TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



וזאת הברכה

לעילוי נשמת



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וזאת הברכה



וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד־ה' - *'So Moshe, servant of Hashem, died there.'*

(34:5)

When the **Chafetz Chaim** was niftar on Elul 24, 1934, Klal Yisrael was thrown into collective mourning. The preeminent tzaddik hador, saint of the generation, his impact was felt throughout the entire Torah world.

During the year of mourning, **Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl,** primary student of the Chafetz Chaim, had occasion to be in England. He was asked to eulogize his revered Rebbe, to render an appreciation of his unique personality, his saintly spiritual demeanour, his extraordinary achievements on behalf of Klal Yisrael.

Rav Elchanan spoke inspiringly about his Rebbe. The following is an excerpt of his hesped:

"Let us attempt to imagine that we had been alive in Moshe Rabbeinu's generation, when our quintessential leader took leave of his precious people. What would the hespedim be like? He was the greatest Rebbe of all generations. Is there one Jew that has not been affected by his life, his teachings? It would take hours to attempt to explain his greatness aptly, to relate his contribution. Veritably, we might only grasp but a miniscule appreciation of who Moshe Rabbeinu was. Yet, our Torah encapsulates Moshe's essence with a mere two words: **עֶבֶד־ה'**, servant of Hashem.

What profundity lies concealed within these two words? What hidden meaning is implied by the words 'servant of Hashem'?

"In the Midrash Tanchuma (Lech Lecha 8), Chazal provide us with the following analogy. A wealthy businessman left Eretz Yisrael for an extended business trip overseas. Travel in those days was not a simple jaunt. It involved much danger and meant being separated from one's loved ones for a long period of time. The businessman took his trusted servant with him, leaving at home his ben yachid, only son, who was too young to travel. It was a difficult decision, but the father was hoping that the trip would be successful, so that he would be able to return home quickly.

He took a considerable sum of money and goods with him, in the hopes: that he would sell his goods at a sizable profit; and that he would be able to purchase more goods at a reasonable price. He was there but a short time when he suddenly became gravely ill. He was acutely aware that he was not going to return home. His days were numbered, and he would never see his son again.

"One major worry entered his mind: How could he provide for his son and family when he had his entire financial portfolio with him? While he had trusted his servant in the past, could he trust him when it involved a large sum of money? What would prevent the servant from taking everything for himself?

If he were to write a will, how could he guarantee that it would ever reach the hands of his son? He came upon an amazingly clever idea. "He summoned his servant and said to him, 'You have been my trusted servant for years. I have relied on you in so many areas of my daily endeavour. Out of a profound sense of appreciation, I bequeath to you all of my possessions. I ask of you only one favour. Please get in touch with my son and inform him that he may take for himself one item.'

The servant was ecstatic over the fact that he was now a wealthy man. Thus, he had no qualms about presenting his master's son with

one item from his vast newly-acquired wealth. The servant returned home and conveyed the sad news of the passing of his master. He extended his condolences to the son and informed him of his father's will.

"The son was stupefied. His father was a wise man who had loved him. Why would he give everything to the servant and leave only one item for him?

He went to visit the rav of their community and posed the predicament to him. At first, the rav was incredulous. He knew the boy's father to be an astute businessman, in addition to being a wise and resourceful member of his community. How could he do something like this? He thought a few moments as he studied the will, and he suddenly jumped up, 'Your father is brilliant!' he screamed. The halachah is stated clearly in the Talmud, Mah shekanah eved kanah rabo, 'Whatever a servant acquires belongs to his master' (Pesachim 88b). Take the servant for yourself. Thus, everything that he owns will belong to you!"

Rav Elchanan concluded the Midrash and said, "This is the underlying meaning of the Torah's eulogy of Moshe: עֶבֶד־ה'. Whatever Moshe possessed in the area of ruchniyos, spirituality, belonged to Hashem. Everything that Moshe did – every endeavour, every mitzvah, every good deed – all reverted to Hashem, because Moshe was the quintessential eved, servant, totally devoted to his Master.

Moshe reserved nothing for himself, because he did not view himself as a separate entity. He belonged wholly to Hashem. Therefore, the Torah has only one appellation for Moshe: עֶבֶד־ה'. These two words aptly describe Moshe. Everything that he did, all of the achievements of his entire life, all belonged to Hashem. He had nothing, because it all reverted to his Master.

Can there be a greater epitaph?" Rav Elchanan summed it up, "This is every Jew's mission: to be an eved Hashem. The Chafetz Chaim

achieved this pinnacle of service." In other words, a servant is acutely aware that his goal in life is to serve his master, and that each and every one of his achievements belongs to his master. The more he negates himself, the greater is his value as a servant.

In his Nitzozos, **Horav Yitzchak Hershkowitz, Shlita**, relates the following story, which complements this idea. A Jew who had wandered off from the path of religious observance once came to a holy man to petition his blessing. The holy man asked him, "Do you observe Torah and mitzvos?"

"No," answered the man. The man, however, did not end the conversation with his negative response. He decided to add somewhat of a rationale to justify his lack of observance. "Rebbe, the Almighty has millions of Heavenly Angels at His beck and call. They carry out His commands to the fullest extent. Does it matter to G-d if one simple Jew like me performs the mitzvos or not? Will it really make a difference if I keep Shabbos or not?"

The holy man was not deterred. "Tell me," he asked, "what is your profession?"

"I am an artist," the man replied.



"What is the most beautiful piece of art that you have ever seen? What captivated you the most?" the rabbi asked the artist.

After a few moments, the artist replied, "I once saw a breathtaking painting of a sunset across the Kinneret. It was absolutely the most life-like imagery I had ever seen."

"How much was the sticker price on that painting?" the rabbi asked. "Six million dollars" was the quick reply.

"Incredible!" the rabbi declared. "A picture that sells for six million dollars! What is there about this picture that catalyzes people to pay such an astronomical sum to own it? Indeed, we could go together to the seashore and shoot countless digital photos of the sunset, which would cost us a fraction of the money. What about this painting is so special? What is the difference between a painting crafted by a well-known artist and a picture taken by a professional photographer?"

"Well, the artist spends hours, days, weeks, at times working under difficult conditions to paint such a perfect picture," the artist explained. "All of this toil – coupled with the artist's expertise – can translate itself into hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of dollars.

'Six million dollars, however, is an outrageous amount of money to ask for a picture which can be taken with a camera. You still have not explained to me why the price should be so outrageously high,' said the rabbi.

The rabbi continued, "Let me explain to you why the painting is so expensive. A photograph cannot lie. The photographer cannot alter the image that is present before him. His camera captures what he sees. There is no work involved on the part of the photographer. He focuses his camera lens on the subject and presses a button. What he sees is what is printed on the paper.

An artist is different. He has the ability and talent to alter the scene, to darken the sky, change the hue of the water's colour, present a different texture of the sand. Indeed, he can do anything, but he does not. He suppresses his instincts to innovate, to change, to express his inner personal feelings, because he wants the painting to be true to its reality. He wants to present a picture-perfect image of the sun setting on the Kinneret, without personal embellishment of any kind. - This is why the painting is so expensive. It is the

product of extraordinary talent and exceptional devotion to a goal of presenting the scene as it existed at that time. Anyone can take a photograph, but it takes a unique and dedicated artist to prepare such a painting.

"You asked why Hashem does not have the Heavenly Angels perform the mitzvos. What impact can a simple human being have in the Heavenly scheme of things? Angels are programmed to follow Divine Will. They have no yetzer horato deter them from their preordained goals. Human beings have to overcome so much in order to perform a mitzvah k'tikunah, in accordance with Hashem's Will.

It takes enormous effort, enthusiasm, and joy to overcome the challenges and obstacles presented by the crafty yetzer hora; at times, it even demands one to triumph over physical and economic challenge. Yet, all of this effort pays off when a mitzvah is performed properly. It means so much to Hashem – much more than the six-million-dollar painting."

This is the meaning of eved Hashem. A true servant of Hashem allows nothing to stand in the way of his serving the Almighty. He is focused on his mission, a soldier completely dedicated to his service.

At times, the "frum" yetzer hora encourages him to embellish the mitzvah, to enhance it with his own innovation. He does not listen, because he follows only what Hashem tells him to do. He is a loyal and trusted servant. He knows no other way.

"Bitachon is the recognition that whatever occurs will be only what Hashem wants. Thus, however bleak a situation may seem, there is never cause for desperation – only for prayer." ~ The Chazon Ish.

תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב – '***The Torah that Moshe commanded to us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov***.' (33:4)

The Torah does not belong to a select few, to a spiritual elite who acknowledge, appreciate and value everything that it has to offer. The Torah belongs to Kehillas Yaakov, the entire congregation of Yaakov. All Jews have a portion in this inheritance. - What are we doing about it?

The story is told that one Simchas Torah, the venerable sage, founder of the mussar, ethical/character refinement, movement, **Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl**, was engrossed in lively dancing with his students. The mood was electrifying. Suddenly, for what seemed to be no reason, Rav Yisrael stopped dancing, and his mood turned pensive and sombre.

This transformation in their revered rebbe brought his students to extreme incredulity. One of them, not given to being shy, came forward and asked Rav Yisrael what was wrong. Rav Yisrael replied, "As I was dancing with the Torah, I realized that in this town alone there are many Jewish boys who will not go to a Torah school. They have no chance of tasting its sweetness, of dancing with the Torah as we do. They neither have a clue that today is Simchas Torah, nor do they have any idea what this means. How can we rejoice with the Torah while being fully aware that there are so many Jews who are deprived of their rightful heritage?"

Rav Yisrael's anguish was expressed over a century ago. Since then the situation has far from improved. He was witnessing the early effects of the Haskalah, Enlightenment movement, and the way it tore young people away from their Jewish roots, creating animosity between their generation and that of their parents and grandparents.

What should we say when we see the products of generations of Jews severed from a life of Torah, alienated from their heritage,

who have embraced the gentile way of life with its perversions and moral/spiritual bankruptcy? Yet, we tout the success of the Torah world, which is truly mind-boggling.

Veritably, we have come so far. Just to have witnessed the recent Siyum HaShas is testament to the incredible growth of Torah. What does one say, however, to a father who has a sick child, a child that, lo aleinu, is hovering between life and death? Do we tell him to forget about this one, because, after all, look how well the others are? Certainly, such a statement would be not only insensitive – it would be ludicrous. Well, what do we say to our Father in Heaven Above: "There were almost 100,000 of your children at the Siyum HaShas." What about the majority of His children who have no idea what a Talmud is – let alone a Siyum HaShas. How can we not empathize with the Ribono Shel Olam when so many of His children have deviated – and in many cases not due to their own fault – from the rich path of Torah?

So, as we read these words on Simchas Torah, let us think about Our Father in Heaven and make every attempt to see to it that next year more of His children will experience the meaning of v'chayei olam nota b'socheinu.

תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב – '***The Torah that Moshe commanded to us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov***.' (33:4)

Ramban interprets this well-known pasuk to be a declaration of our inherent right to the Torah – as our unassailable possession – to be transmitted from one generation to the next.

The word morashah can also be read as me'orasah, married, inspiring Chazal in the Talmud Pesachim 49b to expound that the relationship between the Jewish People and the Torah is similar to that of a chassan and kallah, a groom and his bride. We are wed to the Torah.

In his derashos, the Maharal comments that this refers to the entire nation. Every Jew, rich or poor, pedigreed or not, has an equal share in the Torah. The Torah is not the exclusive property of any individual or group. As a result of this relationship, each Jew has a moral responsibility to see to it that no Jew is left behind. -The wealthy may not say, "Let the poor fend for themselves." They must provide for their spiritual development and enable those who have not learned, or who are unable to learn as a result of their financial problems.

Regrettably, some still feel that Torah erudition is the heritage of only a select few: the wealthy, the pedigreed, the powerful movers and shakers. It might be easier to teach and study Torah in those communities that serve as home to large populations of Jews, but eschew doing so in a small community, which does not possess a large, "feel-good" population of observant Jews. Then there are those who refuse to teach or reach out to Jews in "restricted" environments, whose lives are not perfect, who have made poor choices and are paying for it. It is almost as if they fear being sullied by exposure to anything other than a spiritually pristine climate.

Perhaps the following parable from the **Chafetz Chaim** will enlighten them: A young boy stands in the courtyard of a large shul in Vilna and, with bitter tears streaming down his cheeks, he searches for his lost money pouch. As the worshippers leave the building following the service, they see the sad, young boy and take pity on him. They also join in the search, to no avail. The money pouch seems to elude all of the searchers.

As the search continues, the boy once again begins to weep. It does not appear that his search will be fruitful. One of the men asked the boy, "Tell me, my child, do you remember the last place that you had the pouch? This way, we might be able to narrow down our search." The boy replied, "Yes, I remember where I lost the pouch. It was on the street where the glass shops are located." "If that is the case,

why are you searching for the pouch in the courtyard of the shul? You lost the pouch on the other side of town!"

"I will tell you the truth," the boy explained. "The street of the glaziers is full of mud. I did not want to dirty my clothes searching through the mud. Therefore, I came here, where it is clean. This seems to be a good place to conduct my search."

The Chafetz Chaim utilizes this parable to interpret the pasuk in Shiras Haazinu, כִּי חֵלֶק ה' עַמּוֹ, "For Hashem's portion is His People" (Devarim 32:9). We are very dear to Hashem. His love for us is like Him: boundless. Hashem's affection for His children – exceeds any "feeling" He might have for any other nation in the world. This is the reason that we wonder why He has placed us in this world, a world that is morally bankrupt, spiritually flawed, a world where base desire is out of control and character refinement does not exist.

Why did He not allow us to bask in His glory, to remain in the Heavenly kingdom, to suffuse ourselves with spiritual pleasure? Why would He want us to live in the mud and muck of this world, when we could do quite well in the "courtyard of the shul"?

We forget that we are charged with a lofty mission, a unique goal that we must achieve: to study His Torah and observe His commandments. To accomplish our goal, we must overcome various challenges associated with life, trials that only apply in this world. Spiritual refinement can only occur in a world filled with desire, immorality and flawed character, where the yetzer hara, evil inclination, can have a field day enticing us to fall for its crafty pitfalls. This is a world in which mitzvah observance is the way to acquire eternal life, and distancing ourselves from sin is the path toward maintaining our spiritual achievements.

This is why we must be here. We cannot opt for the young boy's approach of removing ourselves from the muddy street. Our place is here in this world. It is here that we will succeed in reaching our goal and carrying out the mission which we have been sent to achieve.

In the world of outreach, some areas of the spiritual climate leave much to be desired. There are individuals who are so far removed from a Torah way of life that it takes a "specialist" to reach them – or so it seems.

It really does not take a professional. Anyone who is sincere and whose desire to help others emanates from the heart will succeed. The problem is that we all want to search for the money pouch in the "courtyard of the shul." Heaven forbid that we sully ourselves in an environment – or with individuals – that we have deemed inferior.

The Torah is the heritage of the entire Jewish people, regardless of where they are located, whatever their religious affiliation or spiritual character. It is a morashah for Kehillas Yaakov. As long as one is included in Yaakov's Kehillah, it remains his morashah.

וּלְכֹל֙ הַיָּ֣ד הַחֲזָקָ֔ה וּלְכֹ֖ל הַמּוֹרָ֑א הַגָּדֹ֕ול אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשָׂ֛ה מֹשֶׁ֖ה לְעֵינֵ֥י כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ – '***And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Yisrael***.' (34:12)

This is a nice ending to the Torah that Hashem gave to Klal Yisrael through Moshe Rabbeinu. In fact, this pasuk, which in part describes Moshe's shattering of the Luchos, serves as the quintessential leader's epitaph, his greatest moment and most significant achievement.

What about the Jewish People? It is not very comforting to know that the Torah ends with their iniquity. Is it really that important to conclude the Torah with a recap of one of the most serious errors in Jewish history?

Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zl, suggests that, in effect, this conclusion to the Torah is far from a critique of the Jewish People. It is, perhaps, their greatest praise. The Torah ends with the message: Moshe shattered the Luchos when he saw that in his absence, the Jewish People had embraced the Golden Calf. The

response was shattering the Luchos. If Klal Yisrael is not suitable for the Torah, then there is no place for the Torah!

This is similar to the idea of the Korban Pesach, when all of those counted for a group become tamei, ritually contaminated. The Korban becomes pasul, invalid. No people, no Torah. -That is a fairly distinctive praise.

Rav Shlomo Zalman adds that this is why the Shivrei Luchos, fragmented Luchos, were placed in the Aron HaKodesh together with the second set of Luchos. We have a rule that Ein kateigor naaseh saneigor, "A prosecuting attorney cannot become a defence attorney." The Luchos within the Aron HaKodesh symbolized atonement. It was placed inside the Kodshei Kodoshim, Holy of Holies, for that reason. Should the symbol of sinful behaviour, characterized by the broken Luchos, be stored there, also?

With the above idea in mind, it all makes sense. The Shivrei Luchos symbolize our enduring bond with Hashem. Without the Jewish People, there is no Torah. They will never be exchanged for another nation. What greater saneigor is there than this?



