TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



משפטים

לעילוי נשמת



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ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

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משפטים

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



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

מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק - *"Distance yourself from a false word ..." (23:7)*

R' Zusia of Anipol z"l (18th century chassidic rebbe) said, "When you speak untruths, you distance yourself from Hashem and all of your good deeds will not draw you close again."

R' Zusia's brother, **R' Elimelech**, said, "I am confident that when I am asked Above whether I toiled in Torah study, I will tell the truth: 'I did not.' The outcome will be that because I told the truth, I will merit a place in the World-to-Come."

(quoted in Itturei Torah)

אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ - *"To the poor person with you ..." (22:24)*

The poor person's money is with you, and you must therefore give charity. The money that you possess is only a bailment with which Hashem has entrusted you so that you can support the poor. *(Ma'aseh Rokeach; quoted in Ma'ayanah Shel Torah)*

Letters from Our Sages

The following letter was written on behalf of **R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l (1905-1993; the "Klausenberger Rebbe")**. It appears to be a response to an individual who was dissatisfied with a perceived lack of opportunities to serve Hashem. The letter appears in Michtavei Torah, Volume IV, p.71.

'Your precious letter . . . was received by the Rebbe (shlita) [zatzal]. The Rebbe instructed me to write to you that in his opinion, the meaning of the verse [Mishlei 3:6], "In all your ways know Him," is as follows: Whatever direction a person "happens" to go, on whatever path a person's life takes him, he must know Hashem and serve Him with all his heart. A person may not let his spirit fall or get caught up in thoughts of hopelessness over the fact that G-d did not direct him along a smoother road. Rather, in all your ways know Him – as you are and in whatever circumstances you find yourself.

Therefore, if one who is not fortunate enough to make the Torah his full-time occupation and he works to support his household by the toil of his hands, he should serve Hashem through his work and he should remember the words of the Sages [Avot Ch.2], "Torah study is good together with an occupation, for toiling in both of these causes man to forget sin."

If he will set times for Torah study to the extent he is able, then the words of Torah (which is likened to fire, as it is written [Yirmiyah 23:29], "Behold! My words are like fire") will consume the

yetzer hara, which is also called "fire" [in a number of places in the Talmud].

Our sages have taught [Kiddushin 30b] that Hashem created the Torah as an antidote to the yetzer hara; know that every letter of gemara that is learned for the sake of the mitzvah of Torah study destroys a portion of the yetzer hara, and "may all evil vanish like smoke . . ." [as we say in the High Holiday prayers].

However, know that just as with a medicine for the body, where if a small dose doesn't work the doctor will increase the dosage, so with medicine for the soul, if a person feels that two hours of Torah study has not enabled him to control the fire of the yetzer hara, he must double or triple the amount of his Torah study until he gets the fire under control.'



וּמַרְאֵה כְּבוֹד ה' כְּאֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָר לְעֵינֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - *The appearance of the glory of Hashem was like a consuming fire . . ." (24:17)*

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1784-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) notes that it is only Hashem's "appearance" which is fearsome like fire. His true "essence" is Kindness. (Kohelet Yaakov: Rosh Hashanah p.4)

'People search relentlessly for a "city of happiness" – not realizing that it could only be found in a "state of mind."' ~ R' Avraham Pam zt"l.

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ - "***When you lend money to My people, the poor person with you*** . . ." (22:24)

R' Shlomo Algazi z"l (17th century) observes: This verse teaches that when you lend money or give charity to a poor person, you are not doing only him a favour. - "When you lend money to My people, the poor person ***with you***"– you are doing a kindness for yourself as well. (Shaima Shlomo)

וְאֶל־אֲצִילֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יָדֹו וַיֶּחֱזוּ אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ - "***Against the great men of Bnei Yisrael, He did not stretch out His hand– they gazed at Elokim, and they ate and drank.***" (24:11)



Rashi z"l comments: **מִכְּלָל שֶׁהָיוּ רְאוּיִים לְהִשְׁתַּלַּח בָּהֶם יָד** - "*This implies that they were deserving of Hashem stretching out His hand against them.*"

What was their sin?

R' Mordechai Banet z"l (1753-1829; rabbi of Nikolsburg, Moravia) explains: The Aramaic translation Targum Yonatan states, **וַהֲווֹן חָדָן בְּקוּרְבָּנֵיהוֹן דְּאִתְקַבָּלוּ בִּרְעָוָא הֵי כְּאָכְלִין וְהֵי כְשַׁתְיָין** - "*They rejoiced at the acceptance of their offerings as if they had eaten and drank.*"

Seemingly this is a good thing, as we read (Nechemiah 8:10), **לְכוּ אִכְלוּ מַשְׁמַנִּים וּשְׁתוּ מַמְתַּקִּים... כִּי־חֶדְוַת ה' הִיא מָעֻזְכֶם** ""*Go, eat fat foods and drink sweet drinks…The enjoyment of Hashem is your strength!*"

Nevertheless, the great men of Bnei Yisrael were deserving of punishment because the fact that the revelation of Hashem brought them as much joy as eating and drinking means that they valued eating and drinking too highly. (Derashot Maharam Banet: Drush 5)



אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ לֹא־תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה לֹא־תְשִׂימוּן עָלָיו נֶשֶׁךְ - ***"When you lend money to My people, the poor person with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not lay interest upon him"*** (22:24)

R' Shlomo Algazi z"l (17th century) observes: This verse is teaching that when you lend money or give charity to a poor person, you are not doing only him a favour. "When you lend money to My people, the poor person with you" – you are doing a kindness for yourself as well. (Shaima Shlomo)

Rambam writes: There are eight levels of charity:

(1) The highest level is achieved by one who puts the poor person back on his own feet either through a gift, a loan, taking him as a partner, or finding him a job. The other levels, in descending order, are as follows:

(2) Giving charity in such a way that the giver and the recipient do not know each other (for example, by putting money in a pushka);

(3) If the giver knows the recipient, but the recipient does not know the giver;

(4) If the recipient knows the giver, but the giver does not know the recipient;

(5) Putting money directly into the pauper's hand without being asked;

(6) Giving a respectable donation after being asked;

(7) Giving less than a respectable donation, but with a smile; and

(8) Giving any amount with a frown. (Hil. Matnot Aniyim 10:7-14)

לֹא תִשָּׂא שֵׁמַע שָׁוְא - *"Do not accept a false report."* (23:1)



Rashi writes: **אַזְהָרָה לִמְקַבֵּל לָשׁוֹן הָרָע** - *This is a warning not to accept lashon hara.*

R' Dov Berzon z"l asks: Why is it forbidden to accept lashon hara?

The answer is simply that one who accepts lashon hara is an accomplice to the sin of speaking lashon hara. If no one would listen to lashon hara, no one would speak it.

Rambam (Hil. Teshuvah 4:3) writes: There are five sins that if one commits one of them, complete repentance is impossible. One of these is "sharing with a thief" (i.e., fencing stolen goods), because one who shares with a thief enables the thief to steal. - R' Berzon explains that if thieves had no means to dispose of what they stole, they would be less likely to steal.

People often say, "Who am I hurting by listening to lashon hara?" This argument is mistaken; one who listens to lashon hara causes others to sin by speaking lashon hara. (Dovaiv Meisharim)

אִם־בַּעַל אִשָּׁה הוּא וְיָצְאָה אִשְׁתּוֹ עִמּוֹ - *"If he is the husband of a wife, his wife shall leave with him."* (21:3)

Was the wife of the eved ivri enslaved as well?

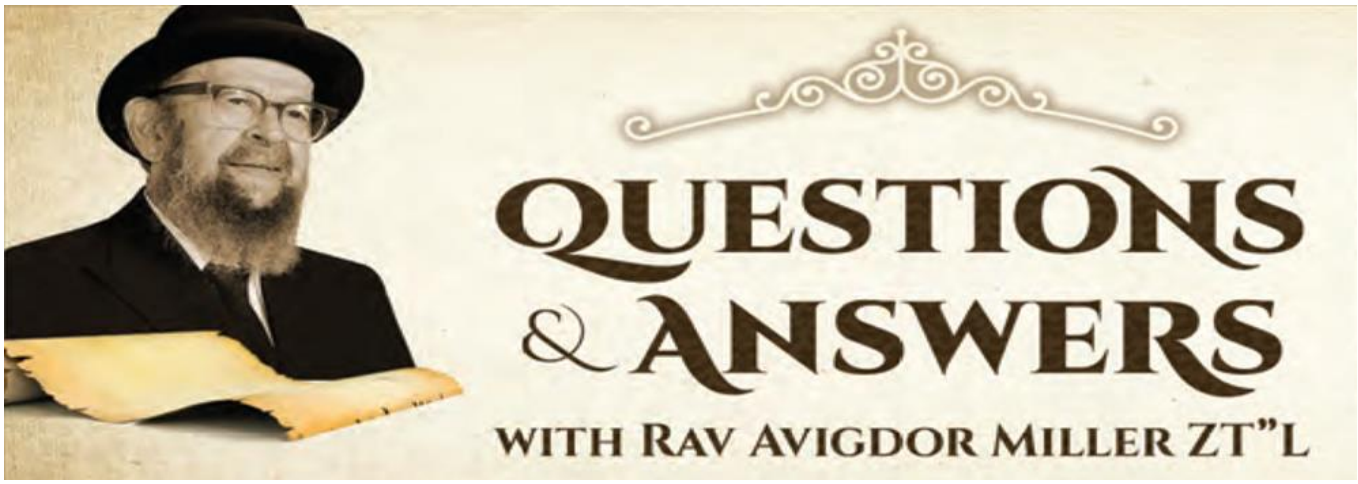
She was not. Rather, explains **R' Yehonatan Eyebschutz z"l** (Germany; died 1764), this verse is highlighting the oneness of husband and wife. - When he is enslaved, she is pained by his troubles, and it is as if she is enslaved too. (Tiferet Yehonatan)

אָדָם אֶחָד מֵאֶלֶף מָצָאתִי וְאִשָּׁה בְּכָל־אֵלֶּה לֹא מָצָאתִי - *"One man out of a thousand I found, and I did not find a woman among them" (Kohelet 7:28) – This is as it is written,* חֲמִשָּׁה בָקָר יְשַׁלֵּם תַּחַת הַשּׁוֹר *"He shall pay five cattle for the ox." (Shemos 21:37)*

The Vilna Gaon explains: The verse from Kohelet alludes to the sin of the Golden Calf, in which not one woman participated. As for the men, one out of 1,000 participated, i.e., a total of 600 men.

Why then did 3,000 people die? (See Shemos 32:28).

Because Bnei Yisrael had to pay "five for the ox," i.e., five people for every person who participated in the sin of the calf (or young ox). ~ (Kol Eliyahu)





How much emphasis should I put on yichus when choosing a shidduch?

It depends; if it's yichus that she comes, let's say, from Dovid Hamelech, then forget about it. But if it's yichus that she comes from good parents, her father is a talmid chochom, a decent man, and her mother is a quiet decent woman, then that's the best yichus there is.

Now, if you have two girls who are exactly the same, and one claims yichus from Dovid Hamelech, so you can choose the one from Dovid Hamelech – if they're both the same. But the best yichus is a good upbringing and good chinuch.

If the girl went to a good Bais Yaakov school, a frum school – not a modern school – that's a very good yichus. If the girl is quiet – by the way, you should look for a quiet girl, not for a lively vivacious girl. And the girls who are lively should act as if they're not, so that he shouldn't know that you are so lively. But don't get a lively girl. That's a yichus!

The best yichus you can find is good character and good upbringing.



Everybody says that משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה, that when Adar comes in we try to make more simcha. How do we do that?

I want you to understand that it's not difficult at all. We have within us a fountain of simcha because when Hashem blew into a man the *neshama*, He also blew in an endless fountain of happiness. And all you need is to turn on the faucet and it starts pouring out. It's remarkable how much joy there is in a human heart.

Of course, you have to be a good plumber because sometimes it's plugged up. But if you know how to unplug it, you'll understand to look at the sunlight and say, "How sweet is the sunlight," and you'll enjoy it; you'll become happy with the sunlight.

Imagine that! Happy with sunlight! It says that: **וּמָתֹוק הָאֹור וְטֹוב לַעֵינַיִם לִרְאֹות אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ**– *How sweet is the light*, how *good it is to see*

the sunlight (Koheles 11:7). - So all year round you're busy with all kinds of things, but in Adar, you take a little extra time to look at the sun and you become full of happiness.

Now, once you start practicing, you'll be amazed how much happiness you have in your heart. When you walk outside and breathe the air, even cold air, it's a happiness. It's good, clean air, and the cold helps clean the air; it makes it free of germs. When you breathe it in, you're so happy. It comes into your lungs, and it invigorates you; it makes your blood become redder and you're so happy. And so, **משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה**: "I'm so happy to see the sunlight! I'm so happy to be breathing!"



Why don't rabbonim talk more about honesty in business?

And the answer is that every day a Jew is getting this lesson. A little boy goes to the yeshiva and right away he learns 'arba avos nezikin', about all the different forms of damage that he's responsible for.

Once a man stopped me on the street and he asked me, "Why is my grandson learning law in the yeshiva? Is he going to be a lawyer?"

I told him what **Rav Yisrael Salanter** answered. Rav Yisrael Salanter said that when you grow up then it's already too late to learn the responsibility you have to a fellow man's money. You'll never feel any hargashah for somebody else's money by that time. And therefore you have to start right from the beginning.

Certainly, Jewish children are being taught that. They're learning about gezel and damages; even a lost object one has to return. The first thing we teach our little children is mamon acheirim, other

people's money. That's the first and most important lesson. So certainly the Jewish nation is getting that instruction; more than anybody else in the world.

Which nation compares to us? Mi k'amcha Yisrael goy echad ba'aretz – Who can compare to us? Which nation teaches their little boys not to do harm to other people's property?

It's ridiculous! Nobody can compare to the Jewish nation. Bava Kama and Bava Metzia and Bava Basra are all talking about mamon acheirim, about how important other people's money is.



Dovid Hamelech said that he never saw a righteous man who was forsaken by Hashem and had to beg for bread - וְלֹא־רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק נֶעֱזָב וְזַרְעוֹ מְבַקֶּשׁ־לָחֶם (Tehillim 37:25).

How do you reconcile this statement with the fact that we see many poor families who have a difficulty making a living and they have to go out to beg?

And the answer is – you'll have to forgive me; I mean that those people will have to forgive me – but not everybody whom you think is a tzaddik, actually is. The fact that a person seems to you to be a tzaddik, may just be a superficiality; a tzaddik is something that is usually an inner attitude of a person. And therefore, it's very hard for me to answer that question in general; but specifically each case that you think of, it could be that he's not. Sometimes there are exceptions, but by and large we have to say that tzaddikim don't beg.

When a person is **מְבַקֶּשׁ לָחֶם** – he begs, it's a sign that something's wrong. Why doesn't he work? Real tzaddikim don't beg – they prefer to work, any kind of work.

Now, sometimes a person works hard, but it's not enough – he needs extra money to pay for schar limud for his children. So he's not mevakesh lechem; he's mevakesh schar limud. He seeks schar limud. But for lechem, he's working. But when a person is a loafer and he's **מטיל עצמו על הציבור**, he throws himself on the community for support, I don't see what kind of tzaddik he is.

I know one person like that, a ba'al teshuva who came from out of town. He's a big ba'al teshuva – or so he thinks – he grew a big beard and now he goes around among the chassidishe shtiblach and he begs. Is that a way for a ba'al teshuva to be? A ba'al teshuva has to throw himself on frum Jews to support him? Why doesn't he work? That itself shows that he's not a genuine ba'al teshuva — that's not a tzaddik.



וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וְעָבַד לְעֹלָם - '***And his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever***.' (21:6)

Why does the Torah command the master to bore the Hebrew slave's ear, rather than any other organ of the body?

Rashi quotes Chazal who teach that, "*The ear – that heard at Har Sinai (when the Torah was given), 'For Bnei Yisrael are My servants,' and this person (eved Ivri) acquired a (new) master for himself – should be bored with the awl… They are My servants and not servants to servants.*"

The Rosh observes that the gematria, numerical equivalent, of **מַרְצֵעַ**, awl, is 400. Klal Yisrael was to be enslaved by the Egyptians for 400

years. Hashem shortened their time by 190 years. Yet, this man (who had been an indentured servant for six years) seeks to extend his servitude. - Let his ear be bored.



Avdus, servitude, is defined as the abrogation of one's personal will in deference to a master. The servant/slave has no personal will. It is all about his master.

Chazal (Pirkei Avos 2:4) state: בַּטֵּל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ, "***Nullify your will before His***." A Jew's will is to serve Hashem, to do whatever the Almighty asks of him. A Jew does not have his own will exclusive from Hashem's will.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates the story of the Ohr Sameach's personal attendant, a gabbai, sexton, who was totally devoted to his Rebbe. Whatever the Ohr Sameach would ask of him, he would carry out to the personal satisfaction of his Rebbe.

One day, the Ohr Sameach asked him to perform a specific mission for him. The man felt that it was not worth doing. (In other words, he disagreed with his Rebbe concerning the efficacy and value of this activity.) The Ohr Sameach reiterated his request. He wanted it done, regardless of his aide's misgivings. The aide replied that executing this mission involved difficulty in carrying it out.

The Ohr Sameach calmly said, "I want it to be done – regardless of the possible difficulty and questionable efficacy."

The aide was adamant in his position. He was immovable. (Clearly the Ohr Sameach had not ordered him to do it; otherwise, it would have been insolent not to listen.)

Understandably upset, the Ohr Sameach asked, "Why is it that you never listen to me?"

Shocked, his aide countered, "Why does the Rebbe say 'never'? I always carry out the Rebbe's wishes to the fullest extent. This is the first time that I feel it will not work."

The Ohr Sameach explained, "Every time that you have conformed with my request, you have done so only because you have agreed with me. In other words, you were not listening to me; you were listening to yourself! You proved this by not doing what I asked you to do today. It was not to your liking, so you demurred."

One who serves a master does not have the option of deciding to do what is agreeable to him or what he fancies. He does not have the luxury of making decisions; he only executes the decisions of his master.

Likewise, we have no room in our religion for selective observance. We do not pick and choose mitzvos according to our liking, convenience or sensibilities. There are 613 mitzvos. This number is not random.

אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתוֹ – '***If you dare cause him pain…! – For if he shall cry out to Me, I shall surely hear his outcry***.' (22:22)

Causing pain to a person whose life is wretched, who stares misery in the face each and every day, is wrong – regardless of one's motivation. Sometimes, a person's intentions are noble. He is acutely aware that the individual who is suffering might well put his suffering behind him if he would only pray with greater devotion.

Some people need to be up against the wall with little or no hope for salvation before they pray like there is no tomorrow. They must feel that it is all over; there is no way out; there is no tomorrow. Only then, do they pour out their heart in fervent prayer.

This fellow, who is really a friend sought a way to motivate prayer. He hurt the person, made him feel bad. Now, he will pay. - Hashem says that, although his intentions were positive, he caused pain for another Jew.



Peninah, wife of Elkana, was blessed with a large family, while her co-wife, Chanah, did not even have one child. Peninah realized that Chanah was not davening sufficiently, so she taunted her, hoping that it would engender within Chanah a deeper understanding of her troubles. - She would now be spurred to daven.

Peninah was punished for her actions.

What about her desire for good?

It was insufficient to transcend the pain that she felt as a result of her sister's taunts.

The Gaon, zl, m'Vilna, interprets this idea into the pasuk, "Even if you will cause him pain – so that he will cry out (your pain has a positive result, one in which father and children are able to sit together in familial conversation). - Hashem says, 'Although you have good intentions, we should do nothing to motivate him,' I will, nonetheless, listen to his outcry."

In 1942, an elderly woman arrived in Eretz Yisrael and immediately proceeded to the home of the grandson of **Horav Avraham Shaag, zl**, who was the head of the rabbinical court of the city of Koibersdorf, himself a talmid, student, of the **K'sav Sofer**.

Apparently, this woman came for a reason: she needed him to take her to Rav Shaag's grave. The man looked at the woman incredulously. Surely, she must have a good a good reason for this request. She related the following story:

Rav Shaag was the Rav of a large kehillah, congregation. His reputation for honesty was impeccable. He was, thus, often asked to hold money for people for safekeeping. When someone deposited money with him, he would place it in a special envelope for safekeeping.

One day, a businessman came and asked if he could leave a sizable amount of money with the Rav. Rav Shaag agreed, but forgot to put it into the standard envelope, instead opting to place it between the pages of his Gemorah. When he concluded learning, he returned the Gemorah to its rightful place on the shelf and promptly forgot about it.

A few days later, the man who had deposited the money came to retrieve his deposit. Rav Shaag immediately went to the envelope and almost passed out when he saw that the money was not there. He had forgotten that this time he had put the money in a different place.

In the back of his mind, he suspected the Jewish maid of "borrowing" the money. He would never dare to accuse her without proof, so he set about gathering funds to reimburse the man. He told him it would take a few days, during which he cleaned out his own bank account and borrowed from members of the community. He had lost the money. He must pay it back.

The Rav could not figure out how he could have misplaced the money; thus, in the back of his mind, he had a gnawing feeling that the mesharshes, Jewish woman who served as maid and all-round help in the house, could have "borrowed" the money. From that day, however, he and his rebbetzin kept this terrible feeling in the back of their minds.

A number of months passed, and Pesach – with its cleaning and turning everything in the house asunder – loomed in the very near future. As might be expected, when they were clearing out the bookcase and then each individual volume, what was to fall out? The missing money!

One can only imagine the personal pain experienced by Rav Shaag knowing that he had (in his mind) wrongfully suspected a Jewish woman. He was miserable and couldn't reconcile himself with it.

Finally, in order to assuage his conscience and in some manner expiate himself personally, he called in the mesharshes, told her the story, and begged her forgiveness for wrongful suspicion. As a token of his profound shame and remorse, he offered to give this poor woman anything in his house. (he had never in any way indicated to this woman the unfounded suspicion that was in his mind. Nonetheless, due to his extraordinary integrity and virtue, he wanted any vestige of personal ethical impropriety expunged.)

The woman replied, "Chalilah, Heaven Forbid, should I have any taanos, feelings of reprimand, against his honor. I was not hurt, because I did not know. However, since his honor insists on 'doing something' to ameliorate the incident, I actually do have a request. It has been fifteen years since my husband and I were married. We have yet to be blessed with a child. I ask that his honor bless me that I conceive and have a healthy child.

"He happily acquiesced to her request, and, one year later, she gave birth to a little girl. I was that girl. My mother was the misharshes. My mother, aleha ha'shalom, aspired her entire life to travel to Eretz Yisrael, to pray at the grave of the holy Rav who granted her the blessing of her life. Sadly, her dream was not realized.

I have been blessed finally to come to the Holy Land. I now want to fulfil my mother's request."

וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדוֹ לְעֹלָם – '***And his master shall bore through his ear with the awl; He then serves his master forever.***' (21:6)



Why was the ear selected over any other limb of the body?

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai explains that, if the ear heard at Har Sinai, "You shall not steal!" and the owner of that ear none-the-less went ahead and stole, his ear should be pierced.

Why should the ear be singled out, given that the hands and feet were involved in an act of theft? They should be pierced! It is almost as if the ear was held responsible for the theft.

Horav Tzvi Pesach Frank, zl, explains that the Giving of the Torah was not a one-time, isolated experience. Chazal teach that the Torah should be perceived by us as being newly-given every day. This means Hashem's voice speaks to us anew all of the time: when we take a sefer in hand; when we study Torah, we are hearing the dvar Hashem, word of G-d, as it was heard then.

The sin of the ear is that it heard it once at Har Sinai, and that was it. It was a one-time hearing with no "follow up." The fact that it did not hear the **לֹא תִגְנֹב**, Do not steal, now, is the reason that the ear is pierced.

We may never disconnect from Sinai. Hashem's voice should resonate within us all the time. It is when we stop listening to His voice, however, that we also stop doing His will, observing His mitzvos.

וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ – '***And his master shall bore through his ear with the awl***' (21:6)



Rashi quotes the well-known statement of Chazal, "The ear that heard at Har Sinai **לֹא תִגְנֹב**, you shall not steal, and this one went and stole – it should be pierced with an awl." The question is obvious: Is it not late for the reminder concerning **לֹא תִגְנֹב**? The man stole six years ago. He did not have the money to pay his debt. As a result, he was sold into slavery for six years. Now, he seeks to extend his servitude. After all, he is happy here – nice boss, nice wife, nice children. Why ruin it all and leave? He might even have to go to work and earn a living! He should have had his ear pierced when he perpetrated the theft. Why did it happen six years later?

In his Yabia Omer, **Horav Yehudah Leib Grubart** cites an analogy to explain this. There was a Jew who did not go out of his way to work too hard at mitzvah observance. He was committed, but on his terms, when it was convenient. At times, he would recite Krias Shma at the required time. At times, he even put on his Tefillin before sunset. At times, he even attended minyan in shul. In other words, he never committed a grave sin (according to today's standards). He simply stayed within the parameters of observance, so that no one could suggest that he did not practice.

One day, his evil inclination got the better of him, and he committed a grave sin, a truly egregious transgression. There was no covering up.

He was taken to the rav to discuss his punishment. "Since you committed such a terrible sin, I fine you five thousand dollars, to be distributed among the poor," the rav said.

"Rebbe! Five thousand dollars is outrageous. I have no problem giving charity, but such an outlandish sum! Rebbe, please have mercy!" was the sinner's response.

"Fine," said the rav. "Instead of paying a five thousand dollar fine, you must fast every Monday and Thursday for the following year."

"Fast? Rebbe, I am not a well man: my heart; my kidneys; I have problems with sugar. Fasting is much too dangerous an undertaking for someone in my physical condition" was the sinner's response.

"Ok, you refuse to pay a fine; you are unable to fast; then you will give up sleeping in your luxurious bed for three months. Instead, you will sleep on the floor. That will be your penance," said the rav.

"On the floor? Rebbe, as it is I am almost a hunchback. I have back problems which require me to sleep in a specially crafted bed," the sinner replied.

"Let me see," said the rav. "You committed a grave sin, and you apparently have serious difficulties agreeing to the appropriate punishment. What should we do?"

"Rebbe, I have an idea. For one complete year, I will not receive an aliyah, be called to the Torah, Shabbos or during the week. That should be sufficient punishment for me," the sinner countered.

"That is a fine? You call that punishment? For you, who hardly ever attends services in shul. How dare you call that penance? It is nothing more than another one of your deceptions. It will not work."

The analogy is quite clear. A man fell to a nadir of sin to the point that he convinced himself that it was permissible to steal from a fellow Jew. He was apprehended and had no money left to pay his debt to the victim. As a result, the bais din sold him as a slave. Once

he completed his term of punishment, he was told, "You may go. You are now a free man."

What was his response? "No, I am not leaving. I like it here. I have come to enjoy the company of my master, my wife and my children. I really would like to stay and continue my servitude."

His reaction to being released is a clear indication that the six years of servitude had not been a punishment. A person should not want to continue as a slave, unless he enjoyed it, demonstrating that this was a vacation – not an act of penance and retribution. If this is the case, let him now have his ear pierced. - Apparently, he did not hear very well when the prohibition against stealing was declared on Har Sinai.



וְגֹנֵב אִישׁ וּמְכָרוֹ וְנִמְצָא בְיָדוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת – '***One who kidnaps a man and sells him, and he was found to have been in his power, shall surely be put to death***.' (21:16)

Who would kidnap a fellow Jew? It would have to be someone who is depraved, an individual to whom human life has no meaning, certainly not someone who would refer to himself as an observant Jew.

We must take into account that when one's life is threatened, especially when it means the possibility of losing one's own child, when the stakes reach such epic proportion – a person's mind becomes clouded, and the rationality of his decisions become suspect. - In other words, when it is "me" or "you" – it is not going to be "me."

The following story, quoted in HaMeoros HaGedolim, is a classic which demonstrates that, when pushed up against a wall, the "finest" and the "best" might justify the most heinous, depraved acts against a fellow Jew:

It was during the reign of Czar Nikolai I, the Russian monarch who decreed that young Jewish boys could be taken from their families and forced to enter the Russian Army for a period of twenty-five

years. This was the infamous Cantonist decree which destroyed the spiritual lives of many Jewish boys. - In the army, they were forced to abandon their religion – which sadly became a reality.



The city of Salant was not spared. It, too, was demanded to produce a required number of boys. The heads of the community were concerned with this decree, because they, too, had young boys of draft age.

They decided to do what was unfortunately common in those days: they sought out the children of the poor to replace their own sons. (The reader might be shocked that an observant Jew could stoop so low, but when personally faced with the decision of "my" son or the "other fellow's son," I am not certain that some of us would act differently.) - Obviously, this "exchange" had to be covertly arranged, since, if word got out, there would be a riot in town.

A poor widow, accompanied by her orphaned young son, visited the town for the express purpose of begging from door to door for alms to sustain them.

When the leaders of the community heard about the town's visitors, they immediately sprang into action by grabbing the young boy,

changing his name and using him to replace one of their own. The community was well aware of this terrible deed, but no one said a word. It was done – and accepted.

The widow, however, was far from accepting. She went from door to door to the community's leaders screaming, pleading, but no one heard her pleas. They were all involved with themselves, unable to hear the cries of others.

It happened to be that **Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl**, visited his home town that week. When the widow heard that such a distinguished guest was in town, the gadol hador, preeminent Torah sage of the generation, she immediately proceeded to his home to plead with him to intercede on her behalf.

Rav Yisrael listened, calmed her down and asked her to return after Shabbos. That Shabbos, Rav Yisrael attended services in the main shul. Following davening, the chashuvei ha'ir, distinguished leaders of the community, came to his home for Kiddush, to bask in the presence of the founder of the Mussar, ethical refinement, Movement, one of the primary leaders of Torah Jewry.

As soon as Kiddush was recited, Rav Yisrael arose from his seat, looked at the assemblage, and raised his voice in rebuke: "Murderers! Kidnappers! How dare you do what you did!"

He knew each leader and looked each one in the face, as he reiterated their egregious sin, "You!" Rav Yisrael screamed, looking squarely in the face of one leader. "You are careful to tie a handkerchief around your neck on Shabbos, so that you will not carry; yet, you have no qualms about stealing a helpless child from the arms of his mother! Are you not aware of the prohibition against kidnapping?"

Rav Yisrael looked at the next fellow and said, "You are so careful and stringent with mitzvos. You picked the most beautiful esrog, but to give a Jewish child over to shmad, to be apostatized, means

nothing to you?" He railed on like this, speaking individually to each leader and pointing out his individual hypocrisy.

The leaders were shocked and knew not what to say. They hung their heads in shame. Never had they been excoriated so vehemently – and especially by the gadol hador.

Rav Yisrael concluded his rebuke, jumped up and left his house. He said, "It is prohibited to be in the presence of reshaim, wicked people." - He left the city on Shabbos!

Word went out throughout the city that Rav Yisrael had stormed out of the community. No one would dream of being insolent to Rav Yisrael. Thus, the leaders acknowledged that they must act immediately. - The young orphan was redeemed and returned to his mother.

One of the rabbanim in the community acquiesced to seek out Rav Yisrael and convince him to return – which he did.

While this near tragic incident worked itself out, it required the input of Horav Yisrael Salanter to set the wheels in motion.

Regrettably, there still remains the double-standard whereby the high and mighty, pious and committed movers and shakers of various communities and organizations, continue to play the game of mi yichyeh: Who will live? Who will go to school, yeshivah, seminary? Are they playing any less with the lives of people? Is creating criteria for acceptance that applies only to certain families with specific pedigree and financial security, any different than what the "holy" leaders of Salant were doing?

When an administrator, Rosh Yeshivah, Menahel, Menaheles says, "No," do they think twice about the ramifications for the potential student and his/her family? True, there are only so many schools and just so much room, but the unequitable criteria, (to which, of course, no one will concede) should not be the determining factor.

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן. אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתוֹ – '***You shall not persecute any widow or orphan. If you will persecute him…for if he will cry out to Me, I shall surely hear his cry.***' (22:21,22)



Hashem issues a guarantee: If the widow or orphan cry out to Him, He will listen to their cries.

Understandably, the widow and orphan are among the loneliest people in our society. Does this mean that they should be guaranteed access to Hashem over everyone else?

Horav Tzvi Partzovitz, Shlita, quotes Chazal (Rosh Hashanah 18a) who say the following:

Two men went up to the scaffold, each about to be executed; or two men went to the executioner to have his head severed from the rest of his body. One succeeds in leaving, while the other falls victim to the executioner's skill. Why? What is it that catalyzes one to leave, while the other one dies?

Chazal teach that one prayed b'shleimus; thus, he was spared, while the other one did not pray a tefillah shleimah, whole, perfect/complete prayer, thus, he was not spared. This implies that, if he would have prayed a tefillah shleimah, Hashem would have surely listened to his prayer. Furthermore, the only reason that Hashem did not respond favorably to this prayer was that his tefillah was not perfect.

What is the meaning of this, and what constitutes a tefillah sheleimah?

We must say that when one walks up the steps to the scaffold, he knows this is it. Unless Hashem answers his heartfelt prayer, he is soon to become history. There is no going back – alive – from the scaffold or the executioner's block. - It is at this point that the supplicant knows that only prayer, if accepted by Hashem, can save him. All options are over. This is it.

When one prays with the realization that his only option for salvation is Hashem, it constitutes a tefillah shleimah. The widow and orphan are acutely aware that they have no one other than Hashem. Thus, their prayer to Him is sheleimah, complete. They have no false beliefs that someone will come to their aid. They are all alone in the world. Therefore, when they pray to Hashem, He listens.

David Hamelech expresses this idea in Tehillim 142:5, **הַבֵּיט יָמִין וּרְאֵה וְאֵין־לִי מַכִּיר אָבַד מָנוֹס מִמֶּנִּי אֵין דּוֹרֵשׁ לְנַפְשִׁי** - "***Looking to the right and see that I have no friend; every escape is lost to me; no one seeks to save my life***."

Why did David HaMelech underscore the fact that he has no friend, no savior; he is literally up against a wall with nowhere to go and no one to whom he can turn? Would having another option preclude or diminish his obligation to pray to Hashem?

Apparently, if he would have had "other" options, it would have diminished his prayer. It would not be shleimah.

As long as options exist, they remain in the back of our minds, impeding us from complete prayer. It is only when one's entire '*tikvah*', hope, depends upon Hashem that prayer has its true efficacy.

"Anyone who has the potential to fall very low, necessarily has the potential to rise very high. ~ Rabbi Shmuel Weinberg.

מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק - '***Distance yourself from a false word.***' (23:7)

The Talmud Sanhedrin 97a relates that there was a city called Kushta that was unique in the phenomenon that none of its residents ever lied. Prevarication was to them the ultimate anathema. As a result, they were blessed with extreme longevity. No one in their community died.

One Erev Shabbos, a woman came to the door of her friend's home and asked to see her. Her husband was aware that his wife was preparing herself for Shabbos (combing her hair), so he said that she was not home at the time.

As a result of his untruth, his two sons passed away.

During the Shivah, he was asked concerning their cause of death, since this was a community where death did not occur. When he told them what he felt was the reason (for his simple untruth), they asked him to move from the community before the punishment which had prevailed on him would spread to the rest of the city. This was a community that had zero tolerance for falsehood.

This is a sad, but inspirational, story. Something, however, does not make sense. When this man moved to the city, he knew what kind of community it was. He was acutely aware that this community had a zero-tolerance level concerning falsehood. No one lied – everyone lived. How could he take a chance and endanger his entire community – men, women and children – by prevaricating?

Furthermore, prior to his acceptance to that community, he was certainly vetted and emerged squeaky clean. How did it happen that he uttered an untruth?

Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl, offers a penetrating explanation. During his entire life, this man had fought to overcome the yetzer hora, evil inclination, for uttering untrue, misleading, dishonest statements. He focused on honesty, distancing himself from any

form of trivial or subtle untruth. So what happened when he moved to this town?

He stopped fighting. He felt that he no longer needed to fight. He was living in a community in which no one lied. Therefore, he slacked off, no longer maintaining strict vigilance against uttering any form of misleading, dishonest statement.

This was his mistake. The fact that everyone in your circle is perfect does not guarantee your perfection. This is the point at which the yetzer hora worms its way in, by connecting to the complacency that accompanies one who lives in a frum, Torah observant community. One must always fight, because the yetzer hora never gives up.

Perhaps I harp on the subject too much, but, if it will awaken one family to be less complacent, thereby saving the tragedy of seeing a kid at risk, it will have been worth it.

Some think that vigilance in raising our children is necessary only if we are living in rural Idaho, but in Torah communities, where Torah learning reigns supreme, where computers and smartphones have filters, and the filters have filters, we have nothing to worry about.

Our children imbibe Torah from the minute they enter the world. What could possibly go wrong? Well, sadly it does – in the most Torahdik communities, in the most perfect and ideal Torah observant homes – it does go wrong. Why?

There are reasons, although this is not the forum for conjecture or discussion. One thing is certain: We are not fighting the yetzer hora in the same manner as we would if we were living in a secular-oriented community. When our due diligence begins to wane, the yetzer hora has already won.

That man's complacency was the cause of his downfall. The yetzer hora is willing to work overtime. So should we – at least for our children's sake.

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן - "*You shall not persecute any widow or orphan*." (22:21)

One tear. Who can estimate the value of a tear shed by a lonely man, weeping over his sorry lot in life? Who can imagine the power and influence of a tear shed by a poor widow, bemoaning her fate, grieving over her loss, which is magnified every time she senses that vacuum in her life, the loneliness and feeling of helplessness that have now become her partner?

Indeed, we cannot begin to calculate the value, the power and the influence which the tears of the broken-hearted generate. Every tear pierces through the heavens and is gathered before the Heavenly Throne where Hashem holds it near to Him, cherishing every drop.



Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates a poignant story that illustrates the value of a tear: It was time to elect a Chief Rabbi for Yerushalayim. The people were encouraged to vote for **Horav Chaim Yaakov Levine**, a very suitable candidate for the position. When Horav Levine heard this, he made it a point to see who else had been nominated for the position. He noticed that **Horav Betzalel Zolty, z.l.**, was also a candidate for the position. He immediately said that under no circumstances would he run for the position. Even after a number of great rabbonim attempted to dissuade him, he remained adamant – he would not compete with Horav Zolty for the position of Chief Rabbi.

After a while, he explained the reason for his refusal to his close friends. Apparently, his father, the venerable Horav Aryeh Levine,

z.l., related that once he was walking through the alleyways of Yerushalayim at night when he came upon a woman who was mending socks by the light of a small torch.

[Perhaps today we cannot relate to this profession, but seventy years ago, when one's socks had a hole in them, they were repaired. Usually, it was some poor woman who darned these socks for the meager pay it generated.]

"Why are you doing this?" asked Rav Aryeh of the woman, "and especially with so little light."

"I am a poor widow. With the few coins I make, I am able to pay the rebbe who learns Torah with my orphaned son." - The woman kept on sewing, as her tears trickled down on the socks that she was repairing.

"Do you know who this widow was?" Rav Chaim Yaakov asked. "She was Rav Betzalel Zolty's mother!

Is it possible to estimate the value and effect of her tears? Rav Zolty should become the Rav of Yerushalayim. His spiritual growth was catalyzed on a field irrigated by the tears of a widow!"



אֱלֹקִים לֹא תְקַלֵּל - "***You shall not revile G-d.***" (22:27)

Chazal derive that the word Elokim is a reference both to G-d and to judges. While it is, indeed, forbidden to curse anyone, judges are often the brunt of people's curses, since they are compelled to render judgment which is not always popular – especially in the eyes of the individual who is on the losing end of a litigation.

Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, z.l., served for a short time as Av Beis Din, head of the court, of **Horav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, z.l.** Once during his incumbency, he was confronted with a bitterly disputed divorce case. He eventually ruled in favour of the husband, an act that incited the members of the wife's family. They felt that

the ruling was unjust and were prepared to take the law – and the judge – into their own hands. They barged into Rav Yosef Chaim's house and began shouting and berating him as if he were the lowest scoundrel. They were so vicious and violent that the Rebbetzin began to cry uncontrollably.



In light of the fact that it was only a week before Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the Days of Judgment, their cruel words and curses left a powerful impact on her sensitive heart.

Throughout the tirade, Rav Yosef Chaim remained silent, seated peacefully at his table, never raising his head from the Talmud which he was studying.

As the shouting began to get out of control, however, Rav Yosef Chaim arose, looked them straight in the eye, and made the following pronouncement: "Listen now to what I have to say."

As soon as he spoke, a sudden silence enveloped the room.

"If you are correct in your claims against me, and my beis din and I erred in Halachah, you have already succeeded in registering your complaint with Hashem. May He have mercy on us, for a judge is only human and can rule only in accordance with the facts presented before his eyes. "If, however, we are correct and you are wrong, if our rendering of the law is justified," Rav Yosef Chaim paused for a moment, as the protestors moved back bracing themselves for what was sure to be a scathing rebuke, "Then I want you to know that I forgive you with a complete heart for your disgraceful behavior and for the terrible pain you have caused me and the members of my

family – and I wholeheartedly wish that you are inscribed in the book of life for a good year!"

One can only imagine the shock and embarrassment that overcame the dissident group. The Rav's humility was overwhelming. They left the house in disgrace, as the neighbors began to congregate to determine the source of the commotion.

A few days later, on Erev Yom Kippur, as Rav Yosef Chaim was returning from pouring his heart out in prayer at the Kosel HaMaraavi, the leader of the group of dissenters confronted Rav Yosef Chaim and begged forgiveness for his insolence. Rav Yosef Chaim reaffirmed that he had already forgiven him wholeheartedly. It was unnecessary to reiterate this.

The man was visibly relieved to hear the Rav's reply. Rav Yosef Chaim then asked him a question which seemed to be a change of subject:

"Tell me, have you purchased an Esrog yet?"

"What a question! Rebbe, I will have you know that I spent a small fortune securing what I feel is a most beautiful specimen, but it was worth every penny!"

Rav Yosef Chaim continued, "Let us make a calculation. The Torah demands that a person spend up to – and no more than – one-fifth of his money to fulfill a positive commandment, such as the mitzvah of Lulav and Esrog. Yet, in order to avoid committing a negative commandment, one should be prepared to give up everything that he owns.

"Now there is a negative command that says, 'You shall not curse a judge.' To what is the Torah referring with these words? It certainly is not addressing the party in whose favour the judge has ruled. He would be more likely to bless the judge than to curse him. It makes sense to say that the Torah is referring to the one who lost the case; he should not curse the judge.

Let us go one step further. If he realized that the judge had ruled correctly and that he was wrong, he also has no reason to curse the judge. We must, therefore, conclude that the Torah is addressing the individual who is certain that the judge erred and miscarried justice in the case – to his detriment. He is the one who is admonished not to curse the judge.

"Now, I ask you, in comparing this negative commandment to the Torah's positive commandments, which must be taken more seriously?"

The individual took the hint and understood the point to which Rav Yosef Chaim was alluding. He was prepared to spend a small fortune to purchase an Esrog but did nothing to refrain from slandering and abusing the rav who had rendered judgment against him.

Regrettably, this form of righteous hypocrisy still prevails.

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן. אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתוֹ – '***You shall not persecute any widow or orphan. If you will persecute him…for if he will cry out to Me, I shall surely hear his cry***.' (22:21,22)

Hashem promises to listen to cries of the widow and orphan. They have no one to whom to turn, other than their Father in Heaven, Who listens very closely to those that are vulnerable to abuse.

A classic story occurred, involving the **Bais HaLevi**, that demonstrates how sensitive we must be to the plight of the unfortunate - especially those who have nowhere to turn:

When the Bais HaLevi was a young boy studying in cheder, he witnessed the rebbe striking a young orphan boy who had fought with another boy, who just happened to be wealthy.

The Bais HaLevi could not tolerate the apparent abuse to which this rebbe was subjecting the poor orphan. He left the cheder, declaring

that he could not study Torah from such a rebbe who ignored the Torah's admonishment against causing pain to an orphan.

Sometime later, the Bais HaLevi became ill. The situation worsened and it looked as if he was about to leave this world. Suddenly, he woke up and started feeling better, improving until he had completely recuperated.

Afterwards, the Bais HaLevi related that he was at death's door, literally one foot into the Olam Ha'emes, when he envisioned a man pushing away the Malach Ha'maves, Angel of Dealth, from him. He began searching for this man's identity, looking at photographs from years back. Finally, he came across the elusive man's picture. It was the father of the young orphan whom he had championed.

Hashem rewarded him with life as a result of his concern for the plight of the orphan. Furthermore, he took a stand for the Almighty by championing His cause. He fought Hashem's fight by taking a stand against this abusive teacher.

Horav Elyakim Schlessinger, Shlita, derives from here that one who fights Hashem's fight, who stands up for those things that Hashem Himself takes issue with - will be blessed with life.

May this be the lot of all those who take a stand for the truth, to uphold and sanctify Hashem's Name.

Our Sages tell us that even if a person restrains himself from forbidden speech for just a mere moment, he will merit the special hidden light reserved for those who guard their tongues – as we see from the words of the Midrash, quoted by the Vilna Gaon:- "For every single moment that a person guards his mouth from speaking forbidden words, he merits to enjoy a hidden light that no angel could possibly fathom." ~ R' Asher Wasserman.

עֲלֵה אֵלַי הָהָרָה וֶהְיֵה־שָׁם וְאֶתְּנָה לְךָ אֶת־לֻחֹת הָאֶבֶן וְהַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתִּי לְהוֹרֹתָם - "***Come up to Me to the mountain... and I will give you the tablets of stone, and the law and the commandment which I have written that you may teach them***." (24:12)



We have two festivals dedicated to the Torah. On Shavuos, we celebrate the giving of the Torah and our acceptance of it. On Simchas Torah, we joyfully express our gratitude to Hashem as we conclude the annual Torah reading.

We may wonder at the need to have two festivals. Would it not have been more appropriate to celebrate Simchas Torah on Shavuos, the day we received the Torah?

Horav Simcha Zissel Broide, distinguishes between two forms of gifts. A gift is valued commensurate with its worth and significance, as well as the stature and eminence of the one who gives the gift.

For example, a simple inexpensive gift becomes greatly enhanced if it is presented by the king. For receiving the Torah, Klal Yisrael is indebted to Hashem for two distinct acts of grace. They owe gratitude for the nature of the gift -- the Torah. They also must acknowledge the Benefactor, the source of the gift.

When we pay tribute to Hashem for the greatest gift, the Torah, we give thanks for the gift of Torah. We also recognize Who it was that gave us the Torah -- Hashem Yisborach.

These two individual festivals were ordained in order to facilitate the proper celebration of the receipt of these extraordinary gifts. On Shavuos we thank Hashem for the gift of Torah. We express our appreciation for availing us of a remarkable gift which is our code of

living and heritage. We must also recognize that this special gift is bequeathed to us from Hashem Himself.





The joy inherent in this realization is overflowing. It cannot be contained in "one day" or "one festival." Consequently, we are blessed with another opportunity to express our joy at having received the Torah from Hashem. Simchas Torah is that special day of communion with Hashem, on which we conclude and immediately recommence the Torah reading. It is a time when a plethora of ecstasy is manifest in our jubilant expression of gratitude to Hashem.

How fortunate are those who not only acknowledge the gift, but also recognize the benefactor. By doing so they hold the gift in higher esteem.

A devout man who had passed away appeared to his friend in a dream. The friend noticed that the man had a mark on his forehead. - The departed told his friend that his mark was a punishment for speaking during davening and Kaddish, and for failing to cut his nails on erev Shabbos. ~ Ba'er Heiteiv 268:112

וְכִי־יָזֵד אִישׁ עַל־רֵעֵהוּ לְהָרְגוֹ בְעָרְמָה מֵעִם מִזְבְּחִי תִּקָּחֶנּוּ לָמוּת - "***And if a man will come presumptuously upon his fellow to slay him with guile, from My altar, take him for execution***." (21:14)

Rashi explains that if this murderer were a Kohen who had intended to perform the service in the Bais Hamikdash, he may be taken away to his execution. - The altar does not serve as a place of refuge for those who deserve punishment.

Horav Moshe Shternbuch Shlita offers a unique homiletic approach to understanding this pasuk: One should not think that by performing mitzvos he can commute the punishment he merits for the various sins he has committed. Just as a sin does not have the power to extinguish a mitzvah, likewise, a mitzvah cannot erase a sin. - The only way that one can effect penance for his transgressions is through repentance and contrition.

This is the message of this pasuk: The mitzvah of performing the service in the Bais Hamikdash does not atone for the sin of murder. A Kohen who transgresses must receive his due punishment despite his exalted station in life.

This is a powerful message for he who foolishly thinks that he can follow the urging of his evil inclination, as long as he balances these misdeeds with mitzvos. Indeed, he will be rewarded for his mitzvos, but he will still be held responsible for his aveiros.

"The craft of a person in this world is to behave as if mute! The craft is not to be a babbler. This is something one has to learn: a baby knows how to talk and babbles as it pleases him. Silence needs to be learned, because silence is a great skill, and by it you recognize the person of intelligence. The nature of a person is his solitude. That's the only way for the soul and spirit to develop their strength." ~ R' Shlomo Wolbe zt"l.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

A Unified Division

Given the unprecedented unity among our people nowadays since the outset of the Gaza war, the following essay is fitting.



The pasuk (Tehillim 133:1) says **הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד** – '***how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers, moreover, in unity***.'

How pleasant it is to Hashem when Jews get along. The word **גם** seems unnecessary.

There can be Jews sitting together but since each has their opinions, sentiments and outlooks, there is a unity lacking. It of course is greater when they are in unity although they have different views and opinions. [It has been said, "We don't have to agree with each other, but we have to be there for each other." Someone else once said, "Differ with people's opinions but not with people."]

The pasuk can be understood as how good and pleasant it is to Hashem when Jews sit together (**שבת אחים**) although (**גם**) they have differences, as **יחד** is an acronym for **יש חלוקי דעות**, there are differences of opinion.

R' Asher Weiss once described the perfect Jew: '***One with a chassidisheh heart, a litvish mind, the integrity and honesty of a yekke, the purity of a Hungarian, kavod hatorah of a sefardi and the love of Eretz Yisrael of a dati-leumi Jew***.'

A Chabad rabbi told a Jew who observed Shabbos, Kashrus and a few other mitzvos that we agree on many more issues than we disagree on. And the things that we agree on are much more important than the things we disagree on. We agree on the value of human life. We agree that Hashem is unique, that He created the Universe and that the continued existence of the world depends on His Will.

We may sometimes let little differences get in the way of our unity.

We must internalize that what connects is far more important and vital than what divides us. If a person is Jewish enough for the Nazis to send him to the gas chambers then he is Jewish enough to be loved.

R' Kalman Krohn was once in a cab in Israel driven by an anti-religious driver. Although R' Kalman tried to be amiable, the driver was curt and abrupt. Suddenly, in the middle of the ride, R' Kalman told the driver "We are brothers."

With antipathy, the driver tersely retorted "We are not brothers. You are religious and I am not."

R' Kalman replied, "My rebbe taught me that we are brothers."

Who is that, the driver inquired.

The response: "Hitler - He didn't differentiate between those who were religious and those who weren't. He killed them all."

The Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz would say that '***one must be good to everyone but not with everyone***!!!' That is to say, one must be friendly to everyone but not be friends with everyone.

"Worldly pleasures are like cosmetics for the soul; they are merely tools for enhancing our spiritual wellbeing and bringing us closer to Hashem." ~ Based on Mesilas Yesharim.



The Way We Treat Others, the Ribono Shel Olam Treats Us by Rav Yissocher Frand

This week's parsha contains the mitzvah of lending money to another Jew. A person may not charge interest. If someone takes a security deposit and the borrower needs it at night (e.g. — it is his bedclothes) then it must be returned each night, etc. A certain individual named, Reb Yosef Gelb, who lives in Lakewood, called me this week and told me the following idea he recently heard from **Rav Matisyahu Solomon (zt"l)**, the Mashgiach in Lakewood.

The Ketzos HaChoshen rules that if Reuven borrows money from Shimon and Shimon is holding a deposit (pikadon) that belongs to Reuven, if Reuven does not pay up the debt, Shimon can keep the deposit he is holding in lieu of payment of the debt. In other words, if Reuven borrowed $500 from Shimon and Shimon happens to be a shomer [guardian] of Reuven's watch worth $500, if Reuven does not repay the $500, Shimon can keep the watch.

Then the Ketzos HaChoshen does something that he does not do anywhere else in the entire sefer: the Ketzos quotes a Zohar. The Zohar says that even though legally the lender may keep the deposit, morally someone should not do this. Rav Matisyahu Solomon said that his Mashgiach — **Rav Eliyahu Lopian, zt"l** — asked: What is the meaning of such a statement? If the halacha states that the lender is entitled to keep the deposit, why does the Zohar say that he should not avail himself of this permission?

Rav Lopian explained: The Almighty gave each and every one of us a deposit — our soul (neshama). "My L-rd, the soul that You gave me is pure, You created it, You formed it…" The Ribono Shel Olam tells us

to watch our neshama and then at the end of our lives to return it to Him. Every single night, when we go to sleep, the Ribono Shel Olam takes back that neshama. Hopefully, every single morning He returns it to us and we say "I gratefully thank You O living and eternal King, for You have returned my soul within me with compassion — abundant is Your faithfulness!"

We all owe the Ribono Shel Olam big time. We have big debts that we owe Him. We do not always behave properly. Nevertheless, He keeps extending our credit. G-d could tell us "Listen here. You owe me a lot. I have this 'deposit' of yours. I could keep it in lieu of you paying your debt to Me." However, He does not do that.

This is the interpretation of the Zohar. The Zohar says that even though we are halachically permitted to keep the deposit, but just think — if someone will insist on his rights in this situation, the Almighty, as it were, could stand on His rights and one fine morning He could say, "You know what? I am sick and tired of you not paying up. I am going to keep your neshama that I have on deposit!"

The way we treat others is the way the Ribono Shel Olam will treat us. This is why the Zohar says that despite the fact that you have the right to keep your neighbor's pikadon if he owes you and is negligent in his payment, do not do it! This will be a merit, a segula, that the Almighty should treat you in the same generous fashion.

*** * ***

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik Plays Role of Horse, But Not Role of Creditor

In this week's parsha, The Torah teaches the great mitzvah of free loans: "When you will lend money to my people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor (lo tiheyeh lo k'noshe); do not place interest upon him." [Shmos 22:24]

I once read the following incident involving Rav Chaim Soloveitchik: Rav Chaim lent money to a Jew. It was a loan for a certain period of

time. The time came and the borrower did not repay Rav Chaim. Rav Chaim did not say anything. A week passed, two weeks passed, a month passed. Rav Chaim still did not say anything. Finally, the borrower met Rav Chaim Soloveitchik and said: "You are a batlan [careless person]. You lent me the money and you forgot all about it and that's why you haven't asked me for it. You don't have your act together."

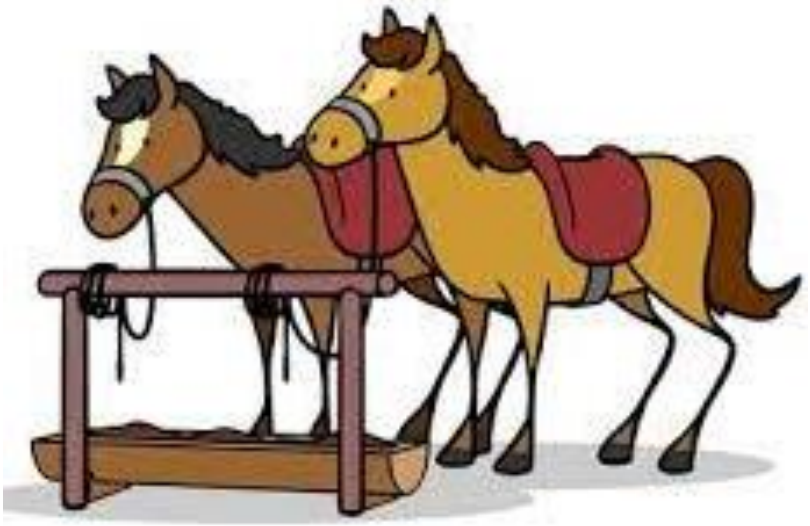
Rav Chaim explained to the borrower that he most definitely did have his act together. The Rav of Brisk told him that he always used to take the shortcut between his own home and the shul that passed right in front of the borrower's house. Ever since he lent the money to the fellow, he did not take this shortcut. He did not want to perhaps transgress the prohibition of "becoming like a creditor" (lo tiheyeh lo k'noshe). "Not only did I not walk by your house before the loan was due, even now, after the loan is due why do you think I still go out of my way to avoid your house? It is for the same reason. So, please don't tell me that I am a batlan and I forgot about the loan!"

When reading the story, I had to ask myself, "What kind of fellow goes to Rav Chaim Soloveitchik and tells him he is a batlan?" It is reminiscent of the definition of Chutzpah being someone who kills his parents and then claims mercy from the court because he is an orphan. Here is a fellow who has the nerve to ask the Rav of Brisk for a personal loan; does not promptly repay the loan, and then insults the Rav for not having demanded prompt payment!"

I believe we can infer from this story the reason why this fellow had to borrow money from Rav Chaim Soloveitchik. There was no one else in town willing to lend money to such a person! Rav Chaim was such a kind person that he would even lend money to such a person.

Rabbi Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff in his work "The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik" records many stories Rabbi Soloveitchik used to tell about Brisk and about the Rabbinic

personalities in his family. He contrasts the Beis HaLevi (Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik's namesake and great-grandfather) with Rav Chaim Soloveitchik (son of the Beis HaLevi).



The Beis HaLevi was an aristocrat. People who saw him walking down the street saw monarchy. He was a regal figure. Rav Chaim was different, he was the nicest man one could ever want to meet. The first accolade on his tombstone is "Rav haChessed" [the kind Rabbi]. The characteristic of their great father that the family was most proud of was that he was a man of extreme chessed [benevolence]. That is why he lent money to such a crude individual who had the chutzpah to chastise him for not pestering him to pay back the loan.

Rav Chaim once came out of his house and saw little kids having an argument. He inquired as to what the problem was and was told that they were "playing horse" but none of them wanted to be the horse. One kid wanted to be the driver, one kid wanted to be the passenger, but no one wanted to be the horse. Rav Chaim said "I'll be the horse."

The kids put the rope around Rav Chaim and he was the horse. The story does not end there. The kids tied "their horse" to the tree. Then they became hungry, so they went home to have a snack, leaving Rav Chaim tied to the tree. The Gabbai came out and saw Rav Chaim tied to the tree. The Gabbai took out a pocket knife and was about to cut the rope. Rav Chaim told him not to do that because it would sadden the kids. Instead, Rav Chaim advised the Gabbai to go get the children and ask them to untie their horse.

This is an example of a "Rav Chessed" par excellence.



"Hashem bestows kindness to Bnei Yisrael because they are descendants of the holy Avos and Imahos. But even if we don't receive Hashem's salvation due to zechus avos, we can receive Hashem's kindness in the merit of our deeds of kindness."

"The Beis Yisrael zt'l points out that there are other ways to do chesed, besides giving tzedakah and lending money. With a smile and kind, encouraging words, you do chesed to your fellow man and will be rewarded with salvations."

The Ahavas Shalom *zt'l* says that **אדר** is *roshei teivos* for **רְעוּא דְרְעוּין אֲשְׁתְכַח** , "***The desire of all desires prevails***."

This means it is a month of *eis ratzon*, when Hashem's love and desire for us are expressed and felt profoundly.

