (the Maharam Shik and others) *sefiras ha'omer* is the middle mitzvah of the Torah. There are 306 mitzvos before *sefiras ha'omer*, and 306 mitzvos after it, *sefiras ha'omer* is mitzvah #307, the exact middle of the 613 mitzvos.

The Barnover Rav *zt'l* (Reb Avraham Simchah, in his *sefer Orah v'Simchah*) writes that just as a middle beam holds up the entire structure, *sefiras ha'omer* is the middle mitzvah of the 613 mitzvos and it holds up all 613 mitzvos of the Torah.

Sefiras ha'omer purifies us. As we say in the prayer after *sefiras ha'omer*)

אתה צויתנו לספור ספירת העומר כדי לטהרנו מקליפותינו ומטומאותינו
"You commanded us…to count sefiras ha'omer to purify us from our impurities…"

This purity connects us to Hashem. Counting the *omer* is the foundation, the middle, the central beam that enables us to keep the entire Torah.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

There are six things that if a person fulfils them, he enjoys their fruits in this world, but the main reward is reserved for him in the next world— and one of them is concentrating during *davening*. (*Shabbos* 127a)

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l



Did the Jews Go Like Sheep During the Holocaust?

QUESTION: The expression that the Jews of World War Two "went like sheep to the slaughter," is that true?

ANSWER: Why talk about the Jews? Didn't the French in World War Two go like sheep to the slaughter? The French prepared beforehand a Maginot Line. Now this line contained all the technology of modern warfare.

The French Also Yielded Like Sheep

There were deep trenches, there were weapons of warfare; they were trained in defending these installations. When Hitler came, it was like it didn't exist. He went through it like nobody's business, and the French just yielded like sheep before the wolf. So the French also went like sheep to the slaughter.

Not only the Jews; everybody did. It's only because the world has an attitude of trying to belittle the Jews, so the Jews are pointed out. What happened to the Polish army? The Polish were big *balei gieva*, showoffs. They were proud of their national prowess. When the time came it was nothing .The Polish army melted away with all the soldiers and tanks. It was nothing.

The Jews Didn't Have Any Tanks

The Jews didn't have any tanks. They didn't have any soldiers. What do you expect of them? What could they do? If the Jews would have fought back not one would have remained. Who remained of the Warsaw ghetto? Nobody! Who said it was such a smart thing? It's only foolish people, sensationalists, who talk about the uprising in

the Warsaw ghetto. It's as silly as could be. If they hadn't made the uprising a lot of Jews would have remained.

Jews remained all over the world. Wherever Hitler went, Jews remained. Of course not enough. But the fact that they fought back meant it was a death sentence. The *chachmei hatorah* (Torah Sages) didn't say fight back. Because after all, the Germans were not that thorough, a lot of Jews escaped.

But when they started fighting back then the Germans brought all their tanks and all their flame throwers, and they wiped out all the Jews. So, going like sheep is not a foolish tactic. When you have no alternative, the best thing is not to fight. It's a silly thing that's used by American people. Now I don't wish it on American Jews, but if they were in the same situation, they wouldn't have been a bit better.

The Folly of the Boycott

Our forefathers understood this; they didn't fight against the nations. They sought to placate the nations. And by the way, it was one of the biggest mistakes, before World War Two when they made a boycott against Germany and they enraged the Germans. Had they followed the council of our sages at that time, they would have bribed Hitler's lieutenants. You know, Hitler's lieutenants were mercenary people. You could buy them. You could send things to them - secretly. They would have pocketed a lot of money, but they would let a lot of Jews out. The story would have been different.

And so, this bravado, this false heroism of fighting back and being killed like a hero, is not the way chosen by Jews. We believe it's better to live not like a hero, than to die like a hero.

"A Yid is not alone. Wherever he goes and wherever he is, Hashem is with him."~~ The Baal Shem Tov

All Beginnings Are Difficult By Rabbi Label Lam

וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־ הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ *And now if you will heed My voice and you will keep My covenant - you will be to Me a treasure from amongst all the nations for the earth is Mine.* (19:5)

אם עתה תקבלו עליכם יערב לכם מכאן ואילך, שכל התחלות קשות *And now: If now you will accept upon yourselves, it will be sweet for you from here and further, because all beginnings are difficult. (Rashi)*

What Does Rashi Mean?

Prior to the event of the giving of the Torah the Jewish Nation was strongly encouraged to be in a ready and accepting mode. Like a strong sales pitch they were pressed to commit now and guaranteed that later everything would be great. What is it that creates the urgency and the need for such a pressured approach? What does Rashi mean when he says, "all beginnings are difficult"? Which "beginnings" is he talking about?

At the end of a Talmud class in Queens we were just winding down from the learning and feeling good, when one of the fellows said something that sparked a lively discussion. He said, "Rabbi, I hate getting up in the morning to go to Davening!"

I think he thought he was going to shock me with his rugged admission. Some of the other fellows started to stir in defence of prayer but I stayed still, because I agreed with him. I told him that I also hate to get up in the morning to go to Davening. "Who likes to go out from under warm covers to go to shul when the body is crying out for a little more slumber?"

Napoleon is reputed to have said, "When I'm awake I'm Napoleon but when I'm asleep I'm a horse!" The most powerfully motivated man on the planet is conflicted at that moment. It can be difficult for anybody.

However, when already awake and in the midst of Davening almost nothing in the world feels as good. It also feels great to have Davened. Similarly, those who exercise formally may find it painfully difficult to get started each time but what gets one going sometimes is the feeling of accomplishment, the high that follows when the hard work out is done.

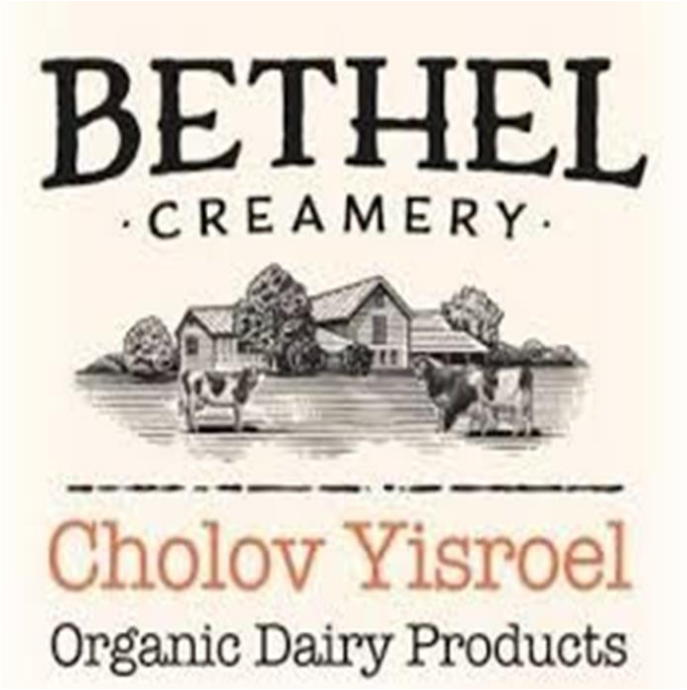


There's a story about a Rebbe and his son that were breaking a hole through an icy lake in order to immerse themselves for purity sake. The son entered the freezing waters first. As he braced himself for the entry cries of anguish could already be heard which grew in to shouts of biting pain. "Ouch!" When he exited the frigid lake, he let loose an expression of relief, "AHHHHHH!"

His wise father who was yet to follow told him, "My son, you should always remember that that's how it is with Mitzvos! They start out "Ouch! Ouch!" and end up "Oooooh Ahhhhhhhhh!" Aveiros- sins, on the other hand, usually start out "Ooooooooooh! Ahhhhhhhhh!, but end up with the feeling "Ouch! Ouch!"

Which "beginnings" are difficult? Rashi tells us straight, "All beginnings are difficult." At the beginning of each day and sometime hundreds of times a day there are new little beginnings that, in order to overcome that initial pinch of "ouch" require thinking about the "Oooooo! Ahhhhhhhh!"-that follows each minor accomplishment. It may yet become an acquired taste but that takes work and imagination. Once the great weight of inertia is overcome, anticipated is the sweet taste of victory.

Kashrus



The Chasam Sofer once asked two community activists to set up a meeting with the mayor of Pressburg. "The issue is urgent, so schedule the meeting immediately." The delegates asked the mayor's secretary to schedule a meeting for that very day, but the secretary replied, "All slots are filled for today. You can't get an appointment on such short notice. If you want, we can schedule it for next week…"

The delegates explained to the secretary that the matter was urgent, and it couldn't be postponed. It wasn't easy, but with their determination and efforts, a meeting with the mayor was arranged for that very day. They entered the mayor's room, and the mayor graciously offered them a cup of coffee. "No, thank you," they replied. "Why not?" the mayor asked. "Is it because it isn't kosher?"

That was the reason. The milk wasn't *chalav Yisrael*. The mayor went into a rage. "If I offer you a drink, you should accept it!" he said. As he was ranting and raving, the secretary opened the door and asked the mayor whether he had a cup of coffee. "No. The mayor replied angrily. "I was about to, but these fellows ruined my appetite. I offered them a coffee, but they declined… because of kashrus." "Good," the secretary replied. "I'm glad you didn't have a coffee because the milk is contaminated. Some people who drank from this milk got sick, and the doctor checked the milk and determined that it is filled with unhealthy germs."

The mayor immediately changed his tone of speech, and he spoke with the two delegates respectfully. He told them, "I always admired

the rabbis of the Jewish nation for their superior wisdom. I forgot about that, of late, and I was considering banishing all the Jews from Pressburg. But now that you reminded me of the wisdom of the Jewish sages, and I will cancel that decree."

The two delegates returned to the Chasam Sofer and told him what happened at the meeting. The Chasam Sofer replied that there was a *kitrug* in heaven on the Jewish community because they weren't careful enough with kashrus and with **חלב עכו"ם** . In the merit of the delegate's *mesirus nefesh* to keep the laws of kashrus, the decree was abolished. *(Heard from Reb Elchanan Halperin zt'l of Radumishla, who heard it from his father-inlaw, Reb Shmuel Unsdorfer zt'l, a descendant of the Chasam Sofer.)*

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

At the time of the **Malbim** the Haskala movement was in full swing, and he fought against them with tremendous zealousness. Once, one of the maskilim sent the Malbim a Shlach Manos on Purim with a figure of a pig on the top of it. The Malbim sent the shliach back with his own Shlach Manos in return, with a picture of himself, with a note saying thank you for sending your image, here is mine in return.

The Malbim was once sitting in his shul, and a maskil came in and the Malbim didn't know who he was at first. He asked the visitor, "where are you from?" He said, "I am from a father and a mother." The Malbim thought that he didn't understand the question, so he repeated, "No, where do you come from?" He answered, "I come from the **ארבע רוחות השמים**."

The Malbim now understood exactly who he was dealing with and told him that he is really busy and doesn't have any time for him. The Malbim then carried on with his learning.

Later that day, this maskil comes to the Rav's house, not realising that the person that he met in shul earlier was actually the Malbim. He came to the Rav's house because he wanted a haskama for a sefer that he had written. He was surprised to see that it was the same person that he had been *fresh* with earlier. The Malbim had a sefer at home that he had written himself about similar words written in **לשון הקודש** that have similar meanings but make a distinction between them and what the difference is. For example - **יראה** and **פחד**.



This person had written some sort of similar book and wanted a haskama from the Rav. So the Rav said that he will give him haskomo, but first please answer me this question. "What is the difference between the words **שרץ** (insect, bug) and **שקץ** (detested thing, abomination)? He didn't have an answer. The Malbim said that a **שרץ** comes from **ארבע רוחות השמים** and a **שקץ** comes a father and a mother!

This put the maskil in his place.

The Ben Ish Chai (**וירא שנה שניה**) writes:

"When a person fights with his wife, children, or servants [on Fridays], he certainly thinks that he is in the right, and that he should make this machlokes, because they did something wrong in the home. But the truth is, someone who has intelligence will understand that even if they did something wrong, it wasn't their fault. It was the Satan who tries to make a fight at this time… Therefore, everyone should understand that… he shouldn't blame his wife or children or maid, and he shouldn't fight with them. Instead, remember this excuse, as it is true. He will remain silent, he won't

fight with them, he won't get angry, and it will be good for him in this world and in the next world."



There are segulos that save us from the Satan, who evokes fights on Fridays. **The Shlah HaKadosh** (**מסכת שבת, נר מצוה אות ד**) writes, "The Reishis Chachmah taught in the name of his rebbe [the Rema'k] that one should clean away all the cobwebs of his home on erev Shabbos… And I will reveal a secret… These cobwebs are the kelipos, which seek to destroy the shalom bayis. Therefore, we have to get them out of the home…"

The Kaf HaChaim (**ר"נ סק"י**) quotes this segulah and adds, "Get rid of the cobwebs on Friday before the fifth hour of the day, because from the fifth hour on begins the light of Shabbos."

Another segulah is from the **Ateres Tzvi of Ziditchov zt'l**: "We have a kabbalah that to banish this Satan [who seeks to make fights in the home on Fridays and Shabbos] one should put on the Shabbos tablecloth before midday."

Zera Shimshon

The Zera Shimshon, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachmon Michoel Nachmani, was born in 5467 (1706/1707) into an illustrious family with great Rabbinical lineage. He studied the revealed and concealed parts of the Torah by the Torah greats of his day. He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sayna and Reggio, Italy, and was recognized as a holy and pious individual, as well as a tremendous Torah scholar in all areas of Torah. He passed away on the 6th of Elul 5539 (1779). His

Seforim were named, Toldos Shimshon (The 'Offspring' of Shimshon) on Pirkei Avos and Zera Shimshon (The 'Seed' of Shimshon) on the Parshi'os of the Torah.

In his introduction, he explains that since his only son had died during his lifetime, he wrote his Seforim to perpetuate his own memory after his passing. The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

"I implore of you with ten terms of supplication to choose from my Chiddushim (novella) the piece that finds favour in your eyes, for your learning will sooth my soul etc… "This righteousness will stand by you forever – to 'eat' in this world, and be satiated in the next. In this merit, Hashem will repay you with children, health and sustenance. "…and now my brothers and friends etc. do a true kindness, and with your eyes you will see children and grandchildren surrounding your table, houses filled with all that is good, wealth and honour will not cease from your children.



This week's parsha speaks about the prohibition for Kohanim to drink wine while doing the Avoda. On this note, the **Zera Shimshon** discusses a halcha that is applicable to all Jews, that has to do with wine. The Tur (Orach Chaim §296), quotes that Medrash that says that one who does not make havdala on wine on Motzai Shabbos or does not hear havdala from someone who is making it on wine, that person does see any signs of blessing. However, one who does make havdla over wine or hears havdala from someone making it over wine, Hashem calls him Holy and designates him as someone special.

The Zera Shimshon asks the obvious question – why, for doing something seemingly so simple as in making havdala over wine, does a person merit blessing and is called Holy my Hashem Himself and is designated as special by Hashem? Especially considering the fact that some poskim are of the opinion that this mitzva is a rabbinically enacted one (others argue).

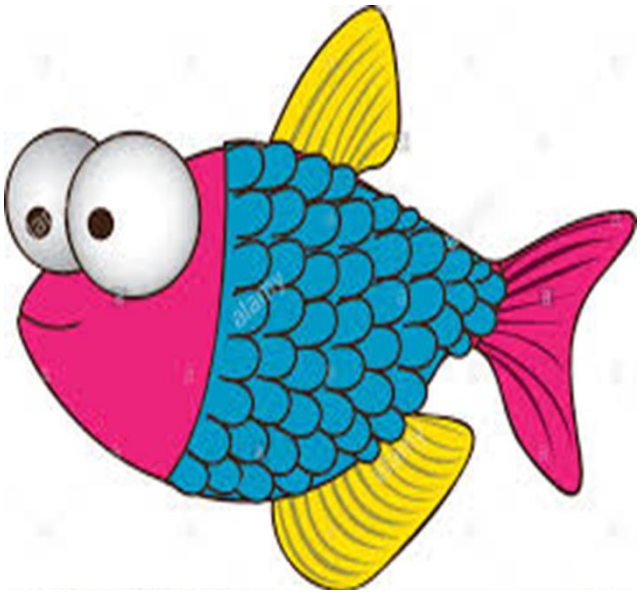
The Zera Shimshon explains this based on the Gemara that teaches that wine was created to console those in mourning and to pay up the wicked in this world (since they receive enjoyment from their wine – that is considered payment for the meagre good deeds that they have done in this world).

As well, there is a Medrash that says that when Noach went to plant his vineyard after the mabul, he was approached by a demon who informed him that they were partners in the vines. The demon warned Noach and said make sure that you keep to your portion for if you don't, I will harm you. This is why the sages teach that if a person has merit, wine will make him happy otherwise it will make him crazy. This is because there are two parts to wine, one that is sacred and the other that belongs to impurity. One that comforts those suffering (holiness) and one that repays the wicked in this world (impure).

Therefore on Motzai Shabbos when one says, **המבדיל בין קודש לחול** , and makes a separation between holy and impure, it is precisely then that a person makes this declaration over wine and is in essence saying that he only wants to be connected to the side of Holiness. On such a person Hashem proclaims he is Holy and he merits blessing. With this the Zera Shimshon the idea of drinking on Purim until one cannot distinguish between Arur Haman and Baruch Mordechai. On Purim, Amalek and the side of impurity was greatly weakened, therefore there is no fear that the side of impurity will overpower the drinker even if he drinks more than usual.

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

11:9 אֶת־זֶה֙ תֹּאכְל֔וּ מִכֹּ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֣ר בַּמָּ֑יִם כֹּ֚ל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ֙ סְנַפִּ֣יר וְקַשְׂקֶ֔שֶׂת בַּמַּ֥יִם



A fish is only kosher, and may be eaten, if it has סְנַפִּיר וְקַשְׂקֶשֶׂת– Fins and scales.

How many scales must a fish have to be considered kosher? Is one scale enough?

So there is an disagreement in the Medrash. The Chachomim say that one scale is enough. Rebbi Yehudah argues that a kosher fish must have at least two scales. (תורת כהנים ג׳ה)

Where does Rebbi Yehudah see in the word קַשְׂקֶשֶׂת that it means at least two? - Says the רבינו אפרים it is hinted to in the word itself: קַשְׂקֶשֶׂת – ת

קשקש = Scale - ת is the gematriah of שנים!!

The Pig Will Do Teshuva?

The Pasuk says regarding the kashrus of a pig, וְהוּא גֵּרָה לֹא־יִגָּר; A pig may not be eaten because it does not chew its cud."

The Or Hachaim Hakadosh explains, that these words are telling us that as long as the pig does not chew its cud it is prohibited; but when it starts chewing its cud it will be Mutar to eat. This will take place LeAsid Lavo - in the time of Mashiach. That is why the pig is called a Chazer. Because it will return (Chozer) and become kosher in the future.

וְאֶת־הָרָחָם- The Magpie 11:18



Among the forbidden birds, is the רָחָם. The Gemara in Mesechta Chulin (63a) calls this bird – the שרקרק. Rashi explains that it received this name because that is the sound that this bird makes when it flaps its wings.

Rebbi Yochonon explains that the Torah calls this bird by the name רָחָם– since, when this bird arrives, it is a sign that רחמים – mercy, is coming into the world.

As the Gemara proceeds to clarify, when the שרקרק lands and begins to make this flapping noise with its wings, it is a sign that אתא משיחא– Moshiach is coming!

The Ben Ish Chai brings down the **Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer** that the fifth and final "end letter" of the Aleph Beis – the ץ – is the letter which represents the ultimate Geulah.

In the calculation of Gematria, the ץ is the letter with the greatest numerical value. After the letter ת- which is gematria 400, we follow on with the five "end letters" ך– 500 ם- 600 ן - 700 ף - 800 and finally ץ - 900 – which is the gematria of שרקרק.

Amazingly, the Gemara calls the רָחָם – שרקרק – **The bird of Geulah!**

"If you believe breaking is possible, believe fixing is possible"~~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslev

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid



This week in parshas Shemini, the Torah talks about so many animals that can and cannot be eaten. That are kosher and not kosher. The Torah tells us וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה֙ תְּשַׁקְּצ֣וּ מִן־הָע֔וֹף 11:13 ***These are the abominations of birds.***

One of the species that the posuk mentions, is הַחֲסִידָה. Rashi brings a gemara from Chulin and asks, why is it called חֲסִידָה? Because it displays *chesed* to others of its own species by sharing food with them.

As we know, eating non-kosher food can harm a Yid in a spiritual way. **The Chinuch** writes that a person becomes that which he eats. It contaminates the soul and makes it difficult for the person to be connected to that which is holy.

The Ramban says an amazing thing on this weeks sedra. He says that all non-kosher birds possess a very cruel nature. This is evident in the way that they tear apart their prey. There is a big anomaly here as to why the Chasida is put into this class of non-kosher (cruel) birds when it displays traits of kindness, compassion and sharing?

Says **Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin** – the heilige Ruzhine Rebbe – that Chazal tell us a very important yesod. The Chasida only displays kindness with its own kind. With birds of its own species, exclusively. It does not share with other types of bird.

This is an amazing lesson for us to learn. People often only like to help others that dress, speak and think the same way as they do. And this is not correct. ***A Yid must help everyone.***



At the beginning of World War Two, thousands of refugees streamed into the city of Vilna (capital of Lithuania). Many of these refugees were yeshiva bochurim who came to Vilna because of **Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky** [1863-1940] (Dayan & Chief Rabbi of Vilna, Co-founder of Vaad Ha'yeshivos which helped by supplying material and spiritual support for yeshivot throughout the eastern provinces of Poland from 1924 to 1939.) He played an instrumental role in preserving yeshivas during the Communist era, and saved the yeshivas of Poland and Russia during the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, when he arranged for these yeshivas to relocate to Lithuanian cities.

Amongst the groups of refugees, was a contingent that caused a great deal of *tzarus* for the Yidden. They specifically wanted to depose Reb Chaim Ozer from his position as Rav, Dayan and chief rabbi of Vilnius. **The Chofetz Chaim** (who was then over 91 years old) assisted by the **Chazon Ish** defended the honour of Reb Chaim Ozer, and were successful in him retaining his position.

The instigators of that shameful campaign who were constantly a thorn in the side of Klal yisrael, were also suffering from the depravations of the time. They had the temerity to request food and financial help from the very Vaad that they wished to destroy.

Some of the members of the vaad were reluctant to give them assistance after all they had done. However, they forwarded the request to **Rav Aaron Berek** (one of the Gaboim) who said **אין בודקין למזונות**– we don't scrutinise and differentiate when it comes to asking for sustenance. The Gemara in Bava Basra (9a) tells us :

וְרַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר אֵין בּוֹדְקִין לְמְזוֹנוֹת *And Rav Yehuda says: we do not examine the level of poverty of one who asks for food.* With that, they gave them food willingly.

This is such a tremendous lesson for us. We are seeing this with our own eyes. There is a Hatzolo member in my area who took a call a few days before Pesach. It was a call for a victim of the Corona virus. Because he attended, he had to go into quarantine. He had to take an apartment across the street from his family and could not be with them for the entire Yomtov of Pesach. His wife and children were alone for the Sedarim and the rest of Pesach. He knew he was jeopardising his being with his family, yet he did not hesitate to attend the call to assist another person.

People continue to do *chessed* with other people who may not be like them.

This period of time is at the beginning of the Sefiras Ha'omer when the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva died because **שלא נהגו כבוד זה בזה**– ***They didn't respect one another.***

This is a lesson for every single one of us. We have to ensure that in our lives, we should look to do chessed - to even help someone else, who may be different from us.

I want to wish everyone a beautiful and wonderful Shabbos!

A Wise Man would say: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

Hope And The Holocaust - Rabbi J. Sacks Zt'l



The Question: Considering the devastation of the Holocaust, how can we feel hope in the Jewish future?

Rabbi Sacks' Answer: In the most uncanny evocation of the Holocaust, Ezekiel the Prophet, twenty-six centuries ago, saw the Jewish people as a Valley of Dry Bones, and G-d said to Ezekiel, "The people say our hope is lost…But it is not lost because I am going to take them out of their graves and bring them to the land of Israel." I see three signs of hope today, and they're remarkable. Today we have Israel, we have Judaism, and we have the Jewish people, all three of them stronger than they ever were before. And I don't need any more grounds for hope than that. Our hope is not destroyed.

L'Maaseh

There was once a man who was involved in a serious accident and sustained a trauma which caused him to become severely handicapped, *R"L*. His only choice was to undergo a special regiment of rehabilitation in a centre designated specifically for such situations.

Before he left for the centre, he decided to travel to Bnei Brak and receive a *Brachah* from the *Ponovezher Rosh Yeshivah*, **Rav Elazar Shach, *zt"l***. After hearing about the man's handicap, Rav Shach asked him which rehab center he would be going to and when his rehabilitation was scheduled to begin. The man was surprised that the *Rosh Yeshivah* took such an interest in the minor details, and told him all the information. Then, Rav Shach gave him a warm *Brachah*, and the man went on his way.

After the man left, Rav Shach turned to one of his attendants and said, "Hurry, buy some framed pictures of the *Chofetz Chaim*, Rav Chaim Ozer, and the *Chortkover Rebbe*. Then take them to that rehabilitation centre, find out which room this man will be assigned to, and hang up those pictures all over the walls." The attendant was puzzled. He asked, "Is all this really necessary?"



Rav Shach simply answered, "When you get there, you will understand." The young attendant did as he was instructed, bought the pictures of those great *Gedolim*, went to the rehabilitation center, and was given the man's room number. As he walked into the room, he was shocked by what he saw— the walls were covered with indecent pictures!

Quickly, he took down the inappropriate photos and replaced them with pictures of *Gedolei Yisroel*. When he returned to Rav Shach, the *Rosh Yeshivah* asked him what he found. He told him what he saw and commented with awe and reverence, "The *Rosh Yeshivah* surely has *Ruach HaKodesh*, and knows the future!"

Rav Shach smiled and shook his head and said, "This was not *Ruach HaKodesh*. I just used common sense. Hospitals are filled with sick people who cannot get out of their beds, and all they think about is the pain and suffering that they must endure. In rehabilitation centres, however, people are generally not bedridden, nor are they in constant agonizing pain. They undergo treatment for a certain

number of hours a day while the rest of the time they are bored, and this inactivity makes them even more bored. Furthermore, since they are not home in their normal religious surroundings, barriers tend to come down and people are generally more lax in their *Mitzvah* observance."

The attendant asked, "If that is so, why didn't the *Rosh Yeshivah* just send me to clean up the room before he came?" Rav Shach answered, "No, no! When barriers fall and *Torah* becomes weakened, one must rebuild and recreate a spirit of *Kedushah* and sanctity. Just staying away from evil is not enough. One must actively pursue righteousness by fulfilling the words in *Yeshaya* (30:20), ***וְהָיוּ עֵינֶיךָ רֹאוֹת אֶת־מוֹרֶיךָ 'Your eyes will behold your teacher!'"***

Weekly Wisdom - Yisroel Rudman and Shloimy Weber

את זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת This you should eat from the water: Anything that has fins and scales *(11:9).*



Fish in their habitat — water — are compared to Talmidei Chachamim learning Torah. This is obvious from that which is said in Gemara (Brachos 61b) regarding the Roman government's decree against Torah. When Pappas ben Yehudah saw Rebbi Akiva assembling people to learn Torah he asked him, "Akiva, are you not afraid of the government?"

Rebbi Akiva replied, with a Mashal: "Once, a fox was walking alongside the riverbank and saw fish gathering from place to place, as they were fleeing from somewhere. When the fox inquired, "From what are you running away?" They told him, "From the nets people

set up to catch us." The fox said to them, "Come up to dry land and we will dwell together just as our ancestors dwelled together." The fish responded, "You are a fool, for if in our habitat where our life is sustained, we are afraid, all the more so we should be afraid for our existence if we leave our habitat."

Likewise, Rabbi Akiva said, "If now when we study Torah, which is our lifesaver, our existence is threatened, how much are we in danger if we would absent ourselves from Torah." Scales serve as a protective garment to the fish and through the fins it swims from place to place. When one learns Torah, he will hopefully discover insights. It is also imperative that one who studies Torah have Yiras Shamayim.

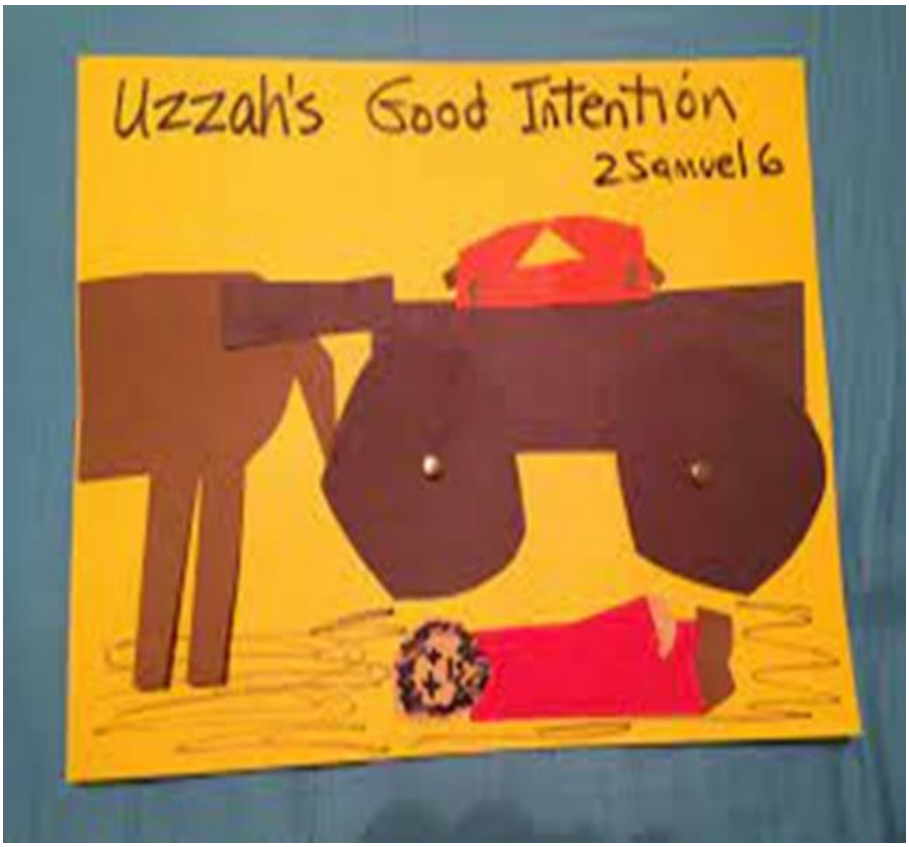
The Gemara (Shabbos 31a) compares learning Torah with Yiras Shamayim to wheat which is stored with chumton — a preservative consisting of earth with a high salt content. Just as the grain will spoil quickly without the preservative, likewise, one studying Torah without fear of Hashem, will easily forget, and his Torah study will be like poison for him. Thus, the fins represent the power to accomplish and reach new heights in Chidushei Torah, and the scales represent the essential factor of Yiras Shamayim, which makes one's Torah study last much longer. Consequently, if one possesses the quality of "scales," he is on the right track with his Torah study and will eventually enhance himself and the Torah with his "fins" — Chidushim that are **אמיתה של תורה**

Analysing the Haftorah ישעיהו י:לב – יב:ו

In this week's Haftorah, we speak about the procession of the Aron through the streets of Yerushalayim, which was being kept in the house of Aminadav. He had two sons, Uzza and Achiyo, who were in charge of moving the carriage with the Aron. In fact, since the family of Aminadav took such great care of the Aron when it was in

their household, each of their ten daughters had six children at once.

During the procession, Hashem performed a Nes and made the Aron



start floating in midair, without any supports. Immediately, Uzza stuck out his hand and put it on the Aron, trying to stop it from falling. Immediately, he was struck by Hashem and died. Why was he treated so harshly, and immediately punished with death?

Firstly, he was part of the saintly family of Aminadav, who had taken care of the Aron for more than a year. Second, he wasn't trying to do anything bad – he wanted to save the Aron from any harm!

The answer is as follows. By sticking out his arm, he was showing (of course not purposely) that Hashem needs help running this world. He tried saving the Aron, which shows that Hashem couldn't hold the Aron Himself, and needs help from people.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 6a) tries bringing a proof from a pasuk, and from something that people do, to teach a Halachah. The Gemara immediately asks, "Does the pasuk need help (i.e. the pasuk is enough of a proof, there is no need for an example from people)?" Hashem doesn't need any help running this world. Although Uzza had the right intentions, it set the wrong example as to how to lead our lives – ***we must always trust Hashem with a full heart!***



The Fancy Glass of Water

Rav Yisroel Salanter, zt"l, once left his family and students to go to Paris to try to influence the assimilated Jews there to return to Torah Judaism. One day, he entered an elegant hotel to meet some wealthy Jews who frequented that hotel. He sat down in the lobby and ordered a glass of water.

When the waiter brought him the bill, it was for an exceedingly high amount of money, and he asked the waiter why the bill was so high, simply for a cup of water.

The waiter responded that Rav Yisroel was not paying merely for a glass of water. The charge included the surroundings and ambience in which he drank the water. He was paying for the exquisite furniture, lighting, carpeting, and stunning surrounding view, as well as the water.

Later, Rav Yisroel wrote the following letter to his students: "For a long time I have been puzzled by the fact that we recite a very lofty and all-inclusive Brachah for a plain glass of water. We say, 'Shehakol Nihiyeh Bidvaro', which means that through Hashem's word, everything came to be.

"But from the words of a gentile waiter in Paris, I learned that we are not merely thanking Hashem for the glass of water, we are expressing our appreciation for the magnificent surroundings in which Hashem serves the water to us. We thank Hashem for the fresh air we breathe as we drink that water, and for the sun that gives us light, and for the tree that shades us. In short, whenever we thank Hashem for one thing, we should use it as an opportunity to thank Hashem for everything!" (*Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

Rav Levi Yitzchok and The Large Feather Pillow



There is a story that is attributed to **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev, zt"l**. A man who spread many malicious stories about others and gossiped incessantly, wished to correct his bad ways and do Teshuvah for his Lashon Hara.

He approached Rav Levi Yitzchok and asked him what he could do about this, and Rav Levi Yitzchok told him to bring him a large feather pillow. When he returned, Rav Levi Yitzchok instructed him to cut open the pillow, and scatter the feathers in the wind. The man did as he was told, and when he returned to tell Rav Levi Yitzchok that he had followed the instructions, he was informed of the second step.

Rav Levi Yitzchok said to him, "Now go and gather all the feathers."

The man was incredulous and said, "That is impossible! The wind blew the feathers in all directions. I can't possibly collect them!"

Rav Levi Yitzchok responded to him, "That is exactly right. You cannot collect all the feathers. Lashon Hara is the same way. Just as you cannot collect the feathers, you cannot take back all the bad words you have spoken either, as they also spread and fly in the wind."

The man was heartbroken at what the Rebbe had told him. Rav Levi Yitzchok said, "Now you understand. When we speak badly about another person, the effect is far and wide, and it is damage that can never be fully undone."

Rav Levi Yitzchok gave him instructions on how to correct his Aveiros, and the man worked on correcting this bad trait!

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Elimelech Biderman, *Shlit"a*, writes that during World War II, Baranovitz was on the border of Russia and Germany. Once, German soldiers ordered all the *Yidden* of Baranovitz to line up facing a wall. The *Yidden* understood what the Nazis were planning. They prepared to leave this world with *Teshuvah* and holy thoughts. The previous



Slonimer Rebbe, the Nesivos Shalom, zt"l, reminisced that his father who was among those standing by the wall, and he asked him for a cup of water, because it is written in *Sefarim* that it's ideal to say the *Brachah* of *Shehakol* before one's demise. His father took the cup of water and said, "*Baruch Ata… Shehakol Nihiyeh Bidvaro*."

Everyone present heard the *Brachah* and answered *Amein*. Immediately afterwards, gunshots were heard. Russian soldiers had arrived and were shooting at the Nazis. The Nazis ran to fight off the Russians, and in the meantime the *Yidden* escaped! People went over to the *Nesivos Shalom's* father and said, "You saved our lives! It was a miracle!"

The *Nesivos Shalom* replied, "It's not a miracle. I said *Shehakol* and increased my *Emunah Peshutah*, the simple faith that *Hashem* does everything. It is *Emunah* that saved us!"

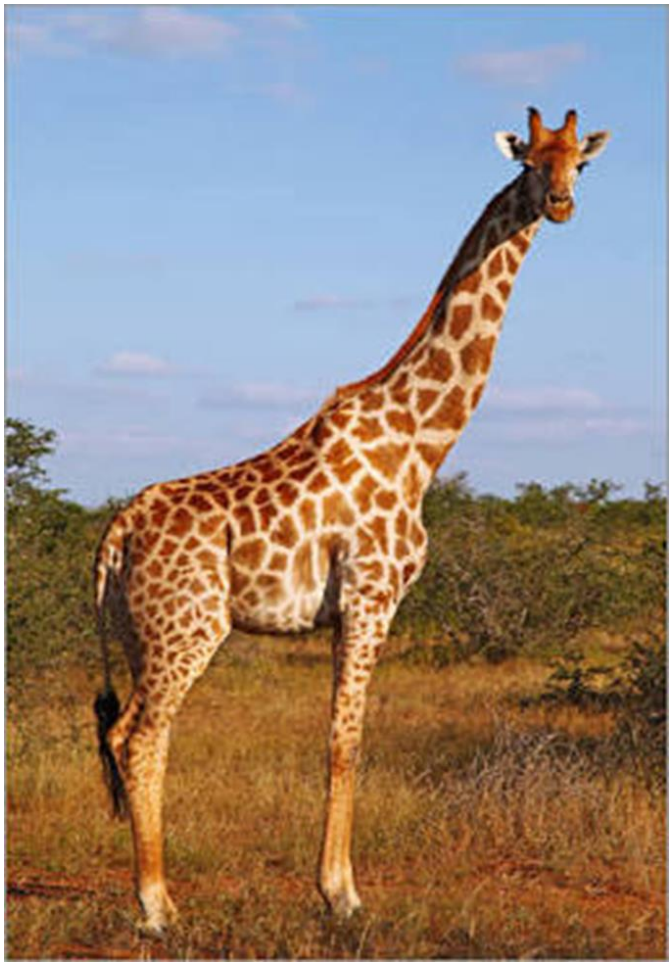
"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending."

Ohr Hamercaz Divrei Chizuk By: R' Avrohom Weisfish

Is A Giraffe Kosher?

Besides the two simanim, beheimos have an additional three simanim – they have horns, they lack upper teeth, and have vertical and horizontal lines crossing over (shti vo'oref).

The Torah lists a zomoh as one of the seven kosher beheimos. The mefarshim describe it as a tall animal that can look above walls with horn at the back and front of its head. Many of the poskim, including the Chasam Sofer, agree that this refers to the giraffe.



When a giraffe died at an Israeli zoo, Rav Machpoud of Bnei Brak was invited to check it. He found all of the simanim present. There is a mistaken belief that the area of permitted shechitah is unknown. As shown in the picture, we know that this covers the length of the giraffe's neck.

Having strengthened our emunah in Hashem over Pesach, we now lein Parshas Shemini, strengthening our emunah in theTorah Hakedoshah.

The Gemara in Chullin points out that a chazir is the only treif animal mentioned in the Torah. This is because it is the only animal with split hooves that does not chew its cud. This, say Chazal, is a perfect proof that Torah was given Min Hashamayim. Who else but Hashem would have known such a fact at the time?