וְלִזְבוּלֻן אָמַר שְׂמַח זְבוּלֻן בְּצֵאתֶךָ וְיִשָּׂשכָר בְּאֹהָלֶיךָ - "***Rejoice, O Zevulun, in your excursions, and Yissachar in your tents***." (33:18)

Horav Yehudah Tzadakah, z.l., was known for his incredible diligence in Torah study. In his youth, he would spend his day studying in the yeshivah bais ha'medrash, and at night he would go to the Beer Sheva shul and study through the early hours of the morning.

In his later years, one of his grandsons asked why he chose this specific shul. He explained that the shamashim, caretakers, of the various shuls were frugal and limited the amount of kerosene used for the lamps. The shamash at the Beer Sheva shul, however, did not

spare any kerosene, giving as much as necessary in order to provide illumination for the Torah scholars.

There was a reason for the gabbai's benevolence. He explained that late at night when he looked out of his window at home and noticed the bright light shining from the shul, he felt great joy knowing that he was facilitating Torah study. The awareness that the sound of Torah did not wane throughout the night, brought him pride and elation.

When the machazik Torah, supporter of Torah, feels such a sense of excitement and pride in his work, it indicates that the partnership between the Torah learner and supporter is one of sincerity and mutual respect.



וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד־ה'. וְלֹא־יָדַע אִישׁ אֶת־קְבֻרָתוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה - "***And there died Moshe, servant of Hashem . . . and no man knows his grave unto this day***." (34:5,6)

It seems strange that the life of the pre-eminent leader of Klal Yisrael came to an end with so little attention directed to it. Indeed, the appellation used to describe the essence of the man who achieved the apotheosis of spiritual leadership is simply עֶבֶד־ה', the servant of Hashem.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, z.l., explains that, in fact, this characterization of Moshe represents the ultimate tribute to him. Moshe's entire life was devoted to Hashem and His people. He was an "eved Hashem," servant of Hashem, in the truest sense of the word. He achieved total self-abnegation, so that his whole being was dedicated to serving as an instrument with which to convey Hashem's message.

Horav Hirsch notes that no physical lasting commemorative of Moshe remains. Our leader has departed from this world, yet no monument or stone exists in testimony to him. We do not even know the location of his gravesite. Moshe's whole earthly persona

disappeared with his physical demise. All that survived of Moshe in this world is Hashem's Word. This was transmitted in the most precise manner, so that if a later descendant arises to assume his mantle of leadership, he will carry with him an echo of the words of Moshe Rabbeinu.



וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד־ה' – '*So Moshe, servant of Hashem, died there*.' (34:5) - The Torah's description of Moshe Rabeinu's passing from this world seems to be an innocuous event.

Horav Dovid Feinstein takes note of the word שָׁם - "there." He suggests that the Torah is implying that Moshe had only died "there," suggesting that he did not die in other places. Indeed, Moshe's soul lives on in all places where Torah is learned and lived, in order to inspire every Jew throughout history.

We may apply this insight to the actual concept of life and death. One who lives his life in this world and leaves it in the manner in which he entered, without effecting any change or inspiring anyone, has truly died.

Our goal in this world is not merely personal achievement, but also communal achievement. A Jew's identity must always be defined in terms of his obligations to Hashem and his fellow man. These relationship requirements define a Jew's essence.

The foundation of our creation is chesed. Success in life in this world is measured by one's ability to fulfil the highest standards of this lofty attribute.



"Shabbos is the antidote to the frenetic pace of modern life, inviting us to slow down and savour the sacredness of time." ~ Rabbi Avraham J. Twerski (1930-2021)







How does one avoid getting ill?

Every day one should do what the Gemara says: **לְעוֹלָם יְבַקֵּשׁ אָדָם רַחֲמִים שֶׁלֹּא יֶחֱלֶה** – 'A person should always plead for mercy from Hashem that he shouldn't get sick' (Shabbos 32a). Which means that every day you should pray for good health. I know you won't do it but listen to me anyhow.

Every single day of your life! Don't rely on shemonah esrei – you don't even think what you're saying. It can be done outside of shemonah esrei, or if you wish, you can add it when you finish shemonah esrei, before you take three steps back. Beg Hakodosh Boruch Hu!

Although you've prayed all your prayers by rote, by stereotype, like a record; but when you've finished, at least one little thing say with kavanah.

"A person who truly trusts in Hashem will receive sustenance without suffering or sadness – just as rain falls effortlessly from the sky." ~ Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk.

Rabbi Shlomo Landau



אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הֶהָרִים מֵאַיִן יָבֹא עֶזְרִי - *I shall raise my eyes to the mountains, from where will my help come? (Tehilim 121:1)*

We have been saying this for 11 months. It's fascinating that when you see a mountain, you always look upwards to see the summit – the top.

Says Dovid Hamelech, that's human nature. However, a Jewish person looks higher - **עֶזְרִי מֵעִם ה' עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ** – '*My help is from Hashem, the Maker of heaven and earth.*' – As high as the summit is, as majestic as the mountain is, A Yid seeks their help from a higher source – from Hashem.

You see, mountains are natural, but The Ribboino Shel Olam is supernatural.

May The Ribboino Shel Olam provide us with help and salvation for every single thing that we possibly need.



◣ Always by Our Side - Premishlaner Rebbe

וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹקִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי מוֹתוֹ - "***And this is the blessing with which Moshe, the man of Gd, blessed the Children of Israel before his death***..." (33:1)

Though Moshe was a "man of G-d," it was a blessing for him and for the people that his concern for the Children of Israel was never deflected. Being a "man of G-d," he was always with בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

◣ To Each Their Own - Reb Baruch of Mezhibuz

וּלְכֹל הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה וּלְכֹל הַמּוֹרָא הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינֵי כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל - "***And all the strong hand, and all the great awe, which Moshe performed before the eyes of all of Yisrael***..." (34:12)

The Torah concludes with these words to indicate that each Jewish person may see into the Torah according to his own ability and understanding.

◣ Heart of Torah - Reb Leibele Eiger

The Torah concludes with the letter lamed and begins with the letter beis. Together they spell lev, "heart." Our Sages say (Sanhedrin 106b), "We must conclude that the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires the heart." - The heart is the entire Torah.

◣ Need For Unity -Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld

"The Torah which Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov…" (33:4) As we come to the end of the Torah, we hear a verse with which we are familiar from a very young age: **תורה צוה לנו מורשה קהלת יעקב** -"*The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a heritage of the congregation of Yaakov*" (33:4).

The Ksav Sofer asks the following question. We are commanded to observe the entire Torah, but is it really possible for one Jew to fulfill all of the mitzvos of the Torah on his own? We know that some of the mitzvos are exclusive for Kohanim, some for Leviim, and some only for a Jewish king. Many of the mitzvos have very specific limitations for when and where and by whom they may be performed. - How is it that the Torah clearly implies that every one of us is commanded to fulfill the entire Torah?

The catastrophic events on Simchas Torah of 5784 was a springboard for tremendous unity. It was a day of mass tragedy, and the days that followed brought with them not only great grief and anguish, but also much inspiration. We saw that the differences among Jews melted away, both cultural and political. Klal Yisrael was united, with one goal to protect their brethren in need and bring the country to safety. All of a sudden, the Sefardim, Chassidim, Litvaks, and the irreligious came together for one cause.

The Ksav Sofer explains that when all Jews unite by loving each other, they are considered one entity. In that state of togetherness, we are equipped to fulfill the entire Torah, since the exclusive mitzvos that one person or one group of Jews is able to fulfill is considered to have been fulfilled by the entire unified body. It will be reckoned as if each one of us fulfilled the entire Torah. - This is the timely message with which the Torah sees fit to conclude. When we are b'achdus, unified, we can reap the rewards both in this world and the next.

◣ Covenant Of Torah - Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

תורה צוה לנו מורשה קהלת יעקב -"The Torah which Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov…" (33:4) - Rashi explains that the Torah is our heritage, our connection that binds us to the Almighty, one that we must always hold on to and never abandon.

R' Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg zt'l was once honored with being sandek at the bris of the son of a talmid. Immediately after the bris, he hurriedly made his way to the door where his ride awaited him. The baal simcha quickly ran over and said, "Rebbi, won't you stay for the seudah?"

"I can't," replied R' Chaim. "I have another bris."

The talmid looked at his rebbi in surprise; he was almost positive that no other bris was scheduled for that day.

R' Chaim smiled and explained: "The Navi (Yirmiyahu 33:25) tells us: 'If not for keeping my covenant (the Torah) day and night, the rules of Heaven and Earth would not apply.' Learning Torah is the bris (covenant) that sustains the world."

R' Chaim concluded, "I must hurry - I have a bris!"

◣ Living Forever - Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

"May Reuven live and not die, and may his population be included in the count." (33:6) - Rashi comments, "May Reuven live in this world and not die in the World to Come."

Even though one follows the way of Torah during his lifetime, unless he succeeds in inspiring his children and those around him to follow his example, then in the next world only his own accomplishments during his lifetime stand to his credit, since the dead are free from the mitzvos (Tehillim 88:6).

If, however, one has not only learned Torah himself, but also imbued in his children and students a love of Hashem's ways, then their actions (and those of their descendants) continue to accrue to his merit even in the next world and in effect he never dies. Thus, this verse concludes **ויהי מתיו מספר** - "And may his population be in the count": Since he trained his children in the way of Torah, they will be worthy of being counted and esteemed as "people."

◣ More Torah, More Joy - Beis Avraham

"Rejoice, Zevulun, in your departure [for business pursuits], and Yissachar, in your tents [of Torah study]..." (33:18)

One should rejoice from learning Torah just as Zevulun rejoices when he succeeds in business and earns an abundance of wealth. The more money he earns, the happier he is. So too, the more Torah one learns, the happier one should become.

◣ The Moshe Within - Rebbe Nachman

"He saw the first portion for himself, because the plot of the lawgiver is hidden there. He came with his nation's leaders, executing G-d's justice and judgments with Israel..." (33:21)

"The lawgiver" - this refers to Moshe. (Rashi) Mechokek (**מחקק**, lawgiver) has a numerical value of 248, corresponding to the number of positive commandments in the Torah and the number of limbs in the human body. Moshe is called the mechokek because he is embodied in every single Jew, in each and every limb, always urging each limb to fulfill the mitzvah particular to it.

"Even on the last day of his life, Moshe Rabbeinu was blessing others. A person who lives for others never truly departs." ~ Rav Eliyahu Lopian.



Our Heritage

This week's parsha has one of the most famous verses in the entire Torah. תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב - "***The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the community of Yaakov***." (Devarim 33:4)

The Torah is not unreachable to the extent that it can only be attained by those who are exceedingly talented. In truth, the Torah is the inheritance of every Jewish person and is accessible to all. As the Rambam writes "Anyone who wants can come and take." (Talmud Torah 3:1)

This idea is so important that this verse is actually one of the first things that a parent is instructed to teach his child. However, even though it seems to be very clear from the Chumash that the Torah is indeed our inheritance, the Mishna in Pirkei Avos seems to say the exact opposite." Fix yourself in order to learn Torah because it is not your inheritance." (Avos 2:12) How can we resolve this apparent contraction between the written and oral Torah?

The Sfas Emes answers in his commentary on Pirkei Avos that even though it's true that the Torah is the personal heritage of every Jewish person, that doesn't mean that it comes automatically. In order to truly "get" the Torah, we need to work for it and develop our learning. The gemara in Pesachim 49b says that Torah is not only our inheritance. We're also "engaged" to it.

The Maharsha explains that engagement is only the first step in marriage. After one becomes engaged, he still needs to bring his new wife to the Chuppa and take her into his home. Similarly, we Bnei

Torah also need to understand that to become the people that we are supposed to be requires great effort on our part. We are the only ones who can make the Torah truly our own. We need to develop our relationship with the Torah and we need to make it part of ourselves. It won't be easy, but this is the only way we can claim our rightful inheritance.

So what can enable us to develop our relationship with Torah? Rashi, in our week's parsha, gives us insight into what knowing that the Torah is our inheritance is supposed to inspire. Rashi teaches us that every Jew should realize that the Torah is something we have to constantly hold on to and never leave. The mitzvah of learning Torah never ceases and every second that we can learn is exceedingly precious.

Furthermore, we should be excited about learning Torah and sincerely love and enjoy everything we learn. Every day when we get up, we make a bracha before we learn, praying that Hashem should make the words of Torah "sweet in our mouth."

Rav Elyashiv would always stress that a person should constantly try to find new ways of "sweetening" his Torah. One should learn in a way that brings him the most joy because that's the way the Torah is supposed to be.

The Or HaChaim, in Parshas Ki Tavo, comments that once a person truly tastes the sweetness of Torah, he'll leave everything else in the world for it. Once a person experiences such happiness with the Torah, he can't help but come to a powerful love for it.

The Gemara in Shabbos 88a tells of how a certain Sadducee once walked by Rava as he learned and was appalled by what he saw. Rava's fingertips were dripping with blood due to the pressure with which he pressed down on his fingers as he learned, not even noticing the gruesome effects of his learning. The Sadducee couldn't understand what insanity could drive a person to do such a thing, but Chazal tell

us that love transcends reason and this indeed was the love of Torah that Rava had.

Although we may not necessarily be able to exert ourselves as much as Rava, we certainly should strive to cultivate the great love of Torah that so many great people before us had. We need to cherish our precious inheritance and develop our love of Torah.

We need to enjoy our learning and we must develop in our understanding. However, on Simchas Torah, the main focus is not on the learning. It's about developing the happiness we have with the Torah. We celebrate that we have yet another year of learning ahead of us. By singing and dancing about the preciousness of the Torah, we express our joy and even add upon it. On Simchas HaTorah, we can truly build upon our appreciation for the dear gift Hashem gave us and this can give us the push we need to last us throughout the rest of the year. When we dance, we should put all our energy into showing Hashem and ourselves how much we love His Torah.

May we all be zoche to grow in Torah this year and experience the incredible joy and love of learning!!!

"The final word of the Torah is 'Yisrael,' and the first word is 'Bereishis.' Joined together they teach that the existence of Klal Yisrael is bound eternally to the Torah from its beginning to its end." ~ Maharal of Prague.

"אַשְׁרֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל — Happy are you, O Israel. The greatest happiness is not what a Jew possesses, but knowing to Whom he belongs." ~ Rav Avigdor Miller.

The Torah Is Not Yerusha – Only Morasha

The Torah reading on Simchas Torah contains the well-known pasuk: "The Torah was commanded to us by Moshe, a Morasha [inheritance] to the Congregation of Yaakov." [Devorim 33:4]

There is an interesting teaching in the Talmud Yerushalmi: Everywhere we find the word morasha, it connotes a weakening of the idea of inheritance (lashon deeha) [Bava Basra 8:2].

Morasha is a peculiar word. It is not easy to translate. It is significantly different than the word yerusha [inheritance]. The connotation is that one has less ownership in an object that has come to him as a "morasha" than he does in an item that comes to him as a "yerusha."

Torah is NOT a yerusha. Just because my father had the Torah does not mean that I will have the Torah. Sometimes a person only has the Torah as a 'morasha'. This means that if a person sweats over Torah and makes the effort to understand Torah and puts in the hours required to master Torah, then Torah actually becomes his. But there is no guarantee. Torah is not a no-strings-attached inheritance (yerusha). Without the sweat and the hours, Torah will only be something that the person can potentially pass on to the next generation (morasha).

Chazal teach a tradition based on the pasuk, "This Torah will not depart from your mouth or the mouths of you children or the mouths of your grandchildren forever" [Yehoshua 1:8]: If three generations are committed to learning Torah, then the Torah will never leave that person's family. The Talmud [Bava Metzia 85a] summarizes this idea with the expression "The Torah returns to its host" (Torah chozeres al achsania shelah).

Someone once asked the **Chofetz Chaim** the very obvious and pointed question that we know people who descend from many generations of Torah scholars who themselves are ignorant of

Torah. Unfortunately, we see millions of Jews that fit into this category. There are families that bear the name of prestigious Gedolim, who today may not even know what an Aleph looks like. What then does it mean "Torah chozeres al achsania shelah"?

The Chofetz Chaim explained that the Gemara's analogy is very precise. The Torah is like a guest seeking its host's home. Sometimes a guest knocks on one's door. If no one answers the door, the guest will not come in.

"Torah chozeres al achsania shelah" means that if Torah has been in a family for three generations, the Torah will come "knocking on that family's door" in future generations. But still, the younger generation must open the door for the guest. The guest must still be invited in by each new generation.

Unfortunately, this does occur. There is knocking. There are opportunities. But the door does not get opened. Torah is not a yerusha. It is only a morasha. The difference is that the former is automatic, while the latter requires effort. If a person does not make the effort, his relationship to Torah might only be to the extent that he will pass it on to subsequent generations.

Shemoneh Esrei - Hand Positions by Rabbi Daniel Travis

"Before Shemoneh Esrei, Rava would put his hands on his chest, one resting on the other, like a slave in front of his master" (Shabbos 10a). The halacha upholds this practice and recommends holding one's hands in this position during Shemoneh Esrei (Shulchan Aruch 95,3). This practice depends on the accepted custom for how one stands before a king, and if the custom changes the halacha will also change (Mishna Berura 95,6).