It Is Good to Say Tehillim On Rosh Chodesh Adar

Reb Sariyah Dibletzky *zt'l* (*Davar Nechmad*) writes, "Reb Eliyahu Cohen and Reb Chaim Abulafiah *zt'l* heard from Reb Chaim Vital's students that one… should recite the entire *Tehillim* on Rosh Chodesh Adar. - This will fix his *neshamah*. - There are other secrets too [why it is good to say the entire Tehillim on rosh chodesh Adar]. It is proper that those who fear Hashem should gather to make this *tikkun*."

For those who cannot say the entire *Tehillim* on Rosh Chodesh Adar, it would be good for them to say some chapters of *Tehillim*. Because the rule regarding spiritual matters is that if you can't do everything, do as much as possible.



The 25th of Shevat is the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt'l*. Returning from Reb Yisrael Salanter's *levayah*, his students calculated that until Moshiach comes, Reb Yisrael Salanter's *yahrtzeit* will always be either before or after Shabbos Parashas Mishpatim.

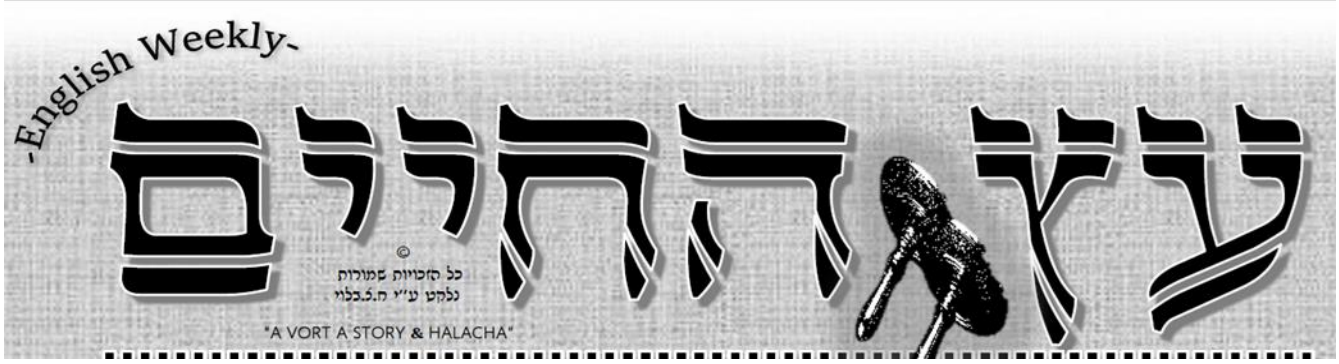
They explained that Rebbe Yisrael Salanter's primary emphasis was to be honest in business and to be cautious with the mitzvos *ben adam lechaveiro*. - These are the primary lessons taught in parashas Mishpatim.

A student asked Reb Yisrael Salanter, "Rebbe, who is greater: A Torah student who studies eighteen hours a day or a storeowner who deals honestly?"

He asked this because Reb Yisrael Salanter would always say that the highest level is a person who does business honestly, so the student wanted to know whether he would say that he is even greater than a talmid chacham who learns eighteen hours a day.

Reb Yisrael Salanter answered, "Certainly, the honest storeowner is on a higher level. However, since he is on such a high level, it would be proper for such a person to study Torah eighteen hours a day..."

The Pnei Menachem zt'l says that wealth is represented by a shadow because money is an imagination, like a shadow. You can't take it with you.



● No Pain



When he was 4 years old, his mother told him, "Eliyahu, please, you are so shvach, you need to go out and play with your friends." - Eliyahu wanted to learn, but his mother told him to go out, so he left. A few minutes later he returned.

His mother asked "Eliyahu, why are you back so soon?"

Eliyahu said, "I saw them playing on a seesaw. I could not get myself to play a game where my aliya is brought about by the yerida of somebody else."

This boy grew up to be the **Vilna Gaon. [Rav Kalman Krohn זצוק״ל]**

● One Should Not Cause Pain to A Widow Or Yasom

Only a widow or yasom, to everyone else you could cause pain!?

Rashi brings the answer that of course one is not allowed to cause pain to **anyone**. Just what? the Torah wrote an almana and a yasom since they can get pained faster since they are naturally weaker. Therefore, one must be **even** more careful to be sensitive to an almana or yasom. However, in truth it is also forbidden to cause any person pain.

● A kallah once Came to **MaRan HaRav Shach זצוק״ל** and asked Rav Shach to be **מסדר קידושין**. Rav Shach had no connection to the girl, her family, or even to the **חתן**. However, the Kallah insisted that she only wanted Rav Shach to be the **מסדר קידושין**.

Rav Shach refused, saying that her chasuna was to take place during the time that Rav Shach had to prepare **שיעור**.

Upon hearing that, the Kallah burst into tears.

Rav Shach immediately changed his mind and told her, "Don't cry, I will be your **מסדר קידושין**."

Those who were close to Rav Shach were very surprised. Rav Shach would not allow **anything** to interrupt his preparations for shiur. Why was Rav Shach suddenly willing to be **מסדר קישודין** for a girl that he never met before in his life?

Rav Shach explained, "I cannot bear the tears of a bas yisroel, her tears tipped the scale! I had to give her the same consideration that I would give my own daughter."

● Pikuach Nefesh

Reb Dovid Shaya Shlit"a related the following story: It was 3:00 a.m., and the gabbai of a certain Tzaddik was awakened by the shrill ringing of his phone. He considered ignoring the ringing, but decided that it must be important.

On the end of the line is a distraught woman, crying to receive an urgent brachah from a famous tzaddik, for the success of an emergency surgery on her son.

The devoted gabbai refused to disturb his Rebbi at that time of night, but the woman was inconsolable, saying that it was a case of pikuach nefesh mamash. So, left with no choice, yet filled with apprehension, he dialled the home of the great tzaddik – known to be a po'el yeshuos.

After just the first ring, the Rebbetzin answered the phone. Apologizing profusely, the gabbai conveyed the woman's request for a brachah, and the Rebbetzin promised that her husband will pray right away for the surgery to be successful.

The next day, the gabbai felt pained and regretful for having disturbed his elderly Rebbi and his wife and decided to write an apology note to them. Shortly thereafter, he received a note back from the holy Rebbetzin.

What would you imagine it said? Perhaps, "It's fine, the main thing is that there should be refuah shleimah…". But no, this is what she wrote:

"We were placed in this world to help other Yidden, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Not only did your phone call not disturb us, but it truly helped us to complete our mission in life."

We can **never know** really what our friend is going through in his life. It is only when **ח״ו** we went through a **צרה** and someone said something foolish to us, that normally would not have bothered us, yet now, since our "spirits are low" we took it more to heart.

The key is to remember that moment and then when we meet someone, realize that we have no idea what they may be going through that day. - We do not want to be the ones to cause any one pain.

"Just as there is a time to open and a time to close the door of a house, so should one close the doors of his mouth. Just as you would guard silver, gold, and pearls in your room, within a case, making one enclosure within another, do the same with your mouth." ~ Orchos Tzaddikim.

Reb Yoel On the Parsha

רבי יוסף פרחי

כא:כד עַיִן תַּחַת עַיִן - "*An eye for an eye*..."



Helen Keller once said, "***Hearing loss is a worse misfortune than being blind. When you lose your vision, you lose contact with things; but when you lose your hearing, you lose contact with people***."

According to *chazal*, this is true to a certain extent. The gemara (*Bava Kama* 85a–b) discusses the five payments for bodily damages, **נזק, צער, ריפוי, שבת, ובושת** , with which one must compensate the damaged party. *Chazal* tell us how to calculate the value the person lost as result of the damage. These monetary costs are calculated according to the slave market.

For example, if someone were to be blinded, we would figure the value of the person before he was blinded and how much he is worth in the market as a slave now that he is blind. The difference between the two goes to the damaged person. - This is just one of the five payments, **נזק**.

The gemara discusses the evaluation of loss of different parts of the body such as losing a hand or a leg, and so on. Each loss causes a different decline in the value of a slave; a different factor is involved in each and every limb.

This is how devaluation is calculated in regard to all the bodily functions—with one exception: If you cause someone to become deaf, that person's value as a slave is reduced to zero, and you need

to pay the whole value of the person, according to what his value would have been had he been sold as a slave before becoming deaf.

No one wants a deaf slave. Why not?

The Ra'avad explains that people become extremely frustrated from trying to communicate with someone who cannot hear.

Q: There seems to be a contradiction. According to what we just discussed, loss of hearing is the greatest loss possible, even worse than becoming blind. However, the gemara (*Nedarim 64*) seems to be saying that being blind is worse than being deaf.

The gemara discusses four people who are considered dead, and one of them is a blind man, while a deaf person is not one of the four.

How can this be? Did we not learn that being deaf is worse than being blind?

A: In regard to the blind man himself, we consider that he is "dead," while a deaf man is not. [R' Yosef, a blind Amorah, tells us that a blind man can never really enjoy food, and never becomes satiated (*Yoma* 74).] - As a slave, however, a deaf man is considered to have the least value! - On a communication level, deafness takes away all value from a person, and is worse than blindness.

The Hebrew word for ear is **אזן**. The Hebrew word for the handle of a cup or jug is also **אזן**. In a way, the ear even looks like a jug handle. This is because the way to get a handle on any relationship is by listening!

Surely it is no coincidence that the word "listen" is an anagram of the word silent.

"The man who envies, is guilty of robbery in thought." ~ R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l.

L' Maaseh...



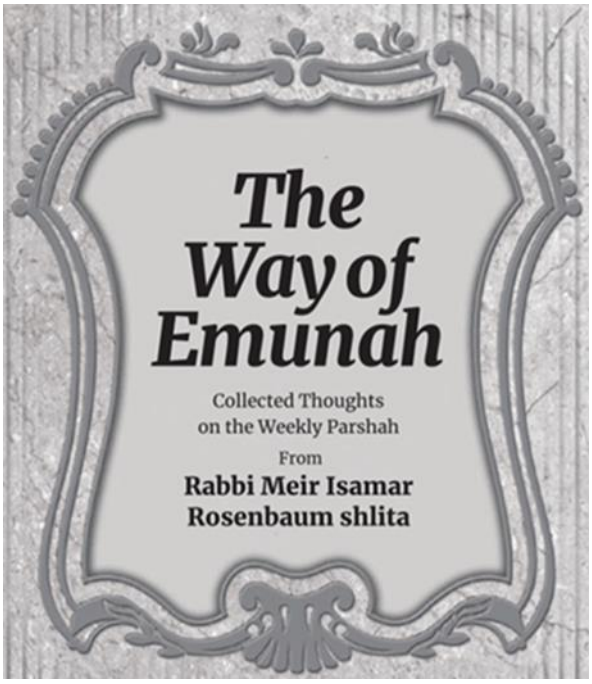
Towards the end of **Rav Moshe Feinstein's** life, a close talmid came to visit him. When the talmid asked "how is the rosh yeshiva?' - R' Moshe replied "nisht gut, nisht gut".

The concerned talmid asked probed further as it seemed out of character for R' Moshe to give such an answer, regardless of his health.

R' Moshe explained that he usually wakes up at 3am and learns until he davens shacharis at 8am. This is a time that he is not bombarded with questions and phone calls as he is throughout the day. Now however, the doctor had instructed him to sleep one more hour every day and this would be at the expense of his own limud ha'Torah. - "Then," said R' Moshe, "I will remain an am ha'aretz!".

At the time, Rav Moshe Feinstein was already recognized as the posek ha'dor, but he understood how much more there was to learn and understand!

A Jew is connected with Hashem, not only while he Davens or engages in a mitzvah, but during every moment of his life. The moment he opens his eyes in the morning and recites Modeh Ani, he declares that he is aware that he is in Hashem's presence. - When he retires at night, he does not go to sleep until he reaffirms his commitment to Hashem by reciting the Shema. ~ R' Shimshon Pincus z"tl



רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא – '***He shall only give him his wages for missed work and pay the costs for the doctor to heal him***.' (21:19)

● Shabbos is The Test:

The Rebbe of Barnov zy"a (Sefer Chamra Tova) explains that there are men who have to work hard all week in order to make a living and, as a result, cannot learn very much Torah.

How can we know if they really want to learn but simply cannot do so?

The way to determine this is to see if they learn on Shabbos when they do not have to work. If such a person uses Shabbos for learning Torah and serving Hashem, it proves that his intentions are good, and it is considered as if he learned all week.

Accordingly, the pasuk is saying: "רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן" – if one gives his all on Shabbos and honors this day by learning Torah and serving Hashem, he will then be "healed" and considered someone who serves Hashem at all times.

● Seudas Shabbos is a Segulah for Refuah:

Sefer Mofes Hador brings the following incredible story:

One of the distinguished chasidim of Kerestir was the philanthropist, **R' Yosef Shraga of Budapest zt"l**, who donated much charity towards the needs of the court of **Rav Shayala zy"a**.

R' Yosef once suddenly became ill and seemed close to death. His son, R' Chaim zt"l, immediately traveled to Kerestir and told the Rebbe that his father's life was in danger. This occurred on a Friday. At the time of R' Chaim's arrival, Rav Shayala still didn't have enough money to buy Shabbos food for the guests who were going to be

eating in his home. He said to R' Chaim, "Don't worry. If you sponsor the food for this Shabbos, your father will be healed. By the time you get home, you will find your father completely healthy."

R' Chaim was amazed to hear this, but Rav Shayala told him, "Why are you so surprised? The pasuk says: **רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא**. "Just give Shabbos, and the sick man will be healed in that merit."

R' Chaim gave Rav Shayala a large sum of money, which was used for the Shabbos food. When he got home, he found his father completely healed.

● First Turn to Hashem, Then to a Doctor:

Chazal (Brachos 60A) learn from this pasuk that a doctor has permission to heal the sick. Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen quotes **Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy"a** as citing the verse (Yeshaya 44:6): **אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן וַאֲנִי אַחֲרוֹן וּמִבַּלְעָדַי אֵין אֱלֹקִים** - "***I am first and I am last, and besides for Me, there is no G-d***", and explaining in the name of **Rav Dovid Lubliner zy"a** that when most people get sick, they first go to a doctor and, if that doesn't work, they daven to Hashem.

The pasuk is saying that this should not be the case. Hashem should be first and last, and the doctor should only be secondary.

● The Cure Comes From Heaven:

Rav Menachem Mendel of Vorka zy"a once told a chasid, "*One should not think he has to always obey everything a doctor says because a doctor is not the one who heals a person. Rather, the cure comes from Heaven.*"

The Tikkunei Zohar states that lashon hara can reduce one to poverty, chas v'shalom. Therefore, if a person wishes to live comfortably, he should guard himself from speaking or accepting lashon hara. ~ Shmiras Halashon.

● One Who Serves Hashem is Healed:

וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם וּבֵרַךְ אֶת־לַחְמְךָ וְאֶת־מֵימֶיךָ וְהַסֹרֹתִי מַחֲלָה מִקִרְבֶּךָ – '***And you shall serve Hashem, your G-d, and your bread and water will be blessed.***' (23:25)

The Saba Kadisha of Radoshitz zy"a was accustomed to provide remedies for the sick through various means. To some, he gave "shirayim" from his challah. To others, he gave water from a nearby stream that was piped into his house. He would give a cup of water to the sick person, and he would wondrously be healed immediately.

When chasidim expressed amazement about this open miracle, he said, "This is clearly hinted to in the Torah. It says that if we serve Hashem, He will bless our bread and water and remove all sickness from our midst. This means that when we serve Hashem, our bread and water will be blessed and given the power to heal the sick."

Shovavim

● This Shabbos Rectifies All the Days of Shovavim

In most years, this Shabbos is the last one of Shovavim.

Rav Tzadok of Lublin zy"a (Sefer Pri Tzadik) writes that even if someone failed to rectify himself during the previous days of Shovavim, he can do so on this Shabbos. - He writes that "if the end is good, it is all good."

For this reason, this Parshah (Mishpatim) is situated right after the Aseres Hadibros (Parshas Yisro). This teaches us that a person should never despair. Even if he transgressed the entire Torah, he can still fix himself on this Parshah. - Just like Shemittah and Yovel (which are discussed in this Parshah) represent freedom and redemption, one can free himself from the yeitzer hara and become a true servant of Hashem.

1 Adar 5422 – The Yahrzeit of the Shach

● The Meeting With His Sister:

The following story was related by Rav Nosson Gestetner zt"l (quoted in Chodesh B'Chadsho 5766, page 1):

In the years of "Tach V'Tat" (5408-5409) many pogroms took place against the Jews and the Shach had to flee from the marauding bands of murderers. The Shach's sister also fled from her father's home, and she made her way to the home of a wealthy man who took her in as a servant in his house.

When the Shach came to this city, he also stayed in this man's home, without knowing that sister was there, and he sat and learned all day in a loud voice, as he was accustomed to do.

As he learned, the wealthy man heard the servant girl crying in a neighboring room. When he asked her what was wrong, she said that her brother, Rav Shabsi, had learned in her parents' home, learning with a sweet voice. When she heard this masmid learning, it reminded her of her brother, and how she had no idea what happened to him.

After she described her brother to her boss, he realized that he was, in fact, the masmid learning in his house. At that time, the Shach blessed his sister to merit a family of offspring that would be great in Torah and mitzvos and who would light up the world with their Torah.

Several years later, she married Rav Yitzchok zt"l, and her sons included Rav Meir Eisenstadt zy"a, author of Shu"t Panim Me'iros.

● The Debate With the Magen Avrohom:

Sefer Sar Torah relates the following story: The Shach once came to the city of Kalish, where he delivered a drasha in the bais medrash. The Magen Avrohom zy"a was in attendance and had a question on the Shach's words. When the Shach returned to his

lodgings, the Magen Avrohom sent his student to ask his question. He told the student, "I assume that when you ask this question, he will offer such-and-such answer. If he says this, ask him such-and-such question…"

When the student met the Shach, he spoke with clarity and wisdom, as he had been instructed. After they finished discussing the drasha, the Shach began speaking to him about other Torah topics. He saw that the student was not as fluent in them as he seemed to be on the topic of the drasha and realized that he must have been sent by someone else.

He demanded that the student tell him who sent him, and with no other choice, the student revealed that it was the Magen Avrohom.

The Shach told him to return to his teacher and to tell him that he wished to speak to him in person.

When the Magen Avrohom arrived, he began speaking in learning with the Shach and their discussion became very heated, developing into a full-blown debate.

In the midst of the learned debate, there was a man in the house who he had come for a din Torah and had fallen very ill. The other people in the house saw that the man was near death and told the Shach that he must hurry and leave the house because he was a kohen.

The Shach banged on the table with his cane and said, "I command him to wait." He added, "As long as we are here, he will not die. So I am permitted to stay here."

And so it was. As long as the Shach was arguing in learning with the Magen Avrohom, the man remained alive. But as soon as he walked out the door of the house, the man died.

1 Adar – The Yahrzeit of the Ibn Ezra

● One Gets Only What is Meant For Him:

The Ibn Ezra was extremely poor. He was destitute throughout his entire life. His good friend, **the Rambam**, wanted to help him financially, but the Ibn Ezra vehemently refused to accept monetary support from anyone.

The Rambam tried to think of a way to help him and he came up with an idea. He knew that the Ibn Ezra davened Shacharis every day in the bais knesses near his house and that he crossed a bridge to get there. He decided to put some money on the bridge.

According to halacha, if one finds loose money with no identifying marks, it belongs to the finder. Therefore, the Ibn Ezra would be able to keep the money without having to take tzedakah.

The Rambam left the money on the bridge the next morning, right before the Ibn Ezra came along. He then hid behind a tree and saw the Ibn Ezra coming. However, he was shocked to see his friend walking with his eyes firmly closed, and he didn't even notice the money.

The Rambam ran over to the Ibn Ezra and asked him, "Why are you walking with your eyes closed?" The Ibn Ezra answered, "I cross this bridge every day. Today, I wanted to see if I knew it so well that I could cross it with my eyes closed, and I discovered that I could!"

The Rambam then told the Ibn Ezra about his plan to leave money on the bridge and the Ibn Ezra said, "There is a fundamental rule that a person only receives what he is meant to have. If one is not meant to have something, there is no way for him to get it. Even if someone gets a hold of something not meant for him, he will somehow lose it."

May their memories be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM
Lights Of Our Righteous

Gedolim Be'Masayhem
Stories & Anecdotes



Rav Avrohom Ibn Ezra zt"l

הרב אברהם בן מאיר אבן עזרא זצ"ל

Adar I 1 - 4924

Rabbi Avrohom ben Meir Ibn Ezra (usually called simply *"Ibn Ezra"*), a true giant of the spirit surpassed all his contemporaries, and his influence upon learning and writing in Italy, Southern France and England was greater than that of any other Jewish figure.

His adventurous, almost legendary life began in Tudela, Spain, where he was born about the year 4852 (1092). He was a man of so many excellent gifts, and such a wealth of universal knowledge, that one is at a loss to judge his mastery of learning, poetry, philisophy, Jewish grammar, astronomy or mathematics.

He spent the first half of his life in the various cities of the Arabic part of Spain, always in financial difficulties and dire need. In one of his poems he makes fun of his ill fortune and complains that "if he were to sell candles, the sun would never set; if he should deal in shrouds, no one would ever die."

Life was made somewhat easier by the generosity of his admirers, who appreciated the elegance and stylishness of his poetry and other writings.

Rabbi Avrohom Ibn Ezra spent the second half of his life travelling from country to country, studying peoples and countries, languages and cultures.

About the same time as his great contemporary, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, he set out for-the Orient, together with his son Yitzchok. He visited Africa, Egypt, and the Holy Land, where he learned Kabbalah, the deepest and most mysterious part of Torah study, from the sages in Safed and Tiberias. Then he traveled to Babylon and Persia, where the Caliph of Baghdad had permitted the Jews to have their own prince.

Finally he returned to Italy where he lived in Rome, Salerno, Lucca and Mantua. There he wrote most of his great commentaries to the Torah, and his books on Jewish grammar and philosophy. He wrote poems in honor of his friends and spent much of his time teaching a great number of disciples who gathered about him.

Ibn Ezra did not stay in Italy. He moved to Provence, in Southern France, where he was received with much honor and respect. For it was there that the two great lines of Jewish tradition, the Sephardic in Spain, and the Ashkenazic from Northern France and Germany, met.

After three years of quiet study, in Beziers, Rabbi Avrohom Ibn Ezra again took up the wanderer's staff and went across the channel to London, where at that time a rich colony of enthusiastic Jews were eager to have this great representative of Jewish learning and art in their midst. Yet before his death Rabbi Avrohom wanted to return to his old home. - At the age of about 75 years he died in Calahora, between Navarra and Castilia.

● The Importance of Honouring Shabbos

A Letter From Shabbos to the *Ibn Ezra* by: Rav Sholom Klass

The *Ibn Ezra*, one of the great *Rabbonim* of the Middle Ages, was born in 1092 in Tudela, Spain. Many stories are told about him and his wanderings. The *Ibn Ezra* traveled throughout Europe. He visited Egypt, Eretz Yisrael and many African countries. The *Ibn Ezra* wrote beautiful poems and commentaries on the Torah.

It happened in the year 4919 (1159) on Shabbos night, the fourteenth day of *Teves, Ibn Ezra,* then in London, fell into a deep and enjoyable sleep. While asleep, he had a dream in which he saw a tall, aristocratic man carrying a sealed letter.

"Are you the *Ibn Ezra*?" asked the man.

"Yes," he answered.

"I have a letter for you from *Shabbos HaMalka*," the man said.

The *Ibn Ezra* bowed low and said, "Know that from the day I began to recite the holy name of Hashem, I have always loved Shabbos. Before she would arrive on Friday night, I would always rush in advance to greet her and when she would leave, I would send her off with song and happiness. I am her most loyal and devoted subject."

"I know," answered the man. "That is why she writes you this letter."

With trembling hands, the *Ibn Ezra* unfolded the letter and as he read the words, they entered his heart as sweet honey drops.

"To my loyal friend," the letter began. "I am *Shabbos HaMalka,* adorned in holy laws. I am the fourth of the *Aseres HaDibros*, and I am the binding sign between Hashem and His children for all future generations." - The letter continued, "On my day, Hashem rested from His work. On my day, no *mon* would fall. I am the one day of happiness, light and enjoyment for the tired mortals on this earth. Even the dead in *Gehinnom* bless me for the one day of respite afforded them."

And now the letter continued in a pleading tone. - "I come to you, my good and loyal friend, to help me. One of your educated pupils has now published a book commenting on the Torah. In this book he urges the people to violate Friday night and to begin the Shabbos on Saturday morning. He attempts to prove from the Torah that I was born in the morning and not the evening before. By doing that he will virtually cut me in half. Please help me!"

The *Ibn Ezra* awoke with a start. Rushing into his library he picked up a sefer given to him by a talmid. Sure enough, it attempted to prove that Shabbos was to be observed from Saturday morning until Sunday morning.

Realizing that this would be another attempt to destroy the holy Torah, the *Ibn Ezra* strengthened himself to do battle for his beloved Shabbos, and he penned his famous, "*Igeres HaShabbos* – A Letter From Shabbos."

In scathing words, he denounced the author. "May your arm wither and your eyes become dark for daring to impugn our *Shabbos HaMalka*…"

He then tore apart the flimsy arguments and pointed to the sentence in *Vayikra* 23:32 - **בָּעֶרֶב מֵעֶרֶב עַד־עֶרֶב תִּשְׁבְּתוּ שַׁבַּתְּכֶם** - "***From evening to evening thou shalt rest***…"

It is said that to this day, whenever the name *Ibn Ezra* is mentioned, the *Shabbos HaMalka* smiles benevolently.

The details of the letter were published in the *Arizal's Shulchon Aruch* and teach us the importance of honoring Shabbos.

"Everyone is good to a dying man – how good we would be to each other if we fully realized that we were all dying." ~ R' Shraga Silverstein zt"l.

Tefillah of IDF Soldier Saves Fellow Fighters



IDF Sgt. Maj. Malchiel ben Yosef saved his comrades from a terrorist who emerged from a tunnel behind them thanks to his turning east towards Yerushalayim to *daven Mincha.*

The incident occurred about a month and a half ago. Malchiel related how his battalion had fought in Gaza for two and a half months in such places as Gaza City's Shejaia neighborhood.

They had been given 48 hours for rest and recuperation inside Israel before receiving an order to re-enter Gaza. Malchiel brought up the rear of his 450th Battalion. Fighters ahead had already entered houses ahead of him.

At one point his group halted and he took advantage of the opportunity to *daven* before the sun set. He turned east towards Yerushalayim, and in the midst of *davening* he spied movement.

"I perceive, 10 meters from me, 15 meters from me [30 feet to 50 feet], something like that, metal moving on the ground. I said to myself it's a cat or some animal."

A moment later he saw the metal lid of a tunnel, which the battalion hadn't noticed as it passed, fly open and a terrorist emerge carrying

a rocket-propelled grenade. The terrorist moved swiftly westward towards soldiers who had already entered a house.

"I'm south of him and he doesn't observe me," Malchiel recalled.

Malchiel, who admits he was in shock, managed to shout at the terrorist, who spun to face him. Malchiel fired at the terrorist, hitting him. In that split second, his friends, who had not spied the terrorist, turned and immediately opened fire as well.

"Thank G-d, we dropped him before he could fire his RPG," said Malchiel.

Malchiel also threw a grenade at the tunnel opening to eliminate any additional threats.

He asked himself why he hadn't *davened* earlier that day as he had had other opportunities but was grateful that he didn't.

Malchiel said that before that event he was sometimes joined by other religious soldiers in *davening*, but since the incident, non-observant soldiers are eager to *daven* with him as well.

The Emphasis on Mitzvos Bein Adam L'Chaveiro by Rabbi Frand

Parshas Mishpatim is all about how to deal with people—how to deal with their cows, how to deal with their cars, and how to treat people. All these mitzvos are literally as important as the mitzvos bein adam l'makom. Therefore, the **Alter from Kelm** said that the timing of the passing of **Rav Yisrael Salanter** in the week of Parshas Mishpatim was very appropriate.

The Alter from Kelm added that the funeral itself took place on Sunday, at the beginning of the week of Parshas Terumah because Parshas Terumah discusses the construction of the Aron Kodesh, which houses the Luchos. This was very appropriate, because Rav

Yisrael Salanter himself was like an Aron Kodesh and the Luchos haBris were deposited within his personality as well.

I would like to share another hesped which **Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon** said on his Rebbi, the **Alter from Slabodka**. Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon was the Lomza Rosh Yeshiva in Poland. People from Baltimore remember Rabbi Samson who was a disciple of Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon. Rav Gordon eulogized the Alter from Slabodka as follows:

Why does Parshas Mishpatim begin with the mitzva of Eved Ivri (the Hebrew indentured servant) given that the laws of Eved Ivri would not be applicable until the laws of Yovel (Jubilee Year) would be in practice, which was totally not relevant for that generation? Was there nothing more practical to teach them at this particular point in history?

Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon said that the Torah is sending us a message here. How someone treats a Jew is how one treats a Hebrew slave. A person must recognize that an Eved Ivri is not from the most elegant strata of Jewish society. He is a thief. Not only is he a thief, but he is also not a very wealthy thief, because if he was a wealthy thief then he would be able to pay back his theft.

The reason he is sold into slavery is because he has nothing with which to repay his debt to society. So, he is the lowest rung of society and yet, if we study how we need to treat such an individual (Rambam Laws of Slavery, Chapter 1), we become very enlightened:

We are not permitted to sell him in a slave market.

We cannot impose upon him avodas perech (back-breaking labor).

We need to provide him the same food, clothing, and living conditions as we do to family members.

All this prompts the Gemara to say, "Someone who buys a Hebrew slave, in effect, buys a master for himself." (Kiddushin 20a).

This is how we need to treat a thief! So this is what Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon said about his Rebbi, the Alter from Slabodka, who was a talmid of the Alter from Kelm, who was a talmid of Rav Yisrael Salanter: The opening pesukim of Parshas Mishpatim are not just teaching how to treat a Hebrew slave, they are teaching how to treat everyone, because we are all—even the lowest of society—created btzelem Elokim, and must be treated as such.

That is why Parshas Mishpatim, which is the source of so many mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro, begins with, of all people, Eved Ivri. If even an Eved Ivri needs to be treated such, how much more so does a person need to treat his neighbor, his friend, or anyone else with dignity and honor.

Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon had lived in Lomza. He lost his family in Europe, and then moved to New York and remarried. After he was in New York for a while, he went to Eretz Yisrael and was a Rosh Yeshiva in a Yeshiva in Petach Tikva with Rav Reuvain Katz.

I saw in a sefer that Rav Gordon's nephew came from Eretz Yisrael to America to visit his uncle. The nephew sent a telegram that he would be arriving about midnight. As it turned out he did not arrive at midnight. He arrived at 3:00 am. He was about to walk into the house when he noticed that his was waiting outside for him.

He was shocked. He told his uncle, "You could have gone to sleep. You could have just left the door unlocked or left a note on the door saying where the key was. Why was in necessary for you to wait up for me until three o'clock in the morning?"

Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon answered, "It is because I wanted to make sure I told you something before you met my wife. I want you to call her 'Tanta' (Auntie)." Rav Gordon was the young man's uncle but his second wife was technically not his aunt.

Rav Gordon said, "She is so good to me, and she takes such good care of me that I want her to feel part of the family. Don't call her Mrs.

Gordon and don't call her by her name. Call her 'Tanta', so that she can feel part of the mishpacha!"

Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon was yafeh doresh v'yafeh mekayem (he expounded beautifully, and he practiced what he preached). He talked the talk, and he walked the walk. All of us can preach about how you need to treat your fellow man with sensitivity, etc. etc.

But listen to his sensitivity. He stayed up until 3:00 am to head his nephew off at the pass, so to speak, to instruct him how to talk to Rebbetzin Gordon with sensitivity. "Call her 'Tanta' so she will feel part of the family."

That is the Torah of Parshas Mishpatim. That is the Torah of Rav Yisrael Salanter, the Alter from Kelm, the Alter from Slabodka, and that is our heritage as well. This is what the Rosh Yeshiva, zt"l, ((1900-1987)) always used to preach.

I remember that **Rav Ruderman** used to tell the following incident, which took place in his boyhood home of Dauhinava (Minsk). He remembers as a child: It was Hoshanna Rabbah, the chazzan went to the Amud to begin to daven, but the shames forgot to bring the kittel which is customarily worn by the chazzan on Hoshannah Rabbah.

The President of the shul went over to the shames and made him feel like an idiot. ("How could you be such a schlemiel? Everyone knows the chazzan needs to have a kittel when he davens Mussaf on Hoshannah Rabbah)! The shames felt lower than dirt.

Rav Ruderman commented: Think about it. Wearing a kittel is a minhag b'alma (mere custom). Embarrassing someone in public is an issur diyoraysa! It is far more severe. Of course, a person's prayers will be accepted without the kittel just as much as they will be accepted with the kittel. How must this shames have felt when he went home after davening that day. He was humiliated in front of the whole shul!

This is our problem, the Rosh Yeshiva used to say. We may act like the custom of the chazzan wearing a kittel on Hoshanna Rabbah overrides all Torah prohibitions. But embarrassing a fellow Jew—who cares about that?

This is something the Rosh Yeshiva learned from the Alter from Slabodka, who learned it from the Alter from Kelm, who learned it from Rav Yisrael Salanter, who learned it from Parshas Mishpatim.

Rabbi Mordechai Kalatsky - In the Pits?



The Land of Israel is blessed with Seven Species, five of which are fruits: the olive, date, grape, fig and pomegranate. Not ironically, there is something which all these fruits have in common: they all contain a pit.

The olive has a pit which is bitter and you spit out. The date has a pit which is usually put into your mouth and then spat out. The grape has a pit, which you usually swallow. The fig has pits, but they are part of the fruit and you consume them. The pomegranate, lastly, is a pit itself, and you eat it all.

The commentaries explain that this spectrum represents life itself. Sometimes life is the pits. It's hard and difficult. You start off like the olive and you hate pits and spit them out right away. Your biggest problem is where you should go on vacation: Florida or Los Angeles?

When you get older, you come across the date. You still spit out pits, but it's sweet! You grew from your experience, and you can see and acknowledge that this time around.

During mid-life, you hit the grape. Things are going to go wrong. Pits are part of life and you accept that as a fact. You are going to be stuck on the phone with a frustrating operator, you are going to be stuck in traffic, and you are going to encounter unexpected events.

As you grow more mature, you wind up with the fig. The pit is part of the fruit. You understand the value and greatness that results from struggles. You don't like them, but you welcome them because you see their value.

The highest tier is that of the pomegranate, where the fruit itself is the pit. You recognize that struggles which refine and perfect ourselves are the very purpose of life. To face our struggles and overcome them is not ancillary to our journey in life; it defines our highest aspiration in life. The fruit itself is the pit and that grants us the most delicious experience. They are one and the same. They are inextricably bound together, and both are sweet to our palate.

Struggles in life do not always manifest in miserable tragedy. It takes the form of getting up in the morning for davening, not losing our patience or growing angry with our children, or becoming frustrated when stuck in traffic or facing the decision to errantly run a yellow light.

Tragedies are horrible, but life is about taking the darkness and turning it into light.

"It is worthwhile for a person to study mussar his entire life, if it will save him from speaking loshon hora even once." ~ R' Yisroel Salanter zt"l.

Parsha Points to Ponder

The Gemora in Kerisos (9a) derives from the national "conversion" at Mount Sinai that one of the essential components of conversion to Judaism is immersion in a mikvah. Where did the Jewish people find an acceptable mikvah in the middle of the desert?

The Ohr Someach notes that the Gemora in Shabbos (35a) teaches that the well of Miriam which followed the Jewish people throughout the wilderness was a kosher mikvah. - He suggests that it was this well that the Jews used for immersion whenever necessary throughout their 40-year sojourn in the desert.



מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

וּמַכֵּה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת. וְגֹנֵב אִישׁ וּמְכָרוֹ וְנִמְצָא בְיָדוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת. וּמְקַלֵּל אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת (21:15,16,17)

Why is the *posuk* about the penalty for kidnapping flanked by the two *posukim* that detail the punishment for hitting/hurting and cursing a parent?

R' Shimon Schwab *zt"l* (Maayan Beis HaShoevah) explains that when parents are more interested in what they get out of the relationship, when they hover over their young and become the scriptwriters and directors of their children's lives, they rob them of their own personalities. They are being molded in the image of

others, who don't have their best interests at heart. Their parents have, in a real sense, hijacked or kidnapped the life that could have been.

The *Torah* is alluding to this vital and true role of a parent. Yes, the child who attacked a parent is at fault for his assault of the parent, whether it is verbal cursing or physical blows. He deserves the penalty enumerated in the two *posukim* (15 and 17). Yet, at the same time, the crime described in the middle *posuk* has also been violated. - His parents are guilty of a real form of kidnapping - robbing a young child of his very essence, his very soul.

In the *Sefer Bedidi Hava Uvda*, authored by **R' Shmuel Dovid Friedman *shlita***, there is a powerful story with a strong and poignant message:

A very wealthy man whose father acted a bit eccentric and would walk around in filthy rags, unclean and unhinged. This embarrassed the wealthy man immensely and he decided that although his father had no place else to live, he would not allow him into his palatial home.

If someone would ask him why he treated his father like a stranger this way, he would emphatically explain that it was not befitting for him, the son, to observe his father behave in this manner, but instead of bringing him into his home and providing him with proper clothing, he chose to ignore him. - The elderly man lived and slept in the streets of the city. This went on for quite some time.

One winter's day, the young son of the wealthy man - a grandson of the homeless man - was walking in the street and saw the old man scrounging around in the garbage. He was unclothed and talking to himself.

The boy watched in horrified fascination as his own flesh and blood, his father's father, was laying in the dirt, grime and snow-covered street without a proper garment, no coat or gloves to protect him from the elements. The old man was trembling from cold.

The young boy decided that he needed to help his grandfather. He ran into his warm and cozy home and told his father that they have to provide the grandfather with better clothing. It was not right to simply leave him outside freezing and trembling, without doing anything on his behalf.

The father was busy reading a book and didn't even look up. With a wave of his hand, he told the boy, "I don't care what you do for that old man. If you want, you can go up to the attic. I remember that there is an old garment there. Maybe even something warm. Take it down and bring it to your grandfather, if you want."

The son went up to the attic and the father went back to his book. After quite a while, the father looked up from his reading and realized that his young son still had not come down from the attic. He became concerned lest something happened to him.

He got out of his chair and hurried over to the attic stairs. With urgency, he called up to the boy, "My son, is everything okay up there? Why are you not coming down?"

The son replied, "I was delayed because I was cutting the garment into two parts, one for my grandfather and one for you, my father. I figured it was a good idea so that when you will become an old man and I will throw you out of the house in the winter like you've done to your father, I'll send you the other half of this garment..."

The father recoiled at the words of his son. It was spoken not out of malice, but with a simple expectation that this is how it will be. At once, he understood the message: His son planned to do to him exactly what he was doing to his father. As a result, he began to reflect on his misdeeds and then went to get his father. He brought him back into his home, gave him a warm and comfortable room, and provided him with proper clothing and hygiene. - The young boy smiled.

בס"ד

למודי משה

The Fallacy of the Expression "Thanks for Nothing"

וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכוּן אֹתוֹ - *"If you find a treife animal you shall not eat it, rather, you shall throw it to the dogs."* (*Shemos* 22:30)

Upon discovering that an animal in his flock or herd has been killed by wild animals, the Torah specifically requires the owner to give the carcass to the dogs, a connection that does not seem to be readily apparent.

The *Daas Z'keinim* explains that most farmers and shepherds employ guard dogs to protect their animals against predators. Presumably, when the wolf stealthily came to attack in the middle of the night, the dog detected its presence and fought valiantly, albeit unsuccessfully, to ward it off. For this effort, as well as for its successful guarding of all the other animals until now, the Torah requires the owner to show gratitude to the dog by presenting it with the dead animal's remains.

In doing so, the Torah is teaching us the fallacy of a common English expression. If a person gives of his precious time and energy in an earnest attempt to help somebody out, only to have his efforts fail, the average American will tell him, "***Thanks for nothing***."

This expression indicates that he is owed no debt of gratitude for his efforts and not-so-subtly suggests that the next time he should just mind his own business.

In contrast, the Torah teaches that because the dog was willing to help and tried to be of assistance in doing its best to protect the animals, its owner is obligated to show appreciation for its good-faith efforts and reward it with the carcass.

So many times, a relative, friend, co-worker, or *shadchan* will volunteer to try to help us out. Unfortunately, these efforts do not always lead to the results we were hoping for.

The next time it happens, instead of rubbing in the failure to somebody who already feels bad enough, let us remember the lesson of the guard dogs and express our sincere appreciation for their time and good intentions. (**R' Ozer Alport**)



Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



Just before the **Satmar Rebbe's** Chasunah, zt"l, his father, the **Kedushas Yom Tov, zt"l**, told him, "Why do we have the Chupah outdoors, under the open sky?

It is to remind the Choson and Kallah to look up to Shamayim, and put their trust in Hashem for all their needs.

There are some Chasanim who go to the Chupah thinking that their father or their father-in-law will support him. But that isn't a true thought. The Chupah, under the sky, is a reminder that Parnasah comes from Hashem, and only from Hashem. - Therefore, don't rely on anyone. Only trust in Hashem!"

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

● Mobs Of People



Pushed around among the mobs of people, waiting for the Rebbe's *tisch* to begin, **R' Shimshon Pincus** attempted to make his way up to the head table, trying to be next to the Rebbe. This, however, didn't last too long. As soon as the Rebbe entered, R' Shimshon was wildly pushed to the side, having to find himself a seat amongst the "regulars." While he was being pushed, he saw a young child being pulled in and placed at the head table.

This bothered R' Shimshon. "Why is this boy granted entry, while I'm being pushed away? Is he better than me? This isn't fair!"

He then heard that this boy was the grandson of the Rebbe. Once he heard that, all questions were answered. We all understand that the grandson of the Rebbe deserves to be up close to the Rebbe, and so R' Shimshon controlled himself.

With this, R' Shimshon explained the concept of being the "son of Hashem." - The child understandably deserves different treatment. Hashem, too, gives us different treatment because we are considered His son.

● The Greatest Proof!



The royal prince sought the best wife, though no woman found favor in his eyes. He called in the top matchmakers in the land, but nothing transpired. His fruitless search stretched into weeks, months, and even years, but the prince remained without a princess.

Eventually, he settled on the daughter of a provincial shoemaker. She felt honored, privileged, and flattered to be chosen for the royal prince, getting to live in the large mansion provided by the king. Never had she dreamed of living amidst such wealth while growing up in her humble father's home.

As the years passed, though, the princess began to feel that the palace life wasn't for her. She complained to her husband about how she would prefer living a simple life in a modest house among the people. It suited her better to be there rather than the opulence of the palace.

After much thought, the royal prince told her that despite his status and lifestyle, he nevertheless agreed to downgrade for his wife's honor and move into a smaller home in the town.

This comforted his wife. Not only was she flattered over being chosen by the prince to be his wife, but by downgrading his lifestyle, it showed her how much he treasured and cared about her. Until now, this aspect of their relationship wasn't apparent, but now that he so-to-say lowered himself for her sake, it displayed the greatest sense of care for her.

Why was this so? Having married her didn't really show his affection for her, as he could have simply been acting for his own sake. However, when he gave up on his due honor and comfort to move down to her level, that showed his real feelings toward her.

The *sefarim* bring that this is the greatest proof of how much Hashem loves us and cares for us. Hashem has endless numbers of *malachim* in *Shamayim*, and yet he lowers himself to care for us and our needs. He leaves His kingdom in *Shamayim* in order to attend our needs.

This is greater than the fact that He chose us as a nation, because choosing us shows that He liked our commitment. But by nevertheless attending to our needs during this long *galus*, that shows the great care Hashem has for us.

At whatever level we are holding, Hashem caters to us on an individual level, disregarding His great glory in *Shamayim*.

● The Mistaken Visit



There are many *chessed* organizations that each helps people in its unique way. One of the smaller ones is an organization that voluntarily goes to hospitals to sing and dance for sick patients.

One time, they received a request to come sing for an elder, unresponsive patient who would appreciate the company and the music. The caller explained that the patient's mood is boosted every

time he's sung for, and so they agreed to come over to cheer up the patient in room #809.

The day they came was particularly cold, and yet when they came into room #809, they saw a responsive, old Russian man. He questioned them why they came, to which they responded that they had come because Hashem sent them here.

"Really, how did you know to come?" asked the ill man.

"We got a call to visit you!" answered the crew.

"I think you should double check the request," the man told them. "It doesn't make sense that someone requested a visit for me; I'm in this world with no one knowing me; from morning to night I am here with no visitors, so how can it be that anyone would call about me?"

The crew went and rechecked the address, and while they had been correct about room #809, they were incorrect over which building to come to! But, since they were already there, they decided to play for him nonetheless.

After a few songs, the Russian man stopped them. "This was amazing," he told them. "I'm recovering from recent invasive surgery, which has been rough, to say the least. I turned to Hashem and said, 'Please help me. I don't have the emotional strength to rebuild my energy. Please send me what it takes to regain my original vigor and strength.'

A few moments later, I heard a knock on the door, and here you are, singing and playing music and lifting my spirit. Yes, Hashem, I knew you'd be there for me. Thank you, Hashem!"

This fellow had no one in the world to care for him, but Hashem showed him *l'maalah mi'derech ha'teva* how He cares for him and is at his side. (**R' Meir Simcha Sperling**)



Why do we say the bracha of **שֶׁעָשָׂה לִי כָּל־צָרְכִּי** in the singular form? That Hashem provided ME with all my needs? All of the other brachos are said in the plural form – **זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים** - **מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים** - **מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים**.

The answer is that what other people have, isn't necessarily what YOU need. – Don't look at what other people have. There is no generalising when it comes to a person's needs. – Everones needs are individual. Whatever you have is whatever you need, and don't look at what others have.

What someone else has is not for you – you have no need for it, and it isn't good for you!



During WWII, the Nazis **יִמַּח שְׁמָם** did terrible things to the Jews. One Jewish person was very frustrated and asked the **Klausenberger Rebbe, Horav Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam זצ"ל** , if on Yom Tov, would he still be able to say the tefillah of **אַתָּה בְחַרְתָּנוּ** where we praise Hashem for letting us be part of the chosen nation?

The Rebbe answered that he most definitely would, because if he was not part of the chosen nation, he would probably also be cruel just as the Nazis **יִמַּח שְׁמָם** were.





Rav Moshe Chaim Lau, the **רב** of Netanya, received a call one day. On the other end of the line was a woman who was engaged to be married, and asked the **רב** to be **מסדר קידושין** at her **חופה**. The **רב** asked her for the date, to which she replied that it would be on the night of **י"ד ניסן**, the busiest night in the year for any **רב** !

Rav Moshe Chaim politely explained that he would be too busy on that evening, and asked if she could arrange for another **רב** to officiate in his stead, or if she could schedule the **חופה** for a different day.

The woman however was adamant that it had to be on that day. She also stated that she would not agree to any other **רב** as she had once seen the **רב** being **מסדר קידושין** and had set her heart that he would be at her **חופה** one day.





The **רב** finally relented and said that he would attend on condition that it would start promptly at 4:30pm, and that he could leave immediately after the **חופה**.

The woman agreed, and on **י״ג ניסן**, Rav Lau travelled for two hours to the **חופה**, arriving at 4:30pm to find just one elderly man sitting in the hall!

The man introduced himself as the father of the **כלה** and said that he lived in Argentina. They started *schmoozing* and the *Yied* reminisced that he was originally from Pietrokov in Poland. He told the **רב** that he had gotten married in Pietrokov and that his own **מסדר קידושין** had been a **רב** named Rav Moshe Chaim Lau. The *Yied* inquired if the **רב** had ever heard of Rav Moshe Chaim Lau, the **רב** of Pietrokov?

The **רב** responded, "My name is Rav Moshe Chaim Lau, and I am named after my *zeide* from Pietrokov!"

The astonished man responded, "My **חופה** was the last that your grandfather ever officiated at. It was in the ghetto in 1944, and the very next day your grandfather was deported to Treblinka where he was sent to the gas chambers".

Rav Lau started crying and finally understood why he had to be at that **חופה**, and why **השגחה** had ordained that only he should be the **מסדר קידושין**.

A Lesson Can Be Learned From…….



R' Shmuel Elya of Bilgoray came to an inn where a group of Maskilim were laughing at the idea of Moshiach. He said to them: Let me tell you a story: A fox once saw a bird perched on top of a tree. As the fox was hungry, he invited the bird to fly down and 'keep him company'. The bird replied that he knew what the fox really wanted – to eat him. The fox said: "Not at all. Moshiach has arrived, and the Posuk (Yeshaya 11:6) has taken effect – וְגָר זְאֵב עִם־כֶּבֶשׂ - '*the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and no animal will hurt another*'.

Suddenly, the sound of hounds and trumpets could be heard. The fox asked the bird, what do you see ? The bird replied, "It's nothing - just some hunters with their dogs".

The fox was afraid and he began to run away. The bird called after him "I thought, if Moshiach were here, that no animal would harm another".

The fox replied, "That's true, but these dogs don't believe in Moshiach". (Pleasant Ridge Newsletter)





וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים -These are the opening words to our parsha. These are the things that Moshe Rabbeinu taught the B'nei Yisrael immediately following Matan Torah. What is the first thing that he teaches? – The laws of the **עֶבֶד עִבְרִי**.

Who is an **עֶבֶד עִבְרִי**? A Yid who stole money from someone else, but he doesn't have the money to pay back, so he is sold into slavery to pay back the loss.

Wouldn't you have thought that when Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Har Sinai, he would have taught us the beauty of Yiddiskeit, YomTov, Shabbos, and other mitzvos? Why are the laws of **עֶבֶד עִבְרִי** the first thing that he taught us? He addresses the lowest person in Klal Yisrael – the thief?

Rav Shmuel Wosner Zt'l says that if Moshe would have come down from Har Sinai and first taught us the previously mentioned beautiful secrets in the Torah, there might be some people who say, "The Torah might be very nice, but it's not meant for me. I've done too many things wrong in life. I've fallen too far. I'm a lost case."

Therefore, the first thing that Moshe addressed was laws relating to the lowest of the Yidden. As far as you fell, the Torah has a solution for you. No one should ever say that the Torah is only meant for only the holiest of people. - Every Yid can find a place in our beautiful Torah.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

A Life Lesson from the Parsha

רבי מאיר אומר: בין כך ובין כך אתם קרויים בנים- Either way says Rabbi Meir "- whether you do the will of Hashem or not - you, the Bnei Yisroel are called "children" of Hashem" (Kiddushin 36a).

One might ask, what makes us unique in a practical sense such that we are called "children of Hashem"?

The answer is found in Rashi's commentaries to this week's parsha: **בידוע שרחמי האב על הבן**-" It's known that the father's mercy is upon the son." - Although the verse that Rashi is commenting on (Shemos 22:2) is referring to a human father and son, it certainly applies to Hashem's relationship with us: Hashem always has great mercy on us because we are His children.



The Parasha Question

Should a slave choose to remain a slave after the six-year term, his ear is drilled into the doorpost. But why was the doorpost chosen for this mitzvah?

Rashi explains that the doorpost was chosen because in Mitzrayim during the Korban Pesach it witnessed the Jews becoming Hashem's servants. Now that the slave is choosing to remain a slave, he is drilled in front of the same witnesses.

The **Tur** answers that the doorpost was chosen because it symbolizes that the slave will be the watcher of his master's door.

Others explain that the doorpost was chosen because it was related to why he became a slave in the first place; he broke someone's door and stole. Therefore, he is drilled into the doorpost.

Another reason given is that the doorpost is in public view. It is hoped that passersby will see what is happening and dissuade the slave from piercing his ear and extending his slavery.

Another reason given is that Hashem is saying that He gave the slave an open path to freedom, but the slave chose to close the door and remain a slave. Therefore, he is drilled into the doorpost.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● **How is oppressing widows and orphans really oppressing Hashem?**

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן. אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתוֹ. וְחָרָה אַפִּי וְהָרַגְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בֶּחָרֶב וְהָיוּ נְשֵׁיכֶם אַלְמָנוֹת וּבְנֵיכֶם יְתֹמִים (22,21) "***You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him, if he cries out to Me, I will surely hear his cry. My wrath will be kindled, and I will slay you with the sword, and your wives will be widows and your children orphans***."

It seems to me that the meaning of the posuk is according to what Chazal said on the posuk in Zechariah 2:12 "whoever touches, you, touches the apple of his eye" - His (Hashem's) eye, so to speak. Thus the posuk is saying that one who afflicts a widow or an orphan, do you think that you are afflicting them? Behold if they cry out to Hashem, He will have mercy upon them, because Hashem is merciful and gracious.

If so, it is like afflicting Hashem Himself. That is why the posuk uses a double expression **תענה ענה**- to express wonder, "is it really them that you are afflicting? If they cry out to me, I will surely hear them", and if so, you are effectively afflicting Me and not them.

Alternatively, we can explain that since Hashem is very merciful towards widows and orphans, He is saying: If you afflict them and they cry out to Me, My anger will be kindled and I will slay you, and then your wives will become widows and your children orphans, and through this you will cause Me distress, and so you will be afflicting Me.

Thus the posuk "If you afflict him" means "is the affliction to him?". No, mine is the affliction, because if he cries out to Me, I will surely listen to him, and have mercy upon him and consequently your wives will become widows and your children orphans, and so this punishment that will happen to you will itself be an affliction to Me.



כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עִבְרִי – *'If you purchase a Hebrew slave . . ' (21:2)*

There is nothing more difficult for a person than to be subjugated to another person. This is why the Parshah begins with the laws of how the Hebrew slave is to be treated. (**Ibn Ezra**)

רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא – *'He shall pay for the loss of his work, and he shall fully heal him.' (21:19)*

From here is derived that a physician is allowed to heal [and we do not say that since G-d afflicted the person, it is forbidden to cure him]. (**Talmud, Bava Kamma 85a**)

The young wife of **Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch** had fallen ill, and the doctors were unanimous in their opinion that there was no hope of her recovery. - When her father-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of

Lubavitch, was told of the doctors' verdict, he said: "The Talmud specifically derives from the Torah that 'a physician is allowed to heal.' But nowhere has a doctor been given the right to declare a human being incurable."



וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכְלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכוּן אֹתוֹ – '***Neither shall you eat any meat that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.***' *(22:30)*

This is to teach us that G-d does not deprive any creature of its just reward. Because the dogs did not bark at the Israelites when they came out of Egypt (see Exodus 11:7), G-d said: Give them their reward. (**Mechilta**)



וְשֹׁחַד לֹא תִקָּח – '***Do not take a bribe.***' *(23:8)*

An impoverished widow once came to the *beit din* (courthouse) of the great sage Rabbi Yehoshua Kutner. Weeping bitter tears, she begged him to summon to the court a man she accused of having wronged her.

Rabbi Yehoshua summoned the man to appear before the court, but referred the case to another rabbi, refusing to preside over it himself. "The Torah forbids the taking of bribes," he explained. "Do you think that a bribe is only a gift of money? Tears can also be a bribe that 'blinds the clear-sighted'—especially the tears of a poor widow." (**Maayanah Shel Torah**)



"A person who trusts in Hashem has true peace of mind, knowing that whatever happens is for their best, both in this world and the next." ~ Sefer Chovos Halevavos.





◣ Reading The Preface - Kotzker Rebbe

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם - "***And these are the ordinances that you shall set before them.***" (21:1)

Why does the Torah speak about the Mitzvos between man and his fellow man immediately after relating the actual giving of the Torah on Har Sinai?

Chazal teach us **דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה**- "Good manners are a prerequisite to Torah." - The same way that one learns about the contents of a book by reading the preface, so can we tell how much Torah a person has within him by observing how he behaves towards his fellow man.

◣ Proper Prep - Sassover Rebbe

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם - "***And these are the ordinances that you shall set before them.***" (21:1) -'Like a table that is set and prepared to be eaten from, that is placed before a person.' (Rashi)

This implies that a person should make the same concentrated effort to perform mitzvos and observe the laws as he does to prepare a table for a meal.

"When a person praises Hashem, Hashem praises the person." Reb Noson of Nemirov (1780-1844)

◣ Proportionate Wealth - Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ -"***When you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you***..." (22:24)

Sometimes a person might establish a specific amount of money that he gives to charity, and even as his wealth increases, the amount he gives remains the same. - But the Torah says, "The poor person **with** you" - telling us that as we become enriched, the poor should be enriched with us!

◣ Respectful Charity - Reb Yisrael Friedman Of Ruzhin

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ -"***When you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you***..." (22:24)

The word kesef (money) can also mean "desire" (kosef) and the word talveh (lend) can mean "to associate."

Based on this, the meaning of the pasuk is that it is not enough just to give money to the poor. You must also associate with him and treat him as a human being and not as someone below you. It is true that he is poor, but he is also an associate.

◣ Closing The Gap - Reb Avraham Radamsker

מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק - "***Distance yourself from a false word***." (23:7)

One of the reasons Mashiach will come is to bring those who are far closer, and those who are close farther apart.

According to the aleph bet, the letters of the word emes (truth) are far apart: aleph at the beginning, mem in the middle, and sof at the end. The letters of the word sheker (falsehood) are in sequence: shin-koof-resh. - When Mashiach comes, all will be truth. He will make that which is far close and that which is close far.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

There are numerous chesed and tzedokoh groups and organisations all around the world who are all doing wonderful and marvellous deeds for the benefit of their many recipients. All deserve our unflinching praise and blessings. Apart from all that, this story of the week, highlights the sensitivity that Askonim and Baalei Chesed display even whilst going about their 'normal' lives and work.

One week after Reb Yitzchok Landau* arrived in America, his father, Reb Avrohom passed away in a New York hospital, leaving behind a wife, who was in her ninth month, and seven children. The tragedy seems particularly unjust: Here was a man who had survived the Holocaust, had spent nearly two years in a Displaced Persons camp in Leipheim, Germany, had undergone the difficult work of securing the papers of his family to immigrate, and finally reached American shores, family intact, only to die right afterwards from what was perhaps a medical negligence.

At any rate, the family he'd left behind needed food on their table. In the 1950's without a male breadwinner, among a fledgling community who were mostly poor, this was a significant challenge.

One day, the almono was told by a friend that there was a way for her to receive bread free of charge. A Williamsburg bakery owner named Reb Shlomo Weiss, a Holocaust survivor who had originally owned a bakery in prewar Vienna, donated bread to any widows or orphans who came to his store. (The bakery still exists today).

"Receiving fee bread," Reb Yitzchok would tell his children when he retold this story to them on countless long Fridays nights, "wouldn't solve the big problem, which was that we'd lost our father, but it would at least solve the problem of our going hungry."

So, one Thursday morning, Yitzchok's mother gave her son a chore. "Issac'l", she said, "go to Reb Shlomo Weiss's bakery on Lee Avenue, tell him who your father was, and then he'll give you some bread."

"But Mameh, Yitzchok said, "I don't have money."

"Never mind," she replied, "he'll give you bread. You'll see."

"I was ten years old," Reb Yitzchok would tell his children with a catch in his voice. "What my mother was asking me to do terrified me. Just walk into a store and ask for something without money? I was afraid the man would laugh in my face. And I was embarrassed. We had been a respected family in my hometown, and now I would be asking for charity?

Every bone in my body protested. But listen, when my mother told me to do something, I obeyed, no matter what. So, I put on my coat and went. The entire walk down Lee Avenue, my heart beat 'bum-bum-bum.' I get to the bakery, and what do I see? Customers. Packed with customers. *Paying* customers. I could hardly breathe. I almost turned back.