In fact, until this day, none of the thousands of species of animals discovered match this criteria.

I want to add two personal stories that have strengthened my emunah tremendously.

As you all know, I am a shochet by profession. One halachah of shechitah is that the animal being shechted must be at least 8 days old. The most practical way of checking this is to look at its teeth. A kosher animal will have 8 teeth by that time. Each young calf is checked for this before shechitah.

Today, in the farming industry, each animal has its own passport, detailing its date of birth, along with other relevant information. As a precaution, these are checked by the shochtim as well.

On one occasion, during these prechecks, I noticed that although the animal had eight teeth, it's date-of-birth was less than eight days before. Not knowing what to do, I spoke to the farmer who had brought it to us. When he heard my quandary, he got very excited. "Your religion is right!" he exclaimed.

The farmer explained that he was legally required to register each animal with the registrar on the day it is born. But since that is quite a distance from his farm, he usually waits until he is in the area already. So, it took a couple days before this calf was registered. To avoid legal trouble, he gave that day's date as its date of birth. And so, as he discovered, our religion was right, as always.

Another interesting story:

The Mishnah in Chullin tells us that an animal without kidneys is kosher. The veterinarians and health inspectors would always mock Yidden for this. "How can such an animal be kosher?" they shouted, "It can't even live!" They were proven wrong when tests at Harvard University showed that kosher animals could indeed function without kidneys. Once again, a fact that the secular scientists only discovered recently has been to us for thousands of years thanks to the Torah.

Shabbat is Sacred



Years ago, two brothers from the community owned a jewelry store in Williamsburg. *Erev Shabbat*, the alarm company called one of the brothers to notify him that his safe was triggering the alarm, because it was left open.

The brothers contemplated asking for a *heter—allowance* in order to get a car to Williamsburg to check on the safe, but they were uncomfortable with the idea of desecrating Shabbat, no matter what the issue. They decided to ignore the alarm company's warning.

All through Shabbat, the men tried to enjoy like it was any other, but every hour, the alarm company called their houses and left messages saying that the safe was open. They had *emunah* that everything would be okay, and they took their time and waited until a few hours after Shabbat was over to go check on the safe.

When they got there, they saw the store had been robbed. Jewelry cases were broken, glass was everywhere. One of the brothers went to the safe and prayed that nothing was taken from it. The items in the displays were just the tip of the iceberg to what was inside the store's safe. Baruch Hashem, the safe was locked, and everything inside was intact. The police were at the store, and they asked the owners why it took so long for them to arrive, as the robbery had been the night before. The brothers explained it was the Sabbath, and they couldn't come in order to keep the day sacred.

The police officer was amazed. "Come with me," he said to them. He led the men upstairs, where he directed them to a hole in the floor, with some protruding wires, abandoned guns. and a perfect view of the safe.

"You see," said the officer, "These men that came were professionals. They played with the wires to trigger the alarm. Once the owners showed up, they would open the safe to check on its contents, and the burglars would shoot them and clear it out. They triggered your alarm every hour to get you here, and you didn't come. If not for your Sabbath, you would've lost your money, and your lives." (*Jack E. Rahmey as based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.)*

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

They Gave Up on Her, but She Persevered!

"… The camel—it chews the cud, but its hoof is not split, it is unclean to you… and the pig— its hoof is completely split but it does not chew the cud, it is unclean to you." (Vayikra 11:4,7)



Chen Miller is a special education teacher in Israel. During her first year of teaching, she entered a second-grade classroom. A little boy sitting in the centre of the room, cursed, spat, and screamed at her. She went over to him and said, "I know that you have a big heart. I know that you are clever. I know that you are a good boy."

He responded loudly for the entire class to hear, "Stupid teacher, you don't know anything! I am a disturbed boy. Everyone knows that I am disturbed. The teachers say that I am disturbed. The principal says that I am disturbed. Even my parents say that I am disturbed!" Ms. Miller repeated, "You have a big heart. You are clever. I know

that you are a good boy." Hearing that, the little boy ran out of the classroom. The second week when she entered the classroom, the exact same thing occurred. The little boy cursed, spat, and screamed at her.

She took a deep breath and whispered to him, "You have a big heart, you are clever, and I know that you are a good boy." In the third week, when Ms. Miller entered the classroom, the little boy was sitting quietly in a desk next to hers. On that day, that little boy chose her to be his teacher.

Towards the end of the year the little boy asked her how she knew that children are good. She told him that when she was a child, she thought that ***she*** *was stupid and that nothing good would come out of her. She, herself, was a student of a special needs class and others were ready to give up on her. She could not even read or write until she was in 5th grade!*

Ms. Miller became a special education teacher to help others. The point she made in her story was that ***words matter****! The words that teachers, principals, and parents say to a child become the words that the child perceives about himself. Negative words foster negative self-images and make a child feel that he is a failure. Positive words foster positive self-images and can encourage a weak student to become a successful one.*

This week's *parsha* discusses which animals are kosher and which are not. An animal that chews its cud and has totally split hooves, is a kosher animal. Most animals do not have any kosher signs at all. There are four animals that exist, that have only one kosher sign.

Many of the commentaries question why we need to know that these animals have one kosher sign. After all, it really makes no difference. Since they do not have both kosher signs, they are not kosher. The Torah first says that a camel chews its cud before it says that it does not have split hooves. The Torah says that a pig has totally split hooves but is not kosher because it does not chew its cud. Why does

the Torah say this at all and why does it list the kosher characteristic first?

The rabbis who teach us *mussar,* share a very important message based on this. When giving constructive criticism, one should first say something positive about the person before mentioning the negative. That is why the Torah mentions the positive characteristic of the four animals before mentioning their non-kosher characteristics. **This message is important for everyone** and especially important for parents and teachers. (*Rav Pam on Chumash by Rabbi Sholom Smith*)

Words can build and words can destroy! Let us choose to use our word in a positive manner.

Chabad.Org - Are Bottom Feeders Kosher Fish? By Yehuda Shurpin



Many bottom feeders aren't kosher, but that has nothing to do with where they live or feed.

For a fish to be kosher, it needs to have both fins and scales that are easily removable without tearing the skin. So although many bottom dwellers such as shellfish, lobster, crab, catfish, etc. aren't kosher, it's because they don't have the signs of a kosher fish.

Carp, on the other hand, is often classified as a bottom feeder and is one of the more popular kosher fish used in making the classic "gefilte fish" for Shabbat.

Swimming to the Top

Torah laws can generally be classified into different categories: those that are logical and those that transcend human logic. *Kashrut*, for which no reasons are given in the Torah, falls into this second category.

At the same time, our sages tell us that we are meant to delve into these laws and endeavour to comprehend them as much as possible (all the while keeping in mind that the "ultimate reason" behind these laws may be beyond our limited human intellect).

Thus, many rabbis and philosophers have speculated on their purpose. For example, Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman (Ramban) writes in his commentary to Leviticus:

The reason why fins and scales [are signs of permissibility as food] is that those fish which have them always dwell in the upper clear waters, and they are sustained through the air that enters there. Therefore, their bodies contain a certain amount of heat which counteracts the abundance of moistness [of the waters], just as wool, hair and nails function in man and beast.

Those fish which have no fins and scales always dwell in the lower turbid waters, and due to the great abundance of moistness and gatherings of water there, they cannot repel anything. Hence, they are creatures of cold fluid, which cleaves to them and is therefore more easily able to cause death, and it [the cold fluid] does in fact cause death in some waters, such as stagnant lakes.

This seems to be one of the main sources for the notion that all kosher fish are by definition not bottom feeders. However, as noted, this is only meant as an "after-the-fact" observation, not an absolute rule.

Additionally, a closer look at Nachmanides reveals that it's not about where the fish feed, but whether they swim to the upper levels of the water. Interestingly, carp, which is often classified as a "bottom

feeder," actually feeds in nearly all sections of the water, and only feeds on the bottom 40-50% of the time. They are also known to feed directly on the surface.

Perpetuating the Misconception

Confusing the speculations of philosophers with "the" reason for *kashrut* has led to many misconceptions, the most common of which is that kosher food is specifically healthier.

True, due to some of the kosher guidelines as well as the strict controls put in place by some *kashrut* organizations, kosher products may be healthier, but this is not always the case. To illustrate, hemlock, one of the deadliest poisons, comes from a plant and is completely natural, and therefore is technically "kosher."

Of course, one of the commandments in the Torah is to be careful with our health, so we shouldn't eat anything that is harmful to us. Yet what is harmful for one person may be fine, or even healthy, for another. Therefore, the question of health is left to doctors (who themselves are not always in agreement), and the question of kosher is left to rabbis.

Although the common misconception is that bottom feeders are unhealthy and therefore unkosher, their health status doesn't impact their kosher status. (some bottom feeders are healthy.)

Although the underlying reason for keeping kosher isn't necessarily physical health, the sages and mystics explain that it does have a profound effect on one's spiritual health and well-being. Furthermore, eating non-kosher foods can dull one's spiritual sensitivities. And like all things in the spiritual realms, this can in turn impact one's physical well-being as well.

Kosher, Healthy Mind and Body

Interestingly, the Talmud states: "All [fish] that have scales also have fins [and are thus kosher]; but there are [fish] that have fins but do not have scales [and are thus unkosher]."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that scales, which protect the fish like armour, represent the quality of *yirat shamayim*, "awe of heaven" and integrity, which protects us from negativity and the many pitfalls that life presents.

Fins, which propel a fish forward, represent innovation and ambition.

Ambition and innovation without the protection of integrity and awe of heaven can have very negative consequences and isn't "kosher." At the same time, we can't just remain in a protected state—in matters of holiness, we must always strive to move forward and climb ever higher.

Parsha Thought – By Yitzi Adlin

Our parsha begins with the establishment of the Mishkan on the first day of Nisan. Aaron is commanded regarding the korbanos. Immediately following that, the parsha tells us of the death of Aaron's two sons and Aaron's reaction, **וידם אהרן**, and Aaron was silent. Rashi tells us that Aaron received great reward for his silence.

It's much harder to remain silent than to cry out which a gemara in Yoma addresses. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why are the Sages of those generations called the members of the Great Assembly? It is because they returned the crown of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to its former glory. How so?

Moshe came and said in his prayer: "The great, the mighty, and the awesome G-d". Yirmiyah came and said: Gentiles, i.e., the minions of Nebuchadnezzar, are carousing in His sanctuary; where is His awesomeness? Therefore, he did not say awesome in his prayer: "The great G-d, the mighty L-rd of Hosts, is His name". Daniel came and said: Gentiles are enslaving His children; where is His might? Therefore, he did not say mighty in his prayer: "The great and awesome G-d". The members of the Great Assembly came and said:

On the contrary, this is the might of His might, i.e., this is the fullest expression of it, that He conquers His inclination by exercising patience toward the wicked. G-d's anger is flared by the gentile nations' enslavement of His people, yet He expresses tremendous might by suppressing His anger and holding back from punishing them immediately. Therefore, it is still appropriate to refer to G-d as mighty.

These acts also express His awesomeness: Were it not for the awesomeness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, how could one people, i.e., the Jewish people, who are alone and hated by the gentile nations, survive among the nations? This gemara shows us that, even for Hashem, it's a much greater expression of greatness to be able to hold back and not say or do anything than to even destroy your enemies. How much more so would it be beneficial not to take action against those we actually care for.



The Nifliosecha Asicha tells a story about **רב בנטוב** as told over by his son. My father was a Rosh yeshiva in Be'er Yaakov. One day, he came a little late to wake up the boys for davening, and he went from room to room already wearing Tallis and teffilin. In one room, a boy was in a deep sleep. When he didn't respond to the knocking on the door, my father gently tapped him on the shoulder to wake him up. The boy jumped up, instinctively slapped my father on the cheek and went back to sleep. My father was taken aback by the reaction of the boy and left the room without saying a word.

Somehow word got around about what happened and the president of the yeshiva came down and called a meeting of the whole staff.

He said this boy is a disaster; we cannot allow him to stay in the yeshiva; he must be expelled. My father stood up and said, "if you throw him out, I'm out too! We worked hard to get him here; he comes from a troubled family where most of his siblings are on the streets. If you throw him out, he will end up there too."

There was silence in the room. The president responded, "what do you suggest we do?" My father said, "For a month he won't be allowed into class and I will learn with him privately; hopefully, he will learn from his mistake". They agreed and the boy stayed in yeshiva.

Years passed and the boy finished this yeshiva and then went on to an even better one. He would call my father every year before Yom Kippur to beg for forgiveness. Years later, when my father passed away and we were sitting shiva, a man walked in, dressed in the garb of a Rosh yeshiva with a long white beard. He came and sat with us and asked that we all gather around. He wanted to tell us something. He said, "it's difficult for me to speak, but I have to tell you this story.

He proceeded to tell this very story, and then concluded, "I am that boy that slapped your father. I came to ask forgiveness in front of all of you and tell you that today I am a Rosh Kollel in the North and I have ten children that are all good. All of what I have is because of your father for, had they thrown me out, I would not be here today." This is an important lesson for all of us, how crucial it can be not to react, even though we have every right to. ***Sometimes, silence is really the loudest message!***

A Wise Man would say: "Needing someone is like needing a parachute. If he isn't there the first time you need him, chances are you won't be needing him again!"

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

וזאת תורת המנחה הקרב אתה... ו:ז ***'And this is the law of the Minchah, bring it…'*** (6:7)



Rashi, quoting *Toras Kohanim* explains that there should be **תורה אחת לכולן**— one set of laws for all *Minchah* offerings, — **להטעינן שמן ולבונה** that they all require oil and frankincense. One would think that the only *Minchah* offerings requiring oil and frankincense are those of a *Yisroel* that a *Kometz* (fistful) is taken out. How do we know that even the *Minchah* of a *Kohein* which is totally burned requires oil and frankincense?

Therefore, the *Torah* says **תורה אחת** — one set of laws for all *Minchah* offerings. It is written in the *Sefer Divrei Meir* that the words **הקרב אתה** have the *gematria* (numerical value) of 713. This corresponds exactly to the golden words of *Rashi*: — **להטעינן שמן ולבונה** which also has a *gematria* of 713. (*Chaim shel Torah*)

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

וַיִּקְצֹף עַל־אֶלְעָזָר וְעַל־אִיתָמָר בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַנּוֹתָרִם (10:16)

After the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, Moshe Rabbeinu commanded Aharon and his surviving sons Elazar and Isamar to continue their avodah in the Mishkan. When Moshe discovered that they had burned the meat of one of the offerings instead of eating it — which he perceived to be an error in judgement — he became angry and rebuked Elazar and Isamar for their actions. Rashi explains that although Moshe was also upset with Aharon, he addressed his

disapproval toward Aharon's children out of respect for his older brother.



However, **Harav Yisroel Reisman** points out that Elazar and Isamar did nothing wrong, for they were merely following the ruling of their father, who was among the greatest leaders in the generation. Had they also been complicit in Aharon's alleged miscalculation, we could understand Moshe's decision to train his displeasure on them, but since they were simply obeying their father's instructions, what right did Moshe have to spare their father's dignity by criticizing his innocent sons instead?

Rav Reisman answers this question based on a contemporary vignette. An elementary school Rebbi was once teaching Parashas Vayeishev to his class, and he told them about the hatred that Yosef's brothers felt toward him because of the special garment that Yaakov gave him.

One of the students raised his hand and asked why their anger was directed at Yosef — who simply accepted a gift that his father bestowed upon him — and not at Yaakov, who caused the jealousy by deciding to show favoritism to Yosef? After searching unsuccessfully to find this issue discussed in any sefer, the Rebbi told him that it was such a good question that he should send it to **Harav Chaim Kanievsky, shlita**, to see how he would respond.

The student did as his teacher advised and eagerly mailed his kushya to Bnei Brak. Surprisingly, Rav Chaim wrote back that such a question

could only be asked in our generation, for in previous generations, the possibility of children hating their father or even questioning his judgment would have been unthinkable. Thus, Yosef was the only candidate for his brothers' jealousy and disdain. What appeared at first glance to be a strong kushya was in reality only a kushya for our times, and therefore the Rebbi was unable to find it discussed in any of the commentaries written in previous generations.

Similarly, when Moshe elected to censure Elazar and Isamar instead of Aharon, they considered it a badge of honor to be blamed for their father's actions if it meant that he would be spared from Moshe's wrath. We are only able to ask this question because we lack the proper appreciation for the mitzvah of honoring our parents.

Middos



A Yeshivah Bochur once came to **Rav Elazar Shach, *zt"l***, because he was very confused about a possible *Shidduch* that had been brought to his attention. The girl seemed perfect in every way and was seeking someone who wanted to remain in learning. The only negative thing he had heard about her was that it seemed to be that she was not very intelligent. This worried him, because he feared that if he married a woman who lacked a sharp mind, they would be less likely to have intelligent children.

Rav Shach explained that raising successful children depends on one thing, and one thing only, and that was how much *Yiras Shamayim* the parents of the child have. He said, "How can you know how much *Yiras*

Shamayim a person has? If their every move is calculated to bring pleasure to *Hashem* and if they are very careful about other people's money, you can know that they fear *Hashem*.

Another way you can see *Yiras Shamayim* in the home is when the parents are always willing to give in to one another, and when there is always an atmosphere of joy in the house surrounding *Mitzvos*. Also, one should be able to see how a person is upset if he falls in *Ruchniyus*.

The main things to look for in a wife is that she jumps away from *Aveirah* like from fire. She should love her fellow Jews, perform *Chesed*, and have good *Middos*. Most important is that she not be materialistic. This is how you will merit to have children who grow up to be great *Talmidei Chachamim* and *Tzadikim* who have profound *Yiras Shamayim*. The intellectual abilities of the parents are actually irrelevant to the development of the children's potential. The only thing of real significance is *Yiras Shamayim*!"

Parsha Thoughts by: Mordechai Sapoznick



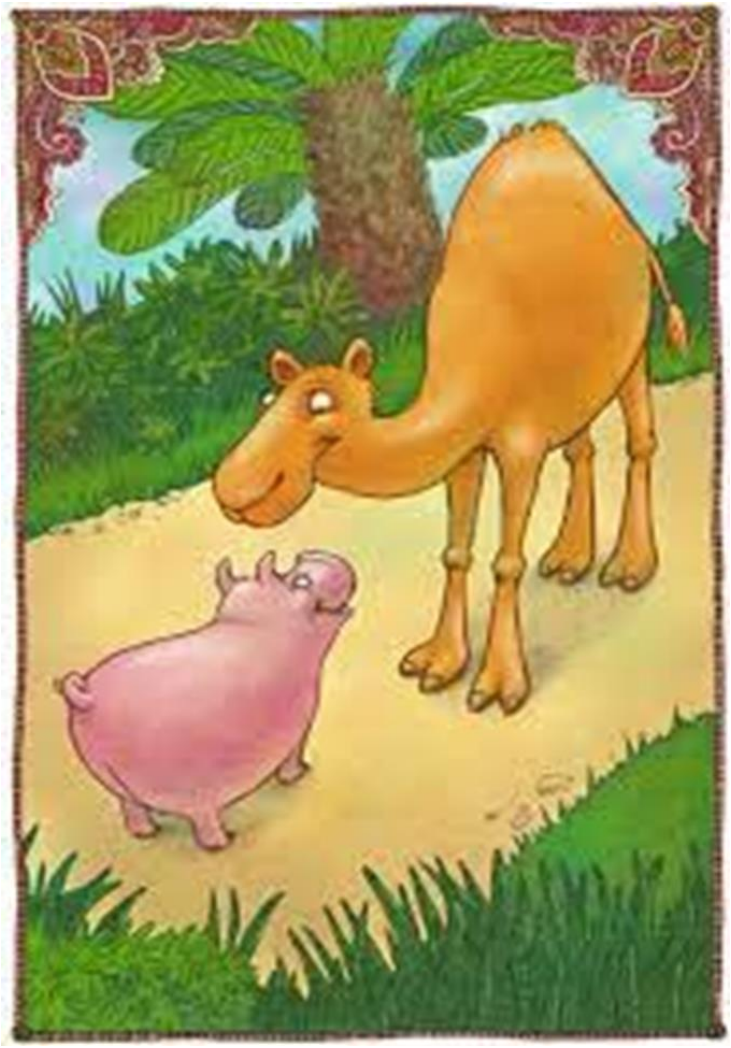
The עֹרֵב (orev) bird, a member of the raven family, is a bird that we are not allowed to eat. Rashi teaches that the raven is cruel to its children and does not supply them with food.

The word עֹרֵב has the same letters as the word רָעֵב which means hungry. It is Hashem Himself who gives the baby ravens food to eat.

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

We all know that in parshas Shemini it tells us which animals are kosher and which animals are not kosher. We are told that there are two *simanim* that an animal must have to render it kosher- ma'alas gaira, it brings up its cud and mafris parsa, it has split hooves. In those pesukim, perek 11:4-7, every time it talks about an animal that is treif, it also tells us that that the animal also has something about it that we might think that it is kosher, but then it tells us why it is treif.

The Kli Yakar asks that in each of these pesukim why does the Torah have to tell us a reason why you might think that it is kosher?



For example, by the camel, it tells us that it does bring up its cud, but it doesn't have split hooves. Why doesn't the Pasuk just tell us straight out that the camel is not kosher because it doesn't have split hooves? Also by the pig, why does the Pasuk have to tell us that it has split hooves, but it doesn't chew the cud? Why doesn't the Torah just simply tell us that the pig is not kosher because it doesn't chew the cud?

The answer is as the Kli Yakar tells us is that those things that are evil and wrong, sometimes they display properties that pretend that they are good. That's what the Torah is telling us, that sometimes they try to fool you.

This is the same with people and institutions. Really, they are no good, but they always try to display their good aspects. Just because you see somebody acting good, doesn't mean that they are a good person, because even bad people can do something good.

The Torah is telling us to be careful. When you see that someone is doing something good, that is nice, but just be careful. Everything may not be what it appears to be.

This is why we can't eat this type of animal. So that we should not behave in this manner.

Why Did the Torah Need to Mention "Fins" as a Kosher Sign for Fish? by Rav Yisochor Frand



Towards the end of Parshas Shmini, the Torah gives us the list of permissible animals, fish, and fowl. There is a very simple rule for identifying kosher fish: Any fish that has both fins and scales is kosher. Any fish that does not have both fins and scales is not kosher. The Gemara in Tractate Chulin (66b) states: "All fish that have scales, have fins." In other words, there is no such thing in all of creation as a fish that has scales but does not have fins. There are certainly fish that have fins and not scales, as we well know, but the reverse is not true. The Gemara asks, if that is the case, why does the Torah say: "Anything that does not have fins and scales in the water is not kosher?" Let the Torah merely say that any fish that has scales is kosher! (We would automatically know that it also has fins.)

The Gemara answers, "to magnify Torah and to exalt it." (l'hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira). In other words, in truth, it was not necessary to provide the extra detail about fins, once we know that scales are a

kosher sign for fish. It was just provided as a literary flourish to expand the Torah and exalt it.

This is a strange Gemara. Anyone who has learned Gemara — and even someone who has only learned Chumash with Rashi — knows that out of every single letter that is extra in the Torah, the Rabbis felt a need to expound and learn out new laws and teachings. Literally, from an extra letter we darshen entire halochos. There are countless discussions where one tanna uses an extra word to teach us one thing and then the Gemara inquires how the second tanna will account for this extra word (implying that every extra word — even every extra letter — needs to be accounted for). Why doesn't the Gemara simply answer in all these cases that the extra letter or word appears "l'hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira?"

We could condense many tractates in the Talmud this way! Maybe Bava Basra would not need to be 176 blatt long. Maybe we could get it down to 100 blatt. So much of Talmudic discussion is spent analyzing exposition of extra words and letters! What is going on here with this answer in Chullin as to why we have the superfluous teaching that scales and fins make a fish kosher?

Reb Aryeh Tzvi Frumer [1884-1943; Poland] says: Today we are familiar, perhaps, with most of the fish in the world. But even today, every once in a while a marine biologist comes up with new species of fish that are first being discovered now. Certainly in Talmudic times, if you asked a scientist, "Is there any fish in the universe that has scales and does not have fins, no scientist would go out on a limb and say "there is no such thing!"

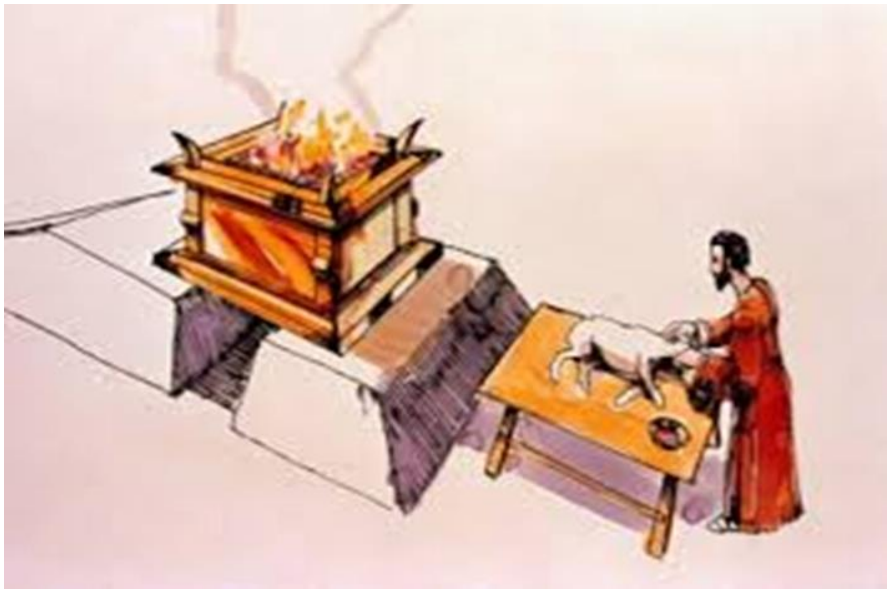
Perhaps the same could be said even a hundred years ago! How would he know? Who can say, "I have knowledge of every single species of fish that will ever be discovered"? Science is empirical. Facts need to be discovered. Nobody can say definitively something is true of every single species of fish, because nobody has seen every single fish in the world.

Yet, the Ribono shel Olam tells us , "there is no such thing in all of creation as a fish that has scales and does not have fins." Why does He tell us this? L'Hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira. To beautify and to glorify the Torah! No scientist in the world can make a statement like the Gemara makes, that there is no such thing as a fish that has scales and does not have fins. But the Gemara can make such a statement because it is based on oral tradition — person from person back to the Almighty.

This is why the Gemara utilizes the expression l'hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adira here. It testifies to the glory of the Torah's wisdom, since only the Torah could definitively know such a scientific fact.

Hama'ayan: By R' Shlomo Katz

וְשׁוֹר וָאַיִל לִשְׁלָמִים לִזְבֹּחַ לִפְנֵי ה' וּמִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בַּשָּׁמֶן כִּי הַיּוֹם ה' נִרְאָה אֲלֵיכֶם "And a bull and a ram for a peace-offering to slaughter before Hashem, and a meal-offering mixed with oil; for today Hashem appears to you." (9:4)



Rabbeinu Machir z"l (Spain; 14th century) observes that the Hebrew word "**נִרְאָה** / appears" has the same Hebrew letters as "Aharon" [who brought these sacrifices]. The word **אֲלֵיכֶם** / to you" has the same letters as the name of the angel Micha-el [who, say our Sages, brings offerings in his role as the Kohen Gadol in the Heavens]. *(Avkat Rocheil)*

The Holocaust Survivor Who Read His Newspaper In Shul During Shachris - *Jack E. Rahmey*



Rabbi Yissochar Frand tells the following story:

There was a couple who went through the Holocaust. Before the Holocaust, they were fully observant of Torah and Mitzvot. After the Holocaust, unfortunately, the husband lost his faith and said, "That's it! I've had it with G-d!"

The husband gave up everything in terms of religious practice and belief. His wife though, did not have that same reaction. She begged her husband —"At least go to shul."

The husband refused. This went on for a while. Finally the wife said to the husband, "Listen, please do me a favor. Every morning you go out and buy a newspaper and you read it from cover to cover. Just humor me, when you pick up the paper at the newsstand, rather than coming home to read it, go to the shul and read the paper — please, to make me happy!"

The husband wanted to please his wife. He spent the time reading the newspaper anyway, so he agreed to her proposal. He would go to shul every morning, sit in the back row and read the newspaper and so this went on for a few years.

Now ask yourselves: If you saw someone come into the back row of your shul every morning, not put on Tallit or Tefillin, not take a Siddur off the shelf, but simply make himself comfortable and read the newspaper for 45 minutes, what would your reaction be?

Most likely our reaction would be very negative. "If you want to read the newspaper, go home and read the newspaper! How dare you be so disrespectful of this holy synagogue?"

To their credit the people in this particular shul did not say anything critical to this individual. They did not chastise him. Instead they began to schmooze with him, they invited him to join them for a l'chaim after praying and when someone had a Yahrtzeit, they invited him to join them in social gatherings.

To make a long story short, this Holocaust survivor went from reading the newspaper in the back row of the shul every day to praying in shul three times a day! Eventually, he even became president of the shul!

What does that tell us? Our inclination would have been to immediately pronounce "Tameh who lachem" — this species is definitely not a kosher animal! But we did not know this man's past. We were not clear about his present situation, and we certainly could not have guessed what his future turned out to be.

This is what the Torah is teaching us. In order to proclaim "This one is Tameh" we must know that the hoof was not split in the past, the hoof is not currently split, and the hoof will never be split in the future. Short of that do not be so quick to say "Tameh hu lachem."

R' Shloime Wolbe zt"l (Alay Shur) would say "וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן- When Aharon's two sons died, he remained silent and was rewarded for his silence.

Remaining silent in the face of intense grief takes great effort. There are times when silence is not merely the absence of words; at times, silence has the ability to even speak louder than words could possibly express."

The custom to bake "Shlissel Challa" (literally "key bread") on the Shabbos after Pesach, is attributed as a segulah for parnassa - a key to livelihood!



Some add a key made out of dough onto the challos. Others indent the shape of a key into the challah by placing a key into the challah and taking it out before baking it. All of this is to commemorate the mann that fell for our ancestors in the desert, and to remind us Who is really in charge of our parnassa and sustenance. There are numerous esoteric reasons given for the "Shlissel Challa" but one reason is based on an incident that occurred in the time of the **Maharal of Prague, R' Yehuda Loewy ZT"L**.

One year, on the first night of Pesach, when the kehillah finished davening Maariv and everyone had already gone home, the shamash (caretaker) of the Great Synagogue walked into his house and went to hang up his large key ring. Now, the shamash had many keys on one string, including the key to the gate of the courtyard, front door of the shul, Aron Kodesh, etc., and he always hung the large key ring on a nail in its appointed place in his home.

This night, however, after hanging the keys, when he reached the table to begin the Seder and recited Kadesh (the first section of the Hagadah), he heard a crash as the keys fell to the ground. He looked over to find the keys on the floor, and he hung them up on the nail again, making sure that they were secure and tight. But once again, as he tried to begin the Seder, the keys fell down - and then again and again.

The shamash was frightened, as he was sure that this was a significant omen. He had no idea, though, what this could indicate.

Thus, he ran, with tremendous fear, to his Rebbe, the great Maharal, and told him about the case of the mysterious falling keys. The Maharal told him to return home, and to take the key ring apart. Then, he should try hanging each key separately on the nail, to see which key was the culprit, causing all the other keys to fall. The shamash did as he was instructed. He hung each key on the nail individually, and one by one, they did not fall. However, when he hung the key to the Aron Kodesh on the nail, it immediately slipped off the nail. He tried to hang it again and it fell again. He knew that the key to the Aron Kodesh was the cause of the issue, so he went back to his Rebbe, the Maharal.

The Maharal told him to go to the shul and see if there was something significant in the Aron Kodesh. The shamash searched and he found a wine bottle that was left there for Kiddush. On closer examination, though, he saw that the bottle had been filled with blood. He went back and told the Maharal.

The Maharal instructed him to clean the bottle well to ensure there was no trace of blood left in it, and then replace it with fine red wine. Then, lock the wine in the Aron Kodesh again and go home without telling anyone what happened.

He did as he was told, and now when he returned the keys to the nail, they remained on the wall and did not fall again. The next day, during davening, a large group of gentiles, led by the local troublesome priest, barged into the shul, bringing the police with them. They began screaming that the Jews had murdered a gentile, and they knew there was a bottle of his blood somewhere in the Synagogue.

This, understandably, caused quite a stir in the shul. The police searched all over, and the priest walked directly to the Aron Kodesh to open it, as if he were certain that he would find evidence there. But the Maharal blocked his path, saying he would not allow a priest to place his impure hands on the holiest place in the Synagogue.

The priest cried to the police that he was certain that the poor gentile's blood was there, since it is clear that the Jewish Rabbi would not allow him to search this area. The Maharal said he would open the Aron HaKodesh himself, but would not allow a no-good priest to do so. He opened the Aron HaKodesh, and showed them the Sifrei Torah, and the priest noticed the bottle. Triumphantly, he cried out, "Aha! Here is the bottle of blood we are looking for!" The Maharal denied this, and said, "Blood? This is a bottle of wine, not blood." They checked, and confirmed it was indeed wine.

The gentiles walked out confused and embarrassed, and the Jews smiled joyously. To commemorate this miracle, the Maharal said they should really place keys in the matzah on the first night of Pesach. However, since this is impossible, they should commemorate the miracle on the first Shabbos after Pesach by placing a key in the Challah baked for the Shabbos meal.

Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan – Back Seat Driver

The Zohar says that there are four reactions to tzaros, that blow up and happen in the mind of a person.. One minute he says, "I am going to fight, they are not going to stop me." A minute later he says, " Gevalt, this is too difficult, I'm going to surrender." Then he says, "No, no, maybe I can talk my way out, I'll negotiate." And then a minute after that, he says, "Enough of this, I have had enough tzaros, I can't deal with this anymore.

These are the four reactions of every human being at the moment that they face tzaros in life.

It is at that moment that a person has a choice – Is he going to stop telling Hashem how he thinks that this thing is going to work out, מַה־תִּצְעַק אֵלָי - why are you crying to Me? Stop telling Me how you think that this should work. Stop giving Me your advice. Stop giving Me your directives.

"I put you in this position in the first place," says The Borei Olam. "I did this, so that you will finally be able to rely on Me." **הַשְׁלֵךְ עַל ה' יְהָבְךָ וְהוּא יְכַלְכְּלֶךָּ - *Cast your burden on Hashem, and He will bear you.* [תהלים נה:כג]** Throw ***you*** on Me.

Throw yourself upon Hashem. Let Him take care of you.

"I am driving the bus. You are the passenger. Stop being a back seat driver." Have you ever had those people in your car? They drive you out of your mind.



You give a guy a lift, and he asks you to take him to Avenue "J" and Eastern Parkway. Go this way and that way. Hey, I know how to get there, I live in Brooklyn. He has to tell you every single turn. You want to pull over and tell him to get out. He's driving you out of your mind. Don't be a backseat driver. I'm driving, I know what I'm doing.

Says the Borei Olam - **מַה־תִּצְעַק אֵלָי**– enough already, can't you trust? The problem is, our human nature, we are control freaks. It is so hard for us to give up control. We keep reaching for the steering wheel.

Says the Borei Olam, "You are not driving, I'm driving. Sit back, let Me show you the way. I will show you that I can open up for you doors that you didn't even know existed. I can make things happen, I can save you, I can help you. I can give you tremendous bracha from places that you didn't know existed."

"But I can only do it for you, if you believe that I can do it for you. If you are the one who is still dictating the way you think that you

are going to be saved, then you are tying My hands to do things your way"

"Let go of the finite and walk into the infinite. Leave your human smallness and come with Me and surrender yourself. Throw yourself upon Me, and take Me by the hand, walk with Me, one step at a time."

Let go of the wheel and let Hashem drive.

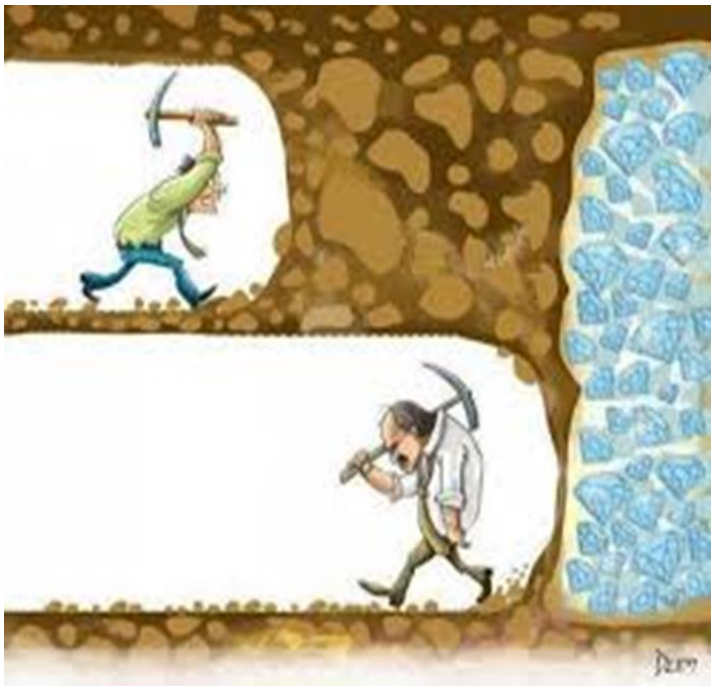
Vechol Maaminim - Brachah and Amen



In Parashas Shemini, there are 91 pesukim, numerically equivalent to amen. Besides that, this parashah concludes with the halachos relating to the kashrus of foods. **מאכל** is numerically equivalent to amen as well – to teach us that it is not enough for us to suffice with a brachah on food, and rather we must always to try have someone present to answer amen to our brachos. We can further add: the sign that we were given for the number 91 pesukim in this parashah is **עבדיה** – meaning that one who is strict to answer amen strengthens his emunah and becomes an eved of Hashem – an **עבד י-ה**.

The Levush writes that on Shabbos we can attain higher levels of wisdom as it is a day especially designated for this purpose. Therefore, we should seek ways to increase the amount of Torah that we discuss on this holy day.

Never Desist from Tefillah



ויבא משה ואהרן אל אהל מועד ויצאו ויברכו את העם ויראה כבוד ה' אל כל העם ט כג- *"When Aharon saw that all the korbanos had been sacrificed, and all the rituals had been performed, and still the Shechinah did not descend to Am Yisrael, he was pained, and thought: 'I know that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is angry with me, and it is because of me that the Shechinah has not descended'…Moshe immediately entered with him and they begged for mercy and the Shechinah descended on Am Yisrael." (Rashi, based on Toras Kohanim Mechilta D'Miluim 19).*

We can learn from here that even someone who has made every possible effort, and yet has not seen a yeshuah, should not despair. Rather, he should redouble his efforts to daven and his yeshuah will ultimately arrive. (*Ohr Torah [Rav S. Mann]*)

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

One of the non-kosher species of birds that is mentioned in this week's *parshah* (11:19) is the *'Chasidah'*.

The *Ibn Ezra* notes that this bird is a seasonal bird, and only appears at specific times of the year. Rav Moshe Shternbuch adds that the name *'Chasidah'* implies the concept of *'Chessed'*, kindness. The Torah is stressing that 'seasonal kindness' is not the Torah way of performing kindness, and this is why it is listed as not kosher.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



"Today's technological devices all require passwords to gain entry. Only the owner of the device knows the password – it's his secret, it's his key.

So too, in Shamayim, we all have a password. We all have our special mitzvos, our acts of *mesiras nefesh* that no one else knows about. Down here, it's a secret, but up there, it's the key that will unlock the gates of Eternity."