The Shulchan Aruch writes that one should place his right hand over his left. The left symbolizes the yetzer hara, man's negative inclination, while the right symbolizes the yetzer hatov, the positive

inclination. Putting one's right hand over the left is a sign that the yetzer hatov should overpower the yetzer hara (Beis Yosef 95,3). The Zohar takes this symbolism one step further. Right symbolizes Hashem's mercy, while left is a sign of strict justice. Placing one's right hand over the left strengthens Divine mercy over harsh judgment during prayer (Darchei Moshe 95,3).

Based on this explanation, the Zohar warns against intertwining the fingers of one's right and left hands at any time. Such a formation mixes an element of strict justice with Divine mercy and is likely to bringing judgment upon oneself (Zohar 24a). Especially during prayer, when we are trying to arouse Hashem's mercy, one should avoid interlocking one's fingers (Be'er Heitiv 95,3).

Positioning one's hands and other forms of body language are all meant to enhance one's prayers. If such gestures are interfering with concentration, a person is better off taking a different position, such as putting his hands on the table in front of him or letting them hang by his sides. Everyone should recite Shemoneh Esrei in a way that is comfortable for conversing with Hashem, avoiding positions that feel awkward or disrespectful (Shulchan Aruch 95,3; Aruch Hashulchan 91,7).

Parshah Pearls - The Ketores Enriches

" יָשִׂימוּ קְטוֹרָה" ('They, the Kohanim, will place incense ... in Your nostrils') (33:10)

The numerical value of these words, the **Ba'al ha'Turim** points out, is the equivalent to that of 'Ma'ashir' (makes rich).

This is based on Chazal who have taught that once a Kohen had brought the Ketores, he never received a second chance. This is because the Ketores was a segulah to riches, and it was considered unfair to give a Kohen, who had already been blessed once with

wealth on account of the Ketores, a second turn, when there were others who had not yet had their first.

Swift Like an Eagle, "נַפְתָּלִי שְׂבַע רָצוֹן" (33:23).

The first letters spell 'nesher' (an eagle), comments the Ba'al ha'Turim, because Naftali was swift like an eagle to do the will of his Father in Heaven. See Targum Yonason Vayechi 49:21.



Rabbi Dr. A. Twerski pointed out that of all the blessings recited at a Jewish marriage and during the "week of Sheva Brochos" there is one blessing that stands out as apparently not directly related to marriage. The very first blessing of the seven wedding blessings is "Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, who has created everything for His glory" (שֶׁהַכֹּל בָּרָא לִכְבוֹדוֹ). The groom is not mentioned. The bride is not mentioned. Marriage is not mentioned. What is the connection between this blessing and the ceremony at hand?

This blessing is placed first because this is what a Jewish marriage should be all about. If a husband and wife understand from the get-go, from the Chuppah, that he should not be in it for himself and she should not be in it for herself, but rather that all is created for the glory of Heaven, then all will be well with this marriage.

Good brings good for the honor of Heaven and bad brings bad for the honor of Heaven. Groom and bride, and husband and wife, should always have this measuring stick in front of them throughout their marriage. It simplifies many of the complexities of marriage and

many of life's difficult decisions. This is the most powerful lesson we can teach the groom and bride under the Chuppah.

Rabbi Twerski illustrated this idea with a story.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky was at a wedding and needed a ride back to Monsey. A single fellow was asked if he would mind driving Rav Yaakov home. The fellow jumped at the opportunity. When he offered the Rosh Yeshiva a ride, Rav Yaakov asked him if he would mind first showing him his car. When Rav Yaakov was taken to the car to look at it, he opened the back door and climbed in, to sit in the back seat. A few moments later he emerged from the car, closed the back door, and told the young man he would be happy to go to Monsey with him.

He explained that his wife would also be accompanying them and he had to be certain that the back seat would be comfortable for her, before accepting the ride. - He was not checking whether he would get to ride home in a Cadillac or a Mercedes. He wanted to make sure the back seat was comfortable enough for his Rebbetzin.

The Weekly Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh - Chaim Bowden

רש"י comments **(דברים לג, א) וזאת הברכה אשר ברך משה וכו' לפני מותו** - that this was close to his death.

The **אור החיים** questions why **רש"י** needed to make this comment. If he made this elucidation to inform us that the event took place close to his death, this is understood from the context before and after it. What need is there to inform us of the timing?

The **אור החיים** gives an incredible answer, namely, that the **פסוק** means to praise the **איש האלקים** for his wondrous deeds. **כלל ישראל** were the reason for his death, as it says **גם בי התאנף ה' בגללכם** - **ה'** was also angry with me because of your words (**דברים א:לז**), as they caused him to sin at **מי מריבה**, in which case he would have

reason to have objected to his death. It was they that prevented him from entering into Eretz Yisroel which he so deeply desired.

Addressing this point, the תורה comes and testifies about the צדיק and says that not only did he not hate them, nor did he distance them from his heart, he gave them a ברכה. This ברכה was given close to his death which further underlines the extent of his exceptional צדקות, as the time of strong emotion, which is at the time of departure would be a reason to hate them. He nonetheless blessed them, with a great ברכה which was given wholeheartedly and willingly.

Rav Chaim Meir Hager of Viznitz zt"l, known as the אמרי חיים, adds that the term איש האלקים is used here to tell us that only a person who lives with ה' and is attached to Him on a constant basis is able to reach this level to bless them.

The Value of an Unknown Burial Place

In Zos HaBracha, the Torah teaches that the burial place of Moshe Rabbeinu is not known. [Devorim 34:6]

I read an interesting story recently about someone who was driving in Eretz Yisrael in the Golan Heights. He came to an intersection and picked up two Israeli soldiers who were hitchhiking. The soldiers piled into the back seat with their M-16s and started up a conversation. As it turned out, the soldiers were not Jews, they were Druze. The Druze are loyal citizens of the State of Israel and serve in the Israel Defense Forces. They also have a difficult history with the Arabs. The Druze soldiers explained that they have their own religion. They are not Moslem. The "father" of their religion is Yisro.

They had a nice discussion and as they got to their destination and started leaving the car, the soldiers left the Jewish driver with a parting thought: "Our religion has something over your religion. Not only do we have something over your religion, we have something over

the Christians and the Moslems as well. We know where the 'father' of our religion is buried. (Yisro is buried in the area around Teverya.) You do not know where Moshe is buried. The Christians do not know where the founder of their religion is buried. The Moslems do not even know IF the founder of their religion is buried. (According to their tradition, he ascended to Heaven before dying.)"

However, the truth is that it is not necessarily good to know where a person is buried. The Torah makes a point of telling us that we do not know, and we will not know where Moshe is buried. The Talmud describes an attempt to locate the grave of Moshe Rabbeinu on Mount Nebo [Sotah 13b]. The attempt was foiled supernaturally. Why?

Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch explains that the Torah saw the potential that Moshe Rabbeinu's grave could become a deity. It is important for all of us to remember that when we visit the graves of the righteous, we do not pray TO the righteous people that they should bless us. We are forbidden to pray TO a human being – dead or alive! We visit the graves of Tzadikim to ask that they petition on our behalf to the Ribono shel Olam. We are not allowed to daven TO the Tzadik.

The Torah saw the potential of such a thing happening with Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was a person of such monumental stature that the Torah feared lest his burial place would become a shrine. The Torah is also informing us that as monumental a person as Moshe Rabbeinu was, there needed to be a new leader once he died. No one could fill his shoes, but that was irrelevant. Life must go on.

The Torah stresses this idea by emphasizing, "You will come to the Judge who will be present ***In Those Days***" [Devorim 17:9] and "You will come to the Priest who will be present ***In Those Days***." [Devorim 26:3]

The fact that this Judge or this Priest is not in the same league with his predecessor is irrelevant. We are told that Moshe's face was like

the sun and Yehoshua's face was only like the moon. Yehoshua was not in the same league as Moshe. But Yehoshua was going to be the new leader.

Rabbi Wein always quotes the maxim: "No man is indispensable, yet no man is replaceable." This is very true. No man is indispensable to the extent that "we cannot continue onward." Yet no man is replaceable either. People have their own unique contributions that can never be replaced.

This is another explanation of why Moshe's burial place is not known. The Jewish people had to move forward. They had to continue with the next leader and the next generation. "A generation passes and a new generation comes." [Koheles 1:4] We only go to the leader who is present in our own generation. This is the way of the Torah and the way of the world.



34:5 **וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד-ה׳**

Towards the end of Parshas Vzos Haberacha, we read about the death of Moshe Rabbeinu. "**עֶבֶד-ה׳**" - "Servant of G-d" are the two words chosen to encapsulate the life of the greatest living being in biblical history. No words that describe his remarkable humility, his unstinting devotion, and his amazing powers of calm and sensibility. Just two simple words - servant of G-d.

Do those words truly do Moshe justice? How could the simplest of compliments, calling the greatest prophet a "servant" help us understand Hashem's adulation for his greatest follower?

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky relates that Fredrick the Great, King of Prussia during the late 1700's, was once reviewing his troops when he noticed a middle-aged soldier wearing an interesting ornament around his neck. Dangling from what appeared to be an heirloom watch-chain was the spent casing of a bullet. It had been polished

and shined as it replaced a watch that the soldier obviously was unable to afford.

The king, in a playful mood, pulled his diamond studded pocket-watch from his vest and held it in the sunlight. As the rays glinted off the diamonds that surrounded its face, he stared at his piece intently. Then he looked at the soldier. "My dear soldier," he said with mock concern, as he tugged on the exquisite piece attached to its chain. "My timepiece says that it is half-past one. What time does yours say"?



The officers around him recognized that the king was quipping and immediately burst into peals of laughter. The soldier, however, did not laugh. He looked down at the bullet around his neck. "Your honour," he declared with sincere humility, "The ornament that dangles from my watch chain, does not tell me the time. Rather it is a bullet." "A bullet!" scoffed the king. "Why on earth would you wear a bullet instead of a watch?"

"To me your honour, there are no hours, minutes or seconds. My watch tells me that every moment of my existence, I am willing to take a bullet - even if it means my life - for your Majesty." Fredrick the Great was so impressed with the soldier's reply that he promptly removed his exquisite royal watch and presented it to the soldier.

Mortals look for accolades that personify their own wisdom, wealth, and accomplishment. The Torah looks for accolades to identify the accomplishment of man's reason for being. The greatest praise that the Creator can reap upon his beloved are two Hebrew words - "**עֶבֶד-ה'**" - ***Servant of G-d***.

Moshe was totally subservient to the will of his Creator making him a mortal extension of His immortal existence. Those two words say a lot. They say more than hundreds of pages of eulogy or tomes of accolades. They tell the raison d'etre of mortal man - to serve Hashem.

As we ponder our existence while we enter the new year, it is wonderful to know those words. They help us focus on the meaning of life while keeping its complexities quite simple. All we have to yearn for is to reach that great level of simplicity.

Chabad.org - "חזק חזק ונתחזק" *"Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!"*



Upon completing one of the five books of Torah it is customary for the congregation to proclaim "*chazak chazak venitchazeik.*" What is the reason for this?

It is a message to the one who concluded the Torah not to be satisfied with his achievement but to be strong and continuously review the Torah lest he forget it. It is also a blessing to the one who concluded that Hashem give him strength to be able to complete additional Torah volumes and perform many more mitzvot. (**או"ח סי' קל"ט, מהר"ם מינץ סי' פ"ה**)

In some communities they say "*chazak, chazak chazak*" — three times (and not *venitchazeik*). The word *chazak* (**חזק**) equals 115, and three times 115 is 345 which is the numerical value of Moshe (**משה**), the teacher of Torah to *Klal Yisrael.* (**אליה רבה סי' תקס"ט**)

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וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד ה' "And Moshe, servant of Hashem, died there…". (Devarim 34:5) וְלֹא־קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה "Never again has there arisen in Israel a prophet like Moshe…". (34:10)



Some of the most successful people failed miserably. However, they maintained **a strong <u>focus</u> on their ultimate goal** and succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

Moshe Rabbeinu was able to speak to Hashem whenever he wanted to. His prophecies were crystal clear. The Torah tells us that there will never again be a prophet such as Moshe. The **Rambam** (Laws of Teshuva 5:2) says that although there will never again be a prophet like Moshe, there can be a tzadik like Moshe. The **Rambam** says, "**Every person** can become a tzadik, as our teacher Moshe".

HaRav Elchonon Wasserman zt"l (in his sefer Kovetz Ma'amarim, page 48) questions this **Rambam**. He says that **it is impossible** for anyone to be able to reach the level of Moshe Rabbeinu. What does the **Rambam** mean that every person has the potential to become a tzadik such as Moshe?

HaRav Elchonon Wasserman says that Moshe is described as, being a "servant of Hashem". The **Radak** in the beginning of **Sefer Yehoshua** says that a "servant of Hashem" is one who puts all his energies, **focus**, and attention to serve Hashem. Even when being involved in one's daily activities, his focus is to serve Hashem.

Rabbi Yossi says in **Pirkei Avos** (2:17), "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven". Even our eating, drinking, and sleeping should be done "for the sake of Heaven". When we do these everyday

actions, we should try have in mind that we are doing them to have the strength to serve Hashem properly. Even if we feel distressed and feel the need to go for a walk, our intention should be that we want to calm down to serve Hashem better. (**Yalkut May'am Loez**)

HaRav Elchonon Wasserman continues that each person is given various capabilities in different measures. Some are given more strength, more wisdom, more understanding, more compassion, etc… Furthermore, some are given more wealth, honor, or prestige. Every person was given exactly what he needs to fulfill his personal and specific mission in life. Nothing extra was given to us that is not needed to complete our mission in this world. Thus, by definition, we are obligated to use all that we have been given to serve Hashem. If we do so, then we will attain the level of Moshe Rabbeinu.

Obviously, we can't attain the actual level of Moshe. Even if we were to use all our efforts for thousands of years, we wouldn't even reach the level of Moshe's ankles. However, that is because we were not given the strength and understanding that Moshe was given. **If we use all the abilities that Hashem has given <u>us</u> to serve Him, then we can also attain the level of being a "servant of Hashem"**, just as Moshe was. This is the explanation of the **Rambam**.

Hashem has given each of us unique abilities and has placed us in different situations in life. Our goal should be to use our unique talents to serve Hashem. We should <u>focus</u> on this goal in all that we do. Then, even our mundane actions become mitzvos. To the extent that we succeed in focusing on this, we will be considered "servants of Hashem", just as Moshe Rabbeinu was.

"Moshe blessed every tribe according to its unique mission. The greatest blessing is not to be like someone else, but to fulfill the task for which Hashem created you." ~ Rav Shlomo Wolbe.

A Shabbos Vort- Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein

תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב ***The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a legacy for the congregation of Yaacov.*** (33:4)



The Chofetz Chaim entered the beis midrash and saw a group of students standing around, squandering away their precious time in an idle discussion.

"I would like to tell you boys a story," said the Chofetz Chaim, "It is a story about a man who lost his mind and began to dismantle the rail-road tracks that passed near his city."

"'What are you doing?' people screamed. 'You are going to cause a terrible catastrophe!'

'"Why is that?' laughed the man, 'This railroad track is hundreds of miles long, and I am only removing several yards of it.'

"The same applies to the Torah," concluded the Chofetz Chaim. "The Torah has been transmitted to us from generation to generation. One who wasted his time instead of studying is similar to the individual who removed several yards from an extremely long track.

"While he may have wasted only a short amount of time, the damage he will cause will be very great indeed.

"The Torah ends with the praise of Moshe's greatness, yet it immediately begins again with Bereishis. This teaches that in Torah there is no ending; every conclusion is the beginning of a new ascent." ~ Chofetz Chaim.



The final words of the Torah (34:12) are **לעיני כל ישראל** - ***"before the eyes of all Yisrael,"*** and connects with the first word of the Torah **בראשית** , because the foundation and the beginning of the Torah is to be cautious with one's eyes.

Rashi writes, **זו שבירת הלוחות** , this refers to when Moshe broke the *luchos*."



The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said that *pasuk* hints that when one isn't careful with his eyes, that's like **שבירת הלוחות** , the shattering of the *luchos*, *chas veshalom*!

Yosef HaTzaddik guarded his eyes and became very wealthy. **The Baal Shem Tov** (*Lech Lecha* 3) proves from this that *shemiras einayim* and other precautions in the area of *kedushah* are *mesugal* for wealth.

"The final act of Moshe Rabbeinu was to bless the Jewish people. A leader's greatest legacy is not what he takes from his generation, but what he leaves behind for the next." ~ Based on the teachings of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch.

וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹקִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי מוֹתוֹ "*Upon the Children of Israel....*" (33:1)

The Sages teach that on the day of his passing, Moshe was shown all the future generations down to the last Jew. When Moshe blessed the nation, he blessed every Jew in every future generation. - That is why every Jew is called to the Torah on Simchas Torah and reads from the blessings of Moshe. Since Moshe blessed us all, we all go up to receive our share of his blessings. **(Yecha'hain Pe'er)**

איש האלקים – *The man of G-d…* (33:1) This is the first time in the Torah that Moshe is described as "the man of G-d." In his humility, he could not bring himself to describe himself in such complimentary terms, but now, before his death, it was necessary for all generations to know that the man who brought them the Torah was the man of G-d. He therefore had to inscribe it in the Torah, for "If not now, when?" (**Imrei Emes) (The Torah Treasury)**

תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב. (33:4)

It is impossible for a Jew to fulfil all 613 mitvos of the Torah, for some mitzvos are reserved for *kohanim*, or *levi'im*, or have a special designation or circumstance. But if Jews stand united, then the entire Jewish people is considered as one being and thus each Jew can observe all the mitzvos.