"Slowly, I pulled open the door of the bakery, and before I'd even dared step inside, I saw the owner, Reb Shlomo, and his eyes caught mine. He was in the middle of packing up some cake for a customer, but he spotted me standing there, and I don't know, he saw something – *epes hut er gezein in maineh oigen,* there was something he saw in my eyes – and he stopped what he was doing, waved me to come close, and as I did, he told the customer, the *paying* customer, "Just a minute. I'll finish your order in a minute." Then he took a huge brown sack, the kind the bakers used to place their rolls of bread in, and he began to fill it. Bread, some rugelach, some kokosh cake, they all went into the sack. He handed me the sack, it was almost as big as me, and said, "*Luz grizen di mameh,* regards to your mother."

"What did he see? How did he know? And how did he know how I felt?" As Reb Yitzchok retold this story, could picture a little boy shuffling down Lee Avenue, hesitantly grabbing hold of the handle of the heavy shop door, peering inside with his big round sad eyes. "How did he know who I was, what I'd come for, how scared I was?

What would make a businessman drop a paying customer and rush to serve a child?"

Although this story took place in the early 1950's it, nevertheless, shows the delicate sensitive and consideration shown whilst distributing ztedokoh and chesed. **וכל מי שעוסקים בצרכי צבור באמונה, הקב״ה ישלם שכרם וכו׳**

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Are You an Angel? וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֻון לִי

In this week's Parsha (22:30), the Torah commands us to be *Anshei Kodesh* – "people of holiness." Other times the pasuk just says to be holy. However, here there's an extra word – to be People of Holiness. Isn't this wording extraneous? Isn't it obvious that Hashem is addressing human beings? Can't the pasuk simply say, "Be holy"? Why does the Pasuk emphasize that we should be "people" that are holy?

I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that **Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk** says that the lesson to us is that we shouldn't try to conduct ourselves as angels in our pursuit of holiness. He says that Hashem has enough angels in Heaven. Rather we should consecrate our physical and bodily needs to use them in service of Hashem. This is why it says to be "people of holiness", meaning "people" and not angels.

Rav Meir of Premishlan said that the Torah is teaching us that in order to attain holiness one must first be a person, a "*Mentch*." One cannot be holy if one doesn't have basic decency and *mentchlichkeit* (ethical behavior). That is why it says to be "people" of holiness. First, behave like a good person, be respectful

and kind to others, care about their property, and then you can achieve holiness.

Someone once came to **Rav Shlomo Kluger zt"l** and told him the following: "I work for a man who has a wine cellar. He has many barrels of wine and I'm his employee. One day I took my purse with all my earnings, and I hid it in the wine cellar. I came back and it was gone. I know that it was my boss, the owner of the wine cellar who stole it because he's the only other person who has a key.

So, Rav Shlomo Kluger called in the owner of the wine cellar, and he said your employee had a purse with all his earnings and it's gone. What do you think happened to it? The owner says, "I didn't take it. It wasn't me. I would never do such a thing."

Rav Shlomo Kluger said to the owner, "It must have been that one of the non-Jews stole your key once and got in there. However, I have terrible news for you. Because it was one of the goyim that stole it, you have lost thousands of dollars because nobody can drink the wine anymore due to *Yayin Nesech* (prohibition of a non-Jew touching uncooked wine). I'm sorry, but hopefully, you will find the thief. The man said what? I lost thousands?! Suddenly he screamed, "It was me! I stole his purse! I admit it!

Rav Bunim of Pshischa says that Parshas Mishpatim which deals with interpersonal laws comes right after the Torah discussing Matan Torah – the receiving of the Torah because Hashem is telling us what a Torah Jew is. Do you want to know what a Torah Jew is? A Torah Jew is somebody who cares about other people's possessions. A Torah Jew is somebody who cares about other people's property. Somebody who cares about other people's money. Somebody who cares about the welfare, health, and safety of somebody else – that's what a Torah Jew is. The Torah gave us Mishpatim, rules, ordinances, and protocols to follow. We must follow these laws and protocols.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Money and Piety

Let's say a ba'al teshuva comes into yeshiva for the first time. And so, he'd like to hear about great ideals; he'd like to be taught noble aspirations and life-changing attitudes. That's why he came in, because he's an idealist. And instead what does he get? The first book they give him is Seder Nezikin! He wanted ideals, and instead he's being treated to a course in financial law. He's looking for Hashem, and instead he finds laws about what happens if one's animal trespasses into his fellow man's field and eats some of the grain. Sometimes it seems to him that all of it is unnecessary. "If only we could skip over all of this and just spend our time on the noble ideals."

That's what he's thinking. And that's what the Am Yisroel was thinking when they stood at Har Sinai. We just heard the first commandment, Anochi Hashem Elokecha, and we said, "We will do, and we will listen" – and at that very moment when their hearts were open to everything, ready to hear the most sublime ideas, we get Mishpatim?! Mishpatim is what You tell us?!

I think it's a big question. And so we'll explain as follows: The preface to living a life of awareness of Hashem is the knowledge that this

world is not hefker. Private property is a sacred foundation of the Torah because it includes the Awareness that everything belongs to Hashem. Private property is really Hashem's property. As far as you are concerned, this man's property is Hashem's property. And even if you have permission to use something, or to go someplace, but if you use it in a way that the owner doesn't want, so you're sinning against the real Owner.

And if you're a shomer, if you're guarding something that belongs to someone else, so you're guarding Hashem's property. And if you're not careful and you cause damage to someone else's property, you're sinning against the property of Hashem. And therefore to be aware all the time about how you are treating this man and that man, and about how you are treating your neighbor's property and your friend's objects, means that you are keeping Hashem in mind all the time. And so, Mishpatim is the foundation of Awareness of Hashem in our lives at all times, and it is therefore the foundation of all avodas Hashem.

● Badges of Honor

The greatness of being a Yisroel is the fact that we have 613 mitzvos. You might think if you have six hundred and twelve it's good enough – and it's certainly a great thing. Imagine you're invited to a royal banquet and you've been honored with various medals of honor; you have this sash and this ribbon and this medallion – all the signs of aristocracy. You have a big nicely starched shirt and you're coming into the ball with all of your badges on that shirt – six hundred and twelve badges!

Six hundred and twelve medals! How can they even fit on you? You have to pin some to your pants and your hatband because there are so many. And so you walk in and all the guests are looking at you as you stride past them decked out in your full regalia of royal honors and your heart swells within as you strut through the hall displaying

all of your decorations. You're walking with a chest sparkling with jewels; you're announcing, "I am a Yisroel."

"Oh no!" Hashem says, "You're not! Because one decoration is missing. You're demoted — you're an eved ivri now." If someone is willing to sell himself or engage in behavior that forces the beis din to sell him to be an eved and forsake even one of these badges of glory it means he has fallen beneath the level of the Am Yisroel; a Yisroel recognizes the greatness of our badges of honor – he would never remove even one of the badges from his chest.

Our greatest pride is the fact that Hashem chose to command us in the mitzvos, and although there are many of them, each one is a separate and distinct honor; every single one is a separate badge of honor pinned on us by the Creator of the world.

That's what being a Yisroel means and if you don't understand that then you're demoted – you're an Ivri now.

● **Doctors and Healing**

Our entire sedrah is filled with dinim about a person's responsibility not to harm a fellow Jew. To harm someone, to cause him ill health, is a very serious sin and you don't know how much is going to be collected from you in retribution for harming your fellow Jew.

Now suppose that fellow happens to be named you and you harm him. Just because it's yourself, nothing is going to be deducted. On the contrary, you're even more responsible when it's yourself you're harming. When a man harms his brother, he's more guilty than harming a stranger because a brother you must love more. And if he harms himself, he's more guilty than harming his brother.

If you are drowning chas v'sholom, and your brother is drowning and there is only one life preserver, and it cannot hold up two people, don't be chivalrous, hold onto it yourself. **חַיֶּיךָ קוֹדְמִים לְחַיֵּי חֲבֵירֶךָ**

– your life comes first (Bava Metzia 62a). We don't own ourselves; we are strangers to our bodies, and the bodies are given in trust to

us. We are guardians over our bodies and it's our duty to take care of these bodies, these Jewish bodies. - And those who are lazy with their health, those people are transgressing this great sin of being careless with their health.

So when you come in from the street and you were in the subway, or on the trolley or bus, and you were holding onto the strap, so it's common sense, you don't have to be a big scientist to know that you have to wash your hand with soap and water before you touch food. Because just before you, someone with an illness who had wiped his nose or coughed into his hand had hung on the same strap. That's why it's a good idea when you come from the street to wash with soap and water before you eat. Make sure you do that.

That's included in the lesson of **וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא** because as much as Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing in this world, He left room for you to take care of yourself.

It's true that your skin is hard at work destroying the microorganisms but the ones that alighted on your hand in the last ten minutes didn't have a chance to be destroyed yet so don't rely on that. If you do, you're a sinner. And whatever happens is the punishment for that sin.

● Doing and Listening

Our forefathers didn't just say **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע** willy-nilly. When they were told that they were about to receive the Torah, they got busy preparing themselves. **הֱיוּ נְכֹנִים לִשְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים** – Be prepared in three days (Shemos 19:15). It doesn't mean that for three days they took off from everything and they loafed. It doesn't mean they were shopping on the avenue for cheesecakes for three days. It means that they prepared their hearts with a great hachanah; for three days they were preparing for the function of Kabolas Hatorah, readying themselves in ahavas Hashem and zerizus to do everything that Hashem was going to request of them. It took a tremendous preparation of love and eagerness; a sincere willingness to do

everything that Hashem would request of them because they understood that it was going to be something big. They expected big demands and so they were preparing for everything.

It takes work to have a frame of mind like that, a mind that is ready to accept the Torah. And because they accepted it with such a sincere heart – Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked into their hearts and He saw that they really intended to do whatever He would ask of them no matter what – so it was considered for them as if they had already learned everything and they had done everything.

That's the key, the secret to Kabolas Hatorah! Because they accepted with such sincere devotion of their minds, it's like they had already done it. After all, they want to do it! Only that they don't know yet. Hakadosh Baruch Hu looks into a person's heart and if sees that it's true, that this man is sincere, then that man receives reward immediately as if he had learned and as if he had done.

Isn't that a bargain? Of course it's not such a bargain because you have to generate such a fire of devotion within you so that it should really be a true resolve. It's easier said than done.

Right now, everyone will say, "Oh, I desire everything that's good in the Eyes of Hashem," but in his heart, if we could pry it open and take a look, he's desiring, let's say, travel. He's thinking about how nice it would be to go on vacation in Florida. Or maybe he'd like to go eat in a restaurant; he's desiring other things. But when our forefathers said "naaseh v'nishma", they meant it. We know they meant it because Hakadosh Baruch Hu cannot be deceived, and He put His stamp of approval on their acceptance.

"Everything is a miracle. Nature is like clay in Hashem's hands, ready to be shaped at any moment. ~ The Ramban.

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



The following story is based on a true incident; some of the details have been changed.

It was Chol Hamoed Pesach 5775, and a group of yeshivah bachurim headed up north for a full-day field trip. Accompanying them as their tour guide was Oren,* a former IDF soldier who had served in the Givati infantry brigade.

Toward sunset, as the bachurim davened Minchah, the soldier sat down on the dusty ground watching them silently and brooding. When they finished, he motioned for them to sit down beside him and told them that he wanted to share a story with them....

I was serving in the South when the Gaza War of 2014, which many know by the name Operation Protective Edge, broke out. All of us were anxious and secretly terrified. We didn't sleep for two days straight as we combed the field, and every minor noise caused us to jump. We were conscious of and attuned to every slight discrepancy or suspicion, and we knew we had to watch our backs every step of the way. We were on the lookout for more terror tunnels, and even the religious guys didn't pray since there wasn't a spare moment.

At one point, we chanced upon a small cottage in a highly strategic spot. Some of the guys decided to enter, search the premises for threats, and if they found it safe, settle down there for a brief rest to recoup our energy. Two of our boys entered, combed the site, and declared it clean. Exhausted, the rest of us piled in and sank onto

the cool floor. After two days of intense fighting, some of us didn't even have strength to eat, and our eyes fluttered closed on their own.

Just as I felt my own eyes close, I heard someone announce, "Bo'u nit-pallel tefillat Arvit, we have to daven Ma'ariv!"

Several guys groaned. We were all so drained and exhausted; who could think about standing up now to pray? Yet whenever did we need G-d close to us as we needed Him right then, when caught in the trenches? Within moments, the group had risen to their feet and were about to begin when someone cried, "Hey! We're only nine!"

A quick glance around proved that he was right; the valiant young men were missing their tenth man. Opposite the cottage was a group of Golani sharpshooters, two of whom were stationed on the roof to protect the soldiers inside from harm.

The two men who'd initiated the minyan decided to cross the field to the Golani Brigade and invite one of the soldiers to be their tenth man. A fellow soldier remarked that it was unlikely that they would find anyone interested, since Golani soldiers were usually raised on secular kibbutzim, while another argued that it was wartime now, and that everyone is close to G-d during wartime, and everyone feels a need to pray. Once they'd appealed to the soldiers in the Golani Brigade, they saw they were both right. Some soldiers refused to complete a minyan, others insisted on being part of the services.

In the midst of their debate, one Golani soldier headed to the restroom while the others took advantage of the break to ask the soldier who had said everyone is close to G-d in wartime, "Would you be willing to complete a minyan for Arvit?"

The upper-class Herzliya boy looked surprised. "What's a minyan?" The others explained, and he gladly agreed to daven with them, saying, "Give me a minute while I use the facilities. I'm waiting for you!"

The soldier disappeared into the bathroom, but three minutes passed without a sign of him emerging. One of the soldiers put his ear to the door, and heard strange noises and without waiting, broke the door down to discover a gaping hole leading directly to a terror tunnel.

When the soldier had entered the restroom, terrorists had burst out and abducted him! Calling for reinforcements, the soldiers from the Givati Brigade bravely entered the tunnel, caught up quickly with the terrorists and killed them while saving their buddy.

"Imagine what would have happened if we'd decided we were too tired and drained after two gruelling days to get up for Ma'ariv! What if we'd decided that it was already late, and that another backbreaking day of fighting awaited us tomorrow? Had we surrendered to temptation not to pray and gone to sleep instead, the terrorists would have entered the house through the tunnel and slaughtered us all.

"Imagine if the Golani soldier had refused to join their minyan. He would have probably gone into the bathroom anyway, but who would have noticed how long he was in there? No one would have bothered to check what was taking so long. He would have been kidnapped and used as a bargaining chip to secure the release of thousands of Arab terrorists. - "Do you know what saved that solider from the kibbutz?" he concluded rhetorically. "His decision to join the minyan.

"And do you know what saved us all from death? Our decision to pray and the self-sacrifice of every one of us..."

"Our purpose in life is to keep building the awareness that Hashem is the only source of all we receive." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – True Empathy



The observer stood in disbelief as he watched the Rov at the counter of the small fast-food store in Lakewood. He did not really know Rabbi Gissinger but had heard that he was an outstanding gaon and a remarkably caring Rov.

"Please tell me what is good? What do people really like?" asked Rabbi Gissinger to the man behind the counter.

"And what about fried onions? Are they good? And tomatoes, pickles, mustard, barbeque sauce …" added Rabbi Gissinger. The observer stood there increasingly embarrassed. Never in his life had he seen someone so busy, getting so involved in which toppings to put onto what was turning out to be a whopping sub-sandwich!

The Rov left the store exchanging pleasantries with the observer.

The observer ordered a simple turkey sandwich and headed back to his car and noticed that Rabbi Gissinger was actually driving the car in front of his, which made sense as he had only left the store a minute or two before him.

The observer fully expected Rabbi Gissinger to continue straight to his house but was surprised as he drove straight past his driveway and took the next right. The observer's curiosity was piqued, where was the Rov going? On a whim, he decided to follow him.

Rabbi Gissinger drove for another few minutes and then pulled up outside a somewhat neglected house. The front lawn was overgrown, and the house looked dilapidated. The Rov jumped out of the car, furtively ran up to the house, placed the groaning bag with the

carefully selected sub-sandwich on the door handle and dashed back to his car.

The observer was no longer embarrassed for the Rov but was now ashamed of what he had been thinking in the store. The Rov had been buying the sandwich for somebody else, someone who was down on their luck and could do with some chizuk and a good lunch.

"Please tell me what is good? What do people really like?" was asked with express purpose of giving pleasure to a Yid who needed a boost.

I read this story in the biography of Rav Shlomo Gissinger, "At Any Hour". It is an astonishing biography of a world class posek and beloved Rov with extraordinary sensitivity.

But for me, the most remarkable part of the story is the postscript.

Sometime later, when the observer got to know Rabbi Gissinger well, he told him that he had witnessed the entire incident. He asked the Rov if could ask him one question.

"When the Rov saw me in the store, why couldn't you just tell me, 'Hi Meir, nice to see you! I'm just picking up a sandwich for someone else.'"

The Rov's answer, said with genuine simplicity, showed the extent of his sensitivity. He said: "How would that have made you feel?" I.e., how would you have felt if I would have excused myself for being in the store, thereby implicitly indicating that you don't have a good excuse for being there!

This week's parsha deals with the eved ivri, the Jewish slave.

The Gemoro in Kiddushin (20a) explains the words **כִּי טוֹב לוֹ עִמָּךְ**, to mean that the eved ivri should be treated well. There should not be a situation in which the master eats fine bread and the slave eats inferior bread, where the master sleeps on a bed and the slave sleeps on straw.

The Gemoro concludes: **כל הקונה עבד עברי, כקונה אדון לעצמו** – 'Anyone who acquires a Jewish slave is considered like one who has acquired a master for himself.'

Tosfos there in Kiddushin ask: why is it like acquiring a master, isn't it enough to treat him like himself?

Tosfos answer by quoting the Yerushalmi. What if the master only has one pillow? If he uses it for himself, he hasn't fulfilled the requirement of **כִּי טוֹב לוֹ עִמָּךְ**. And if he doesn't use the pillow for himself but also doesn't give it to his slave, that is middas Sedom!

The only choice would therefore be to give it to his eved and the master sleeps without one. That is what the Gemoro means "he has acquired a master for himself".

Rav Leib Lopian asks: What about **חייך קודמים**? Your life takes precedence over the life of your friend's. Why then must the master treat his slave better than he treats himself?

Rav Leib explained as follows. When the master sleeps on the straw, he feels only the pain of his poverty and lack of comfort. However, to the slave, sleeping on straw highlights the fact that he is slave. It is as if the straw is screaming out "You are a slave!"

This is much worse than for the master, and that is the reason why he must give his pillow to the slave and he cannot use the halacha of **חייך קודמים**.

Rav Leib teaches us that the Torah obligates us to enter the mindset of the slave, to recognise his feelings and empathise with him.

And Rav Gissinger teaches us that this is true for people down on their luck and could do with some chizuk and a good lunch and for people who observe this.

The Gift of Time (Rav Chaim Kreiswirth)

The pasuk says **וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הֶעָנָן וַיַּעַל אֶל הָהָר, וַיְהִי מֹשֶׁה בָּהָר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לָיְלָה** - '***And Moshe came within the cloud, and he went up to the mountain, and Moshe was upon the mountain forty days and forty nights.***' 24:18

There is a famous **Ibn Ezra** that says:

ויהי משה בהר שלא ירד, וכתוב על אלה הארבעים יום לחם לא אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי (דבר' ט, ט). וזה פלא גדול לא נהיה כמוהו לפניו. - He didn't come down from the mountain. For 40 days and 40 nights, he didn't eat or drink. He was like an angel. – This is a wonder, like there has never been.

What exactly was the miracle? What was the **פלא גדול**?

In Europe, there was a rather common custom that when a noteworthy person was ill, others might "donate" years of their life for the merit of his recovery. Communities actually would hold appeals - not for money but appeals which asked people to "donate years from their life" to the life of the person who now appeared to be on the verge of death.

There was a young single fellow who was very sick in the Yeshiva of Radin. The Yeshiva made an appeal among the other students that they should donate years of their life to this young man who was deathly ill. Different students pledged various numbers of years to the student. - The Chofetz Chaim was asked how many of his years he was willing to donate to the cause. He thought awhile and responded that he would "donate a minute"! - The Chofetz Chaim knew what a minute could do. He knew what he could accomplish with a minute of his own life.

The Chofetz Chaim did not wear shoes with laces. He made the calculation that it would take him approximately one minute a day to tie his shoes. In a year, that would come out to 360 minutes - 6 hours! In the course of a lifetime that would be 420 hours. The

thought of wasting 420 hours of his life tying his shoes, prompted him to wear shoes without laces. He was not willing to give up 420 hours of his life on a "non-productive" activity. He had an appreciation of what one can do with a small amount of time.

The Ostrofser Rebbe comments that a person can live 80 years, but out of those 80 years, how many days did he waste? A person who wastes most of his days may in fact be old, but he is not one who has "come in days". A person could live to a ripe old age but if we add up only the productive days that he lived, he unfortunately may have lived a very short life!

Rav Chaim Kreiswirth says an amazing insight: Moshe Rabbeinu was up on Har Sinai – not just for 40 days and 40 nights – but for three periods of 40 days and 40 nights! – A total of 120 days and nights!

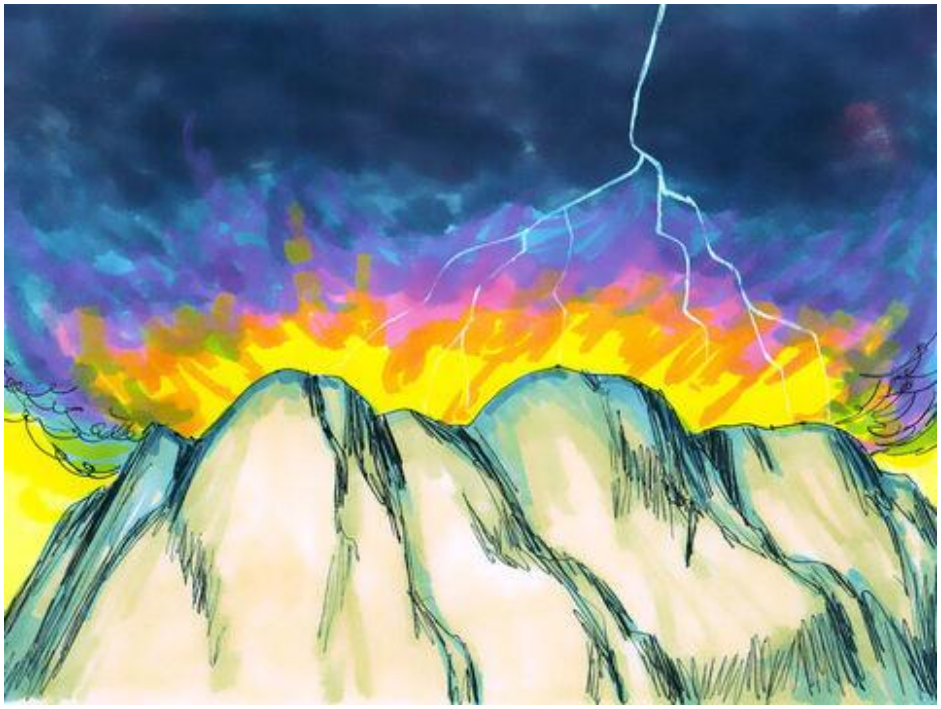
During this time, Moshe Rabbeinu was semi-angelic and gave up 120 days and nights of being in this world for the sake of Klal Yisrael. And he understood the value of time more than anybody. [At the end of his life he pleaded with Hakadosh Baruch Hu for a few more minutes. [See Medrash - **דברים רבה פרשת וזאת הברכה פרשה יא סימן י**]

That's what Rav Chaim Kreisworth says that the **אבן עזרא** is referring to – We never had such an example of misiras nefesh like that.

"The Jewish people draw their strength from their unity. Like a flame that grows stronger when fed, so too do the Jewish people shine brightest when bound as one." ~ Based on the teachings of the Maggid of Mezritch, Reb DovBer (1704-1772).

"One who truly appreciates and thanks Hashem for what they have can expect to receive even more blessings." ~ Shaarei Teshuvah.

HaKtav VeHaKabalah by R' Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg



[The goal of this work is to unify the Written Torah ("Ketav") with the Oral Law ("Kabbala") by demonstrating how the all the material found in the latter is derived from the former. The author was an opponent of the Reform movement, and his aim was to strengthen the authority of the Oral tradition.]

The pasuk says **וּמַרְאֵה כְּבוֹד ה' כְּאֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָר לְעֵינֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – '***And the appearance of the glory of Hashem was like a consuming fire atop the mountain, before the eyes of the children of Israel***.' 24:17

Why compare Hashem to a fire? Why not a raging river or some sort of powerful animal?

Why mention that it is a fire that consumes – all fires consume?

When it came to Matan Torah, not everyone had the same experience as each other. Rather each person experienced it according to his own spiritual standing together with the preparation that they had invested in the experience.

Somebody who had prepared spiritually in a minimal way, their experience was also minimal. Whereas, if somebody was more spiritually prepared, he would be able to absorb more. And so to the whole people – according to the completeness of their soul, was the experience commensurate to them.

When fire burns, it will consume things with different ferocity, depending on the flammability and combustibility of each different item. – Everybody saw Kabalas HaTorah, - a most remarkable and wonderous event. But the experience was according to every individual's spiritual standing.

Our goal is to ensure that our spiritual preparation and acceptability is the best that it can be, to make ourselves into worthy receptacles for receiving the Torah. The cleaner the vessel is, the more that it will absorb. – That's why Hashem is described as **כְּאֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת**.

Achdus

There is a gemara in Zevachim 116a - **שכשניתנה תורה לישראל היה קולו הולך מסוף העולם ועד סופו וכל [מלכי] עובדי כוכבים אחזתן רעדה בהיכליהן**

'When the Torah was given to the Jewish people, the voice of the Holy One, Blessed be He, went from one end of the world to the other end, and all of the kings of the nations of the world were overcome with trembling in their palaces.'

All of the kings gathered around Balaam the wicked, who was the greatest gentile prophet, and said to him: What is the tumultuous sound, i.e., the loud noise, that we have heard? Perhaps a flood is coming to destroy the world? Balaam said to them: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, already took an oath after the flood never to bring a flood to the world.

The kings said to him: He will not bring a flood of water, as he vowed, but perhaps He will bring a flood of fire?

Balaam said to them: He already took an oath that He will not destroy all flesh in any manner. Therefore, there will not be a flood of fire.

They asked: And if so, what is this tumultuous sound that we have heard? Balaam said to them: He has a good and precious item in His

treasury, that was hidden away with Him for 974 generations before the world was created, and He seeks to give it to his children. This is a reference to the Torah, which is the strength of the Jewish people. Immediately, they all began to say: "The L-rd will bless His people with peace" (Psalms 29:11).

Asks **Rav Meir Shapiro Zt'l**, why did the nations think that it was a flood? And secondly, there is a famous pasuk in Yeshayahu that describes what the world will be like in the times of Moshiach: **וְגָר זְאֵב עִם־כֶּבֶשׂ וְנָמֵר עִם־גְּדִי יִרְבָּץ וְעֵגֶל וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יַחְדָּו** – '*And a wolf shall live with a lamb, and a leopard shall lie with a kid; and a calf and a lion cub and a fatling [shall lie] together.*' 11:6. – There will be peace and harmony in the world.

Asks R' Meir Shapiro, "What's the big deal? – We have a precedence of animals getting along very peacefully… in Noach's Ark?

So, R' Meir Shapiro said the following: There are two types of unity that you can have with regards to the animals getting together… One is just an act of survival. The animals in Noach's ark didn't have a choice but to get on with each other – they were in survival mode.

The other type of unity is where you have common aspirations.

Now, Yeshaya is describing a time where the animals would get along together – not because they were in survival mode, and they didn't have any other choice, but because they had a common aspiration.

And that's what Matan Torah really was. Matan Torah was **וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר - כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד** - There was total unity. A unity of common aspirations.

"Everything you face is a test planned by Hashem for your growth. - Your success in life lies in how you choose to respond." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Rabbi Meir Shapiro is well known as the founder of the daf yomi movement, but he was also the head of a world class yeshiva, Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, and it wasn't an easy yeshiva to get in to. Young R' Pinchas Hirschprung - who later became a world renowned talmid chacham and leading rabbinic figure in Montreal - was too young to be admitted to the yeshiva and was instead hired to test the bochurim who wanted to be accepted to the prestigious yeshiva.

A bochur named Shmuel came to the yeshiva but unfortunately, was rejected by R' Pinchas on the grounds that he wasn't good enough and so he made his way to the train station to head home. However, he arrived at the train station just a few minutes late and had to wait for the next train which was almost 24 hours later. Faced with no other choice, Shmuel returned to the yeshiva and found a seat in the beis medrash, opened a gemara and began learning.

Throughout the night and the following morning, Rav Meir Shapiro entered the beis medrash and saw this bochur sitting in the same place, learning with diligence and simcha, and so he went over and asked him who he was and why he was there.

"I wanted to come learn here but wasn't accepted, but I missed my train, so I came back to learn until the next train", he explained innocently.

The rosh yeshiva was so impressed by his sincerity, hasmada and ahavas ha'Torah, that he accepted him into yeshiva: "Ok, you can stay!" he said, accepting [Rav] Shmuel Wosner [the Shevet HaLevi] who would later become one of the leading poskim of recent times!

"You want to know what true "greatness" is? - To feel truly united with another person in his experience, either joyous or sad, is a mark of tremendous sensitivity and real greatness." The Belzer Rebbe, Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rokeach (1854-1926)

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Moshiach and Three Women

Three exceptional women are noted for their contribution in bringing forth Moshiach. Tamar, Miriam and Rus. Each of these women played a pivotal role in their respective eras. A fascinating hint can be found within the name. If we examine the letters of her name, **תמר**, we see that it serves as an acronym for **תַּמר, מַרים, רַות**

Bigger than a Box



The Gemara expounds upon the words **אדם כי ימות באהל** : that Divrei Torah is retained only by one who kills himself over it. We need to make ourselves as if we are dead, meaning that we are not distracted with worldly matters when learning Torah.

The story is told of a storeowner who almost died. After having luckily survived, he decided to dedicate his morning hours to learning where he would be inaccessible while his wife would take care of the store. His wife complained that he was unreachable. He replied that had he died he surely would be unreachable. So, for the morning hours it is as if he died in order that he would be able to learn without distraction.

Based on what we said, we can interpret the phrase **פסיקתן זו היא עשייתן** - the severing is their making as cutting ourselves off from everything is how we attain Torah.

The Kotzker Rebbe noted that the opening word to each mesachta is printed in a box. He remarked that it serves as a reminder that

for a person to prosper in learning, he must enter a metaphorical "box," being entirely immersed and engrossed in the words of Torah.



Expedited Salvation

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah: "**כֹּה־אָמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנֹכִי כָּרַתִּי בְרִית אֶת־ יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנֹכִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הוֹצִאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים לֵאמֹר** – *'Thus said the Almighty of Israel: I made a covenant with your ancestors when I* ***took them out*** *of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage, saying…"* (Yirmiyahu 34:13)

Why is the word "**הוֹצִאִי**" not fully spelled out with a second letter yud? In order to fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story shared in Rav Nachman Seltzer's Incredible (p. 300)

The IDF soldiers were only told the day before that they would be driving few hours from Tel Aviv to the Lebanese town of Tzur where they'd stay in the police station for the night. The police station was a heavily fortified brick building, commandeered by the army for the use of its liaison officers. In the morning, they were to be dispersed to various locations throughout the military zone, with each officer responsible for a particular section of territory.

Rabbi Yossi Wallis took a bus to the Kiryah, enjoying his last free morning prior to his upcoming month in the reserves, and met up with the rest of the soldiers traveling to Lebanon outside the Paratroopers Building. The order was given to board. Soldiers rose, grabbed their gear, and began heading toward the bus. A female soldier stood alongside the door, clipboard in one hand, pen in the other, and proceeded to cross off names as more soldiers boarded and took their seats.

Not in a rush to stuff himself into a narrow seat, Rabbi Wallis waited until everyone boarded. Suddenly an officer appeared out of nowhere and

made an announcement. "*It looks like we have too many soldiers for our current needs. 55 soldiers were ordered to report here today: 50 regular soldiers and 5 reservists. We sent out orders to more soldiers than we needed operating under the assumption that some of you were not going to show up. To our surprise, every single soldier has presented himself on time, and 5 of you will be able to temporarily return home until further notice. Whoever feels that they have a valid reason to be one of the 5 who will leave, please present yourself to me immediately.*"

Unsurprisingly, there was a massive rush to the officer with each soldier attempting to persuade the officer that he was a worthy candidate for a 'get out of jail card' – this one had a business, the other one's wife needed him...Rabbi Wallis did not rise off the floor when he heard the announcement or attempt to convince anyone of anything, knowing that even were he to succeed in convincing the officer, he'd just be ordered back to the army in a few months' time to do his 30 days. No reason to postpone the inevitable, so he stayed where he was.

All of a sudden, the officer walked over and asked, "*How come you didn't come over to me? Don't you want to go home?*" 'Of course I want to go home, doesn't everyone?' "*Then go home right now*." 'I wasn't released.' "*All you have to do is get up off the dirty floor, walk over to the soldier standing beside the bus and tell her to erase your name from the list. Then you'll go home.*"

Rabbi Wallis tried to figure out if the officer was playing with him, but the man merely told him to get a move on. Approaching the soldier at the bus, he said, 'You can erase my name. I've just been released.' "*Says who?*" He pointed at the officer who then waved his hand in an unmistakable 'let him go' gesture. Shrugging her shoulders, she drew a line through his name and confirmed he was free to leave.

Just like that, Rabbi Wallis went from sitting on the floor of the Paratroopers Building amid cigarettes and sunflower shells, about to head up to Lebanon for a month, to learning in the Kollel Chazon Ish in Bnei Brak for the day before returning home.

The next morning, the 7 o'clock news reported: "*At about 3:00 a.m., a truck carrying a full load of TNT and gas tanks rammed itself through the*

protective fence surrounding the police station in Tzur, Lebanon, and drove straight into the lobby of the building, before detonating itself in a blaze of fire that decimated the entire structure and everything inside, including a group of liaison officers who had arrived that day to take up their posts in the military zone. There are no survivors." The liaison officers unit ceased to exist.

Rabbi Wallis recognized many of the higher-ranking officers in his section of the military, but he had never seen that particular officer before…and never saw him again.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky beautifully explains that the prophet specifically spells "**הוֹצִאִי**" shorter without a second yud to show how quickly the Almighty saved us from the Egyptian oppression when the time for our redemption arrived.

Never underestimate the surprising messengers sent from Heaven, and how quickly they appear, when the time of our salvation arrives – just ask Rabbi Yossi Wallis.

Towards the end of R' Moshe's life, a close talmid came to visit him. When the talmid asked "how is the rosh yeshiva?'. R' Moshe replied "nisht gut, nisht gut" (not good at all). The concerned talmid asked probed further as it seemed out of character for R' Moshe to give such an answer, regardless of his health.

R' Moshe explained that he usually wakes up at 3 am and learns until he davens shacharis at 8. This is a time that he is not bombarded with questions and phone calls as he is throughout the day. Now however, the doctor had instructed him to sleep one more hour every day and this would be at the expense of his own limud ha'Torah - "Then," said R' Moshe, "I will remain an am ha'aretz!".

Rav Moshe Feinstein was already recognized as the posek ha'dor, but he understood how much more there was to learn and understand!

A Thousand Pairs of Tefillin

Yom Kippur 5734/1973.



In Eretz Yisrael, fear and dread hung in the air. The entire country was swept up into a maelstrom of fighting, blood, and tears. Many Yidden, including *frum* ones, were called to fight at the front, and the general mood was very sombre. The combat soldiers were very tense about the volatile situation, but at the same time, those sentiments generated musings about the essence of life, and consequently, thoughts of *teshuvah*. Eyes were raised Heavenward in hope and prayer.

Many soldiers wanted to put on *tefillin*, but the cost to obtain hundreds, if not thousands, of pairs of *tefillin* was prohibitive.

Rabbi Yisrael Gellis related: I went to the Belzer Rebbe with Rabbi Avraham Ravitz [who later became a Degel HaTorah MK], and we discussed with him how we would obtain *tefillin* for the soldiers. The Rebbe contributed ten pairs of *tefillin* and added, "Go to Reb Shmuel Daskal of Bnei Brak."

We didn't delay and traveled immediately to Bnei Brak with Rabbi Mordechai Ferster.

"We were sent by the Belzer Rebbe," we began. We told him about the purpose of our visit. Reb Shmuel picked up the phone, and within a few minutes there were a number of *mehudar* sets of *tefillin* in his house from a prominent *sofer* in Bnei Brak. He then added money for an additional ten sets of *tefillin*.

One mitzvah leads to another. A mitzvah that began with ten sets of *tefillin* grew to one thousand sets of *tefillin*. This campaign ended up costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, yet his contributions were all given without fanfare or acclaim.

Dozens of thank-you letters were sent by the soldiers.

Tens of Thousands of *Sifrei Tehillim* That Saved Lives



When Rav Yitzchak Meir came to be *menachem avel*, he spoke about the tremendous *tefillin* campaign. He then added: Reb Shmuel donated tens of thousands of *Sifrei Tehillim* which we distributed in the Golan Heights.

At the end of the war several soldiers told us emotionally, "The *Sifrei Tehillim* saved us. The bullets pierced the *sefarim* which were in our pockets, shielding our hearts. The shrapnel tore the *Tehillim*, but our hearts remained complete; our lives were spared." - And the *tefillin*? That saved their souls.

Packages for Soldiers

Reb Yitzchak Ungar, the musical composer of the Vizhnitzer court, related: I decided to establish an initiative that would lift the spirits of the soldiers: to send them care packages to the battlefront. Each package included *mehadrin* food, some books to read, and other items.

I came to the Vizhnitzer Rebbe and told him about this initiative, and the Rebbe encouraged me in this endeavor. After giving me a *brachah*, I appealed to generous people to help fund the packages.

It is hard to describe what these packages did for the soldiers. It was like giving refreshing cold water to a parched, tired soul. The overjoyed soldiers who received the gifts shared them generously with their friends, and the initiative was a real success.

Despite the great satisfaction we were getting from this mitzvah, financing it was no simple matter. Unexpectedly, Reb Shmuel came to me. He had heard about the campaign and said, "It must be difficult for you to obtain financial backing for such an undertaking, so I want to fund this. If you lack anything, get in touch with me — and don't hesitate to call as often as you need to."

Reb Shmuel paid most of the costs for the entire campaign. I have kept the many thank-you letters from the soldiers, which were written with such warm, emotional words. These letters testify more than anything about the tremendous power of *chessed*.



כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן. אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתוֹ – *'You shall not oppress any widow or orphan. If you oppress him, [beware,] for if he cries out to Me, I will surely hear his cry…'* 22:21,22

Reb Itzele Volozhiner asks, why is this true only with widows and orphans? Anyone who cries out to Hashem will be answered, as we say in Ashrei – '*He is close to all of those who call out to him.*' Any person, even if he hasn't suffered like a widow or an orphan, is guaranteed that Hashem will listen to his cries.

He explains that a regular person who finds himself in trouble, turns to the people that he thinks can help him. A lady turns to her husband, a child turns to a parent, and everyone looks for a patron. In these cases, Hashem leaves a person to his own efforts and does not intervene in these cases. However, when an orphan or a widow finds themselves in trouble, they have nowhere to turn. They turn directly and immediately to Hashem.

That is why the Torah tells us that an orphan or widow immediately turns to Hashem, and that is why they deserve that Hashem should listen to them.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

In this week's parsha we have a great lesson that is so important in our daily life. The pasuk says: **אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ** – ***'When you lend money to My people, to the poor person [who is] with you.***.' 22:24

So, Rashi says, "Why does it say **אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ** ? Because **הֱוֵי מִסְתַּכֵּל בְּעַצְמְךָ כְּאִלּוּ אַתָּה עָנִי** – *'Look at yourself as if you were a poor person.*"

We know so many people in need, in so many ways – in finances, in health etc. And you want to help them – that's great, but how far do you need to go to help them?

Imagine that's it you that requires help and then help others accordingly. This brings achdus and ahavas Yisrael.

"No matter how many times you may fall, Hashem will always be there to catch you." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810).



"If" It Is Not Really Your Money

Parshas Mishpatim introduces the prohibition against being an oppressive lender, and of taking or charging interest on loans: "***Im*** (usually translated as "If") you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not lay interest upon him." (22:24). The *pasuk*, as formulated, seems rather strange because there is a positive *mitzvah* to lend money to a fellow Jew in need. Yet the *pasuk* begins with the expression "***Im*** *kesef talveh…*" which implies that **if** someone decides to lend money, then the following *halachos* apply. The Torah does not use this optional word ***Im*** in connection with the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* or *matzah* or any other positive *mitzvah*. We would expect the Torah to state emphatically "You should lend money to your nation" and then go on to specify the *halachos* inherent in lender-borrower transactions.

The Mechilta already makes note of this question. The Tanna Rav Yishmael there says that the word ***Im*** here does not mean **if**, but rather it means **when** – when you lend money. But the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh wonders, why in fact did the Torah express the*mitzvah*to lend money in such a fashion?

The Ohr Hachaim explains it very interestingly. The "If" of "*Im kesef talveh…*" means If you see that you have more money than you need for yourself personally and you are wondering why it is that you have all this money and your needy friend does not have all that money, then you should realize that IT IS NOT YOUR MONEY! The surplus money you have is money that by right should go to the poor man, and it really belongs to *he'ani* עִמָּךְ (It is really the poor person's

money that happens to be deposited **WITH YOU**). In such a case, you should not lord it over him. It has nothing to do with your brains or your good luck. It is his money deposited by you, so you have no reason to lord it over him.

Rav Yakov Yosef m'Polna explains, *Hashem* gave a considerable amount of money to certain of his children, but not so that they should consider all of that money to be theirs. They should view themselves as executors for distribution of the money to *Hashem's* "other children."

Change of Vowels Provides Chassidic Insight

Among the many civil and monetary laws in this week's parsha is the Torah's first mention of the prohibition against taking interest: "When you lend money to My people (ki tilveh es ami), to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not lay interest upon him." [Shemos 22:24]

Homiletically, the **Kotzker Rebbe** offers an insight into this pasuk that differs from the p'shuto shel mikra [simple interpretation].

We learn in Pirkei Avos : "When a person dies he is not accompanied by his wealth or by his jewelry or by his precious stones, only by his Torah and his good deeds" [Avos 6:9]. This Mishnah expresses a truth with which we are all familiar — "You can't take it with you." This idea is one of the recurring themes of the Book of Koheles, which deals at length with the futilities of this world. With that in mind, the Kotzker Rebbe gives a Chassidic insight into this pasuk.

The word 'Tilveh' which means 'lend' can also be read 'Tilaveh' which means escort. The reading then is "If there is any type of money that will escort My people (to the World to Come) it is the money given to the poor person with you (charity and kindness). That is the only type of money that will accompany a person to the next world.

A Thought In Honor of the 125th Yahrtzeit of Rav Yisrael Salanter

The 25th of Shevat, is the 125th Yahrtzeit of Rav Yisrael Salanter. I happen to remember that on the 100th Yahrtzeit, **Rav Ruderman**, who was a student of the **Alter of Slabodka**, who in turn was a disciple of Rav Yisrael, came into the Beis Medrash and gave a special lecture on the personality of Rav Yisrael Salanter and the mussar movement in general. Rav Ruderman felt very close to the entire mussar movement and in fact named Ner Israel, the Yeshiva he founded, after the founder of the mussar movement — Rav Yisrael (Lipkin) of Salant…

We have all, in one way or another, been affected by the mussar movement. On the occasion of this special Yahrtzeit, I therefore would like to relate the following story about Rav Yisrael. May it be a source of merit for him.

Rav Yisrael was once traveling by train from Salant to Vilna. In those days, it was not prohibited to smoke on the train. Rav Yisrael was smoking a cigar. (It may be hard for us to picture the founder of the mussar movement smoking a cigar, but in those days it was a sociologically different experience.) A much younger person came up to him and started yelling that the cigar smelled up the car. Although technically he was within his rights to keep on smoking, being who he was, Rav Yisrael extinguished the cigar. He felt so bad about it that he opened the window to air out the car. Then this same fellow started yelling at Rav Yisrael that the car was too cold because he opened the window. He humiliated Rav Yisrael with his tirades. Rav Yisrael closed the window.

When they arrived in Vilna, the young man noticed there were hundreds of people waiting to greet Rav Yisrael. He found out who Rav Yisrael was and started crying to the rabbi with profuse apologies. Rav Yisrael said he forgave the man.

The man then began pouring out his heart to him. He told Rav Yisrael that he came to Vilna because he needed a livelihood and had no job. He was a shochet but in order to receive a slaughterer's license he needed a "kesav kabalah" (written Rabbinic permission) from one of the Rabbis in Vilna who issued such licenses.

Rav Yisrael told him that he had a son-in-law who was a Rav in Vilna. He offered to write him a letter of recommendation and sent him to his son-in- law for a test for his Shechita license. Unfortunately, when he went to the son-in-law for the test he failed it miserably. He returned to Rav Yisrael and again cried to him with his tale of woe. Rav Yisrael found him tutors to learn with him and they prepared him for the test, which he was eventually able to pass. He finally received his "kesav kabalah" from Rav Yisrael's son-in-law.

When he was about to leave Vilna he came back to Rav Yisrael and said to him: "it was nice enough that you forgave me for my rudeness in the train, but the fact that you sent me to your son-in-law with a letter of recommendation and found tutors for me when I failed — why were you so nice to me?"

Rav Yisrael responded, "Anyone can say the words 'I forgive you.' But the only way I felt it would be possible for me to really forgive you was to get to like you. The only way to get to like someone is to help him. The key to becoming someone's friend is not to take from him but to give to him. I wanted my forgiveness to you to be sincere and not merely lip service. In order to be able to forgive you with a full heart, I really had to be able to go out of my way a bit to help you. This was not YOUR golden opportunity. It was MY golden opportunity."

This is exactly why the Torah singles out the fact that the burdened donkey belongs to "your enemy". One might be thinking to himself "This could not have happened to a nicer guy." One's natural inclination is "v'chadalta me'azov lo" — "I don't want to help this guy."

Therefore the Torah commands: "You shall surely help him". The only way to overcome this situation of enmity is by, in fact, helping him.

There used to be a bumper sticker: "Love your enemies — It will drive them crazy". This is not a mussar idea. The mussar idea is "Love your enemies, and they won't be your enemies anymore!"

That was what the mussar movement was all about — to teach people how to overcome their natural inclinations and to live up to the standards of "man created in the Image of G-d".

The Poor Donkey, the Poor Beggar, and the Pool of Vodka on the Innkeeper's Floor

The *pasuk* in this week's *parsha* says, "Perhaps you will see the donkey of someone you hate lying under its burden, will you refrain from helping him? — you shall surely help along with him (*azov t'azov imo*)." [Shemos 23:5]. Normally, the Hebrew word *azov* means to abandon or leave, which would be the exact opposite of the way the Rabbis interpret this mitzvah. Rashi points out here (and also in Parshas Teruma) that there are some words in Hebrew that can have opposite meanings, depending on the context. This is an example thereof. Since the expression is *azov t'azov* ***imo*** (**with him**), we understand that in this context, *azov t'azov* does not mean "to abandon," but rather "to help."

This is how Rashi understands the *pasuk*. Despite the fact that *azov* also means to leave or abandon, and despite the fact that the Torah could have picked a simpler and less ambiguous word to indicate helping, Rashi says that here the word *azov* does indicate helping.

Targum Onkelus interprets the *pasuk* somewhat differently: "When you see the donkey of a person you hate suffering under its burden, and you are tempted to let him and his donkey suffer. Abandon that which is in your heart regarding this person, and unload (the donkey)

with him." Thus, the way the Targum is learning is consistent with the traditional interpretation of the word *azov*. It means abandon. However, according to the Targum, it does not mean to abandon this person and his donkey. It means to abandon ill-feelings and animosity towards this person and help him anyway.

This is what we sometimes need to do when we are called upon to do a *chessed*. For whatever reason, sometimes we may have reservations against doing a certain *chessed*, particularly when we need to do it for a specific individual for whom we may not have the warmest feelings. The mitzvah of *gemillas chessed* sometimes requires a person to overrule his evil inclination, to get rid of those resentful feelings, and to do the act of kindness for his fellow man anyway.

I once heard an incident — I believe it involved the Rebbe Reb Bunim. The *Rebbe* went to an inn on a very cold night. He walked into the inn, sat down, and while the innkeeper was providing food, he started telling the *Rebbe* his tale of woe: "Business is terrible, nobody comes by anymore. I am nearing bankruptcy because I am losing my customers. I do not know what it is. Nobody stops at my inn anymore."

On this bitterly cold night, there is suddenly a knock on the door. "Ah! A customer!" The inn keeper goes to the door. "Who is it?" It is a *shlepper* — a beggar! The beggar said, "I have no money but I'm terribly cold. Can I please come in and warm myself up?" The innkeeper said, "Okay," thinking to himself, "Just my *mazal*. Finally, a knock on the door, and it's a beggar!"

The beggar sat down in tattered clothes, and warmed himself up by the fire, and then said to the innkeeper, "I know this is a *chutzpah*, but could you give me a glass of vodka. I just cannot get the chill out of my bones. I need a strong shot of vodka to warm me up. I cannot pay for it, but please give me a shot of vodka. The innkeeper went to the barrel of vodka and poured the beggar a glass

of vodka. He looked at the glass and spilled it on the floor. The Rebbe Reb Bunim is watching and cannot get over it — the innkeeper spilled a glass of good vodka on the floor! The innkeeper again puts the glass by the spout of the vodka barrel, and once again fills it up. Again, he spills it on the floor. This happened two or three times, until finally he filled up the glass and gave it to the poor beggar.

The Rebbe Reb Bunim says to the innkeeper: I will tell you why your business is going down the drain. If you keep spilling good vodka on the floor, it is no wonder you are not making a living! Why are you spilling out the vodka?

The innkeeper responded to the *Rebbe* as follows: I know I am not going to get any money out of this fellow. So what am I doing? I am doing a *chessed*. When I filled up the glass the first time, I said to myself, "Augh! Not only am I not making any money, I am wasting money on this beggar." So, I said to myself, "I cannot give him the vodka like that. With such an attitude, I will not even fulfill the mitzvah of doing a *chessed*. I am giving it to him with the worst of feelings." So, I poured it out. I tried again. No! I still did not feel good. The guy is taking my money, I cannot afford this. I knew it was a bad attitude in which to do a *chessed*, so I poured out the vodka again."

The innkeeper did this several times, until he was able to reach the level of "azov t'azov imo" — until he was able to abandon his ill feelings and say, "Okay. I am not going to make any money, but at least let me do a *chessed* with a complete heart." - Finally, when he got to that level, he gave the vodka to the poor beggar.

"Don't worry if your light flickers; even the stars twinkle." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

Treatment of Widows And Orphans Determines One's Reward and Punishment

The parsha contains the Biblical prohibition against mistreating orphans and widows. G-d threatens us "If you make an orphan or a widow feel bad, watch out! I hear their cries and I will take revenge against you." [Shemos 22: 21-23]

There are a number of incidents documented from the life of the **Chofetz Chaim** that seem out of character for him. When the Chofetz Chaim would see that someone was not kind to an orphan or a widow, he would say, "Wait and see — this person will be punished!" This is surprising. The Chofetz Chaim was not the vindictive type. We do not find that the Chofetz Chaim made statements such as, "This fellow spoke Lashon Hara (gossip), watch it — he will be punished." He never said "This person desecrated the Sabbath — watch it, he will get it." Such things are not our business. They are the domain of G-d.

But regarding someone who did an injustice to an orphan or a widow, the Chofetz Chaim would say, "Wait and see — he is going to get it."

I heard recently that **Reb Chaim Ozer**, the Rav in Vilna, said, "For years I thought that my "ticket" to the World to Come will be the Achiezer (his classic multi-volume collection of thousands of Responsa). However, I now (towards the end of his life) believe that my "ticket" to the World to Come will be that I was responsible for the sustenance of widows and orphans throughout Europe."

Hundreds of thousands if not millions of rubles passed through his hands. He supported Yeshivos and the impoverished; widows and orphans. That, he believed, was his crowning glory to take to the next world, despite his monumental contribution to the annals of Torah literature.

Abusing The Widow and The Orphan: A Tale of Two Incidents

I would like to relate two very interesting incidents relating to a pasuk in the parsha that I have spoken about many times in the past.

Parshas Mishpatim contains the biblical prohibition against inflicting pain on widows and orphans [Shemos 22:21]. The Torah warns: "For if you cause him pain and he cries out to me, I will hear his cry. And My wrath will be kindled, and I will kill you by sword and your wives will become widows and your children will become orphans." [Shemos 22:22-23]

A person must be extremely careful when it comes to widows and orphans. The reason is that these are people who are already in pain. The Almighty, as it were, has special affinity for people in pain. He identifies with them and will take revenge – as it were – against those responsible for afflicting them with additional pain.

The father of the **Netziv** (Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin) was a great Talmid Chochom, but he was not a Rosh Yeshiva. He was a successful businessman. He once returned from an extended business trip and brought his wife a beautiful crystal vase. She was thrilled with the gift and told the maid (who happened to be a widow) to put the new vase in the breakfront with all her silver. She specifically told her: "Be very careful with it; whatever you do, do not drop it. It is very expensive. I just got it and I love it. Do not drop it!"

Of course, when one tells someone 50 times "Do not drop it", inevitably the maid dropped the vase and it shattered. The Netziv's mother started yelling at her: "Look what you did. You are a schlemiel. I told you not to drop it!" The Netziv's father told his wife, "Please do not yell at her like that. If you have a problem with what happened, take her to a 'Din Torah.'"

The Netziv's mother said, "You're right." She told the maid, "Put on your coat right now, I am taking you to a 'Din Torah.' I am going to

bring you to a Din Torah before the Rav of the community." So the maid put on her coat, the Netziv's mother put on her coat, and the Netziv's father put on his coat.

Mrs. Berlin told her husband, "That is okay. You do not need to come. I can argue in front of the Rav myself". The Netziv's father told his wife, "I am not coming to the Din Torah to argue for you, I am coming to argue for her (pointing to the maid). I am afraid she will be too intimidated to open her mouth in front of her mistress, so therefore I am going to support her, not you."

And that is what happened. He went to the Din Torah to act as the lawyer not for his wife but for her maid.

The second story was told to me by Rabbi Yoel Burstyn, who is the principal of the Beis Yakov in Los Angeles. When Rabbi Burstyn was a young student in Lakewood, he lived in an apartment complex. There was an older Jew who had been born in Kovno in his building. At the time of the story, this Jew was 81 years old.

The older Jew told Rabbi Burstyn that his family came from Kovno to this country and lived in Philadelphia. They were extremely poor. He did not even have car-fare to take the bus to school and had to walk two miles in all kinds of weather to get to school. His mother passed away when he was yet a young boy. He once went to shul to say kaddish on her Yahrtzeit.

A Jew approached him in shul and asked him (in Yiddish), "For who are you saying Kaddish?" The boy explained he had Yahrtzeit for his mother and was saying Kaddish. The man then asked him, "Oh, you have Yahrtzeit so where is the bottle of whiskey and cake?" The poor boy was embarrassed to say he could not even afford carfare, let alone whiskey and cake. The man told him, "A Yahrtzeit without whiskey and cake? Feh! That is disgusting!"

The old man recalled to Rabbi Burstyn that when this incident occurred, he went home, ran to his bed and started crying

uncontrollably. His father came in and asked him "Why are you crying?" The boy told his father what happened. The father told him not to worry, he met an uncouth person and he should just ignore what the man told him. The little boy said, "Tatty, I swear I will never step into a shul again the rest of my life!"

When this gentleman from Kovno told this story, crying, to Yoel Burstyn he was already 81 years old and he told him "I never went to shul again in my life. On my parents' Yahrtzeit, I would go into the kitchen and say Kaddish for my mother or my father, but I would not step foot into a shul!"

When the Jew who asked the young orphan where the whiskey and cake were will pass away and go before the High Court in the next world, he will be told, "There was a child in the world below who never went to shul for the rest of his long life because of you! The fact that you once told an orphan "Feh!" is being held against you for all eternity."

This is how careful one must be with orphans and widows. Their cries go directly to the Yeshiva Shel Ma'la. We do not want to suffer the consequences of the Almighty's wrath.

Hakaras Hatov

The Brisker Rav says that a person who is not *makir tov* is a *naval* because he ceases to be a human being. This is a powerful vort. There is a whole list of bad *middos* – haughtiness, jealousy, selfishness, temper, etc. But, says the Brisker Rav, a person with any or all of these bad *middos* has character deficiencies but he remains a human being, albeit a flawed human being. However, a person who is not a *makir tova* – is an *am naval* – ceases to be a human being. - This is how profound and fundamental it is to show gratitude.

The 25th of Teves is the *yahrzeit* of Rav Zvi Hersh Meisels, Veitzner Rav (1901-1974).


Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Meisels

Born in Hungary, he received *semicha* from Rav Meir Arik. In 1921 he married his cousin Henna and a few years later became the rabbi of Neimarket and founded a yeshiva for younger students. In 1930 he became rav of Veitzen.

In the Summer of 1944, the entire community was taken to a concentration camp outside of Budapest. A few days later they were sent to Auschwitz. Rav Meisels's wife and six of his children were murdered there. Another son had died a few years previously due to being overworked in a forced labor camp. Three children survived the war.

One day while he was in Auschwitz a man approached him with the type of halachic question that no parent should ever have to ask, and no rabbi should ever have to answer. His son had been separated from the main group of prisoners and taken to an area from which no prisoners ever returned. The questioner had the opportunity to bribe one of the guards and ensure that his son would not be among the next group to be gassed. But if he did so that would mean that, as the Nazis had a quota, someone would be killed instead of his son. Rabbi Meisels started crying, asking how the father could possibly expect him to be able to answer such a question. He had no other rabbonim with whom to discuss the issue, nor a library to consult. He

wasn't the Sanhedrin. How was he supposed to decide who should live and who should die? Hearing this the man said that his whole life if he had a halachic question he always went to a rabbi and did what the rabbi said. What is he to do now that the rabbi won't answer? "I guess that means I can do as I please and save my son. But if you felt that there was a reason to say it is permitted, you would have said so. Ergo, it must mean that you feel there are no grounds to permit. So, I have decided to not save my son's life as that would mean having him replaced with someone else."

On Rosh Hashana in Auschwitz, Rabbi Meisels went to a barracks where 1,500 boys who had already been selected for death were housed. Somehow, he had a shofar, and, despite the grave danger, he blew the full 100 sounds (some of those present said it was only thirty) for them so that they could perform one final mitzvah before being murdered. Some of the boys escaped or otherwise survived and shared their experiences that Rosh Hashana.

What struck young Yeshaya Glick the most was the incongruity between the outward appearance of this great rav and the spiritual intensity with which he said the few passages he felt he had time to say. "Here was a great scholar, dressed in the striped prisoner uniform, with a camp cap on his head, no beard, and no *payos*. And out of his mouth came the most emotionally laden prayers and blessings, not to mention the *shofar bluzen*."

"I recall his appearance on this moving occasion, when he stood without a beard and *payos*, but was all fervor and devotion, intending to blow shofar with enthusiasm and chassidic ardor. Then he started blowing all the *tekiyas*, just as it was done in shul, without skipping any, blowing all the blasts precisely and well, and if a sound didn't seem right to him, he repeated it, without speed or haste."