Concentrate On What You Say – R' Yehoshua Zitron



We know that there is a big segula for parnassah, is to recite the Parshas Haman every day. Chazal say that anybody that says Parshas Haman every single day, will never lack sustenance.

But wait a minute, there are people that do this, and yet, they are still poor, and they don't have any money. How do you answer that? **The Chofetz Chaim** says that that whatever taste or flavour a person wanted when they ate the Mann, all he had to do was have that taste in mind. But what happened if someone was eating the Mann and had no particular intention? Then the Mann was flavourless.

Likewise, if somebody says Parshas Haman without thinking about it, or understanding what they are saying, than it lacks any strength.

The whole reason for saying Parshas Haman, is to increase your Emunah. Appreciating that Hashem can provide for every single person. Just like Hashem provided food in the desert, He can provide for you.

When you say Parshas Haman, you are supposed to think about what it really means. If you are just reading it, and going through the motions, then the benefits will be limited. Similar to eating the Manna without intentions.

When a person davens and doesn't understand why his tefilos are not being answered, stop for a moment. Concentrate on what you are saying. You don't realise how much more powerful that Tefila will be.

Revach L'Neshama - Avrohom Danzig - The Fire At The Vilna Gaon's Levaya



After Nadav and Avihu died it says, **כָּל־בֵּ֥ית יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל יִבְכּ֑וּ אֵ֚ת הַשְּׂרֵפָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר שָׂרַ֖ף ה׳**; the entire nation will cry and extinguish the raging fire that hashem burned." (Shemini 10:6)

What are these fires and what does it have to do with the death of a Tzaddik?

The Pninim MiShulchan Gavoa brings that at the Levaya of the **Vilna Gaon**, the **Chayei Adam, Rav Avhrohon Danzig**, said that the Midas HaDin, which is like a raging fire, constantly prosecutes Bnei Yisrael. The way to extinguish this fire is with water, the water of Torah.

While the tzadikim are alive, their Torah keeps the fire at bay and prevents it from devouring Klal Yisrael. Upon their death, the water stops to flow, and the fire can grow out of control, causing great damage to Klal Yisrael.

The only thing that extinguishes this fire are the tears that run from our eyes upon the news of their passing. Hashem tells Klal Yisrael to cry rivers of tears for the Tzaddikim as a way of saving ourselves, despite the loss of our water filled protector.

Revach L'Neshama - Meshech Chochma - The Death Of Tzadikim

The Meshech Chochma explains that the whole purpose of Nadav and Avihu's deaths was to cause a Kiddush Hashem. When the tzadikim are punished for small aveiros, people realize that they themselves need to seriously rectify their own behaviour.

Hashem's resting of his Shechina on the Mishkan was a sign that He forgave Bnei Yisrael for Chait Ha'Egel. Therefore, Bnei Yisrael may have gotten the mistaken impression that even when they do a severe aveira like the egel, Hashem will quickly forgive them, and that Hashem is a "Vatran"- lenient.

Therefore, by instantly killing two great tzadikim like Nadav and Avihu for a small aveira, Hashem restored the fear of His judgement among the people. Therefore, their perfectly timed deaths on this very day caused a great Kiddush Hashem.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev - Just Like Baby Moshe, We Must Keep Kosher

The Parsha of Kosher and non-Kosher creatures starts in an unusual manner, (Shemini 11:1), **וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר אֲלֵהֶם**. Why does the Torah use the extra word "Aleihem" at the end of the pasuk instead of ending with the usual "Laimor"?

The Iturei Torah brings and answer from **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev**. He says that Chazal says that Moshe after being found in the river and taken to Pharaoh's palace refused to nurse from any

Mitzri women because he would use his mouth in the future to talk directly to Hashem.

Similarly, the **Ramban** says that we do not eat non-Kosher animals because they have a certain cruelty in their nature while Yisroel is a holy nation who must imbue themselves with the trait of Chesed.



The Pasuk in Yoel (3:1) says **וְנִבְּאוּ בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם**, in the future all sons and daughter of Am Yisroel will speak to Hashem and be filled with Nevua. Since we will all speak to Hashem, we cannot eat unkosher animal like Moshe could not nurse from Mitzri milk.

This says Rav Levi Yitzchok is what he pasuk means. Why can't we eat not kosher? "Laimor Aleihem", since Hashem will speak to each and every one of us, we must be careful that only pure food from clean sources enters our mouth.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Chaim Zaitchek: How The Wife Brings Bracha To The Home

The glorious day of Hakamas HaMishkan was a study of contrasts, says Rav Chaim Zaitchek. First **וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד** (Shemini 9:23). The Medrash (Koheles Rabba 4:9) says that when Moshe gave a bracha to the people, the Shechina didn't rest on the Mishkan.

Similarly Aharon with his avodah did not bring the Shechina. Only after Moshe and Aharon both came together, like the pasuk says, **וַיֵּרָא כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם** did the Shechina finally rest on the Mishkan. Tovim HaShnayim Min HaEchad!

On the other hand says the Medrash (Vayikra Rabba 20:8), Nadav and Avihu made four mistakes that caused their death. One of them was that they did not consult each other. They acted independently without talking it over.

This is mind boggling, says Rav Zaitchek. Two people doing the exact Avodah together but acting totally independent of the other without the slightest meeting of the minds. Had they spoke it over, say the Meforshim they would have quickly realized it was a bad idea.



In a marriage the gemara clearly says that the Bracha in the home comes on account of the woman. Hashem created her specifically for man's benefit. A man must realize that his success comes from consulting with his wife.

A woman is not a magical recipe for success, but co-operation between a man and his wife is what brings the Bracha. Success cannot be achieved by one person alone.

We learn from Nadav and Avihu that it is entirely possible for two people to live together an entire lifetime and jointly raise a family, but live in two separate worlds. This is not Tovim HaShnayim Min HaEchad, says Rav Zaitchek. It is a recipe for disaster and will turn the Bracha to Klala.

Marriage is a gift. Use it wisely!

The Poor Feeding The Poor

During the Holocaust we find stories of amazing courage by previously ordinary people and hear sickening stories of the depths that people sink to. Desperate times call for desperate measures and people make tough decisions about how they will behave. Ask yourself, if you were there and struggling to save your own life how would act towards others? Would you rise or fall to the occasion?



Yosef Friedenson wrote that one of the most pitiful sights in the Warsaw ghetto was the hordes of homeless children wandering around in rags, barefoot, with their stomachs swollen from hunger. They would wander the streets begging for "a pizele broit" (a crumb of bread).

In those precarious times, no one had a crumb of bread to spare, and people hardened their hearts to the cries of these starved children. However, his father, Rabbi Eliezer Gershon Friedenson, the renowed askan, talmid chacham, ba'al chessed, and editor, could not ignore their cries. He would cut up little pieces of bread, wrap them up in paper, and throw them out the window. The news spread quickly that a "rich man" was giving away bread, and every night, a group of children would crowd around the window.

One evening as the children were starting to crowd around like they did every night, R' Friedenson started cutting up the last loaf of bread in the house. He handed out the whole loaf to the children. There was no bread left in the house for supper, or for breakfast the next day. There was no money in the house to buy more. When R' Friedenson realized what he had done, he did not show distress. Instead, he began humming an old Jewish song. "Oif Morgen vet G-

tt sorgen- Let the Good G-d take care of tomorrow." He then sat down with his sons, Yosef, Shimshon, and Raphael, and gave them a shiur in Hilchos Tzeddakah. The main point of the shiur was that even the poor are obligated to give tzedakah.

The life of this spiritual giant, a man who literally gave away his last crumb of bread, was snuffed out by the Nazis in 1943. (Source: A Path Through the Ashes)

Rav Hutner the Shadchan

Yaakov was the top bochur in his yeshivah. He was known not only for his intellectual capabilities, but for his yiras Shamayim and refined middos as well. Therefore, it was quite a surprise to everybody that Yaakov was having problems with shidduchim. It wasn't for lack of opportunities, since he had gone out on countless dates, but nothing ever seemed to materialize. Yaakov was already in his late twenties, and he was beginning to despair. A veil of sadness could be discerned beneath his normally happy disposition.

Despite his personal problems, Yaakov continued to learn with hasmada and was mapkid on his sedarim. However, one day he made an exception to his normally tight schedule to attend the bris of his chavrusa's son in the Beis Medrash of the Gaon, **HaRav Yitzchak Hutner, z'tl**. It was the first time since he had arrived at the yeshivah that he didn't go directly to the yeshivah's Beis Medrash after davening.

After the bris, the attendants crowded around Rav Hutner to greet him and receive a bracha. Rav Hutner nodded to each person in greeting. When Rav Hutner spotted Yaakov, he stared at him with his piercing gaze and whispered to him that Yaakov should meet him in his private office as he wished to speak with him. Apparently, Rav Hutner was able to discern Yaakov's unspoken distress.

Yaakov stood by the door of Rav Hutner's office, wondering what Rav Hutner could possibly wish to speak to him about. A few minutes passed and Rav Hutner appeared, and ushered Yaakov inside his office. The door closed, and Yaakov suddenly broke down. His emotions from years of internalizing his sorrow and loneliness were released. There was no need to explain – Rav Hutner understood everything.



Rav Hutner spoke, "I have a segulah, a mesorah from our rabannim; answering Amen Yehah Shemah Rabbah with all one's koach. Answering Amen Yehah Shemma Rabbah is a tefillah for the magnification of kavod Shamayim, and through it, one fulfills the mitzvah of kavod Hashem. It's possible that once in your life you were mechallel the shem Shamayim and due to this, the gates of Shamayim have been closed to you. When you answer Amen, Yehay Shemay Rabbah loudly and with kavanah, you are mekadesh the Shem Shamayim. This is a tested segulah - if you persist in following it, you'll soon merit to stand at the chuppa, and if you'll continue afterwards, you'll also merit a bris."

Yaakov thanked Rav Hutner, left the office and returned to yeshivah. On the way, he thought to himself that the eitzah of a Gadol Hador is not only a segula, but also a horaah, and a horaah one must fulfil forever. When Mincha arrived, Yaakov already began to say Amen, Yehay Shemah Rabba loudly and with kavanah. A few short weeks later, Yaakov became a chassan and a year later, he was zoche to a son. Rav Hutner was honoured with sandakus.

Rav Naftali Trop Stays Up To Watch The Thief



A vagrant Jew had acquired a reputation as a thief and was ostracized by society. However, when he came to Radin, he encountered Rav Naftali Tzvi Trop, the famed Rosh Yeshivah of the Chofetz Chaim's Yeshiva.

Rav Trop greeted him warmly, invited him to eat by his table, and even offered him a bed to sleep for the night in his home. The Jews of Radin began murmuring with each other, wondering why R' Trop was exerting himself for this unsavoury character.

Someone worked up the courage to ask R' Trop directly why he was treating this thief with such warmth. R' Trop answered in surprise, "It's known that a thief pays back double the value of what he stole, and if he can't pay it back, he's sold as a slave. But where is it written that I'm exempt from fulfilling the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim? Isn't he a Jew? Didn't Avrahahm Avinu fulfill the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim even with Arabs who worshipped the dust of their feet?

It's true that it's risky to bring a suspected thief into my house, but I can watch over him carefully the whole time he's in my home. However, I have no excuse to exempt myself from the mitzvah."

The next day, the people in Radin heard that R' Trop had done exactly what he had said. He had stayed awake the entire night to guard the thief while he slept in his home.

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky



קחו שעיר עזים לחטאת ועגל וכבש בני שנה תמימם לעלה

"*Take a he-goat for a sin-offering and a calf and a lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt-offering.*" (9:3)

QUESTION: The *Sifra (Torat Kohanim)* states that the he-goat was to atone for the selling of Yosef. (The brothers dipped Yosef's shirt into the blood of a he-goat and sent it to Yaakov as proof that Yosef was devoured by wild beasts.) The calf was offered as forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf.

Considering Aharon's involvement in the making of the calf, it is understood why he needed to seek forgiveness. However, why did the iniquity of the selling of Yosef surface precisely now?

ANSWER: According to the *Midrash Rabbah (Bereishit* 84:14), the brothers' rationale for killing Yosef was that they foresaw that years later Yosef's descendant Yeravam ben Nevat would lead the Jewish people astray by making two golden calves (I Kings 12:28). Consequently, they plotted to kill him so that he would not have any descendants.

This excuse could be applicable only until the time when the Jewish people worshipped the golden calf in the desert. Once they committed this transgression, they shared in a sin similar to that of Yeravam ben Nevat and they could no longer justify their intent to kill Yosef.

Consequently, when Aharon made the golden calf, the crime the brothers endeavoured to commit against Yosef became relevant again. Therefore, when Aharon sought forgiveness for the golden calf, he also sought atonement for the sale of Yosef. (**הגהות מהרי"ד על ת"כ**)

Vedibarta Bam

"וישא אהרן את ידו אל העם ויברכם" - *"Aharon lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them."* (9:22)

QUESTION: The plural for "hands" is spelled "**ידיו**" (with a second *yud*). Why in our *pasuk* is it spelled without a second *yud*?

ANSWER: When a *Kohen* recites the priestly blessing, he is required to raise both hands and put them together. Thus, the two hands look like one. The *Kohen* is also required to place the right hand a bit higher than the left. (See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 128:12.)

Without a second *yud*, the word "*yadav*" can be read "*yado*" — "his hand." The Torah writes it this way to allude that Aharon raised his hand (the right hand) a bit higher, and keeping the two together as one, he blessed the people. (**ברית אברהם - שפתי כהן**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ויאמר משה אל אהרן קרב אל המזבח" - *"Moshe said to Aharon: come near to the altar."* (9:7)

QUESTION: Rashi explains that Aharon was diffident and reluctant to approach the altar. Moshe said to him: "Why are you fearful? — **לכך נבחרת** — You were chosen for this position."

How was the fact that he was selected supposed to dispel his fear and diffidence?

ANSWER: *A Chassidic Rebbe* once encouraged a *chasid* to become a Rabbi of a community. The *chasid* was reluctant and said: "I am very much afraid to accept the position; I doubt that I am suitable." The Rebbe responded: "Who, then, should I make a Rabbi, someone who is not afraid? The fact that you are afraid makes you most suitable because you will always be careful in whatever you do."

When Moshe saw Aharon's reluctance and noticed his fear, he said to him: "Come near to the altar. You are indeed the most suitable for the position. *'Lekach nivcharta'* — Because of your fear of Hashem you were selected to be the *Kohen Gadol*." (**דגל מחנה אפרים בשם הבעש"ט**)

Vedibarta Bam

יין ושכר אל תשת | אתה | ובניך אתך בבאכם אל אהל מועד ולא תמתו חקת עולם לדרתיכם

QUESTION: Why in all the printed *chumashim* is there a vertical line (indicating a pause) before and after the word *"atah"*?



ANSWER: When people gather at a joyous occasion, it is customary to have some alcoholic beverages and toast *"lechaim"* — "to life." The word *"chaim"* (**חַיִים**) in "**לחיים**" contains the same *nekudot* — vowels — as the word *"mayim"* (**מַיִם**) — water — yet it is spelled with two *"yudden"* while *"mayim"* is spelled with only one *yud*. This teaches that it is proper for an individual *"yud"* (Jew) to drink water whenever he wishes to quench

his thirst. However, liquor should be consumed only when two "*Yudden*" (Jews) get together to celebrate an occasion.

The vertical lines in the *pasuk* indicate that the Torah is not in favour of consuming intoxicants when "*atah*" — you are doing it alone. However, "*u'banecha itach*" — if you are celebrating a *simchah* together with your sons, such as their *Bar-Mitzvah* or wedding, or "*bevo'achem el ohel mo'eid*" — you have moved into a new home and are making a "*chanukat habayit*" — dedication of a new home — or "*velo tamutu*" — you are making a *seudat hoda'ah* — a festive meal to thank Hashem for saving you from a life-threatening situation, or "*chukat olam ledoroteichem*" — you are at a celebration of a circumcision [of which the Torah says "*ledoroteichem lebrit olam*" — "throughout your generations as an everlasting covenant" (*Bereishit* 17:7)], then it is proper to drink a *lechaim* in honour of the occasion. (**ר' נפתלי זצ"ל מרופשיץ**)

Vedibarta Bam



"ואת בת היענה..." - "*And the ostrich...*" (11:16)

QUESTION: The expression "*bat haya'anah*" literally means "daughter of the ostrich." Why does it specify "daughter" when *all* ostriches are forbidden?

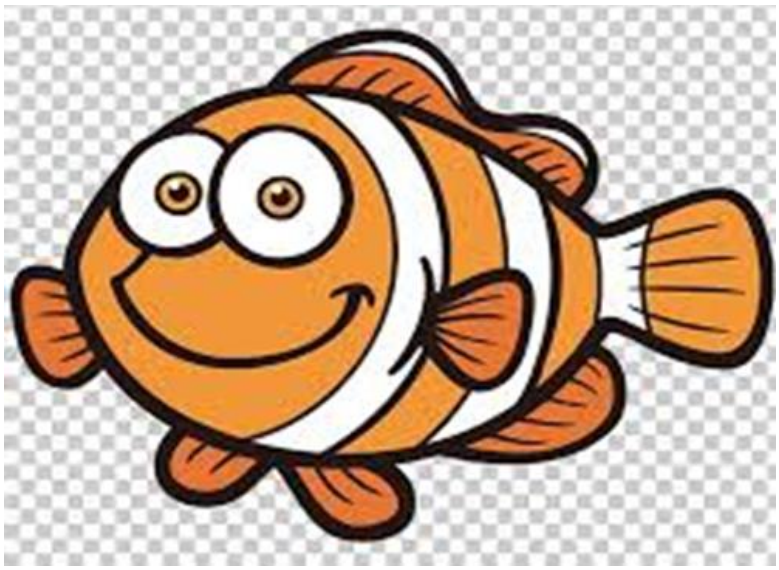
ANSWER: Ostriches live on hard and sharp grass. When they do not find enough food, they eat bones, iron, and glass. The *Midrash Rabbah* (*Bereishit* 31:14) says that Noach took glass into the ark so that he would have food for the ostrich. The *Ibn Ezra* (*Shemot* 23:19) writes that since the ostrich eats such items, its meat becomes dry like wood and hard like steel, and even cooking

does not soften it. However, the meat of a baby female ostrich is still soft and tender. Therefore, the Torah warns specifically against eating ***"bathaya'anah"*** (the baby female ostrich). (**חזקוני**)

Vedibarta Bam

"את זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת"
***"This you may eat from everything that is in the water everything that has fins and scales."* (11:9)**

QUESTION: Why are the fish with fins and scales kosher and the ones without them not?



ANSWER: Fish with fins and scales live in the higher and clearer waters. They are sustained by the air that enters there, and thanks to the fins and scales their bodies contain a certain amount of heat which counteracts the abundance of moistness of the waters.

The fish which do not have fins and scales dwell in the lower waters where there is much turbidity and cannot repel the abundance of moistness in their native habitat. Hence, the cold fluid in the area in which they swim, cleaves to them, and can cause death to people who consume them. (**רמב"ן**)

"The quintessence of wickedness is foolishness." ~~ The Chofetz Chaim

Vedibarta Bam

"ייו ושכר אל תשת אתה ובניך אתך בבאכם אל אהל מועד"
***"Do not drink intoxicating wine you and your sons with you when you come to the Tent of Meeting."* (10:9)**



QUESTION: Why now, after the death of Nadav and Avihu, were the *Kohanim* instructed against intoxicants?

ANSWER: Batsheva, mother of King Shlomo, strongly rebuked her son about drinking wine, pronouncing it improper for a person of his stature, and said, **תְּנוּ־שֵׁכָר לְאוֹבֵד וְיַיִן לְמָרֵי נָפֶשׁ** ***–"Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those of heavy hearts"*** (Proverbs 31:6). It used to be customary to give wine to mourners in order to relieve them of their grief. Now that Aharon and his children were bereft of loved-ones and experiencing their first mourning as *Kohanim*, the Torah warns, "While others may rely on drinking wine in such times, it is forbidden for the *Kohanim* to do so." **(זכרון ישראל)**

Vedibarta Bam

את הגמל כי מעלה גרה הוא ופרסה איננו מפריס...ואת השפן...ופרסה לא יפריס...ואת הארנבת...ופרסה לא הפריסה טמאה היא לכם
"The camel for it brings up its cud but its hoof is not split...the hyrax because it will not divide its hoof...the hare...it did not divide its hoof, they are unclean to you." (11:4-6)

QUESTION: Why does the Torah use present tense ("mafris"), future tense ("yafris"), and past tense ("hifrisah")?

ANSWER: Although this *parshah* of the Torah discusses laws pertaining to animals, we can also learn an important lesson which applies to man:

Before declaring a person to be *tamei* (rejecting and ostracising him), it is necessary to carefully analyse his present, past, and future. When we can be convinced that the past and present are not good and there is absolutely no possibility for betterment in the future, only then may we declare a person unfit. (**ר׳ ישראל ז״ל סאלאנטער**)

Vedibarta Bam



אל תשקצו את נפשתיכם בכל השרץ השרץ ולא תטמאו בהם ונטמתם בם

"Do not abominate your soul by eating any swarming thing...You will be defiled thereby." (11:43)

QUESTION: Why is the word **ונטמתם** — "you will be defiled" — written without an "**א**"?

ANSWER: According to the *Yalkut Re'uveini,* the missing "**א**" indicates that one who eats insects lacks common sense.

The Chidah explains this in the following way: The prophet Eliyahu asked Rabbi Nehorai: "Since the insects do not serve any purpose, why were they created?" He answered that they were created for the benefit of the Jewish people. Whenever Jews sin, and Hashem considers annihilating them, G-d forbid, He looks at these creatures and says: "If I permit these to exist though they

serve no purpose, how much more should I save the Jews who have a purpose in this world?" (see *Midrash Shochar Tov* 18)

Consequently, by not eating insects, we confirm that they have no purpose and exist only as a means to evoke Hashem's mercy for the Jewish people. On the other hand, eating them demonstrates that they have value so that Hashem can no longer use them as a reason to display compassion. Thus, a person who eats insects lacks common sense because he denies Hashem a way to justify showing Divine mercy. (**פני דוד**)

The Ways of Hashem -Working on our Middos



The *Chovos HaLevavos* (*Sha'ar HaBechinah* 5) writes that the way Hashem coordinates the happenings of the world is truly a wonder. When someone is going through something, it could seem like a difficult situation and many things could occur that outwardly seem bad. However, Hashem can work things out in ways where what seems bad is really good.

The same is true for the opposite. To see this happen in retrospect and by looking at the broader picture, it is incredible to see Hashem's hand in running our daily lives!

Once, a person was travelling and stopped to rest next to a wall. A dog came along and got this individual dirty. Disgusted, the man got up and went to clean himself off, and as soon as he was a short distance from the wall— it crumbled and toppled on the exact spot that he was resting just minutes before! The bad episode of being

sullied by a dog had saved his life. If we look hard enough, we can see how often this type of thing happens to us and appreciate how Hashem worked things out to benefit us the most.

Parshah Thoughts - by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וידם אהרן ***…and Aharon remained silent*** (10:3)

After two of Aharon *HaKohein's* sons pass away, the Torah tells us that Aharon was silent. Why does the Torah use the word *'Va'yidom'* — which comes from the word *'domeim'*, used to describe an object with no feeling such as stones— when it could have said *'va'yecherash'* — from the word *'cheresh'*, mute?

The *Pirchei Shoshanim* explains, there is a difference between a muted reaction and a stone. Although a muted reaction can avoid speech, it doesn't conceal an emotion. Yet, a stone-faced reaction will cover emotions and in effect be a complete acceptance of Hashem's decree.

Sometimes the harshest criticism comes from within. We set unrealistic expectations, compare our journey to others, and begin to stress over imagined deadlines. But the truth is, spiritual growth is deeply personal. There is no single timeline for success; everyone's path unfolds differently – and that's not a flaw, it's the design.

Quiet the inner critic. Don't measure your progress with someone else's ruler. You are not behind. You are not late. Compare yourself only to who you were yesterday, not to who someone else is today. Trust in your journey, stay in your lane, and run your own race. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Reb Zusha of Anipoli (1718-1800).

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



In the hallway of the *yeshivah*, **Rav Eliyahu Lopian** once met a student who was holding a transistor radio. He asked the student, "Does the radio really work without being plugged in to an electrical socket?" The student answered that it was indeed true.

Rav Lopian continued, "If even one little screw were to be missing from the radio, I presume that it would not operate properly anymore." The student answered that this was also correct. Seeing that the young man was wondering where the conversation was leading to, Rav Lopian revealed what he was thinking.

"If this radio works as you are describing, why do we find it hard to believe that if we position a little box on our heads and arms— *our tefilin*, that it channels *kedushah* from *Shamayim* as well? This can only occur if the *parshiyos* of the Torah which are inside the *tefilin*, are written with complete perfection and *kedushah*. If even one small letter is defective, the connection is lost and the *kedushah* will be blocked!

We can see from the transistor radio that this connection with Hashem is real and true as well. (Lev Eliyahu)

"Bitachon is the key to inner peace and joy. When we trust in Hashem and recognize that everything comes from Him, we can find purpose and meaning in even the most difficult of situations." – Rabbi YY Jacobson.

The Siddur Speaks & Story

One morning while *davening* in the Volozhiner Yeshiva, **Rav Chaim Volozhiner, *zt"l***, suddenly started crying with heart wrenching sobs. Soon his cries died down and he continued *davening* as before. A few moments later Rav Chaim Volozhiner once again let out a shrieking cry and his tears began flowing harder than before. This time, his cries continued on for a few minutes longer before he was able to regain his composure and finish his *davening* quietly.



The *talmidim* of the Yeshiva were shocked. To warrant such an outburst, their *Rosh Yeshiva* was obviously deeply upset about something extremely important, and it worried them. However, no one felt himself worthy enough to actually approach the *Rosh Yeshiva* and question him.

It was decided that one of Reb Chaim Volozhiner's closest students, Rabbi Dovid Tevel, would ask him about it. When Reb Dovid approached his Rebbe, at first Rav Chaim Volozhiner refused to divulge the reason for his cries. Yet after Reb Dovid's persistence, Reb Chaim Volozhiner finally answered him.

"My son, you must know that the day will soon come when European Jewry will cease to exist. Every Jewish institution and bastion of Torah will be swept away and destroyed. The only hope we have left, the only chance for a rebirth of Torah, is in the *Galus* of America. That will be the last leg of Jewry's tortuous journey through exile

until our final redemption. We've already endured so many exiles, and America will be the last stop before *Mashiach* comes!"

Reb Dovid was taken aback and then asked, "But Rebbe, what was the cause for the second outburst of cries and sobs that lasted longer than the first?"

Reb Chaim closed his eyes in obvious pain and said, "This *Galus* in America worries me to no end. The potential pitfalls, the trials and tribulations that will be faced by those attempting to rebuild Jewry, will be almost too great to bear. Even if they succeed, who knows what Torah in America will look like?"

Many years later, the pioneer of American Torah Jewry, **Rav Aharon Kotler, *zt"l***, would quote these words of Rav Chaim Volozhiner, and use them as his guide in establishing a vibrant new sanctuary of Torah on the shores of America.

[Note: Rav Chaim Volozhiner passed away in 1821, almost 120 years before the start of World War II and the Holocaust, which started in 1939.]

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

Having just heard the difficult news of Rav Chaim Kanievsky's petira, I am reminded about something that **Rav Yehonasan Eibshitz** writes:

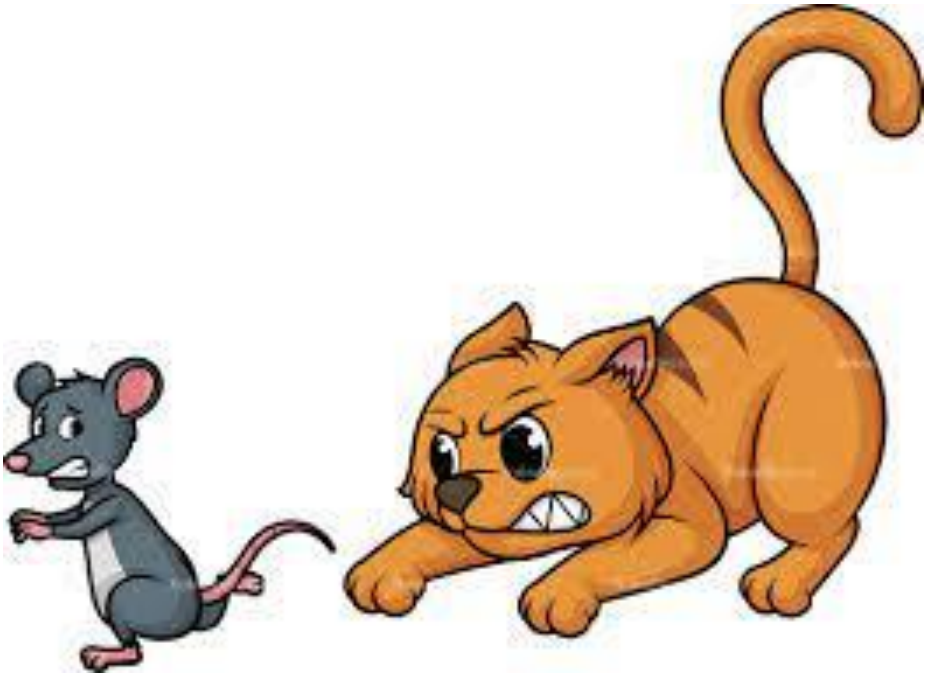
When a gadol is nifter, the special qualities he achieved in this world become freely available for others to "grab". There is no doubt that Rav Chaim zt"l was known for his hasmada, constant involvement in learning Torah. Perhaps we can be strengthened at this difficult time by the thought that *we* have an opportunity to gain special Divine assistance if we push ourselves toward deeper devotion to learning Torah.

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

כל הולך על גחון... לא תאכלום כי שקץ הם ***All that goes on its belly… you may not eat them, for they are an abomination*** (11:42).

Rashi explains: That goes on its belly – this is the snake.

The *Tapuach Chaim* states that this snake gives the impression that it is very humble. It goes on the floor, and it does not look up. But the truth of the matter is that it is one of the most dangerous killers in the world! Therefore, 'it is an abomination for you' – it is forbidden to eat it!



In a similar vein, it is explained in *seforim* that the mouse is not afraid of the birds that want to eat it, since they soar openly, the mouse sees them and is able to hide from them. Its greatest fear is from the cat, because when the cat wants to snatch it, it folds itself up and the mouse does not see it, and that is how it is able to fall upon it and snatch it.

This teaches us that there are some individuals who make themselves appear very humble – but in reality they are quite dangerous, and one must be careful before them and keep one's guard up! (*Umatuk HaOhr*)

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

להבדיל בין הטמא ובין הטהר ובין החיה הנאכלת ובין החיה אשר לא תאכל
To distinguish between the impure and the pure, and between the creature that may be eaten and the creature that may not be eaten. (11:47)



A wise man once said: The letter **ע** – **עַיִן**, eye always precedes the letter **פ** - **פֶּה** -mouth.

This teaches you that anything that you are about to put into your mouth, the onus is on you to investigate and see if it is fit to eat, and anything that comes out of your mouth, the onus is on you to investigate and see if what you are about to say is appropriate or not. (*Umatuk HaOhr*)

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

מכל האכל אשר יאכל אשר יבוא עליו מים יטמא ***Of any food that is edible, upon which water comes, shall become impure*** *(11:34)*

Generally, the word **יבא** is spelled without the letter **ו**, yet here it is written with the **ו** – **יבוא**, why is that?

Rebbe Chaim Kanievski, *Shlit"a*, explains that there are seven liquids that make something susceptible to become *Tamei* [impure] - wine, blood, oil, milk, dew, honey and water, as defined in *Maseches Machshirim* (6:4), yet here, only water is mentioned. Therefore, the Torah wrote the word **יבוא** with the **ו** (which has a *Gematria*, numerical value, of 6) to teach us that besides water there are six other liquids that can make something susceptible to become *Tamei*.

The Siddur Speaks



This story occurred recently. One cold winter morning, a Yid by the name of R' Yosef was driving down 13th Avenue in Boro Park, Brooklyn, and he was heading toward his *Yeshivah*. He made a turn down 50th Street, and realized that he was stuck behind a garbage truck. He decided to back up to 13th Avenue again, and drive until 52nd Street to try again, but again, there was another garbage truck blocking the way.

Left with no choice, R' Yosef continued up 13th Avenue, driving a yet few more blocks out of his way. He turned onto 54th Street, and after driving for just a few seconds, he quickly realized that there was another garbage truck blocking the road!

R' Yosef looked to see if he was able to back up, but an 18-wheeler truck had pulled up behind him, and he was stuck. R' Yosef didn't want to waste his time, so he took out a *Mishnayos* and began to learn while he waited for the street to clear up in front of him.

About a minute later, he noticed his friend from *Yeshivah* running down the block without a coat on. He rolled down his window and called out to him, "Would you like a ride?" The friend happily replied "Yes, thanks!"

As the friend got into the car he explained that his wife had a baby the night before, and he had ran out of the house in such a hurry to get to the hospital that he forgot to take his coat or any money with him. He then related to R' Yosef, "I was *Davening* to *Hashem* to please send a ride for me to get to *Yeshivah*, and after requesting only four times, my *Tefilah* was answered, and you called out to me!"

R' Yosef told him, "My friend, you're making a terrible mistake— all your *Tefilos* were answered. I tried a few times to turn onto a different block, and I turned onto this block because I had no other block to turn on. Your first three requests for a ride were answered with three garbage trucks, and your fourth *Tefilah* was answered with an 18-wheeler truck!"

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Elimelech Biderman, *Shlit"a*, writes that during World War II, Baranovitz was on the border of Russia and Germany. Once, German soldiers ordered all the *Yidden* of Baranovitz to line up facing a wall. The *Yidden* understood what the Nazis were planning. They prepared to leave this world with *Teshuvah* and holy thoughts.

The previous *Slonimer Rebbe*, the *Nesivos Shalom*, *zt"l*, reminisced that his father who was among those standing by the wall, and he asked him for a cup of water, because it is written in *Sefarim* that it's ideal to say the *Brachah* of *Shehakol* before one's demise. His father took the cup of water and said, "*Baruch Ata… Shehakol Nihiyeh Bidvaro*."

Everyone present heard the *Brachah* and answered *Amein*. Immediately afterwards, gunshots were heard. Russian soldiers had arrived and were shooting at the Nazis. The Nazis ran to fight off the Russians, and in the meantime the *Yidden* escaped!

People went over to the *Nesivos Shalom's* father and said, "You saved our lives! It was a miracle!"

The *Nesivos Shalom* replied, "It's not a miracle. I said *Shehakol* and increased my *Emunah Peshutah*, the simple faith that *Hashem* does everything. It is *Emunah* that saved us!"

Chief Rabbi of South Africa

Dear friends,

Together with the rest of the Jewish world, we all mourn the passing of the leading Torah sage of our generation - **HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky** of blessed memory, who left this world on Friday.



With hundreds of thousands at his funeral today, it was one of the largest ever to be held in Israel. Take a moment to reflect how remarkable that is. Rav Chaim Kanievsky held no official position, no title other than 'rabbi'. He wielded no political power or executive authority. He commanded no budgets, no teams of employees, no press or media operation. And yet, he was one the most influential leaders in the Jewish world.

His authority derived not from any financial or political power but simply from the depth and breadth of his Torah wisdom, from the nobility of his character, and the sincerity of his deeds. The influence he wielded, the honour he was accorded, the veneration he inspired, resided purely in his spirit.

The prophet tells us that he found Hashem not in the drama of the 'howling wind, nor in the raging fire, nor in the tumultuous

earthquake' but "in a delicate still voice" (1 Kings 19:12). Rav Chaim's influence came through the "delicate still voice" of his teachings and writings, in his peerless Torah scholarship. He wrote great works of Halacha. But with all his remarkable intellectual accomplishments, his "delicate still voice" was also heard in his righteousness, through his living embodiment of the Divine values of our Torah.

I experienced this personally. I met with Rav Kanievsky on three occasions. When I started my position as a young chief rabbi, he gave me a special blessing that stayed with me and gave me great encouragement. I met with him again just as the international Shabbat Project was getting off the ground, and his endorsement meant so much to me personally and also helped draw support for the project. Later, in 2019, he helped me launch a campaign for Shabbat observant communities to deepen their Shabbat experience through Torah learning.

On the occasions I was privileged to meet with Rav Chaim Kanievsky, I was struck by the modesty of his small apartment in Bnei Brak. No elaborate office with grand views. No plush furniture. Everything was so simple. Books were everywhere - one of which was always open in front of him. The atmosphere was permeated with humility and wisdom.

I saw how Rav Chaim Kanievsky was always totally accessible to anyone who wanted to speak to him - to seek his advice, or his blessing or simply an answer to a Torah question. Whenever I went to meet with him, there were lines of people outside his door. The people who stood in those queues day after day were from all walks of life. Young and old, rich and poor, learned and not.

His wisdom, compassion and learning moved people, and that is why they made him their Gadol HaDor the "Great of the Generation". It is a title that no committee can award you. There is no election that you stand for. It cannot be bought or attained by any official process. And it comes with no benefits or perks or power in the

traditional sense. It is a title awarded by the people - from the most learned to the least - to a sage who has captured their hearts and minds with his righteousness and learning. Rav Chaim did so for decades.

The best way for us to pay respects is by learning more Torah in his merit, especially during the shloshim, which he would certainly have regarded as the greatest gift anyone could give him.

May his memory be a blessing, Rabbi Goldstein

Why Did The "Secular" Man Attend The Gadol HaDor's Levaya?

When a Channel 12 News reporter spotted a "secular" man among the hundreds of thousands of participants at the levaya of the Gadol HaDor, z'tl, on Sunday, he approached him and asked him his reason for being there.

"Why did you feel the need to come and depart from **HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, z'tl**?" he asked.

"First of all, I live relatively close to here," the man said. "I was zochech to be by HaRav Kanievsky, ztl, about 20 years ago in the middle of the night. It was an experience that's impossible to explain."

"My wife didn't understand why I was taking a small child to the levaya. I told her: 'It's the Gadol HaDor, the Sar HaTorah. I view all the avreichim hatziddikim here around us as indispensable. Toras Yisrael is what holds up the world, what enables it to exist."

At this point, the Chareidim surrounding the man and listening to the interview broke out in applause.

The interviewer didn't seem to fully understand the "secular" man's answer. Instead, he turned around and speaking to the camera, said"

"All types of people from all spectrums of society are here – not just Chareidim."

The "secular" man then spoke up and speaking to the Chareidim surrounding him, said: "Chizku V'Amtzu. Continue in your path. I served in the IDF for 25 years. I'm still friends with IDF Chief Aviv Kochavi. And I'm telling you that without you, Am Yisrael wouldn't continue to exist. Without the light that you spread, Am Yisrael couldn't exist." *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*

Facebooker – Death of a Tzaddik – One Door Closes, Many More Open

As we go to press, news of the passing of **R' Chaim Kanievsky z"l**, one of the Gedolei Hador, reached the world. A man dedicated to Torah study and the Jewish People, R' Chaim was the address for Jews from around the world. Even the non-religious admired him and respected him.

Our Sages tell us that the death of the righteous is an atonement for the Jewish People. This is learned from the fact that the deaths of Miriam and Aharon were juxtaposed with the Parah Aduma/Red Heifer and the clothing of the Kohanim/priests. Just as the Parah Aduma purifies a person, so does the death of the righteous. Just as the clothing of the Kohain Gadol atone for people, so does the death of the righteous.