The Ksav Sofer explains that this can be seen in the above verse. The numerical value of "Torah" equals 611. "Moshe commanded the Torah to us" – he gave us 611 mitzvos. But no individual Jew can fulfill all these mitzvos unless he joins with other Jews to form "the congregation of Yaakov." In unity they will be as one man who performs the entire Torah. (**Torah Treasures**)

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ZT"L, whose Shiurim on the Talmud have been studied and admired throughout the Yeshiva world, would often visit an empty beach in Israel in order to admire its beauty and appreciate Hashem's creation.

Rav Shmuel's dedication to Emes was legendary. He would constantly review his Shiurim to ensure that every insight that he said was the truth and had no elements in them that even remotely could be construed as a falsehood.

Rav Shmuel's dedication to Emes in his everyday life was equally legendary. There was one occasion where a student drove him to the beach (to admire Hashem's creation) and the student was stopped by a security guard who asked that they park in a certain location and walk the rest of the way to the beach. The student who drove him stated that Rav Shmuel was the Chief Rabbi and out of respect for the Rabbi, should be allowed to park closer to the beach.

Rav Shmuel gently scolded the student that he was not the Chief Rabbi. The student responded that he was the Chief Rabbi of the Yeshiva. Rav Rozovsky kindly responded that it was still considered a lack of truth if the security guard was not aware of his intent and can readily misinterpret it.

He asked his student to park as directed by the security guard and to walk with him the rest of the way to the beach.

"The Torah concludes with 'before the eyes of all Israel.' Greatness is achieved when one's service of Hashem is not hidden in dreams, but visible in deeds." ~ Rav Yerucham Levovitz.

Parshah Pearls *(Adapted from the Ba'al ha'Turim)*



Swift Like an Eagle, "נַפְתָּלִי שְׂבַע רָצוֹן" (33:23).

The first letters spell **נשר** 'nesher' (an eagle), comments the Ba'al ha'Turim, - **נפתלי שבע רצון ר"ת נשר. שהיה קל כנשר לעשות רצון אביו שבשמים** - because Naftali was swift like an eagle to do the will of his Father in Heaven. See Targum Yonason Vayechi 49:21.

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד־ה' *'And Moshe, the servant of Hashem, died there.'* (34:5)

Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Rabbeinu Asher writes in his Sefer, Tur Orach Chaim (292), in the name of **Rav Sar Shalom**, that the reason we say the three Pesukim of **צדקתך צדק** on Shabbos at Minchah time, is for a memorial for the three **צדיקים** — righteous men, that died at that time: Moshe, Yosef and Dovid (The Tur mentions Moshe and the Bach adds Yosef and Dovid).

The Sefer Bnei Yisas'char, quoting the Sefer Tashbatz (**סימן תמ"ח**), notes that this is hinted at in Sefer Yehoshua, which is the Haftorah of Simchas Torah. The Pasuk says, **משה עבדי מת** -'***Moshe my servant has died.***' (1:2).

The second letter of these three words spells out the word **שבת**, thus hinting that Moshe Rabbeinu died on Shabbos.

Precious Moments With Rav Chaim - Artscroll

Reward for Being the Guard

To be Rav Chaim's grandson is a privilege. His grandsons know that and enjoy every chance they have to speak to the Torah giant who is their grandfather. They have assigned tasks that give them the chance to spend time in the home where they love to be.

One has the task of coming on *leil Shabbos* (Friday night) while their grandfather learns to make sure he doesn't tip the light. (Rav Chaim had a stringency not to read by the light of a candle unless someone else was there to make sure he didn't extinguish it.) Another has the job of drinking the Havdalah wine. Another helps with *bedikas chametz*.

"I get to make sure that Saba doesn't tip the light on *leil Shabbos*," says Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky. "Saba once gave me a *sefer* as a gift. I was surprised to see that he'd written the letters *shin-shin* (ש״ש) at the top of the first page.

"'What does *shin-shin* stand for?' I asked.

"'*Sechar shomer* (reward for being the watchman),' Saba said."

Like the Entrance of a Hall

The bubbies and zeidies stand around the baby carriage. The new baby lies there, dressed all in white. Neighbors and friends fill the hall. The mohel is here too. Everyone is waiting for the bris. But the sandek isn't here yet. The parents of the baby look out the window to see if he's coming. They see Rav Chaim walking away from the hall! He's going home!

A friend runs after him to ask why he didn't come in.

"I came and I knocked for a long time, but no one opened the door. I have no time to wait."

Rav Chaim now turns around and goes back to the hall.

"Do you know why we didn't open the door?" asks the man he's walking with. "The hall is open! Anyone who wants to can come in. You don't need to knock."

They enter the building and push the button for the elevator. Then the man realizes that the elevator door is the door on which Rav Chaim had knocked and knocked.

Rav Chaim knows nothing of this world. What does he have to do with an elevator? One thing he knows, and it's that he has no time to waste.

What's the Askan's Name?

When Rav Chaim was bar mitzvah, he davened with all his heart that he "remember all Torah and forget anything that's not Torah," says Rav Moshe Chaim Katz.

An askan, a community activist, comes to Rav Chaim. Rav Chaim gives him brief answers, and the askan leaves. A few moments later, he remembers a detail that might change Rav Chaim's answer. He goes back to Rav Chaim. He reminds him that he was there a moment ago and forgot to tell him one thing.

"I don't remember," Rav Chaim says. He asks the askan to ask his question again.

Rav Chaim didn't let anything stay in his head but Torah. The askan and his question were gone as soon as the askan was out of the room. The askan has to repeat his question as if for the first time.

Have a gutten, zeesen and freilechen Shabbos and Yom Tov, a gutten Kvittel and a gut gebentchted Yohr.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Zt'l would normally commute every week from Boston to New York to give his shiur at Yeshiva University. In the last years of his life, arrangements were made for him to stay in the Penimiah (dormitory) of Yeshiva University.

One night, some students had a party and brought friends into the dorm. They were making considerable noise. Eventually, unable to sleep, he came out and confronted them. At approximately 2:00 a.m., there was a knock on their door. When they opened it, they found the Rav standing there in his dressing gown. - The room fell silent.

The students expected him to rebuke them for disturbing the dormitory. Instead, the Rav said something to the effect of:

"What's going on here? It's 2 o'clock in the morning — do you not realise that some of us are trying to learn?!"

Rav Elchonon Wasserman reportedly said that when he encountered the young Rav in Boston, he had never seen someone who **"ate, slept and dreamed Torah."**

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshivah of the Mir Yeshivah, would exert superhuman effort into his work for the Yeshivah, and it had the power to melt hearts of stone.

One time, Rav Nosson Tzvi approached a rich businessman and asked for a large donation for the Yeshivah, and regrettably, he refused the Rosh Yeshivah's request. He declined and simply said, "I can't."

Rav Nosson Tzvi said back to him, "I can't either, but I do anyway." After just a moment of uncomfortable silence, he wrote a check for the full donation!

L'Maaseh

A man once entered before **Rav Elyashiv, zt"l**, and told him that he can't learn Torah very much because he has a very poor memory.

Rav Elyashiv asked him if he ever learned a certain Masechta, and the man answered that he had indeed once learned it.

Rav Elyashiv then asked him, "How many times did you review that Masechta?"

The man responded that review doesn't help him, because as he said, he has a very poor memory.

Rav Elyashiv replied, "If you haven't reviewed your learning forty or fifty times, how do you even know that you have a bad memory? Maybe you have a great memory! But you will only know this if you review the material properly. Before you do this, how can you expect to remember?!"

No Chiddush

The *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz once told Rav Shimon Sofer of Cracow regarding his father the *Chasam Sofer* that:

"It was no *chiddush* that your father the *Chasam Sofer* was so great and holy and rose to such heights when he had a rebbe such as Rav Nassan Adler.

Regarding whom I heard from my own rebbe Rav Naphtali of Ropshitz who heard in turn from his rebbe the Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizensk author of *Noam Elimelech* who said that 'for many years a soul such as Rav Nosson Adler's had not descended to this world besides the soul of the *Baal Shem Tov*.'"

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

The story is told that a man once came running hurriedly to the home of the great **R' Yisroel Ba'al Shem Tov ZT"L** and begged him to pray for a sick person who was in critical condition. The Ba'al Shem Tov asked for the man's name and his mother's name and retreated to his inner room where he secluded himself and began to pray.

After a little while, the Ba'al Shem Tov emerged from his room and asked the person who had come to him if he was sure that the name that he gave him was the correct one. He said it was, so the Ba'al Shem once again locked himself in his inner room and continued to pray. But again, after a short while he came out of his room and called over his gabbai.

"If you don't mind," asked the Tzaddik in hushed tones, "could you please go out and call for the man known as "the captain of the thieves". Tell him that I need his assistance immediately and that it's a matter of life and death." The stunned gabbai took a moment to digest this most unusual request but if this was the will of the great Ba'al Shem Tov, than this is what he would do.

The man was found and brought to the Tzaddik who told him, "There is a person in desperate need of Divine mercy and I want you to pray for him." He gave the name of the sick person to the bandit chief with instructions as to which prayers to say. Although mystified and a bit amused by the strange request, the gangster did as he was told.

After a while, a messenger came with the happy news that the patient had abruptly shown signs of recovery, and the doctors were now truly optimistic that he would fully recover.

The gabbai and the other people in the Tzaddik's house were incredulous. What great miracle had just transpired in front of their eyes?

To the surprised bystanders, the Ba'al Shem Tov explained. "Let me tell you. I tried to intercede in Heaven for this man, but I found all

the doors closed. I checked to see if I had the right name, but still, my prayers could not enter. Then, I thought to send for someone who knows how to pick locks and break through barriers. Once I had him remove those obstacles with his prayers, mine were able to enter and be received!"



With The Chozeh of Lublin

The Chozeh wished to honor his important guest, **Rav Sholom Rokeach**, and so he asked them to pour him a glass of wine. Rav Sholom had already begun his ascent and so among his ascetic practices he had self-imposed upon himself was to refrain from drinking any intoxicating beverages. And so he lifted the cup up as the Chozeh had commanded but was in a quandary since he would not drink the wine.

This resolved itself as soon as the wine glass shattered in his hands off its own accord. Seeing this, the Chozeh asked them to pour him a new cup of wine. When the performance repeated itself the Chozeh thundered in mock anger: "What are you trying to do? Do you mean to shatter all my glasses?"

When Rav Sholom explained his *geder* and that he did not drink wine, the Chozeh let the matter alone.

The next day he honored Rav Sholom by calling him up to the Torah for the sixth *aliyah,* an honor accorded and reserved for VIPs and lofty leveled rabbonim. The assembled wondered aloud about such an honor and disctinction bestowed upon such a young guest.

The Chozeh responded to the clamor and commotion with the retort: "Why are you all so surprised?, this *yungerman* will one day be a leader of thousands!" - Of course his prediction came true.

The Chozeh once requested Rav Sholom to be the one to read the Megillah on Purim for all the assembled. Afterwards the Chozeh remarked upon the completion "I have heard the story of Purim many

times before, but not the way this yungerman just told it! I have never heard the story told this way ever before!"

On another occasion Rav Sholom was squashed beneath the Chozeh's *tisch*, the Chozeh whispered to him "One day they will all be squashing under your *tisch*!"

Another time the Chozeh remarked: "People travel to Rymanov (to the Rebbe Reb Menachem Mendel) seeking *parnassah* and livelihood, to Kozhnitz (to the Maggid Rav Yisroel Haupstein) they go seeking *refuos* and healing, to me they come for Chassidus, to you they shall come and by you they shall receive all of these!"

Supremacy Of Torah



וזאת הברכה אשר ברך משה איש האלקים את בני ישראל

"וימת משה עבד השם"

Moshe Rabbeinu's final act was to bless each of the twelve tribes individually, just as Yaakov Avinu had done. The parsha begins with **בני ישראל** and ends with **לעיני כל ישראל**, reminding us that everything in creation revolves around **כלל ישראל**—Hashem's chosen nation.

Moshe begins his blessings by praising Hashem, then praising **כלל ישראל** for accepting the Torah in unity at Har Sinai. The Torah stresses that these blessings were delivered by an **איש האלקים**, a G-dly man whose words were fully inspired by Hashem. Their fulfillment depends on the other "**וזאת**"— **וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל**—because the blessings of Torah come only **כי תשמע בקול ה' אלקיך**.

Chazal and the Rambam emphasize the truth of Moshe's prophecy and the unchangeable truth of Torah. As the text states:

"שזאת התורה לא תהא מוחלפת" "משה אמת ותורתו אמת"

Moshe's greatness lay not only in prophecy but in humility—**עניו מאד**—and in his unique closeness to Hashem, speaking to Him **פנים אל פנים**, meaning whenever he wished. He lived entirely as an **עבד השם**, and therefore merited a **מיתת נשיקה**, passing away "**על פי ה'**."

This mission—to live as **עבדי השם**—was also the lifelong goal of **דוד המלך**, who declared: "**אנא השם כי אני עבדך**." Hashem Himself referred to David as **עבדי**, promising that his descendants would lead **כלל ישראל** forever.

When we complete the Torah and lift it for hagbah, we proclaim: "**וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל על פי השם ביד משה**." This is the same Torah Moshe gave us—unchanged, perfect, and entirely **אמת**.

Chazal teach: **לית מידי דלא רמיזא באורייתא**—everything is contained in Torah. This is the gift Hashem gave us, and the reason for our joy on **שמחת תורה**.

Moshe's final words to **כלל ישראל** are:

"**אשריך ישראל—מי כמוך?**" Fortunate are you, Israel—who is like you? A nation saved by Hashem. As **Rav Yaakov Emden** writes, ***the greatest miracle in history is our continued existence despite every nation that tried to destroy us***.

Moshe ends with a promise that **כלל ישראל** will ultimately triumph over all enemies. Our task is to remain strong—**חזק חזק ונתחזק**—and live as **עבדי השם**, carrying Moshe's legacy of truth until that final **נבואה** is fulfilled.



The Siddur and the Song

Rabbi Avrohom Gold was walking through the streets of Yerushalayim when a stranger stopped him. - "Are you from Detroit?" the stranger asked him.

"Yes," Rabbi Gold replied.

"Then I have a story you need to hear."

Rabbi Gold explained that he was on his way to his mother-in-law's home and was already running late. The man smiled. "Your mother-in-law will be very happy you stopped. This story is about her."

Well then, Rabbi Gold thought, then I certainly should hear what he has to say.

In the 1930s, the Klein family* settled in Detroit, where proper Jewish education was difficult to find. Their daughter grew up with almost no connection to Yiddishkeit and eventually drifted far from her roots. When she announced that she intended to marry a non-Jew, her father was devastated.

During a trip to New York, Mr. Klein met a frum young Holocaust survivor named Yisrael.* Impressed by him, he encouraged Yisrael to move to Detroit, promising to help him find work and rebuild his life. Deep-down, Mr. Klein hoped that perhaps his daughter would take an interest in him and reconsider her plans.

But when Yisrael arrived, she wanted nothing to do with him. Her mind was made up.

In one final attempt, Mr. Klein offered to send his daughter to Eretz Yisrael for several weeks, all expenses paid. He hoped that seeing

the land and experiencing Yiddishkeit firsthand might awaken something within her. He promised that if she returned unchanged, he would no longer stand in her way. She agreed.

During her trip, she visited Meron. The *niggunim*, the dancing, and the intensity of the *tefillos* stirred her deeply. At one point, she noticed a man davening with extraordinary concentration from a small white siddur. When he finished, she asked if she could borrow it. He gladly handed it to her. When she was done, he told her she could keep it.

She returned to Detroit carrying the small white siddur, but told her father that her decision had not changed. She still intended to marry the non-Jew. Her father was heartbroken, but he had given his word.

Then, one Shabbos, as she was walking down the street, she heard a *niggun* drifting from a home in her neighborhood. She stopped. It was the same *niggun* she had heard in Meron. She stood outside listening as the melody stirred everything she had felt there. Something inside her shifted.

When she returned home, she told her father that she had changed her mind. She would not marry the non-Jew. Soon afterward, she agreed to meet Yisrael, and this time, she saw him differently. Before long, they became engaged, much to her father's immeasurable joy.

One afternoon, while visiting his *kallah*, Yisrael asked if he could borrow a siddur for *Minchah*. She brought him the small white siddur from Meron. He opened the cover, and then he froze. The color drained from his face. "Where did you get this?" he asked her.

She told him about the man she had seen in Meron, the stranger who had lent her his siddur and then insisted that she keep it.

Yisrael's hands began to tremble. "The name written inside this siddur is my brother's name." For years, Yisrael had believed that

his brother had perished in the Holocaust. Now, holding his siddur, he realized that his brother had survived.

The young woman's journey to Eretz Yisrael had not only changed the course of her own life. It had revealed that a brother long believed lost was still alive.

The man in Yerushalayim then turned to Rabbi Gold.

"And do you know which home that *niggun* was coming from on the Shabbos when she changed her mind?" Rabbi Gold shook his head. "It was the home of your in-laws, Rav and Rebbetzin Kahane."