"We were in a genuine hell on earth. The chimneys rose up in the background, and here, too, flames of fire and smoke ascended heavenward…and within that huge conflagration, the sound of the

shofar was suddenly heard. Our Father in Heaven, look and see the sacrifices taking place here and now in the hell that we're in… Have mercy."

"For a moment I thought it was an illusion. A shofar? A shofar being blown in Auschwitz? But the thought races through my head. If there's a shofar, maybe there is still hope."

Five months later he was transferred to Brunswiek, Germany where he remained for the duration of the war. He had carried with him all the time a *tallis* that had belonged to his grandfather, the *Yitav Lev*. At some point he was afraid that he would be caught with a large *tallis*, so he shortened it and wore it under his garments. An officer once noticed that his clothing looked bulkier than that of the other prisoners and beat him severely for wearing the *tzitzis*.

On another occasion when getting on the train to Brunswiek a guard noticed his *tzitzis* and ripped them off him. Despite the rav's pleading, the guard proceeded to rip them into shreds and toss the pieces into the fire heating the boiler of the train's steam engine. Broken-hearted, because he always felt the *tzitzis* protected him, he got on the train. His son was sitting next to him, and he fell asleep leaning on his son. In the middle of the night his son woke him to complain that he was uncomfortable with his father leaning on him. This complaint was uncharacteristic of his son, especially under the crowded circumstances of the train. Rav Meisels leaned away from his son, leaving some room between them. Moment later a bomb dropped by an American bomber exploded near the train and a piece of shrapnel entered the train passing right between father and son. Had Rabbi Meisels not moved, he would have been killed. It flew across the carriage and hit the Nazi guard who had destroyed the rav's *tzitzis* with his hands, mangling the hands that had ruined his *tzitzis*.

After the war he worked to help displaced persons at Bergen-Belsen. He was appointed rabbi of the British sector and endeavored to help

people restore themselves physically and spiritually. He helped to resolve many *agunah* cases in which it was unknown what happened to someone's spouse and was in contact with many other rabbonim who worked on these cases. He wanted to institute a *heter meah rabbonim* in some of these cases, but others were opposed to that move.

In 1947 he moved to Chicago and married Breindel, the daughter of the Dezhe Rebbe. Together, they had nine children. He was the rabbi of Congregation Shearith Yisroel and authored numerous works on halacha and other topics. In 1970 he moved to Monsey and later to Williamsburg.



Modeh Ani

Have we ever stopped to think why the first words a Jew says upon arising is *Modeh Ani?* Why do we say this before we do anything else, even before washing our hands?

Since the trait of gratitude is the essence of a Jew, it is essential that we begin our day expressing our appreciation for another day of life. This idea is echoed by **Rav Shlomo Wolbe** who teaches that the first word a Jew recites is *Modeh Ani,* since gratitude is the hallmark of a Jew. Therefore, it is befitting that we start our day with this attitude. (*Alei Shur* Vol. 2 p. 283)

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel notes that Chazal didn't incorporate *Modeh Ani* as part of the set prayer services in Shul. Rather we recite this as soon as we arise. This is because they wanted to impart to us the vital importance of gratitude, that the moment we open our eyes, we must thank our Creator for the good He has done for us, for returning our *neshamah*.





The Three Cutting Boards

When **Reb Shlomo of Bobov** (1907–2000) was still a young child, his grandmother — the wife of **Reb Ben Tzion Halberstam**, the Rav of Ratzport (1874–1941) — once came to visit his home. As they sat together, she began to share a memory from her own youth, a story that had unfolded in her father's home — the home of **Reb Mordechai Dov of Hornosteipel** (1839–1903).

"There was once," she began, "a husband and wife who came to my father seeking help with their *shalom bayis*. He listened patiently, guided them through their quarrels, and sent them home in peace. But a few months later, they returned again — and again after that.

"Finally, the wife sighed and said, 'Rebbe, please give me a *brachah* for everlasting *shalom bayis*. I don't want to have to come back every few months.'"

The Rebbe smiled. "If that's what you wish, I'll give you a way to achieve it. This Friday, go and clean three *lokshen bret*."

The woman blinked. "Three *lokshen bret*?" — referring to the wooden cutting boards used to roll and slice homemade noodles. It was a strange instruction, but she trusted the Rebbe. If this was the *segulah* for *shalom*, she would do it.

That Friday, she set out to fulfill his words. Her first stop was a small home filled with noise — ten children running underfoot, chaos swirling around her. She squeezed into the cramped kitchen and began scraping dried dough off the board. The heat, the noise, the tight space — it was exhausting. Still, she told herself that the next home would surely be easier.

But when she reached the second house, peace was even further away. The air was thick with tension; harsh words echoed from one room to the next. The husband and wife barely spoke without snapping. Cleaning that board took every ounce of strength she had — not because of the grime, but because of the heavy spirit that filled the home.

By the time she arrived at the third home, she was weary — but determined to complete her task. To her surprise, it was even worse. The husband shouted so loudly that his words seemed to shake the walls. The wife stood silent, eyes downcast. The woman cleaned in silence, her heart aching.

When she finished, she walked out into the cold air and stopped. She stood there a long while, realizing what her Rebbe had truly meant.

This was no *segulah*. It was a lesson.

Reb Mordechai Dov hadn't sent her to clean cutting boards — he had sent her to polish her perspective.

Until that day, she had believed her own home to be uniquely burdened with hardship. But now, after stepping into three other homes — each with its own noise and tension — she saw her life with new eyes.

"My father wanted her," she said softly, "to see that every household has its challenges. When we imagine others live easier lives, we grow resentful of our own. But when we realize that everyone carries their share of struggle, gratitude replaces frustration — and peace returns."

She looked at her grandson and smiled. "Sometimes, *simcah* and *shalom* doesn't come from changing our situation — but from changing our sight."



מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק - "***Distance yourself from falsehood***." (23:7).

The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 74) asks why does the Torah use such unique wording — "Midvar sheker tirchak," "Distance yourself from falsehood"? We don't find this expression of distancing used anywhere else.

He explains that this wording is meant to emphasize how utterly disgusting and repulsive falsehood is. He writes that falsehood is "loathsome and filthy in everyone's eyes; nothing is more repulsive than it."

Since emes is Hashem's primary middah, His chosam (seal), every person has a built-in sensitivity and attraction to truth and disgust for sheker. It's embedded in the neshama, a reflection of the Divine spark within.

The Chinuch adds that anyone who connects himself to Hashem's middah of emes connects himself to Hashem's brachah — the source of all goodness. The same is true with all of Hashem's midos: one who practices chesed, compassion, and truthfulness draws brachah and simcha into his life. But one who distances himself from Hashem's midos brings upon himself the opposite — worry, strife, and pain instead of peace and joy.

When a person is mekadeish Sheim Shamayim, living in a way that reflects Hashem's midos and brings them into the world, he fills the world with Hashem's goodness. He becomes a conduit for brachah and Hashgacha.

Have a wonderful shabbos, Rabbi Shraga Freedman.

Without failure there is no achievement.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Did the ear hear?



We are taught if a slave wants to stay by his master, he can… **ועבדו לעלם** - *and serve him forever* (until Yovel). Why is **לעלם** missing a **ו**? The Gemara teaches us the slave becomes a Nirtza through his ear since he heard **לא תגנוב** at Sinai and he stole. If he didn't steal and sold himself as a slave- his ear heard by Sinai **עבדים כי לי בני ישראל** - *the Jewish people are my servants*, and he acquired a different master. **לעלם** means to conceal and this slave made Hashem hidden. He gets drilled with a **מרצע**.

The Baal Haturim points out that **מרצע** yields a Gematria of 400 hinting to the 400 years in Mitzrayim in which Hashem redeemed us from. Yet this person went to serve someone else. This is the meaning in **כי תקנה עבד עברי** as we are referred to as slaves to Hashem who took us out from Mitzrayim. **תקנה** is a contraction of **ת קנה** (400)- with the 400 years Hashem acquired us as his **עבדים** . We were chosen as **עבדים** through the 10 Makkos. Consequently, **עבד** is an acronym of **דַצַך עַדש בַאחב** - R' Yehuda's abbreviation for the 10 Makkos.

Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, zt"l, would often confront his donors with the question why they don't devote more time to Torah study. The standard reply was, "I have to make a living."

Rav Scheinberg would immediately respond, "Yes, I understand, you have to make a living. But when are you going to live!"

Rolling Dough



Money is constantly on people's minds. Indeed, the Midrash tells us one who has 100 (money) wants 200. The word **כסף** can mean to yearn as in **נכסף נכספתי** - ***I yearned intensely***, since people yearn for money.

We see this in **מחשבה, דבור, מעשה** - thought, speech and action. Let us take a look at the letters of **כסף** . **כ** spelled out is **כ,פ** which spells **כף** -*palm of the hand*, representing action. Next is a **ס**, which is round, symbolizing the round head of a person. As a result, **ס** signifies thought. Lastly, when **פ** is spelled out, we get **פה** - mouth, alluding to speech.

For many, it is difficult to part with their money. We need to internalize that the money we possess is temporary. A person is taken from his money or his money is taken from him. Indeed, it is written **כי לא במותו יקח הכל לא ירד אחריו כבודו** - ***upon the death of a rich man he won't take anything, his glory will not descend after him***.

Let us take a deeper look at some terms for money. The word **זוז** - a currency in the time of the Gemara- is related to **זז** – ***move***, because money moves from one person to another; it is transitory.

An allusion to this is that coins are round as it rolls, symbolizing money doesn't stay with us. **ממון** – ***money***, is a contraction of **אתה מה מונה** - ***what are you counting***, as it won't stay with you anyway. **מעות** -***small currency,*** is a contraction of **מה לעת** as it is temporary and will not remain with you eternally.

Many attempt to acquire property but after one passes away, he is buried beneath it. An allusion is found in **נכסים** – ***property***, as it is rooted in **כיסוי** - ***to cover, bury***.





How can one make his money last with him eternally? He needs to give it to **צדקה** -***charity***.

In this way the **Kotzker Rebbe** translated **אם כסף תלוה את עמי את העני עמך** as **תלוה** can mean to escort, accompany. If one wants his money to escort him, then he should give it to the poor.

One of the famous Rothschild's said the only money he truly has is that which he gave to charity. There is a saying, "we make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give."

Ascension after death

We are taught **ברא כרעיה דאבוה** - a son is the leg (extension) of his father. The **פחד יצחק** wonders why this term is used? Why isn't a son called the hand of his father?

There is a concept of a **הולך** and an **עומד**. A **הולך** is one who has the power to keep growing spiritually- like us in this world. Contrary to this is an **עומד** which is stationary. For this reason, a **מלאך** is called an **עומד**. The following are some other places we see this concept:

1) In the battle with Yaakov and the **מלאך** of Esav it says **ויגע בכף יריכו** in which the hip-socket of Yaakov was dislocated. This can also be taken to mean that Yaakov has the ability over a **מלאך** to be a **הולך**. This is where the **מלאך** of Esav hit, attempting to cause an inability of spiritual growth.

2) Korach said **כלם קדשים** - all of them are holy. This is in present tense, meaning we are content with who we are and there is no need for growth. This is contrary to Torah as it says **קדשים תהיו** - future tense, meaning we always need to be growing.

3) The Parshiyos of **נצבים** and **וילך** follow each other. One interpretation of this is that the Jews stopped growing as in **אתם נצבים** . But not Moshe, as it says **וילך משה** as he was a **הולך**

When one dies, he no longer has the ability to be a **הולך** and as Chazal expound on **במתים חפשי** that the dead are free from Torah and Mitzvos. This inability for a deceased to become greater is only in that he himself can't. However, his son can elevate him.

In the Gemara the term 'leg' is used because he has the ability to elevate his father even after his father has passed away (and the leg is the limb that makes one into a **הולך**). This is hinted to in the words of Rebbi who said at the time of his death **לבני אני צריך**, he wanted his children to instruct them arrangement of matters after his death.

Another explanation is that when one is dying **לבני אני צריך**, he needs his children now, because they are now his hope for his future in Gan Eden.

The word **בן** is rooted in **בנין** as he builds and continues his father's existence after he passes away.

R' Shlomo Ganzfried tells us there are many stories in Midrashim that show through the son saying **קדיש** for his parents they were saved from judgement. This is why we are accustomed to recite **קדיש** . **The Biur Halacha** states in regard to reciting **קדיש** on the Yartzheit of parents that he brings **נחת רוח** to his parents, protects them and atones for their souls.

Until when is one obligated in honouring his parents? **The Zohar** says that one is obligated in honouring his parents even after they die! One does this by following the proper way and improving his actions.



R' Alexander Ziskind, author of **יסוד ושרש העבודה**, commands his children in his Tzavaa that after he dies, to rectify their deeds in the ways of Hashem so that he shouldn't have tremendous pain and disgrace from them in the higher world.

What about if one has daughters. How can they continue the legacy of their parents? **The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch** writes that the main thing is to go in the proper path and in this way, one brings merit to their parents. This is even greater than saying **קדיש**.

To fulfil all 613



1) We are taught that there are 613 Mitzvos. However, not all of them apply to one person since some apply only to a Kohen, some to a Levi, others only to women, some only when there is a Beis Hamikdash and so on. How then is it possible for one to fulfil all 613?

2) The Gemara relates a story of a non-Jew who said to Hillel convert me to Judaism on condition that you will teach me the entire Torah…. Hillel converted him and said **מאן דעלך**... - 'that which you hate don't do to your friend- this is the entire Torah, the rest is an elaboration, go learn it. Hillel's answer doesn't seem to be correct since that only includes **בין אדם לחבירו** not **בין אדם למקום** - man's relationship with Hashem?

When we have unity amongst us, we are like one. Through this it can be considered as if we did all 613 Mitzvos since we are like one Jew from all generations in which all Mitzvos apply. This idea is alluded to by the fact we were **כאיש אחד בלב אחד** - unity- at Matan Torah.

Now we can appreciate the meaning of **תּוֹרָה צִוָּה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב** - we can fulfil all of the Mitzvos of the Torah through unity - **קהלת יעקב**.

This explains why R' Akiva said that **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** is a **כלל גדול** - great rule, in Torah as all the Mitzvos of the Torah can be fulfilled because of it. Likewise, this is why Hillel included it all in **מאן דעלך..** .

Stay Warm





When the soup served to **R' Yissachar Dov of Belz** on the first night of Succos was cold, he asked his Gabai what happened. He answered that the soup was carried outdoors to the Succa causing it to get cold. The Rebbe commented that if soup gets cold by going through the city streets, imagine what happens to a person who goes through the city streets!? The bad influences he sees and hears may cool off his **יראת שמים** .

Over 60 years ago, when a Chabad emissary moved from Russia to Eretz Yisrael, he told the people we are going from a cold country (Russia) to a warm one (Eretz Yisrael). Nevertheless, one can still freeze up there (in spirituality).

One frigid night in the windy city of Chicago, a Rosh Yeshiva went around collecting money. Upon entering a certain house, the man was puzzled: "How can you go out on such a night, as it is so cold?!"

The Rosh Yeshiva told him it is written **בבית אלקים נהלך ברגש** - when one goes out for a shul, Yeshiva or the like (**בית אלקים**) he must go with **רגש** - feeling. **ברגש** is an acronym for **בָּרָד רוּחַ גֶּשֶׁם שֶׁלֶג**, hail, wind, rain or snow. Regardless of the weather one must prevail! The weather didn't cool this Rosh Yeshiva off from his mission!

Keep a Distance



The Pasuk states **מדבר שקר תרחק**. Why does the term **תרחק** - to distance oneself, appear only by lying? Why can it just say 'don't lie'?

Chazal say that the seal of Hashem is **אמת** . For this, reason, **אמת** is sealed at the outset of the Torah- **בראשית ברא אלקים**- as the end letters spell **אמת** . In addition to this, Hashem is called **אמת** as in **וה' אלקים אמת** - . **R' Moshe Margolis** in his commentary to Yerushalmi- Pnei Moshe- informs - us that it is an acronym of **אֱלקים מֶלך תָּמיד**

In the **א ב** - there are 13 letters preceding **מ** and 13 after, giving a total of 26, the same as **אמת . י-ה-ו-ה** is also symbolic of Hashem as in **אני ה' ראשון ואת אחרנים...** as **א** is the first letter of the **א ב** - whereas **ת** is the last. The **מ** refers to **מֶלך**.

In light of this, we can grasp that when one speaks falsehood, he distances himself from Hashem. On a deeper level this is what is meant in **מדבר שקר תרחק** - when one speaks falsehood, he distances himself from Hashem.

To value Torah



To not underestimate the value of the Torah let us cite the following incredible stories:

It was in the city of Krakow in the 1800's that a child was suffocating from asthma in the middle of the night. After examining houses to see if lights were on, the father of the child noticed a light on at the house of the Rav, **R' Shimon Sofer** (1820-1883), as he was learning. Begging the Rav for help, R' Sofer gave him his scarf to place on the child. Soon after placing the scarf on the child, he was cured. When asked what was so special about this scarf that it contained such power, R' Sofer replied that this scarf contained his sweat from his toiling in Torah. This story was related by the boy with the asthma at the funeral of R' Simon Sofer.

The Chassidim of the **Avnei Nazer** (1838-1910) noticed that he answered each petitioner concisely not spending much time with them. When asked about this, he retorted that for every second that I am disrupted in my learning, these people have losses at home. Consequently, it is to their advantage that I only hold brief audiences with them!

The Medicine for Yesurim

The Gemara (Brachos 62a) states that the medicine to heal yesurim is to accept them. - Accepting the yesurim with the belief that this is Hashem's will and for the good is a segulah and a refuah for the tzaros to leave. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

Seeing Deeper



The Pasuk states ... **עזב תעזב עמו**, if you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden, you should help him.

Since **עזר** is the more common term for help, why is the word **עזב** used?

A boy that was engaged to the daughter of **R' Baruch Ber Liebowitz** decided to break off the Shidduch. This same boy, when engaged to a different girl, needed a letter of recommendation from R' Baruch Ber for his future father-in-law.

After writing the letter, R' Baruch Ber called in three boys to read the letter to make sure there was no personal bias affecting the letter. R' Koppel Wolpert of Baltimore—who was one of the three—remembered more than 80 years later how the three of them sat there in disbelief and with tears in their eyes on the description of this boy described by R' Baruch Ber— Baal Middos, a **ירא שמים** and the like.

In addition to meaning help, **עזב** also means to leave. It therefore can be interpreted to leave all the negativity and hostility behind. Then you can help the other person. What occurs as a result of you overlooking his faults and leaving it behind? **תעזב עמו** —Hashem will do the same to you, since He acts with us the way we do with others, **מדה כנגד מדה** .

Angelic Gemara

R' Shlomo Karliner (1738-1792) tells us that the word **גמרא** is related to **גומרי**, burning coals because Gemara is like fiery coals that purify us. **R' Aharon Karliner** remarked that when a Jew awakens in the morning, he has **בלטה** , *blutte* (Yiddish for mud) on his face. He washes it off with a blatt of Gemara as the blatt removes the blutte.

In this way, we can interpret : **גמרא גמור זמורתא**. Learn Gemara and then it will cut off the shells of impurity. This is also hinted to in the word **גמרא** as it also means to destroy as in **בקשו לגמר...** since this is what learning Gemara does to the shells of impurity.



R' Meir Shapiro introduced the idea of Daf Yomi at the **כנסיה גדולה** at age 35 in front of many Gedolim who were much older than him like this: The Gemara relates that Rabban Gamliel said that he was once on a ship when the ship was sinking and he was pained by the thought of R' Akiva who had been on that ship since he was now surely lost. When he came up to dry land, R' Akiva came and deliberated before Rabban Gamliel in a matter of law. Rabban Gamliel asked him, "Who raised you out of the water." The reply: I took hold of a **דף**, board from the ship and before every wave that came, I bowed my head and it passed over me. R' Shapiro said there are so many waves—secularism, immorality, materialism... These need to be fought with a Daf of Gemara daily.

R' Betzalel, the brother of the **Maharal**, comments that **גמרא** are the initials of **גַבריאל, מִיכאל, רָפאל אוּריאל**, (Malachim) since when one learns Gemara he is surrounded by them. These protect and save a person from bad.

The Divrei Shmuel (1850-1916), the second Slonimer Rebbe, related that when he has a problem, which prevents him from being happy, he learns a page of Gemara to become happy again. For a big problem, he would learn two pages of Gemara as then the problem wouldn't bother him any longer. If the problem was extremely severe, he would learn three pages of Gemara. As he put it: then there is nothing that can take away my joy.



The Jewelry Thief in a Labour Camp by Eliezer Shore

Eliyahu Hanavi can come in all types of guises.

If I were to tell you all that happened to me during World War II – how it began for me and how it ended, how I survived and how many times I almost died, the friends I lost and the friends I found – it would fill more volumes than there are years of my life. Some stories do stand out in my mind, though, and this is one of them.

It was 1944 and I was fifteen years old. When the Warsaw Ghetto was liquidated, I was sent to the Bedzin labour camp in Poland, along with 800 other Jews. There were about 2000 of us in the camp altogether, including women and children. Most of us worked until exhaustion or death at a military-industrial complex nearby; some labored as servants in the homes of local Poles.

The trick to survival, I quickly learned, was to maneuver oneself into a job "with benefits" – that is, where the workload was not as heavy, or the supervisor not as blood-thirsty, or food was attainable, even by theft. If any one of those factors were missing, death would come within days.

I had been working in an arms factory. It was difficult and exhausting labour. One day the Polish supervisor motioned to me to follow him to a new location – a spacious, brightly lit warehouse nearby. In the center, propped up on wooden stands, was a large wing from a German fighter plane – fifteen feet long and five feet wide.

Other plane parts were lined up along the walls, while cans of gray, green and brown paint were scattered around the room. The Pole showed me what to do. I was to use pressurized spray cans to paint the wings and other parts as evenly as I could, all according to specifications. In my heart, I was delighted, though I dared not show it on my face. It didn't look like hard work at all, but something that one person could do alone. I thanked G-d for the work.

Unfortunately, my joy soon turned to despair. The paint had a strong acetone base, and as I sprayed the plane wings, I found myself at the centre of a cloud of noxious vapour that burned my lungs, stung my eyes, and confused my thoughts. I tried my best to cover my mouth, but the dirty cloths lying around the room, with their pungent turpentine smell, offered no protection. My hands and face were speckled from the paint, and my head was swimming.



Each morning, before I entered the hall, I would take several deep breaths of clean, fresh air, hoping that they would suffice for the entire day. From then until evening, I took as shallow breaths as possible. Of course, it didn't really help, and within a short time, I was inhaling the fumes again.

It took immense effort to concentrate on the work, though I dared not stop. My thoughts became confused, and I often hallucinated. Sometimes, I thought that I heard voices in the empty room, only to realize it was my own voice; I thought I saw people standing around me, though they would vanish when I turned to look. I was alone in the room, save for a Polish supervisor, who sat at the far end of the warehouse, either half-drunk of half-asleep. He never even glanced in my direction.

This went on for two weeks, without a break. As soon as I finished one wing, they would bring another one in its place. It got to the point that I could no longer continue. I felt like I was going to die. I thought that a gas chamber would be better than this slow death by poison.

It was on one of those days that the supervisor unexpectedly rose from his chair and approached me. Tall, blond and blue-eyed, the vodka on his breath mingled with the other chemical smells in the room. I shook my head and tried to concentrate on what he wanted from me. I felt like I was swimming through some dense, dark liquid, struggling for the surface.

"Jew," he said, "what can I do for you?"

I couldn't understand what he meant and took a step back. But he moved in closer, his bloodshot eyes staring at me as though through a fog.

"Jew," he said again, "what can I do for you?"

"Just let me die," I said to him, struggling to hold back my tears.

"No," he said, "tell me what I can do for you. Can I bring you something?"

Bring me something? The words spiraled down into my brain, as though through some muddy whirlpool. The answer I gave him came out by itself. Until today, I don't know where the words came from.

"You can bring me my mother's jewelry. They're hidden in the graveyard in Warsaw."

"Where? Where?" he said, his filthy hand grabbing my wrist. "Where can I find them!?"

That night, as I made my way back to the bunker, I reviewed what had happened earlier that day. Did the Pole really approach me or was it a hallucination? Did I really tell him about my mother's jewelry or was I just imagining it? And if I did tell that thieving murderer

about it, how could I have been so stupid? My mother's precious jewelry – now I would never see it again.

The next day, I returned to work, and it was as though nothing had happened. The Pole sat in his corner seat, drunk and half-conscious, and never glanced in my direction. A new plane wing was waiting for me, with no time to waste. What I remembered of yesterday must have been a hallucination. I returned to the suffocating job of painting the wings.

About a week passed. I kept on working in the hangar; the situation did not improve. One day, the Pole rose from his seat and approached me again. I stopped working to focus on him.

"Jew take!" he said, and pressed a small, round loaf of brown bread into my hand. Then he turned and went back to his seat.

A loaf of bread! In Bedzin this was more precious than gold! I was so famished; I could have eaten it all in one bite. But I decided to bring it back to the camp to share with my uncle, and my friend, Simcha Holtzberg.

Re-entering the camp that evening, I hid the loaf under my shirt. Later that night, lying between my uncle and Simcha on the bunks, I took it out and showed it to them. They couldn't believe it either; my uncle wanted to hold it, to make sure that it was real.

"Maybe that guard is Eliyahu Hanavi," Simcha said with a smile, but I didn't respond. To be honest, the idea had occurred to me, too. From all the children's stories that I remembered, he looked like Eliyahu Hanavi, with his blue eyes, square jaw and wavy blond hair.

We decided that we would eat the entire loaf right there, rather than divide it into small pieces to make it last for days. I broke open the loaf as quietly as I could, so that none of the other prisoners would hear. Suddenly something small fell out of it. I looked and saw that the entire loaf was hollow. Inside was some of my mother's jewelry. All three of us stared in disbelief. Had that Pole actually

traveled 250 miles to Warsaw to unearth it? And why in the world would he give it to me? Was he really Eliyahu Hanavi?

Of course, we ate the loaf, but more importantly, that jewelry saved our lives. We traded pieces of it for food, clothing and other means of survival. Once, I traded a piece for a slice of bread, and then traded a bite of that bread for the opportunity to put on tefillin that someone had found in the camp. "You have an extra slice of bread today," my uncle told me. "You can trade a bite to do the mitzvah."



I continued working in the airplane factory, though the supervisor never looked or spoke to me again, nor I to him. After a few weeks, I was transferred out of there to a new task and location. I could breathe deeply – for a while.

It would be nice to end the story there. To leave it as a mystery, as incomprehensible as my entire survival during those bitter years. But there's a second part to this tale that needs to be told. It happened years later, after I had already settled and raised a family in Israel.

It was a Saturday night, following the bar mitzvah of our twin sons, Betzalel and Menashe. Our house had been a bedlam of guests, food and gifts the entire day, and my wife and I were finally cleaning up. She was tidying the living room and I was in the kitchen, doing the dishes.

"Enough, Avraham," she said. "We've done enough today. The work isn't going anywhere, it can wait until tomorrow. There's supposed to be an interesting lecture in the community center. Let's go."

We drove downtown and took our seats. I can't say whether the speaker was interesting or not; I was so tired that I fell asleep almost as soon as we sat down. Suddenly, though, a comment from someone sitting behind us startled me back to awareness. "Yes, he was in the cemetery in Warsaw."

"What?" I thought. "Who are they referring to?" When the war broke out, I, too, had sought refuge in the Warsaw cemetery. I sat up in my chair and stared closely at the speaker. I recognized him! It was Yorek, who had hidden there together with me. He was noticeably older, and now a distinguished scholar. He had even authored a book on the Holocaust – the topic of his lecture. When he finished speaking, I approached him.

"Aren't you Avraham Carmi?" he asked."Yes, it's me!" I replied.

He laughed and embraced me. And then, before I could say anything, he whispered in my ear, "You know, Lieberman stole your mother's jewelry."

"Lieberman? Who's Lieberman?"

"You don't remember him? Tall, blond, with light-blue eyes. He came to the cemetery and said that you had sent him. He asked for someone to help him find the red mausoleum in the Jewish section."

Suddenly, it dawned on me. That drunken Pole, sleeping all day in the corner of the airplane factory, had really been a Jew, disguising himself to survive the war.

"He wasn't a thief," I said in a voice, trembling with emotion. "He was Elijah the Prophet!" "He was to you," Yorek replied, with an ironic smile.

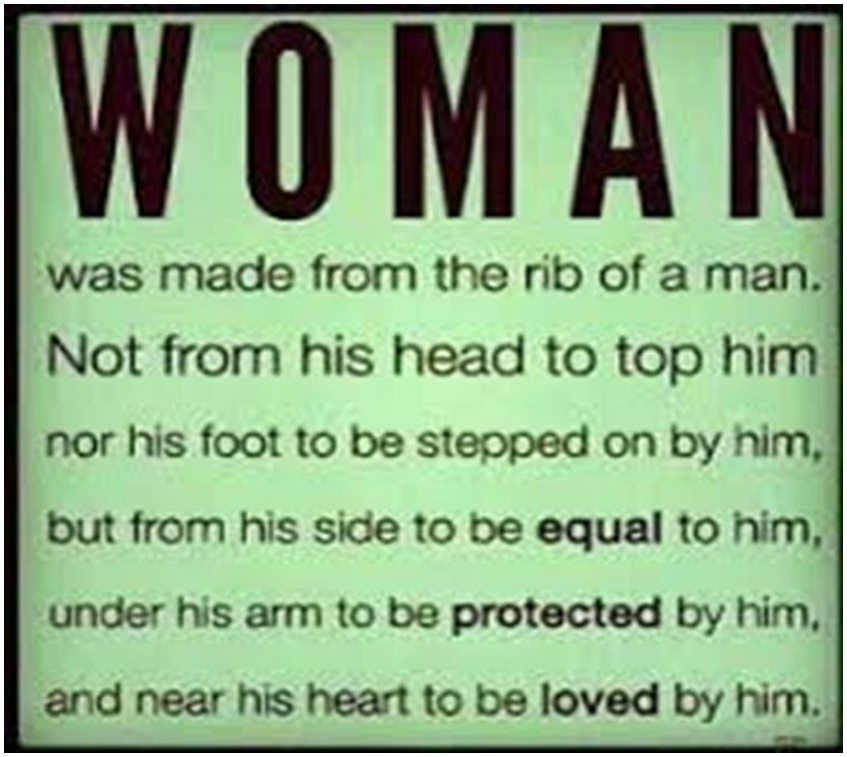
To make a long story short, this Lieberman also survived the war and made his way to Tel Aviv, where he ran a small factory. Yorek gave me his address, and several days later, I went to see him. As soon as I walked in, I recognized him – though he no longer smelled of alcohol. He greeted me casually, as though we had seen each other

just the day before. "Come," he said, leading me to his office, "I have something for you." He opened the drawer and took out a small metal tin – my mother's jewelry box. It was empty, but that didn't matter. What mattered was that the two of us were alive, sitting face to face, in an office in Tel Aviv.

And so, my Eliyahu Hanavi was a man of flesh and blood, and a Jew! Yet, he saved my life. To me, he was and will always be an angel in disguise.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

The Key to a Happy Marriage & Other Personal Relationships *"Do not afflict any widow or orphan". (22:21)*



The Torah says not to cause pain or harm to a widow or an orphan. **Rashi** says that the same prohibition applies to harming **any** person. The Torah specifically mentions these because they are more sensitive and defenceless, thus they are more susceptible to be harmed.

The **Rambam** (Hilchos Dayos 7:8) says that this even applies to a rich widow or even a powerful widow such as a queen. The reason is that they feel more dispirited than other women. The **Rambam** continues that we must be especially careful to speak softly and respectfully to them.

The **Sefer Lekech Tov** brings two instances illustrating the greatness of our Torah leaders in how they acted towards widows. **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld** zt"l was the Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim during the time of the British Mandate. When he was younger, he was a student in the yeshiva in Pressburg. Every Shabbos the students would leave the yeshiva to eat at the homes of various families.

Every week, the young Rav Sonnenfeld would disappear enroute. Some of his fellow students became curious and decided to follow him. They followed him to one of the poorer sections of the city, down many steps to an apartment in the cellar. Rav Sonnenfeld knocked on the door of a widow and in a loud and cheerful voice called out his Shabbos greetings. Then he returned to his Shabbos meal. His friends couldn't contain their curiosity and asked if the widow was his relative. He replied that she wasn't. He just wanted to bring joy to a widow. It was just a few words on his part, yet that was enough to bring a smile to the widow's face.

Rav Yosef Zev Soloveitchik zt"l was the Chief Rabbi of the town of Brisk. Since he was exceedingly humble, he never signed his name followed by his title as the Head of the Rabbinical court of the town of Brisk. He once heard that a widow living in the outskirts of the city needed encouragement and support. He quickly went to visit her.

A younger person accompanied Rav Yosef Zev. He asked the fellow to quickly go ahead of him and announce to the widow that the Rabbi of Brisk was coming to visit her. He had the fellow use his title that he normally didn't use in order to make the widow feel special and important. These are the actions of one who has truly imbibed his Torah learning and acts accordingly.

This is the sensitivity we must show to everyone in need. Is there something else to do to make others feel good and to foster loving relationships?

Avraham's servant, Eliezer, was sent to look for a wife for Yitzchak. He met Rivka at the well and asked for a drink. With haste, she gave him a drink. On her own, she offered to provide water for Eliezer's camels. After being asked for lodging, she added on her own that her family had ample food for Eliezer and his animals.

Levi ben Gershon zt"l, known as the **Ralbag**, (Braishis 24:19) learns from this episode that an ideal servant and a true ba'al chessed, a truly kind person, is one who can anticipate the needs of another. He must be keenly observant to notice a need without being asked. Then he must be conscientious is fulfilling that need. Eliezer saw this trait in Rivkah and knew that she would be the perfect wife for Yitzchak.

The **Ralbag** says that it does not suffice for a servant to follow orders and do all that he is asked. His master will still be lacking because he won't realize to verbalize all his needs. In order be considered the quintessential servant, he must be observant to notice ways to help his master and act on those needs.

Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l, Rosh Hayeshiva of Chofetz Chaim, pointed out that being alert to the needs of others is **a middah of its own, that must be worked on to perfect**. One can't be a complete servant or baal chessed without this trait. King Shaul's son, Yehonasan lacked this trait. He had such love and devotion to Dovid and would have done anything for him. Yet, Yehonasan overlooked Dovid's need for food. He didn't even provide him with two loaves of bread. As a result, Dovid had to get food from the city of Nov, the city of Kohanim. Since that city provided food for Dovid, King Shaul killed the entire city of Nov (**Gemorah** Sanhedrin 103B).

We see from the Ralbag that it is an important middah to be a complete ba'al chessed and anticipate the needs of others. This same trait is important for a happy marriage. Noticing a spouse's needs before it is verbalized will foster a loving and lasting relationship.

Was it Really the Perfect Crime?

When a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox, and four sheep for the sheep." (21:37) - "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (22:20)

AAMCO is an American transmission-repair company. They claim that car transmissions are delicate mechanisms. Each car transmission needs the correct fluid in order to run properly and to last long. Putting in the wrong transmission fluid in a car will eventually cause the transmission to fail.

The most technologically advanced invention is also the most delicate. That invention is the human being. Often, we can do something to damage our own or other's delicate mechanism without even realizing it.

On the outside, we may view a six-foot-three-inch Navy Seal, weighing two hundred and eighty pounds of pure muscle, as a "tough guy". On the inside, however, every human being has a very delicate and sensitive mechanism.

The Ba'alei Mussar are those Torah mentors who teach us to have sensitivity to others. If a person's relative was killed by hanging, you should never mention, in their earshot, anything about hanging. For instance, you should not even discuss hanging a picture. Although meant as an innocent remark, the word "hanging" will strike a sensitive chord and will make the person feel bad, either consciously or subconsciously.

If a man steals an ox and slaughters or sells it, he must repay the animal's owner five times its worth. However, if he steals a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he must repay the animal's owner only four times its worth. Why does the thief pay less for what he did to the sheep? **Rashi** quotes the answer from the Talmud. It is somewhat degrading to the thief when he carries the sheep away on his

shoulders. The Torah considers this embarrassment as a partial compensation for the theft. Therefore, the thief pays a reduced fine.



The Talmud's answer seems strange. This thief feels so happy that he succeeded in the "perfect crime". He feels good about himself. What embarrassment is there?

Apparently, the Torah is teaching us that there **is** a level of embarrassment that the thief feels, **subconsciously**, without even realizing it. His delicate, internal mechanism **was** damaged, without his even realizing it.

This educates us to a whole new understanding of what a person is. He is so sensitive to insult or embarrassment. Sometimes he is not even aware of the hurt, yet it affects him, nonetheless.

On the other hand, a thoughtless remark can damage **our own** internal mechanism. The Torah tells us not to insult a *ger*, a convert to Judaism, because we too were *gerim*, strangers, in Egypt. Our remark insults and hurts ourselves. This too is illogical. Our forefathers were strangers in Egypt over three thousand years ago. If I insult someone by calling him a *ger* can that possibly affect me? The answer is a resounding yes! A human is so sensitive that even such a remark will cause pain to his subconscious.

We must be so exceedingly careful of our words and deeds. A thoughtless act or remark can pain or damage a person's delicate and sensitive mechanism.

R' Yissochar Frand shlit'a

We define a person who is single as being one whose world ends at the end of his garment. He is a self-contained unit. His world ends where he ends. For this reason, by a traditionally Yekke (German Jewry) wedding as well as at a Sephardic wedding, the chosson puts on a Talis and spreads it over himself and his bride. This ritual acts out the very implication of our metaphor. Under the chuppah, at the moment of his marriage, the chosson demonstrates that his world has now been extended - his kallah is now part of his life - by spreading his garment over someone else in addition to himself. In essence, he is saying, "My coat now has to cover someone else."



There is a story told by **R' Elimelech Biderman shlit'a** about a small town in Siberia, where the frigid temperatures and desolate wilderness made for long and lonely stretches of civilization. In this waylaid town, there lived a elderly father and his son, who barely eked out a living under the harsh conditions.

One day, the father and son came to the local Rabbi with a dispute. Each one was laying claim to the one coat in the house. Each one felt that he was more deserving of this coat. The Rabbi listened as they explained that the elderly father stayed home while the son went off to work each day. The father said that he needed the coat; otherwise he would freeze to death as there was no heating in the house and the walls were insufficient to keep out the winds. The son, on the other hand, claimed that his need was far more pressing

because he was out working all day in the exposed fields. If he didn't have the protection of the coat, he would never survive.

The Rabbi looked at the father and asked him how he would respond to the son's legitimate claim. The father retorted that as the son was working and moving about during the day, after a while he would warm up and not need the coat. The son shook his head, not accepting this response. He replied that even though their house was full of unplugged holes it was still preferable to be indoors as there was always some shelter to be found. Plus, they had a stove ....

The two complainants continued to argue back and forth, and the Rabbi was unsure how to proceed. Who should get to wear the coat? He thought long and hard but could not come up with a valid decision. He told the pair to give him some time to study the matter in depth and come back in two days time when he would give them an answer.

As they trudged back to their dilapidated and freezing hovel, both the father and his son begin to assess the claim of the other one. Each man tried to understand the other's counterpoint and what the coat would mean to them. By putting himself in the other one's shoes, they both came to the realization that perhaps the other was right after all. He really does need the coat more than me. I will manage as best as I can without the coat. This became the new crux of their argument.

As a result, on their return to the Rabbi two days later, the father and the son were still arguing vehemently, but this time each was claiming that the other one should take the coat! On hearing both of them present their cases once again, the Rabbi asked them to wait a few moments. He left the room only to return almost immediately with a warm coat in his hand that he gave to them, telling them that now they would both have a coat to wear. Of course, both father and son thanked the Rabbi profusely and stood up to leave.

As they got to the door the son turned around and asked the Rabbi why he hadn't just given them the coat two days ago. The Rabbi

answered that when they were both fighting because each one thought that he needed the coat more, the Rabbi thought to himself that he also needed his coat. But when they returned with each one thinking about the other and agreeing to manage without the coat, the Rabbi thought to himself that he could also think about others and manage without his coat!

Torah Tavlin - Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

22:30 וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֻון לִי וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכُון אֹתֹו



Rashi cites Chazal who explain that by virtue of the dogs not barking during Makkas Bechoros they were eternally rewarded to receive the treifos - non-kosher scraps This teaches us the concept of hakaras hatov and just how far reaching it is.

I once heard from **R' Fishel Schachter shlit'a**, who expounded on the Daas Z'keinim who has a totally different approach than Rashi. People in those days kept guard dogs to ensure the safety of their sheep from the roving packs of wolves. Although this watchdog may fail one time to properly ward off all the marauders and one might lose a sheep, the owner mustn't forget the countless times that his guard dog successfully protected the herd. Therefore, the Torah says to give the dog the treifos, showing him (and others) that we are makir tov and appreciate how he keeps the flock safe all the other times.

This idea extends to all of us. How many times do we get upset at a friend, associate, worker or even a spouse for "messing up"? We trusted them and they "blew it"! We should instead, recognize and remember all the times that person came through for us and tell them him or her how much their efforts are valued, and that we sincerely cherish all that they do on our behalf.

There was once a professor who drew a black dot on a paper and proceeded to ask his students what they saw. They all said they saw a black dot. One student though, responded that he saw a lot of white all around and a small black dot in middle. The professor said - you will go far in life! This student had the ability to see the mostly white whole picture and not just zero in on the negligible insignificant black spec.

This machshava is so pertinent in our world which is so full of cynicism. When someone doesn't perform to our expectations, like children for example, don't dwell on the negative. Rather, give credit for the positive he does, and he will feel so good about himself that he will strive even harder to give us the Yiddishe nachas we yearn for.

R' Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l would say: כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמֹור שֹׂנַאֲךָ רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מַשָּׂאֹו-23:5

A Jew must help even his enemy's donkey who is straining under its load. The Targum says that this actually requires that we abandon our hatred of our enemy for the moment, since chessed (kindness) must be done wholeheartedly and with love.

We must learn to control our feelings. While it takes much effort, we can change our feelings from one extreme to the other if we put our minds and hearts to it."

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Think Before You Speak!



וְגֵ֥ר לֹא־תוֹנֶ֖ה וְלֹ֣א תִלְחָצֶ֑נּוּ כִּֽי־גֵרִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם בְּאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם "***You shall not taunt or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in Eygpt." (Shmos 22:20)***

Your words are powerful. You have the power to make a difference in someone else's life.

The Torah "singles-out" a few individuals to whom we must show special care and sensitivity in our verbal dealings with them. We must speak to them with extra sensitivity. These individuals are widows, orphans, and converts to Judaism. This dvar Torah will focus on a convert and will teach a lesson relevant to everyone.

The Ramban feels that the need to speak to converts with extra sensitivity, is perfectly logical. A convert is new to Judaism. He may feel defenceless and vulnerable. The Torah reminds us that our ancestors in Egypt also felt no one would come to their aid until Hashem helped them. We too must help and treat a convert with extra care.

Rashi's explanation is a bit puzzling. Rashi says, as the familiar saying goes, "People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones". If you verbally distress a convert, he can also make **you** feel bad by saying, "You **too** come from descendants who were converts".

Imagine you are a CEO of a major company. Someone wants to make you feel bad, so he says," Your ancestors, over 2,000 years ago were

converts. Do you really think this CEO, who is on top of the world, could care less; will he now feel bad about a smudge on his lineage from 2,000 years ago?

Apparently, he will feel bad, according to Rashi. Whether this realization is conscious or subconscious, he will feel bad.

We now have a beautiful new insight in the sensitivity we must show, not only to converts, but to everyone. An innocent remark may cause unhappy feelings deep in a person's heart. We must always be careful in how we speak to our parents, children, siblings, friends, and everyone we meet.

Make the right choice; make sure your words bring happiness to others.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

24:7 **וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**

The Gemara שבת פח. asks: "Why are the Jewish people compared to an apple?

Just as an apple sprouts before its leaves, so too Bnei Yisroel proclaimed Naaseh before Nishma!" What does this mean? What is the greatness of an apple that it sprouts before its leaves and why is this a comparison to the Jewish people who said Naaseh before Nishma?

R' Simcha Sheps zt"l gives a stunning explanation. He says that the purpose of the entire creation is chessed. The world is built on kindness and without it there would be no world; the entire phenomenon of nature is one big circle of chessed. Animals eat vegetation, people eat animals. Man shows the world the greatest chessed through his free choice and emulation of Hashem.

During the winter, trees are stripped of their leaves. As spring settles in, the leaves begin to once again cover the branches, and

after that, fruit begins to blossom and ripen. This is true of all trees except one: the apple tree.



The apple tree FIRST gives off it's fruit and only afterwards do leaves cover the branches. While all the other trees first think of themselves first by covering their nakedness, the apple tree first thinks about how it can benefit others by bringing forth its beautiful and delicious fruit and only afterwards does it cover itself!

When Hashem asked the nations of the world if they want the Torah, they answered selfishly. They only thought about themselves and thus answered in the negative. The Jewish people answered "Naaseh V'Nishma" and did not think about themselves, but only about the honour of Hashem. Only after "NAASEH" - we will do whatever Hashem asks, did they say "NISHMA" - we will worry about ourselves!

Whenever we eat an apple, let us remember this great lesson of chessed.

"There are many paths to serve Hashem, for every soul is unique. One Jew serves Hashem through study and another through song; both are ascending the same mountain just from different sides." ~ Based on the teachings of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809)

כִּי יִגְנֹב־אִישׁ שׁוֹר אוֹ־שֶׂה וּטְבָחוֹ אוֹ מְכָרוֹ חֲמִשָּׁה בָקָר יְשַׁלֵּם תַּחַת הַשּׁוֹר וְאַרְבַּע־צֹאן תַּחַת הַשֶּׂה 21:37



If a man steals an ox and slaughters or sells it, he must repay the animal's owner five times its worth. However, if he steals a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he must repay the owner only four times its worth.

Why does he pay less for the sheep? Rashi quotes the answer from the Gemara. It is somewhat degrading to the thief when he carries the sheep away on his shoulders. The Torah considers this embarrassment as a partial compensation for the theft. Therefore, the thief pays a reduced fine.

In the city of Jerusalem, many years ago, lived a woman who had an unusual nickname. She was known throughout the city as ***"Yentele the Meshugene"*** - Yentele, the crazy one. It wasn't for naught that she earned this dubious distinction. In fact, she worked quite diligently to acquire such a reputation all throughout the city.

It was customary to find Yentele standing in the middle of the street yelling at passers-by as they walked. She didn't just say the same nasty things to everyone - no, she was kind enough to tailor her loud and colourful comments to each person individually. To one person she would comment about his family; to a Melamed, she would mimic what the children said about him; to a Rosh Kollel, she would divulge what the yungerleit "really" felt. No one was safe from her harsh and blistering observations.

During the War of Independence in 1948, as Arab shells rained down on the hapless residents of Jerusalem, people ran for cover in the local bomb shelters. Even Yentele the Meshugene was forced to find a miklat (shelter) for protection, and the one she managed to hide herself in had the distinction of also hosting the **Rebbe of Zvill, R' Gedalya Moshe Goldman zt"l**.



Interestingly, as the bombs rained down and the noise outside was ear-splitting, Yentele remained unusually silent. However, the moment the racket subsided, it was then that she began to bomb away! The people in the shelter were frazzled as it was and now with all these extra barbs coming from the relentless mouth of Yentele, they just about had it. It was decided that Yentele had to leave the shelter and find another place to go. Why must they suffer alone - let other people enjoy her spirited words as well! However, before any decision was made, it was agreed to discuss the matter with the Zviller Rebbe, and ask him if it was permitted. A few people went over and asked if it was okay to remove Yentele and switch her to a different shelter? Her sharp and embarrassing words had everyone on edge and people could not take it any longer. R' Gedalya Moshe nodded and said, "Yes, you are permitted to remove her. But before you do I want to tell you a story about my own father, the holy **R' Shloimke of Zvill zt"l**.

When we lived in Europe, I had a sister who became sick. For many weeks she lay in bed and at one point, her fever spiked to the point that it was dangerously high. Nothing my mother or father tried was able to bring down her fever and the doctors were hastily called in to see if they could help. After a careful examination, even the doctors had no answer, and they told my parents that they didn't

think my sister was going to live much longer. "My father, without saying a word, grabbed his hat and coat and ran outside. My mother was surprised to see him go and called after him saying, 'Where are you going right now?' 'I am going to search for bizyonos (embarrassment),' my father answered. And off he went. My father was in charge of the schar limud (tuition) in the local cheder and he knew who had paid and who had not.

Without wasting a second, my father ran to a certain house and knocked on the door. The woman of the house opened the door and my father said something to her, presumably that her tuition was still unpaid. Instantly, she became enraged and started yelling at my father with very harsh and venomous words.

My father slowly walked away, and she followed him out into the street, just yelling and shouting words of shame that would make anybody cringe and turn beet red. A crowd of people followed behind to see what all the commotion was about. This went on for a few minutes until finally my father turned and ran home. "This time as he walked into the house, he smiled and announced, 'Boruch Hashem, nothing is going to happen to her! She will be fine!' And so it was - my sister's fever went down and in a short while she was out of danger."

R' Gedalya Moshe turned to the people in the shelter and said, "Yes, you may remove this woman from the shelter if she is embarrassing people. But consider the fact that Hashem sent her specifically to this shelter as a gift to us. The embarrassment that she so generously doles out is what saves us from death. Do we want to give up on such a wonderful gift?"

The less said, the fewer mistakes. The greater the talk, the greater the headache. ~ R' Yosef Qimhi zt"l (1160-1235)

Torah Tavlin - Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

21:1 וְאֵלֶּה֙ הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר תָּשִׂ֖ים לִפְנֵיהֶֽם

Baal HaTurim gives a deeper meaning to the word **הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים**. It stands for: **הַדיין מַצווה שיעשה פשרה טרם יעשה מַשפט** - ***A judge is commanded to try to reach a settlement before issuing a judgment***. It is famously said that the reason we go back three steps after Shemona Esrai, before we say **עושה שלום**, is to teach us that people must be willing to take a step back in order that there should be shalom - peace, amongst everyone.

The first sedra after Matan Torah is Mishpatim, which discusses the laws of bein adam l'chaveiro. The question was asked why Choshen Mishpat (which deals with these laws) was moved from first to last place. It should have remained the first section of Shulchan Aruch, in order for people to learn to give in and compromise for peace.

The Satmar Rebbe zt"l answered that since it teaches us that litigants should seek a compromise in order to establish peace, the Rabbanim did not want to put Choshen Mishpat first so we should think that we can compromise in all cases of halacha. Yes, in Choshen Mishpat we learn to make a p'shara, but this approach to shalom is fitting only in money matters - but when it comes to mitzvos Hashem, compromise does not exist!

Choshen Mishpat was moved to the end, after Orach Chaim, in order to avoid this mistake. May we always be zoche to a life of peace and happiness amongst our families, friends, and all of Klal Yisroel.

"Bitachon is not just the absence of doubt, but the presence of inner peace." – Rabbi Noach Weinberg.

Lost And found

כִּי תִפְגַּע שׁוֹר אֹיִבְךָ אוֹ חֲמֹרוֹ תֹּעֶה הָשֵׁב תְּשִׁיבֶנּוּ לוֹ 23:4 ***If you come upon your enemy's bull or his stray donkey, you shall surely return it to him.***

Many Israelis travel to India after they complete their military service. In the army, these young men and women have to undergo intense training and abide by strict codes of discipline. India provides a mellow antithesis to such a regimen, and beckons to travellers in many ways.

Liora, and her brother Ayal, were two such tourists who took off for India. They travelled together from one tourist attraction to the next, then split up to follow separate trails. Ayal stumbled upon Arachim's Bayit HaYehudi hostel in India where he enjoyed the hospitality and listened to some fascinating lectures.

Drawn to the extensive library, he discovered new concepts that changed his life completely. He eventually opted for a life of Torah and mitzvos. In contrast to Ayal, Liora wandered around India until she reached the city of Varanasi where she came across a cult headed by a charismatic guru. He spoke eloquently of the brotherhood of all mankind, the spirit of the cosmos, and efficient exploitation of the earth's resources.

His captivating words entranced Liora, and she immediately joined the cult. When Ayal learned of his sister's new affiliation, he tried to extricate her from the cult, but her attraction to her new mentors was too strong. He begged and pleaded to no avail.

As a last resort, Ayal suggested that they both return home for a visit with their parents. He suggested that Liora attend an Arachim lecture together with him while they were in Israel. Liora readily agreed, fully confident that nothing could sever her from her new source of inspiration.

After a considerable delay, an Arachim staffer mounted the podium and announced that the lecturer was sick and unable to attend. However, in order not to leave the audience entirely empty-handed, he read to them a short summary of the Jewish law concerning lost property. He explained that the Torah requires someone who finds a lost object to assume responsibility for it and to make a reasonable effort to locate the owner. He also described how a finder must ascertain that the claimant is truly the owner by asking for identifying marks or characteristics, to prove that the item really belongs to him.



Liora sat there and yawned, totally unimpressed. The lecture had practically put her to sleep. Ayal was devastated. How would he ever pry his sister away from the cult now? After the lecture, they trudged out of the hall and headed for home. The next day, Liora flew back to her cult in India, and Ayal enrolled in a yeshiva for ba'alei teshuva in Jerusalem. It was only a short while later that Ayal was suddenly called out of the Beis Medrash with an urgent message that someone was outside waiting to see him. He was speechless to find his sister Liora greeting him with a wide smile. "What are you doing here?" he asked incredulously. "I want to enroll in a school for ba'alos teshuva," she replied. "You?" asked Ayal. "What happened? What made you change your mind about your 'wonderful' cult and its guru?" Liora told him the full story:

"One day, soon after I returned to India, the guru asked me to accompany him somewhere. As we were walking along the alleyways of Varanasi, the guru bent down and picked up a fat wallet that someone had obviously just dropped. He opened it and found it full

of bills and documents. With a smile of satisfaction, he tucked it into his pocket.

"I was speechless. Some tourist had just lost a considerable sum of money, a driver's license, and other valuable documents. His name, address, and other personal details were all there, and it would be a simple matter to find him by contacting the police or local embassy of his country. Why did the guru just take it for himself? Wasn't that like stealing?

"When I suggested to the guru that perhaps we should try to find the owner, he embarked on a long lecture about the unity of the universe, the brotherhood of all men and the dynamics by which the energy of the cosmos had transferred resources from the former owner of the wallet to himself. He explained that the two of them were actually one soul, divided between two bodies, and the wallet had been lost so that the money would reach its rightful destination.

"I then recalled the Arachim speaker and his presentation of the Torah laws that apply in such a case. The sharp contrast between philosophy perverted by greed and loyalty to the truth brought me back to my senses. I immediately made up my mind to choose the Torah way of life and booked a ticket back home."



There was a certain student who was a regular at the daily shiur of R' Sholom Schwadron ZT"L, but it happened that he missed three nights in a row. R' Sholom went to visit him at his home to see if he was all right. When he got there, the student informed R' Sholom that he was fine, but due to a certain conflict he had, he wouldn't be able to make it to the shiur for the rest of the week.

R' Sholom became concerned and inquired as to the student's problem. The student hesitated. "Rebbe, it's hard for me to say. It's embarrassing. But don't worry, I'll be back next week!" R' Sholom

said, "Embarrassing? Why are you embarrassed? You can tell me - unless it's personal."

R' Sholom urged him with love and patience. "Tell me, what's happening this week and not next?" R' Sholom wouldn't let up so the student finally obliged. "I'll tell you the truth, this week is the soccer championship tournament and the hours of the games clash with the nightly shiur. Rebbe, I love the game and many of the players - and when the game is being played, I cannot bring myself to forgo the game to come to the shiur."

There was silence for a moment as R' Sholom digested this information. Then, the usual twinkle came back into his wise and loving eyes, and he said with enthusiasm, "Okay, I hear. But to tell you the truth, I don't really understand. I'm very interested in learning the secret joy of this sport. I would be very happy to hear how to play this game."



So the fellow explained the game to R' Sholom and stressed that when one is able to kick the ball into the goal, that is the zenith of joy. R' Sholom made a face as if he didn't understand and asked, "What's the big deal to kick a ball into a goal?

Come with me and I'll show you how I can kick twenty balls into the goal as fast as lightning!" The fellow smiled, "Oh, but there's one more thing. There is a guard, called a 'goalie' who stands by the goal and tries to stop the ball from going in. The trick is to outsmart him and get it past the goalie. That is the beauty of the game." "I don't understand," asked R' Sholom, "This goalie is in front of the goal 24 hours a day? He

eats and sleeps there?" "Of course not!" laughed the fellow, "He's only there during the game - afterwards he goes back to his daily living."

"Oh!" said R' Sholom with that familiar glint. "So what's the problem? Let's go to the goal at night when the goalie is not there, and then we'll be able to kick as many goals as we want!"

The fellow raised his voice and said, "Rebbe, the goalie is only there during the game. And besides, what's the big deal to kick a goal if no one is there to try to block you. The mastery and wisdom of the game is only when there's a challenge, when someone is trying to prevent you from kicking it in. When you succeed, that's the real joy and achievement!"

R' Sholom stood up and exclaimed in a loud voice, "My friend, let your ears hear what your own mouth is saying! Do you think that coming to the shiur next week is a big achievement? You want to learn next week when you have no games preventing you from coming? Big deal! That's nothing special. The great 'mastery and wisdom' as you put it, is when there are 'goalies' - in other words opposition - standing guard by the door of the Beis Medrash, telling you to go someplace else, preventing you from entering and learning."

R' Sholom gazed lovingly at his student. "But when you outsmart the goalie and 'kick a goal' by coming inside the Beis Medrash - why, that is the epitome of joy and achievement!" The fellow nodded intently, but he was still unsure. "But ..... I .... don't know ..... " "Chazal teach us: **לפום צערא אגרא**," interjected R' Sholom forcefully. "Remember, don't break the rules of the game. Come to the 'goal' of the Beis Medrash even when it's hard - especially when it's hard - and that will be the greatest joy." He then gave the fellow a hearty handshake and walked out. The following night, right on time, the fellow showed up for the shiur.



A non-religious man, who considered himself a scholar of note, once remarked to the Satmar Rebbe, **R' Yoel Teitelbaum**, "The Gemara says **יבמות קיג:** that Rav Yitzchok ben Bisna once lost the keys to the Beis Medrash in the street on Shabbos. He didn't know what to do so he came and asked Rav Pedas for advice. Rav Pedas said, 'Bring a young boy and girl and let them play in the street, and if they find the keys they will bring them.' We see from here that a boy and girl are allowed to play together in the street, or at least in the same place." The man thought that he had stumped the Satmar Rebbe.

But the Rebbe replied, "Apparently, you do not understand the Gemara you just quoted. The real reason why Rav Pedas told him to send a boy and a girl, and not two boys was for a very basic and practical reason. Since the girl was present, the boy would have to keep his eyes on the ground so as not to look at the girl. As a result, there was much more of a likelihood that he would find the keys!"

There are people who wish to distort the truth and twist logic to adapt it to their wayward lifestyle. Hashem warns the Jewish people against following these types of people. In the desert, Hashem sent an angel to guide the people and told the nation to listen to its voice and do not rebel against what it says, for by doing so, they will turn away from the path that He wishes us to follow. In our present day, we do not have an *angel,* but it is our leaders, the Gedolei Hador, who receive the insight from the Almighty and pass it down to us. We must never feel we know better for this is nothing less than "rebelling" against Hashem.