Lest one make the mistake of thinking that the great person, "died for our sins," let us explain how this atonement is achieved. The deaths of the righteous make us think. They make us stop and consider how we are living our lives. Especially when we hear how they spent theirs.

When a tzaddik dies, they are eulogized. People are inspired to emulate their behaviour and their connection to Hashem. There is something missing in the world now that they have left it. And those

who step forward to fill in the void will be rewarded with growth and closeness to Hashem for taking advantage of this.

The ashes of the Parah Aduma were sprinkled on anyone who was impure. This represents those traits of the tzaddik that we can all emulate, in our own way. The clothing of the Kohanim, on the other hand, are out of reach for most of the Jewish People, as they are not Kohanim.

This represents some of the achievements of the Gadol which may be beyond the ability of most of us. But that is ok. It still works in our favour because we can encourage, promote, support, and assist others in living up to those ideals and carrying on the mantel.

But there is one catch. In order for us to gain the benefit of the passing of the righteous, we must contemplate our own lives and make positive changes. There are many opportunities for growth as they've left behind shoes that are plenty big enough to fill.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

The *Medrash* tells us (*Shemos Rabbah* 1:28) that when the *Yiden* were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim, Moshe saw the hard work of the *Bnei Yisroel* and that they had no *menuchah*, no rest. He went to Pharaoh and said that if he doesn't let his slaves rest one day a week, they would die of exhaustion. Pharaoh agreed and let Moshe choose a day for the Jews to rest, and Moshe picked the day of Shabbos as their day of *menuchah*.

The *Medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 1:13) says that Moshe *Rabbeinu* wrote the *perek* of *Tehilim* 92, which starts: **מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת**

Peirush Maharzav teaches that the *roshei teivos*, the first letters of the words of this first *pasuk*, stand for **למשה** to show that it was Moshe who authored it.

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum - Giving Tzedakah and Collecting From Others

Sefer Nitzotzei Hatorah quotes **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Friedleng zt"l**, Rov of Biskovitz, as relating the following: When I once was sitting at the table of my father in-law, the renowned gaon, **Rav Levi Dayan of Belz zt"l**, I heard him say in the name of the **Belzer Rebbe zy"a** that it is not enough for a person to give tzedakah generously on his own. A person also has to go out and collect donations for charity from others.

In this vein, the Torah lists two signs that an animal needs to be kosher. It must chew its cud ("maalah geirah") and have split hooves ("mafreses parsah"). This hints to the fact that in order for a person to be "kosher", he also needs to have these two simanim. He has to be "maalah geirah". This means that he has to take a "geirah", a small coin, out of his own pocket to give to the poor, and he also has to walk on his "parsah", his feet, to make the rounds and collect money from others.

Pearls of Wisdom - A Word for the Ages

When **Rav Gershon Edelstein** was informed about the passing of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l**, he was silent for several long moments while deeply sighing, "Oy, oy." Rav Edelstein then said, "How many Zechuyos he had. So many Zechuyos of Hasmadah, diligence in learning Torah. What Hasmada!

He would walk in the street, and he had no idea what the name of the street was. He didn't know! He didn't even look! He was very careful, and he didn't look at anything except for Torah.

Even when he travelled, he was always with a Gemara, with such unbelievable Bekiyus, knowledge in every area of Torah!"

Jewish Weekly - Torah Compilations with Yossi

Moshe had already told Aharon not to leave the Ohel Moed for seven days. The Midrash Tanchuma, in the very first Midrash on the Parsha explains that Moshe was telling Aharon and his children that these seven days will be for a week of mourning for the deaths of Nadav & Avihu, Aharon's two sons, which happened on the 8th day.

This is hard to understand, for two reasons, the passuk tells us that Aharon spent these seven days in the Mishkan as part of his inauguration process, if anything, these seven days were a happy time for Aharon, not days of mourning!

Mourning usually happens after a person dies, not before. Aharon did not lose his children or even know about their death that was about to happen, so why did Moshe tell him to mourn?

R' Mordechai Gifter zt"l explains that the purpose of the seven day mourning period is more than just a time to express one's grief and sorrow. It is a time for reflection and see how everything, including the death of a beloved one comes from Hashgacha Pratit.

These seven days that Aharon spent in the Ohel Moed brought him to such a high level of recognition of the Hashgacha, that he was able to be quiet and accept Hashem's verdict upon his children, so in essence these seven days of joy accomplished the same as the seven days of mourning.

We need to look at our lives, at the happy times and even not so happy times and recognize how Hashem is there literally every step of the way, and we must thank Him for that always.

Mmay we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet Shabbat.

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow."

Bitachon Weekly – Smile



It is interesting that a Chazir- pig and a Gamal- camel are always smiling. To smile is a tremendous Mitzva.

R' Avrohom Grodzensky Zatzal worked extra hard on smiling throughout the two years he was in the Kovno ghetto during the Nazi Holocaust. [Toras Avraham 32].

It is the greatest Mitzva to smile to people, especially in difficult times. One of the great Baalei Mussar of pre-war Europe entered an American Yeshiva. His smile was so beautiful it lit up the whole area and gave everyone Simcha. All the Talmidim were impressed and amazed. This very Tzaddik had once confided to his relative that he had a very difficult life, and in his early years he had to work hard on his "fake smile".



I would suspect that his smile became more and more real, since this person had a special K'viyus set time every day to thank Hashem for all the good things that happened to him, starting from his youth.

A smile is a great Mitzva, and a Chesed for the people around you. But what happens if you try to smile and it's not going well?

You need to remember that by Hashem, the main thing is working on yourself and trying. We have the smiling pig and smiling camel, who

the Torah has to warn you to keep away from eating them. They have a good front; the pig sticks out his split hooves to look kosher but is still Treife since he doesn't chew his cud. He has a nice front with his smile and split hooves, but inside he is no good.

The same with the smiling camel, and the same with so many smiling politicians who try to fool the world with their attractive appearance, while in truth they can Davka be the worst blood-thirsty Reshaim.

Bitachon Weekly – וְנַהֲפוֹךְ הוּא

Don't Forget - Purim Continues!

Don't fall into the trap of the *Yetzer Hara* that Purim is over. The power of the days of *Purim* continue throughout the year [By the way – you don't make *Havdalah* after *Purim*] and **תְּשׁוּעָתָם הָיִיתָ לָנֶצַח וְתִקְוָתָם בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר -** Hashem saves us in EVERY generation!

וְנַהֲפוֹךְ הוּא means that your unfortunate *Matzav* can turn around to the extreme opposite.

וְלֹא אָבָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶל בִּלְעָם וַיַּהֲפֹךְ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת הַקְּלָלָה לִבְרָכָה כִּי אֲהֵבְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ - Hashem will turn around the worst K'lala in your life into a Bracha, because He loves you!

R' Dov Ber of Mezeritch ZT"L (Mezeritcher Maggid) would say:

"The evil design of the yetzer hara is to make a person think that he has transgressed greatly, when in truth, he really had not. Thus, when a person is discouraged because of negative behaviour and actions, his depression prevents him from performing mitzvos and good deeds."

Short Story Of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

The Jewish nation is in mourning over the loss of **HaRav HaGaon Chaim Kanievsky, ZT"L,** the undisputed leader of our generation. An incident occurred when he was writing his sefer about chagavim, a type of grasshopper/locust. Rav Chaim reached a point wherein he was distressed because he couldn't visualize the minor differences inherent in the species, and specifically how to identify a "chagav."



Suddenly, a chagav landed in his room and he was able to carefully examine it. One of the students of Rav Chaim's adds the following - lesser known - details of the story.

The student asked Reb Chaim how he knew that this particular insect was a chagav, and Reb Chaim answered that he came to this realization from its "simanim," unique physical signs. The student heard from Reb Chaim's wife (A"H) that a while later Reb Chaim again had a question regarding the chagav, and he was upset that he hadn't examined the chagav for this issue when it had been placed in front of him.

Once again, a chagav landed in front of him. After Reb Chaim printed his work on this topic "Karnei Chagavim", an expert on grasshoppers/locusts told him that he was mistaken regarding the simanim of a chagav, which caused Reb Chaim to once again become distraught and once again, a chagav landed and he was able to verify that what he had written was true.

He was so happy that he went right to his father, the **Steipler Gaon, ZT"L**, to tell him what had happened. The Steipler was extremely impressed with his son.

About ten years ago Reb Chaim's apartment was being renovated, a project he wasn't personally involved in. Suddenly, he jumped up and checked if the workers had broken down a certain wall. He explained that that wall was where the chagav had appeared to him, and he wished to leave the wall to remember the kindness that Hashem had done for him.

Comment: Pashas Shemini (Vayikra 11:21) details the simanim required for a locust to be kosher. **The Ohr HaChaim Hakodesh** (ibid) writes that in Pri Eitz Tahor (his Sefer on the Tur), he describes the complexity of determining which locust is kosher. Therefore, he urged people to stop eating them. He writes that once people heeded his advice and stopped eating locusts, there were no problems from locust swarms ruining their crops for 12 years.

Essential Rabbi Nachman -Attachment To The Tzaddik

It is very good to attach yourself to a true Tzaddik. In the upheavals at the time of the coming of the Mashiach, G-d will "grasp the ends of the earth and shake the wicked from it" (Job 38:13) . But one who is attached to a true Tzaddik will be able to cling to him so as not to be cast off with the wicked. By holding onto the Tzaddik he will remain firm. Sichot Haran #22

Those who draw close to a true Tzaddik have a taste of the Garden of Eden. For "the Tzaddik is the gardener of the garden" (Zohar II, 166b) . Sichot Haran #252

"Rather a little with purpose than a lot without." ~~ Shulchan Aruch

Saying Of The Week - Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"Sometimes you just have to get up, do your job, and disregard your embarrassment."

-Aharon Hakohen was embarrassed when he was told to bring the korbanos (offerings) on the first day of the Mishkan being open. These were an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf, which he made.

Moshe told Aharon to do his job of bringing the Karbon and to not to let the embarrassment stand in the way. We, too, should get going and do what's right even if we are uncomfortable about it.

Concepts In Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

The Chayei Adam, in his hesped for the **Vilna Gaon zt"l** made the following statement: The Gemara in Berachos 56b states that one who sees a pot in his dream should hope for peace. Why?

The Gaon explains that the essence of a pot is to promote peace. Peace between the fire beneath it and the water within it, for without the pot, the fire would be extinguished by the water. Hence, dreaming of a pot gives hope for shalom.

The Chayei Adam explains that many times there exists a midah of din in this world, like a fire. The Talmid Chacham who is immersed in Torah serves as the pot of water, which protects us from the flame. When the Tzaddik is niftar, the water and the pot are gone. Sadly, we are left with nothing to prevent an inferno. Therefore, says the posuk, the solution is to cry copious tears. These tears, will act to keep the fire at bay.

There is really nothing to say. No words can adequately express the loss that Klal Yisroel has suffered with the passing of **R' Chaim Kanievsky zt"l**. We can only shed tears. Our hearts are broken as we realize how vulnerable and delicate we are. Perhaps, if we keep his

Torah, his lessons and his legacy alive, we can still keep the pot full of his vast, endless water.



On that note, I'd like to share a small vort from R' Chaim on this week's parsha found in Ta'ama D'Kra. He explains why **מעלה גרה** - chewing of the cud, is a siman of tahara, the sign of a kosher animal.

R' Chaim writes that if an animal can regurgitate a few times to ensure that its food is sufficiently ground to enable proper digestion, it demonstrates that it is not a lazy animal. This is a siman tahara. Laziness is a siman tumah.

That's how R' Chaim himself lived, constantly reviewing and scrutinizing **כל התורה כולה**. Let's try to emulate his ways in small steps, ensuring that his pot never empties. May Hashem accept our siman tahara and may the tzaddik be a meilitz yosher for all of Klal Yisroel to bring yeshuos and moshiach b'karov.

The Chazaon Ish - "Hakadosh Baruch Hu likes chizuk (improvement) even if it is only for a minute."

Hanhagos Beis Ahron writes, "Be very happy with every good thought and mitzvah that you do, even if it was only for a minute. It will never be lost. It will be beneficial for you, and sometimes even for all Yidden, as this is known."

וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־הָעָם **"And Moshe and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting. Then they came out and blessed the people."**



In 2011, at one of his weekly Motzei Shabbos lectures, **Chacham Rabbeinu Ovadia Yosef zt"l** offered a prayer for Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who was going through a difficult time healthwise, as well as politically.

The Chacham explained that in 1984, he had met with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. There had been plans for the construction of a highway in Egypt that was to run through an old Jewish cemetery in that country in which Torah sages from previous centuries were buried.

Knesset member Aryeh Deri and Chacham Ovadia immediately travelled to Egypt and arranged a meeting with the President of Egypt. After explaining to Mr. Mubarak about the disgrace that would be caused by razing the ancient cemetery and requesting to change the highway's route, Mubarak agreed, despite the cost involved.

In 2011, R' Ovadia recounted this story and then concluded to his spellbound listeners, "After we finished that meeting, the President asked everyone to leave the room except me. He then told me, 'Rabbi, please bless me. I believe in your blessing.'

I put my hands on his head and blessed him with the blessing: 'May your presidency last for many years to come.' "This was 28 years ago and his authority has lasted for over 30 years which rarely occurs in a country like Egypt where leaders are deposed almost on a regular basis ..."

The blessing of a righteous person is felt immediately. After the inauguration of the Mishkan, Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon Hakohen emerged and blessed the Nation as they stood outside. It was a jubilant time, made even more joyous by the blessing of these two leaders of the people. When the Shechina finally settled on the Mishkan, it was clear that Hashem was satisfied with His Nation and they felt doubly blessed.



The Life of Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky Zt'l By Rabbi Shraga Simmons

Imagine discovering at the earliest age a passion for an endeavor for which you have an abundance of natural talent and skill. Add to that the head-start of growing up surrounded by the giants in your chosen field, who closely mentor your progress. For decades, thousands flocking to your home seeking sagely advice, and you produce dozens of scholarly volumes on the entire breadth and depth of your chosen field.

Add to that a single-minded focus and unwavering devotion to the goal – day after day, year after year - for 94 years.

That was the life of Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky - the undisputed Prince of Torah (Sar HaTorah) - who was buried today in the central Israel city of Bnei Brak, as hundreds of thousands converged to pay last respects.

Early Years

Shmaryahu Yosef Chaim Kanievsky was born in 1928 in Pinsk, now Belarus. His father, **Rabbi Yaakov Y. Kanievsky**, was the widely revered Steipler Ga'on. When Chaim was 6, the Kanievsky family moved to Israel. On the sea voyage, Chaim sat day after day with his father, absorbed in Torah study. As they neared the shores of the Holy Land, they were about to complete study of Exodus, when

suddenly his father kissed the book and closed it. "Let's wait until we arrive," he explained, "so we can celebrate in the Holy Land."

This gave young Chaim not only an appreciation for the preciousness of Torah study, but also love for the land of Israel. Since then, he never departed the borders of Israel, and became a lifetime advocate for aliyah, encouraging people to move to Israel.

Rav Chaim never departed the borders of Israel, and became a lifetime advocate for aliyah, encouraging people to move to Israel.

Rav Chaim's childhood home was the center of the Torah world, with people from around the world gathering there to confer with some of the greatest rabbis of the 20th century. Besides his revered father, Rav Chaim's uncle was **Rabbi Avraham Y. Karelitz (the Chazon Ish)**, the premier Torah leader during the critical years of Israeli independence. The Chazon Ish, himself childless, showered Rav Chaim with constant tutelage and individual attention, grooming him in the art of Torah scholarship.

Rav Chaim, a child prodigy with a photographic memory, elucidated complex talmudic teachings at a young age. As a boy, he studied at Yeshiva Tiferes Tzion in Bnei Brak, amusing himself during recess breaks – not with a ball or board game – but by counting the number of times various sages are quoted in the Talmud. For his bar mitzvah, he completed the Babylonian Talmud (Shas), a feat that many do not manage to achieve in a lifetime.

In the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, when five Arab armies attacked, a state of emergency was declared and every Israeli was mobilized into the IDF, no exceptions. At the time, Rav Chaim was a 20-year-old student at the Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikva.

On one occasion, a truck pulled up to the yeshiva and transferred all the students to the site of artillery fighting near Tel Aviv. Rav Chaim was ordered to climb a large hill and due to the vast shortage of armaments, was given a stick and two stones to fend off potential

attackers. Rav Chaim took along a volume of Talmud, climbed the hill and – in classic form – managed to study Torah the entire time until the skirmish was over.

Rav Chaim married Batsheva, the daughter of Judaism's leading legal decisor, **Rabbi Yosef S. Elyashiv** (and granddaughter of **Rabbi Aryeh Levine**, beloved Tzaddik of Jerusalem). Rav Chaim's illustrious lineage was unmatched, although that alone is insufficient to ensure success. Metaphorically, "nine zeros is not a billion" unless an actual number is added in front. So too, Rav Chaim was surrounded by Judaism's leading Sages, but what he added at the beginning made it all count.

Torah Study

Rav Chaim was a private citizen, leading no synagogue or yeshiva, and with no official teaching or rabbinic position. For years, he occupied a nondescript seat in Kollel Chazon Ish, conducting uninterrupted in-depth research and writing. Once, as a young man, he considered taking a paid position, but his father said: "Your contribution is to sit and learn. Period." With commitment and diligence, Rav Chaim never wavered from that advice, becoming this generation's paradigm of nonstop Torah study.

Inside Rav Chaim's modest home on Rashbam Street, every room and hallway were lined with bookshelves, crammed with thousands of Torah books. On Shabbat, Rav Chaim would play a game with his children. One of them would name a book title, and Rav Chaim would educate and entertain the children by immediately telling them its precise location among the volumes filling every inch of wall space.

Rav Chaim maintained a breathtaking schedule, waking at 2 a.m. for a rigorous 20-hour-a-day study of the entire biblical and rabbinic corpus including Tanach, Mishnah, Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, Midrashim, Zohar, and all the primary works of Jewish law: Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, *Tur*, *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law), and *Mishnah Berurah*.



Rav Chaim studies in his Bnei Brak home

Rav Chaim toiled day and night, saying that the mental energy expended on Torah study is more physically taxing than digging ditches or laying bricks. Few people manage to study so many intricate works in a lifetime. Rav Chaim completed them all - every single year.

When a wealthy visitor once offered to buy them a spacious house, they declined, explaining that it encourages people to see that economic hardship does not preclude devotion to Torah study.

The Kanievsky's had a small apartment, and the young children slept in a room filled to the brim with beds. When a wealthy visitor once offered to buy them a spacious house, they declined, explaining that it encourages people to see that economic hardship does not preclude devotion to Torah study.

Rav Chaim learned before dawn with a study partner and they wanted to be able to awaken and study right away. Despite the already over-crowded conditions, a spot was found for the study partner to sleep in the Kanievsky's apartment on a regular basis.

Rav Chaim published dozens of volumes that are modern classics, including Derech Emunah, Derech Chochma, Shoneh Halachos, and Ta'ama D'kra. With unparalleled breadth of knowledge, Rav Chaim was uniquely qualified in obscure topics of Jewish law, such as lunar cycles, agricultural laws in Israel, and a groundbreaking commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud.

Additionally, Rav Chaim authored tens of thousands of rabbinic responsa on nearly every conceivable aspect of Torah. Each week he

would sequester himself in a room with stacks of hundreds of letters, and patiently responded to every single one. Due to the sheer volume and to maximize his time, Rav Chaim's responses were record-breaking brief – typically a single line, and often limited to one word in microscopic letters, occasionally adding a reference to the Jewish codes.

Rav Chaim made an art out of brevity. When delivering words of encouragement, to save precious seconds, he invented the word "Boo-ha," an acronym for "blessings and success."

As the world's most learned sage, Rav Chaim had insights into every possible dilemma – personal, communal, or global. Despite his reluctance to take a position of public leadership, tens of thousands of people from around the world - politicians, businesspeople, educators, and foreign dignitaries - flocked to Rav Chaim's modest home on Rashbam Street.

At appointed times each day, the steep staircase outside Rav Chaim's home would be lined with visitors waiting to enter, with lines often snaking around his house. Thousands would enter his inner chamber for blessings, inspiration, and sage advice from this humble human being, endowed with Divine guidance. Preferential treatment was given to little boys celebrating their third birthday, the day of their *upsherin* (first haircut), as Rav Chaim recognized the challenge of asking young children to wait in line.

For most of Rav Chaim's life, he left decisions on communal matters to others. A few years ago, when I went to consult with Rav Chaim regarding a project of communal concern, he listened to my question and then – characteristically – sent me to consult with his Bnei Brak colleague, **Rabbi A.Y.L. Shteinman**.

Rav Chaim often expressed tremendous gratitude to Rabbi Steinman for shouldering that burden of responsibility, enabling Rav Chaim to continue his studies uninterrupted.

In My Home

Rav Chaim was renowned for being honoured multiple times - every day - as sandek, holding the baby at a Bris Milah. In 1999, Rav Chaim accepted an invitation to the Bris of my son. At the appointed hour, he swept through the front door of my home and, with nary a word, unfurled the tattered tallis – inherited from his saintly father – that he wore at every bris. In our living room, Rav Chaim served as sandek, lovingly dropping wine into the baby's mouth, imparting spiritual influence on the baby, and praying intently for his future success.

Serving as sandek is considered a merit for becoming wealthy, and someone once asked Rav Chaim, "If you serve so often as sandek, why are you not wealthy? He replied that "wealth" is not limited to money, and quoted his father that wealth is attained by publishing Torah commentaries. Rav Chaim added his own opinion that grandchildren are a source of tremendous wealth.

Rav Chaim's time was highly structured and keeping to such a rigorous schedule comes with intendant risks, particularly regarding one's private life. Rebbetzin Kanievsky had every right to voice opposition to this hyper-focus on Torah study, which ostensibly came at her expense. Yet she was his biggest supporter. Someone once made Rav Chaim a generous offer, which involved him spending two minutes not related to Torah study or community matters. Rav Chaim presented the proposal to his wife, who nixed the idea, saying that two additional minutes of Torah study were worth more to her than anything else.

Fittingly, Rav Chaim passed away on Shushan Purim, a day when Haman – descendant of the biblical Amalek – fought to annihilate the Jewish people. Amalek represents ideologies antithetical to Torah; the best weapon we have against that is the study and practice of Torah. For 94 years, Rav Chaim Kanievsky fulfilled that mandate to the utmost.

The Wisdom of Silence

Shlomo HaMelech said, "There is a time to speak and a time to be silent." Chazal teach us to speak words of Torah, but to minimize unnecessary chatter.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said, "All my days I have grown up among chachomim and have found nothing more beneficial for a person than silence."

Rebbi Akiva said, "A fence around wisdom is silence." This refers to unnecessary speech in worldly matters. Chazal say that silence is good for the wise; how much more is this true for others. The best remedy is silence, for it spares a person from many issues.

whY I Matter - *Young Israel of Midwood by R' Yedidye Hirtenfeld*

זֹאת הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלוּ מִכֹּל הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל הָאָרֶץ These are the animals you may eat ... whichever divides the hoof and chews the cud (11:3)

Chazal say that when Moshe went to receive the Torah, the angels objected, "Put Your grandeur in the heavens [Tehilim 8:2]. Give the Torah to us."

To this Hashem replied, "Are you the same angels who went to visit Avraham and ate meat and milk?!"

We see, notes **R' Yoel Teitelbaum, zatzal** (1887-1989; the "Satmar Rav"), that one can lose the whole Torah because of a single non-kosher meal. (Haggadah of the Chassidic Masters by Rabbi Shalom Meir Wallach, ArtScroll)

"Man dies of idleness—and boredom." Avos Derabbi Nasan

Stories About Our Gedoilim by Shalom Gartenhouse

A girl from Lakewood at the young age of 14 had a double heart attack r"l and fell into a coma r"l. They went to **Rav Chaim Kanievsky ZT'l** for advice and a bracha. Rav Chaim replied "go and daven". The family davened, and poured their heart's out to Hashem. But nothing happened. So, they went back to Rav Chaim and said that nothing had happened.



Rav Chaim said "you are supposed to daven with the mindset that Hashem is your father and there is no-one who loves you and cares for you like Him. And you should view it as if the yeshua already transpired." They did this, and B"H she woke up!

Parshah Pearls

קְרַ֣ב אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּ֗חַ וַעֲשֵׂ֞ה אֶת־חַטָּאתְךָ֤ וְאֶת־עֹלָתֶךָ֙ וְכַפֵּ֣ר בַּעַדְךָ֔ וּבְעַד֙ הָעָ֔ם Two Kinds of Priests, *"Prepare your sin-offering, and atone for yourself and for the people"* (9:7).

Look at the difference between a gentile priest and a Jewish one. The gentile priest administers absolution to all and sundry, irrespective of the fact that he himself has sunk to the forty-ninth level of sin. Not so a Jewish priest. He is given clear instructions that before he can begin to atone for others, he must first atone for himself. ***(P'ninei Torah)***.

Parsha Potpourri by R' Ozer Alport

ויקצף על אלעזר ועל איתמר בני אהרן הנותרם לאמר מדוע לא אכלתם את החטאת במקום הקדש (10:16-17)



The Rambam rules (Hilchos Deios 6:7) that a person who sees his friend transgressing or engaged in inappropriate behaviour is required to rebuke him and explain to him the error of his ways. The Rambam adds that this must be done in a soft voice and gentle manner, making it clear that the criticism emanates solely from a pure desire to assist and benefit his friend.

In fact, **Rav Chaim Volozhiner** maintains that a person who is only able to deliver rebuke in an angry, condescending manner is exempt from this mitzvah based on the requirement of the Rambam.

A beautiful hint to this concept is found in our verses. The Torah tells us explicitly that Moshe was angry at what he perceived to be an incorrect judgment on the part of Aharon and his sons. Nevertheless, the first letters of the words of his actual criticism spell out **מלא אהבה** – full of love – hinting that even as Moshe carried out what he perceived to be his Divine obligation to protest their actions, he did so in a way that demonstrated his love for them and his pure motivations.

The Kindness of Reincarnation

The Megale Amukos writes that reincarnation is a Chessed of Hashem, that any Jew can fix what he messed up. This is alluded to by the fact that the word **גלגול** has the same Gematria as **חסד** (72).



Rav Avrohom Genechovsky זצ"ל

Dvar Torah from Artscroll's Rav Chaim Kanievsky on Chumash

A rich businessman travelled from America to Eretz Yisroel and asked **Horav Avrohom Genichosky זצ"ל** to tell **Horav Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל** that he was willing to pay Rav Chaim $1,000 a month so that he should be able to sit and learn at home all day, instead of going to Kollel where people came and disturbed his learning with questions.

Rav Genichovsky told this over to Rav Chaim but Rav Chaim declined. He said that he really appreciated the offer, but he didn't want to accept it.



Horav Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל

He explained that since people came and asked him questions in the middle of his learning, he was forced to review what he learnt already before going further. He was afraid that if people wouldn't interrupt his learning, he wouldn't review as often.

When he finished a meal, he would sometimes ask those around him what **ברכה אחרונה** to make as he hadn't noticed what he had eaten, such was the non-importance he gave to everything else besides for **תורה.**

Emunoh In Our Lives

There are many stories told about the **רוח הקודש** that **Rav Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל** occasionally expressed.

One such story involves a young couple who were living in the **מעלות דפנה** neighbourhood of **ירושלים**. The wife was in her 5th month of pregnancy when the doctors told her that they had discovered a serious heart defect in the child and there was no chance that he would live.

The distraught couple consulted with the biggest expert in Israel who told them that there was an operation that could only be done in Boston, USA, but even then, the chances of recovery were very slim.

They went to Rav Chaim and relayed the prognosis. Rav Chaim responded, 'there is no defect, the child is healthy'. They came again with the X-rays. Rav Chaim looked at them and once again said, 'the child is whole and healthy'.

When the baby was born, the doctors were sure that the baby's life was in danger and he was rushed to the ICU. The doctors said they would need to transport the baby to Boston so they sent the X-ray images to the expert there.

The expert responded, 'I don't know what you want from me. There is nothing wrong with the baby, he is whole and healthy'. The Israeli doctors rechecked the X-rays and to their astonishment realised that the expert was correct, and more importantly that Rav Chaim **זצ"ל** had been right all along…

"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it."

Circle Time - Always Be Pure

אַל תְּשַׁקְּצוּ אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם... וְלֹא תִטַּמְּאוּ בָּהֶם וְנִטְמֵתֶם בָּם – Do not make yourself disgusting… [in order that you do] not become impure with them, because they make you impure. (11:43)

Throughout the generations, Klal Yisrael has always recoiled from non-kosher food, even under the most difficult of circumstances. **The Rebbe of Klausenberg** was imprisoned in the Nazi work camp of Auschwitz for several years during the Holocaust.

After the war, the rebbe related the following:

Throughout the years in that place, I never ate treif and was not mechallel Shabbos. At some point, I decided to allow myself to eat chalav akum, as long as I could tell that nothing had been mixed into it. But this heter did not last long. I had just made the decision, when I noticed that my stomach had become distended. This happens when someone does not eat properly for a long time. I heard other prisoners whispering about me. They had also noticed, and they figured that it meant I did not have much time left. "I'm going to die soon, anyway," I thought. "Why should I make myself impure and disgusting with chalav akum if it won't help? I am not going to eat it anymore." I stopped having any chalav akum milk, and wouldn't you know it! My stomach returned to its proper size, and I recovered fully.

Hashem looks after those who keep to their principles and keep the Torah with mesirus nefesh.

"Man is fond of counting his troubles, but he does not count his joys. If he counted them up, as he ought to, he would see that every lot has enough happiness provided for it."

Perfectly Suited by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



Someone once confessed to the **Dubna Maggid** that he does not feel Hashem's love at all. In fact, despite performing mitzvos and finding time to learn Torah on a regular basis, he does not feel *any* real connection to Him.

The Dubna Maggid sensed that although this man kept many mitzvos, he also transgressed many more. "I'll explain your predicament in the following parable:

A village man once found himself in a large city for the first time. He passed by a suit store and decided that he would buy a suit — his first ever. He walks in and the storekeeper gives him a suit, telling him it's his size, and the man goes to try it on.

A few minutes later he walks out of the changing room. "Are you making fun of me?" the man demands of the storekeeper, "My size? It's far too small, I could only just get the pants and jacket on and I can barely move in them!"

By now, the storekeeper is laughing, which only incenses the man further. "Let me explain," says the storekeeper after regaining his composure, "The suit fits you perfectly, I am sure of it, but you need to *remove* your old clothes *before* putting the new suit on. If you don't, then of course it will not fit!"

The Dubna Maggid then explained that the same is true with our connection to Hashem. The more "old clothes" we are wearing — the more transgressions we are holding on to — the less room we have to put on a "new suit" — to connect to Hashem.

This concept is found in the Gemara, which states that whenever someone transgresses a mitzvah, he creates a spiritual blockage in

his heart, stifling his connection with Hashem *(timtum halev)*. This applies to every transgression; however, the Ramchal explains that *timtum halev* associated with eating non-kosher food is much more severe.

Since eating non-kosher food is not one of the "worst" sins one can do (for instance, one is not required to give up his life to avoid eating non-kosher food, unlike some other mitzvos) why is the spiritual blockage so serious?

The Ramchal answers that by eating non-kosher food, or even "kosher food" prepared in a non-kosher manner, one is not only causing a blockage between him and his Creator in a spiritual sense, but by digesting such food, he is literally making the cause of this blockage a part of his physical being; essentially, bringing the cause of a stifled relationship with Hashem into his nature.

Therefore, when we are careful with our kashrus standards, we are not only preventing ourselves from erecting a barrier between us and Hashem, but we are showing that despite a situation being easier, cheaper, or tastier, nothing compares to the importance of our relationship with Hashem!

The Chofetz Chaim was once serving a guest and the guest said to him, "Thank you, but I can serve myself. You don't have to serve me."

The Chofetz Chaim replied with a smile and said, "If you do this Mitzvah for me, will you also do other Mitzvos for me too? Will you wear my Tefilin for me tomorrow? Just like I can only do the Mitzvah of Tefilin if I wear them myself, I can only do this Mitzvah best by serving you myself as well!"

"I live like a king!"

A news reporter once came to interview **Horav Aryeh Levine זצ"ל** and was surprised to see how simple he lived. He asked Rav Levine, "How can you live in just one small room with a roof that leaks and sleep on an uncomfortable wooden bed? Why don't you move to a bigger apartment?"

Rav Levine answered, "Hashem is good to me and gave me everything I need. I have electricity and an apartment with a tall ceiling so I don't have to bend down as I walk.

Why should I want to have more rooms when I have everything I need in just one room? I am really happy with what I have and feel that I live like a king!"



"את זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת"
***"This you may eat from everything that is in the water everything that has fins and scales."* (11:9)**

Fins and scales are the signs of a kosher fish. Fish use them to swim against the current. Also, the *Yerushalmi* (*Taanis* 4:5) says that a sign of a kosher fish is that can swim against the current.

This teaches us that a kosher Yid is someone who can go against the current. People are influenced by their surroundings. Therefore, fortunate are those who spend their days among good influences. But even in the best environments, there will be some things that aren't perfect. You have to be able to discern between the good and

the bad, and when necessary, swim against the current in order to do Hashem's will.

Also, a person has his own habits. Changing them is like swimming against the current. It isn't easy, but keep trying, because it is possible. You can turn over a new leaf, go against the current, and do as you know you ought to.

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

אַךְ אֶת־זֶה֙ לֹ֣א תֹאכְל֔וּ מִמַּעֲלֵ֥י הַגֵּרָ֖ה וּמִמַּפְרְסֵ֣י הַפַּרְסָ֑ה אֶת־הַגָּמָ֗ל כִּי־מַעֲלֵ֤ה גֵרָה֙ הֽוּא וּפַרְסָ֣ה אֵינֶ֔נּוּ מַפְרִ֥יס טָמֵ֖א הוּא֙ לָכֶֽם *But these you shall not eat among those that bring up the cud and those that have a cloven hoof: the camel, because it brings up its cud, but does not have a [completely] cloven hoof; it is unclean for you.*



The Kli Yakar points out that the phrase '*the camel though it brings up its cud*', in the above verse is inappropriately placed. Since the verse tells us the reason why we cannot eat this animal, why does it begin by stating a reason that we can eat it - the verse should have said "But this is what you shall not eat from those that chew the cud or have split hooves; the camel, for its hoof is not split even though it chews the cud".

Why is the camel's 'Kosher sign' written first, or even - at all?

The Kli Yakar answers that the phrase "it chews the cud" is actually not coming to explain its 'Kosher sign', rather the exact opposite.

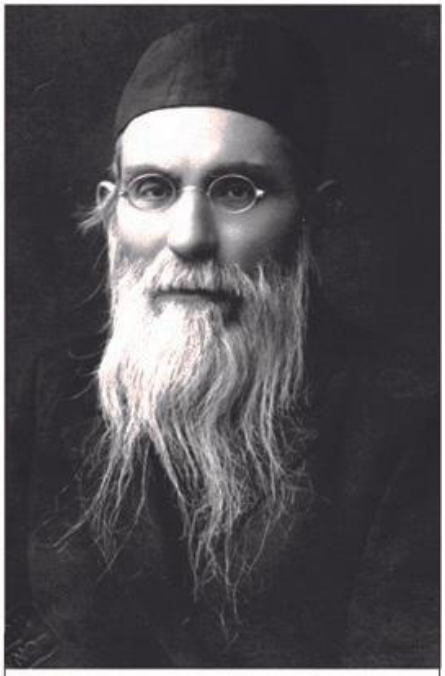
The fact that the camel chews the cud - its 'Kosher sign' - is precisely what makes it even more treif, because pretending to be good when in fact you are not, is a terrible character trait, worse

than someone wicked who at least openly acts wickedly.Therefore, the Kli Yakar explains that this sort of animal is worse to eat as it represents more of a danger to the Jewish people who may be tricked by its 'Kosher sign'.

Proper Manners



Horav Isser Zalman Meltzer זצ"ל



Horav Nosson Tvi Finkel זצ"ל
The Alter of Slabodka

Horav Isser Zalman Meltzer זצ"ל once sent a group of bochurim to the **Alter of Slabodka, Horav Nosson Tvi Finkel זצ"ל** , to test them on their learning, and let him know what he thinks will become of each boy.

One bochur was known to be a genius, and Rav Isser Zalman was sure that the Alter would have good things to say about him. To Rav Isser Zalman's surprise, the Alter did not say any words of praise about him, but remarked that nothing great would become of that bochur.

Rav Isser Zalman asked the Alter why he said that. The Alter answered that when tea was served to that bochur, some sugar spilled on the table. The bochur dipped his fingers into the sugar and then put his fingers into his mouth.

The Alter said that a bochur who doesn't act properly and lacks proper manners will not become something great. Eventually this bochur became involved in cheating people and ended up in jail.

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן After his two sons die, ***Aharon was silent*** (10:3).

Medrash P'li'ah notes that Aharon had proper responses, but he chose to remain silent.

Rav Ephrayim Wachsman explains that the reason he remained silent was because he understood the power of this silence. This silence would bring great merit to him and the entire nation, which enables Hashem to rest His Presence on the nation. Sometimes, even when we have great responses, remaining silent is so much more powerful.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Shloim'ke of Zvhil, zt"l, exceeded at doing Chesed for others, even if they were undeserving of this Chesed. There was one thing that he just could not do, and if someone would ask him to wake him up in the morning at a certain time, he apologized and said that he could not do this.

This was surprising, as he did so much Chesed for others, couldn't he also do this simple act of kindness, to wake a Jew from his sleep when he wanted to get up in the morning?

But Rav Shloim'ke felt that this was not an appropriate thing to do, because when a person is awakened from his sleep, even if he wants to get up, still, at that first moment, he is troubled that he can't sleep any longer, and he is even slightly upset about this.

Rav Shloim'ke cared for others so much that he could not cause even this light distress to another Yid!



Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(ט:ו) ויאמר משה זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' תעשו *Moshe said, "This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do." (9:6)*

HaKadosh Baruch Hu foresaw that the Bais HaMikdash was destined to be destroyed. Hashem said to Klal Yisroel, "As long as the Bais HaMikdash is standing, and you bring Korbanos there, they will atone for you. But when the Bais HaMikdash is not standing, how do you achieve atonement?

Be involved in the words of Torah which are compared to Korbanos, and they will atone for you. (Medrash Tanchuma, Acharei Siman 10 – Otzer HaMedrashim)

The Bag of a Thousand 20 Shekel Notes By Rabbi David Bibi

I want to share a story I heard yesterday from Rabbi Shlomo Landau. He heard the story directly from the protagonist Rav Chaim, a well know Kiruv speaker in Eretz Yisrael for Arechim – an outreach organization. As you listen to the story, I want you to think about what you would've done along the way?

Rav Chaim explains that his daughter got engaged, and he had committed to purchase the furniture for their new apartment. So, he went to the furniture store in Bnei Brak where they had selected everything. Completing the selections, the salesperson tallied everything which totaled 22,000 shekels.

So, he asked the lady what could she do as a package deal to reduce the price? I guess Jews don't ever want to pay list price and always need a bargain. So, she starts playing with her figures, looking things up on the computer, and finally comes back to him. And she said that if he paid the whole bill in cash, she could reduce it to 20,000 shekels.

He said fine. He went down the block to the bank and he asked to take 20,000 shekels out from his account. The teller explained that she was short on cash and they were hoping to get cash in and if he would wait a little bit, they would take care of him. He explains that he's in a little bit of a rush because he needs to get back to the store to drop off the money and then he hast to get to Haifa where he is going to be giving a lecture that night. They beg his patience, and he sits down.