Rabbi Gold stood speechless.

A *niggun* sung inside an ordinary Jewish home had drifted through an open window and stopped a young woman in her tracks. That melody led her back to Yiddishkeit, brought her together with her roots, and ultimately helped reunite a family torn apart by the Holocaust.

Rav and Rebbetzin Kahane had never known who was standing outside their home that Shabbos. They had never known what their singing had set in motion. (*Heard from Harav Eli Yelen.*)

R' Yitzchok Meir of Gur (Chiddushei Harim) ZT"L would say:

"We recite the berachah המחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים - who returns souls to dead bodies, right after the blessing on the Torah, to show that our very life is just from Torah!"

When you see someone in need, offer them help. You may very well be the person Hashem sent as the answer to their prayers. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים



In the city of Lodz, Poland, the large community was graced with the presence of their beloved Rov, **R' Eliyohu Chaim Meisels ZT"L**. Despite the adequate salary for his rabbinic position in the city, it seemed that R' Eliyohu Chaim was always in debt. He used to borrow huge sums of money from many of the wealthy people in the community, to distribute to the poor or to help support merchants whose businesses were failing. The wealthy lenders loved and trusted their venerable rabbi and had no qualms with extending loans to him, many times over.

It happened, that when the prominent community of Warsaw sought to recruit him as their rabbi, he graciously refused their offer. This was surprising, for Warsaw was the largest city in Poland and many of his family members could not understand why R' Eliyohu Chaim would be reluctant to accept the most coveted rabbinical position in Europe.

Someone finally mustered up the courage to ask the Rov. R' Eliyohu Chaim answered, "Initially, I was the rabbi in the small village of Prozhin. Even there, I would borrow much money to give to the

impoverished people, and although it was well known that my salary was insufficient for repayment of the loans, I was nevertheless trusted because it was assumed that I would eventually be offered the position of rabbi in the town of Lomza, and my earnings there would enable me to settle my accounts.

"When I became rabbi in Lomza, people there lent me money, sure that I would one day become rabbi in the large city of Lodz, and then have enough to cover all of my monetary affairs. Now, in Lodz, people only trust me enough to extend me money because they imagine that I will yet become rabbi in the teeming metropolis of Warsaw."

R' Eliyohu Chaim, in complete and utter earnestness looked at his questioner and exclaimed, "Now, if I accept the esteemed position as Rov of Warsaw, although it is a wonderful opportunity to be involved with such a great Jewish community, on the other hand, people will no longer have any reason to believe that I can advance myself and maintain the ability to increase my revenue. They will then refuse to consider lending me any money. How will I be able to help the poor people if no one will lend me any money?"

Such were the dilemmas troubling the great men of yesteryear.

- **Warsaw** — Poland's capital, by far the largest city of the four
- **Łódź** — Poland's third-largest city, a major industrial centre
- **Łomża** — a smaller city in northeastern Poland
- **Prozhin/Pruzhany** — the smallest, a town in Brest Region, Belarus, about 200 km east of Warsaw

"A person should not remain all alone and refuse to be part of society, for how can man emulate Hashem if he is all alone? Just as Hashem is merciful to us, man must be merciful to his fellow men." ~ R' Yaakov Emden.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

אנו עמלים ומקבלים שכר והם עמלים ואינם מקבלים שכר (ברכות כח):

During the 1950's, the great Ba'al Mussar, **R' Eliyohu Lopian ZT"L**, (then Mashgiach at Yeshivah Knesses Chizkiyah in Eretz Yisroel) visited America, and he accepted an invitation to deliver a Shmuess - ethical discourse, at Beis Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, New Jersey.

The Shmuess was held on a hot summer day. The air-conditioning system in the Beis Medrash was old and noisy: it had been shut off so that R' Elya, who was then in his eighties, could be heard. After speaking in his typically powerful manner for forty-five minutes, R' Elya said, "What I have said thus far is by way of introduction." He then withdrew a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

The Rosh Yeshiva, **Hagaon R' Aharon Kotler ZT"L**, leaned over his shtender from his seat near the Aron Hakodesh, and said to R' Elya, "You do not have to continue right away. Perhaps you should rest a few minutes and then continue."

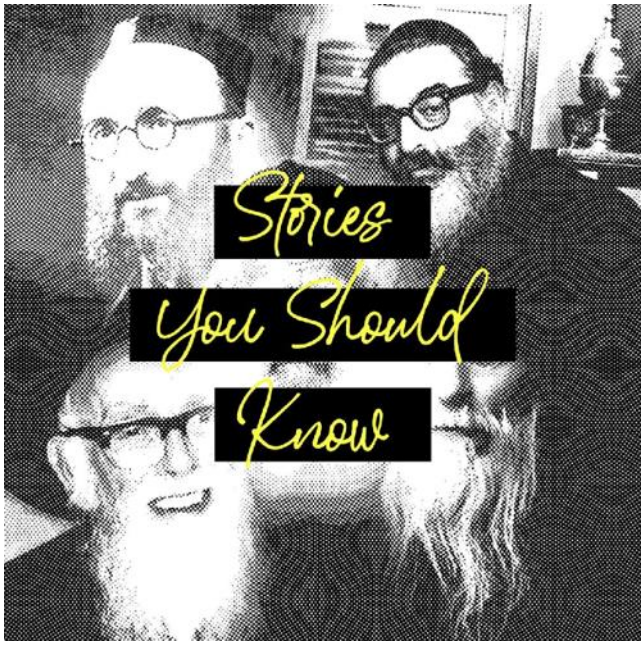
R' Elya turned to R' Aharon, and in a tone of wonderment said, "**אדם לעמל יולד**!" - Man was created to toil (in Torah)!" He turned back to face the Talmidim and went on with his Shmuess.

Those near R' Aharon noticed that for the remainder of the Shmuess, his head was down. A talmid who sat only a few feet away recalled that from that point on, he could not concentrate anymore on the Shmuess. He could not take his eyes off the Rosh Yeshivah, R' Aharon, who had his head underneath the top of the shtender and was crying like a child.

R' Aharon, the classic **בתורה עומל** - toiler in Torah study, had taken R' Elya's words "**אדם לעמל יולד**" and applied them to himself as if they had been words of reproof. It seemed that he was making a **חשבון הנפש** - a personal reckoning, lest his own effort and toil in

Torah study be lacking in any way - though it is hard to imagine how this could have been possible of R' Aharon.

When the Shmuess had ended, the floor beneath R' Aharon's seat was soaked with tears!



You're Like A Son To Me- The Unfathomable Care Of Reb Elchonon Wasserman For Every Student

"You're like a son to me." This phrase is commonly used and it's powerful, but many times one can sense that this is just a phrase and not a reality. In the eyes of Rav Elchanan Wasserman, all of his students were like his very own sons. The year before World War II began, he was fundraising in America for his *yeshivah*. It was March of 1939 when Rav Elchanan decided that he was going to return to Europe.

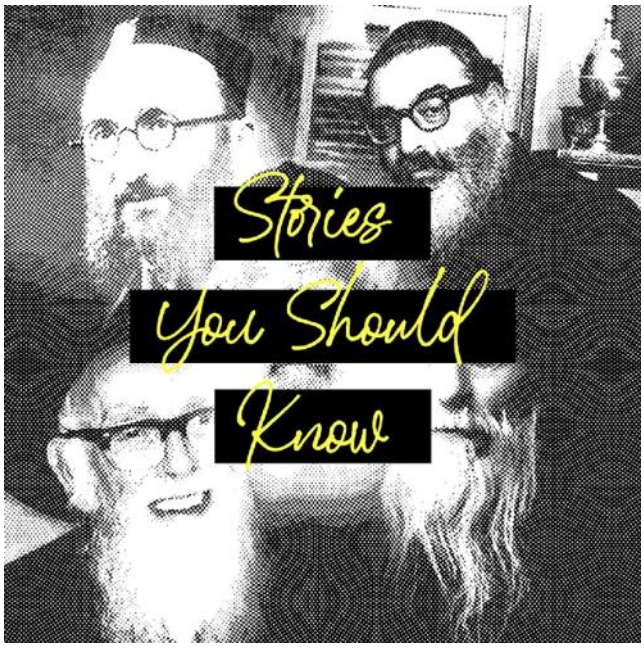
Knowing these plans, his supporters were astonished. How could he return to Europe if there was an imminent threat of Hitler invading?

Rav Elchanan remained steadfast in his decision. They attempted to even bring Rav Elchanan's unmarried sons to America as well to persuade him to stay there and avoid the inevitable danger in Europe, but Rav Elchanan absolutely refused. "Do I have only two sons? I have 400 sons! All the *yeshivah* students are my sons, and I can't abandon them."

And that's exactly what happened. He never abandoned them. When World War II broke out as expected, Rav Elchanan had exit visas to escape to America and certificates to enter Israel, but he couldn't

abandon his children. He explained, "As long as a single student remains here, I may not save myself."

Rav Elchanan returned, and on July 8th, 1941, he was murdered by the Nazis. But just like a father would be incapable of sitting back and watching if his children were in danger, Rav Elchanan also felt unable to witness his students suffer alone and was completely determined to be there for them at all costs.



How Great Is Your Faith- The Line That Comforted Reb Chatzkel In Siberia

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, referred to as Rav Chatzkel, was born in 1886 in the Russian Empire. He was an activist and rabbinic leader, but in 1929, his life took a tumultuous turn. The authorities broke into his house in the middle of the night without a moment's notice, exiling him to Siberia for five years of forced hard labor.

He had nothing left. He didn't have his *tefillin*, he didn't have his *sefarim*, and the conditions made it impossible to keep any *mitzvot*. All he had left were the clothes on his back.

In Siberia, it was blistering cold, temperatures reaching 40 below zero. The first morning after his arrival, the vicious guards forced the Jews to get up early in the morning for so-called exercise, barefoot in the ice for an hour.

Everything was looking bleak. Thankfully, his prison stay was short-lived, and he was freed on *erev Yom Kippur*, 1931, thanks in large part to prominent rabbis and Jewish organizations across the world who lobbied to free him. Rav Chatzkel survived. Not only that, it is

said that he had continued to work on writing a *sefer* on cigarette paper while in the labor camp.

One must ask, how did he survive such unbearable conditions? What was he thinking through this process?

Rav Chatzkel once shared a line that he thought to himself and lived, a line that continued to comfort him through the hardest of times. He would wake up in the morning and say to Hashem, רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתֶךָ - "How great is Your faith," a line that every Jew says in the morning.

He would then ask, "What is so great about Your faith, Hashem?" He would then answer, "What makes Your faith so great is that it is the one thing that nobody can take from me."

We must always remember that even in the most trying of situations, there is one thing that can never be taken from us as long as we are still breathing: our belief that Hashem is there for us, guiding us the whole way through.

The Entire Alef-Beis, "***And to Gad he said*** … " (33:20).

The Ba'al ha'Turim points out that the B'rachah of Gad contains all the letters of the Alef-Beis. And he ascribes the reason for this to the fact that Moshe, who fulfilled all the Taryag Mitzvos, is buried in Gad's portion.

And it is for the same reason that all the letters are contained in the B'rachah of Yosef, whose coffin traveled in the Desert next to the Aron ha'Kodesh, because, as Chazal cite a Heavenly as saying 'This one (Yosef) kept all that is written in that one.

"A person may never achieve total perfection, but just by striving for it, one may achieve excellence." ~ R' Yisroel Salanter.

HADERECH

A Powerful Message - Harav Zimmerman Rav & Av Beis Din, Kehillas Federation UK

"The Rebbe taught us that when you do tzedakah there are no differences between Jews."

Rav Mattisyohu Salomon ztvk"l was once in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, and I visited him when he came back to Lakewood. He said to me, "You know, I am so impressed with the Satmar Bikkur Cholim." I said, "Yes, the amount of food they give people is impressive."

He responded, "No, that alone did not impress me."

I asked what impressed him.

He answered, "It was Erev Shabbos and in came a member of the Bikkur Cholim and gave me seven magazines for Shabbos, Der Yeed and Der Blatt, which are two Satmar Newspapers, the Machneh Hachareidi which is a Belzer newspaper, Hamodia which is an Aguda newspaper, the Ami and the Mishpacha which are private enterprises, and the Jewish Press, which is a modern orthodox newspaper.

I looked at him and said, 'Why are you giving me newspapers of hashkafos you don't believe in and are even against?'

He said, "The Rebbe taught us that when you do tzedakah there are no differences between Jews. Our Avodas Hashem is one thing, and our beliefs, is one thing, but when you are performing tzedakah, our purpose is to make a person feel good. What is going to make him feel good? To read the newspaper that they enjoy, not the one that I believe in. Therefore, I am giving them out.'"

יְשׁוּעַת ה׳ כְּהֶרֶף עַיִן - Dr Sholom Springer



Rabbi Moshe Shapira (1935-2017) was a towering Rosh Yeshiva, master of Jewish thought (*machshavah*), and leader of the Mussar movement in Israel. Renowned for his phenomenal memory, staggering erudition, and deep grasp of both the revealed (*nigleh*) and hidden (*nistar*) dimensions of Torah, he was widely considered one of the most profound thinkers of his generation.



He developed a close spiritual bond and learned bechavrusah (in Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak) with the legendary Mashgiach, **Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler**. He also forged relationships with the **Brisker Rav (Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik), the Chazon Ish and Rav Yitzchok Hutner.**

יְשׁוּעַת ה׳ כְּהֶרֶף עַיִן – *Hashem's salvation comes in the blink of an eye*

The greatest mistake is to measure Hashem's salvation by the progress we can currently see. Just before a geulah arrives, a person may see no indication that anything is changing. Then, in what seems like a single moment, everything is transformed. This is one of the lessons of Yetzias Mitzrayim: redemption emerged with a suddenness that transcended normal historical development.

The "blink of an eye" is not primarily a measure of speed. It means that the transition from darkness to salvation occurs in a realm beyond the gradual process visible to human eyes. It can occur even when the eye blinks and cannot see.




הַצְלָחָה וְשֶׁפַע רַב

רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, כֹּל יָכוֹל, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִבָּצֵר מִמְּךָ מְזִימָה, זַכֵּנִי לְהַצְלִיחַ בְּכָל הַהַצְלָחוֹת, בְּכָל הַיְשׁוּעוֹת, וְתִפְתַּח לִי שַׁעֲרֵי הַצְלָחָה, שַׁעֲרֵי יְשׁוּעָה, שַׁעֲרֵי פַּרְנָסָה, שַׁעֲרֵי כַּלְכָּלָה. "שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, ה' אֶחָד", "בָּרוּךְ, שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד". וּתְמַלֵּא אוֹתִי שָׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה, חֶדְוָה, צָהֳלָה, רִינָּה וְגִילָה. וְתִפְתַּח לִי שַׁעֲרֵי הַצְלָחָה, אַהֲבָה וְאַחְוָה וְרֵעוּת. וְאָזְכֶּה לִהְיוֹת צִינּוֹר הַשֶּׁפַע לְכָל עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמוֹ יוֹסֵף הַצַּדִּיק, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר עָלָיו: "וְיוֹסֵף הוּא הַמַּשְׁבִּיר לְכָל עַם הָאָרֶץ".

כל הקוראים תפילה זו בקביעות יראו ניסים ונפלאות

Hatzlachah V'Shefa Rav

Success and Abundant Blessing

Master of the world, all-powerful G-d, who created from nothing, grant from Your abundant kindness and before You all successes, all salvations, and open for me the gates of success, the gates of salvation, the gates of livelihood, the gates of sustenance, the gates of economy.

"Listen, O Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One." "Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever."

Fill me with prosperity, joy, gladness, happiness, success, wealth, love, brotherhood, and friendship. Open for me the gates of success, love, brotherhood, and companionship. May I find favour in the eyes of every person of Israel, just as Yoseph the righteous found favour, as it is said concerning him: "And Yoseph was the successful one with the whole land."

The small note at the bottom says:

"All who recite this prayer every morning will see signs and wonders."

Chizuk - Inspiration

The Price of Principle

In 1937, **Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky** traveled to America to raise funds for a Yeshivah. Among his first visits was the Manhattan office of a manufacturer. In accordance with customary practice, he presented a copy of the previous year's donation receipt in the hope that he would be provided with a similar donation this year.

After a prolonged delay, the manufacturer returned with a check for an amount lower than that recorded on the receipt.

"This is the amount I actually donated last year," he explained.

"But the receipt records a larger contribution," Reb Yaakov replied.

"I know. Your office deliberately entered a higher amount, hoping that I would match it this year. I remembered giving less, so I checked my records. This check reflects the correct amount."

Deeply disturbed by this disclosure, Reb Yaakov declared, "I cannot represent an institution whose office conducts itself dishonestly."

As he rose to leave, the donor stopped him. "Please take the check for now," he urged.

"No. In my mind, I resigned a moment ago. I am no longer the Yeshivah's Meshulach (representative) and therefore have no authority to accept funds on its behalf."

The manufacturer was astonished. "Do you not have a family to support?"

"Yes—a wife and six children."

"Then please accept this," the man said, taking two hundred dollars from his wallet.

Reb Yaakov drew back. "I do not accept gifts."

"Then consider it a loan until you find another position."

"Thank you, but Hashem will provide. I do not need a loan."