Drush V'Chiddush - לֹא־תְבַשֵּׁל גְּדִי בַּחֲלֵב אִמּוֹ 23:19



The Gemara states "If a small amount of forbidden food falls into a pot of permitted food, if the forbidden food is permitted to some Jews (e.g Terumah), a Jew tastes the mixture to see if it has any taste from the forbidden food. If the forbidden food is forbidden to all Jews, then a gentile tastes the mixture."

The Rema adds that nowadays, the custom is not to rely on a gentile taster; rather, we must ascertain that the amount of permitted food is sixty times the amount of the forbidden food (**בטול בששים**).

It once happened in Jerusalem that a bit of milk fell into a pot of chicken, and the question was presented to **R' Shimshon Aharon Polanski ZT"L**, the Tepliker Rav. He asked to call in a gentile to taste the food. The gentile tasted the mixture and said that he didn't taste any milk. Then the Rav asked a Sephardic Jew to taste it, for it is well-known that Sephardic Jews follow the ruling of the Beis Yosef (R' Yosef Caro ZT"L) and rely on a gentile taster. The Sephardic Jew also said he did not taste the milk. Based on this, he permitted the chicken for Ashkenazim!

The Chasam Sofer, R' Moshe Sofer ZT"L, held that the reason for waiting six hours between meat and milk is because this is the time it takes for the human body to digest the meat. He also assumed that the digestive process quickens during sleep. Thus, if one ate meat late at night and rose early the next morning, he may drink milk even though six hours have not passed since he ate the meat.

It is told that one morning, the Chasam Sofer prepared coffee with milk even though six hours had not passed since his meat meal. Before he was able to drink the coffee, however, his entire cup accidentally overturned and spilled onto the floor. Turning to his attendants, he remarked, "Apparently, in Heaven, they do not accept my ruling!"



R' Yonason Eibeschutz zt"l (Tiferes Yonason) would say:

הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָךְ לְפָנֶיךָ לִשְׁמָרְךָ בַּדָּרֶךְ- *Behold, I am sending an angel before you to guard you on the way* .

Klal Yisroel is protected through the power of Torah learning. They do not need an angel to watch over them. However, when a person is travelling, his Torah learning weakens (Medrash).

Thus, Hashem tells Moshe, "I am sending a malach to guard you – בַּדָּרֶךְ - because that is when you will actually need protection."

Rebbe R' Heschel of Krakow ZT"L (Chanukas HaTorah) would say: וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדְוֹ לְעֹלָם 21:6

Rashi makes a point of noting that the servant's ear in question is the right ear, and not the left. He goes through a long-winded explanation to prove this point. Why would we even think for a moment that the posuk is referring to the left ear?

Because, as Chazal tell us, the slave's ear is bored through due to the fact that 'the ear that heard at Sinai the words, Thou shall not steal, and he went and stole, deserves to be bored.' And the Medrash

states in the name of Rabban Shimon bar Yochai that when Hashem spoke to the Nation at Har Sinai, the words went out 'from the right of Hashem to the left of Yisroel.'

It turns out, therefore, that the ear that heard Hashem's words was the left ear! In case one might think the left ear is bored, Rashi proves otherwise."

Torah Gems

22:30 וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֻון לִי וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכُון אֹתֹו



We know the famous adage: **שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא - *"There is no reward on this world for doing a mitzvah."*** For a dog, though, the Torah details its immediate reward due to the fact that by **יציאת מצרים**, the dogs of Egypt did not "sharpen their tongues" by attacking Bnei Yisroel.

R' Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtza ZT"L explains that by departing from their natural tendency to attack or bite a perceived foe and keep their "chops" clean, we are told to throw any unkosher meat "to the dogs". It's a just reward for creatures whose sole intention then was to serve Hashem, subjugating their natural inclinations for the Almighty.

R' Yitzchok Zilberstein Shlit'a relates an unusual episode that occurred a number of years ago. In England, a wealthy, Jewish Society Lady died and when her will was opened, it contained a clause allocating a full 25% of her considerable assets to her dog! The whole of London was abuzz with this strange request since the lady

was not known to be eccentric nor was she especially affectionate to her dog.

A Rabbi by the name of Rabbi Adler decided to investigate the matter a bit further, since the reports in the press were causing a large-scale Chilul Hashem on behalf of all Jews. He requested to see the original will and after much legal wrangling, managed to procure a copy in its handwritten original German form. What he discovered was that the lady had left 25% of her estate to a "Hinda" - presumably a relative of hers, but when the German was translated by an English High Court translator, he dutifully interpreted the German word "hind" as "dog" and this was how it appeared in official court documents. With relief, the matter was rectified, and a Kiddush Hashem was caused to boot!

R' Shimon Shkop ZT"L (Shaarei Yosher) would say:



וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדְוֹ לְעֹלָם 21:6

If a servant wishes to remain with his master and not go free, his ear is pierced at the door, and he remains in servitude 'forever.'

Why is only the slave given this punishment and not the master, who should insist he goes free? Because it is natural for the master to wish to keep his slave; it is unnatural for a human being to resist being free. Freedom - **בן חורין** is the key to serving Hashem and learning Torah; this slave truly deserves punishment."

Torah Gems

23:5 כִּֽי־תִרְאֶ֞ה חֲמ֣וֹר שֹׂנַאֲךָ֗ רֹבֵץ֙ תַּחַ֣ת מַשָּׂאוֹ֔ וְחָדַלְתָּ֖ מֵֽעֲזֹ֣ב לוֹ֑ עָזֹ֥ב תַּֽעֲזֹ֖ב עִמּֽוֹ



If you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden, would you refrain from helping him? You shall surely help along with him.

The Torah commands us to assist the donkey of our enemy as it carries a heavy load. One must overcome his personal enmity and release his anger in order to assist the animal of person who did him wrong, in its time of need. Let's think about this for a moment; this donkey is no doubt carrying a load of heavy material - bricks, cement, stone - that's what an animal of this sort does. It belongs to one's enemy. But what if it belonged to one's friend? Would one help out? Of course he would! Who wouldn't help out a friend? And if it belonged to a stranger? Again, why wouldn't one help out an animal in distress?

Okay, but let's take this a step further. What if the donkey wasn't carrying heavy building supplies, but rather hospital supplies? This donkey was loaded with all sorts of medications, bandages, potions and life-saving apparatuses that were urgently needed by the ill patients. Do we even need to ask the question whether one would help out? Why, he would bend over backwards to do whatever was in his power to help that straining donkey deliver the much-needed supplies.

Now, let's say it wasn't a donkey carrying all those hospital supplies - but a man! A fellow human being, weighed down with machinery, vials of anti-biotics, soft and hard casts. He'd run over and relieve

him of some of the items and together they'd sprint to the hospital! Patients are dying - medicine is needed! Of this, there's no doubt!

Says the **Chofetz Chaim ZT"L**, when a Rosh Yeshivah comes to collect funds for his yeshivah, do we not realize that he is straining under the weight of enormous debt? He is carrying life-saving supplies - Torah study which supports the entire world! But his students need to eat, the Rebbeim need to get paid. Is it not incumbent upon us to run over and relieve him of some of his tremendous burden?!

R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer ZT"L would say:



"On the posuk **וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיוּן לִי וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכוּן אֹתוֹ** 22:30- the Medrash admonishes: 'Regarding dogs, if one barks all the others gather around and bark for no purpose. But you (Yisroel) must not be so, for you are holy.' This warns against idle hatred, lashon hara and 'barking' at others for no reason. Baalei Machlokes are like dogs. Upon witnessing a person quarrelling with his neighbour, he will often get involved in the fight - not in order to decrease it but rather to intensify it.

This is a canine trait, for the nature of dogs is that when one barks at a person, all the other dogs join and bark - for no reason! Therefore, 'You, Yisroel, must not act like dogs - for you are holy!'"

וְכִי־יִפְתַּח אִישׁ בּוֹר אוֹ כִּי־יִכְרֶה אִישׁ בֹּר וְלֹא יְכַסֶּנּוּ וְנָפַל־שָׁמָּה שׁוֹר אוֹ חֲמוֹר ***And if a person opens a pit, or if a person digs a pit and does not cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it.*** *21:33*



A Chupah is at once a solemn and sanctified place where a bride and groom officially become joined as one. It is also a scene of bedlam in the moments right after the glass is broken, the horns start blaring, and the well-wishers "attack" the platform to offer blessings of Mazel Tov. It is highly unusual at this frenetic time for the chosson himself to disappear right under the noses of all of his guests.

But that's exactly what happened at the Chupah of **R' Leib Chasid ZT"L** of Kelm. As everyone looked around to wish the young man well, he could not be found. Where exactly was he? Well, he was on all fours crawling around under everyone's feet picking up the broken shards of glass he had moments before crushed, as a customary commemoration of the destruction of the Temple. People were shocked to see young Leib'l on the floor and asked him what he was doing.

His answer is inspiring. "It is my obligation to clean up these pieces of glass," he said matter-of-factly, "for I am the one who broke the glass, thus I am the 'Baal Habor' (maker of the pit)!"

The gemara learns from here that one who hides (or places) thorns or glass and another is injured by it, must pay for his injury. **Rabbeinu Ovadia Bartenura ZT"L** adds that he hid them in a public domain, which is similar to digging a pit and another person injures

himself or his animals in it. One must always be cognizant of what he has done or if he may have caused a **בור ברשות הרבים** - a pit that can cause bodily damage to the public. Even the smallest objects must be taken into consideration.

Torah Gems



The prohibition of following the **חוקות הגוים** - ***Laws of the Gentiles,*** encompasses many practices and customs including dressing in their manner, absorbing their media, and even serving Hashem in ways that are similar to the ways that Gentiles worship in their respective religions.

In fact, Tosfos seems to make a **חילוק** - division, in the issur of **חוקות הגוים** by denoting the two different types of actions that are prohibited: One, is a Gentile custom that was instituted for the sake of Avodah Zara and is totally forbidden even when done in the act of fulfilling a mitzvah. Second, is even a **מנהג שטות** - worthless (silly) custom, that is accepted by the Gentiles, would be forbidden for Jews when done in a manner that is akin to the way in which the Gentiles worship.

A halachic query was once posed to **R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik ZT"L**, regarding the accepted custom of those who study and practice the art of Karate. It is customary before every session or after certain procedures are done, they turn and bow to their instructor, their sensei. Is one permitted to bow in this manner or is this considered **חוקות הגוים**? He answered that in his opinion, it is forbidden to bow, for although this is not an act of worshipping idols, but rather an

Oriental custom of acknowledgment, still it is nothing more than a worthless custom **מנהג שטות** , and Jews should be careful to avoid any actions and/or customs that are ridiculous and have no inherent value!

R' Yechezkel Abramsky ZT"L (Chief Rabbi of London) would say:



"Since I entered adulthood, I never ceased from Torah study. While I eat, I think about learning; when I walk, I think about learning; when I talk with people, I think about learning!

When I was freed from the camp in Siberia, I was appointed head of the rabbinical court in London. On the way from my home to the court, I would pass by a bridge stretched over the river. You cannot imagine how many tears of mine that bridge absorbed day in and day out, as I cried before the Creator that I may earn a share not only in the study of Torah, but in the supporting of Torah!"

"Emunah is the key to inner peace. When we trust that everything is happenning for a reason, we can be at peace with whatever comes our way." – Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe



R' Yaakov Yitzchok Hurvitz ZT"L (Chozeh of Lublin) would say: ורפא ירפא - Hashem gives permission to a doctor to treat patients. But he only has permission to heal. He does not have a right to despair about a person being healed. Although a doctor might see from his experience that people in certain situations do not recover, Hashem has the final say about the reality of any person's recovery.

Never give up hope. There are plenty of people who have lived for many years after doctors have said that they would not get well."

Parshas Shekalim - Imray Yosef of Spinka



A Thought To Help Us Think About Hashem Before Parshas Shekalim.

The Shekalim were used to purchase the Karbanos for the year. Tefillah was instituted in the place of Karbanos.

This means that on Parshas Shekalim we can Daven to Hashem for all of the Tefillos of the whole year to be accepted !

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

We are obligated to follow in Hashem's ways. *The gemara says,* ***"Be similar to Hashem. As Hashem is חנון ורחום (compassionate) you should also be"*** *(Shabbos 133:).*

Rashi (Devarim 11:12) writes, *"Hashem has compassion, and you should also have compassion. Hashem performs loving kindness, and you shall also do loving kindness" (Devarim 11:22).* Included in our obligation to follow in Hashem's ways is our obligation to perform tzedakah u'mishpat. This means, we don't only seek to do what is right, we also strive to do what is right under the circumstances, with our fellow man's needs in mind.



Approximately fifty years ago the chasunah of **Reb Avraham Dov Auerbach Shlita** , present Rav of Teveria, took place. Reb Avraham Dov's father was **Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l**, and his father-in-law was **Reb Werner zt"l**, the rav of Teveria. In those days, the main course at a chasunah was fish, but the fish spoiled and no one was able to eat it.

In the middle of the chasunah, Reb Shlomo Zalman zt"l went to the manager of the hall and said, "It is possible that my mechuten, Reb Werner, will tell you that he doesn't want to pay for the fish, since it spoiled. So, I came to calm you. If he doesn't pay his share, I'll pay the entire bill myself."

The manager smiled and said, "Just a moment ago, Reb Werner came to me and said those same words to me." Reb Shlomo Zalman and Reb Werner could have technically been freed of their obligation to pay.

The fish spoiled, and the seudah was ruined. But they followed the path of tzedakah u'mishpat. They went beyond the letter of the law, out of concern for their fellow man.

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק וְנָקִי וְצַדִּיק אַל־תַּהֲרֹג כִּי לֹא־אַצְדִּיק רָשָׁע 23:7



In the early days of Mesivta Torah Vodaas, the Yeshivah was located on South Third Street in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, before it eventually moved to its present location in Kensington, during the 1960's. **R' Yaakov Kaminetzky ZT"L**, the famed Rosh Yeshivah, would customarily walk from his home to the Yeshivah during the warm summer months, accompanied by one or more of his students. They would discuss issues of Torah learning as they walked, and it was deemed quite an honour to walk with the Rosh Yeshivah on his occasional strolls.

On one of these walks, R' Yaakov and a talmid walking with him, encountered the renowned **Satmar Rebbe, R' Yoel Teitelbaum ZT"L,** who was likewise strolling with a group of chassidim to his nearby Beis Medrash in Williamsburg. It was quite a sight to see, as the great Chassidishe Rebbe and the great Litvishe Rosh Yeshivah, stopped and greeted one another with the highest respect and regard. However, after a moment, R' Yaakov was able to discern that

the Rebbe, R Yoilish, as he was fondly called, whose countenance was usually extraordinarily bright, did not look well that day. R' Yaakov inquired about this and the Satmar Rebbe remarked,



"These days are especially difficult for me." He was referring to the time of year when he and many of his congregants observed the yahrtzeits of their martyred family and neighbours who had been deported from their hometown in the Hungarian city of Satmar, to the Nazi death camps in 1944.

As the memories were still quite fresh in the minds of R' Yoilish and a considerable constituency of Satmar Chassidim, the pain of those tragic events was readily apparent on their faces. R' Yaakov endeavoured to steer the conversation to a happier portent and asked the Rebbe, "Tell me, how was the Rebbe saved from Europe?"

R' Yoilish began explaining the details of the Kasztner Transport, an amazing episode in war history which allowed the Satmar Rebbe and over 1680 Hungarian Jews to be rescued and transferred into Switzerland, as a result of the exorbitant bribes paid by Rudolf Kasztner to the hated Adolf Eichmann himself. But R' Yaakov persisted in his questioning. "What I meant to ask was in what zechus - merit, was the Rebbe saved?"

This time, the Satmar Rebbe hesitated, unsure of how he should respond to this line of questioning. R' Yaakov nudged him a bit to

reply by adding with a smile, "It's fine to tell me. This is between us." R' Yoilish was thoughtful for a moment. Then he said, "Rosh Yeshivah, I believe it was due to my never going to sleep." He was alluding to his well-known diligence in the study of Torah whereby he would remain at his position learning Torah until he dozed off, then continue on from where he had left off as soon as he awoke.

R' Yoilish was universally known for this extraordinary trait, and in his humility, he attributed his salvation to his diligence in learning. Then, with the usual twinkle back in his radiant eyes, the Satmar Rebbe looked at R' Yaakov and countered, "Nu, what about the Rosh Yeshivah? In what merit was he saved?" R' Yaakov had escaped the blazing inferno and come to America in 1937 before the outbreak of hostilities, but one of his major considerations in leaving Europe was his view that war was impending. In this regard, R' Yaakov was unlike many other individuals who either believed that the brewing tempest would soon simmer down, or felt that they must remain with their congregations and Yeshivos no matter what was to happen.

This time, R' Yaakov hesitated somewhat and was reluctant to re-join. In a spirit of kinship, the Satmar Rebbe objected good-naturedly saying, "Look, I revealed my thoughts to you!" He was obviously expecting R' Yaakov to do the same. Whereupon, the great Rosh Yeshivah of Torah Vodaas responded in a humble voice, "I think it may be due to the fact that as far back as I can remember, ***I never in my life uttered a lie!***"

R' Elimelech of Lizhensk ZT"L (Noam Elimelech) said:

"I believe that when I am asked in Heaven whether I truly toiled in Torah study, I will tell the truth: 'I did not.' The outcome will be, however, that because I told the truth, I will merit a place in the World-to-Come."

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים



In the city of Ponovezh, very few Jews publicly desecrated Shabbos. This was due in large part to the efforts of the renowned Rov and **Ponovezher Rosh Yeshiva, R' Yitzchok (Itzele) Rabinowitz ZT"L**, who would go out every Friday afternoon together with one of the prominent residents of Ponovezh, **R' Yehudah Naftali Hertz ZT"L** of Bialystok, to supervise the closing of the Jewish stores in time for Shabbos. R' Itzele was in charge of one area of town, while R' Naftali Hertz oversaw a different location. Witnesses had recounted that the announcements of R' Itzele about the impending commencement of Shabbos left a lasting impression of sanctity upon all who witnessed it.

Only once was a Jew in Ponevezh brazen enough to keep his store open on Shabbos. Even after the two rabbonim made their usual Friday afternoon rounds, one Jewish shopkeeper decided to flaunt the accepted rule and continued to do business even after nightfall.

The scandalous news blazed throughout the city and eventually reached the home of the Rosh Yeshiva. When R' Itzele heard about it, he stood up and announced his resignation as Rov, effective immediately. He refused to accept responsibility for a city in which chilul Shabbos occurred. Many of the community leaders ran to his home and urged him not to take such drastic action, that they would use all means of persuasive negotiation to prevail upon the Shabbos desecrator to mend his ways and see the light. However, all efforts to persuade him to reconsider were fruitless.

Once the members of the community realized that R' Itzele was totally unyielding, they did what was required to resolve the

problem. Very soon thereafter, the father of the Jew who had kept his store open passed away, and the Chevrah Kadisha - burial society, in conjunction with the missive of the leading members of the community, informed the son that they would not give his father a proper Jewish burial unless he promised to keep his store closed on Shabbos. Only when the man agreed to do so did R' Itzele consent to continue as Rov of the city.

Later, R' Itzele explained his obstinacy: Had he not resigned from his official position as Rov, or had he resigned but then immediately caved in to the requests to return to his position, the chevrah kadisha would not have felt the urgency necessary to pressure the son as they did. Soon more stores would have remained open on Shabbos, and all the responsibility would have fallen on the Rov's shoulders since he had had it in his power to suppress the insurrection at its outset. Said R' Itzele, "I just acted as a leader of a community should!"

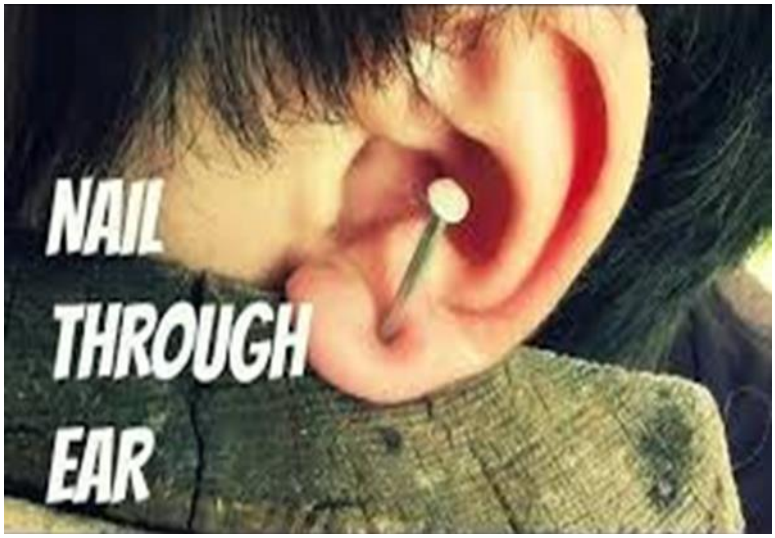


In a similar situation, a Rov once told the **Chofetz Chaim** that it was beyond his power to repair the damaged mikvah in his city. Most of the residents lived in grinding poverty, he said, and the few wealthy ones were unconcerned about the lack of a kosher mikvah.

It was impossible to consider the costly repairs required to restore the mikveh. The Chofetz Chaim told him, "I understand that it is difficult, and the people do not listen to you. But the least you could do is faint" If the Rov would faint, perhaps the members of the community would find some way to repair the mikveh!

whY I Matter

וְאִם־אָמֹר יֹאמַר הָעֶבֶד אָהַבְתִּי אֶת־אֲדֹנִי אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת־בָּנָי לֹא אֵצֵא חָפְשִׁי׃ וְהִגִּישׁוֹ אֲדֹנָיו אֶל־הָאֱלֹקִים וְהִגִּישׁוֹ אֶל־הַדֶּלֶת אוֹ אֶל־הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדוֹ לְעֹלָם׃ ***"If the slave shall say, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I shall not go free,' then his master shall bring him to the court and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever."*** (21:5-6)



Rashi z"l writes: "Why is the ear pierced rather than any other limb of the slave's body? Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai said, 'The ear which heard on Har Sinai, "You shall not steal!" yet its owner went and stole, and he was therefore sold as a slave, should be pierced. Or, in the case of one who sold himself because of poverty, having committed no theft, the reason is: The ear which heard on Har Sinai, (Vayikra 25:55), "For to Me Bnei Yisrael are servants," yet its owner went and procured another master for himself, should be pierced'." A Jewish slave's ear is not pierced until he has served for six years and he then refuses to go free. If the ear-piercing is a punishment for selling himself, why wasn't it done six years earlier?

R' Ovadiah Mi'Bartenura z"l (approx. 1445-1515; Italy and Eretz Yisrael; author of the eponymous Mishnah commentary) explains: Originally, he sold himself because of need. For that, he doesn't deserve punishment. But the Torah has pity on him and limits his term of service to six years. If he nevertheless wants to continue under a master other than G-d, he is deserving of punishment. We could likewise ask: If the ear-piercing is a punishment for a theft

that the slave committed, why wasn't his ear pierced six years earlier when he committed the theft?



R' Moshe Silver z"l (Yerushalayim; early 20th century) explains: The mere fact that he is sold as a slave is punishment for his theft; he does not need or deserve a second punishment. But, if he later says, "I enjoy being a slave," then it turns out that he was not punished at all. Therefore, he now deserves a new punishment, i.e., to have his ear pierced, because he violated the commandment which his ear heard, "You shall not steal." *(Chashukei Kessef)*



Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

זוכה הויין לו בנים בעלי חכמה בעלי עושר Basra Bava 9b – **אהבת חסד**. "Whoever regularly performs Chesed – showing kindness to people in need by extending them loans, will be Zoche to have children blessed with wisdom and health.

It is amazing that people are busy seeking all kinds of Segulos, and spending lots of money, to help them have children. It would be much better if they would avail themselves of the Segulah mentioned by the Gemara, (Bava Basra 9b, above) to constantly be involved in charitable acts. Many have tried this and found it to be effective.

A Holocaust Story - A powerful true story of Jewish heroism - by Rabbi Yosef Wallis

While he was in Dachau, a Jew who was being taken to his death suddenly flung a small bag at my father, Judah Wallis. He caught it, thinking it might contain a piece of bread. Upon opening it, however, he was disturbed to discover a pair of tefillin.

Judah was very frightened because he knew that were he to be caught carrying tefillin, he would be put to death instantly. So he hid the tefillin under his shirt and headed for his bunkhouse.

In the morning, just before the appel [roll call], while still in his bunkhouse, he put on the tefillin. Unexpectedly, a German officer appeared. He ordered him to remove the tefillin, noted the number on Judah's arm. At the appel, in front of thousands of silent Jews, the officer called out Judah's number and he had no choice but to step forward. The German officer waved the tefillin in the air and said, "Dog! I sentence you to death by public hanging for wearing these."

Judah was placed on a stool and a noose was placed around his neck. Before he was hanged, the officer said in a mocking tone, "Dog, what is your last wish?" "To wear my tefillin one last time, "Judah replied."

The officer was dumbfounded. He handed Judah the tefillin. As Judah put them on, he recited the verse that is said while the tefillin are being wound around the fingers: **וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי לְעוֹלָם, וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי בְּצֶדֶק וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים: וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי בֶּאֱמוּנָה, וְיָדַעַתְּ אֶת־ה׳** - ***I will betroth you to me forever and I will betroth you to me with righteousness and with justice and with kindness and with mercy and I will betroth you to me with fidelity, and you shall know G-d."***

It is hard for us to picture this Jew with a noose around his neck, wearing tefillin on his head and arm – but that was the scene that the entire camp was forced to watch, as they awaited the impending

hanging of the Jew who had dared to break the rule against wearing tefillin. Even women from the adjoining camp were lined up at the barbed wire fence that separated them from the men's camp, forced to watch this horrible sight.

As Judah turned to watch the silent crowd, he saw tears in many people's eyes. Even at that moment, as he was about to be hanged, he was shocked. Jews were crying! How was it possible that they still had tears left to shed? And for a stranger? Where were those tears coming from?

Impulsively, in Yiddish, he called out, ***"Yidden, I am the victor. Don't you understand, I am the winner!"*** The German officer understood the Yiddish and was infuriated. He said to Judah, "You dog, you think you are the winner? Hanging is too good for you. You are going to get another kind of death."

"Judah, my father, was taken from the stool and the noose was removed from his neck. He was forced into a squatting position and two huge rocks were placed under his arms. Then he was told that he would be receiving 25 lashes to his head – the head on which he had dared to position his tefillin. The officer told him that if he dropped even one of the rocks, he would be shot immediately.

In fact, because this was such an extremely painful form of death, the officer advised him, "Drop the rocks now. You will never survive the 25 lashes to the head. Nobody ever does." Judah's response was, "No, I won't give you the pleasure."

At the 25th lash, Judah lost consciousness and was left for dead. He was about to be dragged to a pile of corpses, after which he would have been burned in a ditch, when another Jew saw him, shoved him to the side, and covered his head with a rag so people didn't realize he was alive.

Eventually, after he recovered consciousness fully, he crawled to the nearest bunkhouse that was on raised piles and hid under it until he

was strong enough to come out under his own power. Two months later he was liberated.

During the hanging and beating episode, a 17-year-old girl had been watching the events from the women's side of the fence. After liberation, she made her way to Judah. She walked over to him and said, "I've lost everyone. I don't want to be alone any more. I saw what you did that day when the officer wanted to hang you. Will you marry me?"



My parents walked over to the **Klausenberger Rebbe** and requested that he perform the marriage ceremony.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, whose Kiddush Hashem is legendary, wrote out a kesubah [marriage contract] by hand from memory and married the couple. I have that handwritten kesubah in my possession to this day.

"Foolish and frivolous things are easy to learn and hard to forget." ~~ Avos Derabbi Nathan

Middos

The mother of the **Chofetz Chaim** was once asked if there was anything she thought that she could attribute to meriting having a son as special as the Chofetz Chaim. She could not think of anything she had done that would have brought this about. Those asking her said that there must be something special that she did that would bring her such a son, and after thinking, she said, "The only thing I could think of is some advice that my mother had given me before I got married.

My mother told me that any free minute I have, like while waiting for the soup to boil or any such opportunity like that, I should say a few Perakim of Tehilim. She told me not to let spare minutes be wasted, and I can use them for Tehilim. I took this advice to heart and I followed through with it, and it could be in the Zechus of the Tehilim I said, I was Zocheh to have a son who is the Chofetz Chaim!"

Reb Yisrael Salanter's zt"l yahrtzeit 25th of Shevat.



When the students of Reb Yisrael Salanter returned from his levayah, they made a calculation and discovered that until Moshiach will come, their rebbe's yahrtzeit will always be on the week of parashas Mishpatim. The students explained that because Mishpatim discusses the laws of honest dealings and that was the primary theme of Reb Yisrael Salanter's life. He used to say, "Business ethics is the highest level possible. There is nothing greater."

Once, a student asked Reb Yisrael, "Rebbe, you teach us that dealing honestly is the greatest madreigah. Therefore, I ask, which person is greater: A diligent Torah student, who studies eighteen hours a day, or a shopkeeper who deals honestly, and only learns one hour a day."

Reb Yisrael Salanter answered, "Certainly the one who is honest in business is on a higher level. However, since he is on this very high level, why is it that he only studies one hour a day. It would be far more appropriate for such a person to study eighteen hours a day!" People in the beis midrash were discussing a certain tzaddik nistar [hidden tzaddik] that had just passed away.

Reb Yisrael Salanter zt"l quoted, "It could be that he was a nistar, but then he wasn't a tzaddik, because the concept of a tzaddik nistar doesn't exist anymore. In today's generation, if someone is a tzaddik, he must reveal himself. People need him."

L'Maaseh

Once, a Bochur came to **Rav Eliyahu Lopian** and said that he had gone to visit a man he knew from helping around the Yeshivah, and the man seemed to be very weak. He asked the man what was wrong and the man answered that he was paralyzed, R"L, and he was unable to move. The Bochur knew this man from the Yeshivah and how he always tried to help the boys. He said to Rav Lopian, "Rebbe, there is a man who is so kind to the Yeshivah Bochrim, and he is very sick now." Immediately, Rav Lopian got a group of Bochrim together and went to visit him. They gathered around his bed and together they completed saying the entire Sefer Tehilim. When they finished, Rav Lopian told the man, "Lift up your hand", and amazingly, the man was able to lift up his hand, when just moments earlier he couldn't! Rav Lopian continued, "Lift up your foot", and the man was able to raise his foot off the bed. Rav Lopian said, "Now get off the bed and walk", and inexplicably, the man stood up and was able to walk around!

Soon enough, word got out that Rav Eliyahu Lopian the great



Tzaddik, was able to perform miracles. However, when he heard that people were saying this, he got very upset, and he told everyone his explanation. "When a group of people gather together and say Tehilim, there is tremendous influence and effect from this. There is incredible power that comes from this, and this power is something that many people don't understand.

It is the tremendous power of saying Tehilim with a group that causes great miracles. It is the power of a majority, of a group saying Tehilim which is much more powerful than when an individual says Tehilim by himself."

He added, "We don't even know how much we are saved from Tehilim groups and how much they benefit us and our communities. The power that comes from Tehilim said at these groups is tremendous!"



The Turei Zahav (the Ta'z) would have many guests in his home on Shabbos. Some of them were ignorant, and couldn't even recite kiddush by heart. They had to take a siddur in hand, to say kiddush, and the Ta'z understood that this was embarrassing for them. To protect their dignity the Ta'z, himself, would say kiddush from a siddur. Because where there is sympathy and comprehension, one knows how to help others. [*The Turei Zahav's yahrtzeit is on the 26th of Shevat.*]

Sympathy





A poor talmid chacham from Poland needed financial help, so he traveled all the way to London to meet with **Baron Anshil Rothschild**. When he arrived, he saw a large line in the Baron's home, so he also stood in line. But he soon realized that something was terribly wrong. The Baron wasn't receiving the poor, it was his gabai tzedakah, and all they were giving was a gold coin or two, far less than the amount that he was expecting and hoping for.

He stood in line with unbidden tears streaming down his face. One of the gaba'im noticed this foreign man in distress. He quickly went over to him and said, "Every Friday, the Baron comes to his office to review the amounts of tzedakah that was given throughout the week. Come then. Hopefully you will receive what you are hoping for."

The talmid chacham came on Friday, and the Baron invited him to eat with him on Shabbos. They enjoyed three meals together. The talmid chacham spiced each meal with delightful divrei Torah. On Motzei Shabbos, they spoke. The talmid chacham told the Baron his life-story:

"I run a business, and I used to be wealthy. But the wheel of fortune turned, and I lost all my money. I need money to restart the business again." "How much did you own at the peak of your success?" asked

the Baron. The talmid chacham told him, and Baron Anshil Rothschild gave him that amount.

On the wrapper of the money package, the Baron wrote his address. The talmid chacham thanked the baron profusely and then he asked, "Why did you write your address?" He didn't assume that he was waiting for a thank you letter.

The Baron replied, "I see that you are going through a spell of bad mazal, and it is possible that sooner than later, you will need more money. I don't want you to travel all the way from Poland to come to see me again. Why should you endure the hardships of the trip, and why should you be distant from your home? So I'm writing down my address. If you need more money, just write to me, and I'll send it."

This story is an example of a baal tzedakah who perceived what the needy go through. With his foresight, he was able to help the poor.

Living Jewish - Regards To The Leviathan



Crossing over a bridge in Danzig, the holy tzaddik **Reb Simcha Bunim of P'shischa** saw a man struggling in the waters below. Seeing no way of saving the Yid, he called out to him, "Send regards to the Leviathan! " At that moment, Hashem came to the man's aid, and he managed to catch onto a plank and save himself.

Reb Simcha Bunim explained that due to the man's broken spirit, he could not be helped. "When I made a comment that slightly gladdened him, he was able to save himself with the power of joy. " (*reprinted from Lma'an Yishme'u)*

The Silver Cane - by Yerachmiel Tilles



A middle-aged chasid of the Alter Rebbe used to go about with a wooden cane. However, whenever he had a private audience with the Rebbe he made sure to leave the cane outside of the room before entering, as he deemed it disrespectful to enter the Rebbe's room with a cane.



One time though, he forgot. The Rebbe eyed the cane for a few long moments, and then said to the discomfited chasid, "You know, a cane like that deserves a silver handle."

As soon as the chasid left the Rebbe's study, excited by the Rebbe's personal recommendation, he rushed over to the silversmith and requested a silver overlay for the head of his cane. The next day, when he returned to the shop and saw the result, he was not satisfied. "No," he said to the astonished craftsman; "this won't do. You made it like a normal silver handle. But this has to be special. The Rebbe himself told me to put it on."

The silversmith added another coat or three, but when his customer returned, he still was not satisfied. "Not enough," he insisted. "Not enough. Not when it is the Rebbe himself who said to make it silver." This time the silversmith added really a lot of silver. He actually worried that he had made it so thick and so heavy that it would no longer be practical for use. The chasid, however, was ecstatic. "I have fulfilled the Rebbe's directive to the maximum, and beyond!"

he thought to himself. He set off for home. But he did not progress far along the road before he was set upon by three highwaymen, marauding murderers who were intent on taking all his valuables, including of course the cane with its massive amount of glittering silver, and then disposing of all the evidence, including the victim.

"You want my cane?" he screamed. "I'll give it to you!" with the sudden realization that the handsome silver top was also a powerful weapon. He quickly reversed it, grasped it with both hands at the bottom, and swung it mightily at the head of the nearest robber. The top of the cane connected solidly with the back of his head, and down he slid to the ground, unconscious. The chasid quickly dispatched the second attacker as well. He then wheeled towards the last man, but he was already speeding down the road, looking back a few times in shocked fright.

The next time the chasid arrived in Liozna he was soon admitted to private audience. But before he could tell the story of what had happened, the Rebbe spoke first: "Now your cane no longer needs a silver head."

Living Jewish - Free Ride



Someone once asked **Reb Chaim Brisker**, "Is it true that when the respect of parents includes some monetary expense, it is the parents' responsibility and not the son's?" "Yes," replied Reb Chaim, "That indeed is the halacha". The man continued, "Then here is my question: My father lives in a distant town and I have just been notified that he is ill and bedridden. Trust me; I want, to fulfil the mitzvah of Kibud Av, and travel to help him. But alas,

what can I do? The way is a long one and the train ride is very costly, and my father does not have the money to pay for the ticket. Doesn't that mean that I am exempt from making the trip?" "True!" answered Reb Chaim, ***"You are not liable to take the train. Go instead by foot…!"***

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

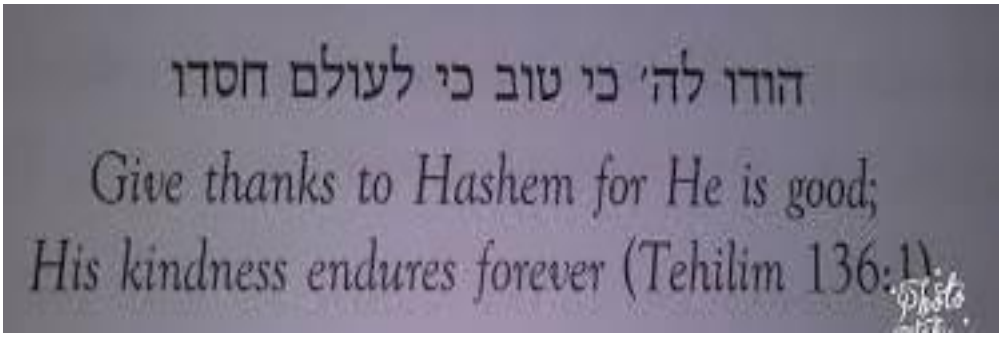


A store owner who did not observe Shabbos once came to **Rav Yitzchok of Alexander** with a complaint that his business was unsuccessful, and he seeked the Tzaddik's Brachah and advice. Rav Yitzchok advised him, "If you will take me as a partner in your business, you will be successful." Of course, the man happily agreed.

Rav Yitzchok said, I'd like to own one seventh of the business. Rav Yitzchok asked him to draw up a contract which they both signed. Rav Yitzchok then said, "Since I now own a seventh of the business, it works out that essentially, I will be running the business for one day a week, and you will be running it for six days. I'd like my day to run the business to be on Shabbos. You can have the other six days to run it as you choose. I choose to run the business on my day to be closed, and if you agree, I will forgo any profits that you make on your six days, if you forgo any profits that I make on my day. We each keep what we earn."

The man was hesitant to agree, but he looked down at the contract he just signed with the Rav, and agreed, and from then on, his store remained closed on Shabbos. Word soon got out that Rav Yitzchok of Alexander was now a partner with this man in business, and people started buying more from him, and he became very busy. His business prospered, and he realized the brilliance of Rav Yitzchok, and he decided to become a true Shomer Shabbos!

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*



The Baal HaNesivos instructed his family in his Tzava'ah, his will, to say five Perakim of Tehilim each day. Tehilim, he says, fires up the heart of Avodas Hashem, Service to Hashem. Moreover, Dovid Ha'melech Davened, that when people say Tehilim, it should be considered in Shamayim as if they learned the difficult Masechtos of Nega'im and Ohalos!

Since there is no ulterior motive for saying Tehilim, as it brings no glory or respect like Torah learning does, the Nesivos explains that saying Tehilim is like learning Torah Lishmah, learning Torah only for the sake of learning Torah, and he felt that saying five Perakim a day was sufficient to meet these lofty standards!

"Hashem watches over us continually, knowing our needs and preparing salvation long before challenges arise, constantly guiding events behind the scenes." ~ Chovos Halevavos.

L'Maaseh



When **Rav Matisyahu Salomon** was a Mashgiach in Gateshead Yeshivah, there was a Bochur who would consistently get the best Chavrusos each Z'man. What was unusual about this was that this Bochur was not an exceptional learner. He had diligence, but he was still only average in learning, and average learners usually learned with average learners, not the outstanding learners. Z'man after Z'man passed, and eventually the Rebbeim began to wonder why this was constantly happening. They would observe the time when the boys chose their Chavrusos, and they could not figure out why this boy would always got the best Chavrusah.

After a few years had passed, the mystery was finally solved. A new Z'man was starting and the boys were choosing their Chavrusos, and this Bachur again got the best boy in the Yeshivah to learn with. Just after, this boy went out of the Bais Medrash to make a phone call to his mother, and one of the Rebbeim heard him on the phone. He said, "Mommy, you can stop saying Tehilim now, I got the best Chavrusah again!"

R' Chaim Shmulevitz ZT"L would say:

"Chazal teach a man to honour his wife more than he would himself, while a wife is deemed virtuous if she does the will of her husband.

As long as the husband abides by the former and the wife by the latter, their home will be blessed with marital bliss. It is when they switch quotations – the wife demanding love and respect and the husband expecting total subservience – that the troubles begin!"

The Siddur Speaks



Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski once said over the following story: A man once related how he had been married for many years and didn't have children. He said that he went to visit **Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon**, for a Brachah, and the Steipler had promised him a son.

The man said that this promise was fulfilled, and soon after, his son was born. **Rav Shach** visited the Steipler and commented about this story, "It is not our practice to perform miracles. How could you have made such a promise to that man?"

The Steipler responded, "I will tell you what happened. This man pleaded with me for a child, and I gave him a Brachah that Hashem should bentch him with children. However, this man was not satisfied with a Brachah and wanted a promise from me. I told him I couldn't promise him anything, as everything is in Hashem's hands. He was insistent and would not leave. I have to admit that I was getting frustrated because I wanted to get back to my learning, so to placate him, I said, 'Alright, I promise you a son.'

Afterwards I thought to myself, "How could I have done such a thing and make such a promise?! To make up for it, I said Tehilim for him, and soon later he had a son."

Rav Shach replied, "You said Tehilim for him? Then that's not performing a miracle. That is the power of saying Tehilim that brought a salvation!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Rav Shimshon Pincus, zt"l, said that many people think, 'If I could say Tehilim like a Rav or a Rebbitzen, then I would say more Tehilim', or, 'If I understood all the words I was saying, or if I was only able to have the right Kavanah, then I would say more Tehilim, but since I don't understand it, and I don't have the right Kavanah, I won't say Tehilim, or I won't say so much.'

Rav Pincus advises regarding this, "Just say Tehilim, and dismiss all excuses not to say it. Just start and keep on going! We don't have to understand it, we don't have to have the right Kavanah, we just have to say it and not worry, because Dovid Ha'melech comes after we start, and he finishes it for us.

It is taught about Dovid Ha'melech that he has the heart of every Jew within him. He experienced everything and anything a Yid can experience, so he understands where we are coming from when we Daven. He knows if we are saying Tehilim from Simchah, joy and happiness, or from distress, R"L. We just have to start saying Tehilim, and Dovid Ha'melech takes what we say, finishes the words up with the proper Kavanos, and brings them straight to the Kisei HaKovod!

It is well known that all spiritual blossoming comes through falling and rising. There is no greatness without struggle, and no ascent without a prior descent. ~ R' Yitzchok Hutner (Pachad Yitzchok).

Parsha Potpourri - Rabbi Oizer Alport

אם רעה בעיני אדניה אשר לא יעדה והפדה לעם נכרי לא ימשל למכרה בבגדו בה ואם לבנו ייעדנה כמשפט הבנות יעשה לה 21:8-9 .



The Torah gives the master of a female Jewish slave an obligation to arrange for her marriage, either to himself or to his son. Who is this maidservant? She is the daughter of a man so overwhelmed and devastated by poverty that he felt compelled to sell his own young daughter into slavery, hardly a girl that people will be jumping to marry.

In his work **Darkei HaShleimus, Rav Shloma Margolis** suggests that this mitzvah teaches us that when it comes to seeking a prospective match, money shouldn't be the determining factor. Nobody could possibly be as destitute as this maidservant, yet the Torah commands her owner not to see a financially downtrodden girl but a potential wife or daughter-in-law. Money – or the lack thereof – doesn't reflect in the slightest on the essence of a person and his or her suitability to be a good husband or wife.

To illustrate this point, Rav Margolis recounts that there was once a student in the Radin yeshiva who returned after a trip to meet a prospective match. The saintly **Chofetz Chaim** asked him how the encounter went. The young man proceeded to describe at length the tremendous poverty in which the family lived. The sagacious Chofetz Chaim turned to the student and asked with a smile, "Nu, and what other ma'alos (positive traits) did she have?"

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

והיה כי יצעק אלי ושמעתי כי חנון אני - אדרת אליהו 22:26.

It is known that Tefilah must be done with Simcha, joy. If one is Mispalel with Simcha, then his Tefilos are accepted with great Rotzon. "**והיה**" is a Loshon of Simcha, joy. **והיה כי יצעק אלי**– "If one will be Mispalel with Simcha, then, **ושמעתי כי חנון אני**– "Hakodosh Boruch Hu will hear those Tefilos, for those are the Tefilos He desires. On the first of Adar, (the first Shabbos) we read Parshas Shekalim.



It says in the Shulchan Aruch, **משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה** – "When Adar enters one should increase Simcha." All Mitzvos are more desired by Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and more accepted, when they are performed with Simcha. Therefore, we have the Minhag to Lain Parshas Shekalim at the beginning of Adar, when we are to be more joyous, so that this Mitzvah performed with joy should be more accepted and desired by Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק *Keep far away from falsehood (23:7)*

A liar is more despicable than either a robber or a thief: The robber steals only at night, for he worries about being discovered. The thief steals by night and by day, but only from individuals, as he is afraid to confront a larger group. The liar, however, lies by night and by day, and spreads his falsehoods and gossip about everyone. *(The Maggid of Kelm)*

Parsha Pages - Throw it to the dog

22:30 וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֻון לִי וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכُון אֹתֹו



"Throw it (the tereifah) to the dog"

The final nun of the word **תשלכון** is not grammatically necessary. This extra letter teaches that a carcass should be removed 50 amos (letter nun = 50) from a town (in order to diminish the effects of its foul smell.

The Baal haTurim indicates that the word **תשלכון** can be read as **תשלכו- ן** one should throw it fifty. (The Gemara in Shabbos 155b states that one should throw the scraps of meat and bone to a stray dog only in the midbar. However, in the city one should give nothing to the dog, because it could become a great pest, always coming back.

Thus, in the city one must place the tereifah meat in the garbage heap, but it must be at least 50 amos from the city.)

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

When the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Yehuda Zev Segal** would accept a Bachur into the Yeshivah, he would ask the boy for his full Hebrew name and also the name of his mother.

He once explained the reason for this, "I am responsible for this boy's Neshamah and I have assured his parents that I will do my best to take care of him. It is therefore incumbent upon me to Daven that he develops properly, and that is why I need his name!"

וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ His master shall bore his ear through with an awl (martze'a) 21:6



Why a "martze'a?" Because its numerical equivalent is 400 -- the same number of years the Jewish people were originally supposed to be enslaved in Egypt. When G-d took the Jews out of Egypt, He declared, "The Children of Israel shall be servants unto Me." Subsequently, anyone who willingly chooses to serve a human master rather than G-d deserves to have his ear bored through... (*Da'at Chachamim)*

Someone once asked R' Moshe Feinstein z"l why so many people in America became secular and did not keep Shabbos, when their parents expressed such mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice, for Shabbos, even losing their jobs and suffering in order not to desecrate it.

R' Moshe sighed and said, "It is precisely because they had mesiras nefesh." When questioned, R' Moshe explained: "Self-sacrifice is fine for oneself, but it cannot be transmitted to the next generation.

In order for the next generation to develop its own self-sacrifice, the love of Shabbos must be conveyed with joy and happiness; realizing its tranquility, beauty, and pleasure. Then the Shabbos will become a part of them. But, if one looks at Shabbos merely as a day when one cannot do things, why would the next generation want anything to do with it?"

Piercing the ear –Internalizing experiences -by Jonny Caller

We learn in Mishpatim that if a Jewish slave wants to remain a slave for more than 6 years, the master has to drill a hole in his ear next to the doorpost. If the master does this, then the slave is tied to the master until the end of the Yovel cycle.

Why is he pierced in the ear? How is the piercing related to the extended slavery?

Rabbi Frand brings the **Sefas Emes**, who says in Gemara Kiddushin that the ear did not hear the words of Hashem 'avodai hem' 'they are My servants'. Since these slaves decided not to listen to these words but rather decided to be a slave to humans rather than to Hashem, so therefore, this slave must be pierced in the ear.



Still, why the ear? Why not the brain? Surely the brain makes the decision to serve man rather than Hashem! The ear didn't do anything wrong, it's just a keli, a vessel, that carries out the brain's command!

Really, the brain didn't decide. The brain never had the choice to serve Hashem since the ear did not let the words 'avodai hem' sink in, it did not let these words pass through to the brain. It came in one ear, and came out the same ear.

So too, each of us must really internalize our own experiences in order to help us make the right decisions. It's very easy to let experiences not hit us. Our challenge is to ensure that we let it impact our personality, our actions and all our decisions.

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ ***When you lend money to My people, the poor among you (22:24)***



The words *"among you"* seem to be superfluous. The Hebrew word for "among you" is עִמָּךְ, which also means "with you." Sometimes a person might establish an amount of money that he will give to a particular charity, and even if his wealth increases, the amount he gives remains the same. The Torah is telling us that when we are enriched, the poor should be enriched with us. *(Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg)*

'An Eye For An Eye'! Written By Jonny Caller



Ayin Tachat Ayin = 'an eye instead of/underneath an eye' How do we know that it's talking about monetary damages? Answer: That's in the mesorah. It was told to Moshe at Har Sinai, as part of the Oral Torah.

But there are also a few hints in the wording: For example, the **Vilna Gaon** points out: Tachat=underneath – the letters underneath the word Ayin is peh, kaf, samech, spelling kesef=money. This alludes to the payment one must give for blinding another Jew.

Parsha Points to Ponder - by Ozer Alport



A master who knocks out the eye or tooth of his non-Jewish slave must immediately free the slave (21:25-26). The Gemora in Kiddushin (24a) rules that a slave goes free not just through the loss of an eye or a tooth at the hands of his owner, but of any limb which won't grow back. Why does the Torah specifically single out the eye and the tooth if many other body parts are also included in this law? *(Rabbeinu Bechaye, Peninim MiShulchan HaGra)*

Rabbeinu Bechaye notes that Noach cursed Cham and his descendants with slavery as a punishment for Cham seeing his father's nakedness and relating it to his brothers (Bereishis 9:25). Since slavery is a punishment for sinning with the eyes and the mouth, it is appropriate that if they are damaged, the slave has received an alternate form of punishment and is now exempt from slavery.

The **Vilna Gaon** adds that according to the strict letter of the law, the slave should only go free if both his eye and his mouth are wounded, but Hashem mercifully allowed him to be freed even if only one is injured.

אם כסף תלוה את עמי את העני עמך - נחל קדומים 22:24. **תלוה** has the same Gematria as **אמת. אמת** is a Remez to the Shechina Hakdosha. Through Tzedakah, there will be a combining of Tiferes and Malchus. This is the "true" purpose of the world.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah - L'Maaseh



A Rav once saw a poor, elderly street vendor who was selling sandwiches and drinks from a little stand. The Rav was moved by this sight, and he went over to purchase something, just to enable the elderly gentleman to earn some money. The old man realized that a big Talmid Chacham was standing before him, and he wanted to know if the Rav could help him with some information. He began by telling the Rav about a young boy, in a small village in Lithuania, who was so poor that his parents had not been able to afford to send him to Yeshivah. The boy cried, begging his parents to find some way to send him to Yeshivah.

"I overheard the boy pleading with his father to please let him go learn". The father sadly looked into his son's eyes and said, 'My dear child, I would give everything I have so that you could go on to Yeshivah, but I have absolutely nothing.' The boy could not accept this answer, and he began to cry with such bitter tears that I also began to cry with him.

I decided that I had to do something to help this child who wanted so badly to go learn Torah in a Yeshivah. Baruch Hashem I was fortunate to have a job. The hours were long, the labour was difficult, and the pay was less than sufficient. Nevertheless, I decided that I was going to set aside a portion of my earnings so that I could send that young boy to Yeshivah. You can't imagine the excitement in his eyes when I knocked on his door and gave his parents the entire sum of money that was necessary for their son to go to Yeshivah!"

The man then asked the Rav, "Perhaps you know if anything ever became of that young boy?" The Rav asked him, "Do you remember his name?" The man responded, "**Aharon Kotler**." When the Rav heard this, he exclaimed, "Do you know who he has become? He is the Gadol Ha'dor, the Torah leader of our generation! Your selfless act of Tzedakah gave the world its Gadol Ha'dor!"

The man was beaming and felt very content when he heard this. The Rav added, "Who knows what this world would look like if only there were more people just like you!"

Likutei Miminai Michoel



The Arizal says that each Jewish month represents part of a person's head. The month of Adar represents the nose. A sweet smell, according to the Gemoro in Maseches Brochos [44b], gives pleasure not to the body but rather to the neshomo. When Odom and Chavo ate from the eitz ha'da'as they used all their senses for the aveiro, except their sense of smell. Therefore, the sense of smell has a certain purity that is unequalled by the others.

It is fitting that for the nes that took place in the month of Adar, the names of both of the heroes of Purim relate to smell. Mordechai's name says the Gemoro in Chulin [139b] is hinted at in the name of the fragrance used in the ketores (incense) called mor d'ror. Esther's real name, the Megillah tells us [2:7], is Hadassah, the sweet-smelling myrtle tree. (*B'nei Yisascher*)

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - Who Helps Whom?

For two close friends, Mike and Barry, the trip up north to Alaska brought with it what they least wished to happen. Within just a short period, the wind current shifted and caused the onset of an unbearable snowstorm. The frigid temperatures placed them into extreme danger, with the possibility of frostbite if not worse. As it turned out, Mike could not bear the cold any longer, and despite every effort to keep his body up, he collapsed to the snow.

Catching sight of Mike's condition was none other than Barry, who rushed over immediately. But Mike had apparently fallen into a sleep and gone unconscious. Barry, aside from panicking, knew quite well that now was not the time to be passive. If only he could keep maintain Mike's blood circulation, he would perhaps come out alive and avoid freezing to death.



Barry began rubbing Mike's hands, feet and neck, hoping that it would be enough to stave off any imminent life-threatening danger. Fortunately, it helped until a team of paramedics came across the two of them and transported them to a hospital.

Mike was rushed into the emergency room and immediately seen by a group of nurses and doctor, as Barry sat in the waiting room anticipating what he hoped would be good news. Finally, after some while, the doctor emerged. "I have some news about your friend," he said softly. "Fortunately, he is alive. We needed to amputate a couple of his toes, but he is now stable and doing better."

Barry breathed in a sigh of relief. "Thank G-d," he said, "I am so happy that I continuously rubbed him. I'm afraid to think what would have happened if I wouldn't have done so." But the doctor had something else to tell Barry. "I just want you to know that as much as you saved your friend's life, your friend saved your life." Barry was unsure what to make of the doctor's comment. "What do you mean? He was half asleep!"

"That may be true, but by you rubbing his body and keeping his blood circulation going, you kept your own circulation going and saved your own life. Because you were working to keep your friend alive, you are perfectly healthy now."

In life, we tend to think that when we help another person, we have helped them and them only. But, in truth, our efforts are never one-sided. All that we do to help another person helps us in turn in multiple ways. It makes us into a better person, sensitizes us to other people's needs and feelings, and just sometimes saves our own very life.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR MISHPATIM

The Chofetz Chaim's Humiliation in Honour of Shabbos

In Radin, where the Chofetz Chaim lived, there was an organization whose members would go to Jewish storeowners on Friday afternoon and encourage them to close their stores early, before Shabbos. The Chofetz Chaim urged people to join the group, and sometimes the Chofetz Chaim himself went with them on Friday afternoons, to speak with the store owners.

One Friday afternoon, the Chofetz Chaim asked his student, Reb Avraham Kalmanovitz, ztl, to join him on such a mission. They walked from store to store, and reminded the shopkeepers to close their stores at the right time. At one store, the owner shouted at them

for telling him what to do and he smacked them. The Chofetz Chaim and **Reb Avraham Kalmanowitz** didn't answer back. They silently left the store and went on to the next store.

A couple of weeks later, someone came to the Chofetz Chaim in a hysteric state. He said that his wife was in the midst of childbirth and she and the child were at risk. The Chofetz Chaim asked him, "Is your wife careful with the three mitzvos one is tested on, by childbirth?"



The man said that she is cautious with all of them. The Chofetz Chaim immediately summoned Reb Avraham Kalmanowitz (who was learning in the yeshiva's beis medresh) and said, "You remember, a couple of weeks ago we were humiliated by a storeowner. Are you willing to give the merits you earned from that humiliation to this man who needs a salvation?"

Reb Avraham granted him those merits. Moments later, they heard the good news that a healthy son was born. It was evident that the merits of the humiliation saved this woman's life and the life of her child.

After this episode, Reb Avraham Kalmanowitz said to the Chofetz Chaim, "Rebbe, I have two questions:

(1) You were also humiliated, and you were also smacked by the shopkeeper. Why did you ask me to give my merits? You could have given yours.

(2) If the reward for embarrassments is so great, shouldn't I keep it for myself?"

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "I'm an old man, and I went through a lot in my lifetime. At this point in my life, it doesn't bother me so much when someone humiliates me. But you are still young. The disgrace certainly hurt you very deeply. Therefore, I asked you to give him your merits. Your merit is greater than mine, and it could help this man. Regarding your second question, that you should keep the merits for yourself, I say the opposite: Why do we need merits, if it isn't to help others?"

Years later, Reb Avraham Kalmanowitz became the rosh yeshiva of Mir, in America.

A Desperate Man's Request to Hashem

Rav Elimelech Biderman told an amazing story that happened to Rabbi Yosef Palech, from Kiryat Harim Levin. The Rabbi gave a Gemara shiur to a small group of Baalei Teshuvah men every night in Tel Aviv. The participants were extremely committed to the class.

However, one night the weather was so bad that no one was able to make it to the class that night except for Rabbi Palech who was the only one that showed up. The Rabbi had been giving this shiur for years without missing a single night, and he didn't want to start now. He went out to the street in an attempt to find someone that he could teach, but no one was outside in that weather.

"Please Hashem," he beseeched, *"help me find someone."*

He crossed the street and approached an unkempt house that bore a *mezuzah* on the door and knocked. A man who was clearly not observant opened the door, exposing the foul-smelling, untidy interior. Nevertheless, the Rabbi politely asked, *"I was wondering whether you would be interested in learning Torah with me tonight."*

The man opened his eyes wide and tearfully shouted. "*Who brought you here? Come in!*" Between wrenching sobs, he managed to tell the Rabbi his life story.

"*After the war,*" he began "*I was a lonely Holocaust survivor. I wanted nothing more to do with Judaism or Hashem. My life has been one long chain of misery. I have nothing in this world. No wife. No family. No money. Nothing.*"

He then pointed to the ceiling beam from which a rope was dangling. "*Tonight, I was ready to put an end to my misery. Before I took this drastic step, I cried out, 'G-d in Heaven, if You are here with me and You really want me, show me that You need me and I will come back to You.'*

"*Since the day I moved into this house, no one has ever knocked on my door. Just moments ago, when I finished my prayer, you came. Yes, I want to come learn with you tonight, Rabbi. Please guide me back to Hashem.*"

Many years later when Rabbi Palech passed on, this man, who by then was fully observant, came to the *shivah* and shared this story with the Rabbi's family.

Hashem loves all of us and wants everyone to be close to Him. No matter how far a person has strayed from the path, Hashem yearns for him to come back.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Bnei Yissaschar (in Igra d'Kalah) explains that the final command of the Aseres HaDibros, ***לא תחמד***, ***don't be jealous***... is a review of the entire Torah, because the purpose of the Torah is to attain emunah. - When one believes that Hashem gives everyone their just portion, he won't be jealous of anyone.