He sat for about 15 minutes when the bank manager came out and apologized that the bank was a little messed up that day and all he had were 20 shekels notes. Rabbi Chaim said cash is cash, and they proceeded to count one thousand 20 shekels notes and place it into a very large envelope for him.



With the large envelope in tow, he walked back towards the store, but lo and behold they had closed. Now he has a problem. He's holding this big envelope stuffed with cash and he needs to go to Haifa to give a lecture. And he is reluctant to carry this with him, but what choice does he have?

He grabs a small grocery bag and places the large envelope inside it, and hops on the bus for Haifa. And he's holding onto that bag for dear life. He gets to Haifa. He delivers his lecture, keeping the bag

close by at all times. The lecture goes very well, and as he's leaving the hall in Haifa to go catch the bus back, he is told that he just missed the last bus for the evening and he needs to take the train.

Rav Chaim goes to the train station and in order to get through security one has to go through the metal detector and have his belongings x-rayed. He tries to explain to the security person that he is holding notes but uninterested, the guard insists that he place the bag through the x ray on the conveyor belt. He does as asked. He pulls it off the other end and he gets on the train.

While he's on the train, he has this sudden urge to double check and make sure that he still has the envelope with the money and the money is still inside it. He picks up the bag, opens it, undoes the envelope and looks at the cash within it. He doesn't realize, but the guy sitting behind him also sees the large amount of cash within the envelope.

He gets to the Azrieli Tower in Tel Aviv and in order to get into the station he needs to go through security again and again he tries to explain to the guard that he's carrying this bag with cash, but the guard insists that he put his bag through the belt and so he does and he comes to the other side and nothing comes out. Now as we can imagine, the Rabbi is freaking out. He put 20,000 shekels on the conveyor belt and as far as he can tell, the money never came out. He runs over to the security guard.

The security person tells him that the bag did go through. But what happened? At that moment, they did not realize that the guy who saw the Rabbi on the train, and was right behind him when he was going through security. He slipped in front of him, grabbed the bag and went on his way.

The security guy is horrified, and he takes the Rabbi to the office where they have the security cameras and monitors. He's sure they'll be able to find the person, but unfortunately, of all the cameras on

line, the camera that was focused on that conveyor belt was the one camera not working.

Now the rabbi is extremely angry. He's looking at the security guard and saying to himself, if this guy had just let me carry it through, then none of this would've happened and now because he made me put it on the conveyor belt. My 20,000 shekel is gone.

And as I am listening to the story, I am thinking that my daughter at that moment would be screaming, "Don't have yeush." Yeush is where a person gives up hope of ever getting his lost or stolen object back.

The rabbi was so angry. He probably did have Yeush. He needed to let it out on someone and he just wanted to give it to this guy. I told him there was cash. He should have looked in the bag and let me carry it. But he had been working on his MIDAH of controlling anger, and he tried to implement a strategy which may at some point come to assist any of us.

When a person gets angry, it's generally because of their ego and their haughtiness and their pride, thinking, how could you do this to me, how could you act this way to me, how could this happen to me,?

But if when a person is getting angry, they can throw the focus off of me, and do something good for someone else, it can come to defuse that anger that centers on the I, and the me.

As he's about to lose it on this guard and thinking about how he can control it and defuse it, perhaps in some way, he remembers a certain bride who is trying to get married, and she literally has nothing and so he commits in his mind that he's going to donate 1000 shekels towards her wedding. And his mind focuses for a minute on the act that he's going to do and that he is committed to do to help another person, at that moment, he is no longer the center of his world and it's no longer only about the me and the I.

He announces to himself, 'As soon as I get back home to Bnei Brak, I am going to give her 1000 shekels', and then in some way some feelings of tranquility enter his mind and he is able to control himself. He is giving something to someone else. He took himself for a moment out of the equation. He's going to do something for someone else. And although the situation has not changed, his mindset has.

Standing in the middle of the lobby of Azrieli tower in the middle of Tel Aviv with the security guard saying there's really not anything that they can do but they can call for a supervisor to come, but it will take a little bit of time. A man taps the rabbi on the shoulder and asks, aren't you Rabbi Chaim?

And it's a rhetorical question because he knows who he is and he tells him that on the top floor of the building his daughter is having a bat mitzvah celebration and she is the Rabbi 's biggest fan and is always listening to his tapes and lectures, and perhaps he can come upstairs for a couple of minutes Just to give her a blessing because that would truly make the event something memorable.

Rav Chaim considers that he has to wait anyway and there's not much that anyone's going to be able to do so he might as well go up and give a girl a blessing, and do a good deed. They ride up the elevator together to the 47th floor and it's a big party. The man grabs his daughter and the rabbi gives the girl a blessing and speaks for a couple of minutes. They take a few pictures, and as he's walking out, he sees a familiar face.

It's the guy who was sitting behind him on the train, and who was walking out behind him when he went through security. The rabbi thinks to himself, "This must be the person". And then he sees that the man has his bag within another bag at the foot of the seat where he is sitting.

The man gets up to get a beer and the rabbi thinks perhaps he should just take his bag out of the man's bag and walk out, but he doesn't

want to get into a confrontation with this big guy in the middle of the party.

The rabbi sits at the table opposite him, and when the man returns, he leans forward towards him, and the man has a glimmer of recognition. And the rabbi tells him, Adoni, listen, my sister-in-law's sister is married to the chief of police, and I'm about to make a phone call and have a squad of police come And arrest you for stealing my money. But I know that every Jew has a good soul and I can't imagine that you really wanted to do this.

The man recognizes that he's caught red-handed, and begins to apologize with excuses that he found himself into terrible debt, and all of a sudden he saw this money, and then he stepped through the metal detector first, and he saw the money come out of the conveyor belt and he just took it.

The rabbi calmly directs the thief to just hand me back the money. And the man sheepishly reaches down, takes out the bag and hands it to the rabbi across the table. Now the rabbi says to him. I can understand that you're in a very difficult situation, and things must be very hard for you now, but let me make a suggestion.

"How does it sound to stay in a hotel for three days for free"? And the guy says I really have nothing else going on in my life. The rabbi says next week we are doing the seminar in such and such a place and I want to invite you as my guest. You'll come, you'll hear some lectures, and it will give you an opportunity to think about doing the right thing. The man sheepishly thanks him and gives him his number.

The Rabbi thinks to himself that it's going to cost him 500 shekels to sponsor this guy, but that's all good and he stays in touch with him and the guy does come to the seminar and begins to turn his life around. But that's not the end of the story.

The next day he goes back to the furniture store with his big envelope of cash to pay them the 20,000 shekels. But in the

meantime, it's costing an extra 1500 shekels. The thousand that he immediately donated for the girl getting married and the 500 for the seminar for the guy who took the money.

But at least he has his money back.

Rav Chaim hands the sales girl the envelope with the 20,000 shekels in 20s and she looks at it and asks, "what do you want us to do with this? We can't take this! The rabbi responds that cash is cash. She won't take it and agrees to get the owner. The owner comes down and sees Rabbi Chaim and immediately recognizes him and tells him how much he enjoys his videos and not to worry and asks him if he has a story to share.

The rabbi says have I got a story to tell you, but it's gonna cost you. Am I going to get another discount. Maybe says the owner? Immediately the sales lady chimes in that she already gave him 2000 off and the owner says that was your discount I can give them my discount. And he turns to Rabbi and says for a great story, how about another 1500 off and with that the rabbi said to him. Wow now have I got a story to tell you.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

It is a *Mitzvah* to accept *Shabbos* early by adding from the weekday onto *Shabbos* (*Orach Chaim* 261:2) and by *Davening Minchah* earlier than usual (*Sefer Chasidim* 269).

According to the ***Arizal***, the main part of *Kabalas Shabbos* is saying *'Bo'ee Kallah'* in *Lecha Dodi'* (***Ben Ish Chai***, *Shanah Beis*, *Vayeira* 5). However, the ***Mishnah Brurah*** rules (261:31) that *Shabbos* is officially accepted when we say *'Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabbos'* in *Kabalas Shabbos*. Ladies are *Mekabel Shabbos* when they light candles (*Orach Chaim* 263:10).

Giving the Grade By Rabbi Yechiel Spero



Some teachers have a one-size-fitsall grading system. Everyone is graded by how they do on tests and everyone receives the same test. It doesn't matter how bright you are or what type of extenuating circumstances you may be working under. The Al-mighty understands that some children are smarter than others. In fact, He was the One Who made that determination. Some have been given the ability to sit for long periods of time while others struggle to sit for more than a half-hour. The Al-mighty understands His students. He knows the challenge — and rewards accordingly.

Though Yanky very much wanted to succeed, he was not blessed with a good head for learning. No matter how hard he tried, he always found himself behind his peers. During his elementary school years, this was not so glaringly obvious, but as the years went by and the learning became more and more challenging, the gap between Yanky and his classmates grew.

He worked hard and listened to shiur every day, but failed to understand the material. There were times when he recorded the shiur and reviewed it again and again, yet still struggled to comprehend the sugya. He was only able to go so far, to dig so deep. This made it difficult to find a chavrusa. No one wanted to learn with a boy who was so weak, he couldn't understand the Gemara.

Though his rebbeim managed to convince some of the stronger boys to learn with him, Yanky knew that nobody was doing so willingly, and it didn't do wonders for his self-esteem, confidence, or pride. Yanky felt like a failure. By the time he was 17, sadness and a deep, dark

cloud of hopelessness engulfed him. His rebbi tried to be mechazek him, to no avail. He told Yanky that all Hashem wants is for us to do our best, but Yanky wasn't convinced. Though he heard the words, they made little mark on his damaged psyche.

Finally, his rebbi decided to take him to the Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky. He didn't know what the Steipler would say, but he was confident that if anyone had the right words, it would be he. As he presented his dilemma to the Steipler, Yanky's voice cracked from emotion. He detailed how because of his weak memory skills, he didn't have the background knowledge his friends had.

Thus, he had to learn each Mishnah from scratch, with all of its references, as if he had never heard the concepts before. It took him months to learn what the other boys mastered in a few days. By the time he understood the first daf, the others in his shiur were eons ahead of him. While his peers were already on daf yud (page 10), he sadly conceded, "I'm only holding on daf beis (page 2, which is the first page)."

The Steipler, who was hard of hearing, asked him, "So you're holding on daf kuf beis, page 102?"

"No," Yanky corrected with reverence and respect, "daf beis."

But the Steipler repeated, "Daf kuf beis?"

Yanky didn't want to be disrespectful, but he was aware of the Steipler's hearing issues and he wanted the Steipler to understand clearly where his frustration lay. So, he wrote down on a piece of paper in very clear letters, "Higaati l'daf beis, I reached page 2."

The Steipler looked at the vulnerable bachur and clarified, "Bachur'l, I heard you clearly. And I know that you think you got up to daf beis. But in Shamayim (Heaven), they count differently. There you are up to daf kuf beis, because every daf you learn with difficulty is like

100 dapim to Hashem. Although you think you are ten dapim behind your friends, you are really ninety ahead of them!

"Do you still think you're unsuccessful? Do you still think you're behind in your learning? "This is what we believe and you must believe it, as well. And if you do, you will feel so much more berachah in your learning, and you will feel so much happier and more satisfied."

Yanky walked away with a newfound belief in himself and went on to become quite accomplished in his learning. Students often feel unsuccessful because they compare their accomplishments to the others in their class or shiur. Although it is always nice to grow together as a group, if the feelings of failure overwhelm you, then you must remember what really matters. And Who is giving the grade.

Tricks of the Trade By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski



Rabbi Yosef Dov of Brisk received a complaint that a wealthy man refused to contribute to the community charities. The next time they met in his home, the Rabbi steered the conversation to the subject of the Egyptian sorcerers described in the Torah, who were able to mimic some of Moshe's miracles. The rich man revealed that he was cynical about all of this, and doubted that anyone could perform either magic or miracles.

"Why do you say that?" Rabbi Yosef Dov asked casually, ignoring the affront to the Torah. "Even I can perform miracles. I will gladly do so right now, but only if you donate one hundred rubles to charity." The skeptical man accepted the challenge.

"Very well," the Rabbi said, adjusting his tone to the event. I will now show you that if you place four twenty-five rubles notes on the corners of this table, I will utter only one word, and the money will find its way into the bowl at the center." The man was veritably trembling with anticipation as he placed the four notes on the four corners of the table.

"Hayim!" Rabbi Yosef Dov then called to his little son, who promptly picked up the four bank notes and deposited them into the bowl.

"Well, there you have it! It is just as I said," the Rabbi declared.

"That is not fair!" the man howled in protest, "There was no miracle involved in this."

"No miracle?" the Rabbi mocked, good-naturedly. "You think that getting one-hundred rubles for charity out of you is not a miracle?"

Everyone had a hearty laugh, and the wealthy man left without ill feelings.

Rabbi Kaminentzky And the Catholic Nun

At the funeral of **Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky**, people were shocked when a [Catholic] nun came in. When she was asked how she knew the Rabbi, she said that every morning on his daily walk, Rabbi Yaakov would pass by the convent where this nun lived. Although other religious Jews who passed by the convent never paid any attention to the nun, Rav Yaakov would graciously nod to her and wish her a friendly "Good Morning."

The nun related that she was so impressed by the aged Rabbi's friendliness, that she felt she had to pay her respects at his funeral.

"Silence is the most beautiful of all sounds." - Kotzker Rebbe



ואת החסידה *And the chasidah* (11:19)

The *chasidah* is a bird which the Torah declares not be kosher. This is enigmatic, since it is called *chasidah* as a result of the *chesed*, kindness, that it performs toward the members of its species. If it is so compassionate and shares its food with other *chasidos*, why is it deemed unkosher? One would think that sucha noble trait would be reason to render it kosher.

A well-known explanation – attributed to varied commentators – is that, while the *chasidah* does indeed direct its kindness towards members of its species, it does so exclusively to them. It distinguishes between "its kind" and others. This form of selective *chesed* is reprehensible. Thus, it is characterised as non-kosher.

The *Rav* of Lodz, *Horav Eliyahu Chaim Meisel, zl*, offers an explanation that defines *chesed*. He posits that the mere fact that this bird is called *chasidah*, a name which underscores its act of performing *chesed*, is in and of itself the reason for its non-kosher status. Feeding others, performing acts of kindness to those in need, is not *chesed*. It is *mentchlichkeit*, human decency. To cloak acts of decency and obligation under the veneer of kindness is revolting. To do what is correct and proper does not deserve a pat on the back. It is only right.

My friend, Reb Mendy Klein, whose fifth *yahrzeit* will occur in a few weeks, was a *baal chesed* in a league all of his own. Anyone in need, large or small, was acutely aware that he was the most prominent address for *chesed*. He never said "No," because he felt that someone in need should be helped. It is only *mentchlech*.

Mendy redefined *chesed* and transformed it into *metchlichkeit*. He was a *mechayev*, obligated, to act kindly – not because it is a glorious act of chesed, but because it is proper for human beings, especially Jews towards their brothers and sisters, to act kindly. *Yehi zichro baruch*.



והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים ... ולא חטמאו את נפשתיכם... להבדיל בין הטמא ובין הטהר ובין החיה הנאכלת ובין החיה אשר לא תאכל

You are to sanctify yourselves and you shall become holy … and you should not contaminate yourselves … to distinguish between the contaminated and the pure and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten*. (11:44,47)*

A significant portion of *Parashas Shemini* is devoted to the laws of *kashrus*. Added laws are stated in *Parashas Re'eh*. This indicates the critical importance for a Jew to observe the kosher dietary laws.

As in all *mitzvos*, both positive and prohibitive, Hashem has His reason for their commandment. The Torah alludes to the idea that, in order for us to maintain our sanctity, we must adhere to the dietary laws.

Sforno writes, since Hashem is holy, He wants His people to likewise be holy, so that they will be eternal, perceive their Creator, and follow in His path. This can only be achieved if we abstain from forbidden foods. In other words, keeping kosher is not just another *mitzvah*. It defines us and, without it, we are unable to achieve sanctity - ever.

The *Mesillas Yesharim* writes (*Perek* 11): "If you defile yourself by consuming them (forbidden foods), you will ultimately become personally defiled by them. This is because forbidden foods introduce impurity into the heart and soul of a person."

Ramchal indicates that forbidden food has such a contaminating effect on those who consume them that they are in a sense more

harmful to the person than illicit relations and theft. Furthermore, even in those extenuating circumstances when *halachah* permits ingesting a medication that has forbidden components in it, it can still have ramifications of *timtum ha'lev*, obstruction of the heart, which blocks a person's ability to achieve full sanctity.

To put this in practical layman terms: We will be unable to reach the heart and mind of a Jew who is alienated from Torah and *mitzvos*, as long as his diet consists partially of forbidden foods. He just simply cannot relate to the *kedushah*, sanctity, that is part and parcel of Judaism. It is not enough for a Jew to be morally good; he must strive to achieve sanctity in such a manner that it influences and defines his every activity.

Rav Yaakov Halperin, a Torah activist in Bnei Brak who was very close with the ***Chazon Ish***, sought to establish a cemetery in the Bnei Brak area which would cater only to *Shabbos* observant Jews.

It was 1942, and Bnei Brak's observant community was just beginning to grow. He was able to purchase fifteen dunam of land near the Zichron Meir neighbourhood, and he presented his case for the *Chazon Ish's* approval.

The *gadol ha'dor,* pre-eminent leader of the generation, responded positively, albeit with definite stipulations, which were later publicised in the media.

The following were his criteria: "It has been a number of years since the observant community in Tel Aviv approached us concerning the establishment of a cemetery in Bnei Brak reserved only for observant Jews. This cemetery will not permit burial of those who are not *Shabbos* observant, who deny Hashem as the Divine Author of the Torah, or who consume prohibited meat such as rabbit or pork."

Interestingly, the clause concerning *kashrus* was distinct from *Shemiras Shabbos* and *Torah m'Sinai*. It was as if the sage was underscoring the prohibition against forbidden foods as unequivocal.

When asked why the *Chazon Ish* seemed to underscore *kashrus* over the other two, **the *Brisker Rav, zl***, replied, "*Kashrus* is the *yesod ha'yesodos*, foundation of all foundations. To remain a true Jew requires adherence to the laws of *kashrus*… A person who does not keep kosher will have an obstructed heart that will block any wisdom from entering. As a result, his spiritual cognition will be impugned in such a manner that it will affect his total spiritual/religious demeanour/observance."

The following vignette gives us a glimpse into the centrality of *kashrus vis-à-vis* the Jewish faith and its overriding effect on the Jewish psyche.

The owner of a well-known kosher hotel in Netanya was confronted with a predicament. His hotel catered only to the strictly observant.



The *kashrus* adhered to the highest standards. One day, a clearly non-observant couple arrived at the hotel and asked to register for a room. They indicated that they were paying cash up-front, no credit cards.

The owner asked why they insisted on paying prior to their stay. They replied that they were planning on leaving on *Shabbos* afternoon, and, at that time, the office would surely be closed.

The owner, shaken by their response, told them that he did not think that his hotel was geared towards them. Perhaps he could help them in securing a room in another hotel. The couple replied that they had already been all over and had been unable to find a suitable room anywhere. Realising that this issue would not go away, the owner said that he must discuss their registration with a noted scholar. "I will ask him if there is a problem with accepting your registration at our hotel if you will be leaving on *Shabbos*."

At that time, one of the guests at the hotel was none other than the *posek ha'dor*, pre-eminent *halachic* decisor of the generation, ***Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl***. The owner proceeded to the *Rav's* room and knocked on the door. As usual, *Rav* Elyashiv was immersed in his learning. The owner presented his query.

Rav Elyashiv thought for a moment and replied, "What difference does it make to you if they will keep kosher for a few days?" (In other words, if, as a result of their staying at the hotel, they would keep kosher, then, by all means, let them stay!)

When the owner informed the couple of *Rav* Elyashiv's response, they were visibly moved. They became emotional, and tears came to their eyes. They explained that they were raised as *Gerrer chassidim* and had, for a good part of their lives, adhered to Torah and *mitzvos*. The tragedy of the Holocaust gave them reason to question Torah and *mitzvos* and, ultimately, the Creator. "We are very pleased that the *Rav* decided in our favour, and, as a result, we will not leave on *Shabbos*." The story ends with the couple eventually returning to full observance of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Rav Elyashiv's practical application of *halachah* and the significance of *kashrus*, even if but for a short period, turned the tide for this couple and started them on the road of return.

Va'ani Tefillah ***ואתה קדוש יושב תהילות ישראל - Yet, You the Holy One, enthroned upon the praises of Yisrael.***

The *Kidusha d'Sidra* was added to *Shacharis* as a way of getting around a Roman government decree against reciting *Kedushah*. They planted people in shuls to listen during the times of *davening* to hear whether the Jews would say, *V'karah zeh el,zeh v'amar…Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh*.

The spies left before the end of *davening* thinking they had put an end to the recital of *Kedushah*. Thus, *Chazal* instituted that it should be said at the end of *davening*.

Even though today we recite *Kedushah* with no anxiety concerning gentile repercussion, we continue to recite the added *tefillah*, just in case our spiritual level digresses and we are no longer worthy of Divine favour. The prayer is recited in Aramaic, rather than Hebrew, because of those who could not read or understand the meaning of the Hebrew words. - Considering its significance, it is important that everyone avail themselves of the opportunity to recite it.

The Kindly Stork

וְאֶת־ הַחֲסִידָה ***And the Chasidah -the stork*** (11:19).

It is called 'Chasidah', Rashi explains, because it performs kindness (chesed) with its friends. Then why, one may well ask, is it listed among the non-Kasher birds?

Simple, answers the **Ba'al-Shem-Tov**. Because it confines its acts of kindness to its friends. A genuine Ba'al-Chesed will perform Chesed to anyone who needs it, friend or not.

Let's put it like this. Someone who refuses to help someone in need, because he is not his friend is no Ba'al-Chesed. He is a heartless scoundrel!

Short Story Of The Week With Rabbi Dovid Kaplan

Rabbi Elazar Shach, ZT"L, was once walking with the **Brisker Rav, ZT"L**. Someone came over to Rav Shach, handed him a letter, and informed him that it was from the **Chazon Ish**.

Although Rav Shach was certainly extremely curious about the contents, he put the letter straight into his pocket without looking at it. There was simply no way he was going to open it and read it in front of the Brisker Rav.

When they arrived at the Brisker Rav's home, Rav Shach took out the letter…and gave it to the Brisker Rav to read!

The Brisker Rav himself is said to have been impressed by Rav Shach's understanding of protocol. Compare this with the outrageous behavior of answering cell phones in the presents of – and sometimes in the middle of a conversation with – a Rav or a Rosh Yeshiva.

Comment: Different reasons are brought down by our Sages why Nadav and Avihu died. One reason is that they taught a Halacha in the presence of their Rebbi, which in this case was Moshe Rabbeinu. One of the fundamentals of Torah is that one must negate himself totally in the presence of their Rebbi. Let's examine our relationships with our Rabbeim and see if we can somehow add to the respect we are giving our esteemed leaders and guides.

"The world says that time is money, but I say that money is time. In order to earn enough money to satisfy his desires, one must sacrifice inordinate amounts of time. For me, that sacrifice is too great." ~ Chofetz Chaim

בס"ד

למודי משה

שמיני - גליון קס"ז

An Incredible Story Stressing the Reward for Meticulous Kashrus Observance

The *pasuk* at the conclusion of the section of forbidden foods listed at the end of the *parsha* says: "For I am Hashem Who brings you up from the land of Mitzrayim to be a G-d unto you; you shall be holy for I am holy." (*Vayikra* 11:45).

Rashi cites the teaching of the House of Rav Yishmoel that the *pasuk* means to say, had I not brought Klal Yisroel out of Mitzrayim for any reason other than that they do not make themselves impure through eating of the forbidden foods as do the other nations, it would have been sufficient cause for them to have been redeemed.

It is difficult to OVERSTATE the importance of the laws of *kashrus*. It is likewise difficult to UNDERSTATE the great harm done to a Jewish soul by the consumption of forbidden foods. Rabbi Berel Wein once quoted a statistic published by the Jewish National Fund that today 80% of their money comes from only 10% of the Jewish population. Despite the fact that Jews have a reputation for being generous, that may have been the case 40, 50, 60, or 80 years ago. Today, the eating of *chazor*, shellfish, crab, and improperly *shechted* [slaughtered] meat that the Jewish people have been consuming over the past 50 years has taken a toll on the Jewish soul. The "*Yiddishe neshomah*" is not what it used to be because of the corrosive effect of forbidden food entities.

That having been said, I read the following story that was written by **Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, a *talmid* of the ***Kesav Sofer***. The *Kesav Sofer*, in turn, was the son of the ***Chasam Sofer*** who told this story in the name of his teacher, **Rav Nosson Adler**. The story took place in the late 1700s or the early 1800s.

There were two successful Jewish merchants who lived in Pressburg, the city of the *Chasam Sofer*. They had their own fleet of boats in which they used to travel the world in pursuit of their import/export business. These merchants were once arrested by Spanish authorities off the coast of Spain with their ship full of merchandise.

At that particular point in time, piracy was rampant in the Mediterranean Sea and therefore smuggling and piracy was common. The Jews and their merchandise were detained because of the (false) suspicion that their goods were pirated or smuggled.

They were brought into the port of Barcelona to be held in custody while the investigation proceeded as to whether their cargo was legitimate. They were lucky, however, in that at that time, the Spanish Government had very good relations with the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its Emperor, Franz-Yosef.

Based on the good diplomatic relations, the Jews were not thrown into jail. They were treated very respectfully while they were being detained. They were assigned to two customs officials, who would take care of them while the investigation proceeded. Each was taken home by one of the customs officials to relax and be served lunch.

There was only one problem. Despite the fact that this story took place between two and three hundred years after the Inquisition, the Inquisition was still alive and well in Spain. Under terms of the Inquisition, any person in Spain suspected of being Jewish was given the choice of either converting to Catholicism or being burned in the town square. The merchants realized that if their Jewish identities would be revealed, they would face this horrible choice.

Therefore, the Jews disguised themselves so that they would look like Gentiles. As mentioned before, each merchant was assigned to a different customs agent. The customs agent had his servant serve them lunch – consisting of chicken and wine.

The customs agent noticed that his guest turned white as a ghost. He then told his guest to follow him to the attic. When they got to the attic he told him, "I know that something is wrong. You turned white as a ghost when my servant brought you your food. You are Jewish, aren't you?"

Before the guest had a chance to answer, the customs agent told him, "So am I." It just so happened that this customs agent was a descendant of the Marranos, who outwardly converted to avoid expulsion from Spain, but secretly tried to maintain their Jewish identity and Jewish traditions. To prove his point, he closed the door of the attic, pulled up a floorboard and took out a shiny and sharp knife used to perform *shechitah* ('*chalif*'). He told his guest, "The chicken we are about to eat, I personally *shechted* it!" Kosher *L'Mehadrin*!

The Jewish merchant was flabbergasted at the *hashgocha protis* that sent him specifically to this man's house! He ate his meal, the investigation concluded that there was no problem with their merchandise, and both merchants were released.

The Jew met up with his partner and asked him about his experiences. The second Jew was very distraught. He admitted that he had to eat non-kosher meat to preserve his appearance as a non-Jew. He had ruled for himself that this was a matter of life and death and in such situations one is not required to be a martyr to eat only kosher food. The first Jew told his friend, "The same thing happened to me, but I had the unbelievable fortune of being hosted by a secret Jew who was a *shochet*, and I was able to eat kosher."

The man who had to eat the non-kosher meat was beside himself when he heard this story. "What was my sin, what was my iniquity that caused Hashem to lead my partner to a secret observant Jew and I was forced to eat *nevilah*?" When he got back to Pressburg, he went to his holy Rebbi, the *Chasam Sofer* and told him the story.

"What", he asked his teacher, "did I do wrong in my life that I was put into a situation that I had to eat non-kosher?"

The *Chasam Sofer* responded, "I have a tradition from my teacher, the holy Gaon Rav Nosson Adler, that any person who never put anything in his mouth that had the slightest question of being forbidden, Hashem guarantees that this person will never come into a situation which would force him to eat something that is prohibited. If you are so careful that you never ever put anything questionable into your mouth the 'measure for measure' reward is that Hashem will see to it that you in fact never have to eat anything prohibited."

The *Chasam Sofer* concluded, "It must be that some time in your past, you must have eaten something forbidden or something about which there was at least a doubt that it might be forbidden."

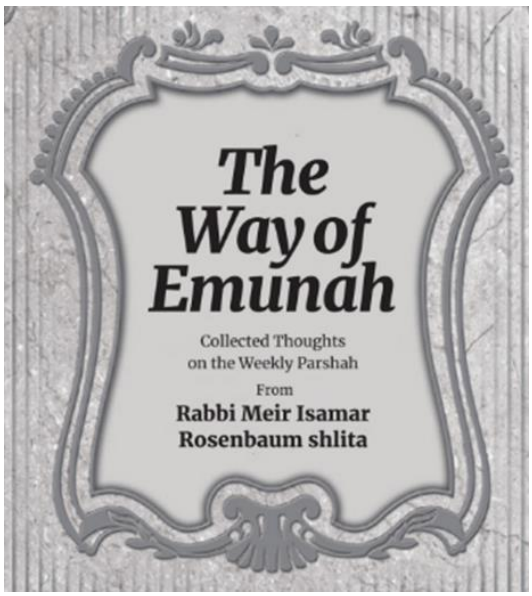
The merchant responded, "Rebbi, it cannot be. It is not true!"

The *Chasam Sofer* insisted: "Think hard."

Finally, the merchant admitted: "There was one incident. When I was first married, my wife made chicken for us. She brought me the chicken after she got it from the *shochet* and showed me a '*shailah*' [question] she had about the chicken. I was a young newlywed. I was ashamed to tell my wife that I did not know and she should ask the Rabbi. I did have *semicha*. I learned the laws of *shechita* and of *tereifos*. I looked at the chicken. I saw the *shailah*. I said 'kosher.'"

Being a newlywed, his wife did not trust him. She took the chicken to a Rav. She told the Rav, "My husband has *semicha*, he learned the laws of *tereifos*, and he says the chicken is kosher. Is he right about that?" The Rav looked at the chicken and it was not such a simple question, but he did not want to second guess the newlywed husband so he said, "Okay, your husband says it is kosher, you can rely on his opinion." The merchant told the *Chasam Sofer*, "I ate that chicken."

The *Chasam Sofer* exclaimed, "That is it! You put in your mouth something that had a possibility of being prohibited. That is why you forfeited the guarantee mentioned by Rav Nosson Adler. The other merchant must have never put anything with a doubt of prohibition in his mouth. He had the guarantee from Hashem that he would be protected from ever eating non-kosher food."



Avoiding Forbidden Foods

אַל־תְּשַׁקְּצוּ אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בְּכָל־הַשֶּׁרֶץ הַשֹּׁרֵץ וְלֹא תִטַּמְּאוּ בָהֶם וְנִטְמֵתֶם בָּם

"***You shall not make your souls abominable with any creeping creature… and you shall not defile yourselves with them, that you should become impure through them.***" (11:43)

The Gemara (Yoma 39B) states: "Rav Yishmoel taught that an aveirah stuffs up (metamtim) a person's heart, as is stated: 'And do not defile yourselves with them that you should become impure.' Do not read the word as: 'defiled' (venitmetem); rather, read it as: 'stuffed up' (venitamtem)."

The following incredible words about the damage caused by eating forbidden foods are related in Sefer Otzros Hatorah:

The Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim), **Ramban** (Vayikroh 11:13) and **Ibn Ezra** write that the reason the Torah forbade eating certain foods is because the food one eats affects the person who eats it. The nature of the food one eats attaches itself to the eater and affects the way he acts.

The animals and birds forbidden by the Torah have cruel tendencies. If a person would eat them, he would become cruel. And if one would eat shekatzim (disgusting insects), his nature would become sullied and dirty.

Chazal list (Yerushalmi Chagigah, Perek 2) several reasons why Elisha ben Avuyah, the rebbi of Rav Meir, left the correct path and abandoned Torah and mitzvos, to the extent that he rode on a horse on a day that was both Yom Kippur and Shabbos.

One of the reasons is that when his mother was expecting him, she passed a house of idol worship and smelled the meat being offered as a sacrifice to the idol. Rav Nosson says that she also tasted the food. This smelling and tasting of the food harmed her baby's body like a snake's venom, and, from that time on, he developed a desire for sin.

We see that food can spiritually harm a person even if he didn't actually eat it. Even if the food was eaten by the person's mother, rather than by the person himself, and even if the person is a great talmid chochom like Elisha ben Avuyah was, the forbidden food can be an impetus to cause him to abandon Torah and mitzvos completely.

The Shach (Toreh Deah 81:26) writes that even though the halacha is that if a young child is eating food that is forbidden m'derabanan, his father is not obligated to take it away from him, he still should grab away the food because if the child eats it, it will harm him when he gets older. It will stuff up his heart and change his nature for the worse.

The Pri Chadash (Yoreh Deah 81:7) adds that the reason many young people in our times leave the proper path, with most of them audaciously flouting Hashem's Torah without fear or shame, is because they consumed forbidden foods.

The Zohar Hakadosh says (Parshas Shemini 41B) that forbidden foods create a spirit of impurity and confuse a person's mind.

"A man's true wealth is the good he does in the world."

Eating Forbidden Foods Leads to Heresy

The following story that occurred in the times of the **Rambam** was related by **Rav Chaim of Brisk zt"l** and quoted in his name in a letter written by **Rav Yissochor Ber zt"l**, the Magid of Ritova:

When the Rambam made his famous visit to Yemen, he met a great talmid chochom who lived there. After he returned home, this gaon would regularly correspond with him in learning.

One day, the Rambam received a letter from this great scholar. Amongst his question was a lengthy query about philosophy. When the Rambam read the question, he became very agitated. He grabbed his head with his hands and said, "How could this great man ask a question like this? Questions like this don't even enter the mind of a Jew unless his soul has been impurified!" And the Rambam did not send back an answer to the letter.

Over the course of the next few months, this talmid chochom wrote several more letters to the Rambam, until the Rambam finally felt a need to send an answer. He took out a paper and wrote just one line: "Go and check the shochtim and bodkim in your community!"

The gaon did as the Rambam ordered, and it was then revealed that the shochet had been feeding him and the entire community neveilos and treifos for the past 13 years!

This was how his thoughts had become sullied. Even a gaon like him had become so impure that he had asked a question that contained heresy.

The same story but with slightly different details is related in Sefer Degel Machaneh Efraim (Parshas Eikev). He says that someone asked the Rambam where we find the idea of techiyas hameisim in the Torah.

The Rambam answered that the only reason the man was asking a question that indicated that he did not believe the words of Chazal

was because he was not careful to avoid eating forbidding things. Therefore, his mind had become full of impure thoughts.

Both versions of the story teach us how low a person can fall from eating forbidden foods.

Ravens Are Attracted to Non-Kosher Birds

Sefer Niflaos Hasaba Kadisha relates the following story that occurred with **Rav Eliezer Dovid of Radoshitz zy"a (the son of Rav Hillel zy"a**, a grandson of the **Saba Kadisha of Radoshitz zy"a**) when he was only six years old:

When he was a young child, Rav Eliezer Dovid was already recognized as a genius. By nature, he was quite shy, and he would often walk quietly, immersed in his deep thoughts. One Friday morning, he was walking to cheder when he saw a Jew's wagon full of slaughtered chickens arriving from a nearby town. When the wagon stopped, it was surrounded by many Jewish women who wanted to buy a chicken.



The boy walked closer and told them not to buy the chickens because they were treif. When the wagon's owner heard this, he got very angry. He took a stick and hit the boy with it. The boy was in pain and he ran away. However, he was still very concerned that people might buy the treif meat. Therefore, he ran back to the wagon, which by now was surrounded by a large group, and he again warned everyone that the chickens were treif.

He saw that he had created a tumult amongst the crowd. Some people had already chosen chickens to purchase and some were in

the process of picking one out. But after hearing the child's words, they all put the chickens back onto the wagon.

Once the boy saw that his words had made their mark, he went on his way to cheder. Unsurprisingly, the chicken seller was very upset and he began to yell at the crowd, "Why are you paying attention to what that kid said? How could he know if there was something wrong with my chickens? Can he see something that you all can't?"

At that exact moment, the Rebitzen, the wife of Rav Hillel, happened to pass by. Some of the women stopped her and asked if she could explain how her son knew that the chickens were treif. The Rebitzen did not have an answer to the question but she did know that her son never said anything for no reason.

She didn't say anything, but she ran home and told Rav Hillel what she had heard. Rav Hillel immediately asked for the chicken seller to be brought to him and when he arrived, Rav Hillel told him, "I heard that you are selling treif chickens."

The man trembled upon hearing the sharp words of the Rebbe. He began to cry, and he admitted the truth. He said that he usually bought live chickens from non-Jewish farmers and brought them to shochet to slaughter. He would then sell the chickens to Jewish customers in the surrounding area. That week, the shochet was unavailable for some reason and he had no choice other than to kill the chickens himself, even though he did not know how to shecht.

Rav Hillel chastised the man and explained why what he had done was so heinous. He told him that he was very fortunate that he hadn't actually sold any of the non-kosher chickens.

The man accepted the rebuke and continued to cry. He promised that he would never do anything like that again.

When Eliezer Dovid got home from school, his father called him into his room and asked him how he knew that the chickens were treif.

The young boy answered, "I saw that the ravens were flying over the chickens in the wagon and trying to get to them, and the wagon driver had to shoo them away. He swung his stick at them but they kept coming back.

When I saw this, I knew that there must be a reason for it. I remembered the pasuk (Vayikroh 11:15): "אֶת כָּל־עֹרֵב לְמִינוֹ" (and the raven after its kind) And understood this to mean that a raven, which is a non-kosher bird, goes after its kind, meaning that it chases after other non-kosher birds. Therefore, I realized that the chickens must not be kosher."

Rav Hillel was overjoyed to see that although his son was still a schoolboy, he was already blossoming into a great gaon.



For the Shabbos Table

"וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה תְּשַׁקְּצוּ מִן־הָעוֹף...וְאֶת הַחֲסִידָה" *"These shall you abominate from among the fowl…the chasidah"* (11:19)

The Sefer Hachinuch explains that non-kosher birds are forbidden because they engage in negative behaviour, and these instincts can influence the person who consumes them.

Among the forbidden species is a bird called chasidah. Rashi explains that the chasidah earned its name from its characteristic of doing chessed by sharing its food with friends. This seems to be a praiseworthy characteristic; if so, why is the chasidah forbidden?

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that while the chasidah engages in chessed, it does so only for its friends, and only those in its own circle benefit from the kindness. This discriminatory behaviour makes the chasidah unfit for Jewish consumption, as the Torah wants us to give freely without discrimination against "outsiders".

A Jew is responsible for a fellow Jew's needs - even for those far from himself, whether literally or figuratively. Additionally, a Jew must do chessed simply because he is commanded to do so by Hashem, and not only when he is sympathetic to the cause or the recipient.