Reb Yaakov returned his portfolio and donor lists to the Yeshivah office. The following day, he encountered Reb Alter Poplack, an old friend from the Slobodka Yeshiva, who recommended him for the position of interim rabbi at Congregation Bikur Cholim in Seattle. Reb Yaakov served there for six months before relocating to Toronto, where he became the Rav of Congregation Toras Emes.

Boundless Potential

Reb Shlomo Wolbe, renowned mashgiach, was a talmid of the famous **Reb Yeruchem**, the mashgiach of Mir. He would often quote his rebbe as follows: "It is a significant issue if a person is unaware of their own failures or the areas in which they stumble. One must recognize where his yetzer hara has gained a foothold in his life."

However, Reb Yeruchem taught, that while not knowing your weak points is definitely a problem, there is a much more significant one: when a person is unaware of their own positive values and good middos. If someone does not recognize their own strengths, they are like a shoemaker without tools. A seamstress who lacks the equipment necessary cannot sew any beautiful garments or dresses.

We do not fully grasp the extent of the inner strength we possess. We have the capacity to build limitlessly, and we should not be afraid of our own potential.

In every aspect of our life, we should avoid being small-minded or viewing ourselves as insignificant. Instead, we should remember that every Yid has boundless potential.

Why Are So Many People Sad?

R' Noach Weinberg zt"l was once giving a shiur and told someone to repeat a few times, "Hashem loves me."

After the shiur, someone asked R' Noach, "Why did you keep asking him to repeat those words?"

R' Noach asked him, "Do you love me?"

He said, "Yes."

"Why do you love me?" R' Noach asked.

The person said, "I have my reasons."

R' Noach said, "I will tell you why you love me: because you know that I LOVE YOU! And this is how one can learn to really love Hashem, by recognizing how much He loves us!"

What's The Lesson? - The more we look for and recognize His love for us, the more we will also LOVE Hashem!

R' Dovid Trenk zt"l was already older and wasn't feeling well. When the doctor came to check on him, he said, "Please open your mouth and stick out your tongue fully."

R' Trenk looked at him and said, "Doctor, I NEVER stuck out my tongue at another person in my life. Please don't make me start now!"

What's The Lesson? - If R' Trenk was so careful that he never stuck out his tongue at another person, imagine how careful he was NEVER to make fun of someone or embarrass them!

"We are accustomed to thinking that love of the Torah leads to toil in Torah. Actually, the truth is, that toil in Torah leads to love of Torah!" ~ R' Chaim Shmuelevitz ZT"L.



In May 1972, a heavy cloud of anxiety descended upon Israel. Sabena Flight 571 had been hijacked by terrorists and forced to land at Israel's Lod Airport. The hijackers issued a terrifying ultimatum: release over 300 prisoners, or the aircraft and everyone aboard would be blown to pieces.

Miles away, in the quiet town of Netivot, the news was brought to the great sage, **Chacham Yisroel Abuchatzeira, *zt"l*,** the **Baba Sali**. Upon hearing of the hostages' peril, his face grew pale. Without a word, he entered his private study and remained secluded for hours in intense, solitary prayer.

Outside his door, his family and students waited in a tense hush. Suddenly, the stillness was pierced by heartrending sobs emanating from the *Baba Sali's* room. A short while later, radio broadcasts shifted from dread to jubilation. In a lightning-fast raid known as Operation Isotope, Israeli commandos had stormed the plane, neutralized the hijackers, and miraculously freed the hostages.

When the dust settled, the household realized that the very minute the commandos breached the aircraft was the exact same moment the *Baba Sali* had suddenly burst into tears.

R' Yaakov Yitzchak Halevi Ruderman ZT"L would say:

"Chazal teach that every person should believe, "The whole world was created for me." This obligates each of us to believe that his prayers can make a difference."

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

The Elderly Woman With Bags Who Taught the Bus Passengers an Unforgettable Lesson in Emunah

Ashdod today is a bustling *chareidi* city, but in its early years, it was a spiritual desert. The few *chareidi* families who had moved there had very few services available to them, and there was no proper bus line to Bnei Brak, only a single private bus.

I drove that bus for years until the city became more developed and a proper transit company began to operate. I'd begin my route early in the morning, picking up teachers and students who taught and learned in Bnei Brak. I'd drive from Ashdod to Bnei Brak, and from there to Netanya and Haifa. In the late afternoon, I'd make the return trip from Bnei Brak to Ashdod. Most of the passengers were regulars, and the stops were fixed.

On the day that our story occurred, at one of the stops, a young man got on and asked if I stopped at Moshav Nir Galim. "Yes," I answered hesitantly. Because though I passed the moshav I didn't usually stop there. The area is just past Ashdod's industrial zone.

"Can you drop me off there?" the man asked.

I considered telling him no, because I never actually stopped my bus there. But then I thought, why not do a Yid a favour?

"With pleasure," I said.

We reached the moshav and I let the young man off. And then, I noticed an elderly woman at the stop. Seeing me pull over, she rose from her seat and asked, "Are you going to Haifa?"

"Yes," I answered, but I was surprised by the question. After all, the bus stop wasn't meant for buses heading to Haifa.

"Wonderful," the elderly woman said. "I'll go and get my bags."

Before I could respond, the elderly woman began dragging several large bags over from the stop. Some young men got off the bus and helped her load them, clearing the seat behind me so that the elderly woman could sit in it.

After some time, when the woman had finished settling in with all her bags and my gaze was back on the main road, I asked her. "Savta, why were you waiting at this stop?"

"What do you mean, why? There's a bus stop here, no?"

"Yes, there's a stop here. But who told you a bus to Haifa stops here?"

"No one," she said.

I didn't understand. "So why did you stand there if you weren't sure if a bus to Haifa would stop for you?"

"Because this is the only stop around here," the woman said slowly, addressing me as if I had limited comprehension abilities. "Where else was I supposed to go if not to that bus stop?"

"That's true," I said, and then I tried to explain. "But buses to Haifa don't usually stop at that stop. You could have stood there until nightfall, and no bus would have come."

"But you came," the woman said with a smile.

"You're right," I admitted. "But I don't usually stop there. If I hadn't stopped, what would you have done?"

"Waited for the next bus." Her voice betrayed confidence.

"But that bus wouldn't have stopped there either. Buses to Haifa don't stop there!" My voice was insistent because something about her reasoning was completely illogical to me.

"But in the end, you did stop, right?"

"Right." I was again amazed by her calm and confidence. "But still, why did you go to a stop where no bus to Haifa would pick you up?"

"Because I needed to get to Haifa," the elderly woman finally explained. "They told me to go to a stop across the street and to take a bus from there to Ashdod, and then in Ashdod to get off and switch for a bus to Haifa. But I said to Hashem, 'Father in Heaven, I'm a tired, old woman. I don't have the strength to cross the street with all these bags, and I certainly don't have the strength to get on a bus to Ashdod, then get off, wait, and get onto another bus with all these bags. So please, do chessed with me and bring the bus to Haifa right here, to this stop.'"

"Nu, and then what happened?" I murmured, waiting for the rest.

"What do you mean, 'nu' - You saw what happened! Hashem brought the Haifa bus right to that stop."

The older woman's words moved me, as I realized that a great miracle had just taken place and that I was no small player in it. "Savta," I said again. "Maybe you can tell me exactly how you asked for what you wanted?"

"Exactly like we're talking now," she said. "In the clearest, most straightforward way: 'Please do chessed with me and bring the Haifa bus here.' That's it."

She didn't seem to understand why I pressed her for every little detail, but she played along with me. And at the back of the bus, the passengers listened in silence to the miraculous account of hashpachah pratis.

I was overwhelmed for the rest of the ride. I couldn't get over the act of hashpachah pratis I'd just been partner to.

It is precisely when a person has no one else to rely on that Hashem is right there with him. That is the moment to ask Him, simply and innocently, for our needs—like a child begging his father. And Hashem, in His mercy changes the course of nature and brings the bus, or whatever we need, right there to our doorsteps.

For the Honor of Shabbos

The following remarkable story was told by Rav Reuven Elbaz shlit"a:

There was once a man, not very observant, who happened to attend a Torah class. There, he heard the rav say that one should say "Lekavod Shabbat Kodesh— in honor of the holy Shabbos," over everything that he buys for Shabbat, for speech has great power in holiness (see Mishnah Berurah 250:2).

The man took the idea upon himself.

That Thursday, he went into a store and bought something for Shabbat. As he lifted it, he announced loudly: "Lekavod Shabbat Kodesh!"

Everyone around him was startled, and he, too, was embarrassed. But he didn't let that deter him from his new commitment.

The next day, Friday, he went to a large fish store. After selecting a nice, fat fish, he lifted it and loudly proclaimed, "Lekavod Shabbat Kodesh!"

Around him, people stared at him in bewilderment. He was embarrassed, paid quickly, and left the store.

On Sunday, he found himself attending a Torah class once again. The rav, someone whom he didn't recognize, told everyone that derech eretz kadmah laTorah. "The idea that proper behavior precedes the Torah applies even to mitzvos," the rav said. "A person should perform mitzvos in a calm and pleasant manner that doesn't disturb others or cause a chillul Hashem."

As an example, the rav said that on Friday, he had been in a fish store when suddenly a man entered and loudly cried out: "Lekavod Shabbat Kodesh!" in a way that startled all the customers there.

Hearing this, the man's heart sank. He rushed home and told his wife, "You have no idea how the rav spoke about me in the shiur. No

one else knew he was talking about me, but based on what he said, it seems I didn't act properly. And all I wanted was to do a mitzvah!"

The man's wife wanted to comfort and encourage him, so she suggested that they go out for a walk. As they walked, they passed a fish restaurant, and the smell wafted out into the street. She asked if they could go inside to order a small portion of fish.

The man only had a twenty-shekel bill in his pocket, nothing more. But still, they entered the restaurant, and he asked the owner to bring them a small piece of fish—twenty shekels worth.

"Sit down," the owner said. "I'll bring you your order in a few minutes."

A few minutes later, the restaurant owner arrived with a large tray overflowing with fish.

"I told you I only have twenty shekels!" the man told him in astonishment.

"It's on me," the owner replied. "Eat in good health, and when you're finished, I'll tell you why I gave you a special meal."

When the couple finished eating, the owner explained. "I used to be traditional. I tried to keep Shabbat and went to shul. But then I got caught up in business and slowly let go of even the little that I used to keep. I became the person whom the pasuk is referring to when it says: Vayishman Yeshurun vayiv'at—[He] grew fat and rebelled (Devarim 32:15).

"Lately, my wife began urging me to at least go back to what we once used to keep and to keep Shabbat again. I told her, 'If Hashem sends me a sign from Heaven, I'll take it upon myself to truly keep Shabbat.'

"Since I run a fish restaurant, I went last Friday to check out a few fish stores at the marketplace. I entered one store, and suddenly a Jew came in, bought a fish, and loudly cried out: 'Lekavod Shabbat

Kodesh!' The customers were all startled, but I understood right away that Hashem had sent me a sign. And so, I kept this past Shabbat properly.

"The moment that you walked into my restaurant, I recognized you. You're the man whom I owe my life to! It's because of you that I went back to keeping Shabbat properly. With Hashem's help, I hope to continue to strengthen my commitment to Torah and mitzvot. So tell me, what's a tray of fish compared to what I owe you?"

"Be wholehearted with Hashem..." Hashem loves our wholeheartedness and temimut. The simple Jew, who fulfilled what he had learned from the first rav with unashamed sincerity, merited to inspire another Jew in his Shabbat observance. A bond formed between them, and they went on to strengthen each other in their observance of Torah and mitzvot. As for how to practice this properly, a posek was asked and he replied that each person should do as he sees fit, saying the words out loud or quietly. So long as the person's intent is l'shem Shamayim, his actions are beloved by Hashem who will help him succeed.

The Secret To A Good Life

"It's a good thing to say over everything one buys. 'This is lekavod Shabbos,' for speech has great power in holiness." (Mishnah Berurah 250:2)

One must keep reviewing the words of the Mishnah Berurah: "Speech has great power in holiness." Even if a person hasn't yet reached a high level, when he trains himself to say "Lekavod Shabbos Kodesh," his soul is ignited with a longing for Hashem, and he acquires the light of Shabbos within himself.

In Hashem's Hands - Rabbi Yisroel Majeski

My father would often quote the *Chovos HaLevavos* who teaches a profound lesson about happiness. Who is the happiest person in the world? Not necessarily the wisest, strongest, or wealthiest, but the one who possesses genuine *bitachon* in Hashem.

Why? Because he knows that whatever happens, Hashem is guiding his life for his ultimate good. Circumstances may seem confusing, difficulties may persist, and questions may remain unanswered. Yet he lives with the conviction of "*Kol d'avid Rachmana l'tav avid*—Everything Hashem does is for the good" (*Berachos* 60b).

This is the secret of true happiness. Rather than dwelling on what is missing or complaining about what has gone wrong, we learn to appreciate Hashem's countless blessings. Genuine happiness comes not from having everything we desire or controlling our circumstances, but from trusting that our lives are always in Hashem's loving hands.

Secrets of the Sages

Kedushah Beis Hamedrash as espoused by the Tzaddikim

The Chasam Sofer Yahrzeit 25 Tishrei, 1839

If, heaven forbid, we treat the shuls and batei midrash with disrespect and engage in idle talk in them, the ministering angel of chutz l'Aretz takes up residence there. He becomes the master of the shul, R"l, intercepting the tefillos and carrying them over to the forces of impurity, and thus, speaking in shul is akin to idol worship! (***Derashos Chasam Sofer***)

The Yeshiva Was About To Close - Rabbi Joey Haber

In 1929, the Lomza Yeshiva was home to approximately four hundred students. But the yeshiva was struggling desperately. Money was scarce, and that year, the situation became far worse. The Jewish world was reeling from the terrible massacre in Chevron, and desperately needed funds were being directed toward the devastated community and yeshiva there.

At the same time, the American stock market crashed. The Great Depression had begun. Much of the financial support that had previously come from the United States suddenly disappeared.

The Lomza Yeshiva had four hundred young men to feed. And almost no money with which to feed them. Eventually, conditions became so difficult that the yeshiva could provide its students with only one meal a day. That was how hundreds of bachurim were expected to survive.

Then came the night when even that was no longer possible. The Rosh Yeshiva and the mashgiach sat down together. They looked at what remained. There was no money in the account. No reserve fund. No source of income they could rely upon. All that remained was enough bread and water to give the students breakfast the following morning. After that - **nothing**.

The two men came to a devastating conclusion. Tomorrow morning, they would serve the students their final breakfast. Bread and water. And afterward, they would stand before the approximately four hundred bachurim and announce that the yeshiva was closing. They had no choice. There was simply no food.

The following morning, the students davened Shacharis. Then breakfast was served. Bread. Water. The meal ended.

Now came the moment they had been dreading. The Rosh Yeshiva looked at the mashgiach. "You get up and tell them."

The mashgiach looked back at him. "No. You say it."

Neither could bring himself to do it. How do you stand before hundreds of young men learning Torah and tell them: **It's over?**

How do you announce that a yeshiva that had existed for decades was shutting its doors? They knew the reality. There was no money. There was no food. They had no choice. And yet - they couldn't say the words.

Finally, one of them had an idea.

"Before we make the announcement, let's go to the business office. Maybe there is some mail. Perhaps someone had sent ten dollars. Maybe twenty."

In 1929, even a small donation could purchase enough food to keep the yeshiva alive for another day. They weren't looking for a miracle. They were simply hoping for one more day.

The two men walked into the office. They began opening the mail.

One envelope. Nothing. Another. Nothing. Another. Nothing.

They kept going. Envelope after envelope. - **Nothing.**

Their worst fears were being confirmed. And then they opened another envelope. Inside was a cheque. They looked at the amount.

$1,000!

In 1929. At the exact moment the yeshiva was preparing to announce that it was closing, an enormous check had arrived. The yeshiva remained open. Not merely for another day. Not merely for another week. That $1,000 helped keep the Lomza Yeshiva functioning until World War II!

A branch of the yeshiva would later continue in Eretz Yisrael. And from that world of Torah would emerge generations of talmidei chachamim who would help shape the Jewish future. - All because an envelope arrived at the moment when two broken-hearted rabbanim

could not bring themselves to announce: **The yeshiva is closing.**

But there was another question. Who had sent the money? Who, in America in 1929, in the midst of a financial collapse, was sending a $1,000 cheque across the ocean to a yeshiva?

They investigated. And they discovered the name of the donor.

Yaakov Yosef Herman. The legendary Reb Yaakov Yosef Herman, whose life would later become known to generations through All for the Boss.

Reb Yaakov Yosef Herman had been in the fur business in America. Then the stock market crashed. His business collapsed. He lost virtually everything.

When it was over, he was left with approximately $1,300. That was it. His business was gone. The economy was collapsing. The country was entering the Great Depression. And he had $1,300 left.

Most people would have looked at that money and thought: I have to protect this. I don't know what tomorrow will bring. I don't know how I will support my family. I don't know whether I'll have another source of income. This is all I have left.

But Reb Yaakov Yosef Herman looked at those same $1,300 differently. He saw an opportunity. He took $1,000 - and sent it to the Lomza Yeshiva. He then took another $250 and put it toward the founding of a yeshiva in America, Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim. - That institution would become associated with one of the greatest Torah leaders of the next generation, **Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l**.