The Red Keffiyeh By Rabbi Dov Brezak



A friend of mine shared this story with me a few years ago.

Years ago, before my friend, let's call him Yaakov, became religious, he used to drive a gasoline truck, for a living. He would drive around the country (Israel) in a huge gasoline truck that carried 35 tons of gasoline.

His job was to visit the various gasoline stations and fill up their tanks with gas. In the front compartment of the truck he had a small refrigerator between the driver's seat and the passenger seat. This enabled him to keep his food fresh since he could be in the truck for many hours.

As part of Yaakov's job he would also service Arab gasoline stations even if they were located in dangerous places. One of these places was in a village called Beit Omar and is located near Chevron. This particular village is known to be a haven for the many Arab terrorists that live there.

Yaakov would deliver gasoline there often and over time he became friendly with the Arab owner of the gas station. One day the owner asked Yaakov if he would like to take a tour of their village. Yaakov replied that he was Jewish and it would be dangerous for him.

The owner said that he would bring him a Keffiyeh (traditional Arab headgear) to wear on his head. In addition he instructed Yaakov to be quiet the entire time and not talk. This way everyone will think that Yaakov is an Arab (Yaakov does have a dark complexion and can be mistaken for an Arab.) He then asked Yaakov which Keffiyeh he preferred, a red one or a white and black one. (Yaakov explained to

me that the white ones are for the Arabs that wish to make peace with the Israelis while the red ones are for those hostile Arabs that wish to rage war with us).

Yaakov, in jest, told the owner to bring him a red one. Consequently, the owner gave Yaakov a tour of the village while Yaakov was wearing the red Keffiyeh. Baruch Hashem the trip was uneventful and Yaakov thanked the owner of the station as he returned to his truck. He took the Keffiyeh with him and placed it on top of the refrigerator in the truck.

About two weeks passed by and time came for Yaakov once again to make a delivery to the Beit Omar gasoline station. Yaakov explained to me that in order to approach the village one must drive up a very steep hill. It was about 11 A.M. as Yaakov slowly made his way up the steep hill. Because the hill was so steep and the truck so big Yaakov could not see ahead.

As the truck came to the top of the hill and leveled off Yaakov saw a car waiting with an Arab terrorist inside. The terrorist was pointing a rifle straight at Yaakov and was about to shoot. There was a security guard in the truck along with Yaakov but he did not have enough time to grab his gun which was on the floor.

Yaakov (who had at this point already become a Shomer Torah Umizvos) realized that his life was about to come to an end, heaven forbid. Suddenly Yaakov remembered the red Kaffiyeh that was on the refrigerator. He quickly grabbed it, held it out the window, and waved it at the Arab. The Arab took a look and thinking that the driver of the gas truck was a fellow terrorist, (due to the red-not black and white- Kaffiyeh) lowered his rifle and drove away.

Because the Arab owner decided to give Yaakov a tour of Beit Omar and because Yaakov decided to make a joke, and choose a red Keffiyeh instead of a white one, his life was saved. Or more accurately, because Hashem wanted Yaakov's life to be saved He arranged it in advance. He placed the thought in the owner's head

that he give Yaakov a tour and He placed the urge in Yaakov's heart to make a joke and choose the red Keffiyeh. And what about the fact that he kept the Keffiyeh instead of throwing it out and that he placed atop the refrigerator of his truck so that he could grab it with the second or two that was critical for is life to be saved.

How wondrous are the ways of Hashem!

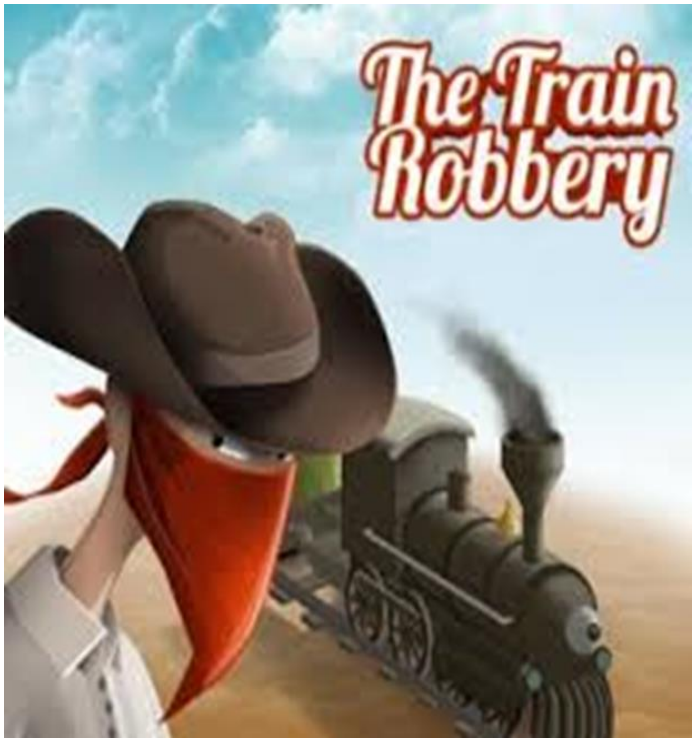
The Rabbi Who Played Ball with a Little Girl

Rav Reuvein Feinstein once related a story about his father, **Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l**. The Feinsteins would spend some time each summer in the city of Hartford, Connecticut, and they stayed with the local Shochet, Rav Berman, who Rav Moshe was friendly with.

During the time that Rav Moshe and his family were in Hartford, a relative of the Bermans, a Yeshivah Bochur, came to stay with them also. The Bochur took advantage of this rare opportunity of being in the presence of Rav Moshe, and to observe him and try to learn from his conduct.

The Bochur observed how Rav Moshe was a tremendous Masmid, and he would wake up every day at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and begin learning. One day, at about 6 o'clock in the morning, a little girl entered Rav Moshe's room. To his astonishment, the Bochur witnessed how Rav Moshe got up from his table and started playing ball with the little girl! Intrigued, the Yeshivah Bochur asked the Gadol HaDor why he deemed it necessary to interrupt his learning to play ball with this girl.

Rav Moshe, demonstrating the sensitivity that characterized his Middos and way of life, replied, "Until I came here, this girl was the one who got everyone's attention. When I arrived, I stole the focus and attention from her, and therefore, I owe her something. I must repay her, by at the very least, spending some time playing with her!"



The 10,000 Zlotys Train Robbery

There were two young men living in one of the cities of Poland. They worked together for a long time, and from all their hard work and toil in their various jobs, they managed to accumulate the nice sum of 10,000 zlotys.

They discussed as to how they could increase their wealth with it, and they decided that since they had this large sum of money, it would be worth it for them to go to the big city, buy merchandise at wholesale, and sell it in their city.

This is what they did, and they took a train to get to their destination. It was well known in those times that there were robbers who traveled the trains just to steal from the travelers.

Knowing this, they decided to put their money in a bag and tie it to one of their belts, and the other would watch over his friend so that their money would not be stolen. While they were on the train, every few minutes they would check the money to make sure it was still there.

Before they reached their destination, the train filled up with passengers and it became very crowded. One man asked the other, 'Is the money still there?' The other man felt his belt and discovered that the money was missing. They searched all over but there was no sign of the money. They stood up and began screaming and they stopped the train. They notified the transit police about the theft, and the officers began to search the baggage of all the passengers, but they did not find the money.

When the train reached the next station, they got off the train crying bitterly, and they went to the Jewish neighborhood. Once there, they went to the house of the Rav and they told him the terrible thing that had happened to them. The Rav told them to sleep there that night, and the next day HaKadosh Baruch Hu would guide them as to what they should do.



The next day, the Rav told them to notify the newspapers about everything that happened to them, and to tell them that thieves stole 20,000 zlotys. They asked the Rav, "How could we lie? Only 10,000 were stolen from us! Besides, we told the police that the amount that was taken was 10,000 zlotys."

The Rav told them, "Report it to them like I told you, and if they press you and you are unable to withstand the investigation, tell them that I gave you the advice. You will see that B'Ezras Hashem, everything will work out fine!"

They did as the Rav said and reported to the newspapers, that two Jews were robbed on the train in the amount of 20,000 zlotys. The police noticed that on the train the two told them it was only 10,000 zlotys, and now they had told the newspapers that it was 20,000 zlotys. This seemed odd to the police and they decided to investigate the young men, until having no choice, they confessed that the Rav advised them to report the amount as 20,000 zlotys.

The police immediately summoned the Rav and they asked him why he advised the young men to report the amount as 20,000 zlotys? The Rav told them to wait for the second edition of the papers. When the later editions came out, the headline described that there

were men killed and wounded in a certain village, and there was a large arrest of a group of train robbers. It came out that the group of train robbers read the papers that the stolen amount was 20,000 zlotys, but the robbers had only turned over to the group 10,000, and they were obviously accused of keeping the other 10,000 for themselves!

They began to fight with each other, during which three people were killed. The police were able to arrest the whole group, and because of the brilliance of the Rav, the young men got their money back! The moral lesson is the benefit one can receive by asking advice from a Talmid Chacham, and whoever asks advice from the Chachamim will be successful!

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5779 email of Torah U'Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

The Zutchka Rebbe's Foot Problems

Physical suffering was the lot of the holy Rebbe, **R' Yitzchak Isaac Rosenbaum of Zutchka** (d. 2000). After surviving the Holocaust, he developed a leg ailment that frequently caused him great pain. He kept his suffering to himself. He always wore an expression of tranquility, even when he ought to have been screaming in agony.

After years of suffering, the condition of his legs deteriorated. Before, he had suffered from painful sores. Now they developed abscesses. After trying various treatments, the doctors informed the Rebbe and his family that only one option remained: to amputate both legs in order to save the Rebbe's life.

The Rebbe received the news without blinking an eye, as though they were not speaking about him at all. The Rebbe lay in his bed in Ichilov Hospital, while around him preparations were being made for the difficult operation scheduled for the next day.

After Maariv, the Rebbe began to conduct a cheshbon hanefesh – a [spiritual] accounting with himself. Suddenly, he rose up from his bed. He knew why this terrible thing had befallen him! He put on his clothes and slipped out of the room. He hailed a taxi to the Yad Eliyahu neighborhood.

Back in his room, the medical staff was shocked to find his bed empty. A search was conducted, but the Rebbe had vanished! The taxi arrived at the Rebbe's Beis Medrash. With an energetic step he entered the Beis Medrash and went directly to the place where the bookbinder's tools stood. He pulled out a spool of thick thread and a needle, and then went over to the Aron Kodesh. He removed one of the Sifrei Torah and placed it on the table.

With unnatural strength, he unrolled it to its beginning. The stitches attaching the first panel of parchment to the wooden pole were extremely frayed, and the rebbe took needle and thread in hand and re-sewed the stitches. He then rolled the Sefer Torah to the end of Devarim, and made the same repairs to the frayed stitches at the end. He returned the Sefer Torah to the Aron Kodesh, returned to the hospital, and quietly slipped back into his bed.

The next morning, when the surgeon came to check on him shortly before the scheduled surgery, the Rebbe surprised him by saying, "I'd like you to check my legs again." The doctor felt it was an exercise in futility. The Rebbe told him firmly, "If you do not re-examine my legs, I will not agree to have this operation under any circumstances!"

The doctor took this as an affront to his professional reputation. The situation was saved by R' Nosson, one of the hospital administrators, a pious Jew who had been a chassid of the Rebbe's father, R' Isamar, the old Nadvorner Rebbe. He convinced the surgeon to re-examine the Rebbe's legs.

The doctor was astounded. A slight improvement was clearly evident. The infection was receding. Amputation was no longer urgent.

Conservative treatment using ointments and bandages was recommended instead. Several days later, the Rebbe was released from the hospital – walking on his own two feet!



The Rebbe later told his stunned family, "Why are you surprised? When I made a cheshbon hanefesh, I remembered that I had known that the parchment panels of one of the Sifrei Torah in the Beis Medrash had been detached from the wooden poles for some time. I wanted to deal with this at once, but because of my busy schedule, I did not manage to get around to it.

"I thought to myself: Hashem deals with us measure for measure. I neglected to attach the Sefer Torah to its 'feet' – so I, the one responsible, was struck with an appropriate consequence. It was as though the Heavenly Judgment was crying out, 'Just as you did not attach the atzei chayim, so, too, will your legs be detached from your body!' So I hurried over to quickly make the repairs. And, indeed, when the atzei chayim were attached to the Torah, my legs were no longer in danger of being cut off!" (*Once Upon a Story*)

Everything is From Hashem

״אֵין לְךָ שָׁעָה וְרֶגַע שֶׁאֵין הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה עִם הָאָדָם, הֵן לְצָרְכֵי גּוּפוֹ הֵן לְצָרְכֵי צְרָכָיו.״

The Ohr HaChaim in this week's parashah (22:6) writes, "There isn't an hour or a moment that Hashem isn't doing something for a person; both for his body and for his needs."

The Furniture Store that Clogged Up the Sidewalk



In Bnei Brak, Israel, a store was selling furniture products, so the owner placed some samples of his merchandise on the sidewalk, in order to attract customers. The residents of the upper floors of the building the store was in were getting upset that the owner was clogging up the sidewalk with his products and took him to the Beis Din (Jewish court) of **Rav Nissim Karelitz**.

Rav Karelitz heard both sides and then ruled that even though the neighbors are in the right, they should overlook this arrangement and not hurt the owner's livelihood.

There was one neighbor who took exception to this and was very displeased with the decision. However, he still accepted the ruling and did not voice his disagreement to anyone.

One day, this man was busy with house chores while his wife was cooking dinner. Neither of them noticed the fact that their three-year-old son went out to the balcony of their third-floor apartment, leaned over the railing, and fell over!

When the parents found out what happened, they dashed downstairs to their son, only to find him resting securely in the arms of the store owner. It turned out that upon falling, the child fell directly in one of the cribs that were occupying the sidewalk (as advertisements). After being taken to the hospital, the child was

checked out by doctors and turned out to be perfectly fine, Baruch Hashem. ***Comment:*** *Some people say that the Torah is not maximizing their lives since it contains many restrictions. However, these people wouldn't say that if they knew the truth that the observance of Torah/Mitzvos is protecting them from untold harm. (Story heard from R'Yisroel Miara in the name of Rav Avraham Genechovski.)*

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5778 email of Torah Sweets Weekly.



A Shabbos in the Park by Yerachmiel Tilles

In the early part of the 20th century, before WWI, a young girl stood near her father on the quay of a Polish harbor, a steamer trunk at her feet. Out of her nine siblings, twelve-year-old Rose was the child chosen to be sent to the "golden land," America. Life in Poland was hard, hunger a constant visitor in her home. After much scraping and pinching, her family saved enough for a single one-way ticket to the United States. And Rose, the youngest of the nine, was the lucky one chosen to go.

Her father hoisted the trunk on his shoulder and walked silently, his coattails flapping behind him. Rose could see the effort he was making to keep his emotions in check. The weight of living was apparent on the lines of his face, in the burning sadness of his wise eyes, and in the gray in his beard. His back, however, was ramrod straight, in seeming defiance of his tribulations.

With an involuntary sigh, her father dropped the trunk on the deck and turned to his daughter. A gray head bent over an upturned innocent face, as the father gazed deep into his daughter's unclouded eyes. He felt an urge to scream, to protest the cruelty of fate. How he longed to snatch Rose back home, to hold her as he had

held her when she was a mere infant. Instead, he laid a trembling hand on her cheek.

"Rose, my child, remember: G-d is watching over you every step of the way. Remember His laws and keep them well. Never forget that more than the Jews have kept the Shabbat, the Shabbat has kept the Jews. It will be hard in the new land. Don't forget who you are. Keep the Shabbat - no matter what sacrifice you must make."

Rose buried her face in the scratchiness of her father's coat, her slender arms wrapped tightly around him as if to anchor herself to all that was familiar in Poland. Tatte gave another heaving sigh. His straight shoulders bent over his daughter as his tears mingled with hers. A blast from the ship tore the two apart. *Tatte* bent down and hugged Rose again, squeezing the breath out of her in a hug meant to last a lifetime. Then he turned and walked down the gangplank, a stooped man, finally defeated by life's hardships. As the ship steamed away from the *shtetl* life of Poland, a fresh sea wind blew on the passengers preparing to start life anew.

For Rose, the journey was crammed with questions and uncertainly. Would her relatives really extend a welcome to her, or was she to be all alone in the new land? How frightening was the thought of a new life without her loved ones. As the ship made its entrance into New York harbor, the passengers stood plastered against the railing, shouting and clapping as they saw the "new land." Rose stood aside, shy and unsure. Would the new land fulfill its promise of hope, freedom, and riches? Would her relatives meet her here - or was she now homeless?

Rose did not have long to worry. Her relatives were waiting for her, solicitous of their "greenhorn" cousin. She was soon safely ensconced in their home.

Life in America was new and strange. Polish mannerisms were quickly shed - along with religion. Modesty, keeping kosher, and Torah were abandoned, together with the outmoded clothing and accent. Rose's

relatives insisted religion was "old-fashioned": an unnecessary accessory in America. Rose, however, never forgot her father's parting words. She put on the new clothes her relatives gave her, cut her hair to suit the fashion, but never gave up on the Shabbat.

With her mature appearance and demeanor, it was not long before Rose found a job as a sewing machine operator. But what would she do about Shabbat?

Every week without fail, Rose devised a new excuse for her boss to explain why she did not come to work on Saturday. One week she had a toothache, another week her stomach bothered her. After three weeks, the foreman grew wise. He called her over. "Rose," he said in a tone that indicated he had only her welfare in mind. "I like your work, and I like you. But this Shabbat business has got to stop. Either you come in this Saturday, or you can look for a new job."

Upon hearing this development, Rose's relatives were adamant. Work on Shabbat, she must. They applied pressure; they cajoled, pleaded, and enticed. Rose felt like a leaf caught between heavy gusts of wind, pushed and pulled with no weight or life of its own. She was so young and vulnerable. She wanted to please her relatives. But her father's words kept echoing in her head. What should she do?

The week passed in a daze for Rose. Her emotions were in turmoil. On the one hand, *Tatte* is not here to help me be strong. I do want to please my new friends. I want friends. I want to fit into this new land, she reasoned. And then just as quickly came another thought: On the other hand, how can I forget Shabbat? How can I give up the beauty *Tatte* taught me?

"Rose, sweetheart, listen to us. It's for your own good." On and on went her relatives, until Rose's determination wavered.

On Friday, Rose walked to work, lunch bag in hand and head stooped in thought. She sat at her machine throughout the day, listening to

the humming of the other machines as she absentmindedly went about her job of mass-producing. Would it be so awful to do this tomorrow as well? Decision time was nearing.

Whirr, bzzz, whirr, bzzz. The machine kept tune to Rose's troubled thoughts. What should she do - or was the question, what could she do? As the sun slipped over the parapets of the Lower East Side, Rose knew there was really no question. She was Jewish, and she would keep the Shabbat.

Shabbat in America was not the warm day Rose had known at home. This week was the worst yet. She lacked the courage to face her relatives and tell them of her resolve. Instead, she left the house in the morning, pretending to be headed for work. Back and forth through the streets of Manhattan she paced.



Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

{March 25, 1911}

Later in the day, she rested in Tompkin's Square Park, together with the city pigeons. "*Tatte*, this song is for you," she whispered. The pigeons ruffled their feathers. "*Yonah matza bo manoach*" ("On it [the Shabbat] the dove found rest."). There she sat among the pigeons, singing the traditional Shabbat songs, with tears in her eyes and sobs between the verses.

When three stars finally peeked out from the black sky announcing the end of Shabbat, the moon shone down on a weary girl and bathed her face in its glow. Rose had triumphed, but her victory would cost her dearly. She had no job and had alienated her family.

"Baruch HaMavdil" (the blessing said upon the departure of the Shabbat). It was the time to face the hardness of the world. Rose trudged homeward, dreading the nasty scene to come when her relatives learned that she hadn't been at work.

As she got near home, a shout broke into her reverie. "Rose! What…what I mean, how are you here? Where were you?"

Rose looked at her cousin Joe, her expression woebegone.

"Joe, what will become of me? I kept Shabbat and lost my job. Now everyone will be angry and disappointed with me, and oh, Joe, what will I do?" The words tumbled out together with her tears. Joe looked at her strangely. "Rose, didn't you hear?" he asked gently. "Hear what?" "There was an awful fire in the factory. Only forty people survived. There was no way out of the building. People even jumped to their deaths." Joe's voice was hushed, and he was crying openly. "Rosie, don't you see? Because you kept Shabbat, you are alive. Because of your Shabbat, you survived."

Out of 190 workers, Rose Goldstein was among the minority of those who survived. The infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire on Saturday, March 25, 1911, claimed the lives of 146 immigrant workers present. Because it had been Shabbat, Rose Goldstein was not there. As her father had said, more than the Jews keep the Shabbat, the Shabbat keeps the Jews.

"Some men are stupid: they stand up to honour a Holy Scroll, but do not rise to honour a sage." ~~ Talmud Makkot 22b

The Doctor Who Didn't Want to Treat a New Patient - J Rahmey

Another current day story that I read in Hacham Ovadia's Artscroll biography was of a miracle that was performed by **Hacham Ovadia** to benefit our very own **Hacham Baruch Ben Haim, zt"l**.

Approximately 15 years ago, Hacham Ovadia's close friend and our Rabbi Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim sustained a serious heart attack and he lay unconscious in the hospital for several months.





Hacham Baruch Ben Haim **Hacham Ovadia Yosef**

A medical referral specialist in New York spoke to his doctors at length and informed the family that the main problem was not with Hacham Baruch's heart, but with his lungs. There was only one doctor in the New York area who could treat this problem, and he worked far from the hospital in which Hacham Baruch lay.

The family called this doctor and asked whether he would be willing to examine Hacham Baruch, but he refused, explaining that he had no time. Even when they offered him a large sum of money for his

services, he could not be swayed. His patient roster was simply too full to make time to examine someone in a faraway hospital.

The family was wondering what to do next, when Rav David Yosef, [the son of Hacham Ovadia] who happened to be in New York at the time and was privy to their conversation. He asked whether he could perhaps speak to the doctor, who he heard, was a non-religious Jew. "Perhaps I can speak to his Jewish heart," Rav David suggested.

He called the doctor and asked, "Have you heard of Harav Ovadia Yosef?"

"Certainly," replied the doctor.

"Well, his childhood friend is lying the hospital, unconscious, and I'm certain that Rabbi Yosef would greatly appreciate it if you could examine his friend."

"Oh, he's Rabbi Yosef's friend?" The doctor asked in surprise. "I'm coming right down." Thankfully, the doctor was able to diagnose Hacham Baruch correctly. Within a few weeks he had returned to full function, and he lived for another two years. When the family called the doctor's office to settle payment, they were astonished to hear that the doctor did not want money.

"I didn't do this for pay," he explained. "I owed this to Rabbi Yosef."

He then shared his fascinating story. Several years earlier, this doctor's son had visited Israel, and wound up in the wrong place at the wrong time. While he was in Yerushalayim, a terrorist detonated a suicide bomb right beside him. The doctor received a call that his son had been rushed to Hadassah Hospital in critical condition. He booked the next flight to Israel and ran to his son's bedside, but despite his medical knowledge, there was little that he could do for his son.

Having heard about great rabbis and their power of blessing, he asked someone to arrange for him to visit some of these rabbis. Each rabbi whose house he visited empathized with his plight and

promised to pray for his son. When he reached Harav Ovadia's home, the Rav listened to him, and then closed his Gemara and told his driver, "Come, we're going to Hadassah."

When they reached this young man's room, Harav Ovadia began to recite chapter after chapter of Tehillim, with tears streaming down his face. After 15 minutes of crying the words of Tehillim, he blessed the young man to have a Refuah Shelemah, and left.

"My son had a miraculous recovery," the doctor related. "And if Rabbi Yosef, who was thoroughly engrossed in his books when I walked in, was willing to drop everything and run to my son's bedside, didn't I owe him the same in return when his friend's life was on the line?"

Recognizing the Source



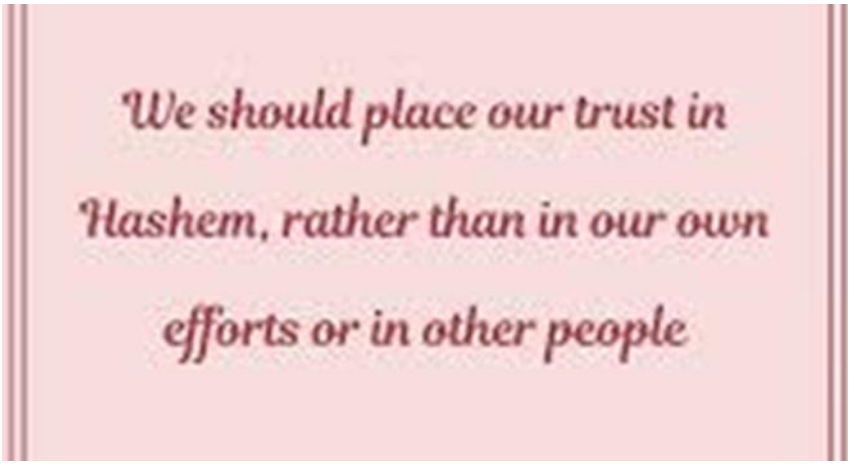
A poor man had to marry off his daughter and came to ask Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk for assistance. The tzaddik gave him a letter to deliver to Reb Moshe Chaim Rothenburg, a wealthy Jew, asking for monetary aid. The poor man trudged from town to town until he reached the home of Reb Moshe Chaim, where he was graciously welcomed.

After having rested, the poor man handed the letter to his host, and to his astonishment, he received a miserable sum. After all it had taken to reach here, especially with the letter he had brought from the Rebbe himself, he couldn't believe that this was all he was going to get! How would he cover the expenses for the chassuna?

With no choice, the poor Jew exited and began his long trek home No sooner had he left than Reb Moshe Chaim hurried out to buy clothing, dishes and whatever else a couple might need, quickly loaded it unto a few wagons, took along an additional sum of money, and set out to catch up to his visitor.

Seeing his host with all his baggage, the poor man asked in amazement, "If you were planning to give all this to me, why did you have to put me through all that anguish?" Listen," Reb Moshe Chaim explained. "When you arrived with a letter from the Kotzker Rebbe you were sure you'd receive all you needed and forgot that we have an Eibershter on Whom we rely upon. I simply wanted to remind you where to place your trust."

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An epileptic traveled to Reb Yitzchak of Neshchiz to ask for a bracha to be cured. Reb Yitzchak declined, but the sick man continued to plead, until the tzaddik told him, "It is possible for you to be cured, but I can't give you this promise. It's your fault, for you have heard there is a great man in Neshchiz who can perform miracles and you have placed your trust in him instead of in Hashem. When you place your trust in Him, you will be cured.

Reb Yitzchak then told him about a villager and his wife who were robbed and approached the Maggid of Koznitz for assistance. The Maggid protested that he had not stolen their money. They continued to beg for his help and gave him a gold coin to be given to tzedaka as a pidyon.

"But I want more," countered the Maggid, so they handed him another two, but he was not satisfied. They kept adding, until the
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Maggid said he would not agree unless they gave him 60 coins for tzedaka.

This was too much for the woman, who gathered up all her coins and turned to her husband, saying "Let's leave! Hashem can help us without all this."

Hearing this, the Maggid told them, "Your request was hard to fulfill because you had placed your trust in me and not in Hashem. But now that you have thought about Him, your salvation is near. And if you don't mind, can you please give me back that first gold ruble you had given for tzedaka?

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During the first few years of his marriage, the, **Yismach Moshe, Reb Moshe Teitelbaum** of Ujhely was supported by his father-in-law so that he could study Torah undisturbed. When his father-in-law passed away, he realized that he would need to find some way to support his family.

He had an idea: he would procure ten thousand silver reinish, entrust it to some merchant for business purposes, and from that he would have the means of support. There was only one problem: he had no way of securing such a sum.

One day, while trying without success to concentrate on his Gemara, Reb Moshe began to cry over his situation, and soon fell asleep over his open sefer. In his dream, he entered a great hall in which sat a venerable sage, who motioned to him to go into a side room.

There Reb Moshe saw another man who asked him if he knew who the scholar was. When Reb Moshe replied in the negative, the man exclaimed, "That is Reb Yitzchak Luria, the holy AriZal!"

When Reb Moshe returned to where the tzaddik was learning, the AriZal said, "Young man, if a person does have ten thousand silver reinish, is he no longer dependent on the favors of Hashem? Either
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way, he is dependent – in order that he should be able to eat, talk, walk and live.

"And just as Hashem will grant you these favours so too will He grant you a livelihood, even without ten thousand silver refinish!"

Reb Moshe woke up and felt at ease.

Can I Give You a Ride Home? By Rabbi Reuven Semah

"And I carried you on the wings of eagles." *(Shemot 19:4)*

Before Hashem gave the Jewish people the Torah He spoke about the Exodus from Egypt. Hashem said that He carried us out on wings of eagles. *Rashi* explains: This refers to the day that Israel came to Raamses, where the nation had gathered for the Exodus from Egypt. For Israel was scattered throughout the land of Goshen and in a very short time, when they were about to travel and depart, they were all gathered to Raamses. So in order to ease their departure Hashem Himself gathered them up quickly to Raamses.

Rabbi David Kaplan tells a heartwarming story of another carrier of people. As the Saltzmans exited the Gutnick wedding Hall in Jerusalem, a man standing a few feet away gestured towards them and simultaneously pointed to a van. "Where do you need to get to?" he asked. "It's okay. We're taking a bus," Mr. Saltzman said.

Don't worry. I don't charge. I'm not a cab, but maybe I can give you a lift. Where are you headed?"

"We're going to Ramot." "Great. That's in my direction. Get in."

The seven Saltzmans clambered in and settled in the seats, noticing another family of three already in the can. "I'm just dropping them off in Givat Shaul and then we'll head up to Ramot."

The Saltzmans figured the man lived in Ramot and were very appreciative of the way he went out of his way to find someone to

give a ride to. Only when they were getting out in front of their home did they realize there was something out of the ordinary going on. As they thanked the driver, they asked him where he lived. "In Ezrat Torah," he answered.

"So why did you take us so far out of your way? We though you lived here."

The man smiled. "Each night I hang around the Gutnick Hall, because I know people are coming out of weddings late and public transportation is not great at that hour. An entire enjoyable evening can be ruined by the hassle of trying to get home. So, I drive people home from the weddings and then come back looking for more. Hopefully, it'll be a merit for me and my family."

This story really gives us a lift. It's another reminder of how it's so true that Chesed is one of the things about which our Sages say there is no limit. A person who truly wants to do chesed will find a way to do it.

Chiune Sugihara



In downtown Los Angeles, in Little Tokyo one block from the Japanese American National Museum, stands a statue of a man very few people know about or would ever recognize. His name was Chiune Sugihara, and he did an extraordinary thing seven decades ago.

Sugihara was a diplomat working at the Japanese consulate in Lithuania during the first years of World War II. As the Nazi forces threatened to overrun the small nation, thousands of Jewish refugees, who already had fled the horrors of

Poland, crammed around the compound desperate for safe passage out of the country.

Sugihara didn't hesitate. Disobeying direct orders, and thus risking his own career and indeed freedom, he issued visa after visa, scribbling them out as quickly as he could and even enlisting his wife to help over the course of nearly a month, often staying up all night to process ever more. Survivors recall that Sugihara, who was forced to vacate the compound, even thrust completed, stamped visas out of his train window as it pulled away from the platform. In all, six thousand people who would otherwise be destined for the gas chambers were spared; they fled to Japan and often on to other nations from there.

For years the survivors and their families tried to locate Sugihara, if only to thank him for what he did.

He paid a heavy price for his actions; after spending 18 months in a Soviet prison camp, and finally returning to Japan, he was asked to resign his post, likely as a direct result of his incredible stance. Sugihara lived out the remainder of his days in obscurity until happily, in 1985 just a year before his death, he was honored with a Righteous Among the Nations award an honor bestowed on non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews. He shares this title with the likes of Oskar Schindler.

Heroes come in all forms, and there are times each of us may be called upon to be heroic. Chiune Sugihara heard that call, and he answered it resoundingly.

R' Mendel Kaplan ZT"L (Yeshivah of Philadelphia) would say: "Learning Torah is very hard but living without learning Torah is even harder!"

Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l - The Importance of Having Appreciation For Hakodesh Baruch Hu

What should you think when saying Amen Yehei Shmei Rabah?



I'll just tell you one thing now, just to be brief. A man has to be able to look back on his life and to see what Hakadosh Baruch Hu did for him. If you don't do that, then you can't say anything. You won't say Amen Yi'hei Sh'mei Rabah properly, or anything else.

Now, when a man looks back on his life, and he sees that Hakadosh Baruch Hu spared him so many troubles that he noticed occur to other people in this world, and that he is perfect almost without any blemish.

Some people never broke a bone in their lives. If you're one of these people, it's a remarkable history. You never broke a bone in your life? Think how many people broke bones! They had casts at least for a few weeks. You never broke a bone in your life?! How many people never had a fire in their homes, even once in their lifetime? You never had a fire?! So many people had fires in their homes.

How many people were without work, didn't have a job for some time? You never were unemployed? Never in your life were you unemployed?

How many people had trouble, serious trouble in their houses, marital troubles? Either he ran out of the house or his wife ran out, and it was a great to-do before they were reunited in embarrassment. You never had that in your life?

So when you look back and you see Hakadosh Baruch Hu spared you, so you start thanking Him. But you'll never get through, there's so

much, there's so much!! So you say, Yi'hei Sh'mei Rabah Me'vorach, I have to thank you Hashem and bless you, Le'olam, forever U'lolmei Ol'mayah, and ever and ever. No matter how much I'll say, I won't live long enough. In the next world I'll continue to thank You and praise You forever and ever. There's so much to be grateful for.

The Muffed Haftara By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach



Yossie's parents looked forward to the Shabbat of his Bar Mitzvah when he would read in their synagogue the Haftara. Blessed with a beautiful voice and musical talent he was certain to do a great job on the Haftara he had so diligently prepared and to thus bring great *nachat* to his proud parents.

But something went wrong. The reading of the Haftara was marred by several off-tune moments and some bouts with hoarseness. As they left the synagogue Yossie's father noticed that his son suffered no hoarseness at all and asked him why his reading was so characterized by loss of voice and tune.

"A friend of mine read the Haftara last week for his Bar Mitzvah, explained the boy, and he did a rather poor job because he has a hard time carrying a tune. Next week another friend with little musical ability will be reading the Haftara for his Bar Mitzvah. If I would have read the way I was capable of doing because of my musical ability, people would have made the comparison between my beautiful rendition and the poor showing of the others. How could I thus embarrass my friends? I therefore decided to mess up my own reading a bit so that no comparisons would be in order."

It was Yossie's father who revealed this incident when he spoke at a *Sheva Brachot* celebration for his son almost a decade later. Yossie had met with great success in his learning and in his *shiduch*, and it was his father's conviction that his nobility as a Bar Mitzvah boy earned him these blessings from Heaven.

Down Went the Clown From by Yerachmiel Tilles



One night in the year 5656 (1896), a wealthy businessman in Bagdad decided to celebrate his great success. To enliven the party, he invited Nissim the comedian, who used humor to mock others publicly. Standing on the table and sipping from a cupful of strong drink, Nissim made all sorts of bold gestures while he drew from his repertoire of cruel jokes and witty insults, filling the hall with noisy laughter.

During his performance he was offered a piece of fish and ate from it while continuing to amuse the crowd. Suddenly, a large bone got stuck in his throat. Not knowing how to assist him, the spectators helplessly watched as Nissim turned blue and then fell to the floor, lifeless. Horrified, the wealthy host screamed in panic, for he feared he would be blamed for the comedian's death!

One of the onlookers suggested they place Nissim upstairs, in front of Saadia the Doctor's door, and so a group of volunteers from among the many guests carried the dead comedian to the second floor, knocked on the doctor's door and hurried away.



Saadia, hearing the knock, came to the door, but because it was dark, did not notice the man lying on the floor and tripped over Nissim's feet, causing them both to roll down the steps, one over the other. Recovering from the fall, he looked at the other fellow and gasped; by tripping over this man and making him fall, he had killed him!

Not wanting to be punished for murder, he stood the body against a nearby wall and left. Ezra the tailor, still busy working at this late hour, suddenly noticed someone looking into his window and was overcome with fear; perhaps a thief was trying to break in? He ordered him to leave immediately, but when there was no response, he took a hot iron and threw it, hitting the dead Nissim in the face and knocking him down. Seeing the body collapse, he was mortified, thinking that he had killed a man!

Not wanting to be caught, he dragged the body into the street and stood him up against a tree. Soon after, a drunkard passed by and thought this man was laughing at him, so he took his bottle of whiskey and hit Nissim on the head, causing the dead body to fall to the ground. At that moment, a police officer was walking by, and seeing what the drunkard had done, arrested him. The news spread around town that in two days the drunkard would be hung for having killed Nissim the comedian.

Feeling guilty, the rich businessman, the doctor and tailor, each on their own, went separately to the police to admit that in truth, it was they who had killed Nissim.

The judge was unsure how to pass judgment. Never had he encountered such a strange situation, that four people should admit to killing one man! He decided to seek the advice of the nearby great Jewish sage, **Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Bagdad, the Ben Ish Hai**.

The day of the court case arrived, and many gathered to see how this episode would be resolved. The judge proclaimed his verdict: All four men are free from punishment! My decision is according to the wisdom of the great Rabbi. The judge went on to explain what he had learned. Nissim the comedian caused his own death through his public mockery, and therefore he received punishment corresponding to all four forms of execution that Jews could have been sentenced to during the time of their Holy Temple.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings - Trust in Hashem

Reb Shimshon Pinkus *zt'l* discusses how parents take care of their infant children diligently, often giving them what they need even before the children ask. But this attitude gradually changes, and as the children mature, the parents don't run to take care of every detail. What changed?

Reb Shimshon Pinkus explains that when children feel totally dependent on their parents, parents feel totally devoted to their children. But when the children feel that they can fend for themselves, parents feel less obligated to care for their needs.

Reb Shimshon Pinkus adds that it is the same regarding our devotion to Hashem. If we feel totally in need of Hashem's help, Hashem's *hashgachah pratis* over us is felt in a very intense way. But when we think we can manage on our own, the *hashgachah pratis* over us lessens.

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A month ago, an extraordinary woman, a Holocaust survivor, was *niftarah* at the age of ninety-two. I heard her story of salvation from her son, who is a tzaddik and chassid, a close friend of mine:

This woman and her older sister were born in Germany before World War II. When cruel decrees against Yidden became commonplace in fascist Germany, the parents took their two daughters and escaped to France. But their troubles followed them to France, and they were detained in a concentration camp. The father was permitted to leave each morning to go to work. The mother and the two daughters remained behind in the camp, where they suffered fear, starvation, and humiliation.

This woman (who was recently *niftarah*) would often talk about how she went through the camps and the horrors of the Holocaust without worry. She trusted that her parents were taking care of her in the best way, and that they always knew what needed to be done. Therefore, she was never worried.



Once, she broke her leg and needed to go to the hospital. Her mother brought her two daughters to the front gate, and in a broken French, she managed to tell the guard that they required a hospital. The guard replied, "You and your young daughter can go, but there is no reason to take along your older daughter. She has to remain here."

Using a drop of French and hand movements, her mother explained to the guard that she could hardly speak French, and she needs her older daughter to help her communicate with the doctors. The guard accepted the excuse and let them out.

The doctors at the hospital said that it was a very severe wound and needed to operate. They stayed overnight,

and in the morning, the doctors told them that the operation wasn't successful. She would remain a cripple all her life. The operation probably just made matters worse. The mother picked up her daughter and headed back to the concentration camp.

As they approached the camp, they were shocked by the silence. Even more surprising, there was no guard at the front gate. The camp was almost entirely deserted. They heard from the few people who remained that there was a deportation a day before, and everyone was sent to Auschwitz.

This family was saved because they weren't in the camp when the round-up took place. The father was saved because he was at work.

They immigrated to Eretz Yisroel, and the woman who was just *niftarah* received a monthly check from the Germans to compensate for the horrors she endured during the Holocaust. She could have received more money to pay for her becoming a cripple, but she refused to take money for her wounded foot. She said,

"This foot is mine, and I won't sell it to the *resha'im*. This foot saved our lives."

We learn from this story that even when something terrible happens, trust that it is for our benefit. Additionally, we can learn from this story how to trust in Hashem. As a girl in the camps, she wasn't worried because she knew her parents were caring for her.

If we have this same trust in Hashem, we will also have nothing to worry about.

"Prayer is one of Hashem's greatest kindnesses, for He hears every prayer." ~ Sefer Pele Yoetz.

The Role of Women in Judaism By Rabbi Moishe Lichtenstein

I was once asked a question about why the Shemonei Esrei, we say three times a day mentions only the Patriarchs, "G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" but not the Matriarchs "Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah"? - There is a myth that in Judaism, women are considered to be inferior.

The Torah, the blueprint of the universe and everything in it, presents roles for men and women based on the intrinsic natures of the two and the infinite wisdom of how it would be best for those natures to maximize their potentials. Women are *not* inferior. Nor are they superior. A man and woman work as a team for maximum results and universal benefit.



The Rambam teaches us how a husband and wife should treat each other. He writes that a man is a King and a woman is a Queen. They both have very different roles, but both important-- without one or the other there could not be a kingdom. A team effort is required to create, develop and maintain a kingdom.

The Rambam also says that a man should honor his wife more than himself. Thus, the well-known Jewish statement "if you want to be the king of the house, treat your wife like a queen" -- or vice versa. There is no question in Judaism about the role of women because her role is that of a Queen.

Jewish life is not unaffected by modern trends of world thought. Jewish homes are affected by outside views of the role of women

just as non-Jewish homes are. Originally, Jewish women were not maids in their homes, but true Queens. Today, many women's roles include even more responsibilities than that of a Queen. Today women are much more involved in every aspect of Jewish life and are even sometimes, the bread winners of the home. Today many women work outside their homes, yet they are not absolved of fulfilling the irreplaceable role of mother, wife and beacon of moral support which only she can fill.

However, there is one uncompromising, fundamental and consistent concept, seen throughout the Torah with regard to the role of women – the concept of *tznius*. "*tznius* is infinitely more than what we wear - it's about who we are. It's the potential within every one of us, male and female and Judaism enjoins us all to actualize it. *Tznius* is the key to all spiritual growth and therefore to a healthy society. Rather than restricting, *tznius* is, in the most profound sense, liberating."

The reason why the Amidah prayer mentions the patriarchs and not the matriarchs is because the role of women is intrinsically private and internal vs. the male role, which is public and external, although men should be modest as well, it is the woman's role that contains within it, the power modesty brings.

Under no circumstances do we ever see that women in Judaism are considered to be inferior because of modesty. The association of publicity or prestige with how important a person is, does not exist in Judaism. Women are at the forefront of the foundation of life and are respected accordingly even if they do not hold a public position.

A man and woman are two parts of a whole. The Jewish woman is the backbone of her home and community, and her fulfillment of that role determines the health, wellbeing, and growth of our surrounding world.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-*Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

At the end of the parsha, there is an unbelievable Pasuk. The Pasuk says **וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הֶעָנָן וַיַּעַל אֶל־הָהָר וַיְהִי מֹשֶׁה בָּהָר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לָיְלָה** 24:18

Moshe Rabeinu was up for forty days and forty nights. There is an incredible **Even Ezra** here.

He writes **ויהי משה בהר: שלא ירד וכתוב על אלה הארבעים יום לחם לא אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי. וזה פלא גדול לא נהיה כמוהו לפניו**

Never has there been such a thing, and never will there be such a thing.



Rav Kreisworth Ztl from Antwerp says a *moradike pshat* -This man didn't eat or drink a thing for forty days. Incredible! But remember that this is Moshe Rabeinu who brought us the *Mann* for forty years, the *Makkos* and *Krias Yam Suf*. The most incredible miracles that were ever witnessed in the world. And on these the Even Ezra says nothing! And here, one man sustained himself for forty days and forty nights, and about this the Even Ezra says, "Wow! this will never happen again." What's *pshat*?

Rav Kreisworth brings a *medrash* that when Moishe Rabeinu was about to leave the world, he begged Hashem to be allowed to stay on this world another day, another hour, another minute, another second. Hashem said, "No, it's all over, your time has now come". The medrash continues, that Moishe said, "let me remain on this world as

a fly! I just want to remain here. Because staying in this world, means that I can accomplish and do things". The Riboino Shel Olam said, "no, your time has come".

Can you imagine - Moishe Rabeinu would have rather stayed in this world as a fly. This is how precious every moment in this world is. Says Rav Kreisworth, where did Moishe Rabeinu go to get the Torah? Up a mountain? No, he must have gone to *Olam Haboh*, because in *Olam Hazeh* nobody can live without food and water for forty days. It is not possible. He must have been in *Olam Haboh*. Why did he go to *Olam Haboh?* He went to bring the Torah down to Klal Yisroel.



Said Rav Kreisworth Ztl, that a person to whom every second in this world is so precious, that he is willing to give up forty days in this world, just to bring the Torah down to Klal Yisroel.

This is the *pshat* in the Even Ezra in this weeks parsha - **וזה פלא גדול** – This is the *mesiras nefesh* that Moishe Rabeinu gave up of himself for others. That is something that is an incredible thing and that is the **פלא**.

I want to tell you a story that I experienced myself. I just came back from a three-week trip from America. It was Motzai Shabbos and I wanted to eat *Melave Malkah* , so I went to a pizza store. I went together with a few of my previous talmidim. There were a bunch of teenagers there. Boys and girls together – it was not a good *matzav*. I said to one of my boys, "you know what, lets talk to them and see what we can accomplish." So I started a conversation with one of the boys and we started schmoozing about the Riboino Shel Olam, about Yidishkeit, about Shabbos Kodosh, about Tefilin.



To cut a long story short, we sat there for a while, and after sitting there for a while, I managed to get a number of these kids (who I am still in touch with today) to put on Tefilin – some of them for the first time in four months. They are now putting them on every day.

One of my talmidim was sitting there, writing down notes. He said, "I want to see how you do it, what's the key to bringing people closer to Yidishkeit". After I had finished, he said, "now I see the key. It is not so much as about what you said, but that you cared for them and showed them love. That is all they want."

That is an unbelievable *Yesod* that the Even Ezra is telling us over here. So many times, we are busy and so immersed in our own lives in what we need to accomplish, in what we need to do, that we forget about others and their needs. Whether it is a kind word or a smile. Whether it is a good morning greeting. Just going over to someone and showing that you care, can change somebody's life.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

"Man's task in the world, according to Judaism, is to transform fate into destiny; a passive existence into an active existence; an existence of compulsion, perplexity and muteness into an existence replete with a powerful will, with resourcefulness, daring, and imagination." — Rabbi Joseph Solovetchik

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ"ל- נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד

This week is the Yartzeit of my *shver* ***Dayan Gershon Lopian zt"l*** and the Torah that we learn in these shiurim, should be *L'iluy nishmoso.*

I will share with you a *vort* that I heard from him.



This coming Shabbos is parshas Shekolim, and we are going to take out two Sifrei Torah. There is a halacha that we are going to give *din kadimah* to the Sefer Torah of *Todir.* Because *Todir v'sheano todir-todir kodom.* The Dayan asks, what is the rational- the reasoning and message behind this?

He showed me a quote from the **Chovos Halvovos** who writes that when we look around the world that we live in, at the raw commodities and materials that are present, we notice that air is the most abundant, followed by water and then the grains and further down the chain would be natural minerals like onyx, rubies gold and diamonds. Why is this the case?

Says the Chovos Halvovos that the Riboino Shel Olom created a world in which that the commodities that are most needed for the survival of mankind, are found to be most abundant. And those things that are not necessary for life's exitance are found less abundant. Hence, air, water, and the basics for a person to live, are most

abundant in the world. Things like gold, which is rarer and diamonds which are even rarer, are not imperative for mankind's survival.

However, by virtue of the fact that they are not so common, and rarer in the world, they are more valuable. If we had the opportunity to get these, and turn down the chance to own them, we would be considered foolish.



So, when once a year, when we have a mitzvah that comes our way- the mitzvah of *Parshas Shekolim*, the four Parshos, Pesach, Shavuos, Succos, Purim, Channukah etc, it is a once in a year opportunity to perform that mitzvah. This is like the rare gemstones. If we pass that up, we would be idiots.

If that is the case, then we should lein *Parshas Shekolim* before the *Parshas Hashovuah.* It should have *din kadimah*, why? Because at the end of the day, it is the diamond – the gem.

The answer is that a person first needs to ensure that they have the primary items with which to survive,- Oxygen, water, food etc. Once we have these, then we can collect the precious gems. The mitzvos that we do on a regular daily or weekly basis are the fresh air, water and basics that a person needs for survival.

And therefore, when we are faced with a mitzvah of *todir and a mitzvah of sheano todir,* the halacha is *todir kodom.* Because the things that we need for our natural spiritual survival come before other things that are there. They are *gevaldig* and very valuable, but they are secondary for our integral basic survival of our *ruchnios*.

Dayan Gershon Lopian, zt"l - נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד



Dayan Lopian was born in Portsmouth, in 1938. In 1942, his parents, Rabbi Leib and Rebbetzin Tzippa Lopian, moved to Gateshead, where his father was one of the founding members of Gateshead Kollel. His father encouraged him to "spend time with the Zeide."

"The Zeide" was, of course, **Rabbi Elya Lopian, zt"l**. The Dayan spent 14 years in the Sunderland Kollel. The Lopian family moved to Edgware in 1976.

Dayan Lopian was the Rav of Yeshurun Edgware and was greatly respected for his erudition and much loved for his warmth and humanity. The combination of the two made him a highly sought after *posek*, by all sectors of the *kehillah*. He Had a love of learning and teaching Torah and *ahavas habriyos*. He had, the power to create *shalom* in the wider community, inspiring everyone who he met with *shalom*. He viewed himself as an ambassador of the *Ribbono shel Olam* and had no *hakpadah* that people should *daven* in his shul or come to his *shiur*, only that they should *daven* and learn somewhere.

The *Dayan*'s care for others extended even to those he did not know. A man, whose wife had been ill for a long time and subsequently passed away, came to Edgware for a few days' break. During *Shacharis*, the *Dayan* observed the visitor and could see something was wrong. After *davening*, the *Dayan* approached him and asked him what was the matter. The man explained that his wife had died and the last few years had been very hard. When the *Dayan* did not return home from shul that morning, the "search

party" sent out to find him discovered him some time later, crying with the bereaved man.

Dayan Lopian made everyone feel at home. Together with his Rebbetzin, he welcomed hundreds of people into his home and his family. As his children said, "Once you were a guest, you were part of the family." And it was as a loving father that the *Dayan* made demands on his *kehillah*, sometimes bluntly, sometimes humorously. When he saw that a congregant had not shaved on Chol Hamoed, for example, he would congratulate him with a hug and kiss, and not just the first day, but on every day of Chol Hamoed. Other people also wanted the *Dayan's* approval, so they too would improve their *mitzvah* observance and be rewarded with a trademark kiss.

Later on, in his life when undergoing health problems, his love of learning still dominated his life.

Several years ago, the *Dayan* underwent a back operation and was not allowed even to lift a *sefer* for nearly five weeks. Instead he listened to recorded *shiurim*. He finally returned home with a physical therapist as a test to see if he could cope. The therapist made him walk round the house, following a normal routine, which he did successfully. Next, he entered his study and sat at his desk with a *Gemara*, which he picked up and kissed. To the therapist's amazement, *Dayan* Lopian then burst into tears. He explained, "This book is my best friend and I missed him dearly!" The *Dayan* knew exactly where all of his 7,000 *sefarim* were on the shelf. When his grandson asked him how he could remember this, he replied, "These *sefarim* are my best friends. Of course I know where they live!"

When we do a mundane action for the sake of Hashem, we elevate that action to holiness!

Essential Rabbi Nachman - Pray for everything



You must pray for everything. Even if your garment is torn and you need another, you should pray to G-d to give you something to wear. Do this for everything: make it a habit to pray for all your needs, great or small. Your main prayers should be for fundamentals: that G-d should help you to serve Him and draw closer.

Even so, you should also pray for minor things. G-d may give you food and clothing and everything else you need in life even without your asking for them. However, you are then like an animal. G-d provides all living creatures with their food. But if you do not draw your needs through prayer, your livelihood is like that of an animal. A man must draw his vitality and all his needs from G-d only through prayer. Is it beneath your dignity to pray even for something minor? You must pray for everything, even the most minor things. (*Sichot Haran #233)*

Start with thanks

When a person wants to pray to G-d and ask for what he needs, he should first thank G-d for all of His past kindnesses and only then ask for what he needs. Because if he starts by asking only for what he needs, G-d says, "Have you nothing to thank Me for then?" (*Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-2)*

"Days are scrolls, you may write on them what you wish."

The Jewish weekly - Is it Time to Say "Goodbye Grandmother?" By Y Halberstam and Judith Levental.



After sustaining a severe heart attack in 1973, my grandmother sank into a deep coma and was placed on life support systems in the hospital. Her EEG was totally flat, indicating zero brain activity. She was hooked up both to a pacemaker that made her heart beat artificially and a respirator that made her lungs breathe artificially. But technically, as the doctors told me privately, she was basically as good as dead. "She'll never come out of the coma," they said, "and she's better off this way. If she did, her life would be meaningless. She'd exist in a purely vegetative state.

Even though she was in her mid-seventies and had lived a full life, I refused to believe that my beloved grandmother could simply slip away like this. She was too feisty, too vital to just disappear into a coma. My instincts told me to start talking to her and keep chatting away. I stayed at her bedside day and night, and that's precisely what I did. I spoke to her all the time about my husband and our two small children, about other relatives, about her own life. I told her all the news that was circulating in Australia at the time. Anything and everything was grist for the mill. I also kept urging her to keep clinging to life, not to give up. "Don't you dare leave us!" I exhorted. "I need you, Mom needs you, your grandchildren need you. They're just beginning to get to know you. It's too soon for you to go!"

It was hard for me to do battle for my grandmother's life, alone as I was. During the time that she fell ill, I was her only relative in Sydney. Her daughter (my mother) was away overseas on a trip, and

my only sibling — a brother — lived in Israel. My husband was home caring for our children so that I could take my post at her bedside. I stood a solitary vigil, but that was not what placed such tremendous pressure on me. What was enormously difficult was being asked to make decisions alone. The emotional burden was huge.

When four days passed with no signs of life flickering in either my grandmother's eyes or her hands, and no change recorded by the EEG, the doctors advised me to authorize the papers that would turn off the life support systems. I trembled to think that I held the power of consigning my grandmother to an early grave. "But she's really already dead," the doctors argued. "She's just being kept artificially alive by the pacemaker and the respirator. Keeping her hooked up to these machines is just a waste." "Well, listen," I said. "It's Thursday afternoon, and in the Jewish religion we bury people right away. My parents are overseas — practically two days away — and they would certainly want to be here for the funeral. But we don't do funerals on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. The earliest we could do the funeral would be on Sunday. So let me call my parents to get ready to fly home, and I'll sign the papers on Sunday."

It was all very cold and calculating, but deep inside, my heart was aching. Meanwhile, I didn't let up. I kept talking up a storm, discussing weighty matters, babbling about the mundane. "Guess what, Grandma?" I gossiped. "You won't believe who ended up being your roommate here in the hospital! Stringfellow! Your next door neighbour at home, Mrs. Stringfellow, was just brought in with a serious condition. Isn't that a coincidence? She lives next door to you in Sydney and now she's your roommate here in the hospital!"

On Saturday, I was at my usual post at my grandmother's bedside, getting ready to start a round of tearful goodbyes, when I thought I noticed her eyes blinking. I called a nurse and told her what I had seen. "It's just your imagination, dearie," the nurse said compassionately. "Why don't you go downstairs for some coffee, and

I'll stay with her until you come back?" But when I returned, the nurse was brimming over with excitement herself. "You know," she said, "I think you may be right. I've been sitting here watching your grandmother, and I could swear I saw her blinking, too."

A few hours later, my grandmother's eyelids flew open. She stared at me and then craned her neck to look at the empty bed on the other side of the room. "Hey," she yelled, "what happened to Stringfellow?"

By the time my mother arrived at the hospital the next day, my grandmother was sitting up in bed, conversing cheerfully with the hospital staff, and looking perfectly normal. My mother glared at me, annoyed, sure I had exaggerated my grandmother's condition. "For this, I had to schlep all the way home?" she asked.

Later, my grandmother told me that while she was in the "coma" she had heard every single word that was said to her and about her. She repeated all the conversations to me, and her retention was remarkable. "I kept shouting to you," she said, "but somehow you didn't hear me. I kept on trying to tell you, 'Don't bury me yet.'" After she was discharged from the hospital, my grandmother's quality of life remained excellent. She lived on her own as a self-sufficient, independent, and high-spirited lady and continued to live in this manner until her death ***sixteen years*** after I almost pulled the plug.

Parsha Pages - Why the door and the mezuzah?

21:6 וְהִגִּישׁוֹ אֶל־הַדֶּלֶת אוֹ אֶל־הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וְעָבַד לְעֹלָם

1) **Rashbam** answers that it is pragmatic to do so. Even if a house is built of stone, the doors and door frames are made of wood. Wood is a practical material into which an awl can be forced.

2) **Rabbeinu Bachyei** in the name of the Medrash says that Hashem gives this slave an opening to leave servitude at the end of six years.

The slave who turns down this opportunity and opts to stay on has voluntarily shut the door to his freedom. In kind we pierce his earlobe against the doorway opening.



3) One always passes through the doorway of a house. Let the person who had the opportunity to go free and turned it down see the hole made by the awl in the doorpost. It is at eye-level as it passed through his earlobe. (Shomati)

4) **Toldos Yitzchak**: Once a thief always a thief is an attitude that some people have, including some thieves. This former thief has served his master for the past six years. He should go free, but wants to stay on, "Ohavti es adoni ……" It is obvious that he cannot stay on against the will of his master. When he does stay on it is only with the master's agreement.

This clearly indicates that the master has noted that there was no theft on the part of this slave, or else why would he agree to keep him. The former thief has turned a leaf and is now clean of this terrible character flaw. A door, when open, invites theft. When closed and locked, it prevents theft.

Similarly, one's ear is a receptacle for lashon hora and other negative speech. The ear has a flexible lobe, which can be placed into the ear canal to muffle out negative speech. It can also be left open to absorb words of Torah wisdom, Mitzvos, as hearing the reading of the Torah, Parshas Zachor, Megillas Esther, the blowing of the shofar, and the like. Thus, the slave, the door, and the ear

have a common denominator, that they can either be used to promote the negative or the positive. This is the message of piercing the slave's ear against a doorpost.

5. **Bais Levi** (on the Hagadah) offers that the door and mezuzah received the blood on the Jewish houses when HaShem passed over them on the 15th of Nissan on the last night in Mitzraim. This was the indication of the end of physical and spiritual slavery to the human masters and the beginning of service to HaShem. Now at the time that one declares he wants again a human master, let the door and mezuzah come and bear witness that the Jews already were dedicated to serve HaShem and no to serve a human master.

6. **Ben Yehodiyah** states the **אזן דלת מזוזה** are Roshei Taivos for **אדם** .Only a Jew that serves HaShem is called Adam. This person who declares a human master to serve, is punished through the combination of these three items.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The *Chofetz Chaim* was very careful to watch over his health and fulfill the words of the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 41a) that one must walk at least four *Amos* after eating, before going to sleep. Even at an advanced age, when he had great difficulty walking at all, he would get out of his bed and take a few steps, and then he would turn around and make his way back to his bed. He was overheard saying, "It seems to me that I just walked four *Amos*. That is enough, and I am not required to do more than that!"