מגדל אור

כֹּל מַפְרֶסֶת פַּרְסָה וְשֹׁסַעַת שֶׁסַע פְּרָסֹת מַעֲלַת גֵּרָה בַּבְּהֵמָה אֹתָהּ תֹּאכֵלוּ

"***Any animal that has split hooves… and chews its cud you may eat.***" (11:3)



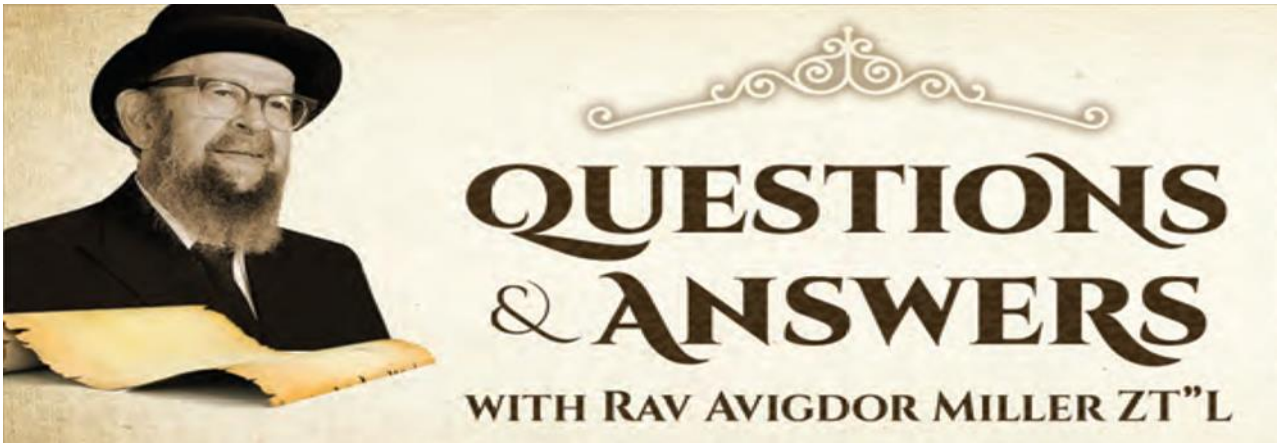
We are told about the various requirements for animals to be kosher. The two main requirements for land animals are that they chew their cud and have split hooves.

The Torah singles out the pig, which has split hooves but is not ruminant, and three other animals (camel, hyrax and hare) which are ruminant but do not have split hooves.

When the Torah mentions each of these animals, though, it uses terms in different tenses. Mafris, hifrisa, and yafris have the same root, meaning 'split,' but one is in present tense, one in past, and one in future.

The Baalei Mussar teach an important lesson from this. Before declaring these animals non-kosher, we look at them past, present

and future. Similarly, before writing off a person, we must know their history, their current situation, and think of what their future might hold in store. Rather than being quick to declare the person impure or treif, we should give them every chance to be judged favourably and not assume they are simply, 'no-good.'





If it's ossur to think divrei Torah in the bathroom, then what should one think about?

What should we think about in the bathroom?

You should think about what a chesed it is that you're able to go to the bathroom normally. You should think about it. Chasdei Hashem! Yes, you should spend time thinking about that. It's a tremendous chesed. Rofei Chol Basar U'maflee La'asos. Maflee la'asos means that it's a miracle. It's miracles upon miracles.

Now, some of the kadmonim didn't always understand this, so there are all kinds of peirushim on those words. But today we know that it's simply miracles and miracles.

I'd like to explain a little more about how miraculous it really is but it would take too much time. But it's a miracle. You're able to expel the waste; and you should be filled with happiness that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is doing this miracle for you.

Put thought into that. And then, when you get out of the bathroom and make the bracha of Asher Yatzar make sure to put all those thoughts that you had in the bathroom into the brachah.

משה קבל תורה מסיני ומסרה ליהושע
... מאד מאד הוי שפל (פרקי אבות ד-ד)

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

R' Chayim Vital zt"l writes that our main preparation for Kabbolas HaTorah is Tikkun Hamiddos, fixing our character traits. We must align our traits on the middle path, the golden way, which means that one should not be extreme in any midda. No extreme is good, and we must learn to fine tune our middos and synthesize them to work in harmony without acting extreme in any way.

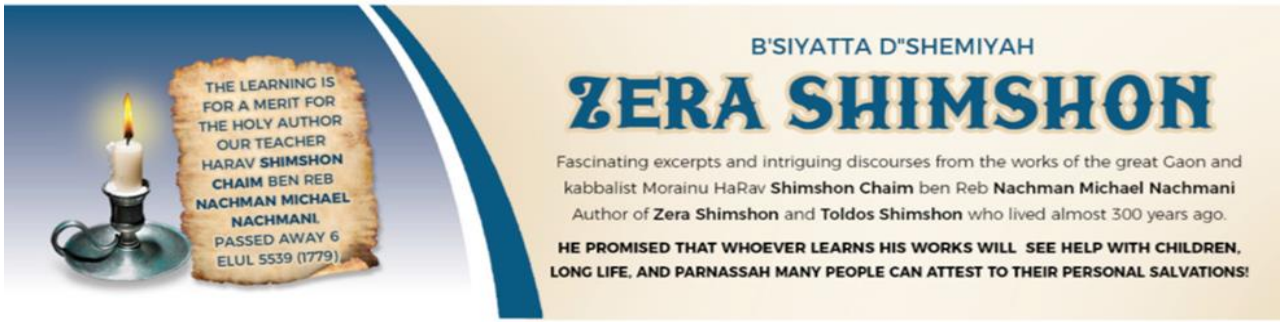
All except one. There is one midda that we are taught to go to the extreme. The Mishna (Avos 4-4) teaches us, "Meod meod hevei shfal ruach," be very, very humble. This means extreme.

Perek Aleph in Avos starts by delineating the mesorah of our people. We read how Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and he gave it over to Yehoshua, Yehoshua to the zekainim, and so on and so forth. There is a chain here. But the first link in the chain seems odd. Why do we say that Moshe received the Torah FROM Sinai? He received the Torah ON Sinai, but he got the Torah FROM Hashem? Why does the Mishna tell us that he got the Torah FROM Sinai?

The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l explains that he received the Torah from the lesson of Sinai. Har Sinai was a small and lowly mountain who did not compete with the others in thinking that the Torah should be given on him. He was humble and he was small, and it was because of his extreme humility that Har Sinai was the mountain chosen for Kabbolas HaTorah. Moshe, too, was the most humble of men and it was he, who was chosen to be the Master and Teacher of Torah for the entire Jewish people.

So, the very first lesson that we learn in Pirkei Avos is "Moshe kibel Torah MiSINAI," Moshe got the Torah from humility, and if we want to be worthy vessels of Torah, then that is the most important midda to work on. And not just to get to the middle path - we need to go to the extreme.

The Mishna says (2-8): "If you learned a lot of Torah don't hold yourself as great, because this is what you were created for." With these words, we can begin our journey towards spiritual growth, Tikkun Hamiddos, to be worthy vessels to receive the Torah.



This week's parsha speaks about the prohibition for Kohanim to drink wine while doing the Avoda. On this note, the Zera Shimshon discusses a halcha that is applicable to all Jews, that has to do with wine.

The Tur (Orach Chaim §296), quotes that Medrash that says that one who does not make havdala on wine on Motzai Shabbos or does not hear havdala from someone who is making it on wine, that person does see any signs of blessing. However, one who does make havdala over wine or hears havdala from someone making it over wine, Hashem calls him holy and designates him as someone special.

The Zera Shimshon asks the obvious question - why, for doing something seemingly so simple as in making havdala over wine, does a person merit blessing and is called holy and is designated as special by Hashem? Especially considering the fact that some poskim are of the opinion that this mitzva is a rabbinically enacted one.

The Zera Shimshon explains this based on the Gemara that teaches that wine was created to console those in mourning and to pay up the wicked in this world (since they receive enjoyment from their wine - that is considered payment for the meagre good deeds that they have done in this world).



As well, there is a Medrash that says that when Noach went to plant his vineyard after the mabul, he was approached by a demon who informed him that they were partners in the vines. The demon warned Noach and said make sure that you keep to your portion for if you don't, I will harm you.

This is why the sages teach that if a person has merit, wine will make him happy otherwise it will make him crazy. This is because there are two parts to wine, one that is sacred and the other that belongs to impurity.

One that comforts those suffering (holiness) and one that repays the wicked in this world (impure). Therefore on Motzai Shabbos when one says, **המבדיל בין קודש לחול** ,and makes a separation between holy and impure, it is precisely then that a person makes this declaration over wine and is in essence saying that he only wants to be connected to the side of Holiness.

On such a person Hashem proclaims he is Holy and he merits blessing.

With this the Zera Shimshon the idea of drinking on Purim until one cannot distinguish between Arur Haman and Baruch Mordechai. On Purim, Amalek and the side of impurity was greatly weakened, therefore there is no fear that the side of impurity will overpower the drinker even if he drinks more than usual.

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

Rav Pam told a story of a young man who got married to a very wonderful girl. This girl lived out of town, very far away from the yeshiva. The only reason why the Rosh Yeshiva agreed, was because her father assured him that this very fine boy, who was a great *masmid*, would continue learning for a long time.

After they got married, the young man started learning in the local Beis Hamedresh. But, after some time, he started curtailing his hours in learning. He wasn't learning the same amount, or with the same intensity as he was when he was learning in Yeshiva.

Finally, the father-in-law said to his son-in-law, "One of the reasons why the Rosh Yeshiva allowed this marriage was because there was an assurance that you would continue learning."

So, the son-in-law said, "Is there anybody else in this little town that learns more than me?"

So, the father-in-law said, "Who are you comparing yourself to? You're comparing yourself to the people of this town? You have to compare yourself to the best people, like from the yeshiva that you came from."

Then Rav Pam mentioned a pasuk from this week's parsha - **וְהִתְקַדִּשְׁתֶּם וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים** – '***you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy***' why? Because **כִּי קָדֹוֹשׁ אָנִי** – '***because I am holy***'.

In other words, the reason why a person must be a **קָדֹוֹשׁ** is not because you are better than the goyim or better than the people in the street, because that is not a comparison – You must realise that Hashem is **קָדֹוֹשׁ**.

We come out of the Yom Tov of Pesach, and we realise that we had the geula and we came out of Mitzrayim, and we must know that it's not that we just have to be better than the people of Mitzrayim – Of course, but we must look at the best Yidden that we know, and compare ourselves to them.

So, as we now prepare for Shavuos, we must retain the highest levels of kedusha as far as possible. Then, if we do that, than we are considered קְדֵוֹשׁ.

Right – Wrong

A man was writing a sefer on the questions of **R' Akiva Eiger**. He had spent much time and rigorous study in trying to answer or explain these issues.

One night, his wife awoke to find him jumping on his bed, nearly dancing in joy. "What on earth are you doing?!" she asked. "R' Akiva Eiger came to me in a dream tonight and told me that the explanation I wrote today was wrong," he explained excitedly.

"If he said you were wrong," she asked querulously, "why are you so happy?"

"Didn't you hear what I said?" he asked. "I said he told me that what I wrote today was wrong. That means that everything else was right!"



R' Chaim Vital ZT"L would say:

"See how great the power of love among mankind is. The word אהבה - love, has a gematria of 13. When two people show each other true אהבה the total is doubled to equal 26, which is equivalent to the gematria of the Name of Hashem. Thus, it is clear that when people share true love for one another, Hashem reigns His Divine Presence between them!"

Sarah Schenirer – The Communal Activist [*Askanit* עסקנית]

At the time that Sarah Schenirer appeared on the Jewish horizon, there was no field as abandoned as that of the field of Jewish education for girls in Poland. There were no Orthodox schools for girls, no Orthodox literature appropriate for young girls, no religious atmosphere. Everything was infected with the poison of heresy; the corrosive germs of frivolity and pretence completely pervaded the atmosphere of Jewish women.

Although **Samson Raphael Hirsch's** 1853-established '*Realschule*' provided girls with rigorous elementary and secondary school education, and thousands of girls in Russia attended female-only cheders in the 1890s, there existed no formal curriculum, tradition or template for educating Orthodox girls.



Sarah Schenirer was born in Krakow, Poland, in 1883 to a family of a prominent rabbinic Belzer Chassidim. She attended a Polish elementary school for eight years, and envied her brothers for the opportunities they had to learn Torah.

Schenirer understood that girls needed formal Jewish education. They needed knowledge of yiddishkeit in order to remain religious. She herself had such a burning desire for Jewish knowledge that she studied on her own. She was a self-taught woman, and it bothered her to see that other girls grew up without that knowledge of Yiddishkeit. - Sara Schenirer was the first and only one at the time who was willing to do something about it.

As she grew up, she watched her contemporaries—*frum* girls like her, from Chassidic families like hers—assimilate at an alarming rate. Schenirer concluded that without a strong Jewish education and environment providing a grounding in tradition, girls had nothing to mediate the secular influences and ideologies they were encountering in the Polish state schools they attended.

Sarah Schenirer was deeply pained by the *chillul Shabbos* that pervaded at that time. 'If only', she mused to herself in her diary, 'girls of our circles had spaces of their own, programs of learning and inspiration designed for us, how different life would be'!

She dreamed of filling this hole — by drawing women away from intellectual and spiritual diversions that were ultimately inadequate and inviting them into a world of growth within the bounds of Torah and mitzvos. - She wanted to create a haven for Orthodox women who craved intellectual stimulation.

While Schenirer deeply wanted to work with girls and be a catalyst for change in her community, she did not see how that could be possible. At this time, she began to articulate her wishes to enhance the lives of Jewish women, writing, "***When will I be able to act on behalf of my sisters?***"



Troubled by Assimilation

The assimilation of her girlfriends troubled her, and they began to call her "the little pious one," not necessarily out of admiration.

During World War I, the family relocated to Vienna, where Schenirer was inspired by a neo-Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Flesch, who had been a disciple of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888 pictured). One of his sermons

described the glorious role women had played in Jewish history. Upon her return to Cracow in 1917, Schenirer decided to initiate some type of educational activity for the women of her community.

But in Poland, Jewish education for girls was a contested issue, with the rabbinic and communal establishment remaining firmly against it. It was considered to be against Jewish tradition, if not outright forbidden by *halachah*.

In fact, in 1903, at a rabbinical conference in Krakow, one rabbi suggested establishing schools for girls. He stated that his colleagues had neglected girls' education and that Jewish schools for girls could stem the frightening rates of assimilation plaguing the community. However, he was shot down, and the convention instead declared that fathers should certainly educate their daughters, but to establish Jewish schools for girls would be wrong. Others would try as well to fix girls' education, but none gained the traction to be successful.

Since a lecture series which she organized for adult women did not greatly improve the situation, Schenirer began to dream of establishing a school for young girls.

Leading the Movement

As a young woman, Sarah Schenirer earned her living as a dressmaker in Krakow. She would sew dresses made to order. When mothers came to order dresses for their daughters, Sara Schenirer would say to them -"Why are you only interested in dresses to improve the physical appearance of your daughter? Why do you not show at least as much concern about the spiritual beauty of your daughter?" - Sara Schenirer said that she lost many customers due to her discussions with the mothers.

Sarah Schenirer, a seamstress who lacked formal qualifications in either the Judaic or general academic-pedagogic realm, thus became the head of a worldwide movement with tens of thousands of pupils

in hundreds of institutions. Apparently, she was a charismatic figure about whom legends began to spread.

The girls within the movement called her "*Sarah Imeinu*"–Our Mother (or Matriarch) Sarah. Under her leadership, the Bais Ya'akov movement developed a sophisticated strategy for giving legitimacy to the innovation they were introducing into the traditional community, including stories, symbols and role models

Sarah Schenirer's Inspiration

While various historical accounts highlight different inspirations for Sarah Schenirer, there is a legendary story involving a dream by a **Rabbi Cohen** (often identified as Rabbi Yaakov Cohen or another prominent figure associated with the Chevron Yeshiva) that is often cited in Bais Yaakov circles.

Rabbi Cohen, a student or teacher at the Chevron Yeshiva, reportedly had a powerful dream at *Me'aras HaMachpelah* in Chevron, where the Matriarch Sarah is buried, in which he saw the Matriarch Sarah Imeinu. In the dream, she was weeping over the spiritual state of Jewish daughters in Europe, who were increasingly abandoning their connection to Torah and traditional Jewish identity for secular movements.

The dream supposedly concluded with Sarah Imeinu pointing to a simple seamstress—Sarah Schenirer—and indicating that this woman was the "true daughter" and would be the one to "save" and 'rebuild' the "House of Jacob" (*Bais Yaakov*).

The Validation

The dream served as a spiritual endorsement of Schenirer's mission. When the story reached the ears of Rabbinic leaders, it was used to illustrate that her "radical" idea of formal schools for girls was not a break from tradition, but a divinely inspired restoration of it.

The Turning Point

A turning point came during World War I in 1914. Sara Schenirer's family escaped from Krakow to Vienna, Austria to avoid the dangers of war. Her first Shabbos in Vienna she went to shul and listened to the fiery Shabbos drasha of the Rav, Rav Moshe Dovid Flesch.

It was Shabbos Chanukah of 1914, and he spoke about Chana and about Yehudis, the daughter of Mattisyahu, who went on a dangerous mission and killed Aliphornous, the general of the Greek army and brought about the victory of the chashmonaim. He described the deeds of Yehudis, portraying her as a Jewish heroine whose historical bravery should serve as a model for contemporary women.

With fire in his eyes, Rav Flesch exhorted the women in shul to rise up to their own Jewish obligations and behave in accordance with the brave model that Yehudis represents. - The content of the derashah and its direct appeal to women were absolutely riveting.

When Sara Schenirer heard these words, they were the sparks that ignited the flame within Sara's soul. She could no longer contain her burning desire to educate Jewish girls. She returned from Vienna after the war determined to start a Jewish school for girls.

She tried to find support for her revolutionary idea but met with strong opposition from frum people. Between 1915–1917, Sarah Schenirer sent a letter to her brother Menachem in Bohemia (Czechoslovakia), detailing her plans and seeking his opinion. Her brother was not enthusiastic. He asked why she would want to start a school when so many people were against it.

He predicted severe opposition, foreseeing struggles and obstacles. "Why get involved in that?" he asked. But she insisted, and, familiar with Sarah's determination and resolve, her brother offered her the age-old path of our people at a crossroads, in seeking the counsel of sages. Surely his Rebbe, the holy tzaddik Rav Yissachar Dov Rokeach

of Belz — leader of the court in which their father spent his finest hours — would guide her.

This foray had its risks. The Belzer Rebbe was considered one of the most important chassidish leaders of Galicia and Hungary of his time. Known as a wonder worker, thousands flocked to him to seek blessings, advice, and to imbibe the wisdom of his words. His leadership, prayer, and Torah were suffused with holiness, vitalizing his disciples with sanctity and emotion.

But the Rebbe was also extremely faithful to tradition, rejecting any deviation from the customs and practices of the past. Not only were Zionism and the Mizrahi movement anathema to him, but the Rebbe also refused to support Agudath Israel because of its novel borrowings from the secular institution of political parties. It seemed most unlikely that he would encourage Sarah Schenirer's revolutionary proposal.

Nevertheless, at her brother's suggestion Sarah Schenirer quickly prepared for a journey to the spa town of Marienbad, where the Rebbe was visiting. Since her brother was a well-known figure among the Belzer chassidim, the pair was granted an immediate audience with the Rebbe.

Sara wrote a kvittel. Her brother took the kvittel to the Rebbe and said, "*Mine shvester vill efenen a religiezeh shuleh far maidlach*." - "My sister wishes to educate bnos Yisrael in the spirit of the Torah and tradition." - The Rebbe read the kvittel in her presence, lending his blessing to the endeavor, and said two words: "***Bracha v'ahtzlacha***."

Those two words were all that Sara Schenirer needed. All the way home, she was excited about her new venture. For Sarah Schenirer, this blessing from the tzaddik was a powerful sign that she had been given a divine mandate to realize her vision. The journey to the Rebbe was a turning point in her monumental project, filling her with

the courage and confidence that Divine Providence would grace her efforts.

[It must be noted that the Belzer Rebbe's blessing did not magically remove all opposition. While many leaders — including the saintly Chofetz Chaim, Rav Yisrael Meir Hakohen of Radin — lent their approval and support to the movement, many rabbanim and rebbes remained suspicious of Bais Yaakov. The Rebbe of Muncakz, Rav Chaim Elazar Spira, for example, strongly denounced the nascent movement. The new ground it was breaking, including girls singing and davening aloud together, led the Rebbe to compare it in writing to a "Bais Eisav" rather than a Bais Yaakov.

Some even tried to claim that the approbation of the Belzer Rebbe was not absolute, pointing to the fact that his own followers did not send their daughters to Bais Yaakov schools. (The followers of Belz initially avoided sending their daughters to Bais Yaakov not due to opposition to girls' formal Torah learning, but rather due to concerns about the modernity of the teachers. However, in places where there was a greater risk of girls remaining uneducated at home, the Rebbe gave his consent for chassidim to send their daughters to Bais Yaakov schools.)

To this point, a rare testimony supporting the Belzer Rebbe's approval came from the son of the Rebbe Yissachar Dov, Rav Mordechai of Bilgoray (father of the current Belzer Rebbe *shlita*). Addressing the crowd at a wedding in Antwerp in 1948, the Rebbe of Bilgoray spoke highly of the institution: "Sarah Schenirer, the founder of Bais Yaakov, I knew her well. She was in Belz before she founded Bais Yaakov and received approval with the intention that this institution would have the character of Bais Yaakov, that is, an education whereby *Bnos Yisrael* will proudly uphold the banner of the Torah and the banner of Yiddishkeit."

Belz asserts a great measure of pride in the fact that their rebbe was the first of all *gedolei Yisrael* to support the movement.]

Support of the Imrei Emes

Once she received her blessing from the Belzer Rebbe — whose influence was felt throughout greater Galicia — Sarah Schenirer sought approbation from the Gerrer Rebbe, Rav Avraham Mordechai Alter. Known as the Imrei Emes, he was one of the most powerful leaders of Polish Jewry.

In Gur, women were never granted an audience with the Rebbe; — as Mrs. Schenirer stood in the other room and listened in to the words of the Rebbe, as he said, "Teaching Yiddishkeit to Jewish daughters is exceedingly proper," and the Rebbe added that there is definitely room to act on behalf of girls education that has been so neglected up until now. - The Gerrer Rebbe had found grounds to permit women's Torah learning, based on the principle of 'Es la'asos la'Shem' — that at times, the Torah must be adapted for the sake of Heaven.

The approval and support of the Gerrer Rebbe, leader of the largest chassidic court in Poland, was critical to the success of the young movement. Beyond his initial commendation, the Gerrer Rebbe expended tremendous energy to ensure the success of Bais Yaakov.

Sara Schenirer got additional moral support from the Chortkover Rebbe and Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. In addition to these gedolim, Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin and Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, also offered approval of Schenirer's efforts.

All of them agreed that now was the time to teach Jewish girls Torah … and to start these schools. - "With the blessings of gedolim, and the support of the leaders of her community, Sarah was ready to set up shop."

Returning to Krakow in 1917 after the war, Sara Schenirer started Bais Yaakov as an afternoon school in her own three-room apartment with 25 students, no blackboards, and old benches. But her spirit overrode the material conditions, transforming the sparse quarters into a dynamic educational scene.

Soon, the group of 25 girls became a group of 40. In those early years, the subjects were basic, including: Zitten (Ethics), Fleiss (Diligence), Religia (Religion), Brachos, Tefillah, Translating, Writing, Yiddish Reading, German Reading, and Jewish History.

Unlike its Lithuanian counterpart, the Yavneh school system — which taught all subjects in Lashon Hakodesh — Bais Yaakov's leadership decided to teach secular subjects in the Polish language, to differentiate them from the religious subjects ("***If we have to teach goyishkeit, we will teach it in goyish***").



From 1918 to 1922, Sarah Schenirer attempted to accommodate up to 80 girls as students in her own apartment. - After she outgrew the quarters of her crowded home/school, Sarah Schenirer was compelled to rent a small apartment on Katarzyna Street, upon which she hung a sign that proudly read "***Bet Sefer Bais Yaakov L'Bnos Yisrael***."

She could not have predicted that eventually the 25 would become 40 and the 40 would burgeon to thousands. Back then, it took much effort and time to win supporters, one by one, and each supporter was precious and deeply valued.

The news spread quickly. Her former customers for whom she sewed dresses sent their daughters. Even in the limited time she had, she taught the girls the fundamentals of Judaism and ahavas

yisroel and enthusiasm for yiddishkeit. A Jewish school for girls, Bais Yaakov. became a reality!

The Chofetz Chaim's Decision

A kol koreh, an appeal, came from the Chofetz Chaim in support of the new girls school. The Chofetz Chaim came to support the Bais Yaakov movement at a relatively late stage. The support of the *gadol Hador,* the Chofetz Chaim, for the Bais Yaakov movement is well-documented and widely known.

Most famously, the Chofetz Chaim wrote a letter in Shevat, 1933, to the community of Fryšták, expressing his unequivocal support for the Bais Yaakov cause. The Chofetz Chaim unequivocally asserted that, in his time, it was a great mitzvah to teach girls Chumash, Neviim, Kesuvim, Pirkei Avos, Menoras HaMaor, and the ethical teachings of Chazal.

This letter was written during the final months of his life — 16 years after the movement's founding. [However, the Chofetz Chaim had previously published his halachic ruling permitting women's Torah study in Likutei Halachos on Maseches Sotah, in 1921. That ruling undoubtedly referred to the fledgling efforts toward Orthodox girls' education, including Bais Yaakov.]

The Chofetz Chaim told his students that not only had he been convinced of Bais Yaakov's necessity in Poland, but that it was also essential in Radin — and perhaps even more so."

This made a deep impression on Polish Jewry and parents from surrounding towns opened branches of Bais Yaakov. Each town paid for its own Bais Yaakov. Sara Schenirer sent her oldest students as teachers to these new schools. The teachers inspired by Sara Schenirer, did a great job.

In the meantime, the world Agudath Israel organization in Krakow adopted Bais Yaakov. They became involved and gave Bais Yaakov financial support. More Bais Yaakov schools opened, and Sara

Schenirer was confronted with the problem of where to get teachers.



She dealt with this problem by opening the Bais Yaakov Teachers Seminary. The Bais Yaakov Teachers Seminary developed into an excellent school that graduated hundreds of teachers. The young women came to Cracow from Poland, Germany, Romania, Israel and even from America. They became trained teachers who spread Sara Schenirer's ideals.

Before the establishment of Bais Yaakov, it was not practical or realistic for married women to serve in teaching positions. By building not only a school but a seminary to train future teachers, Sarah Schenirer did more than educate girls; she reimagined a Jewish woman's potential and accomplishments.

15 years after Bais Yaakov was founded, there were 250 schools in Poland. When World War II broke out, the Bais Yaakov movement had 40,000 students throughout Poland. The Seminary had a staff of excellent devoted teachers.

Sara Schenirer showered the girls with love. She sang and danced with them. She was very loving and friendly. She went with them on outings. She taught them *pairush tefillo*. She davened with such kavana you were inspired just by watching her. One of the special traditions Sarah Schenirer conducted at the seminary was the recitation of Shir Hashirim on Friday nights, to greet Shabbos as she entered the threshold.

They held Sara Schenirer in very high esteem.

For young adults she founded, edited and contributed articles to the Bais Yaakov Journal. Sara Schenirer also started the organizations Basya, Bnos and N'shei.

Think about this woman. Sara Schenirer engaged in so many activities for the klal, busy with administrating a Teachers Seminary, teaching classes, raising funds, a woman engaged in founding schools all over Poland and visiting and supervising all of them, a woman editing magazines and writing articles and plays. In other words, she was an energetic woman fulfilling so many jobs, each of which was a full-time job.

How much time do you think such a woman can devote to any individual? Yet each of her hundreds of talmidos was near and very dear to her heart for years after they left her school. In fact, until her death in 1935, she corresponded with many of them. She guided them with their problems, comforted them in their troubles, and strengthened them in their undertakings. Whoever wrote to her, received a personal answer.

Her charity was beyond imagination. Out of her own pocket and from money which she collected from others, she supported many poor families, married off poor girls, took care of sick people and orphans. All this she did single handedly. She carried a big pocketbook and in it she had notebooks with chesbonos of all her tzedaka activities.

Her influence spread all over the world. The most important aspect about Sara Schenirer was the example she set of utmost yiras shomayim, ahavas habriyos, of complete bitachon in Hashem and the hislahavus of serving Him.

She was 27 when she had been engaged briefly, but remained alone for most of her life, till her marriage to Rav Yitzchok Nuchem Landau, a great-grandson of the Radomosker Rebbe, Although they did not have children of her own, they became a source of support and sustenance to young men learning Torah in Krakow.).

Sarah Schenirer was a great woman who knew a great deal, having published many literary works in her lifetime including numerous articles, scripts for Bais Yaakov performances, and lesson texts. Yet with all her intellect, Sarah Schenirer's knowledge was not her salient characteristic. In defining Jewish womanhood, she emphasized a woman's greatest strength: The ability to create a passionate continuum of love for Torah, to nurture others in their path of Ahavas Hashem, to lead the way to holiness with fervent devotion.

Seeking the Essential Sarah Schenirer

In 1933, after years of work, Sarah Schenirer stepped down as titular head of the movement but remained the symbolic head until her death. The only thing that slowed Sarah Schenirer's massive energy and devotion to Bais Yaakov was her five-month battle with cancer in 1935. During this time, many of her students wished to visit, and her family tried to shield her by keeping her in seclusion. But Sarah Schenirer refused to be separated from those who loved her so deeply. "Let them all in," she said. "They are my children."

Sarah Schenirer died at the age of 52 on March 1 - Adar, 1935. She did not have children, but Beis Yaakov girls were her children. The impact of her *petirah* upon them was so far-reaching, that thousands of Jewish mothers tore their clothes and sat shivah.

To Proudly Uphold the Flag

The motherly relationship is clear in her last will and testament, which was written on her deathbed, in 1935, at the age of 51.

Sarah Schenirer loved knowledge and sought to impart it. She loved Torah and *divrei Chazal*. But the most important thing, the message she devoted her whole life to communicate, is that women do not fulfil their mission by study alone. Rather, it is good deeds, and the motivation of good deeds in others, that are a woman's true task.

"You are going out into the world," she writes, "and you will have the fate of future generations in your hands. Remember, you have learned so much, but *vos hot de Talmud dir gelernt* — what did the learning teach you? No matter how much you have learned, it is not the study that matters, rather it is your deeds."

This subtle difference in intent and direction still remains Bais Yaakov's greatest strength. Every daughter of Bais Yaakov — essentially, any woman who learned in an all-girls Orthodox (Chasidish, Litvish, Sephardic) school, even if it bears a different name — is a product of her vision.

The true legacy of Sarah Schenirer is that one person can make an incredibly positive change. Her legacy is the power of grassroots efforts. It is persisting in the face of apathy, ignorance and opposition. It is the belief that if one's work is truly for the benefit of the community, it will be successful. The greatness of Sarah Schenirer is that she persisted in doing what she knew was right despite communal opposition and apathy.

As Sarah Schenirer herself wrote, reflecting back on the movement's inception, "***If the intent is sincere and the aim is proper, my goal will certainly be achieved***." - And indeed, no one could extinguish the fire of love for Torah that Sara Schenirer lit.

Sara Schenirer saw her dreams come true. To this day, her name and legend remain as part of the heritage of Bais Ya'akov. Unlike so many heroes of history whose greatness is recognized only after

they have passed from the earthly realm, Sarah Schenirer witnessed her triumph.

She saw the world she envisioned come to be in her own time. She started with a few students, and merited multitudes. Her name became synonymous with the ascendant spirituality and growth of the entire Klal Yisrael. She left the world in the loving embrace of all of the girls whose lives she changed forever. And we all embrace her still.

While many leaders, including Rav Shlomo Halberstam, [as he worked to rebuild the Bobov community through similar educational institutions] - who deeply valued Sarah Schenirer's legacy spoke highly of Sarah Schenirer's revolutionary impact on Jewish education, it was Rav Yechezkel Sarna (1890–1969), the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva, who made the following specific, provocative statement during a gathering of *Gedolei Yisrael* in the late 1960s. Rav Yechezkel Sarna reportedly announced:

"The one who did the most for Klal Yisrael in the last one hundred years never learned a blatt Gemara!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

This week's Parshah discusses the laws of Kosher animals, and says that any animal that has a split hoof or chews its cud is Kosher (11:3).

Rav Moshe Shternbuch taught that there is a deeper meaning to these two signs. He explains: There are Jews, when based upon their outward appearance, they appear to live a righteous lifestyle. However, masked deep within them they are far from Hashem and they are not prepared to exert the required effort to get closer to Him.

Then there are other Jews, whose lives revolve around Torah and Mitzvos, but they are afraid to exhibit any public display of this. The Torah directs us with two visible signs of purity, or Kashrus on

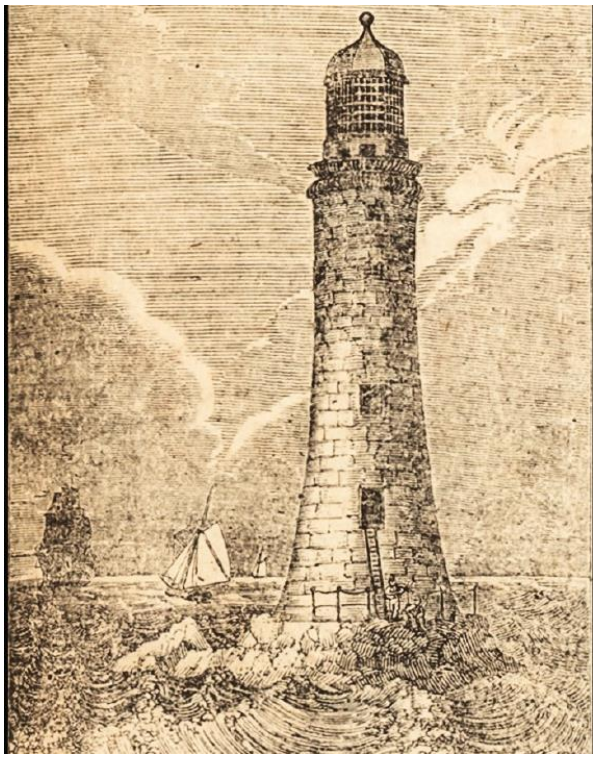
an animal. The split hooves and the chewing of its' cud. These two signs are of specific importance, because it is a crucial lesson for us. Not only must we perfect our inner selves, but we must – as members of Hashem's chosen nation, perfect our outward observance and image to complete our service of Hashem!



The Guardians - bringing Jewish history to life!

What is a British lighthouse doing in a book of Rabbi Akiva Eiger?

One of the most famous halachic works ever printed is the responsa Shu"t Rabbi Akiva Eiger, a collection of 224 responsa by one of the greatest rabbinic authorities of the 19th century. Yet inside this serious halachic work appears something unexpected.



Between its pages is a printed illustration of a lighthouse rising above stormy waves, the famous Eddystone Lighthouse off the coast of England. Which raises a simple question: what does a British lighthouse have to do with Rabbi Akiva Eiger?

The answer is: nothing at all.

The explanation lies in a remarkable detail about Rabbi Akiva Eiger himself. When his sons prepared the book for print, he asked them to pay special attention to its beauty. As he wrote to his son:

"***A person's spirit is stirred, the mind becomes more open, and understanding awakens when learning from a beautiful and well-printed book.***"

Following this idea, the printers included several illustrations throughout the volume, among them the lighthouse, deer, and even a curious image of a figure climbing a tree.

A small reminder hidden in a classic halachic work: sometimes the beauty of a book is part of the learning itself!

When the Rebbe Stopped Hakafos for One Man by Rabbi YY Jacobson

I was twelve years old. It was 1984. It was Simchas Torah in Crown Heights — the second night of Yom Tov. My father, a"h, was a journalist his entire life. He worked for major publications, including Yediot Achronot, serving as their correspondent at the United Nations. He loved politics, diplomacy, and the world stage.

Each year, my father would bring Israeli diplomats to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for Hakafos on Simchas Torah. Since they were not bound by Yom Tov restrictions in the same way, they could travel — and he believed the experience would inspire them deeply.

That year, a young Israeli diplomat came. His name was Benjamin Netanyahu.

770 Eastern Parkway was packed. Thousands of people filled the room — men, women, children. The air was thick, the energy electric. People were dancing, singing, celebrating with incredible joy. The Rebbe would lead the Hakafos for hours.

In the middle of this powerful scene, Netanyahu approached the Rebbe. I was standing just a few feet away. He greeted the Rebbe and said he had come to see him.

The Rebbe responded: "You came only to see me? Not to speak to me?"

Netanyahu answered: "If the Rebbe wants to speak, I am ready." And then the Rebbe began to speak to him. At first, it seemed like

a brief exchange. But it wasn't. Two minutes passed. Five minutes. Ten minutes. The dancing stopped. Thousands of people stood and waited. Fifteen minutes. Twenty minutes. Thirty minutes. Forty-five minutes. The Rebbe was speaking to him the entire time. I didn't hear what was being said — I was just a boy. But I knew something unusual was happening. The entire Simchas Torah celebration paused, while the Rebbe spoke privately with this young diplomat.

After Yom Tov, I asked my father: "What was that conversation about?"

He told me. The Rebbe was speaking about the United Nations, about the Arab world, about the security of Israel.

At one point, the Rebbe said something very sharp: "The United Nations is a house of lies." And when you enter a house of lies, the Rebbe explained, you must bring truth. Even one candle of truth can push away a great deal of darkness. The Rebbe warned about a dangerous pattern — that compromise after compromise would not bring peace but would instead embolden those who seek to harm Israel.

For years, I didn't fully understand what I had witnessed. Why would the Rebbe stop Hakafos — with thousands of people waiting — to speak to one man for forty-five minutes? It was late at night. People had come to dance, to celebrate. Why then?

And then, years later — especially after the events of Simchas Torah, October 7th — I began to reflect. A tzaddik sees further than we see. A tzaddik understands what may unfold decades later. Perhaps, at that moment, the Rebbe saw something. Perhaps he understood that this young man would one day stand before the world — and would need strength, clarity, and courage.

Perhaps those words, spoken in the midst of Hakafos, planted something deep within his soul. I once heard Netanyahu himself recount that night. He described how, after the long conversation,

the Rebbe took a Sefer Torah and began to dance. Thousands joined him. The energy, the heat, the intensity — he said it felt like Har Sinai. And in that moment, he said, he understood something profound: The strength of the Jewish people. The eternity of Netzach Yisrael.

There is one more detail that adds another layer to this story. Netanyahu's father, Benzion Netanyahu, was a great historian, an expert on the Spanish Inquisition. At his 100th birthday celebration, he stood up to speak. Most people, at such a moment, speak about family, memories, gratitude. But he spoke about something else. He said the greatest threat to the Jewish people was Iran — a regime building toward destruction.

Among all those present, there was one person who truly listened. His son. Throughout his career, Netanyahu continued to speak about that threat, again and again, often against tremendous opposition. And today, we are witnessing the consequences of that clarity and that courage.

Sometimes, a single conversation can change history. Sometimes, words spoken at the right moment — even when no one else understands why — can shape the future. And sometimes, what looks like an interruption… is actually the most important moment of all.

L'Maaseh

Rabbi Paysach Krohn relates how **Rav Shalom Shwadron, zt"l**, the Maggid of Yerushalayim, who as a young boy of thirteen years old, joined a group of boys who would practice giving speeches to each other. They would meet every Shabbos, and the first time they met, Rav Shalom Shwadron was chosen to be the first speaker.

Rav Shalom walked up to the Shtender and began his speech with a Mashal that he hoped one day to say in front of a large audience. He

said, "A father had two children who had a certain illness, which required them to take a very bad tasting medicine.

To the older child, the father explained the severity of the consequences if he wouldn't take the medicine, and he told him that he may even end up in the hospital if he didn't take care of himself. Eventually, the father convinced his son to take the medicine.