Now Reb Yaakov Yosef Herman had only $50 left. So what did he do with the final fifty dollars? - He used that money for another Jewish need. He used those final dollars to produce one of the first Jewish candle-lighting calendars in America, helping Jewish families know the proper time to light Shabbos candles.



There was once a Jewish man. He was living in Europe before the war, a simple man, a family man, a man with a wife and one son. And then, like it did for millions of others, the war came. His whole world shattered.

In a single breath, his wife was murdered in the early days of the war, and he and his son barely escaped, and they were saved by the kindness of a righteous non-Jewish woman who risked her life to hide them. And eventually, after the smoke and the blood settled down, he married the woman who saved him. She wasn't Jewish, but she gave him a second chance at life. And together, they moved to America, and they had another son there.

He opened a small business, and the business grew, and it boomed, and the man became a wildly wealthy man. He built a fortune worth 50 million dollars. And as time moved on, the man got sick, and eventually he died, and he left his two sons, one Jewish and one not Jewish, 50 million dollars in inheritance. And now the question wasn't how to split the money, it was where to bury their father.

The non-Jewish son said, "We're burying him in St. Mary's Cemetery. That's where my mother will be buried. That's where he belongs." But the Jewish son wouldn't have it. He said, "He was a Jew.

I don't care that he married your mother, he's going into a Jewish grave." And the argument got heated, and emotions flared, and neither side was budging, so they went to court. And the judge, trying to be diplomatic, he said, "Okay, here's an idea: Why don't you cremate the body, split the ashes, half will go into the Jewish

cemetery and half will go into the Christian cemetery, and both of you will be happy?"

The Jewish son almost fell off his chair. "Absolutely not!"

So the Christian son saw an opening, a pressure point. "If it matters to you so much," he said, "I'll let you bury him in the Jewish cemetery, but only if you give me your entire half of the inheritance. 25 million dollars, that's the deal."

The Jewish son said, "Let me think about it." - The next day he went to **Rav Elyashiv**, and he asked what he should do. And Rav Elyashiv answered in just a few words, "Give him the money, and bury your father like a Jew." - He handed over 25 million dollars for the right to dig six feet into Jewish soil and bury his father with dignity, with identity, with eternity.

This wasn't a *Rosh Yeshiva*, this wasn't a *tzadik*, this wasn't some *mekubal*, this was a man who barely kept Shabbos, this was a man whose father married a Christian woman, this was a man who grew up in a home without Torah and *tefillah* or *chesed*, and yet, somewhere in his soul, something couldn't be bought, even for 25 million dollars. Somewhere in his DNA, there was a voice screaming, "He's a Jew, he's my father, and he's going home!"

And I ask you, what other nation produces souls like that? What other religion creates such loyalty, such irrational, inexplicable, unshakable connection? You can't beat the Jewish people. You can scatter us, you can burn our books and break our bones, but you will never break the bond. Why? Because while the world might practice religion, we sing it.

While others walk in the path of life, we dance through it. The Torah isn't just our guide, it's our song, and we're not just its readers, we're its singers, and we will cross oceans and climb mountains to keep on singing like the world depends on it, because it does.



So there was once a fellow in Eretz Yisrael, I heard this story from Rav Meilech Biderman. He heard it from the guy himself.

The guy was asked by his father to come help him in his apartment, which was quite a travel away in Eretz Yisrael from to get there. So he gets on one bus, takes him to another bus, and he's traveling, it's taking a very long time, and all of a sudden in the middle of his travels, as he's going and *shlepping*, but you know, for your father you know what you got to do, right?

He gets a phone call from his father after his third bus that he transferred to or whatever it was, and his father says, "Oh, never mind, somebody else local came and helped me and thank you so much, I don't need your help anymore."

Gave up my whole day to come to do this, but listen, Hashem runs the world, right? So he decides he's going to turn around wherever he was right then, he was in the middle of the travel, he'll get off that bus right there wherever he is, and he'll find a bus going back home.

And who knows why Hashem does what He does, right? He gets off the bus at this random neighborhood, he has no idea where he is, catch a bus back home. Before he does, he figures I'll hop into a little grocery store, get himself a snack to eat, and he'll use the bathroom.

So he walks in and there is a totally irreligious store owner standing behind the counter, and he comes in, then he says to this fellow, "Do

you mind, could you watch my duffel? I just want to use the bathroom, if you don't mind."

So the guy looks up with unexpected interest and says, "Well, why can't you take your bag into the bathroom?"

So the guy says, "Well, cuz I have *tefillin* in there."

Guy says, "You have *tefillin* in there? Oh, *Baruch Hashem*! Could I please put them on?"

So this *chareidi* guy is obviously a little bit taken aback, surprised. The store owner says, "No, I got to explain to you something. This is unbelievable, you don't realize, my friend, you were sent here by Hashem."

He says, "Why?"

He says, "Because you should know I'm totally not religious, but one thing I do with unwavering commitment, I put on *tefillin* every day. Every day I put on *tefillin*." He said, "This morning was such chaos getting out of the house, and I got on the bus, and then, and I showed up at my store, and I walked in, and I went, 'Oh, I forgot to put on my *tefillin* today.'"

"So I said, 'Hashem, I forgot to put on my *tefillin* today! Please send me *tefillin* so I could put on *tefillin* for You.'"

Here he is in the middle of this random neighborhood, where is he going to get *tefillin* from? He said, "And right after I said this prayer, right after I *daven* to Hashem, 'Hashem, this one thing I do, help me to do,' you walked in with your *tefillin*."

The guy says, "You think that's amazing? Wait till you hear what I'm doing here! I got on a bus to go visit my father and the whole thing ended up being a false call. The whole thing was a false alarm, I didn't need to be there, everything! Hashem woke me up this morning and put me on three buses for one reason, one reason only, my friend: to get you these *tefillin*.

So that you can keep your commitment, that your one *mitzvah*, that thing you're holding on, your step forward that you decided that other people may say is so small in the scheme of things, to Hashem it's not small at all. That's you being a warrior. That's you living for what life's about. That's you taking that step forward that shakes heaven and earth, that transforms who you are, that unlocks all the power of Hashem in your corner.

That's how precious it is to Hashem, and we need to never ever forget that."



102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Ben Ish Chai Appears in This World to Activate the Power of a Jew!

Chacham Ephraim Cohen zt"l (father of Chacham Shalom Cohen zt"l) went to sleep one night, and the Ben Ish Chai appeared to him in a dream. "Chacham Ephraim," the Ben Ish Chai cried out. "Get up quickly and plead with Hashem! My beloved friend Rav Yehuda Tzadkah is in critical condition and in danger of leaving this world!"

In his dream, Chacham Ephraim felt frightened as the Ben Ish Chai continued to cry out, "Tear the heavens open so that Hashem will annul the decree and Rav Yehuda Tzadkah will continue to live!"

Rav Ephraim awoke in fright, washed his hands, recited brachos, and began saying Tehillim word by word. Tears fell from his eyes, as he trembled and davened for Rav Yehuda Tzadkah's recovery. Rav Ephraim wasn't aware of Rav Yehuda's condition, but he trusted his dream and davened intently.

After reciting Tehillim for hours, Chacham Ephraim went to daven at dawn. When he finished, he searched for Rav Yehuda in the shul and neighborhood, and when he saw that Rav Yehuda was indeed missing, he headed to the nearby Bikur Cholim Hospital to see if he was there.

The hospital staff confirmed that Rav Yehuda had arrived during the night and was resting in a room on an upper floor.

Chacham Ephraim ascended to Rav Yehuda Tzadkah's room, and as soon as Rav Yehuda's family members saw him, they were taken aback. "How did you know that Rav Yehuda Tzadkah is here?" they asked. "Who told you he's sick? The rav was rushed here in critical condition in the middle of the night, and we didn't have a chance to inform anyone yet!"

"How did I know?" Chacham Ephraim said. "The Ben Ish Chai came to me in a dream and told me. He begged me to tear the heavens open and to say Tehillim to arouse Hashem's mercy so that Rav Yehuda would not pass away. I awoke immediately and spent the whole night wholeheartedly saying Tehillim."

Rav Yehuda's family members were astounded. They informed Chacham Ephraim that, baruch Hashem, that morning Rav Yehuda's condition had stabilized, and his condition was no longer considered critical.

Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt"l, mashgiach of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, heard this story and asked a powerful question:

"The Ben Ish Chai is up in Shamayim, beneath the Kisei Hakavod, close to the Shechinah. The most logical thing would be for him to stand before the Kisei Hakavod, to plead with Hashem to heal Rav Yehuda Tzadkah. After all, how did the Ben Ish Chai know about Rav Yehuda's condition? He heard about it from the Heavenly Court! So why descend to this world and wake Rav Ephraim up to daven? He could have simply pleaded before Hashem together with other tzaddikim in Gan Eden! We all know that when a person needs a yeshuah, he goes to kivrei tzaddikim and asks them to daven for him. So why did the Ben Ish Chai call upon Chacham Ephraim?"

Rav Nosson Wachtfogel answered with a penetrating and powerful truth:

"The Ben Ish Chai came to Rav Ephraim in a dream to beg him to cry out, because tefillah in this world, from the depths of a living person's heart, pierces the heavens and annuls decrees far more than the tefillah of even a tzaddik in Olam Ha'emes, near the Kisei Hakavod. Only in our world are decrees issued and changed, because the power of our mouths is immeasurable and creates wonders in the upper worlds."

Tefillah, even in the privacy of your room, with a single tear of earnest, heartfelt supplication has incredible and mighty power. So much so, that the Ben Ish Chai would descend into this world just to activate it.

Oh, the mighty power that a perek of Tehillim said for Klal Yisrael these days has! How many decrees are nullified through earnest, heartfelt tefilllos!

Sometimes, we see people demean tefillah. They think Aleinu is Tefillas Haderech, a tefillah for the road, and they head toward the door as they say it! Why?

Because the person saying it doesn't understand what an awesome, fearsome power he holds in his mouth.

When people recite mishnayos, Tehillim, and words of tefillah, they think their lips are moving here on earth. They don't realize: "They have set their mouth against Heaven..." Their mouths are doing great things in Heaven, changing decrees, and turning over worlds.

When we say words of Tehillim, tefillah, and brachos, we stir things up in Heaven.

Every Jew has the power to change things. Now is the time to act and to remain connected with our Tehillim. No matter how small we are, in this manner, we can change our life for the better!



Who Wrote Adon Olam and How Did It Become So Famous? By Yehuda Shurpin

Despite there being no mention of the hymn in Talmudic times, Adon Olam ("Master of the World") is found in many prayer books, including those of the Ashkenaz, Sefard, and Yemenite communities.

In many communities, Adon Olam is recited at the beginning of the morning service, before Shacharit. But this was not always the case. In medieval times, it was customarily said on the night of Yom Kippur, and over the centuries it migrated to other parts of the prayers, so that practices now vary widely.

Some communities say it before Shacharit, while others say it after Shacharit or Maariv. Many Ashkenazic communities in Israel conclude the Friday night service with Adon Olam, whereas Sefardic and Yemenite communities conclude the Shabbat morning service with it instead. In the Babylonian tradition, it closes the *Bakashot* (the pre-dawn supplications), and some communities recite it around Selichot during Elul and the High Holidays. Moroccan Jews also customarily sang it before the bride was escorted to the chuppah.

So while it is always tempting to theorize that it became popularized due to well-known singers and cantors putting it to catchy tunes, it is really the other way around.

To understand why this is, let us start with a bit of background.

What Is the Hymn About?

At a basic level, the hymn praises G-d as the world's eternal Creator and Guide. He was, He is, and He will be. His greatness transcends the world and is entirely independent of it. It concludes with a declaration of our trust in Him, as we entrust our bodies and souls to His care, both when we go to sleep and when we awake.

Who Wrote It?

No one knows for certain, and several candidates have been proposed.

The hymn is often attributed to the poet Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol (1021-1058), but there is no solid evidence. It is not included in his works, and its meter does not match his other compositions. On the other hand, the theme and even some of the words seem to be similar to those used in his philosophical works.

Others attribute it to Rav Sherirah Gaon (c. 906 – c. 1006) or to Rav Hai Gaon (939-1038), and some, like Likkutei Mahariach, trace it as far back as the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. Still others suggest Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra, based on the poem's style and its first appearance in Western Europe.

Some write that the Babylonian Geonim instituted its recital on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, in response to Christian claims about the Trinity.

Earliest Extant Manuscript Mentioning Adon Olam

The earliest dated reference to Adon Olam in a liturgical work comes from 13th-century England. In *Etz Chaim*, a comprehensive code of Jewish liturgy completed in London in 1287 by Rabbi Yaakov ben Yehuda Hazzan, Adon Olam is listed as the hymn to be recited after the morning *Aleinu* on the fast of 9 Av.

Significantly, the author does not write out the text of the hymn but refers to it only by name. This suggests that it was already well known to the community and had been in use for some time.

Etz Chaim was completed just three years before King Edward I expelled the Jews of England in 1290. The manuscript survived and is preserved today in the Leipzig University Library.

Earlier versions of the hymn exist in a fragment from the Cairo Genizah and in a manuscript preserved at Oxford. Since neither is

dated, however, it is impossible to say for certain whether they predate *Etz Chaim*.

This brings us back to the question of the importance of this prayer.

Why Did Adon Olam Become So Famous?

For starters, the 16th-century Matteh Moshe (by Rabbi Moshe of Premyslan) cites a tradition attributed to Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid, Rav Hai Gaon, and Rav Sherira Gaon: Those who recite Adon Olam with proper intent will have their prayers heard, and no adversary will be able to prosecute against them, even on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Some add that even their evil inclination will make peace with them, as King Solomon says: "When a man's ways please G-d, even his enemies will make peace with him."

What Is So Special About It?

The Shulchan Aruch rules that when saying a blessing, one should have in mind the meaning of G-d's Name, both as it is read and as it is written.

As it is pronounced, A-do-nai means "Master of all." As it is written, *Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh*, it means that G-d "was, is, and will be."

Adon Olam expresses both these ideas. The three lines of its opening stanza reflect the three tenses of the Name:

- **Past:** "Master of the world, Who reigned before any being was created."
- **Present:** "When all was made by His will, then His name was proclaimed King."
- **Future:** "And after all has ceased to be, He alone will reign in awe."

Reciting Adon Olam before prayer was instituted so that this intent would remain fresh in one's mind throughout the service. This is why the Geonim taught that whoever concentrates on Adon Olam at the beginning will have their prayers heard.

On a Deeper Level

The Kabalists explain that the words Adon Olam [**אדון עולם**] have the same numerical value (gematria) as Ein Sof, "the Infinite One" [**אין סוף**]. This alludes to G-d's infinite will, which existed before Creation. That it is only hinted at in the words suggests that in this world, the Infinite is concealed.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

Years ago, a man named Yankel worked in a small cubicle located in New York's bustling diamond district on 47th Street. Yankel was a devoted follower and *chasid* of the **Klausenberger Rebbe, R' Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam *zt"l***. The *Rebbe* frequently taught him a profound lesson about livelihood, explaining that sustenance comes directly from *Hashem*. - Because nobody can predict where their blessings will originate or how much they will receive, the *Rebbe* stressed that a person must meticulously value every single penny and treat each coin with utmost responsibility.

Yankel's daily routine involved traveling from store to store, connecting with different vendors and merchants to hawk his wares. It was a cash business that required immense care, constant travel to different cities, and strict attention to detail.

As part of his diamond business, Yankel frequently traveled out of town to conduct transactions. One of his regular stops was in Detroit, where he frequently did business with a wealthy Armenian merchant named Harry. Known to all as "Harry the Armenian *Goy*," he was a straightforward man who bought large quantities of diamonds from various dealers on 47th Street, including Yankel. Their professional relationship was built on honesty and efficiency: Yankel would visit Harry's office, showcase his selection, and Harry would immediately select what he wanted, paying for the goods in cash right on the spot.

During one particular visit to Detroit, Yankel brought a very large selection of diamonds to Harry's office. After looking through the goods, Harry chose a large amount of stones, resulting in a very significant transaction total. When they calculated the exact amount due, Harry piled the cash bills onto the desk along with the remaining loose coins.

Wanting to follow his *Rebbe's* teaching about cherishing every single coin, Yankel made sure to include the loose change in the payment.

As Harry pushed the stack of bills and coins forward across the desk to pay Yankel, one of the coins suddenly rolled off the edge and dropped straight underneath the heavy desk.

Faced with an awkward situation, Yankel hesitated to crawl under a client's desk. Remembering the *Rebbe's* lesson about never ignoring a single penny, however, Yankel politely asked Harry if he could search beneath the desk. Harry readily agreed, and Yankel crawled down into the dusty space underneath.

While reaching around in the dark floor dust, Yankel felt the fallen coin, but his fingers also brushed against another unusual object right next to it. Curious, he scooped up both items and crawled back out from beneath the desk.

Opening his hand, Yankel revealed the fallen coin alongside a large, magnificent, and highly valuable diamond. He immediately looked at Harry and suggested that he must have accidentally lost the precious stone under his desk. However, Harry firmly insisted that the diamond could not possibly be his, stating that he kept meticulous track of every single item in his inventory.