A Wise Man would say: "Remember to always have patience with all things, But, first of all with yourself."

A Shabbos Vort – Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein

רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא הַמַּכֶּה 21:19 ***He shall, however, pay for his lost work-time and provide for his complete recovery.***

A Yid once came to **R'Baruch Mordechai of Koidanov**. Signs of intense suffering were etched on the man's face. "Rebbe" said the man, "I have been suffering terribly for a long time. Please give me a beracha that I should recover from my illness."

"I will give you some advice," responded the rebbe. "Be extra careful to avoid Shabbos violations and try your utmost to honour the Shabbos. Do so, and Hashem will grant you a speedy recovery."



The man did as the rebbe had instructed. Shortly thereafter, the excruciating pain that he had been feeling began to subside. Finally, it went away altogether.

"Do not think that I performed a miracle," the rebbe later told his students. "It is a treatment that the Torah itself recommends, as the verse states **רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא**. The word **שִׁבְתּוֹ** can also be read Shabato," meaning his Shabbos."

The verse can therefore be read as follows: ***Let him give his Shabbos, and he will surely be healed***. That is, if a person pays attention to his Shabbos observance and honors it properly, then Hashem will provide him with a complete recovery!



Vechol Maaminim - Ha'aderes Veha'emunah Lechai Olamim Monday, 3 Adar, is the yahrtzeit of the Raavad of Yerushalaym, **Harav Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz Teumim, zt"l**, [the Aderes]. In his sefer Nefesh Dovid (23), he describes his strictness about answering amen. He writes: "I was very very careful about answering amen, from my childhood, and I love and run with great fondness for this mitzvah, until it has become almost nature for me. I became used to hearing Birchos Hashachar each day from several people. Anyone who sees me doing this should learn from me to love answering 'amen' and 'amen Yehei Shemei Rabba', which at first, people are lax about, and people did not deem this mitzvah important… In this easy way, each person can acquire Olam Haba, and can fulfil hundreds of mitzvos each day, easily and tirelessly."

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

When the ***Brisker Rav*** was eight years old, his father, the ***Bais HaLevi***, said to him, "Chaim, the *Gemara* tells us that Hashem considers our intentions to do a good deed as if we already did it. Right now, I'm thinking of a very hard question, so it is as if I already asked it. Can you answer it?"

Without hesitating, the little boy answered, "Tatty, right now I'm thinking of a very good answer. Do you like it?

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

An eye for an eye (21:24) **עין תחת עין**

Our Sages tell us that if a master knocks out the eye of his servant, he must pay a monetary sum and does not actually have his own eye removed. How do we know this? **The Gra, in his Sefer Kol Eliyahu** explains that the word **תחת** is not necessarily the most appropriate word to use. A better choice might have been **בעד**, as is used in Iyov (2:4). The Torah must therefore be telling us something by specifically using the word **תחת**.



The Gra explains that if we were to write the Aleph-Bais in a vertical column, then the letter under, or **תחת**- below the **ע** would be **פ**, the letter under the **י** would be **כ**, and the letter under the **ן** would be **ס** .These letters: **ס, כ, פ** —when rearranged— spell **כסף**, money!

This indicates that the Torah requires a monetary payment and not an actual physical punishment. *(Chaim Shel Torah)*

"Bitachon is not just a matter of words, but a state of the heart. When we truly believe that Hashem is running the world, we are free from worry and fear." – The Chofetz Chaim.

ShortVort by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכוּן אֹתוֹ . . .And you must not eat flesh of a mutilated animal in the field; throw it to the dogs (22:30)



The verse tells us that if there is a mutilated animal among the flock, it should be given to the dog. **The Daas Zekeinim** adds that the mauled animal to be given to the dog was actually part of the flock that it was protecting. Yet, despite this, the Torah is teaching us that although the dog was not successful in its guarding, nevertheless, it should still be given the carcass in appreciation for every time it *was* successful in the past, as well as for its efforts guarding the other members of the flock.

This is an incredible lesson to us. One would have thought that specifically now would *not* be the time to reward the dog — after all, the wolf was only able to snatch the sheep because the dog failed in his role. Yet, the Torah is teaching us not to focus on others' mistakes when there are so many more successes to consider.

We can apply this message to so many areas in our life, especially in the relationships which matter most to us: our spouses, children, friends, and co-workers. Everyone makes mistakes. Our role, when it comes to dealing with those around us is to at least put this mistake in the wider context of the entire relationship. If we do this, then the small error that might happen now and again is easily forgiven and quickly forgotten.

Parshah Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



The Pasuk states (22:30) **וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ לַכֶּלֶב תַּשְׁלִכוּן אֹתוֹ *"And flesh in the field that has been torn you should not eat, you should throw it to the dogs."***

Rashi notes that this is a reward to the dogs for not barking at the Jews when they left Mitzrayim (11:7). **Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein** points out that we can learn an amazing lesson from here. The dogs, today, are still reaping the benefit for not barking, even though it is some 2300 years after the fact, since the law of this Pasuk still applies. If they are still getting rewarded for something they did so long ago, we can only begin to appreciate how great our reward will be for doing Hashem's Mitzvos daily!

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Itzele Volozhin - We Can All Be Answered Like Orphans & Widows

The pasuk tells us that when someone causes pain to an orphan or widow, Hashem will take matters into His own hand and will kill the opressor and leave his family without a father and husband. One might think that the reason is because they are downtrodden. While this is certainly a concept mentioned in the Torah and Chazal, that is not what the pasuk says here.

Rav Itzele Volozhin explains that when a person faces a difficulty, he naturally turns to his patron to help him, usually a father or husband. When the person does that Hashem stays out of the scene and leaves it to the person turned to for help to do so. Not so with widows and orphans who don't have a father figure to turn to. They

cry out directly to Hashem, "Ki Im Tzaok Etzak Elai." (Mishpatim 22:22) When someone cries to Hashem, how can our compassionate King not answer their prayers?

The lesson is that we should be smart, and as soon as we need something, Hashem should be our first port of call and not a last resort when all else fails.

Revach L'Neshama -Why The Innocent Children Suffer

People wonder, says the **Ben Ish Chai**, how a child so innocent and pure can be stricken with severe handicaps R"L. What did these little children ever do wrong to deserve such a difficult future? Have they ever sinned? However he says, intelligent people understand that these children are gilgulim from previous lifetimes who have come correct their past errors. They pleaded with Hashem to curtail their power to sin once again. They are the ones who requested the impairment so that they cannot make the same mistakes again in this lifetime. Then at the end of their stay on earth they finally release their excess baggage and are free to go to the place in Shamayim they rightfully deserve.

This is hinted in the Pasuk, **וְכִי־יַכֶּה אִישׁ אֶת־עֵין עַבְדּוֹ אוֹ־אֶת־עֵין אֲמָתוֹ וְשִׁחֲתָהּ לַחָפְשִׁי יְשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ**, ***If a man strikes the eye of his slave, or the eye of his female slave, and destroys it, he shall set him free*** (Mishpatim 21:26). The man here, says the Ben ish Chai, is Hashem. If He strikes someone's eye and sends him to the world blind, guaranteeing he will never sin with his eyes, then when it is all over, he will finally be set free.

Similarly, the next pasuk says, **וְאִם־שֵׁן עַבְדּוֹ אוֹ־שֵׁן אֲמָתוֹ יַפִּיל**. Shain here can mean Shanim or years. If Hashem cuts down a young child in his youth, having his many years fall by the wayside, you must know that **לַחָפְשִׁי יְשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ**, Hashem sent him away for his own good.

Revach L'Neshama - Ben Ish Chai - Curing An Illness Decreed By Hashem

וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא (Mishpatim 21:19) Rashi says, "From here we learn that a doctor has permission to heal a person, even though Hashem is the only one who ultimately heals a person." Why does the Torah write the redundant expression of וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא?



The Ben Ish Chai explains with a Mashal. Two Talmidei Chachomim were walking through the market when they met up with a leper who was moaning about his ailments. The Chachomim gave him a secret ointment to cure himself. As they continued, a peddler, who sold bitter vegetables, who witnessed this scene, approached them and asked them two questions. "First, how can two men who sit in front of a Gemara all day know about medicine? Second, if Hashem made him sick how dare they go against the will of Hashem and heal him?"

They answered that all wisdom comes from Torah. With regard to Hashem's desire, they asked the peddler how he sells bitter vegetables. He said that he makes them sweet and then sells them. "But is it not Hashem's desire that they be bitter," they asked? "Just like Hashem makes bitter vegetation that man sweetens and eats, also He makes a person sick and wants others to help them recover."

Why did these Chachomim not answer the peddler that the Torah says, "Rapoh Yirapei," and grants man permission to heal? He answers that the peddler would have answered that this pasuk is referring to a man that was beaten by another man. In that case, man did damage and is permitted to undo it. But if Hashem makes someone

sick, can man decide to make him better? "This," says the Ben Ish Chai, "is the reason for the double, 'Rapoh Yirapei.' To teach us that whether we become not well through an act of man or directly via the hand of Hashem, in either case a person may seek human medical intervention."

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Shamshon Refoel Hirsch - Dignity Is The First Rule



Parshas Mishpatim discusses laws Bein Adam L'Chaveiro, between man and man. These govern many important and significant day-to-day occurrences in commerce and in relationships with those around us. Why is the seemingly less common and less significant mitzvah of the Jewish slave chosen as the first of the laws between man and man?

Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch explains, the Jewish slave actually sets the tone for all of the laws between man and man. The underlying theme of these laws is that all people are created in Hashem's image and must be treated accordingly.

The Jewish slave is a thief who could not afford to pay back what he stole. The Torah teaches, even the thief must be treated with respect and dignity. From that the tone is certainly set regarding how we must treat the upstanding members of society.

"A man should always be happy in his lot, then will he be pleasant and so all his deeds." ~~ Midrash Le'Olam.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Yehoshua MiBelz - Making Up For Lost Years

וּבַשְּׁבִעִת יֵצֵא לַחָפְשִׁי חִנָּם (Mishpatim 21:2) "An Eved Ivri works six years and on the seventh year he goes out free." Rav Shia of Belz points out that the word, וּבַשְּׁבִעִת is written without any Yud's and is written like Shivas or "all seven".

He explains that an Eved who is sold into slavery for seven years, apparently did aveiros that caused this terrible fate to befall him. During all this time that he serves his master, his Avodas Hashem is seriously compromised, since his time is not his own. When he is freed in the seventh year, he looks back at his aveira and the wasted years that it caused him, and he feels terrible.

Hashem, in His chesed, sees his pain. This Chalishas HaDaas and profound regret on his part open up the gates of rachamim in Shamayim and Hashem considers it as if all the seven years were spent in Avodas Hashem. This is why the pasuk says, "U'bishivas." In one moment of sorrow, he frees himself and recovers all the years that had gone by.

"This same idea applies to anyone who has a Tzara that steals his time," says the Belzer Rebbe. "If when it finally ends, we have true regret about the time lost, it will be considered as if the lost time were well spent."

None Besides Him

When one, G-d forbid, finds himself in distress, let him contemplate the absolute Oneness of the Creator, that there is none besides Him. Then, all Heavenly judgments fall away and no harm can reach him.~ Beis Halevi on Bitachon.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Shamshon Rephael Hirsch - The Torah's Rules For Hide N' Go Seek

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ לֹא־תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה לֹא־תְשִׂימוּן עָלָיו נֶשֶׁךְ׃
When you lend money to My people... do not act toward him like a demanding creditor." (Mishpatim 22:24)



The Gemara Bava Metzia in 75b says that if you lend someone money and the loan is past due, if you know that he doesn't have money to pay, you may not pass by in his presence, or else you have the aveira of being a *Nosheh*- a demanding creditor.

Look how beautiful our Torah is!" says Rav Shamshon Rephael Hirsch. "In the whole world someone who owes money, hides from his creditor. Our Torah requires the creditor to hide from the debtor!"

Revach L'Neshama - Chasam Sofer & Rav Elchonon Wasserman - Majority Rules?

The pasuk in Mishpatim tells us, אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהַטֹּת- ***"To follow the majority."*** 23:2. The famous question asked is, "That since most of the world does not follow Hashem and abide by the laws of the Torah, why aren't we obligated to follow the majority?"

The Chasam Sofer's explanation of this pasuk answers this question. לֹא־תִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי־רַבִּים לְרָעֹת .There are things that are absolutely, positively bad. Do not follow the majority in their wickedness and folly." When do you follow the majority? "L'Hatos," when there is doubt in which way to turn. Then go with the Rabim. If you understand this, then, לֹא־תַעֲנֶה עַל־רִב says the pasuk. "You will not be

caught up in debate about avodah zara and other bad ways of the world because the guidelines are clear to you."

Reb Elchonon Wasserman answered that it says a few pasukim later (23:8) כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יְעַוֵּר פִּקְחִים - that bribery blinds the wise. The majority of the world is bribed by their desires, and even if they are wise, they have become blind and cannot be followed.

Revach L'Neshama - Kozker Rebbe - You Can Take Your Money With You

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ ***"When you lend money to the poor man in my nation."*** (Mishpatim 22:24) This is the mitzva of lending money to the poor. The Kotzker Rebbe learns this pasuk B'Derech Drush.



The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (6:9) says that when a person leaves this world, **אֵין מְלַוִּין לוֹ לָאָדָם לֹא כֶסֶף וְלֹא זָהָב וְלֹא אֲבָנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמַרְגָּלִיּוֹת, אֶלָּא תוֹרָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בִּלְבַד**; ***"His money does not accompany him, only his Torah and good deeds."***

The Kotzker says, we find a remez to this in our pasuk. **אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי**; If a person dies and finds that his money is accompanying him on his journey to the next world, **אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ**; it is not the money you enjoyed, but rather the money that you gave to a poor person. "That money will stay with you for eternity."

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Yehonoson Eibushitz - The Tzira As A Secret Weapon?



"וְשָׁלַחְתִּי אֶת־הַצִּרְעָה לְפָנֶיךָ וְגֵרְשָׁה אֶת־הַחִוִּי אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְאֶת־הַחִתִּי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.", ***I will send hornets ahead of you and they will drive out the Chivi, the Kena'ani....*** (Mishpatim 23:28).

These hornets says the Medrash blinded their eyes above and sterilized them below. Why did Hashem specifically use this as weapon to drive out Kena'an?

Rav Yehonoson Eibushitz explains that this was Mida K'Neged Mida. Kena'an was the one who sterilized his grandfather Noach, so that he would not have more children. He also made himself blind to Noach, who was lying immodestly on the floor, and he did not cover him. Therefore, the Tzira was fitting retribution for this aveira.

Vedibarta Bam

"ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע" "And they said, 'Everything that Hashem has said, we will do and we will listen (obey).'" **(24:7)**

QUESTION: Why when *Yiddish* speaking Jews meet, does one says to the other "*Vas machts du*" — lit. "what are you making" or "*Vas tust du*" — lit. "what are you doing" or "*vas hert zich*" lit. "what is being heard?"

ANSWER: When Hashem offered the Torah to the Jewish people, their immediate response was "*na'aseh venishma*" — "we will do and we will listen."

Grammatically, everyone should have responded in the singular, *"a'aseh ve'eshma"* — "*I* will do and *I* will listen."

They responded in the plural to indicate that in addition to their own doing and listening, they would see to it that other Jews would also do and listen. This is in accordance with what the *Gemara* (*Shevuot* 39a) states *"kol Yisrael areivim zeh lazeh"* — "all Jews are responsible one for another."

Hence, when Jews meet one asks the other "*Vas machts du* or "*Vas tust du*. Since we told Hashem *"na'aseh"* (we will make/do) and since we are also responsible for each other, one Jew asks another if he is fulfilling his pledge of doing and making what a Jew is supposed to do and make in regard to Torah and *mitzvot*.

Similarly, since the Jews said *"nishma"* — "we will listen" — and one is responsible to look after the other, we ask, *"Vas hert zich"* — "Are you listening to the words of Hashem?"



***"אם כסף תלוה את עמי את העני עמך" "When you lend money to My people, the poor among you."* (22:24)**

QUESTION: Do not the words **את העני עמך** — "the poor among you" — seem extra?

An important lesson the Torah is teaching us about *tzedakah* is the following: One Jew must help the other when he has been blessed with abundant wealth. Moreover, even one who is experiencing financial difficulties should not hesitate to help another in need.

The Torah alludes to this with the words **את העני עמך** — even when *you* experience poverty ("poverty is with *you*") — make an effort to help a fellow Jew in need. (**ר' שמעלקא מניקלשבורג זצ"ל**)



Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

***"ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם" "And these are the laws that you must set before them."* (21:1)**



QUESTION: Rashi states: ***"כשלחן הערוך ומוכן לאכול לפני האדם Like a set table which is ready for the person to partake of the feast."*** In what sense is the *halachah* governing monetary matters like a set table?

ANSWER: Many people are very particular about the *kashrut* of the food they eat. When they are invited to a party, before partaking of the foods laid out on the table, they inquire about the *shechitah* of the meat and the bakery that produced the baked goods, etc. Only if the food on the table meets their *kashrut* standards will they eat of it. Unfortunately, in monetary matters they are often not so stringent and they may even engage in questionable business practices. Rashi is suggesting that in money matters, one should be as strict as with the food on one's table.

The Code of Jewish Law is known as the *Shulchan Aruch*, which literally means "a set table." This, too, emphasizes that in all issues of *halachah* one must act with total integrity, just as one demands the highest standards of *kashrut*.(**ר׳ משה ליב מסאסו צ״ל**)

Vedibarta Bam

"אם המצא תמצא בידו הגניבה...שנים ישלם" "If the stolen object shall be found in his possession...he shall pay double." (22:3)

QUESTION: Why does a ganav — thief — pay double?



ANSWER: When a thief steals £100, his intention is to gain £100 for himself at the expense of £100 to his victim. The punishments in the Torah are measure for measure. Therefore, by paying double, the thief ends up losing £100 and making the victim gain £100. What is done to him is exactly what he planned to do to his fellow. (**פרדס יוסף**)

Vedibarta Bam

וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא ***"And he shall provide for healing."*** (21:19)

QUESTION: Why does it state **אֲנִי ה׳ רֹפְאֶךָ** *Parshat Beshalach* (15:26) — "I am G-d your healer" — with a soft "**פ**" and here with a hard **"פ"**? Moreover, why is the word repeated twice in this case, while there it is only stated once?

ANSWER: When a doctor endeavours to heal a patient, often the patient experiences pain. Moreover, at times a doctor may make

mistakes and, regardless of his good intentions, complicate the illness before healing the patient.

Hashem's method of healing is with a soft touch, and He never errs. Thus, the *pasuk* uses a soft "**פ**", and there is no need for repetition of the word. (**בעל הטורים - רבינו בחיי**)

Vedibarta Bam

***"אם כסף תלוה את עמי" – "When you lend silver to My people."* (22:24)**

QUESTION: In ancient times currency was made of gold or silver. Why does the Torah specify *"kesef"* (**כסף**) — silver — only?

ANSWER: The letters that comprise the word *"zahav"* (**זהב**) decrease in numerical value (7, 5, 2), while the letters which spell the word *"kesef"* (**כסף**) increase (20, 60, 80).

The Torah is conveying an important lesson — "**אם כסף**" — when a person wants his assets to increase — it can be achieved through "**תלוה את עמי**" — extending interest-free loans to My people because charging interest causes a decline of one's assets (*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Dei'ah* 160:2). (**בית יעקב**)

Stop Blaming Yourself

One who lacks bitachon blames himself for outcomes he never controlled and is left full of regret. But one who has bitachon knows the result is Hashem's decree and lives without regret.~ R' Pinchas of Koritz zt"l.

L'Maaseh… A tale to remember



Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, once received a very special and expensive new *Shas*, and was learning from a volume for the first time. Printed *seforim* in those days were quite expensive and this new *sefer* was a treasure. *Talmidim* would pass by just to see it.

It happened that Rav Moshe got up to get a *sefer* and **Rav Nissan Alpert, *zt"l***, went over to his *rebbe's shtender* to look at the new *Gemara*. By accident, he got a little too close and knocked into the inkwell, spilling ink all over the brand new *sefer*, staining the pages! Just then Rav Moshe came back to his place and saw the ruined pages and the embarrassed *talmid*.

With a gentle smile, Rav Moshe said: "Doesn't the *sefer* look beautiful in blue?" referring to the blue ink that was now all over the book.

Rav Alpert breathed a sigh of relief that his *rebbe* didn't seem to mind his mistake. He asked Rav Moshe, "How is it that the *Rosh Yeshivah* is not bothered at all by this? This expensive *sefer* is brand new and now it is ruined!"

Rav Moshe responded, "Do not think that I just now overcame my urge to get upset. My nature is to be angry, and I have been working against the *middah* of *ka'as*, anger, my entire life!"

V'halachtah B'drachav - The Ways of Hashem

Once, when Hillel was taking leave of his disciples, they said to him: "Master where are you going?" He replied, "To do a pious deed and a kindness to the guest in the house."

They asked, "What may that be?" He replied, "To bathe myself." They responded, "Is that a pious deed and a kindness?"



He replied, "Yes. In the theatres and circuses, the images and statues of the kings must be kept clean. How much more is it a duty of a person to care for his body, since we have been created in the Divine Image and likeness of the King of kings? Additionally, everyday my body is a host to a guest— my *neshamah*. Today it is here and tomorrow it will be gone. I must do my best to give it pleasing accommodations." (*Tosefta*, *Sotah* 4:13)

Rabbi Y Y Jacobsohn

A yungerman called reb Shia came over to me. He said I've got a *kleine maasseh* for you. When people tell me That I have a Kleine maasseh for you, I get triggered.

Reb Shia tells me that just two weeks ago, he went to Uman. He goes into the Tzion of **Reb Nachman Breslover** Zechuso Yagein Aleinu. There is a young man there who looks like a nineteen-year-old kid. He has beautiful long peiyos. He is davenning and saying Tehillim. At the back of his head, he has a long ponytail.

Have you ever seen that? That's a first. Reb Shia thinks, what kind of split personality have I just encountered? [They say that the

definition of chutzpah is that you go to the therapist because you have a split personality, and than you ask for a group discount!] He says, what type of split personality do I have here?



Long peiyos, really long ones, and then a really long ponytail at the back. And the colour of his hair is unique. It is semi- Gingy.

Reb Shia tells me- I am curious. Sholom Aleichem- Aleichem Sholom. What brings you here? Nothing special, I just came to Uman to davenn.

Reb Shia says to me, "Rabbi YY, I knew not to let go, this is going to be good. There is potential here, there's juice".

I ask him, " Where are you from, what's your story"? He says, "you don't want to know my story". "No, I really want to hear your story". Well I have a unique story even relative to all other stories.

I had a Booba - grandmother that that took me in. She brought me up. I couldn't sit still in school. All I wanted to do was to ride on a scooter. And then the electric scooters came out. I begged my Booba for one and she said sure. She bought me an electric scooter. I would wake up at the crack of dawn, get on the scooter, and I would come back at the end of the night.

This was my life. Athletic kid, go on my scooter check out the world. My life became scooters. And grandmother nutured me, fed me,

embraced me and loved me. I said to her, "I can't go to school anymore. I can't sit there".

I was a teenager. I was not involved in Yidishkeit at all. Even though I grew up in Monsey with frum grandparents. I decided that it was time to make some money. I opened up an on-line scooter business selling scooters. Today, I have four employees. They work for me full-time and I earn a lot of money. And I still love scooting around.

Reb Shia says, "wow, and now you are here in Uman, and you have peiyos". He said, "Yeah, I am in Uman, and I am davenning to the Riboino Shel Olam. I need to heal. I have a lot of pain. But I am here, I want to be able to forgive. I want to be able to live a beautiful life."

Shia tells me, I look at him, and I said, "one more question- what's the ponytail all about?" If you are sporting a ponytail, then why do you have such beautiful long peiyos and if you have such beautiful long peiyos, than why are you sporting a ponytail? He said,"leave it alone." I said," I'm just trying to understand. What is this doing for you?"

Friends, open your hearts, so that you will understand who your children are.

He said, a little while ago, I wanted more meaning in my life, so I became a volunteer for Chai Lifeline and Mekimi and all day I visit cancer patients.

Six months ago, I visited a girl who lost all her hair. The problem is that the colour of her hair was so unique that they couldn't find a wig to match. But as I looked at her remaining strands, I said to her that this is my semi-Gingy colour.

I have another two weeks to complete the ponytail, that will allow her to have a wig to be able to protect her dignity!

But I knew how much pain that this would cause my parents, (who threw me out of the house) to see their kid in Monsey with a ponytail,

even though he has peiyos. So I have been in Uman for six months, not to cause them shame or pain.

I have been living here. My four workers have been running my business. I davenn, I learn, I talk to Hashem. I have two more weeks, then I cut it off, give it to the girl, than I will go home.

Reb Shia looks at me with tears in his eyes, and he says, "Rabbi YY, I went in as a judgmental person. What is this clown up to? What new craziness is out there? Is this the new fashion? It used to be a ponytail, now it's peiyos with a ponytail. What's next? What is this wacky trauma going on"?

"I walked out feeling internal remorse and shame. The fact that I didn't realise הַבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה .. ***gaze down from heaven and see***. I didn't have the eyes to see. A ponytail can mean something. I didn't have the eidlekeit within me. I didn't have the zechus to look and see what the truth was".

The truth was that this ponytail was the embodiment of Yiras Shamayim, Ahavas Yisrael, Ahavas HaTorah, Ahavas Hashem, Mesiras Nefesh, Love, Commitment, Dedication, Self-transcendence of the profoundest form, Kibbud Av V'eim.

So I bless you and all of us, that we should be able to cultivate those microscopic spiritual eyes, to be able to zoom in and out.

הַבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם - Look at every one of them from the heavens and **וּרְאֵה** -then you will see the everlasting light that we are zoche to have in our homes,to enrich our lives.

Before you judge someone, walk in their shoes, get to know them. Before you write someone off, listen to their story. There's usually a good reason people are the way they are!

L'Maaseh… A tale to remember



It was a cold snowy night in Manchester which made walking outside very difficult. **The Manchester *Rosh Yeshivah*, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal**, was slowly trying to make his way home, when a car pulled up next to him and the driver offered him a ride.

The driver was a young man, and while driving, he told the *Rosh Yeshivah* that his wife had just given birth to a baby girl. Rav Segal wished him a *mazal tov* and asked him how the mother and new baby were doing. He said that *Baruch Hashem* they were both doing very well.

When they got to the *Rosh Yeshivah's* house, Rav Segal got out of the car and stepped into the snow-covered street. The driver got out of the car as well, to escort the *Rosh Yeshivah* to his house, and to his great surprise, Rav Segal took his hands and started dancing with him in the middle of the snow storm!

The father asked the *Rosh Yeshivah* why he was endangering himself and dancing on the slippery street, and Rav Segal answered that whenever he hears that a mother and child are healthy after childbirth, he is so consumed with *simchah*, happiness and praise for Hashem that he needs to dance! Such was the love that Rav Segal had for another *Yid*.

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

In this weeks' *Parshah* we are taught that a slave who wants to stay beyond his term gets his ear bored (21:5-6). *Rashi* explains that this is for the ear not listening to the commandment to not have another master.

The *Alter of Kelm* adds that the ear has the power to hear, but it is also the conduit for accepting and understanding. The slave's love for his new wife and master are emotions that he is allowing to override that which is right. The action of boring his ear is to 'unplug the stoppers' that are standing in his way of remembering that which is the top priority— serving Hashem, the Master of all.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos



There is a very big mitzvah to be happy on Shabbos. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (77:21) writes that it is forbidden to be pained or distressed, over anything on Shabbos.

Sefer Devarim Niflaim al Shabbos Kodsheinu (p. 139- 140, 154) says that when we take measures to be happy on Shabbos, Hashem is pleased with us, and this causes many good things to come our way. Also, if we have any worries or problems, we should try our best to not think about them on Shabbos.

This shows Hashem how much we love Shabbos, and when Hashem sees this, He will repay us by taking away the problem!

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

The *Chasam Sofer* was once was riding in a carriage with his *Rebbe*, **Rav Nosson Adler**, when the horses suddenly started jumping in fright. They were about to be attacked by a wild bear, and the driver could not control them.

Rav Nosson Adler looked out the window, and the bear saw him and quickly ran back into the woods. The *Chasam Sofer* asked his *Rebbe* why that happened, and Rav Nosson Adler replied, "*Hashem* made man in His image, as *Chazal* tell us, and at the beginning of the creation of the world, even wild animals were afraid of man's G-dly nature. It seems that I still have some of that *Tzelem Elokim*, the image of *Hashem*, and when the bear saw me, he was afraid to harm us!"

Rabbi Shlomo Landau - First Class Honesty

Rav Yehuda Zev Segal zt"l, the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, was once on a train with a student of his, learning together. But soon enough, a rowdy, boisterous group of people stepped onto the train and it quickly became distracting to learn under such noisy conditions.

With this, Rav Segal and his student looked to find another car in the train that was quieter where they could continue learning. But they couldn't find any place, so they went up one class – to first class – fully intending to pay the difference when the conductor came around. But the conductor never came around. It seemed as if the conductor had already gone through all the cars.

As soon as they exited the train and arrived at their destination, Rav Segal hurried to the station master, where they sold tickets, and said, "I owe you money." "What are you talking about?" asked the station master. Rav Segal explained. "We bought a coach fare, but it was very noisy, so we walked into first class. First class was empty and quiet, but we owe you the difference."

The station master was quick to reply. "There was no one there anyway. Don't worry about; it's fine." But Rav Segal saw it otherwise. "No, it's not fine," he said. "Do you have the authority to make the decision that I don't have to pay the difference between a coach ticket and a first class ticket?" At this point, the station master didn't know what to say.



"I want to speak to your supervisor," said Rav Segal. Sure enough, the supervisor came over and said the same. "It's not a problem; don't worry about it." But again, Rav Segal was adamant. "Do you have the authority?" Hearing this now twice, Rav Segal had nothing more to do … than reach into his pocket and pay the difference.

That's a living example of first class honesty. Rav Segal had rock-solid faith that everything Hashem gives us in life, we are supposed to have, and whatever we're not supposed to have, we won't get. But that doesn't mean we take advantage. Quite to the contrary, we give advantage. We must make it right. We must live our lives with the highest degree of integrity. Nothing less. And knowing this, Rav Segal had no problem reaching into his pocket and paying the difference. We can only imagine the Kiddush Hashem he made that day at the train station.

Peninim On The Torah

כי תקנה עבד עברי When you acquire a Hebrew bondsman. *(21:2)*

Chesed, kindness, and *rachamim*, compassion, are two character traits which are extolled by the *Sefer HaChinuch* as the cornerstone of the *mitzvah* of *eved Ivri*. It is through these two character traits that the descendants of the Patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov identified and moulded their national character. In other words, it is the commitment to *chesed* and *rachamim* that Hashem wants to see reaffirmed in His children's activities.



Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates an inspirational story concerning a *yeshivah* student who was experiencing difficulty in finding his *bashert*, designated matrimonial match. He had been prepared to say, "Yes," a number of times. The girls, however, did not have the same positive feeling about spending the rest of their lives with him. He was now seeing a wonderful young lady, to whom he was ready to say, "Yes."

Unfortunately, she was prepared to use this upcoming date to inform him that it would be their *last* date. They went to a coffee shop, where the young man ordered three cups of coffee.

She wondered why he would do that and asked for an explanation. He said, "I ordered one for each of us and the third one for the guard who is outside (quite common in parts of the Holy Land). He stands there all day, and it is an unusually cold day today. He cannot leave his position, so he must be cold. I figured that he could use a cup of hot coffee."

When the young lady heard this, she immediately changed her mind about the young man. Anyone who was so thoughtful of others was the type of spouse for whom she was searching. This was the type of home she sought to build. He would be the perfect partner.

Peninim On The Torah

ויבא משה ויספר לעם את כל דברי ד׳... ויען כל העם ויאמרו כל קול אחד הדברים אשר דבר ד׳ נעשה ***Moshe came and told the people all the words of Hashem… and the entire people responded with one voice and they said, "All the words that Hashem has spoken, we will do."*** *(24:3)*



"Rabbi Meir said: At the time that *Klal Yisrael* stood at *Sinai* prepared to receive the Torah, Hashem said, 'Am I to give you the Torah freely? Rather, you must first provide Me with guarantors (*areivim*) who will guarantee that you will abide by it.'

The Jews suggested that their forefathers would be guarantors. This was not acceptable to Hashem. He countered with the Patriarch's descendants; Avraham begot Yishmael; Yitzchak fathered Eisav; Yaakov complained concerning the various travails which challenged him. Finally, *Klal Yisrael* said: "Our small children shall guarantee us." Hashem replied, "They are good guarantors. By their virtue I will give you the Torah."

The question which begs elucidation is: how are the yet unborn children better guarantors than the Patriarchs and the Prophets whose lives were wholly devoted to Hashem?

When *Klal Yisrael* realised the incredible influence parents have on their future generations, and how perfect their inspiration via their example must be, they acknowledged that their children would be the guarantors for the Torah. This meant that *they*, the generation that stood at *Sinai* – and all ensuing generations, have an overwhelming obligation to not only transmit Torah to their children – but must also impart it by example, because children are acutely insightful and do not respond well to the "Do as I say – not as I do" syndrome associated with parental neglect.

The Jews understood that there is no greater guarantor than themselves. Once *they* accepted the responsibility to inculcate Torah to their children, Hashem acquiesced to their promise. With this in mind, parents must realise that their promise to teach Torah to their children and commitment to transmitting Torah to the next generation, is the reason Hashem granted us the Torah. Therefore, when parents renege on their responsibility, they endanger the very underpinnings of our relationship with the Torah, and, by extension – Hashem.

I recently came across an inspiring story by Rabbi Yechiel Spero (To Light a Spark) that underscores this very idea. The Kupshitz family of *Eretz Yisrael* have been blessed with extraordinary Torah *nachas*, with generations of their children becoming exceptional *talmidei chachamim*, Torah scholars.

Obviously, there was a secret to their success. Anyone who has raised children and reaped *nachas*, knows that it does not just happen.

Many years ago, *Rebbetzin* Kupshitz, who was the matriarch of the family, came to the ***Chazon Ish*** with a request for two *brachos*. First, she requested that her sons be blessed with *kisharon*, acuity,

and *chochmah*, wisdom, so that they have clarity and retention in their learning. Erudition which lacks clarity defeats the purpose. Second, she asked that the *Chazon Ish* bless her sons to always have *cheishek*, deep-rooted desire, to learn more and more Torah. They should not settle. Enough is never enough with regard to Torah.

The *Chazon Ish* listened intently to her requests and rendered the following response. "Regarding their comprehension and retention, Hashem should bless them with outstanding knowledge and with utmost clarity; however, with regard to your second request for passion to learn more and more, I cannot help you." The *Rebbetzin* was dumbfounded, since this was the more important of her requests. Brilliance without desire will only generate minimal knowledge. A person must want to learn, to thirst for Torah.

The *Chazon Ish* added, "I cannot give you a blessing that will catalyse your sons' desire to learn. The only one who could achieve that is you – their mother."

This response startled the *Rebbetzin* even more than the initial "no." Seeing that the *Rebbetzin* was in a state of incredulity, the *Chazon Ish* explained, "The more *you* want them to learn, the greater will be their desire to learn and grow in Torah. The greater your burning desire that they become *gedolei Torah*, giants of Torah, the more they too will want to achieve this enviable milestone. This is how it is achieved."

Years passed and the *Rebbetzin's* sons each became exemplary *gedolim*. Toward the end of her life, the *Rebbetzin* who had garnered so much *nachas* from her sons, was asked how she did it. What was the key to her outstanding success?

She replied, "Because I wanted it."

"But *Rebbetzin*, we all want this for our children. Who does not want their son to be a *talmid chacham*?"

"True, everyone wants this. However, I wanted this and nothing else. When one of my sons was struggling with his learning, I dropped everything to facilitate him. I could not function when my son had difficulty with his *Gemorah*.

On the other hand, even when we hardly had food in our home, but the boys were learning diligently, an air of calm and joy prevailed in our home. Everything revolved around Torah. I just wanted them to learn and be happy learning."

This is how *Klal Yisrael* achieved their *areivus* for the Torah.



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman – Torah Wellsprings

It states (*Shemos* 19:23) **הגבל את ההר וקדשתו** ***"Set boundaries to the mountain and sanctify it."***

Why are boundaries important?

Reb Shmuel Minkas *zt'l* once visited an elderly woman and saw that she had a special siddur that he wanted to own. It was a rare siddur, called *Siddur HaRav*. This siddur contains the Baal HaTanya's commentary printed around the sides of the pages.

Today, this siddur is available for purchase, but it wasn't easy to come by in those days. Reb Shmuel Minkas, a student of the Baal HaTanya, pleaded, "Please sell me the siddur. I will pay you well, and I will buy you another siddur with larger letters, which will serve you better."

She refused. The siddur wasn't for sale. She explained, "Sometimes, the edges of the pages fray and tear. If that happens to my siddur, it will tear at the commentaries, and I will still be able to read all the tefillos. I don't want another siddur. If that siddur tears, I won't see the words of the tefillah!" Reb Shmuel Minkas repeated this story and said that we learn the importance of making *gedorim* and *siyagim*, fences and boundaries. These boundaries distance us

from *aveiros*. And even if we transgress a boundary, we didn't touch the *aveirah* itself. But if we don't have any limits, we are liable of *chas veshalom* transgressing the mitzvos themselves.

Boundaries



Chazal tell us that we were redeemed from Mitzrayim because we didn't change our names, clothing, and language. Of course, some people would call that extreme. They might have asked, "Why can't we dress like the nation where we live? Why can't we speak their language and use their names? Why do we have to stand out all the time?"

However, our clothes, language, and names create walls and boundaries. It is a constant reminder of who we are and where we want to be. It is how we keep far away from intermingling with the goyim among whom we live.

It is important to add that those who make boundaries for hemselves lead happy lives. Don't think that these boundaries of *kedushah* lessen their enjoyment of life.

Reb Shalom Shwadron *zt'l* *mussar drashos* were mixed with umour, as he would comically mock destructive behaviours. Some people thought it was *letzanus*, and they told him that it isn't proper to speak that way.

Reb Shalom Shwadron went into the **Chazon Ish *zt'l*** to ask his opinion on the matter. The Chazon Ish said, "Give me an example of what you say at your *drashos*."

Reb Shalom Shwardon decided to make a full performance. He took a *shtender* and spoke exactly as he would before many people. The Chazon Ish laughed and said, "You should always speak that way. Your humour is important. In this manner, you will save Bnei Yisrael!

In Lithuania, there were great *talmidei chachamim*, and they ere outstanding *yirei Hashem*, too, nevertheless, many youths fell to the Haskalah. Because the *maskilim* had joy, while we didn't. We need joy today. We need to serve Hashem with joy"

Once, in the beis medresh of Rebbe Yoel of Satmar *zt'l*, the *baal korei* stopped the Torah reading because he wasn't certain the *sefer Torah* was kosher. He had found an error in the way a word was written.

The Satmar Rebbe came up to the *bimah* and looked at the word in question. He seemed uncertain and requested that they bring him a few *sefarim*. He stood there, at the *bimah*, studying the matter. Finally, he said, "I think it is better to return this *sefer Torah* to the *aron* and take out another one."

Later, someone asked the Satmar Rebbe, "It wasn't a complicated question. The halachah was obvious that the Torah hould be changed. So why did the Rebbe ask for *sefarim*, and why did you study the matter?"

The Rebbe replied, "Didn't you see? The *sofer* of this *sefer Torah* was in the beis medresh. If I had said immediately that it was *pasul*, he would be embarrassed. Therefore, I made it appear as if it wasn't a clear-cut case to prevent his shame and anguish."

Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt'l*.



The 25th of Shevat is the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt'l*.

Returning from Reb Yisrael Salanter's *levayah*, his students calculated that until Moshiach comes, Reb Yisrael Salatner's *yahrtzeit* will always be during the week of *parashas Mishpatim*.

They explained that Rebbe Yisrael Salanter's primary emphasis was to be cautious with *mishpatim*, with the laws of the Torah regarding monetary matters and *ben adam lechaveiro*.

Thus it is befitting that his *yahrtzeit* should always be in the week we read about these halachos.

Reb Yisrael Salanter used to say, "Being ethical in business is the highest level possible. There is nothing greater." In his time, people emphasized yiras Shamayim and caution with keeping the mitzvos in the best way, but he noticed that when it came to *ben adam lechaveiro*, people were lax. So he established the path of *mussar* to turn the tide around, that people should understand that caring for the needs of others isn't less important than any other mitzvah of the Torah.

"The highest level of charity is to help others help themselves." ~~ Rambam

Bikur Cholim



It states (21:19) , **ורפא ירפא** ***"He should provide for healing."*** which is the source that doctors may cure the sick. Most of us aren't doctors, but we can still help the ill by visiting the sick and doing *bikur cholim*.

According to some *rishonim*, visiting the sick is a mitzvah from the Torah. They write, "It is a great mitzvah. The ill person's life depends on it because the visit lightens the illness.

Furthermore, visitors can offer counsel regarding medical treatment, they can encourage and calm him, and these functions grant life. But if no one comes to visit, the sick person becomes bored, the illness becomes unbearable, and he may die. That would be considered murder."

Another source for bikur cholim is in last week's *parashah* (18:20) **והודעת להם את הדרך ילכו בה** , "Teach them the path on which they should go…" Where do they go? The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 30:) explains that "they should go" visit the sick. It alludes to the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*.

The Gemara (*Nedarim* 40.) relates, "One of Reb Akiva's students was ill, and none of the scholars visited him. However, Reb Akiva himself did come to visit him. He swept and washed the floor, which revived the sick person's spirits. The ill student exclaimed, 'Rebbe, you granted me life.'

"Reb Akiva went out and taught his students, 'Whoever doesn't visit the sick, it is like murder, and whoever visits the sick causes him to live."

The Seder HaYom writes, "*Bikur cholim* is the highest form of kindness, as Chazal (*Nedarim* 39:) say, 'There is no limit [to the greatness of] *bikur cholim*.'

Sometimes with clever, encouraging, and kind words, you can revive the ill person, and that will enable him to live. We saw this many times because sometimes a person visits the sick for an hour or two, and the ill person says, 'I feel like a new person. My *neshamah* came back to me.' And we notice that the illness became lighter."

A primary part of *bikur cholim* is to bring joy to the sick person. Positive spirits and hope play a significant role in a person's ability to fight disease. Therefore, Rambam (in his *sefer* on health) writes, "tell a sick person happy stories that will gladden his heart. Tell him interesting news that will take his mind off his illness and make him laugh. So, when you choose someone to be with an ill person, choose someone who can make him happy because that is needed for the ill."

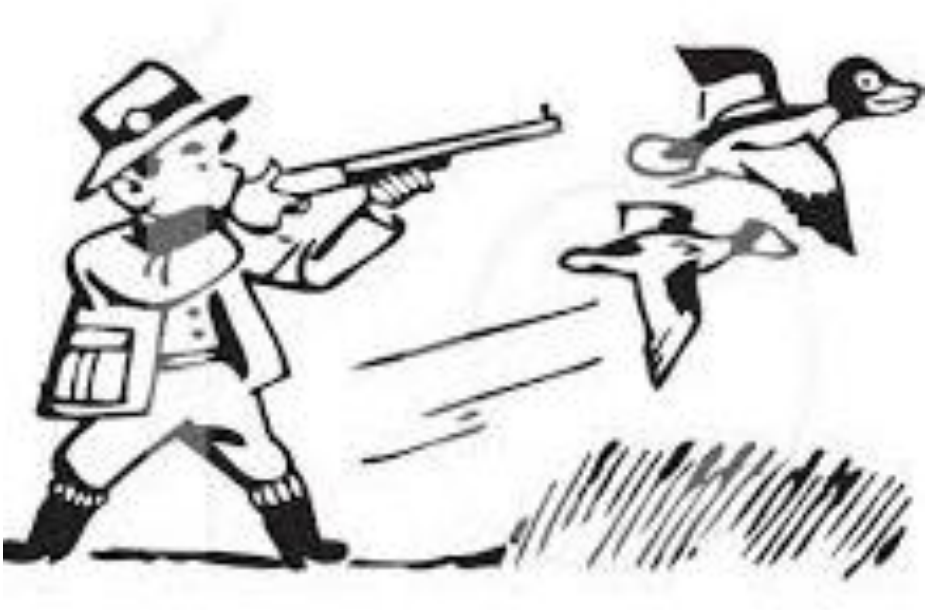
The Gemara (Nedarim 40) lists the rewards for *bikur cholim*. They are: You will be saved from the *yetzer hara*, from Gehinom, and affliction. Everyone will honour you, and you will have good friends who give you good counsel, and you will be protected from bad friends who offer bad counsel.

The *meforshim* explain that these rewards are *midah kneged midah*. For example, he helped the ill person feel better, so he will also be protected from affliction.

We can add that he will certainly be spared from the condition the ill person is going through.

The Way Of Emunah

אִם כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת עַמִּי אֶת הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ ***When you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with You*** (22:24)



A man once asked his son, who was a very smart boy, the following question: If ten birds landed on our roof and hunters came and killed four of them with their guns, how many birds would be left on the roof?

The boy answered, "There would be four birds on the roof."

The father said, "You are wrong. Ten minus four is six."

The boy replied, "If the hunters shot four of them, it would make a loud noise and the remaining six birds would have flown away. The only birds that would still be on the roof would be the four dead ones." The father then said, "My son, you are correct."

This story can be used as a parable to bring out the point that when one gives money to tzedakah, it may seem like that money is gone and "dead", and the giver will have no more benefit from it. It may appear like the only money he has left is the money that he did not give away and which he still has in his wallet. That money seems to still be "alive" for him.

However, the truth is the opposite. The "live" money can always fly away and leave one's possession. The only money one truly retains possession of is the "dead" money that he gave away to tzedakah. That money is definitely his and cannot be taken away from him.

Accordingly, we can explain the pasuk to be saying that if you lend money to others, meaning that you do mitzvos with your money by giving it to poor people, then עִמָּךְ, "it is with you". Only this money remains yours and can never leave your possession

Short Story Of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

The Chazon Ish, ZT" L, was known to be scrupulous his entire life never to pain another person and was especially careful in all monetary manners. The following story illustrates how Hashem helped the Chazon Ish fully accomplish this.

Right after the Chazon Ish passed away, a non-religious older man from a distant kibbutz happened to be in Bnei Brak. He paused to read all the posted signs announcing the passing of this great Tzaddik. By chance, the man stopped a close disciple of the Chazon Ish, Rav Shmuel Greineman, ZT"L, and asked him details about the famous man who had passed away. It turned out that he had known the Chazon Ish from years prior, as they had lived in the same town in Belarus before the war.

In fact, he told Rav Greineman, the Chazon Ish had borrowed some small change from him in order to buy a train ticket….and had never paid him back! Rav Greineman was stunned!

He told the elderly person that the Chazon Ish had disclosed on numerous occasions that he had once borrowed some money before the war, and was extremely perturbed that he had been unable to pay that person back because they had lost contact after the war.

Rav Greineman immediately paid back the old debt on behalf of his Rebbe. Hashem had rewarded the Chazon Ish for a lifetime of care in all monetary manners, and arranged for the one minor debt to be repaid even after the Chazon Ish had passed away.

Eved Ivri

Rebbe Leibele Eiger *zt'l* in *Toras Emes* teaches us a very important idea regarding the *eved ivri*, which is worth repeating here. He writes, "Although the literal laws of *eved ivri* don't apply in this generation, nevertheless, the Torah is eternal and is applicable at all times. The essence of this mitzvah is that a person should be liberated from all sorts of slaveries. He shouldn't be enslaved to anyone other than Hashem. And if he forgets and becomes enslaved, he goes free on the seventh [on Shabbos]…."

He explains that when one knows that everything is from Hashem, he will be enslaved solely to Him. This is a very important lesson, because many people feel enslaved. They are unable to be themselves and act as they understand they should because they are always trying to please others. The Torah therefore begins parashas Mishpatim with the laws of the *eved ivri*, and how he can go free. This reminds everyone to try and free themselves from their slavery, and to be enslaved to Hashem, alone.

whY I Matter by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

אִם־בְּגַפּוֹ יָבֹא בְּגַפּוֹ יֵצֵא אִם־בַּעַל אִשָּׁה הוּא וְיָצְאָה אִשְׁתּוֹ עִמּוֹ "If he is the husband of a wife, his wife shall leave with him." (21:3)

Was the wife of the eved ivri enslaved as well? She was not. Rather, explains **R' Yehonatan Eyebschutz z"l** (Germany; died 1764), this verse is highlighting the oneness of husband and wife. When he is enslaved, she is pained by his troubles, and it is as if she is enslaved too. (Tiferet Yehonatan)

"The world exists for the sake of kindness." - Rashi

Rosh Chodesh Adar

The beginning influences everything that follows. Therefore, *rosh chodesh* is an important day. **The Ahavas Shalom *zt'l*** says that if one serves Hashem on *rosh chodesh*, even if it is just for an hour or two, this sends the *kedushah* of *rosh chodesh* into the entire month because the beginning influences everything that follows.

The Chozeh of Lublin *zt'l* said that on *rosh chodesh Adar* one should daven that all the tefillos he said up to that day should go up to Heaven. Because the holy sefarim write that *tefillos* that aren't said properly don't go up before Hashem. But at an auspicious moment, all those stranded tefillos can ascend before Hashem.

The Chozeh of Lublin teaches that on *rosh chodesh* Adar, one can pray that Hashem should accept and answer all those *tefillos* that had not yet gone up before Hashem.

Chazal say, **הרוצה שיתקיימו נכסיו** , if a person wants his tefillos to be answered, **יטע בהן אדר** , he should pray for that on *rosh chodesh* Adar. And then his prayers will go up, and everything will turn into *chesed* and compassion."

Maaseh Avos Siman Lebonim

22:1 אִם־בַּמַּחְתֶּרֶת יִמָּצֵא הַגַּנָּב וְהֻכָּה וָמֵת אֵין לוֹ דָּמִים

During his over thirty years of political activity in the Israeli Knesset, **Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz z"l** served as a member of the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs and other committees, and worked to help Mosdos HaTorah and the Chareidi community in general. He garnered tremendous respect from fellow MKs, religious and non-religious alike, for his honesty, integrity, conviction and acumen. At the same time, he was respected by the Gedolei Hador for his practical intelligence, his dedication, and ability to be mekadesh Shem Shamayim in every setting.

Prime Minister David Ben Gurion used to enjoy talking with him, and once asked to show him where in the Torah there is any hint to an exemption from army service for yeshivah students. Rabbi Lorincz promptly showed him the Rambam's description of Shevet Levi and the Prime Minister was mightily impressed.



He was the only person able to report the impressions of the famous meeting between the **Chazon Ish** and Ben Gurion from the perspective of both individuals. In the early 1950's, there was an incident that took place which landed two Israeli brothers in jail. The two brothers lived out in a farming community and shared a large ranch house. They had a barn and a chicken coop and they lived a simple life, albeit not a very religious one.

One night, a man broke into their chicken coop with the intention of stealing their property and causing damage. The brothers were alerted to the break-in and accosted the man, who put up quite a struggle. Together, the two brothers fought back and struck the man a terrible blow that killed him. The authorities arrived and did not believe the brothers' account of how the story went down, and the two brothers were arrested and thrown into an Israeli jail. After a long and showy trial, they were found guily and sentenced to multiple years in prison for murder.

One day, Rabbi Lorincz received a message in his office from none other than the **Chazon Ish, R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz zt"l**. It was not long before the Tzaddik passed away, and he asked Rabbi Lorincz to please implore the President of Israel at the time,

Yitzchak Ben Tzvi, to wave the remaining years on the sentence of these two brothers, and allow them to go free. Rabbi Lorincz was surprised. He, like most other people, had forgotten about this trial, which was sensationalized over eight months prior in the Israeli press, but had now shifted out of the public's consciousness.

He went to the home of the Chazon Ish and found him lying on his bed in a weakened state. He asked the Tzaddik why he felt he should go to President Ben Tzvi at this time on behalf of two convicted murderers?

The Chazon Ish replied, "Al pi halacha, these two brothers should not have been found guilty of murder and sentenced to such a long imprisonment. It would seem to be a case of **הבא במחתרת** of which the Gemara rules: **הבא להרגך השכם להרגו..** - 'If someone comes to kill you, kill him first.' (Sanhedrin 72b) They found someone breaking into their property and did not know what his intentions were, so in order to protect themselves and their possessions, they fought back and he was killed. For this, they should not have to serve such a long sentence." The Chazon Ish added that he should tell the president in his name that eight months in prison is long enough, but that they do not need to serve any longer than this.

Rabbi Lorincz wasn't sure why the president would listen to him but at the behest of the Chazon Ish, he pledged to do all he could to set these men free. Rabbi Lorincz made an appointment and brought the case to Ben Tzvi. He explained that the Chazon Ish feels eight months is enough and they should be set free.

The president's face took on an expression of surprise. "I have heard all about the greatness of the Chazon Ish, but I never realized to what extent. For him to be so concerned about two brothers whom he does not even know personally, and to even calculate how much of a jail sentence they should serve, that is beyond my comprehension. I will see what I can do on their behalf."

Indeed, not long after, the brothers were released from jail. The two brothers returned to their farm, but now they were changed men. After recognizing the kindness that was shown to them by the Chazon Ish, they became serious Yarei Shamayim and Bnei Torah, and spent much of their days learning.



Chizuk – Inspiration

A premature baby needed blood to survive. The father donated blood and the baby's brother "Moshe" also wanted to donate blood. There was one problem. The hospital sign said that you needed to be 17 to give blood. Moshe was only 16.

"But I am in my 17th year," Moshe said. His father responded, "That doesn't make you 17. You can't represent that you are 17 and give blood." Moshe pleaded, "But I am in my 17th year, let me ask my Rebbie." The father said firmly, "You are not 17 and no Rebbie can make you 17. You will not be donating blood."

A week later, Moshe was in a serious accident. He survived, Boruch Hashem. The doctor who treated him was told that Moshe wanted to give blood a week ago. The doctor declared, "Moshe lost a lot of blood from this accident. Had he given blood last week, he would not have had enough blood in his body at the time of the accident to survive the transport from the accident scene to the hospital."

When Moshe's mother told me this story, she told me to tell people, "מִי הָאִישׁ הֶחָפֵץ חַיִּים... נְצֹר לְשׁוֹנְךָ מֵרָע וּשְׂפָתֶיךָ מִדַּבֵּר מִרְמָה (The person who wants life should guard their tongue from speaking evil and lips from speaking falsehood). My son is alive today, because last week when he wanted to give blood, his father would not let him misrepresent that he was 17." (**Rabbi Paysach Krohn**)

An Anonymous Kindness By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Mrs. Edith Bloch and her husband, Avraham Abba (now both deceased), were in Florida at a hotel on vacation in late winter 1988. Friday night, at the Shabbat meal, a chassidic woman sitting at her table said to her: "You look like a Lubavitcher, I am very sorry about the passing of your Rebbetzin Schneerson. I have a nice story to tell you about her."

This is the episode she related. "A group of us women were Bobover chassidim and Holocaust survivors. We were all young and married, yet still had not merited to have children. Since we were the only survivors of our large families, we each went to the Bobover Rebbe for blessings, but to no avail. "One of the group decided to go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing because she heard he was a 'baal mofais' - a holy individual who has brought about miracles from G-d. About 10 of us women decided to join her.



"We knew where the Rebbe lived, because at the time the Bobover Rebbe lived right next door to him. However, when we came to 1304 President Street, we got cold feet and couldn't decide who should be the one to knock on the Rebbe's door. "We were standing on the sidewalk talking about it, when a car pulled out of the driveway. The woman driver walked out of the car and asked us what she could do for us. We stumbled over our words, but finally we told her about our predicament.

"The woman took out a pad and pen from her purse and asked us for our names. She then proceeded to give us the name of a fertility

doctor in Manhattan and told us to call him in a few days." This chassidishe woman continued and said, "I don't know what happened to all the other women. We all went our own ways. This is what happened with me.

"I called the doctor's office and the person at the other end told me that she could make me an appointment with this very busy doctor in a year!

I started to cry and the person on the other end asked me to repeat my name. She then told me to wait. A few minutes later she came back to the phone, and told me that they actually have an appointment for me already reserved for the following week.

"Through that doctor," she continued, "G-d blessed me with a daughter. And that daughter has given me 10 grandchildren! "Later, I found out that the person who made the appointments for us was none other than the Rebbetzin herself." Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor's Note: Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson's 34th Yahrzeit was 22nd Shevat.

Parsha Points to Ponder by Ozer Alport

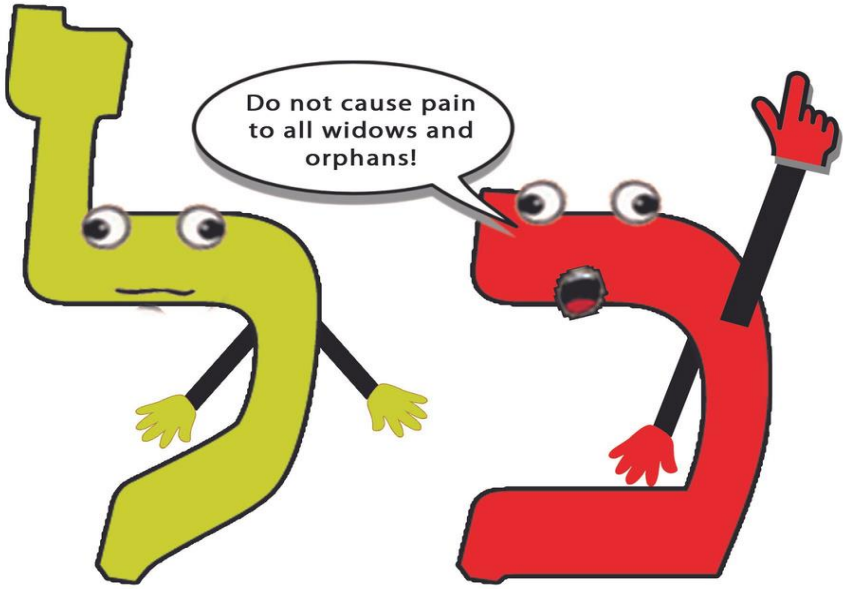
A master who knocks out the eye or tooth of his non-Jewish slave must immediately free the slave (21:25-26). The Gemora in Kiddushin (24a) rules that a slave goes free not just through the loss of an eye or a tooth at the hands of his owner, but of any limb that will not grow back. Why does the Torah specifically single out the eye and the tooth if many other body parts are also included in this law? (Rabbeinu Bechaye, Peninim MiShulchan HaGra)

Rabbeinu Bechaye notes that Noach cursed Cham and his descendants with slavery as a punishment for Cham seeing his father's nakedness and relating it to his brothers (Bereishis 9:25).

Since slavery is a punishment for sinning with the eyes and the mouth, it is appropriate that if they are damaged, the slave has received an alternate form of punishment and is now exempt from slavery.

The **Vilna Gaon** adds that according to the strict letter of the law, the slave should only go free if both his eye and his mouth are wounded, but Hashem mercifully allowed him to be freed even if only one is injured.