The second son, however, was a different story. The father played with him and told him jokes, and as soon as the son opened his mouth with hearty laughter, the father slipped the medicine in his mouth.

Anyone seeing this might think that the father liked the second son better than the first son. With the first son he was stern and strict, but with the second son he played with him and almost got him to 'enjoy' the medicine. However, this is far from the truth. Rather, the older son was old enough to be spoken to logically. The younger son would not understand the seriousness of having to go to a hospital. He might think that it was fun. Therefore, the father had no choice but to find a pleasant way of giving him the medicine.

The same is true of our generation. It used to be that the Maggidim, those who speak to the public, could get straight to the point without softening the people up with pleasantries and stories, and making them laugh. Nowadays, people resent Mussar and rebuke, and they will not accept it. But, if the speaker will lighten things up for them with laughter and stories, their hearts and minds will open up and they will become receptive to Mussar and instruction!"

Rav Shalom said these words many years ago as a young teenager. He related later in his life that it was true then when he was a child, but it is even more true today!

"When Jews unite in love and peace, no power in the world can harm them." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Rabbi Yoel Gold - You Are Worth It

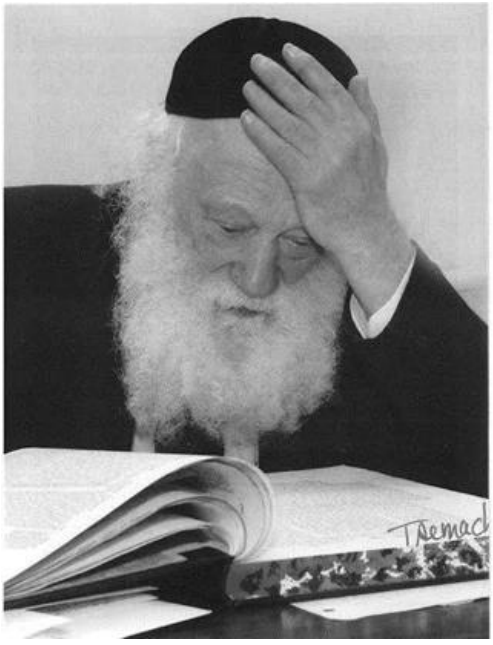
It was the final week of high school. I was preparing to graduate from Adelphia Yeshiva, filled with anticipation for the next chapter of my life. My plan was clear: I would be continuing the following year in Passaic, New Jersey.



Then, one day, my rebbe, **Rabbi Dovid Trenk *zt"l***, walked into the Beis Medrash, sat down beside me, and said quietly, "Yoeli, I want you to stay next year in Adelphia to help build the Beis Medrash."

My heart sank.

At that time, the Beis Medrash was just beginning. There were only three students. If I stayed, I would be the fourth. It was not yet a fully developed *makom Torah*, and I had already set my sights elsewhere. I responded honestly. "Rebbe, I'm planning to go to Passaic. I don't think I can stay." But it is not easy to say no to a rebbe like Rabbi Trenk. I asked for time to think it over.



The next day, he returned and said simply, "Yoeli, get into the car." "Where are we going?" I asked. "I'll tell you on the way."

We drove down Route 9 and onto the Staten Island Expressway. Then he turned to me and said, "I'm taking you to a *din Torah*. We're going to ask **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum** what you should do." A short while later, we arrived. Rav Shmuel welcomed us in, and we sat down together. Rabbi Trenk began to speak, and then, unexpectedly, he broke down in tears.

"Rebbe," he said, "Yoeli has spent four years in Adelphia. I want him to stay another year to help build the Beis Medrash. Please tell him to stay."

Rav Shmuel then turned to me, took my hand, and gently asked, "Nu, what do you say?" With a trembling voice, I answered, "Rosh Yeshiva, I am deeply grateful—to my rebbe, to the yeshiva—but I feel it is time for me to move on. I believe I will grow more in Passaic." He looked at me and said simply, "If you will learn better there, then go."

I turned to Rabbi Trenk. There was a faint smile on his face.

We got back into the car and drove home in silence.

The following year, I went to Passaic. And from time to time, Rabbi Trenk would come visit. He would walk straight into the Beis Medrash, come over to my seat, lift me up in a warm embrace, and say, "Yoeli, I am so proud of you."

Twenty years later, I received the call. The rebbetzin informed me that Rebbe had passed away. I flew from Los Angeles to Lakewood, and throughout the flight, I replayed memories—moments, conversations, experiences—that had shaped my life.

And then I remembered that episode. - I felt a deep sense of guilt. After the *shivah*, I called the rebbetzin and said, "Do you remember what happened? I feel like I owe Rebbe an apology."

She began to laugh gently. "Yoeli," she said, "you do not owe my husband an apology. He knew it was time for you to go. He understood that. But he wanted you to know how much he wanted you to stay. How much he valued you."

Then she said something I will never forget.

"He wanted you to carry that with you into life. So that when you face challenges, when things become difficult—as they do for everyone—you will remember that you are worth fighting for."

In that moment, everything became clear. Like a light turning on, I realized that throughout the years, whenever I struggled, I kept pushing forward. I kept fighting. Because somewhere deep within me, my rebbe had planted that truth: *you are worth fighting for.*

And that is a message not just for me, but for every person. Your *ruchniyus* is worth fighting for. Your struggles do not define you, and your setbacks do not disqualify you. No matter how many times a person falls—once, a hundred times, a thousand times—it does not matter. Get back up and continue fighting.

Because you are worth fighting for.

Rabbi Yehuda Zev Klein - Tears for Eternity

My son-in-law, R' Shloime Grossnass, once shared with me a remarkable story passed down through his family.

In the 1920s, his great-great-grandparents were forced to relocate from Poland to Germany. One Friday evening, their teenage son was walking home when he suddenly heard the sound of crying—deep, heartfelt sobbing—coming from a nearby house. Drawn by the intensity of the moment, he approached the window.

Inside, a woman had just lit her Shabbos candles.

With tears streaming down her face, she poured out her heart in *tefillah*: "*V'zakeini le'gadel banim u'bnei banim*…her children should grow to be wise, G-d-fearing, devoted to Torah and good deeds." Her words were not routine. They were alive, filled with longing, with a mother's deepest yearning.

The boy stood there, transfixed. He had never heard such sincerity, such depth, such pleading before. In that moment, something shifted within him. A decision crystallized. "I want to become the kind of *talmid chacham* she is davening for. I want to live with that *yiras Shamayim*."

The next day, he told his parents that he wanted to travel to Radin to learn in the yeshiva. They agreed, and he began preparing. The journey was long and difficult, but he arrived determined and hopeful. He was tested.

And then he was told: "We're sorry. You're not yet on the level required to keep up with the yeshiva." He was crushed. All the effort, all the preparation, all the anticipation collapsed in an instant. He left the building, sat down on a bench, and broke into tears.

At that moment, **Rabbi Naftali Trop** passed by and noticed him. "What happened?" he asked gently. "Why are you so distressed?" The boy explained everything—his journey, his aspiration, his rejection. "Where are you from?" the Rav asked. "Germany." "Aren't there *yeshivos* in Germany?"

"Yes," the boy replied. "But there, they learn during the day. Here, they learn day and night—Shabbos and Motzei Shabbos, Yom Tov and after Yom Tov. Here, Torah is everything. That is what I want." When Rabbi Naftali Troup heard those words, he paused. And then said, "If that is what you desire, come. You are accepted."

From that point on, the young man flourished. He grew into one of the most outstanding students in the yeshiva, and later continued his learning in Baranovich under **Rabbi Baruch Ber Leibowitz zt"l**. He became one of his closest and most distinguished students. In time, he married, and eventually became a leading Rav, known as **Rabbi Aryeh Leib Grossnass**, the Av Beis Din of London.

But the story does not begin there.

It begins with a woman. A mother standing alone, on a quiet Friday evening, lighting candles and crying.

Imagine, after one hundred and twenty years, when she ascends to Shamayim. She is shown generations of *talmidei chachamim*,

generations of *yirei Shamayim*, entire worlds of Torah that emerged from that single moment of tefillah.

"Look," they will tell her. "See what your tears created. See what your yearning built." The greatness of Torah does not begin in the Beis Medrash. It begins in the heart of a mother.

It is the Jewish women—their *tefillos*, their sacrifices, their quiet devotion—who plant the seeds of eternity. They infuse their children with *emunah*, with values, with a love for Torah that shapes not only a life, but generations.

And sometimes, one tear, just one, can change the destiny of the world. - Forever.

Rabbi Daniel Glatstein - A Favorable Time

A woman once came to the **Brisker Rav** toward the end of his life, when he was living in Yerushalayim. She was childless and came seeking a *beracha*. The Rav, however, did not receive her immediately. He instructed his family to ask her to return later that day.

This was no small request. She had traveled all the way from Bnei Brak and it was a burden for her to come again, but she did. When she returned that evening, the Rav once again asked that she come back the following morning.

Finally, when she came in the morning, he received her and gave her a heartfelt *beracha* that she should merit to have a child. The family was perplexed. Why delay her so many times? Why not give the *beracha* immediately?

They were hesitant to ask directly. Instead, they turned to **Rabbi Elazar Shach *zt"l*** and requested that he inquire on their behalf. When Rav Shach asked, the Brisker Rav answered with characteristic precision and depth.

"*A beracha*," he explained, "is not something one gives casually. *A beracha* is most effective at an *es ratzon*, a moment of Divine favor, a time when the Heavenly gates are open."

He continued. "I was in the midst of completing a *mesechta*. I anticipated finishing at night, and I waited for that moment. But I was unable to complete it then. Only in the morning did I finish. And when one completes a *mesechta*, it is an *es ratzon*. The Tannaim and Amoraim are present. There is a unique opportunity for *tefillah* to be received."

"And so," he concluded, "I waited. I waited until the right moment, until it was an *es ratzon*, to give the *beracha*."

Not every moment is the same. There are times in life when the gates feel closed, and times when they are wide open. The wisdom lies not only in what we ask for, but in recognizing when to ask.

And sometimes, the difference between delay and fulfillment is not rejection, but preparation for the moment when Heaven is most ready to respond.

The Tefillah That Brought Him Back by Rabbi Joey Haber

I heard this story directly from a father. His son had gone completely off the path. Not just a little — completely. He was from a strong, beautiful family in the Tri-State area, but something happened, and he drifted far. He disconnected from everything. From Torah, from mitzvot, from his upbringing.

At some point, he went to Israel. He ended up in a program meant for struggling boys — a place designed to help those who had gone off the path. But even there, he couldn't stay. He was asked to leave. From there, he drifted again, eventually finding himself at another place in Israel — still searching, still lost.

And then, slowly… something began to change. Step by step, he started coming back. Until eventually, he became a completely different person — a true ben Torah, learning in yeshiva, rebuilding his life.

One Tu B'Shvat, a friend told him: "There's a man in Israel — Rabbi Septimus. People go to him, he gives brachot, it's a very special experience." -The boy decided to go.

He walked into Rabbi Septimus' home. And the moment he entered, the rabbi looked at him and said: "I know you."

The boy was confused. "You know me? I've never seen you before in my life."

The rabbi stared at him. "I recognize you."

"How could you recognize me?" the boy asked. "You've never met me."

Then suddenly, the rabbi said: "I know." "Three years ago, you were off the path."

The boy froze. "Yes…"

"You were at the Kotel," the rabbi continued.

"Yes."

"There was a famous rapper there. And you went over to him and started singing his songs."

The boy couldn't believe it. - "Yes… that happened."

"And then," the rabbi continued, "there was a Lubavitch man putting on tefillin. You didn't go to put on tefillin — you went to take some food."

The boy nodded slowly. "That's true."

The rabbi leaned forward and said: "After you left, I went over to that Lubavitch man and I asked him, 'Can you find me that boy's name?'" "He gave me your name — Yaakov Yosef ben Miriam." "And

from that day until today… I have been davening for you. Every single day."

"And now," the rabbi said, looking at him, "you walk into my home a completely different person."

There are two powerful lessons in this story. The first is this: Sometimes, when we see someone struggling, there is nothing we can say. Words won't reach them. Advice won't help. But there is something even more powerful than speaking. - We can daven. We can take that person's name, hold them in our heart, and speak to Hashem on their behalf.

This rabbi didn't give a speech. He didn't try to convince. He didn't argue. He used his silence — and turned it into tefillah. And those tefillot changed a life.

The second lesson is that Hashem allowed that boy — years later — to walk straight into the home of the very person who had been davening for him all along. So he could see… Tefillah works.

Today, that boy is back in America. He is a rebbe. He has a beautiful Torah home. He is living a life his parents once only dreamed of. And his father said something incredible: "When my son came back, I thought it was because of our tefillot." "I didn't even know… that somewhere in Israel, there was a stranger who had taken my son's name — and was davening for him every single day."

We are a nation with one great strength. The strength of our voice. Hakol kol Yaakov. The voice of a Jew — when used for tefillah — can reach places nothing else can. And sometimes… It can bring a soul all the way back home.

"All Jewish souls are truly one, for they all share the same source." ~ *Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi.*

The Chesed That Came Full Circle - Rabbi Shlomo Landau

There was a Yid living in Eretz Yisrael who woke up one night not feeling well. He went to the bathroom — and suddenly realized something was very wrong. He was vomiting blood.

Panicked, he called his doctor in the middle of the night. The doctor didn't hesitate. "Go to the emergency room immediately. This is not something to play with."

He rushed to the hospital with his wife. A full series of tests were run. Baruch Hashem, most of them came back normal. They were told to sit in the waiting room while they waited for the remaining results.

As they sat there, his wife noticed someone nearby — a middle-aged man pacing nervously, biting his nails, clearly overwhelmed. She turned to her husband. "Something isn't right with him. Go over. Maybe he needs someone to talk to."

The husband hesitated. "Everyone here is nervous," he said. "What am I going to help?" But she insisted. "Go. Just say something. Show a little care."

Reluctantly, he got up and approached the man. "Excuse me… is everything okay?" - The man looked at him, desperate.

"No," he said. "It's not okay." "My 15-year-old son… he had an accident. He cut off two of his fingers with a saw. The doctors are trying to decide what to do."

He explained the situation: They could attempt a complex surgery to reattach the fingers — but it carried a serious risk. If something went wrong, the entire hand could become paralyzed. Or they could leave it — and the boy would lose two fingers forever but keep full use of his hand. - "They gave me 30 minutes to decide," the father said. "How do you make a decision like that? I don't know what to do."

The man paused, then asked gently: "Have you ever heard of Reb Elimelech Firer?"

The father shook his head.

"He's someone who helps with medical situations like this — referrals, guidance. Let's try to reach him."

"It's the middle of the night," the father said. "How are you going to reach him now?" - But within minutes, they had him on the phone.

Reb Elimelech listened carefully. "Give me ten minutes," he said.

Ten minutes later, he called back. "Leave this hospital immediately. Go to a different hospital. I've arranged for one of the top hand surgeons in the country to be waiting for you. He'll take your son right away."

The father couldn't believe it. Within moments, he ran to get his son, gathered everything, and rushed out. Before leaving, he turned to the man. "How can I ever thank you?"

"Just give me your phone number," he said.

They exchanged numbers — and he left.

Meanwhile, the first man received his own test results. Baruch Hashem — everything was fine. It had been a scare, but nothing serious. He went home and continued his life.

A few months later, there was a knock on his door. Standing outside were the same father and his son. The boy stretched out his hand — all five fingers intact. The surgery had been a complete success. The father was emotional. "We did some research to find you," he said. "You need to understand what you did for us. Without you, my son may not have had a functioning hand — or he might have lost his fingers completely." - He took out a check. "I'm a wealthy man," he said. "This surgery — done privately — could have cost over $100,000. I want you to take this as a token of appreciation."

The man immediately refused. "Absolutely not. I didn't do this for money. This is what we do as Yidden — we help each other."

The father insisted. The man refused. And in the end, they parted — with gratitude, but no money exchanged.

Months passed. The man later made a wedding for his daughter. He decided to invite that father and son. They came. They danced. They celebrated together. It was beautiful. At the end of the wedding, the father of the kallah went to settle the bills — to pay the band, the caterer, the hall. But something strange had happened. Everything was already paid. Every last expense.

He asked around: "Who paid for all of this?" The answer came back: "The man you invited… he paid for everything."

Because when a person steps out of himself… When he notices someone else's pain… When he chooses to care… He's not just helping another person. He's bringing Hashem into the picture. And when you live that way — chesed doesn't just go out. It comes back full circle.

Jews in Curaçao: A Remarkable History by Rabbi Menachem Levine

A tiny Caribbean island once had more Jews than all thirteen American colonies combined—and later played an unexpected role in saving thousands during the Holocaust.

Curaçao, a small island near Venezuela and part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, has a rich and unique Jewish history. Though some recognize it as the destination listed on passports that helped Jews escape Europe during World War II, its Jewish roots stretch back centuries, earning it the title "Mother Congregation of the Americas."

Originally claimed by Spain in 1499, Curaçao remained under Spanish rule until 1634, when the Dutch captured it. Around that time, the

island's first known Jew, Samuel Cohen, arrived as an interpreter. Once under Dutch control, Curaçao became a strategic trading post.

In 1651, a group of Portuguese Jewish families from Amsterdam, led by Joao d'Yllan, settled on the island. They were granted remarkable privileges for the time: religious freedom, land, tax exemptions, and even protection of Shabbat observance. Additional waves of Jewish settlers arrived in 1659, many of them refugees from the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions who had passed through Amsterdam or Brazil. They brought with them a centuries-old Sefer Torah that remains in use today.

At first, the settlers attempted agriculture, but Curaçao's dry climate made farming difficult. They soon turned to commerce, relocating to Willemstad and building extensive trade networks between Europe and South America. This shift brought tremendous success. By the 18th century, Jews dominated much of the island's shipping industry, owning hundreds of vessels and playing a leading role in trade. They were also pioneers in marine insurance and became prominent bankers, establishing major financial institutions that shaped the island's economy for generations.

Their influence extended beyond commerce. Curaçao's Jews supported Simón Bolívar in his fight for independence from Spain, providing refuge, funding, and even manpower. At the same time, they generously supported Jewish communities throughout the Americas, helping fund synagogues in places like Newport, New York, Philadelphia, and Jamaica. In recognition of this support, some of these communities continue to recite prayers of gratitude to Curaçao to this day.

The community itself was highly organized and deeply committed to Torah life. As early as 1659, it established communal regulations (Haskamos) and a governing board known as the Machamad. Congregation Mikveh Yisrael became the center of Jewish life, building a synagogue in Willemstad that was eventually replaced in

1732 by a magnificent structure still in use today. Known as the "Snoa," it features high ceilings, historic chandeliers, and a distinctive sand-covered floor—variously explained as a reminder of the desert, a symbol of blessing, or an echo of secret worship during the Inquisition.



Mikveh Israel-Emmanuel Synagogue

Education was a central priority. Under early rabbinic leadership, particularly that of Chacham Josiau Pardo, boys were required to study Torah from a young age through their teenage years—an uncommon standard even in Europe at the time. Curaçao also established one of the first yeshiva-like institutions in the Western Hemisphere, training future rabbis, chazzanim, and leaders who would serve communities across the Americas.

By around 1750, Curaçao's Jewish population reached approximately 2,000—likely exceeding the combined Jewish population of all thirteen American colonies. The community was both spiritually vibrant and economically powerful, truly living up to its reputation as the "Mother Congregation of the Americas."

Over time, however, internal tensions began to weaken this strong foundation. Disputes over communal authority led to divisions, including the establishment of a separate congregation in the 18th century. In the 19th century, further conflict and the growing influence of Reform Judaism caused additional splits. Some members sought to modernize synagogue practices, leading to breakaway groups and lasting discord.



Inside the shul with sand covered floor

These divisions, combined with assimilation, intermarriage, and emigration, gradually diminished the once-thriving community. By the mid-20th century, even major congregations struggled to gather a minyan and eventually reunited out of necessity.

In the early 20th century, a new wave of Ashkenazi Jews arrived, many initially intending only to pass through. Over time, they established their own community and institutions, including a synagogue that continues to serve both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews today.

Curaçao's story took a remarkable turn during World War II. In 1940, as Jews desperately sought to escape Europe, a technical detail became a lifeline. Dutch officials noted in passports that no visa was required for entry to Curaçao—though in reality, local approval was still needed. This wording allowed refugees to obtain exit visas from the Soviet Union and transit visas through Japan.

With these documents, approximately 2,000 Jews—including the entire Mir Yeshiva—escaped Europe, eventually reaching safety in Japan and Shanghai. What began as a bureaucratic workaround became one of the most significant rescue efforts of the war.

In a striking historical irony, Curaçao—once home to a flourishing Torah community—played a key role in enabling the survival of one of the great Torah institutions of the modern era. The Mir Yeshiva would later rebuild and continue its legacy in America and Israel.

Though the Jewish community of Curaçao is no longer what it once was, its impact is profound. From building one of the earliest and most influential Jewish centers in the Americas to quietly facilitating the rescue of thousands during the Holocaust, its legacy continues to resonate.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Yitzchok Blazer, zt"l, also known as Rav Itzele Peterburger, was seeking to get Haskamos, letters of approbation, before printing his Sefer Pri Yitzchok. He sent his manuscript to two renowned Gedolim who lived very far from where he lived— **Rav Shlomo Kluger, zt"l, and Rav Yosef Shaul Natansohn, zt"l**, for them to review his work and give a Haskamah.

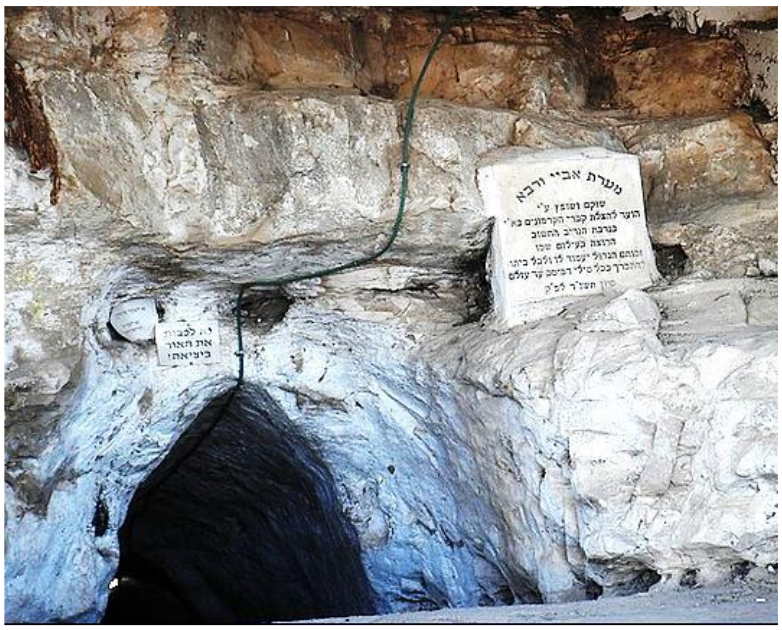
He didn't ask for any Haskamos from the Gedolim of Lita, where he lived. People asked him why he did this, as Lita had some exceptional Talmidei Chachamim.

After being pressed a little, Rav Itzele revealed that he was afraid that any of the local Gedolim who knew him would write excessive praise about him personally, while the two Gedolim he sent the Sefer to did not know him, and they would keep their comments directly related to the quality of the Sefer.

The people became aware of how humble Rav Itzele was, as he wanted no part in anyone writing comments about his character or what type of person he was!

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Abaye



Anyone who learns gemara comes across the name Abaye many times. What is the meaning behind this seemingly unusual name?

We know that Abaye was an orphan. His father passed away prior to his birth, whereas his mother died as soon as he was born. Fascinatingly, the first letters of the phrase **אֲשֶׁר ־ בְּךָ יְרֻחַם יָתוֹם**, it is with You that an orphan finds mercy, spell out the name **אביי**. In fact, the name **אביי** is a contraction of **אב יי-**, as he was an orphan, so Hashem was like his father (Hashem's name can be represented by two *yuds*, as we see in Torah).

Abaye was also called Nachmani because he was a young orphan who was raised and educated by Rabba Bar Nachmani, who dubbed him with his father's name, Nachmani.

The Meir Ayin cites that Abaye is gilgul of **רבי ייבא סבא**. We see a hint to this in the name **ייבא** as when the letters are reversed, we come to the name **אבייי**. This is the meaning in **אַךְ בִּי יָשֵׁב יַהֲפֹךְ** whose initials spell **אבייי**. That's **ישב יהפך** meaning reversing (**יהפך**) the letters from **ייבא** to **אבייי**.

נפלאות הבורא - Hashems Amazing World

Gardiner's Seychelles Frog



Gardiner's Seychelles frog is one of the smallest vertebrates known to exist, at just 11 millimetres long (0.4 inch). Its tiny head is missing parts of its ears, which means it shouldn't be able to hear anything. Like most deaf animals, Gardiner's Seychelles frogs are very vocal. Males in particular make plenty of noise.



They produce a single note 0.19 seconds long, around 5710 hertz, up to once every 3 minutes. However, when scientists played recordings of the frogs' calls to males in the wild, the males turned towards the sound, called out in response, and approached the loudspeaker. Sometimes they even attacked it. Clearly, they don't have any trouble hearing each other!? In order to figure out how this frog is able to hear, they used an advanced scanning technique

called X-ray synchrotron holotomography to build up a 3D image of the interior of its body. This simulated how well sound was transmitted through the different regions. To their surprise, they realized that the frog's mouth was the solution! It resonated best at a frequency of 5738 Hz. That's close to the pitch of the male's calls, suggesting that the mouth is ideally suited to amplify the sound of the call and transmit it to the inner ear. It's the first land-living vertebrate known to use its mouth for hearing.

Listening through your mouth may seem unnatural, however, Hashem the Ultimate Designer, provided them with a unique way to hear! Hashem has placed such wisdom and care into each and every one of His creatures! *(Rabbi Eliyahu Tobal)*

Rebbe

In the early 1950s, there was a young talmid chacham in Bnei Brak who carried the last name and lineage of a very prominent Chassidic dynasty. As one of the few survivors of his family, he was being urged to assume the mantle of leadership and become Rebbe, but he was hesitant.

He went to the **Chazon Ish, R' Avrohom Yeshayah Karelitz**, and shared his reservations. He felt unworthy of the title and role, he said.

"In this generation," the Chazon Ish told him, "anyone who gives encouragement to other Yidden can be called a 'rebbe,' and he is worthy of that title."

The visitor accepted the Chazon Ish's words, and as he prepared to leave, the Chazon Ish added a line. "And even if the only Yid he can encourage is himself, and even if that encouragement comes only from the fact that he has received the title of 'rebbe,' this too makes him worthy of it!"

UKforTORAH@gmail
Authentic Hashkofa from Gedolei Yisroel

Torah Perspectives On The European Churban

A Condensed Summary Based on the Words of Gedolei Yisroel

1. Why Not "Holocaust" or "Shoah"?

Gedolei Yisroel consistently avoided the terms *Holocaust* and *Shoah*. Rav Hutner explained that these words imply an isolated, random catastrophe, like an earthquake, detached from Jewish history. But the Churban of European Jewry is part of the continuous chain of Divine hashgachah, rooted in the *Tochacha* and the covenantal relationship between HaShem and Klal Yisroel.

"The word *Shoah*… implies an isolated catastrophe… This is far from the Torah view." (**Rav Hutner**)

Rav Avigdor Miller likewise rejected the term because it connotes "random cataclysmic destruction."

2. The Churban as Divine Punishment

The unanimous Torah principle: **Schar v'Onesh applies to all of history**, including the events of WWII.

Gedolim stressed:

- The Churban Bayis Rishon and Sheni were punishments for aveiros.
- The same principle applies to Churban Europa.
- Divine justice is unfathomable in detail, but its existence is absolute.

Many struggled emotionally with this idea, especially survivors who saw tzaddikim perish. Gedolim responded with Chazal's teaching that in communal punishment even tzaddikim are swept along.

Rav Schwab expressed the duality:

"They are punishments for our historic sins… However, this does not explain the massive churban… We do not dare give explanations… Let it arouse us to do teshuva." - Thus: We cannot explain individual suffering, but we must accept the communal message.

3. Warnings Before the Churban

Many Gedolim foresaw disaster due to:

- Assimilation
- Haskalah
- Secular nationalism
- Zionist ideology
- Abandonment of Torah education

Rav Elchonon Wasserman

In *Ikvesa D'Meshicha*, he warned that Zionism's ideology mirrored the nationalism of the Nazis — a Divine message that "Jewish nationalism" was spiritually poisonous.

The Chofetz Chaim

When Hitler rose to power: - "He himself does not know what he is saying; it is a message from the Beis Din Above."

Rav Mordechai Brisk

He warned in 5693 that German assimilation would bring Divine retribution.

Meshech Chochma's Prophecy

"Berlin is not Jerusalem… a storm wind will uproot him." Gedolim saw this as fulfilled.

Rav Chaim Ozer

In *Achiezer* (5699), he wrote that assimilation in Western Europe had weakened emunah and now "the evil comes from there."

Rav Bloch of Telz

He described the Nazi obsession with Jewish destruction as supernatural — a clear sign of Divine decree.

4. Aftermath: How Gedolim Interpreted the Churban

Rav Avrohom Kalmenovitz

In *Emunas Hamishpot*, he warned against attributing the Churban to:

- Politics
- Military causes
- Nazi insanity

He insisted it was Divine punishment meant to awaken teshuva.

Rav Aryeh Leib Mallin (Beis HaTalmud)

He traced the root cause to the Haskalah in Germany, which led to:

- Abandonment of Torah
- Secularization
- Collapse of Jewish identity

He argued that the primary rectification is rebuilding Torah learning, especially yeshivos.

Chazon Ish

He famously said:

"People ask why the Shoah happened. I ask — how could it *not* have happened?"

He pointed to:

- Destruction of Jewish chinuch
- Burning of children's neshamos
- Zionist influence
- Widespread abandonment of mitzvos

5. Zionism and the Churban

The document devotes a major section to this theme.

Chazon Ish

He linked the Churban to the spread of Zionism.

Satmar Rebbe

In *Vayoel Moshe*, he applied the **Shalosh Shevuos**:

- Do not rebel against the nations
- Do not ascend "as a wall"
- If violated, "your flesh will be hefker like the deer of the field"

The document notes that this description matches the events of the Churban with chilling precision.

Rav Eliyahu Henkin

In 5701, he explicitly attributed the Churban to violation of the Shevuos.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe

He wrote: "There is no more exact description of the Holocaust than 'your flesh will be permitted like the deer of the field'."

Rav Dovid Soloveitchik

He applied the same Gemara to contemporary Jewish bloodshed in Eretz Yisroel.

Rav Weissmandel

He wrote that Zionist kefirah brought the Churban.

Rav Shmuel Berenbaum

He held that Zionists were a major cause of the spiritual destruction that preceded the physical destruction.

6. Jewish Betrayal During the War

The document cites historical episodes where Zionist leaders:

- Prioritized state-building over rescue
- Sabotaged rescue efforts
- Collaborated with Nazi officials (e.g., Kastner)
- Used the Churban to justify political goals

Rav Hutner wrote that the Mufti's push for mass murder was tied to Zionist political pressure.

Rav Weissmandel recorded firsthand how Zionist leaders blocked rescue attempts.

The Rayatz reportedly said: "Who were the ones who did it all in the first place?"

7. "Yom HaShoah" — A Zionist Narrative

Gedolim universally rejected "Yom HaShoah."

Reasons include:

1. It removes HaShem from the story.

Rav Miller: - "How can we view our history from the perspective of atheism?"

2. It promotes Zionist ideology

Themes include:

- "Never again" through military strength
- "Jewish unity" defined nationally, not religiously
- Glorification of armed resistance over spiritual heroism
- Using the Churban to legitimize the State

3. It contradicts Torah hashkafah

The only guarantee of Jewish survival is Torah and mitzvos — not a state or army.

Rav Gifter: - "We have no business with it."

8. Why Gedolim Did Not Establish a New Fast Day

Although many initially supported a taanis, the Chazon Ish strongly opposed creating a permanent enactment:

"How could our generation… dirty with aveiros… establish anything permanent?"

Reasons:

- Our generation lacked the spiritual clarity to define a Torah-true commemoration.
- Any new day would inevitably be hijacked by Zionist ideology.
- Tisha B'Av already encompasses all tragedies of the Golus.

Rav Moshe Feinstein explained that tragedies caused by governments fall under the umbrella of Tisha B'Av.

9. Could Such a Churban Happen Again?

The Torah answer: **Yes — if we do not do teshuva.**

Rav Shach

He warned that:

- A new "counting" began after WWII
- When the measure fills, tragedy can strike again
- The State's secular leadership endangers Klal Yisroel

Rav Yerucham Levovitz

If Germany could fall into barbarism, so can any nation.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch

Anti-Semitism is supernatural; only Torah protects us.

Rav Ruderman

Purim vs. the Churban:

- In Purim, Klal Yisroel did teshuva → no casualties
- In WWII, they did not → devastation

Rav Mattisyahu Solomon

He recounted how three days of teshuva in Eretz Yisroel stopped Rommel's advance.

10. The Individual and the Community

If communal sins bring communal punishment, what of the individual?

Rav Moshe Schneider

He taught from Shabbos 55a:

- Tzaddikim were punished in the Churban Bayis Rishon because they did not protest.
- Even if protest would not have helped, they were judged for not trying.

Maharil Diskin & Rav Hirsch

A tzaddik who isolates himself is **not** a tzaddik who saves the city. A tzaddik who protests — even unsuccessfully — protects both himself and others.

Thus: **Our responsibility is not only personal growth but influencing our surroundings.**

11. Addendum: "Return, Yisroel!" — Rav Mordechai Tzuckerman

A searing post-war cry from a survivor of Kovno:

"The voice of the blood of our brothers… cries out: Return, Yisroel!"

He writes that:

- The Churban was midda k'neged midda

- We abandoned HaShem unnaturally → we were punished unnaturally
- Only massive, wholehearted teshuva can rectify it

"Just as the punishment was terrible, so too must the teshuva be tremendous."



Yom Hashoah

"Auschwitz is the largest cemetery on this earth… There are no divisions there, not between Sephardi and Ashkenazi, not between secular and religious, not between rich and poor. - They were all killed as Jews…

The secret of dying together is not enough. We must learn how to live together." ~ Rav Yisrael Meir Lau.



Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita - שְׁלִיסֶל חַלָּה - What is the Message?

We must reflect on the spiritual and practical transition from the festival of Pesach to the upcoming Shabbos, emphasizing the ongoing inspiration and clarity gained from Pesach's mitzvahs and messages.

The community remains uplifted and inspired after Pesach, carrying forward the spiritual clarity and connection attained through its mitzvot and messages.

The journey of Yisroel after the miracles of Pesach, notably the Kriyas Yam Suf, into the desert is a profound example of living with complete faith and reliance on Hashem despite physical destitution and uncertainty.

The current spiritual phase encourages internalizing and practicing Emunah - living with faith in Hashem's providence, accepting that both our possessions and our needs come from Him.

The Shabbos following Pesach features a unique minhag involving the "shlissel challah" (key in the challah). This key, either shaped as or placed inside the challah bread, symbolizes the source and root of our hatzlochah (success, welfare, livelihood).

The two challos on Shabbos represent the Lechem HaPanim (Showbread) and recall the Lechem HaMishnah—the heavenly bread provided before Shabbos, symbolizing divine sustenance.

The key embedded in the challah serves as a tangible reminder that all success and provision come from Hashem, reinforcing the concept of faith and reliance on divine blessing in all aspects of life.

Our material and spiritual success are both gifts from Hashem and should be recognized and internalized as such.

The act of placing the key into the challah is a symbolic act of entrusting our financial and general welfare to Hashem's care.

This practice encourages a lifestyle where faith and gratitude permeate daily life, especially in the transition from the elevated spiritual state of Pesach to regular life.

This connection and faith should continue to grow, allowing the community to carry forward the "great hashpaohs (divine benevolences)" of Pesach into everyday life.

With Hashem's blessing, the community will merit to sustain the spiritual light and miracles experienced during Pesach throughout the year.

The Shabbos after Pesach serves as a spiritual and practical reminder that all success and sustenance come from Hashem. Through faith and symbolic customs like the key in the challah, individuals are encouraged to maintain a deep connection with Divine Providence as they transition from the elevated state of Pesach into daily life.

"Incubation By Sight"



Early rabbinic and kabbalistic writers teach that: The ostrich (יַעֲנָה) incubates its eggs not by sitting on them, but by gazing at them! The ostrich warms or develops its eggs through staring (**ראייה**) rather than sitting.

The earliest clear Jewish formulation is attributed to **Rabbi Gershom ben Shlomo**: (13th century France) in his sefer *Sha'ar Hashamayim* - **נאמר על בת היענה שהיא מקבצת ביציה בראייתה** - *"It is said of the ostrich that it gathers its eggs with its gaze."* This is already the idea of **ראייה** having an active effect—not just seeing, but influencing.

A stronger formulation appears in the name of **Rabbi Yosef ben Shalom Ashkenazi** (Sephardic sage 14th century) who claims that the '*knaf renanim*' gazes at the eggs and warms them without touching them, whereby the chicks hatch. He does not identify the bird, but later sources attributed this quality to the ostrich. Biblical zoologists note that the name *knaf renanim* seems appropriate for the male ostrich - "***The bird gazes at the eggs and warms them without touching them, whereby the chicks hatch.***"

The Arizal in a sefer called Otzrot Chaim. In Shaar Hanekudim perek aleph page 5 (amud aleph) [in the old editions]. The Arizal mentions the Bat Yana gazing at its egg to hatch it. The minhag of hanging it in shul though is not mentioned.

The ostrich's gift of vision was also recorded in the writings of **R. Yitzchok Luria (the Arizal)**, recorded by his student **R. Chaim Vital** (1543-1620) after his death.

R. Chaim Vital writes: We find some power of eyesight as evident in the natural sense of sight, such as the ostrich egg from which the chick emerges as a result of observation, with no need to sit on the eggs and warm them like other birds, proving that eyesight has real power.

As R. Luria sees it, the ostrich's gaze indicates that the sense of sight is not passive, rather capable of influence, action and inception, and he illustrates this through the Kabbalistic practice recommending that one imagine Hashem's name in the mind's eye and then observe it.

R. Mordechai Hacohen (Aleppo and Land of Israel, 17th century), a disciple of R. Israel di Curiel and a 'cub' of R. Isaac Luria (the ARI), mentions the connection between the ostrich's power of sight and the custom of suspending eggs in the synagogue, in association with the city of Safed where he lived and operated.

Hacohen writes:

The *na'ama* [*=the ostrich*] lays eggs and places them in an elevated place and looks at them from afar and is not distracted, and its gaze is productive as it causes the chicks to hatch, and if some animal comes and it stops [*looking at the eggs*] it kills it, as the eggs become strange [*no chicks will form in them*] and for this reason it is customary to hang them in the synagogue, for the essence of prayer that it should be accepted and fruitful is *kavanah* [*concentration in prayer*] and that there should be nothing blocking one from Hashem who is in heaven.

According to Mordechai Hacohen, the ostrich places its eggs in an elevated place so that it can concentrate on them and cause them to hatch. It gazes at them unceasingly and distracting its attention from the eggs, even for a short time, might stop the chicks from

developing. For this reason, any animal that distracts the ostrich from gazing may be attacked and even killed by the ostrich.



Hacohen compares the ostrich and its focus on the eggs for the purpose of producing chicks - to **תפילה** in the synagogue. Prayers are meant to have an effect and to fulfil their purpose just as gazing produces chicks. For this reason, the worshipper must concentrate on his prayers and avoid distraction. Distractions during prayer are like producing 'strange eggs', that is, eggs that will not develop into chicks.