Even though Harry urged him to keep it as a gift, Yankel refused, explaining that he could not accept something that rightfully belonged to someone else. Unable to resolve whose stone it was, they placed the diamond inside Harry's safe to wait for its rightful owner.

A while later, Yankel was back in his cubicle on 47th Street, listening to the usual background chatter of fellow diamond dealers discussing their clients and deals. Suddenly, he overheard two colleagues talking about another dealer named Yossel who was tragically going out of business. Intrigued and concerned, Yankel leaned over to ask why Yossel was failing.

His colleagues explained that Yossel had suffered a devastating loss when he misplaced an extremely valuable stone and could never recover financially from the blow.

Realizing the connection, Yankel immediately called across the room to ask if Yossel happened to be a patron of Harry the Armenian *Goy* in Detroit. When his colleagues confirmed that Yossel indeed did business with Harry, Yankel's heart skipped a beat. He urged them to have Yossel call Harry immediately to inquire about a lost stone. Sure enough, Yossel made the call, and it was discovered that the magnificent diamond Yankel had found beneath the desk belonged entirely to Yossel.

Harry joyfully returned the stone to Yossel, allowing him to recover his losses and save his business.

Through this remarkable event, Yankel saw firsthand the profound truth in the *Rebbe's* teaching: that every single penny is sent from Heaven with a purpose, and no act of honesty or care for *Hashem's* blessings ever goes to waste.

A wise man once said:

"If you are thinking one year ahead, you plant rice. If you are thinking twenty years ahead, you plant trees. If you are thinking a hundred years ahead, you educate people."



Working on our Middos

Rav Chaim Volozhiner, zt"l, a Talmid of the Vilna Gaon, writes in Nefesh HaChaim that if one is ever faced by danger, R"L, if they concentrate on the words "Ein Od Milvado", "There is no power other than Hashem", then all other forces will be nullified and the danger will disappear.

His descendant, the **Brisker Rav, zt"l**, in World War II, when escaping from German occupied Poland towards Lithuania, made a harrowing three-day journey towards the border. While many people on the same route were murdered by the Nazis, ym"s, his wagon traveled along quietly without encountering any disturbance, experiencing many miracles along the way.

When he was about to cross the border, he was stopped by a soldier who started physically abusing him. After a few minutes another soldier mysteriously appeared and told him to leave the Brisker Rav alone.

The Brisker Rav later told a student that during the entire journey he strained himself to concentrate only on "Ein Od Milvado". However, once he approached the border, he relaxed, thinking that he was safe, and exactly at that point he was harassed by the soldier. He immediately started to concentrate again, and the mysterious soldier came to the Rav's aid.

Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl, the Rav of the Old City, when relating this story taught that strengthening our recognition that nothing but Hashem can help us in any situation, is a tremendous Segulah for removing any and all bad decrees. It is not sufficient to just say the words "Ein Od Milvado", but we must actually feel it!

Hashem Was There The Entire Time by Rabbi Yisroel Brog

"When I was ten years old, the Second World War broke out. I was separated from my parents, my four brothers, and my two sisters. But just before I was torn away from my father, he looked at me and said: 'Naftali, remember HaKadosh Baruch Hu. He can save you anywhere and in any situation. Always remember the pasuk: גַּם כִּי־אֵלֵךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמָוֶת לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי - "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me."'

A few minutes later, I was ripped from my father's hands. From that moment on, I began to daven. Through my tears, I begged Hashem to let me live.

They loaded me onto a cattle car together with many other Jews. I was the only child in that car. The crowding was unbearable. People were pressed against one another, and I was terrified that I would be crushed. I whispered to Hashem, 'Please, give me a little space. Please don't let me be crushed.'

Suddenly, the man beside me stretched out his leg, while another man on the opposite side shifted his arm. Somehow, a small pocket of space opened around me.

I thanked Hashem. And I continued to daven.

After a long and terrifying journey, we arrived at a place where a selection was taking place. Those considered strong enough to work were sent to the right. The elderly and the children were sent to the left - to their deaths.

I understood immediately. I was ten years old.

By every natural calculation, I belonged on the left. I had no chance. So I began crying to Hashem with everything I had.

"Please, Hashem. Give me my life as a gift. Please save me."

The line moved closer and closer. When it was almost my turn, the Nazi officer conducting the selection suddenly stopped to light a cigarette.

To me, that cigarette was a message. I felt that Hashem was giving me a few more moments to daven. So I begged harder.

The Nazi paced back and forth while smoking. Then suddenly, he slipped in the mud and struck his head. He became furious. What angered him most was not the pain, but the humiliation of having fallen in front of the Jews - and the fact that his uniform was now covered in mud. He began cursing and stormed away to clean himself.

For a few brief moments, no one was watching us. Suddenly, a local man came running toward me.

"Child," he whispered, "I want to save your life. Come with me."

I froze. What if it was a trap? What if I ran and was caught? But then I thought: If I stay here, I am almost certainly going to die. If I follow this man, at least there is a possibility that I may live. So I went with him.

He led me to a small shed filled with straw used for animal feed. "Stay here," he told me. "Do not make a sound. I will come back for you."

I remained there for the entire day. I was freezing. I was hungry. I was desperately thirsty. And throughout the day, I could hear the cries and groans of Jews being tortured nearby. I cried with them. And I cried to Hashem. I begged Him to save me and to save them. And I made a promise: **"Hashem, if You spare my life, I will become a Yerei Shamayim. I will remain faithful to You."**

Late that night, the door of the shed opened. The same man entered - but now he was dressed in a Nazi uniform. I was terrified.

He immediately whispered, "Don't be afraid. The uniform is only a disguise." Then he sat down beside me.

"Can I tell you something?" he asked.

"My name is Alex. My mother is Jewish. My father is German. The Nazis have not yet discovered that my mother is Jewish, but I know that sooner or later they will. And when they do, they will kill me.

"According to the Torah, because my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish too. And I am afraid of the day when I will stand before the Creator and He will see that I lived my entire life as a non-Jew. So I made a promise to Hashem."

"I promised Him that I would save one Jew from the Nazis - someone who would go on to fulfil His will - and perhaps that mitzvah would become a merit for me in Heaven."

Then Alex looked directly at me. "Child, if I save you, will you keep the mitzvos?"

I answered immediately. "Yes. I promise."

I told him how I had been davening to Hashem all day and how I had already promised that if I survived, I would live as a G-d-fearing Jew.

Alex stood up. "Then come with me," he said. "I am taking you to Switzerland."

Outside was a horse and wagon made to resemble those used by the Nazis, so that we would not arouse suspicion. He hid me carefully inside. He gave me bread, vegetables, and water.

I ate. I thanked Hashem with all my heart. And then I thanked Alex.

We traveled through the night until we reached the border. Before we separated, Alex handed me money and false papers that would allow me to continue my journey.

Then he looked at me and said: **"Naftali, remain a kosher Jew. Let that be my zechus in Heaven."**

I looked at him. "Alex, what about you? Where are you going?"

"I am going home," he said. "I have a wife and children."

I stared at him. "But you told me they are eventually going to discover that your mother is Jewish. You are going back to be killed. Why would you return?"

"I cannot abandon my family," he answered.

I asked him, "Is your wife Jewish?"

He lowered his head. "No. Unfortunately, she is not."

I said to him, "Then come with me. Save your life. What is the value of your apartment and your money if you are going back to die?"

Alex stood there silently. Then he began pacing back and forth. He had never considered such a thing. He had a home. He had possessions. He had a family. But now a ten-year-old Jewish boy was forcing him to confront the truth.

Finally, Alex stopped. He looked at me. "You are speaking wisely," he said. And then he made his decision.

"I will flee with you."

With Hashem's help, after a long and exhausting journey, we eventually reached America. Alex brought me to rabbanim in the Jewish community and entrusted me to their care. They found a family to raise me. They enrolled me in Talmud Torah. And Alex went his own way.

Years passed. I grew up.

At the age of thirty-one, I was still not married. Then one day, a shidduch was suggested with a young woman from a family of baalei teshuvah. The shidduch progressed well. Eventually, her father asked to meet me. When we sat down together, he introduced himself.

"My name is Eliezer," he said. Then he asked me my name.

"Naftali," I answered.

And during our conversation, I mentioned that during the war I had been saved by a man named Alex.

The man suddenly jumped out of his chair. His face changed.

"Naftali?" he cried. "Is that really you?"

I could not understand his reaction. "Yes," I said. "How do you know me?"

He stared at me. And then he said: **"My name used to be Alex."**

It was him. The man who had saved my life. After leaving me with the rabbanim, Alex had moved to another city in America. There, he began studying Torah under one of the great Chassidic leaders. He did complete teshuvah. He changed his name from Alex to Eliezer - acknowledging that Hashem had been his help, saving his life and giving him the merit to save mine. Eventually, he married a righteous Jewish woman. And now, decades later, the young woman I had been dating was his eldest daughter.

The man who had saved my life was about to become my father-in-law. I had no words.

My grandfather would tell this story twice every year. And each time, he would end with the same lesson: **Look at the power of tefillah.**

I davened. I cried. I did not give up. And look at what Hashem did.

And look at the power of chesed. When Eliezer saved my life, he thought he was saving another Jew. But that act of chesed ultimately saved him as well - physically and spiritually. –

That is emunah. To live with the awareness that Hashem is present at every moment, in every place, even when everything around us appears hopeless.

Chizuk - Inspiration

The Maharsham, Rabbi Sholom Mordechai Hacohen Schwadron ZT"L, was the leading halachic authority (Posek) of his generation. He once wrote a responsum, later quoted in the Sdei Chemed, ruling that there was potentially more room for leniency regarding the prohibition of writing on Shabbos when using typeset print than when writing by hand. He supported his ruling with a responsum from Rabbi Eleazar ben Judah ben Kalonymos ZT"L, the Rokeach.

In 5670 (1910), a year before his passing, he received a letter from Rabbi Dov Behr Ritter ZT"L, Av Beis Din of Rotterdam. Rabbi Ritter respectfully pointed out a problem with the Maharsham's proof from the responsum: the Rokeach had lived several hundred years before Gutenberg invented printing, so he could not have been referring to typeset print. Accordingly, the Maharsham must have misunderstood what the Rokeach had written.

The Maharsham read the letter aloud. A promising young scholar was in the room to be tested for Semichah (rabbinical ordination) by the aged gaon. He suggested a way to save face: the Rav could blame the error on a misprint in his edition of the Rokeach.

The Maharsham was puzzled by the idea. He answered, "What will I gain by doing so? The truth is that I made a mistake, and Heaven forbid that I should try to save my honor by telling a lie! He who fails to admit his mistakes does not believe in Hashem, Who is Truth!"

He then wrote back to Rabbi Ritter, lavishly praising and thanking him for catching the error. He added a German saying: "Irren ist menschlich," meaning "To err is human." The leading Posek of his generation had a convenient excuse handed to him. He refused to use it because he believed that failing to admit a mistake was tantamount to denying Hashem.

Sweeter Than Honey

To See, Care, And Do!

A Skverer chassid was once looking for a minyan to daven Maariv when he happened to pass **R' Dovid Feinstein's** yeshiva. He told his wife that he was going inside to daven, and she decided to wait for him in the hallway.

The chassid walked into the shul. It was empty except for one older Yid sitting and learning. He asked the man, "When is the next minyan?" The man looked up and answered, "In a few minutes."

The older Yid noticed the chassid's wife standing in the hallway. Without being asked, he got up, brought her a chair, and made sure she had somewhere to sit. Only later did the chassid find out WHO had brought his wife a chair. It was none other than **R' Dovid Feinstein ztl**, one of the Gedolei Hador!

The Final Link In The Chain by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



On one occasion, the Chazon Ish traveled to Vilna and entered one of the local shuls. The people there did not know who he was. The Chazon Ish wanted to spend some time learning, so he walked over to the sefarim shelf, took down a Chumash, and prepared to sit down.

The gabbai noticed him. He walked over to the unfamiliar visitor and asked: "Are you a member of this shul?"

The Chazon Ish answered that he was not.

The gabbai promptly took the Chumash out of his hands and returned it to the shelf.

But that wasn't enough. Apparently feeling that this stranger needed to be taught a lesson, the gabbai proceeded to give him mussar for what he had done.

The Chazon Ish listened. He didn't argue. He didn't reveal his identity. He didn't embarrass the man. But afterward, the Chazon Ish said something surprising: **"I'm going to take nekamah."** He was going to take revenge.

The next day, the Chazon Ish returned to the same shul. During davening, the gabbai began making his rounds with the pushka, collecting tzedakah.

At that time, the Jews of Vilna were extremely poor. People had very little to give. If someone could contribute even a single coin, that itself was significant.

Eventually, the gabbai reached the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish reached into his pocket - and dropped fifteen coins into the pushka.

The gabbai was stunned. Fifteen coins? Who was this wealthy man? Then he looked more carefully. It was the same man he had rebuked the day before. The same stranger whose Chumash he had taken away.

The following day, when the Chazon Ish entered the shul, the gabbai reacted very differently. He hurried over to the shelf. He selected the nicest, newest Chumash he could find. Then he ran over and respectfully presented it to him.

That was the Chazon Ish's nekamah. That was his revenge. He didn't humiliate the gabbai. He didn't put him in his place. He didn't tell everyone, "Do you know how this man treated me?" He simply responded by giving.

That is the revenge of a ben Torah.

Rabbi Goldwasser then shared another extraordinary story - this one about Rav Kushilevsky, shlita.

Years before the remarkable simchah that would eventually bring such tremendous chizuk to Klal Yisrael, Rav Kushilevsky went to the great tzaddik, the Baba Sali. He asked for a brachah that he and his wife should be blessed with a child.

The Baba Sali gave him a bottle of his special water and instructed him to bring it home and have his Rebbetzin drink it. Everything, the Baba Sali told him, would be good.

Rav Kushilevsky accepted the words with emunah. He traveled home.

By the time he arrived, it was already late at night. His Rebbetzin was sleeping, and he did not want to wake her. So he placed the bottle carefully inside the refrigerator.

There was a bachur staying in their home at the time. During the night, the bachur became very thirsty. He opened the refrigerator. He saw a bottle of water. He took it out. And he drank it. **Every last drop**.

The next morning, Rav Kushilevsky discovered what had happened. The water was gone. The special bottle the Baba Sali had given him for his Rebbetzin - was empty.

Imagine the disappointment. Imagine how easy it would have been to react.

"Do you have any idea what you just drank?" "Why would you take something from the refrigerator without asking?" "This was from the Baba Sali!"

But Rav Kushilevsky said nothing. **Not one word.** He did not rebuke the bachur. He did not embarrass him. He did not even let him know what he had done.

For all those years, he never told the bachur. Never complained. Never made him feel guilty. **That is gevurah.**

And there is a profound perspective behind that kind of self-control.

Rabbi Goldwasser quoted a fundamental teaching from Rav Elchonon Wasserman, zt"l.

A person must learn to understand the mishpetei Hashem - the way events unfold in this world. Everything that happens is part of a tremendous chain. The chain begins in Shamayim. What eventually reaches us down here is merely the last link.

The person standing in front of us is often only the final link in the chain.

Someone causes you a loss. Someone embarrasses you. Someone makes a mistake that affects your life. Someone drinks the bottle of water you brought home from the Baba Sali.

Our instinct is to focus entirely on that person. **"Look what he did to me."**

But a person who lives with emunah tries to look beyond the final link. Yes, people have free will. If someone chooses to behave improperly, he is responsible for his actions. Wrongdoing does not suddenly become right. But there is another truth as well:

No human being controls what Hashem has decreed should reach you. The person may be the final link. But he is not the One holding the chain.

That changes everything. The Chazon Ish could have looked at the gabbai and seen the man who had embarrassed him. Instead, he gave fifteen coins to his pushka.

Rav Kushilevsky could have looked at the bachur and seen the person who had consumed the precious water intended for his Rebbetzin. Instead, he remained silent.

Because when you understand where the chain begins, you don't have to spend your life fighting with its final link.

How much anger do we carry because we believe another person took something away from us?

How much resentment do we hold because of something someone said or did?

How often do we replay the moment and think: If only he hadn't done that... If only she hadn't said that... If only that person hadn't gotten involved...

And perhaps sometimes we need to remind ourselves: **You are looking at the final link.** Look higher. The chain stretches far beyond what you can see. It reaches all the way to Shamayim.

The person who hurt you is responsible for the choices he made. But your life is not in his hands. Your parnassah is not in his hands. Your future is not in his hands. **You are not in his hands.**

Everything that ultimately reaches a person comes through a chain whose beginning he cannot see.

And that is one of the great gifts of emunah. It doesn't necessarily explain why something happened. But it reminds us Who is in control.

So when someone wrongs us, before allowing anger to consume us, perhaps we can remember the Chazon Ish. Remember Rav Kushilevsky. And remember the teaching of Rav Elchonon Wasserman:

Don't mistake the final link for the One holding the chain.

Secrets of the Sages - Kedushah Beis Hamedrash as espoused by the Tzaddikim

"...Who speak idle words and engage in trivial conversation, for which the punishment is exceedingly severe. For what greater chutzpah could there be than this? When you stand before a minister or ruler, you would certainly be afraid to utter even the slightest idle remark." ~ **Rav Elazar of Kelin -** Yahrzeit 15 Cheshvan, 5562 (1801)