The Kav HaYashar (**פרק ח׳**) uses the ostrich as a mashal for the power of focused intention: **והיענה מְחַמֶּמֶת הַבֵּיצִים בְּעֵינֶיהָ וּמְחַיָּה אוֹתָן בְּכֹחַ הַהַבָּטָה** - "***The ostrich lays its eggs in the sand. It does not sit on them like other birds. Instead, it warms and incubates them by staring at them intensely. The heat of its gaze is described as "bringing them to life."***

The author uses this to teach: A person's Machshavah (thoughts) have real spiritual impact. Concentration and kavvanah can "give life" to actions, just as the ostrich's gaze gives life to its eggs.

Rabbi Yaakov Emden (Yaavetz) references this idea in several places, most famously in his commentary on Pirkei Avos - **וכן מצינו בְּיַעֲנָה שֶׁמְּחַמֶּמֶת בֵּיצֶיהָ בְּעֵינֶיהָ, וְכֹחַ הַהַבָּטָה פּוֹעֵל בָּהֶן לְהַחֲיוֹתָן** - "***And so we find regarding the ostrich, that she warms her eggs with her eyes, and the power of [her] gaze acts upon them to give them life.***"

In **אורח חיים סימן תקפ״ח — מור וקציעה** - he cites the ostrich as an example of: The mysterious powers implanted in creation, The

effect of sight and intention, The way Hashem built spiritual forces into natural processes. He references the ostrich as an example of mysterious natural forces that operate through sight:

" הֲרֵי הַיַּעֲנָה שֶׁאֵינָהּ דּוֹגֶרֶת כִּשְׁאָר הָעוֹפוֹת, אֶלָּא מְחַמֶּמֶת וּמְבַקַּעַת בְּעֵינֶיהָ בְּכֹחַ הַמַּבָּט." He notes that Chazal already describe the ostrich as: "**מְחַמֶּמֶת בְּעֵינֶיהָ**" — "warming [the eggs] with its eyes."

For R. Yaakov Emden, this becomes a musar lesson: Just as the ostrich's gaze affects its eggs, A person's gaze and thoughts affect their surroundings, especially in matters of kedushah and tum'ah.

Literary sources in recent centuries relate the custom of several Jewish congregations to hang ostrich eggs in the synagogue. During the twentieth century, this custom gradually dwindled, and at present has almost disappeared from synagogue life.

The Jewish custom of hanging ostrich eggs was mentioned several decades later in *Midrash Talpiot*, compiled by R. Elijahu ha-Cohen ha-Itamari of Izmir (1659–1729). He mentions two other explanations for the custom of placing eggs in the synagogue. In contrast to Mordechai ha-Cohen, who compares the ostrich gazing at its eggs to one's connection with the Creator during prayers, R. Elijahu ha-Cohen says that this phenomenon expresses Hashem's constant watchfulness over the People of Israel. In this way, if Hashem were to stop His vigilance over His people for even a moment, this might lead to their loss and destruction, just like the ostriches when distracted from their eggs.

R. Elijahu ha-Cohen adds that looking at the egg during prayers might arouse the worshippers' affection for Hashem who looks out for his people and prevents any harm to them.

In the eighteenth century, the custom was mentioned in a book by R. Jacob Emden (1698–1776) who lived in Altona, Germany. He relates: "I have heard that Jews in the country of Turkey hang the

egg of an ostrich [*na'amit*] in the synagogue to arouse one's concentration on the prayers."



The Ukrainian town of Gwoździec had a wooden synagogue from the late seventeenth century that was destroyed in World War I. Its ceiling murals were recorded, including a drawing from 1729 that included a round frame encircling a bird resembling an eagle gazing at three eggs, with the title *bat ya'anah* [ostrich]. The researchers assume that the artist had never seen an ostrich, so he drew an eagle.

In a large medallion on the ceiling above the entrance, an eagle-like bird is shown landing on the top of a tree trunk, looking directly down at three eggs in its nest. The artist, uncharacteristically, labeled the figure as an "ostrich" in Hebrew. This figure is the only animal in the entire synagogue that was given a label. This probably indicates that he did not know what an ostrich looked like.



The Etz Chaim Synagogue in Chania, Crete. Seven ostrich eggs hang from the main chandelier and six around the frame + one suspended in the center

R. Shlomo Badiḥi, a Jewish sage from Sana'a who lived and operated

in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reviews in his commentary on the Bible some of the explanations presented by his predecessors, adding an explanation that offers a symbolic connection between the form of the egg and synagogue prayers:



Ades Synagogue (Jerusalem) Reconstructed image

Another reason I have received for hanging the eggs in the synagogue is so that those entering will see them and refrain from holding everyday conversations in the synagogue, and will be like the egg that has no mouth. In the same way one should be silent and avoid everyday conversation, like one who has no mouth, and in this way his thoughts will adhere to the Holy one blessed be He, and he shall concentrate on his prayers.

The ostrich egg, as the eggs of other birds, "has no mouth," i.e., it is smooth with no apparent apertures (and compare b. Bava Batra 16b). This 'sealed' form indicates the desirable conduct of worshippers in the synagogue. They must be silent and concentrate on their prayers and not converse with other worshippers. Hence, according to this later understanding, the ostrich egg was an original and unique way of conveying the message 'don't speak during prayers,' as posted today in many synagogues.

A linguistic parallel between the Hebrew word for ostrich (*ya'anah*) and the word for "poor" (*ani*) served as a mnemonic for the importance of giving charity. - The Hebrew word for ostrich, **בת היענה**, has the same letters as **בת העין**, pupil of the eye.

Carrying the Flock

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah: **וְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמַר לְעַבְדִּי לְדָוִד כֹּה אָמַר ה' צְבָקוֹת אֲנִי לְקַחְתִּיךָ מִן הַנָּוֶה מֵאַחַר הַצֹּאן לִהְיוֹת נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל** – *Now, tell My servant Dovid, 'The Almighty said, 'I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be ruler of My people Israel.'"* (Shmuel II 7:8)

What is the meaning of the Almighty telling King David that he was specifically taken from the pasture to be the nation's king?

In order to fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story shared in Rav Binyomin Pruzansky's Stories That Tug at the Heart (p. 50)

Dovid noticed that his friend Simcha had backed away from the elevator in the lobby. Dovid thought, "*Not again*. *When is he going to get over this? A 20-year-old guy afraid to get on an elevator*." Still, Dovid didn't leave his fearful friend behind.

Simcha confessed, "I know it's crazy, but these phobias of mine are just getting worse. It's getting hard for me to get anything accomplished in my learning, let alone worrying about what's going to be when it's time to get married. I know it doesn't make any sense, but every time I try to get on an elevator, it's like I'm facing a firing squad."

Dovid looked at his friend's sad, earnest face and realized that serious help was needed. That night, as Dovid lay in bed trying to fall asleep, he thought about what he would do if he had such a problem himself.

"That's it!" Dovid exclaimed. "Rav Don Segal!" Dovid had forged a close relationship with the great sage during his years at the Mir Yeshivah in Yerushalayim. He had seen with his own eyes the vast variety of Jews who came to Rav Segal day after day seeking life advice and guidance to meet their challenges. Dovid was also a regular guest at the Rav's Shabbos table.

The next day, Dovid told Simcha, "*You don't have to worry anymore. Come with me to Rav Don Segal. I'm telling you. You'll get the advice you need*."

Simcha pushed back with his sense of hopelessness, but Dovid wouldn't give up on his friend. "*Simcha, you don't deserve to live like this. For me, let's go*."

Minutes later, the two were standing at the entrance of Rav Segal's apartment building. Dovid took the elevator to the fourth floor while Simcha took the stairs. They knocked on the door, and the Rav himself answered.



Spurred by the Rav Segal's warmth and sincere interest, Simcha was comforted he was not in this alone. The sage suggested an approach Simcha could utilize that he had not heard before and gave him hope. Simcha thanked the Rav for his time and began to take leave.

Rav Segal rose from his seat as well and continued toward the door with his guests. The three walked into the hallway and stood before the elevator. Simcha felt the familiar sense of terror rising up in him.

"Please hold my arm and everything will be all right," Rav Segal reassured him.

Simcha allowed the sage to gently grasp his hand and guide him onto the elevator. Straining to keep his focus on the protective hand that enclosed his own, Simcha tamped down the fears that tried to bubble up into his heart.

In moments. the elevator made a soft landing on the ground floor and the door opened onto a mundane scene of daily life. No rescue personnel. No sirens. Simcha flooded with a sense of relief. Simcha began to follow Dovid out the elevator door, but Rav Segal did not relinquish his hand. "Please stay with me," he told Simcha.

The door closed once more, with Dovid left in the hallway. Rav Segal pressed the fourth-floor button, and the elevator began its slow, slightly shaky ascent. Simcha, still holding the Rav's hand, reasoned that perhaps the sage had further advice to give him. They reached the fourth floor and the doors opened, but once again, the gentle tug of the Rav's hand indicated that he did not want Simcha to go anywhere quite yet.

"There, that wasn't so bad, was it? Let's try going down again."

Thus, this most sought-after Jerusalem Rabbi passed his time on that afternoon riding up and down the elevator. By the time they made their last descent together, Simcha's fear was replaced with relief and pride.

Rav Dovid Feinstein (Shmuel II 7:8) beautifully explains that the Almighty was telling King David that the shepherd's humility was a key factor in his elevation to greatness. Although the rest of the world may elect the strongest soldiers or most eloquent speakers for their positions of power, our leaders are chosen for their sincere care for others and devotion to serving the Almighty and His children – just like Rav Segal.



Rav Chaim Vital's Yartzeit 30th Nisan

Pidyon Rashash: The Segulah that is proven to bring your personal Yeshuah!

Reb Chaim Vital who did it yearly has said: this Pidyon has brought Yeshuos "thousands of times". While the Arizal revealed this powerful Pidyon Rashash, it was the Holy Rashash who instructed how to perform it.

The Rashash wrote that one should set aside 160 pure silver coins, recite special Kabalistic Tefilos, and donate these coins to Talmidei Chachamim who are Moser Nefesh to learn Torah.

The 160 coins, equivalent to the numerical value of "Eitz," symbolize man who is likened to a tree. Through this Pidyon, the person receives a new Tzelem Elokim and a redemption of his soul where all judgment is transferred from the person to the coins, and all the good that awaits the person can start flowing again upon him.

The Sefer Shemen Sason writes: by doing the Pidyon Rashash he will certainly live through the year! The Sefer Sha'arei Rachamim revealed that it's a Segulah received from Eliyahu HaNavi himself.

While the Segulah is tremendously potent every time, it is particularly powerful after midnight. When the Ropshitzer Rav was

sick, the Ateres Tzvi wrote to Him that he will perform the Pidyon Rashash for him after Chatzos and:

"certainly, certainly, certainly, you will merit a Yeshua!"

We are living in desperate times, Klal Yisroel is looking out for Refuos, Shidduchim, Nachas, Parnassah, etc. It is Mekubal that at times there are wonderful Hashpaos and Yeshuos waiting to come down, but we are not worthy of them. Once the Pidyon Rashash is performed, one becomes pure, with a new Tzelem Elokim, clearing the path for the Hashpaos Tovos to descend.



To honour the yartzeit of Rav Chaim Vital (30 Nisan), here is a core teaching and a few short stories that capture his unique relationship with his master, the Arizal.

The Teaching: The Power of Small Deeds

Rav Chaim Vital recorded in *Sha'ar HaGilgulim* that the Arizal once told him that in earlier generations, one had to perform massive ascetic feats to reach holiness. However, in our "latter generations," because the world is so spiritually dark, even a tiny bit of effort—a small mitzvah or a brief moment of prayer done with sincerity—is worth more than the massive fasts of the ancients.

He taught that no person should ever feel their actions don't matter; because the "shell" (*kelipah*) of the world is so thick now, even a small spark of light can pierce through it.

The Stories

1. The River Journey

When Rav Chaim Vital first met the Arizal, he was a scholar of "revealed" Torah (Talmud) and was sceptical of Kabbalah. Legend says the Arizal took him on a boat in the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias). The Arizal scooped up a cup of water from a specific spot and told Rav Chaim to drink it. He explained it was from the Well of Miriam.

As soon as Rav Chaim drank it, his "inner eyes" were opened, and he was finally able to grasp the Arizal's deepest teachings.

2. The Fly on the Nose

Once, while the Arizal was teaching a deep secret of the Torah, a fly landed on his nose. He paused the lesson and appeared deeply distressed. Rav Chaim asked why such a small thing bothered him. The Arizal explained that the fly was a "messenger" from Heaven, indicating that he had revealed a secret that the world wasn't quite ready for yet. This taught Rav Chaim the extreme precision required when handling "The Hidden Light" (*Ohr HaGanuz*).

3. Why He Wrote it All Down

The Arizal famously preferred not to write books, saying that his "wisdom was like a rushing river" and penning it would be like trying to trap the ocean in a jar. After the Arizal passed away, Rav Chaim Vital was the only one permitted to compile the notes. It is said that the other students were so jealous that they bribed Rav Chaim's brother to "borrow" 600 pages of his manuscripts for a single night, which 100 scribes stayed up all night copying. This is how many of the teachings first began to spread.



Of course we begin with a beautiful amazing story.

This story is actually brought down in the **הקדמה**, the introduction to the **ספר כח השור**, a **ספר** that was written by **רב יצחק שור** probably about 200 years ago and he writes a personal story that transpired with him. It seems like in the town that he was the **רב** there was a priest who was a **משומד**, an

apostate, and he constantly would badger and debate with **רב יצחק** about all kinds of different things. One day he comes in and he's very bothered by a particular **פסוק**. We know it says **לא יאונה לצדיק כל און** that **הקדוש ברוך הוא** protects a **צדיק** from doing **עבירות**, from doing sins.

And the **גלח**, the priest, the **משומד**, the apostate, he says this is not true, there's many times that **צדיקים** do things that they shouldn't be doing. I don't believe in this whole thing. Back and forth and back and forth and **רב יצחק** just said to him, listen, it works.

בהמתן של צדיקים מן הקדוש ברוך הוא מביא תקלה על ידם, the **גמרא** says. Even their animals **הקדוש ברוך הוא** prevents them from doing **עבירות**, for sure the **צדיקים**, the righteous people themselves. - You could believe whatever you want to believe, I know it works.

And this **גלח**, this priest, decided that he's going to trip up **רב יצחק שור**. So what he did was he went and he purchased three small chickens, and he took these chickens and he force-fed them pork, meat of a pig, until the chickens became very large and plump.

Now we know the **הלכה** as the **שולחן ערוך** says in **יורה דעה סימן ס**, that if a chicken or a bird that its primary food is non-kosher, it becomes non-kosher itself. So he goes out and he tells someone, I want you to sell this in the marketplace and if anyone approaches you to buy these three plump chickens, give them an exorbitant price so they won't want to buy it. But if you see the **רבנית**, the wife of **רב יצחק שור** coming along, make sure to sell it to her for a rock-bottom price, something that she won't be able to walk away from.

And that's exactly what happens.

The **רבנית** comes, they sell these three large chickens, she goes and she takes them to be **שחט**, unknowing of the fact that these chickens were not kosher and there was no way she could know. There was nothing wrong intrinsically with them, they had just been force-fed non-kosher meat. But how should she know that? She

comes home and she prepares the first chicken. They **שחט**, they salt, they **כשר** them.

She prepares the first chicken. Now **רב יצחק שור** had a **מנהג** that if he was in middle of a **סוגיה**, he was learning something and he didn't come to a conclusion, he wouldn't eat. And it took longer for him to get clarity in the **סוגיה**. By the time it was time for him to eat, the chicken had already gone grown cold and the **רבנית** said, you know what, I'm just going to make eggs and bread and that's what you'll eat, and this is what the family will eat and we'll put it away for tomorrow.



The next day she takes out the pot that had the chicken in it and the entire top of the pot is covered in spider webs. She's a little bit perturbed. She goes to her husband. She says, what should we do? He says, don't use that one.

Take the next chicken and prepare, which she does. But unbeknownst to her, her husband was invited to a **פדיון הבן**. And we know if you eat at a **פדיון הבן** it's like a fast eighty-four **תעניות**. And so he partook from the food there.

He comes home. He says, I'm so sorry, I ate by the **פדיון הבן**. She said, okay, I'll put it away for tomorrow. The next day she comes and again there's cobwebs covering the entire thing of the pot.

And eventually he says to her, don't eat it, something is wrong. They throw away all the chickens, and they think that's the end of the story.

The very next day the **גלח**, the apostate, comes along and starts once again debating this concept of **הקדוש ברוך הוא** prevents a **צדיק** from doing an **עבירה**. And he says, you see, I'm right.

And he says, how do you know? He goes, your wife brought three chickens. And you know those three chickens? I stuffed them with pork. And look, you ate them. You see it doesn't work.

רב יצחק שור smiled and he said, oh does it work, and he shared with him the story how somehow **הקדוש ברוך הוא** prevented him from eating it, so much so that he sent a spider to spin a web to prevent **רב יצחק שור** from eating it.

An amazing concept and obviously the priest conceded that **רב יצחק** was right.

This has a lot to do with this week's **פרשה** because the **אור החיים הקדוש** brings the following understanding. We know that **פרשת שמיני** speaks a lot about **כשרות**, about not eating food that's not kosher or even questionably kosher.

And the **פסוק** says at the end of the parsha **כי אני השם אלוקיכם והתקדשתם**, behold I am **השם** your G-d, make yourselves holy, **והייתם קדושים**, and you will be holy, **כי קדוש אני**, because I am holy, says **השם**, **ולא תטמאו את נפשותיכם**, and your souls will not become contaminated.

Explains the **אור החיים הקדוש** this concept in this pasuk, **והתקדשתם**, if you try to live your lives with **קדושה**, with holiness, with sanctity, you're meticulous and careful particularly when it comes to eating non-kosher food, which we know contaminates a person and takes them away from **קדושה** and from holiness, then **הקדוש ברוך הוא** says, I will make sure that I will keep you holy, especially because I am holy, **ולא תטמאו את נפשותיכם**, I will ensure that your souls do not become contaminated by non-kosher food.

Not only Is it the right thing to be careful and meticulous when it comes to the laws of **כשרות**, but when **הקדוש ברוך הוא** sees that a

person is particularly careful, he ensures that the fellow can keep his standard and **חס ושלום** even accidentally he doesn't eat something that is **לא כשר**.

There's an unbelievable story brought down in the **בן איש חי**.

The **בן איש חי** says this story transpired in a time when the Spanish Inquisition, the Catholic Church still had its hold and there were many places that if a Jew went there, they were doomed. It seems like there were two fellows that were traveling on a boat, merchants not planning to go to any such country, not to Portugal or Spain or something that was under control by the Spaniards, and their ship was wrecked. And eventually they made it onto shore, but when they came out to shore, they realized it was one of the occupied countries where the Spanish Inquisition had its grip of terror. So right away they pretended that they were not Jewish.

They had not eaten properly in four days, they were famished. So each one decided to separate. One knocks on a door, and he says, 'I've just come, I've been shipwrecked and I'm here, please give me something to eat.' And the kind Catholic family invites him in and they break bread with him and they serve him meat.

He didn't want to blow his cover, he eats the **לא כשר** meat. His friend as well finds a kind home, they let him in, they invite him to break bread with them, he eats with them, they serve him bread, they serve him meat and he eats it, he can't blow his cover, it's **פיקוח נפש**.

Right before the second fellow, we'll call him **שמעון**, is about to leave, the father of the home, he calls him to the side and he says, from the look on your face I could tell that you're one of us. And he says I am.

He says I just want to give you a little bit of peace of mind. I know you ate the meat, but it's 100% **כשר**. We **שחט**, we **כשר**, we salt all of

the meat downstairs in the basement no one knows about it. The meat you ate is 100% כשר. You don't have to walk away with a guilty conscience that you ate something לא כשר.

Later the two of them, ראובן and שמעון, they meet up with one another to continue on their way. And ראובן shares, he says no choice, I ate לא כשר meat. And שמעון says I thought I ate לא כשר meat as well, but you should know I didn't eat לא כשר meat because the owner was one of the אנוסים, one of the hidden Jews and he shared that it was כשר meat.

ראובן was a little bit pained that he didn't have that experience. And later when they arrived to the destination, they went to the רב of the local town, the בן איש חי doesn't say who it was, and they said to him, what's פשט that I, ראובן says, I ate לא כשר food and my friend שמעון- הקדוש ברוך הוא spared him that the one family that he came to is a Jewish family?

And the רב said to ראובן, I want to ask you a question, be honest. How meticulous are you with keeping כשר? Can you remember an episode, an incident in your life where you ate something לא כשר? And he said I did, one time I partook from wine that was יין נסך, לא כשר wine. The רב says then you didn't have the סגולה, you didn't have the סייעתא דשמיא, הקדוש ברוך הוא's help in the background ensuring that you shouldn't eat something לא כשר.

But your friend שמעון, he was meticulous his whole life, הקדוש ברוך הוא didn't want to break his streak and he ensured that שמעון could continue to keep his streak of only eating כשר and not eating לא כשר.

This doesn't by the way only apply to stories that happened 300-400 years ago or stories with greats like רבי יצחק שור. It happens to us too. When a person is careful and meticulous in keeping the הלכות of כשרות even in situations where it's questionable, one is traveling, they're on vacation, they go to a שמחה, they go to a program, a hotel, a cruise and all of a sudden כשרות becomes more of a challenge.

If a person takes the high road **הקדוש ברוך הוא** will ensure that they will always live a life that is careful and meticulous without eating food that is **לא כשר**.

The **כף החיים** was a **רב** in **ירושלים** many many years ago when the people in **ירושלים** were extremely poor. To them a chicken was a luxury. There was one poor family that finally got a chicken.

That chicken was going to serve them everything they needed that **שבת**, the soup, the **טשאָלנט**, the main, the side. They would stretch it so the whole family could have it, they would cook the bones and everything. And when he takes the chicken to be shechted and it's opened up there's a **שאלה**, there's a question maybe the chicken is **טרפה**. So he goes to the **רב**, to the **כף החיים** and he shows him the chicken and the **כף החיים** says it's **טרפה**.

The **ייד** was devastated. Now they would have no **פליישיקס** for **שבת**, it would be **חלה** or **פיתה** and **טחינה** and that's it. And his **יצר הרע** got the better of him. Obviously he wouldn't eat something **לא כשר** so he took the chicken to a different **פוסק**, to the **טעפליקער רב** who was a great **תלמיד חכם**, a big **פוסק**.

He looked at it and he said **גלאט כשר**, it's 100% okay. The **ייד** was stunned. He has a **פסק** from the **כף החיים** that it's **לא כשר**, **פסק** from the **טעפליקער רב** that it's **כשר**. What does one do? And he was kind of vacillating and standing there.

The **טעפליקער רב** saw his hesitation and figured it's probably because he has nerves, he's nervous. So the **טעפליקער רב** took a piece of the chicken, a **פליגל** of it and he tossed it into the pot of his **טשאָלנט** and he says if it's good enough for me it's good enough for you.

The **ייד** takes it home, his wife says is it **כשר**? He says the **טעפליקער רב** said it's **כשר**, we could use it.

או געוואלדיג, she makes soup and she also takes some of the chicken and puts it into her **טשולנט** pot and she adds potatoes and beans or whatever it is he has to add.

In those days they didn't have crockpots, so what would you do with your **טשולנט**? You'd bring it to the local baker's oven. Everyone would. They would seal it up before **שבת** and on **שבת** morning they would open it up and everyone would get their **טשולנט** and bring it home.

Friday night comes to this family and the wife is taking the chicken off the fire, the pot off the fire and she trips and the entire chicken soup falls into the oven. - Nothing left. They have no chicken soup. So a little bit disappointed but hey what can you do.

שבת day she goes to the baker to pick up the **טשולנט** pot from the oven and everyone else's **טשולנט** is there and hers is not.

And she looks around and she sees at the bottom of the oven is a spilled turned over pot of **טשולנט**. Hers. They had no **טשולנט**. And she comes home and she's devastated.

She says we didn't have chicken last night, we don't have chicken today, something is not okay. And her husband confesses and he says I went to the **כף החיים** and he told me it's **אסור**. I went to the **טעפליקער רב** and he told me it's **מותר**.

But you're not supposed to ask a **שאלה** once someone says something is **אסור**.

Look **הקדוש ברוך הוא** made sure that we wouldn't eat it. And while everyone the family was sad, he said don't be sad. It's amazing that **השם** protected us from eating something that was not **כשר**. And they came around and they appreciated it.

After **שבת** his wife said to him you need to go to the **טעפליקער רב**. You need to tell him that you played a **שטיק** on him and he ate **טשולנט** and it's a problem maybe it wasn't **כשר**. First, he says I can't go there, I'm too embarrassed. She says you have no choice.

Go there, ask **מחילה**, ask for forgiveness. So he drags himself to the **טעפליקער רב**. And he tells the **טעפליקער רב** the whole story and the **טעפליקער רב** smiles. He says what's so funny you ate chicken that's not **כשר**?

טעפליקער רב said no I didn't. I ate chicken that's 100% **כשר** because I paskened it's **כשר**. You ate chicken that wasn't **כשר** because the **כף החיים פסקנד** that it was **אסור** for **you**. The chicken is not the discussion here it's the person.

השם spared you and by the way the **טעפליקער רב** said the chicken was delicious, the **טשולנט** was even better than usual.

You know why? Because **הלכה פסקנד** that it was **כשר** and there was a question for the other person and for the **טעפליקער רב הלכה** was on his side and therefore he was okay. So we see by the way we see that it's not even so much the object necessarily sometimes, it's even the person themselves.

רבותי, my friends, this is just a **חיזוק** for us. **והתקדשתם**, if we try to live our lives with sanctity, the **רבונו של עולם** says, "I'm gonna keep you holy," **ולא תטמאו את נפשותיכם**, your souls will remain pure. - Let's work on **כשרות**, let's focus on it, let's appreciate it, and in the situations when it's challenging, let's rise to the task, **אם ירצה השם** we'll do that, **הקדוש ברוך הוא** will keep us holy. Have a beautiful and wonderful Shabbos.

Appreciating the Small Things in Life

Our Fingers: We use our fingers constantly such as for writing, eating, speaking on the phone, carrying things etc. Rav Yerucham Levovitz commented 'people think holding a pen is simple and needs no strength, only special strength is a gift but really the strength to hold a pen is a Divine gift…'



Look At His Feet

וְאֶת-הַחֲזִיר כִּי-מַפְרִיס פַּרְסָה הוּא (יא/ז)

It is interesting to note that a **חזיר**, which is used a symbol of filth and repulsiveness, is the one to have the **סימן טהרה** on its feet.

One can learn a very important lesson in **עבודת ה'** from the **חזיר**. There are times when a person feels; I have tried! It is just too hard! I am not cut out to be a **תלמיד חכם**! He throws up his hands in **יאוש** and then he slacks in his learning and **עבודת ה'**. Even when a person feels like giving up, he must not surrender. Rather he must strengthen himself and try again and again; realizing that he is going through a **ניסיון** from **ה'**.

This is the lesson one can learn from a **חזיר**. Many times he is chased away from a rubbish dump, but he will always be back; no amount of harshness will keep him away. That is the meaning of its name **חזיר**, which comes from the word **חזרה**; the **חזיר** will always come back.

That's why it has a **סימן טהרה**; to teach us that even though he is **טמא** nevertheless we can learn out a pure lesson from his feet. Never give up! Keep trying! (**אוצרות התורה/בשם ארון עדות**)



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר'גרשון בן ר'אריה ליב ע"ה

The **תורה** lists four non-kosher mammals: **גמל, שפן, חזיר**—all **לשון זכר**—and **ארנבת, לשון נקבה**.

The **פסוק** says: **מעלת גרה היא**, but the **כתיב** is **הוא**.

The **אבן עזרא** and **חזקוני**: most of the species are female, hence **ארנבת**. **רבנו בחיי**: the species is **אנדרוגינוס**—possessing both male and female characteristics. **פענח רזא**: one month it functions as **זכר**, another as **נקבה**. Thus the **קרי/כתיב** reflects its dual nature.

The **ספר התשבי** adds: one who commits certain **עריות** may have his **נשמה נתגלגל** in an **ארנבת**, because it is **רובע ונרבע**.

Why No Fish Names?

The **תורה** lists names of animals and birds, but no fish. The **טור על התורה** explains: **אדם הראשון** named animals and birds, but not fish. Therefore the **תורה** gives no fish names. The **בעל הטורים** adds: fish are **מכוסים**—they live hidden from sight—so they have no explicit names.

The **פסוק** says: **כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת במים**—the **סימנים** must be present in the water. Some fish shed scales when removed; they remain **כשר** because they had them in the water.

Why חזיר**? — Four Explanations**

1. **לקח טוב**: **חזיר** cannot turn its neck; to see behind it, it must turn its whole body—**חוזר**.
2. Another source: because of its **טומאה**, it cannot look upward.
3. **מושב זקנים**: it **חוזר ואוכל צואת אדם**.
4. **מדרש**: **שעתיד הקב"ה להחזירו לישראל**.

Does this mean **חזיר** will become **מותר**?

The **פרי מגדים** says **חז"ל** called it "**דבר אחר**" to prevent people from mistakenly thinking **חזיר** will become permitted. He holds **חזיר** will not become **מותר**. But others disagree.

דבר שיש לו מתירים — A Halachic Problem

If **חזיר** will become permitted, then currently it is a **דבר שיש לו מתירים**—something destined to become **מותר**—and therefore cannot

be **בטל בשישים**. Also: **יוצא מן הטמא טמא**—anything born from a non-kosher species remains non-kosher.

So how could **חזיר** ever become permitted?

אור החיים & **חתם סופר** — A New Species

The **אור החיים הקדוש** and **חתם סופר** say: When **משיח** comes, the **חזיר** will change its nature. The **פסוק** hints: **והוא גרה לא יגר**—now it does not chew the cud. But **לעתיד לבוא**, a new type of **חזיר** will be born that will chew the cud and have split hooves.

Thus it will be a new species, not **יוצא מן הטמא**, and therefore permitted.

The **ריטב"א, רקנאטי, רמ"ע מפאנו**, and **רב חיים פלאג'י** all discuss this **מחלוקת**.

The **בן איש חי (בן יהוידע, נזיר ה.)** writes:

שעתיד להחזירו — שיהיה נתקן ונטהר והותר למה נקרא שמו חזיר?.

Meaning: its nature will be transformed; it will become **טהור** and permitted.

The Shach's Daughter

The Flight

It was during the terrible persecutions of **ת"ח–ת"ט** (1648–49) and later the Russian invasion of Vilna (1655). The great gaon Rabbi Shabtai HaKohen fled together with his family. As thousands of refugees escaped through forests and marshes, his young daughter became exhausted from hunger and exposure. At one point she collapsed unconscious. - The Shach, believing she had died, was forced to continue fleeing with the rest of the family, leaving her where she lay.

Soon afterward passing noblemen found the child still alive.

Raised in the Palace

Since no one knew who she was, she was brought to the royal palace and raised alongside the king's own daughter. Although only a child, she steadfastly refused every non-kosher food placed before her. The servants assumed she was merely stubborn.

Eventually the king himself questioned her. She explained that her father had taught her that Jews may never eat forbidden food.

The king, impressed by her remarkable determination, ordered that kosher food always be prepared for her. This became a standing order in the palace.

Saving the Princess

Years later the princess was walking in the royal gardens. A poisonous snake suddenly slithered toward her. The Shach's daughter saw the danger before anyone else. She struck the snake and saved the princess's life.

From then onward the princess loved her like a sister and refused to be separated from her.

Pressure to Eat Non-Kosher

One of the palace tutors considered her refusal to eat non-kosher food to be foolish obstinacy. He argued repeatedly: Surely your religion cannot require this.

One day he attempted to force her to eat. The king happened to enter. Learning what had occurred, he rebuked the tutor sharply and declared: Every person has the right to keep the religion of his parents.

From then onward nobody dared interfere with her observance.

The Dream

One night she dreamt that her late mother appeared. Her mother warned: Tomorrow the palace will burn. Escape immediately.

The next day a massive fire indeed broke out. In the confusion she fled. The palace was destroyed.

Captured by Bandits

She wandered alone until brigands captured her. Seeing that she was well dressed and educated, they decided she must be valuable.

She pleaded: Do not sell me as a slave. Take me instead to a Jewish community. They will ransom me.

The bandits agreed.

The Pidyon Shevuyim

When they arrived at a Jewish town, the captors demanded an enormous ransom. The local rabbi ruled that the community could not pay such an inflated price because of the halachah of: **אין פודין את השבויים יותר מכדי דמיהן**.

A wealthy young man, however, quietly redeemed her with his own money rather than communal funds. Later they married.

She never revealed her true identity.

The Evil Minister

Many years later a harsh royal minister arrived bearing a decree against the Jews. The community feared disaster. She discovered that this minister was married to the very princess with whom she had grown up. She requested permission to visit the palace.

The princess immediately recognized her beloved childhood companion. After an emotional reunion she pleaded for the Jews. The princess persuaded her husband to cancel the decree. He also informed the king that the mysterious Jewish girl from years before had been found alive.

The king rewarded him generously. Thus the entire Jewish community was saved.

The Reunion

Some time afterward a distinguished rabbi visited the city. During his public address he described the suffering of the Jewish people during the massacres and mentioned that he had once lost a little daughter while fleeing.

As she listened, she suddenly recognized his voice. She approached him and asked about his family. He described the daughter he had lost many years earlier.

She then revealed certain private details only they could know. Father and daughter embraced amid tears of joy. The rabbi was none other than the Shach himself.



ותצא אש מלפני ה' ותאכל אותם וימותו לפני ה' וגו' (י-ב)

Among the many reasons given by **חז"ל** for the death of the Bnai Aharon, Nadav and Avihu - they entered the Mishkan in a drunken state, they displayed a lack of respect to their elders, etc. - one that is listed was their refusal to marry, feeling that no woman was worthy enough for their illustrious family lineage. This was their sin.

It is told of the **Rebbe, R' Duvid'l of Zablotov ZT"L**, that he once became dangerously ill to the point where all the physicians gave up and did not think he had very long to live. However, the Rebbe's pious wife refused to accept this bitter decree and day and night she would pour out her heart out to Hashem, begging him for a **רפואה שלמה** for her husband.

Alas, where physicians and medical remedies failed, the prayers of an **אשת חיל** prevailed and R' Duvid'l recovered completely from his long illness to lead and inspire his Chassidim.

The Rebbe was extremely gratified to his faithful wife and expressed himself to those nearest to him: "Now I can understand

clearly why the Midrash states that Nadav and Avihu died because they had no wives. Were they to have merited wives like my very own **אשת חיל**, they surely would have been saved from death...Where my Rebbetzin is present, the hand of death cannot prevail!"

יין ושכר אל תשת אתה ובניך אתך וכו' (י-ט)

The Medrash connects this Posuk to the verse in Tehillim, **פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לבי** - "The precepts of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart".

How, exactly, are these posukim related?

R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischah ZT"L answers, we know that the shechinah - divine presence, does not abide within a person burdened with sorrow, and a kohen who brings korbonos to Hashem, must do so in a spirit of euphoria. This being so, why is a kohen forbidden to drink wine? After all, wine induces happiness; **ויין ישמח לבב אנושי**! - **(תהילים קד)**

The answer is that the joy of a kohen performing his priestly duties must not be artificially stimulated. Rather, he must be inspired by a form of gladness that has Torah as its source, by joy that is derived from **שמחה** - happiness from the mitzvah. He is, therefore, forbidden to drink any alcoholic substance. Instead, he must be enraptured by the "precepts of Hashem", that gladden and fill his heart with happiness.

"The illustrious task of serving as the Kohen Gadol was an affliction for Aharon Hakohen, who was so modest and humble. It is easier for man to throw himself into a burning furnace than to be one of the most famous and renowned tzaddikim in Klal Yisroel." ~ R' Uri of Strelisk ZT"L (the "Saraf")

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

הוא אשר דבר ה' בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כל העם אכבד וידם אהרן וגו' (י-ג)

Following a convention of prominent leaders of European Jewry, some of the gedolim that had attended returned home by train, and at each stop, a crowd of people gathered at the station to greet the great rabbonim.

Most of the sages, in turn, accommodated the masses by appearing outside for a few moments and speaking to the crowds. Only the revered **Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ZT"L**, remained in the coach throughout, refusing to come outside and step onto the platform.

The Lubliner Rov, R' Meir Shapiro ZT"L, many years younger than the venerated sage, but not lacking in religious spunk, thought it a bit improper, and approached him. "Why does the great sage of Radin not join the other rabbonim on the platform? Many people are out there clamoring to see him."

The Chofetz Chaim responded, characteristically. "What is there to see? I am no different than any other human being. They only want to gaze at me because they think I am some kind of tzaddik, and my going out to them would not only confirm this mistake, but it would also constitute vanity on my part."

R' Meir smiled slyly. "I concede that this would be vanity," he agreed, but so what if it is?"

R' Yisroel Meir raised his eyebrows in surprise. "**גאוה** - vanity is a sin for which one is severely punished in gehinnom by being whipped," replied the tzaddik, visibly shaken at the notion.

"So you will suffer whipping in gehinnom," the youthful Rov of Lublin persisted. "However, the Torah tells us that the great Aharon Hakohen, who had so much love in his heart for every fellow Jew, accepted Hashem's decree of death for his own two sons, and suffered silently but willingly. Can't you endure some suffering

willingly, like Aharon Hakohen, just in order to afford a few simple Jews the pleasure of seeing you?"

At this suggestion, the Chofetz Chaim was shocked into action, and thereafter at each ensuing station where the train stopped, he was the first one to appear on the platform!



מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

והתקדשתם והייתם קדושים ... ולא תטמאו את נפשתיכם וכו' (יא-מד)

The story is told - which was actually witnessed by certain members of the Sephardic community - about a certain butcher who took ill and was approaching his final moments.

He called the rabbi, R' Eiloan Avidani ZT"L of Kurdistan, and in a tearful tone confessed that all his life he was feeding people forbidden meat.

The people standing around the deathbed were shocked as the implication of what the butcher had said began to sink in. Even before he completed his confession, the sinful butcher died.

As they were about to bury him in the grave, the chevra kadisha - burial society, noticed that the grave was full of mice scurrying back and forth. The people around trembled and scrambled to dig another grave nearby.

They dug another grave, but as they were about to lower the deceased they once again saw an enormous assembly of mice. The rabbi instructed to dig yet a third grave, but once again dozens of mice started running about as they brought the body for burial. They tried chasing the mice away, but to no avail. Even when they lowered wood and set it on fire, the mice still remained.

The rabbi realized what was taking place and finally decided, "This is already the third time; we now have a Chazakah - presumption. We have no choice but to bury him here."

Later, when they came to erect the monument, they saw that the mice had completely devoured the body as well as the bones, sparing nothing.

The people turned to the rabbi and inquired, "True, the man was a sinner. But as we know, Hashem always punishes 'measure for measure.' How did this punishment fit the crime?"

R' Avidani explained. "The Talmud Yerushalmi says that mice symbolize the wicked. The reason is that when they discover food they not only satisfy their hunger with the newly found goods, but they call their friends to join them in their theft. Thus, they are not only sinners themselves, but they bring others to sin, as well.

Similarly, one who wishes to indulge in forbidden foods, so be it, and he will ultimately have to stand judgment for his sin. But one who takes others with him and feeds them these foods, is comparable to the mice, who not only sin themselves but lure others to participate, as well."