Parsha Thoughts By: Mordechai Sapoznick



The פָּסוּק says, **כָּל אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן** - "***You shall not cause pain to any widow or orphan.***" 22:21

Why does the פָּסוּק have to add the word **כָּל** - all'? **Horav Chaim Kanievsky** שליט"א explains that the word **כָּל** is coming to include even a widow or an orphan of a king. One might think that it doesn't matter if one causes pain to them because they are powerful and tough and wouldn't get hurt so easily.Therefore, the פָּסוּק adds the word **כָּל** to let us know that even to them we cannot cause any pain.

Emunah is the foundation of all greatness, the source of all hapiness, and the cure for all suffering. – Rabbi Avraham Yitzchok Kook.

Predictable But So Often Preventable by Avraham Y. Heschel

The last thing a caring Jew would want to do is hurt the feelings of another, especially a widow or orphan, the gravity of which is taught in this week's parsha. Yet with more awareness and foresight, so much anguish could be avoided.

In this feature, we explore this topic and learn how Gedolei Yisrael approached this issue.

Double Cry, Double Pain- Exponential Reward

You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry.

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן׃ אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתוֹ ***You shall not oppress any widow or orphan. If you oppress him, [beware,] for if he cries out to Me, I will surely hear his cry.*** 22:21-22

Many meforshim wonder about the double words in this passuk.עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה ,צָעֹק יִצְעַק and שָׁמֹעַ אֶשְׁמַע. In each case, one word would have sufficed to express the meaning.

The Kli Yakar asks further, why the Torah, which appears to be referring to both a widow and an orphan, uses the word ***oso*** – cause ***him*** pain, rather than ***osam*** – cause ***them*** pain.

The Kli yakar explains that since Hashem is the father of orphans, He too is troubled when they are pained. Therefore, the Torah tells us, אִם־עַנֵּה – if you will cause pain to an orphan, תְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ – you are causing pain to Him, k'vayachol, to Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself.

At that time, there is a great hue and cry in Shamayim, and this Heavenly cry is coupled with the cry of the orphan in this world. It is to these two cries that Hashem listens.

Another explanation for the double lashon of **עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה** is the fact that when feelings of an orphan are hurt, this also reminds him of his devastating loss. *"If only my father were still alive, this person would never have acted this way to me"*, the orphan thinks to himself. So every time he is hurt, it is a double pain.

A Reason To Rush

A talmid of **Hagaon Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l**, came to bid farewell to his rebbi before returning home before Pesach. Harav Shlomo Zalman, who was aware that this talmid was an orphan, gave him some surprising parting advice.

"Do not spend any more time than necessary on bedikas chametz," he urged his talmid. "Search for as long as you are required to, but not any longer than that."

He explained why. "The longer you are bodek, the more time your mother will have to think to herself, 'My husband used to do the bedikah in such-and -such a way…' These memories will cause her pain. Therefore, hurry the bedikah so that she will not have time to think."

Not Just Widows and Orphans

While we are obligated to be exceedingly careful in regard to the feelings of almanos and yesomim, it is important to remember that we need to be on the lookout for the feelings of every Yid.

Harav Avraham Genechovski, zt"l was standing alongside another well known talmid chacham at the bus stop in Yerushalim awaiting a Bnei Brak-bound bus, when a van pulled up infront of them. The driver, himself a ben Torah, who was aquainted with Harav

Genechovski, was headed to the same destination, and was glad to offer the two Torah scolars a lift.

As the van drove off, HaRav Genechovski's companion turned to him and asked him a complex question in Choshen Mishpat. An area in which Rav Genechovski, famed for his Torah knowledge, had particular expertise.

The companion was most baffled by his puzzling reply. "In the local zoo he replied, there is a girraffe. Now, this animal comes from abroad. How do you think that they managed to transport such a tall animal here"?

For the rest of the trip, Harav Genechovski continued to speak about similar seemingly frivolous topics, never addressing the choshen Mispat dilemma. It was only after arriving in Bnei Brak and alighting from the vehicle that he explained. "The driver is a talmid Chacham he said, but in this complex Choshen Mishpat question, he would be unable to add anything to the disscussion.

The driver's wife is sitting in the back of the van. Were she to hear us discussing and see her husband remain silent, it would lessen his honour in her eyes."

The Unusual Sendoff

The masterfully written biography of **Harav Shimshon Pincus zt"l**, describes how, like her husband, Rebbetzen Chaya Pincus was a model of kindness and sensitivity. Her sons nostalgically recall the sweet moments when she would escort them to the bus stop on the way to yeshivah-especially on the first day of a new zman, when they left with suitcases packed with their personal effects.

On one occasion, much to his surprise, Rebbetzin Pincus declined to walk one of her boys to the bus stop. Instead, she accompanied him only as far as the building lobbey and there she said goodbye and showered him with brachos for the new zman.

"Why aren't you coming?" he asked in surprise and dissapointment. It was only when the boy repeated the question and she saw the deep disappointment on his face that she felt forced to reveal the reason.

"I heard that a certain orphaned bachur is also leaving today to yeshivah and is probably taking the same bus as you. If he sees us together, he will probably feel a twinge of pain over the fact that he doesn't have a mother to escort him to the bus stop."

Terse Praise

The son of a prominent Russian Rav once approached **Harav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, zt"l** for a letter of recommendation. Rav baruch Ber complied and wrote a very warm letter, using lavish titles and heaping praise on the bachur. However, when he mentioned the boy's father in the letter, Rav Baruch Ber used a single respectful, but rather minimal title.

The puzzled bachur expressed his astonishment. "I wish I could reach even close to my father's level. Why did the Rebbe give him only one title and several titles to me?"

"Your parents are divorced," Rav Baruch Ber replied, "and you mentioned to me that you will be travelling from here to your mother. When she sees this letter, she will certainly have much nachas from those descriptions of you. If the letter also included lavish praise of your father, it would lessen your mother's enjoyment.

"On the other hand,"Rav Baruch Ber continued, "I know your father well. If he sees the letter, what I wrote to him will not bother him, for he has no need for titles. After all, I am writing about you, not about him,"

Rosh Chodesh Adar Segolot - Rabbi Raphael Avitan

We have the capability to receive our salvation on Rosh Chodesh Adar.

1. The holy Kabbalist **Rabbi Chaim Vital Z"tl** revealed that on Rosh Chodesh Adar, it is essential to say as many chapters of Tehilim as possible, which brings excellent salvation. (Even if you can only say a few, it's better to recite them than none at all).

2. When - ***Mishe Nichnas Adar Marbin b'Simcha*** - Whoever enters Adar increases their joy.

That's why it's important to hear happy music on Rosh Chodesh and to dance for a few minutes, even in a room alone. **Rabbi Nachman of Breslav Z"tl** writes that whoever does this sweetens all the judgments against themselves.

3. It is noteworthy to say the verses that correspond to your name and your mother's name in Tehillim Chapter 119. For example, **דוד בן שרה** would say the 8 verses for **ד**, then recite the 8 verses that begin with **ו** going back to **ד** —saying all the verses including for the words ben or bat, and the mother's name (letters)—followed by the letters **ש.מ.ח.ה** which spells out joy.

4. On each day of Rosh Chodesh, it is good to recite the -Tikkun Haklali - General rectification, revealed to us by Rabbi Nachman of Breslev. They are chapters 16, 32, 41, 42, 59, 77, 90, 105, 137, 150 of Tehillim. (**טז, לב, מא, מב, נט, עז, צ, קה, קלז, קנ**)

5. It is good to say the Igeret HaRamban. The RAMBAN wrote the letter to his son, found in many Siddurim.

6. After reading the letter, take a few minutes and thank the Creator in your language for everything you have. And most importantly, ask and beg for what you are missing because the holy **Chozeh of Lublin Z"tl** revealed to us that the prayers on Rosh Chodesh Adar are very powerful and can accomplish a lot. Therefore,

it is important to pray in your own words throughout Rosh Chodesh, and G-d willing to receive your salvation.

We wish everyone a happy and blessed month.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

מִדְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר תִּרְחָק 23:7 ***From words of Falsehood, you should keep far away.*** It is interesting that there is no other mitzva or aveira in The Torah that uses the word **תִּרְחָק -** you should keep far away.

Shloime Hamelech in Mishlei (30:8) says almost the exact same thing - שָׁוְא וְדִבַר־כָּזָב הַרְחֵק מִמֶּנִּי - ***Distance falsehood and the lying word from me.***



Why is it so important to keep far away from lying, cheating and not saying the truth?

I believe, because frienships and businesses simply cannot exhistwhen there are lies and fabrications. As a matter of fact, **Rabbenu Bechaye** tells us something so important about being emess.

He writes **כל המחזיק במידת האמת תפילתו נשמעת** that anybody who retains the midah of emess, his tefilah will be heard. Why? Because it says **קרוב ה' לכל קראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת** ***Hashem is close to those call to Him with honesty.***

We know that today there are so many problems, and we need Hashem to answer our tefilos.

He says one more fascinating thing. In the first pasuk in the Torah, every single nekuda – vowel is there except one – the Shuruk - ּ is missing. The Shuruk is spelt **שרק** . This is Roshe tevos of the word

שקר and sheker cannot be mentioned in the first pasuk in the Torah in any form or shape at all, because it represents **כל התורה כולה**.

So let's not over-exaggerate. Let's not lie. Like this, we can exist and co-exist and all our tefilos should be answered.

Sparks Of Shabbos



HaRav Shimshon Pinkus zt"l posits that the key to getting the most out of Shabbos is how we enter it. If one is ready for Shabbos early, and awaits it, he will gain much more from the kedusha of the day.

The reason why most people aren't ready in time is because the Satan does his utmost to stop us. Even during the summer months, a person can work from 8 am to prepare and he is still rushing, because the Satan knows that on Shabbos he will be silenced, and so he grows stronger and fights to disturb us.

This is why often Shabbos chol ha'moed is much easier to prepare for, as the Satan is already in a weakened state. It is therefore incumbent upon us to fight harder to resist the Satan's tactics and enter Shabbos, with full force, fully prepared, yet in a relaxed state.

"Bitachon is not about denying reality, but about recognizing that Hashem is the ultimate reality." – Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

The Fruit Store



*One day, **Horav Avigdor Miller** זצ"ל walked into a fruit store and was just walking around. The owner asked Rav Miller if he could help him with anything. Rav Miller answered that he just wanted to look at the fruit, so he can appreciate how merciful Hashem is by creating such delicious colourful fruit for us!*

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

לא תשא שמע שוא (23:1)

אזהרה ... לדיין שלא ישמע דברי בעל דין עד שיבא בעל דין חבירו (רש"י)



Even in his youth, **Rav Yonason Eibeshutz** was legendary for his diligence in studying Torah day and night, showing no interest in joining the other kids at the games and sports so popular among children. When asked about it, he explained that Rashi writes that it is forbidden for a judge to listen to one of the litigants until the other side is present to have a chance to rebut the claims and allegations. The sages teach that the yetzer ha'ra is present in a person from the moment he is born, but his yetzer tov isn't given to him until he

becomes an adult. "If so," young Yonason brilliantly concluded, "it may be that the yetzer ha'ra is correct in trying to get me to take a break from my studies and join the other kids in their games, but as a judge who must determine the right course of action, I am forbidden from listening to him until I am able to hear the opposing arguments presented by my yetzer tov, and until then I just keep sitting and learning!"

Olam HaEmes

R' Shimon of Yaroslav lived to a ripe old age. When asked the secret of his longevity he replied: "Everything that Hashem does is good. However, when things happen to people that they consider bad, they question Him and say that it was unfair, or should not have happened.

He therefore has to take them to the Olam HaEmes, the World of Truth of the next world, to show them why what He did was not only just, but good and necessary. I, on the other hand, am content with whatever whatever Hashem does to me, because I know that all He does is for good. Since He has nothing to prove to me, He has no need to bring me to the next world just yet!"

מכה איש ומת מות יומת

He who strikes a man, so that he dies, shall surely be put to death (21:12)

The numerical value of the Hebrew letters of the words***"he who strikes a man"*** **מכה איש** and ***"a man who strikes"*** **אִישׁ כִּי יַכֶּה** (Vayikra 24:17) is the same as the letters of the name "**עשו**." -376

Violence and murder are the attributes of **עשו**, and not **יעקב**. (Nachalas Chamisha)

Rabbi YY Jacobson - It's Not You

Sit back for a moment and read the following. Allow your heart and mind to soak in a deep truth about yourself.

When things crop up, don't be afraid of your feelings. You're bigger than any of your emotions. You can contain anything that is happening in your brain. Your soul is Divine and infinite. Anything that arises in your mind – any thought, any sensation – whether pain, sadness, anger or despair, don't be afraid.

Look at the thought, study the emotion and observe it, but don't define yourself by it. Take in a deep breath and let it out, and be compassionate towards yourself and calm within yourself. Study the problem, but recognize that you are not it.

You are not your thoughts, your skeletons, your stress, your depression, your trauma, your anxiety, your hatred. Allow yourself to respect these emotions, but don't define yourself by it. It will teach you where to grow, but don't let it determine the trajectory of your life and patterns of your behavior.

Let it be, give it its space.

The great sages call thoughts, "*Levushim*," garments. Thoughts are clothing you put on and take off. But they are not *you.* Your shirt may be dirty, stained or too big or too small, but you can take it off. Sometimes it looks like you, because it's on you, but it still is not you.

Who are you? You are Divine, you are love, you are infinity, you are the light of Hashem in this world. - Never label your soul. Never limit yourself. The power you have within, the infinite energy you hold, can never be extinguished!

Most people do not fail because they lack knowledge, but because they lack attention. ~ Ramchal- Mesillas Yesharim, Introduction.

The Story of Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis



Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis (Rabbi Meir, Master of Miracles) was a great sage who lived in the Mishnaic era. The name "Meir" is actually a sobriquet — his real name is thought to have been Nahori or Misha. The name Meir, meaning "Illuminator" in Hebrew, was given to him because he "enlightened" the eyes of scholars in Torah study and to know the light of G-d. The epithet 'Baal Haneis' means "the master of miracles" which was added due to the wondrous miracles that G-d performs in his merit.

At the end of 66 CE, there was a Jewish revolt in Judea stemming from Greek and Jewish religious tension. According to the Talmud, Nero Claudius Caesar (37-68 CE) fifth and last Roman Emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, wanted to lead his army into battle against Jerusalem.

He wished to determine if he would be successful in destroying the Holy City. He therefore shot arrows in all four directions. Miraculously they all fell towards Jerusalem.

He took this as a heavenly sign that he would be victorious. He then asked a passing child to repeat the Scriptural verse he had learned that day. The child quoted a verse in Ezekiel 25-14 "I will take revenge of Edom, through the Jewish people".

Nero became terrified. He said to himself, "G-d wants me to destroy His House and later avenge Himself in me!" Nero decided to flee to Rome and convert to Judaism to avoid Divine retribution.

Vespasian was then dispatched in his stead to put down the rebellion. Jewish tradition reports that Rabbi Meir was a descendant of Emperor Nero. Rabbi Meir studied under Rabbi Yishmael and then under Rabbi Akiva. He also studied under the famed scholar Elisha ben Avuya, who after adopting a worldview considered heretical by his fellow Tannaim, the rabbis of the Talmud refrained from relating teachings in his name and referred to him as Acher, the "Other One".

Rabbi Meir continued studying under him while at the same time used their relationship to implore him incessantly to repent his ways and return to the fold. When Elisha was on his deathbed Rabbi Meir was there and one last time begged him to repent.

Elisha asked "After all I have done, will I still be accepted?

Rabbi Meir said: Is it not written: You return a person to dust (Psalm 90:3) which means, even to the point that a life is ground to the dust one can return. Elisha ben Abuya cried and died.

Prayer Over the Burning Grave of His Teacher

Rabbi Meir rejoiced and said "It seems to me that my teacher departed in a moment of repentance". When they buried him, a fierce fire came and began to burn his grave. They came and told Rabbi Meir: Your teacher's grave is burning. Rabbi Meir went out and spread his Tallis over Elisha's grave and prayed. The fire died down.

When later generations questioned how it was permitted for Rabbi Meir to continue studying under Elisha even after he had soured, the response was given that Rabbi Meir was very great and he was able to take only the good and reject the bad. Rabbi Meir became one of the greatest of the Tannaim.

There are three hundred and thirty five laws in the Mishnah that are explicit quotes in the name of Rabbi Meir. In addition, there is a rule in the Talmud that all anonymously authored opinions in the

Mishnah are attributed to Rabbi Meir. One of the sages of the Talmud, Rav Acha Bar Chanina said:There is no question that Rabbi Meir was the greatest scholar of his generation. Nevertheless, the final Halacha is not necessarily established according to his opinion because he was so brilliant, the greatest sages of his generation could not plumb the depth of his great genius and wisdom."

Rabbi Meir was married to Beruriah, one of the few women cited in the Talmud and famous for her great brilliance and wisdom. She was the daughter of Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradyon, one of the ten Jewish leaders martyred by the Roman Government.

The Roman Government Punishes Rabbi Meir's In-Laws

The Roman Government ordered that Rabbi Chanina and his wife be executed for teaching Torah publicly. They also decreed that their younger daughter (Beruriah's sister) be placed in a jail. Beruriah asked Rabbi Meir to save her sister.

Rabbi Meir took a bag of gold coins and went to the jail disguised as a Roman horseman. He offered the money as a bribe to the guard. The guard replied, "When my supervisor comes, he will notice the prisoner missing and kill me."

Rabbi Meir replied that when you are in danger - say the words, "G-d of Meir - answer me" and you will be saved." The guard wondered, "How can I be guaranteed that this will save me?" Rabbi Meir replied, "Look! There are man-eating dogs over there. I will go over to them and you will see for yourself."

Bribes the Prison Guard

Rabbi Meir walked towards the dogs. They ran over to tear him apart. He cried out "G-d of Meir - answer me!", and the dogs retreated. The guard was thus convinced and handed over the girl to Rabbi Meir.

When the prison supervisors came, the guard bribed them with the money. Eventually, the money was exhausted, and the guard's deed

was publicized. The government arrested the guard and sentenced him to death by hanging. When they tied the rope around his neck he cried out "G-d of Meir - answer me!" The rope tore and the guard escaped.

Rabbi Meir suffered great personal tragedy. He had two sons and a daughter. When his two dear sons suddenly passed away on the Sabbath, his wife Beruriah covered them and hid the news from him so as not to sadden him on this holy day.

After the Sabbath she asked him, "What if someone gave me a great treasure to hold for him and he now demands that I return it, must I give it back?"

"Of course," he replied, not realizing what she was leading up to. She took his hand and led him into the room where the two dead children lay. When she removed the cover and he realized the great tragedy, he began to cry. She confronted him "Didn't you just say that we must return the treasure to its owner? G-d gave them to us and now G-d took them back. May His name be blessed". In fact, you my dear husband taught that "one is required to bless G-d for the bad just like for the good. (Talmud, Berachot 48).



The Tzadik is Buried on the Shores of Lake Kinneret Near Tiberus

Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis passed away on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Iyar. He is buried on the shores of Lake Kinneret, only a short distance from the city of Tiberius. The grave of Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis is one of the holiest sites in the Jewish world and thousands of people flock there to pray for their salvation.

Before his death, Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis promised - as his legacy to all generations - that he will personally

intercede in Heaven, on behalf of anyone in distress, who will give charity to the poor in Israel in his memory.

To this very day it has been a sacred and hallowed tradition for Jews, in crisis or need, to recite the words "G-d of Meir - answer me!" while giving Tzedakah to the Rabbi Meir Haness charity.

Countless stories abound of men and women who during a personal crisis, experienced miraculous help when they gave charity to these holy funds in memory of Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis.

[whY I Matter for the Young Israel of Midwood in Brooklyn.]

The Power of a Note



Every year, Rabbi Perlman,* a Rebbi of sixth-grade boys in Brooklyn, gives a major test on the Gemara that the children have learned since Chanukah. The day of the test arrived and there was great excitement and trepidation in the class. Yanky,* who never did well in class, was sitting unusually serenely in his seat.

Rabbi Perlman called the class to order and reinforced that from the moment he gave out the papers, there would be no talking permitted at all. The boys began writing feverishly. The rebbi sat quietly at his desk, scanning the boys as some wrote, some thought, some erased and wrote again.

Yanky Took a Piece of Paper from His Shirt Pocket

And then he saw it. Yanky had taken from his shirt pocket a piece of paper and put it on top of the test paper. Rabbi Perlman was aghast! Did Yanky think he wouldn't see it? Yanky looked at the paper, put it

back into his pocket, and began answering a question. Rabbi Perlman decided not to say anything yet.

But Yanky kept doing it over and over – answering some questions, taking out the paper, reading from it, and going back to the test. Rabbi Perlman couldn't understand it. Yanky was not the smartest in the class, but he had a great enthusiasm for learning and was known as a sincere boy. And now he wasn't even trying to hide his obvious cheating.

One of the Last to Hand in His Test

Yanky was one of the last to hand in his test, but he did so with a contented smile. Upon dismissal, the rebbi motioned to Yanky to come with him into the hall, from where he led him to the teachers' lounge. Rabbi Perlman asked him how he thought he did on the test.

Yanky replied confidently that he thought he did really well on this one.

"You knew all the answers?" asked the rebbi.

"I really studied hard this time and I even had my father learn the Gemara with me," Yanky replied.

"Can I ask you some of the questions?" the rebbi asked. Yanky seemed puzzled. He answered the three questions posed. But why was Rabbi Perlman questioning him?

Asked About the Paper in His Pocket

Then the rebbi asked, "Would you like to tell me what you were doing with that paper you had in your pocket?"

Yanky was shocked that he was suspected of cheating. "Rebbi," he blurted out as tears welled in his eyes, "I did not cheat, I know the material. You can check my paper."

The rebbi took out Yanky's test paper and began going through the entire test; indeed, every question was answered correctly. Then the

rebbi said, "But Yanky, this is the first time you got 100 on a test. How did you manage to do that?"

Yanky then felt he had to show the rebbi the paper he had been looking at throughout the test. Rabbi Perlman was surprised to see that it was his own handwriting! At the most recent PTA meeting, he had given Yanky's father a note in which he had written, "Yanky's cheerful demeanor and friendly personality make him a class leader. With his effort and enthusiastic learning, he will grow into a talmid chachom."

Inspired Him with the Willpower to Continue Trying

He had given it to Yanky's father so that his son would read it and know that his rebbi truly had confidence in him. Before Rabbi Perlman could say anything, Yanky said, "You gave this to my father at PTA. And every time I'm about to give up, I read it and it gives me the willpower to continue trying. Because, rebbi, if you believe in me, then I believe in myself."

Rabbi Perlman was stunned at the impact of one little note. He realized that when Yanky had felt flustered and insecure about an answer, he read the note and it calmed him. This, indeed, had been the first test since that PTA meeting, so it had never happened before. As he reflected on the incident, the rebbi was grateful that he had not confronted Yanky during the test, and he was sorry he had suspected him wrongly.

He had been very close to embarrassing Yanky in front of his classmates, but he had restrained his initial impulse. Since then, Rabbi Perlman has written many notes to other parents and watched their sons blossom into wonderful talmidim. (**Illuminations of the Maggid**)

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Why is a person unwilling to lose a Din Torah, but is resigned to losing money in the normal course of business?



Because in a court case, there is another person who wins! – Harav Chaim of Karsnovitz

A Quick Mayseh - A Story to Warm the Heart

There was a wealthy Jew from the city of Ruzhin in Russia who travelled to Eretz Yisrael. He spent some time touring the land and visiting the mekomos hakedoshim.

Upon returning home, he sought an audience with the **Rebbe of Ruzhin** to discuss his trip. During the conversation he commented that he didn't find the Land to be an especially attractive place and expressed his disappointment.

The holy Ruzhiner responded - "There was a wealthy Jew who married off all his daughters to Torah scholars. However, he was unable to find a suitable groom for his eldest daughter and eventually married her off to a simple tailor.

Before the wedding, the bride's father instructed her to adorn herself so she would look pleasing for her soon-to-be husband. With a wry smile, she responded: 'For a tailor, I am attractive enough as I am.'"

"The same is true for Eretz Yisrael," said the Rebbe. "For those capable of appreciating her lofty degree of holiness, she is sufficiently adorned. It is only to those immersed in physicality that she appears like any other land."

The Ruzhiner's response was very sharp, but there is a message here for us as well. Eretz Yisrael is our reflection. It is so easy to draw up a litany of criticisms and complaints of the Land and the portion of the Jewish nation it holds.

But such an outlook ultimately reflects negatively on our own eyesight.

If we refine ourselves and cleanse our way of looking at the world, we will be able to recognize only the sweet, gentle, holiness of this Land and its other-worldly beauty which shines for all eternity.

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez

וְכִי־יִשְׁאַל אִישׁ מֵעִם רֵעֵהוּ And if a person borrows [an animal] from his neighbour 22:13

The Mishnah teaches us in Pirkei Avos (4:15) that it is a great middah to be the first to greet every person when you encounter them. Be it on Shabbos, with a 'Good Shabbos.' Or on a Tuesday, with a 'Good morning.'

This is what Chazal teach us -"**הֱוֵה מַקְדִּים בִּשְׁלוֹם כָּל אָדָם**" - '***Upon meeting people, be the first to extend greetings***.'

Of course, everything is hinted to somewhere in the Torah…

So, the **שמנה לחמו** shows us a Remez to this Chazal here in our Pasuk:

יִשאַל אִישׁ מֵעִם רֵעֵהוּ = יאמר שלום !

And the word unscrambled = **לאיש** ! One should greet every single person!

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez

עַ֣יִן תַּ֭חַת עַ֑יִן שֵׁ֥ן תַּ֝חַ֗ת שֵׁ֥ן יָ֣ד תַּ֭חַת יָ֑ד רֶ֝֗גֶל תַּ֭חַת רָ֑גֶל 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot.' 21:24

The Gemara in Mesechta Bava Kama 83b-84a explains that the one responsible for the damage done to someone else's eye, tooth hand or foot – must pay its monetary value.

The Rabeinu Efrayim teaches us a powerful lesson here, and then shows us a beautiful Remez.

A person can be wealthy in many ways. One can have millions of dollars in the bank. A tremendous amount of real estate. The most expensive car. A magnificent mansion. The list goes on and on…

There is however, no greater wealth in the world – than being healthy! What good is the high-priced luxury car if the owner cannot see? How can one enjoy a meal in an upper-class restaurant, without teeth? What good is the quickest, smartest technology without hands? What good is having enough money to travel around the world without feet?

Our healthy working eyes, teeth, hands and feet – make us truly healthy and wealthy! - **ע-ין ש-ן י-ד ר-גל = עשיר !**

Twelve Beautiful Words

"כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה" - "כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע" (24:3,7).

These two Pesukim, each comprising six words, correspond to the six words that the twelve sons of Ya'akov said to their father "Sh'ma Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad", and the six words with which their father, Ya'akov responded "Baruch Sheim k'vod Malchuso le'olam va'ed" (*Ba'al ha'Turim).*



Never Raising One's Voice to Any Jew

It is related that the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l** was very careful never to raise his voice to anyone. Even if people would bother him and annoy him for no reason, he would never yell at them.

He would say, "The pasuk says that one may not cause pain to a widow or an orphan, and the Mechilta says that this actually applies to all people. I don't want to transgress this prohibition."

שמואל זנוויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry) - The enthusiasm must continue

וְאֵלֶּה֙ הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר תָּשִׂ֖ים לִפְנֵיהֶֽם And these are the judgments that you shall set before them. (21:1)

The connection with the word "and these" in this verse connects the ten commandments in the previous parasha, Parashat Jethro, with the laws and sentences detailed in Parashat Mishpatim .

It is interesting that the enthusiastic response of the Israelites: "We will do and hear" comes not after the Ten Commandments, but in this parasha of Mishpatim (24:7) .

The fact that this enthusiastic response comes later indicates, apparently, that the enthusiasm should not only be momentary: it should be continuous .The connecting hook indicates this continuity.

Every boy who celebrates his Bar Mitzvah is very excited on the first Shabbat when he is called to come to the Torah .This is a great moment in his life, and he is especially happy because his relatives and friends are in shul, and are witnessing this festive and happy moment .But if this enthusiasm does not continue, then every bar mitzvah celebration will lose its meaning.

In Tehillim 34:12 it is written: **לְכוּ־בָנִים שִׁמְעוּ־לִי יִרְאַ֥ת ה' אֲלַמֶּדְכֶֽם** "Go, children, listen to me, the fear of Hashem will teach you ".

The verse does not say: "come", but "go ;"And the meaning of this is: "Listen to Me" not only when you are here, but wherever you go .**The enthusiasm must continue!**

"Emunah is not only a belief in Hashem; It is a belief that Hashem believes in me." – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

Never Abandon Your Mother – Rabbi Duvy Bensoussan



Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau – the great Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel is a powerful and eloquent speaker.

He writes in his biography, that he was very close friends with Yitzchak Rabin. It turns out, that Rabbi Lau, being the chief Rabbi of Israel, once went to visit Fidel Castro in Cuba! He had a four hour discussion with Fidel Castro. At the end of the discussion, Fidel Castro said that he loved the Rabbi immensely. He realized that he had just met with somebody with such purpose, depth and knowledge.



Rabbi Lau was so sweet and loving. He said to Rabbi Lau, "I want you to do me a favour, and please give this box of Cuban cigars to my good friend Yitzchak Rabin when you get back to Israel."

Rabbi Lau said, "It will be my pleasure."

When he gets back to Israel, he gives the box of very expensive cigars to Yitzchak Rabin. He says, "I have a present for you from Fidel Castro."

He says, "Really, what is it?"

Rabbi Lau shows him the box of expensive Cuban cigars.

Rabin said – "I only smoke cigarettes!"

While they were talking, it just happened that the Israeli government were in the middle of negotiations with the Palestinians

(Yassar Arafat) with a final resolution of what they were going to do with 'The Green Line of Jerusalem.'

They were about to shake on the giving back of Kever Rachel!



Rabbi Lau turns to Yitzchak Rabin and says, "What!, Kever Rachel!? If you do that, they will trash it, like they did with Kever Yoseph in S'chem. No way- You can't."

You must know that Rabin was an ultra-secular non-religious Jew. Giving back Kever Rachel made no difference to him.

Rabin says, "No, No, Rabbi, don't worry, I understand that you're not going to be very happy about this, but don't worry, although they will control the road, the area of Beis Lechem and the surrounding area, but we will still retain the right to come and visit every now and then."

Can you imagine? The Arabs are going to give us rights to visit our own mother!

The government were ready to sign on this deal.

Rabbi Lau turns to Yitzchak Rabin, and said, "Yitzchak… you cannot do this! Do you want to know why? – ***Because you cannot abandon your mother – Nobody abandons their mother***!

Rabin went quiet.

The next week, Yitzchak Rabin called up Rabbi Lau. He said, "Rabbi, I have good news… I stood up by the meeting with Arafat and the PLO – And I took back Kever Rachel and derech Beit Lechem. And I told them – No deal! Do you know why? Because your words hit me

hard and were ringing in my head - ***" You cannot abandon your mother – Nobody abandons their mother!"***

This is your mother. This is who you turn to for Chizuk.This is who you turn to for Tefillot. This is why Yaakov Avinu buried her at the side of the road.

A Yid without this facility is finished! We have Kever Rachel today which symbolizes a mother who cries for us!

We must really appreciate these places. You cannot abandon these places! You cannot abandon your mother!

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman -Torah Wellsprings - Lifting Our Head

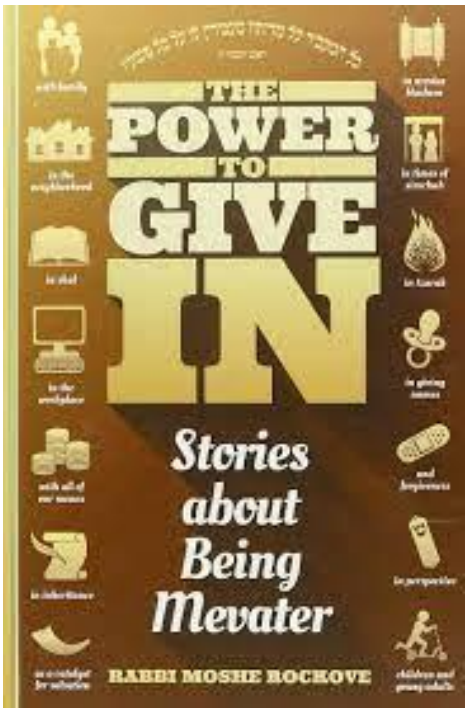
The Midrash (Tanchuma 3) teaches, Moshe Rabbeinu said to Hashem, "Master of the World, when I die, I won't be remembered anymore!"

Hashem told him, "I swear, as you stand today, and you teach them about the shekalim and you raise their heads, so too, every year, when they read parashas Shekalim before Me, it will be like you are present and raising their heads. "

The Chidushei HaRim repeated this Midrash with immense excitement. He said, "This Midrash is telling us something great! Every year when Parashas Shekalim is read, Moshe Rabbeinu comes and lifts up the heads of Bnei Yisrael!"

When one is going through hard times he's often hunched over, because the troubles of life weigh heavily on him. But when his problems leave, and he receives his salvation, he stands up straight and proud. "Moshe raises our head" means that Hashem will save us from all our troubles, and our heads will be lifted.

The Happiness Recipe By R' Avi Slansky



Rav Aaron Leib Zt'l said, "What is the recipe for a happy life?" He said there are only three things needed -

1. **Be Mevater.** - Give in. Let the other person be right.
2. **Be Mevater.**
3. **Be Mevater.**

Says Rav Aaron Leib, "If you live your life letting the other person win, then you win! If you always let the other person being right, you will end up being a happy person."

There was an occasion, when a man came to Rav Arron Leib to request a bracha. "For what do you want a bracha for?" Asked Rav Aaron.

"For Sholom Bayis."

Rav Aaron queried – "Sholom Bayis? How old are you?"

The man replied –"83 Years old!"

Rav Aaron Leib said, "A Jew who is 83 years-old – should know how to be mevater!" To Rav Aaron Leib, happiness and sholom bayis are synonymous in being mevater.

The Aish Kodesh On The Parsha With R'avraham Levitt: Mishpatim - Introduction

Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Piaseczna Rebbe, is best known as the "**Aish Kodesh**," the Holy Fire, for the series of drashos he gave in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Second World War.

Rav Shapira was sometimes called the Rabbi of the Warsaw Ghetto, and by all accounts, he was well respected by the many different

types of Jews who were forced to live and die together. Rav Shapira did not call his work Aish Kodesh. When he buried the manuscript in coffee tins to be discovered after the war, he called it "Torah from the years of Rage". The work itself, spanning three years, shows a progression of emotions as he dealt with the unprecedented catastrophe of his time.



He had not only to impart courage and faith to a community confronted with the worst horrors imaginable, but he had to reassure himself of a future in which his work would be found and published.

Towards the end of the time in the ghetto, Rav Shapira communicated a message of acceptance of suffering as setting the stage for the final redemption. This approach anticipated what would come to be accepted by much of mainstream Judaism that survived the Holocaust.

For Rav Shapira, it was an organic response to the challenge of the moment from the deepest depths of misery. The Piaseczna Rebbe wasn't a simple community rabbi who happened to find himself in extraordinary circumstances. His was one of the great voices of contemporary Jewish spirituality and communal leadership but was tragically silenced before his influence could truly be felt.

His response to modernity and the enlightenment represents a truly innovative approach to outreach and pedagogy that might have transformed Jewish life in the 20th century had he or his works been known by a wider public.

Today, a hundred years after he labored with the cause of improving Jewish communal life and keeping Jewish souls committed to Torah

and Mitzvos, many of his early writings are beginning to achieve the stature they have long deserved.

Over the coming year, we will look at his teachings from before he was thrust into the "iron furnace" of the European persecution and we will also learn the lessons he taught to the community that was on the verge of becoming its victims.

It is fitting that we should begin this work on Parshas Mishpatim, because this is the Parsha where we are taught Hashem's plans for the Jewish community after the thunder and lightning of the revelation at Sinai have faded and the real work must begin.

Rav Shapira was focused, above all, on cultivating conscious communities of spiritually enlightened individuals who were mutually supporting and devoted to the service of Hashem.

He wrote a series of books to examine the right ways of training such individuals, beginning with early childhood and extending to the organization of communal structures. The seeds of his teachings were planted in the ground, literally, and fertilized by the blood and ashes of millions of holy martyrs. We can pray that they will at last bloom and flower in our time as our own communities begin to adopt his guidance.

Aftermath In Turkey Of The 2023 Turkey–Syria Earthquake

On 6 February 2023, a catastrophic and destructive M_w 7.8 earthquake struck southern and central Turkey, as well as northern and western Syria. A M_w 7.7 earthquake occurred nine hours later.There was widespread damage and tens of thousands of fatalities. As of 14 February 2023, over 41,100 deaths have been confirmed, including the president of the small Jewish community and his wife - stalwarts of Antakya's Jewish community - Saul and Fortuna Cenudioglu.



The Posek Hador **HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shternbuch** spoke about the earthquake in Turkey after his shiur klali this week.

At the beginning of his words, HaRav Shternbuch brought the words of the Navi Zecharya who prophesized that the houses in Jerusalem will be destroyed even before milchamas Gog U'Magog. "The Navi Zecharya (14:2) prophesized on the era before milchamas Gog U'Magog: '*And I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to war, and the city shall be captured, and the houses shall be plundered, etc, and half the city shall go forth into exile – and the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*'"

"And these words – although they appear to us as far-fetched, but we're maaminim bnei maaminim that all the words of the neviim are emes, and it's clear as the sun in the sky that that's what will be."

"Who doesn't fear this matter? Because no one can guarantee for himself in which half of Yerushalayim he'll be, in the half that will go into exile or in the other half. And therefore, in this era, we need to snatch more and more mitzvos and even mitzos kalos, and especially the mitzvah of Talmud Torah, that every word of Talmud Torah is a mitzvah in itself…limmud Torah is the way to be saved from chevlei Moshiach."

"We need to look at the earthquake in Turkey and Syria as the '**קול ה' בכח**' that announces and tells us 'Look what I can do.' And as it's written in the Gemara in Yevamos (63, 1), 'Rabbi Elazar bar Avina said: There's no calamity that comes to the world except for Yisrael, as it says: 'I have cut off nations, their towers have become

desolate. I have destroyed their streets so that there are no passersby…I said: 'Surely you will fear Me, you will accept mussar.'"



"This is a warning from HaKadosh Baruch that if chalilah v'chalilah, we'll destroy the Torah HaKedosha, chas v'shalom, He will destroy the houses. And therefore now is the time to be mechazeik as much as possible and heed the 'kol Hashem' calling to us to wake up and snatch more and more mitzvos."

"And although the Gemara in Brachos explains that an earthquake expresses Hakadosh Baruch Hu's sorrow on the tza'ar of Yisrael but when the earthquake is so powerful with tens of thousands of dead, it also expresses a warning to Am Yisrael."

"And I saw in several mekomos that they explained that a terrible calamity of an earthquake with so many dead people is mainly to show 'Hashem's love for Yisrael' Who protected us and didn't bring an earthquake to Israel but in Turkey.

It should be known that this is not the derech. I didn't see this by Gedolei Yisrael but adaraba, Gedolei Yisrael were awakened to see this as a 'judgment' – that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is showing His power

through a terrible tragedy by the Umos HaOlam in order to warn us, as is explained in Yevamos 63."

"And it's certainly true that Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves us very much to an immeasurable extent but the cause of such a terrible calamity isn't to awaken us to realize that He loves us, but Hashem is showing us that a time will come that He will take revenge on the reshaim, and all this in order to awaken us to teshuvah and to instill fear in us of punishments from Shamayim."

"One must look at the events of the time with the lens of Torah and the eyes of Daas Torah and not with the superficial eyes of the people on the street who seek to find only 'Ahavas Hashem' in every event and don't understand that this is a clear call from Hakadosh Baruch Hu to show us His koach and gevurah and awaken us to teshuvah, to toil in the Torah and correct our deeds."

וה' יעזור שנזכה במהרה לקיום התפילה 'ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים', ויתקיים במהרה וכל קרני רשעים אגדע "תרוממנה קרנות צדיק, ונזכה לגאולה שלימה במהרה בימינו בקרוב אמן

(YWN Israel Desk)



וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם ***And these are the judgments that you shall place before them****. (21:1)*

The previous *parshah* (*Yisro*) concluded with the laws of the *Mizbayach*, Altar. *Rashi* asks why the law of judicial cases are juxtaposed upon the laws of the *Mizbayach*. He explains this teaches that the *Sanhedrin*, supreme court, should have its place near to the *Bais Hamikdash*. The *Mizbayach* represents *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice.



Horav Ovadia Yosef, zl, was a pre-eminent Torah scholar whose encyclopaedic knowledge of *halachah* was matched only by his brilliant mind. As a *posek* without peer for over seven decades, he consistently championed the idea that *Chazal's* precept of *koach d'heteira adif*, the power of permitting (allowing for a dispensation), was greater. This concept, as explained by *Rav* Ovadia (quoting *Rashi Beitzah* 2b), is that anyone can rule *l'chumra*, stringently, but only a *Rav* who is certain concerning the rulings transmitted to him by his mentors has the right to rule leniently.

This rule came into play numerous times when *Rav* Ovadia was asked to sort out and rule concerning the various questions regarding the *agunos (loosely translated as an abandoned wife. The term, however, applies to any woman who may not remarry, either because her husband is recalcitrant and holding her captive, or her husband disappeared, and his death has yet to be confirmed.* Who in this case, were probably widows), who were left in limbo in the aftermath of the *Yom Kippur* war, when the IDF suffered 2,500 soldiers killed in action, of which 1,000 had not been clearly identified.

It was up to *Rav* Ovadia to study each case and look for any *halachic* dispensation to allow the wife, who in many instances was a young woman, to have closure and go on with her life.

Each evening, he would sit down with his *dayanim* to find ways to be *matir*, permit, the wife to remarry. He dealt with these cases both from a technical, *halachic* perspective and from an emotional level, personally feeling the pain of each widow.

One night, after finally finding a *heter* for a certain widow, he immediately summoned his son and asked him to locate the woman's phone number. He did not want to wait all night to deliver his verdict in the morning at the *bais din*.

His son said, "But it is late. You might wake her up."

"I am sure that she is awake, concerned about what my ruling will be."

By law, *Rav* Ovadia had to issue the ruling at the *bais din*. Yet, he could not bear to have this woman suffer unnecessarily for another night. He called, but did not tell her the exact ruling, only that she could rest assured that it would all work out.

She began to weep. So did *Rav* Ovadia.

Fourteen years prior to his *petirah*, passing, *Rav* Ovadia had a heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. The doctors determined that he had a blockage that could be opened with a stent. They wanted to do the procedure immediately.

He asked for a three-hour reprieve, during which he would go home. They could not understand the reason for his request.

He explained, "I am in the middle of writing a *teshuvah*, *halachic* responsa, to free an *agunah*. If I do not survive the procedure, who will take pity on this *agunah* and free her from her loneliness?"

He went home, wrote the *teshuvah* and returned to the hospital! This is the meaning of *mesiras nefesh* for *ruchniyos*.

"When we trust in Hashem, we are able to see the world with new eyes, and to recognise the hidden blessings and opportunities that lie in every challenge." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עִבְרִי ***If you buy a Jewish bondsman****. (21:2)*

The Torah begins *Parashas Mishpatim* presenting the many *mitzvos* that cover the gamut from social/welfare relationships to the appropriate manner of service to Hashem, including the laws of the *eved Ivri*, Jewish bondsman.

One would think a number of other *mitzvos* would also serve as an appropriate opening to *Parashas Mishpatim*. The various commentators address this question by offering explanations for what seems to be an anomaly, but we know that no anomalies exist in the Torah. Everything is sorted out and presented by Heavenly design.

Horav Yechezkel Abramsky, zl*,* treated his *ozeres*, maid, like royalty. If he sensed that she was working too hard, he would suggest that she rest a bit – even though this would cost him more money. (She was paid by the hour.) Unquestionably, this woman developed a greater respect for *frum*, observant Jews.

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן ***You shall not cause pain to any widow or orphan****. (22:21)*

What kind of person would mistreat a widow or an orphan? The mere fact that the Torah admonishes us against being so cruel indicates that there are people who will do anything to anyone to take advantage – be it for money, or just because they want to show their power. Some people simply do not use their *seichel*, common-sense. To them, a rule is a rule, and it should apply to the weak as well.

Thus, a widow and orphan do not receive preferred treatment. They are no different than anyone else. No leniency exists for them. This is just another method of justifying cruelty on the part of the oppressor. In this manner, the Torah teaches us that the rules change when it involves those who are unusually vulnerable.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita *(L'Kayeim)* cites a powerful story concerning the ***Chida***, who lived during the eighteenth century.

A widow had an only child, a young boy whom she supported with whatever she could scrape together. When the boy reached an age when young men enter the work force in order to support their families [*yeshivos* were at a premium and enrolment, for a number of reasons, was limited], the young orphan was prepared to go to work, but, due to his weakened physical state, would-be employers felt he was too fragile to perform any meaningful labour.

The boy was frustrated, but equally adamant. He was going to find a job, despite his scrawny physique. He had the willpower to work, and he felt that was all one needed. He presented himself at the office of a large factory and asked to meet with the owner. The owner met with the boy and did his best to dissuade him, because he was certain that the physical demands of the job were too much for the boy to handle.

The boy was unbudging. He wanted to work and was prepared to do whatever it took to secure a job. The owner came up with a daring – but diabolical – idea. If the boy would enter the river at dusk and remain in the water until dawn, he would give him ten thousand silver coins – more than he would earn in a lifetime.



The boy knew that the water at night was frigid, and he might contract hypothermia, but this was his only chance. His mother cried and pleaded with him not to take the proposition. He was obstinate and, despite her pleas, and the clear danger notwithstanding, he was going to spend the night in the river.

He responded affirmatively to the man, with one precondition; he wanted a legal written contract to stipulate that if he survived the night in the cold water, he would be paid. [This gives us a window into the level of poverty to which people were subjected. It also demonstrated the miscreant character of a man who would take such advantage of an orphan.]

The boy entered the river exactly at dusk and settled in for a long night. As the night went on, the water became colder, reaching the freezing point. The man stopped by a couple of times to see if the boy was still there. He could not believe the boy's determination. He was getting nervous that he might have to put up a small fortune in silver coins.

The widowed mother knew that while she could not change her son's mind, she might succeed in giving him hope. She took wood and started a fire a distance from the water line. She knew that the heat of the fire would not reach her child, but the mere thought that a warm welcome awaited him would strengthen his resolve and give him the message: "Someone cares about you."

As soon as dawn broke out in the sky, the near-frozen boy ran to his mother who was waiting by the fire with warm clothes. After warming up, they promptly went to the owner of the factory and demanded that he adhere to his promise.

The man had the audacity to renege on his word, claiming that the mother had heated up the water with her fire!

The widow and her son summoned this man to the *Chida* to rule on their dispute.

The *Chida* was a *halachic* authority without peer. This dispute, however, did not require a *halachic* authority. A clever person who saw what was taking place could easily cut through the ambiguity and rule.

The *Chida* placed a raw egg in a saucer opposite a pot of hot water. He turned to the man and said, "Eat the egg."



"*Rebbe*, the egg is raw. How can I eat it?" "It is opposite a pot of hot water."

"Yes, but 'opposite' does not cook the egg. The egg must be in the water!"

"Now, you see," said the *Chida*, "that the mother's fire on the banks of the river did nothing to heat up the water. You must immediately hold up your end of the deal."

Rav Zilberstein derives an important lesson from this story.

When someone is in a bind, when he is going through a difficult time, regardless of the challenges that he may face, it is possible to strengthen him and give him hope. How? A few well-placed words such as, "I care; I am thinking of you; I am always here for you," intimate to the person that, regardless of his situation, he is not alone.

The widow could not warm the water, but she sent a message to her son: "I am waiting for you with a warm fire. You are not alone."

Sometimes, all we can do for a person in need is to make him aware that someone cares; he is not alone. This, too, is a critical act of *chesed*, lovingkindness.

"The goal of Bitachon is not to eliminate challenges and difficulties, but to face them with confidence and trust in Hashem." - Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel

וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֻון לִי People of holiness shall you be to Me. (22:30)

It is not enough for a Jew to be good and upright. While these are noble, enviable attributes for anyone else, we answer to a Higher Authority and a Higher calling. We must strive to attain *kedushah*, holiness.

Our *neshamos*, souls, are pure, and it is incumbent upon us to do everything within our ability to sustain the soul's pristine nature. It is due to this Heavenly mandate to achieve *kedushah* that the dynamic concerning what we may do, where we may go, what we may eat and how we should live comes into play. For a Jew, everything comes under the rubric of *kedushah*.

Horav Nachman Breslover, zl, teaches that *kedushah* is *simchah*, happiness. One who is filled with positivity, whose outlook on life is joyful, views every juncture in life, regardless of the challenges that must be overcome, as an opportunity through which he may come closer to Hashem.

This is unlike the misguided concept equating *kedushah* with asceticism. One who is holy does not run from the world. He is not depressed. A *kadosh* infuses his holiness to become a vehicle of joy and inclusiveness – not gloom and isolation.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, posits that *kedushah* in man represents the highest degree of moral freedom in which the moral will is no longer engaged in a struggle, but is absolutely ready to do the will of Hashem. Furthermore, he adds, in Judaism, the entire concept of holiness is especially connected with sanctifying.

Holiness is not to be concentrated. It should not be the exclusive domain of a mere few. The purpose of holiness is to sanctify others. Holiness is not a private enterprise.

In order to maintain the pristine nature of our *neshamah*, it is essential that we exert much care to establish safeguards that will prevent any unwanted, mundane "particles" from breaching the

perimeter of holiness. While holiness is about sanctifying, it is different when we go out to "them" than when "they" come in to us. Our *machaneh*, camp, must remain unsullied by outside influences.

This concept is easily understood when it involves the mundane. Unfortunately, when we address issues of the spirit, we confront an element of resistance.

The following story highlights this disparity.



Horav Yitzchak David Grossman, Shlita, *Rav* of Migdal Emek, accompanied Ezer Weizman (at the time he was President of Israel, prior to that he had been head of their air force) on a tour of a factory that made computer chips to be used in industry, but also in navigating the fighter jets flown by the pilots of their air force. Thus, Weizman had a special interest in touring the "chip" section of the factory.



The manager welcomed his interest and said he would be happy to take him on a tour of this restricted area, but (he apologised) the President would have to don protective clothing, with a face mask and protective glasses.

Since *Rav* Grossman was a guest of the President, he, too, agreed to wear what appeared to be something akin to spacesuits. Indeed, they looked like two astronauts.

At the end of the tour, *Rav* Grossman was honoured with saying a few words in recognition of the critical work

being performed at the factory and its contribution to the welfare of the pilots. He also tendered his personal gratitude for being asked to join them on the tour.

He said, "I thank you for availing me of the opportunity to learn an important lesson concerning our *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty."

When he said this, the President turned to him incredulously and asked, "what lesson concerning your service to G-d could you have possibly derived as a result of the tour?"

"People wonder, why is it that it is only the Jews who have dietary laws prohibiting them from consuming certain foods? Why are there so many stringencies with regard to what we ingest?

Gentiles may eat anything they want; in contrast, we have a very selective diet. Today I realised the reason for this. When we were about to walk into the room where the chips are produced, we were asked to don special clothes. Why?

The slightest foreign speck of dust that comes in contact with a chip can alter its accuracy. When one of our pilots is flying hundreds of miles an hour, when he is on a mission, the slightest deviation can have the most tragic consequences. The chip must be pristine.

"We, too, have *neshamos tehoros*, pure souls, which, if exposed to the wrong foods, become contaminated and blemished. Only, we, *am Yisrael*, have a *neshamah* that is a *chelek miMaal*, part of Hashem Above. It is perfect – if we keep it perfect. Thus, we are enjoined against consuming any food that would taint our *neshamos*.

"To be a successful businessman, you must have remarkable talents; and if you have such talents, why waste them on business?" – R' Yisrael Salanter

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Yummy Yidden

The pasuk states ...עזב תעזב עמו (Shemos 23:5). If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden, you should help him. Since עזר is the more common term for help, why is the word עזב used?

A boy that was engaged to the daughter of **R' Baruch Ber Leibowitz** decided to break off the shidduch. This same boy, when engaged to a different girl, needed a letter of recommendation from R' Baruch Ber for his future father-in-law. After writing the letter, R' Baruch Ber called in three boys to read it to ensure there was no personal bias affecting the words he had penned.



R' Koppel Wolpert of Baltimore, who was one of the three, remembered more than 80 years later how the three of them sat there in disbelief and with tears in their eyes on the description of this boy described by R' Baruch Ber — baal middos, G-d fearing, and the like.

In addition to meaning help, עזב also means to leave.

R' Moshe Dovid Valli (1697-1777) explains that it therefore can be interpreted to leave all the negativity, antipathy and hostility

behind. Then you can help the other person. What occurs as a result of you overlooking his faults and leaving it behind? **תעזב עמו** — Hashem will do the same to you, since He acts with us the way we do with others — **מדה כנגד מדה** .



Shabbos

Shevet HaKahasi (vol.3 180) writes that **Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l*** didn't put on new shoes on Shabbos. He first wore them on the weekdays so that they would be broken into a little before Shabbos. He didn't want to feel the pinch that comes with wearing new Shabbos shoes.

We should also seek to avoid feeling any distress on Shabbos. Shabbos is (*Bamidbar 10:10*) **יום שמחתכם** , a day of joy, and we must be happy on Shabbos.

The Shlepper

Reb Mordechai is a travel agent who travels often. On one of his travels, he had enough points to travel first class if he added to his ticket just one hundred shekels. So he decided to do that because he was curious to know what it felt like traveling first class.

Reb Mordechai isn't wealthy, but he felt like a millionaire during the flight. He had a comfortable seat (he kept playing with all the buttons, trying to find the perfect position) and sat among the wealthiest people on board.

This rich feeling began already in the airport. He didn't have to wait in line with everyone else. There was a special agent for fortunate people like himself who flew first class.



A Yid, flying economy class, wanted to see who was flying in the first-class cabin. Perhaps it was just curiosity, or maybe it was because he was traveling to America to be mezakeh Yidden with the mitzvah of *hachnasas kallah*, so he figured he should begin his mission on the plane.

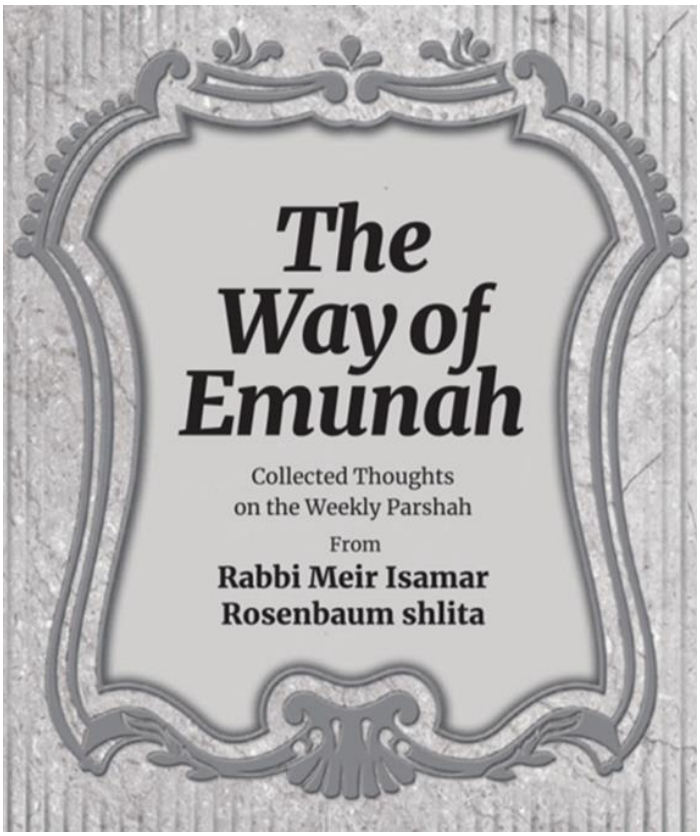
Whatever his motives, he waited for a time when the stewards didn't notice, and he slipped into the first-class cabin and looked around. When he saw Reb Mordechai, he said, "Oh, it's just that shlepper!"

Reb Mordechai said that at that moment, he felt like a poor man. His balloon had popped. He was pretending to be wealthy, and now someone who knew him realized the truth: that he was a poor shlepper.

Reb Mordechai said that he realized then that it isn't sufficient to *pretend* to be wealthy. If you want to feel rich, you have to be wealthy. There needs to be a drastic increase in your bank account, or people will recognize that you are "just that shlepper."

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

Money Obtained Improperly Impedes Success



וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם
And these are the law that you shall place…(21:1)

Sefer Agra D'Kallah explains that the word "tasim", to place, also means "sima", to sense and feel. He writes that the pasuk is saying that Klal Yisroel was told to "feel" the mishpatim.

When people do business with each other, they must have the feeling that all of their success depends on being honest and upright and following the rules of the Torah.

For example, if a person is told by a bais din that he owes his friend money, he should accept that this is for his own good. He should feel that taking this money away for him is for his ultimate benefit, because that is what the Torah considers to be the just and ethical thing to do. And he should sense that giving up this money will lead to his own success, as one can only succeed through money that is earned ethically, according to the values of the Torah.

This is an important lesson for every person to take to heart. Sometimes, a person thinks he is very clever and that he was very smart to cheat his friend out of some money. He should know that he did not fool anyone besides himself. He only stole from himself because he won't see any success or blessing as long as he possesses money that he earned dishonestly.

The Aleph Bais of Business

Two men once approached **Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a** and told him that they were going into a business partnership together. They asked the Rebbe for some advice and guidance regarding how they should run their business.

The Rebbe took a scrap of paper and wrote on it the letters: "aleph, bais, gimmel daled."

They were very confused and asked him to explain. He said, "This is the Aleph Bais of business. ***Aleph stands for emunah. Bais stands for bracha. Gimmel stands for gezeilah. Daled stands for dalus (poverty)***.

If you are honest and do business with emunah, you will see much bracha. But if you are dishonest and engage in gezeilah and trickery, you will become poor."

A Child Cannot Forgive

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן ***You shall not oppress a widow or orphan***. (22:21)

Rashi states: "You shall not oppress any widow or orphan: The same applies to all people, but the pasuk speaks of the usual situation, since widows and orphans are weak and are frequently oppressed."

As Rashi says, this is the way of the world. If a person is strong and powerful, no one will start up with him. But if a person is weak and powerless, unethical people will take advantage of him and he will be unable to fight back.

The following story took place in the "Gr"a Shul" in Yerushalaim in 1946: In this shul, the minhag was to allow children under the age of bar mitzvah to read the Haftorah.



One week, one of the boys prepared the Haftorah after the Gabbai told him that he could lein that Shabbos. However, when he got up to lein, the baal koreh said that no one had told him in advance that a boy was going to read the Haftorah that week. He said that he had already prepared the Haftorah himself and he was going to lein it.

The boy, who put a lot of time and effort into preparing the Haftorah, went back to his seat and cried.

One of the mispalelim saw this and approached **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l**, who was davening in that shul. He asked him, "Even if the baal koreh is correct that it is his right to read the Haftorah, wouldn't it still be proper for him to give in and let the child lein? Wouldn't this be the right thing to do according to the 'fifth volume of Shulchan Aruch' (an expression used to mean treating people with derech eretz)?" Rav Shlomo Zalman answered, "I don't know if this halacha is in the fifth chelek of Shulchan Aruch but I do know that it is clearly stated in the first volume - It says that there that if someone hurts and insults a child, the child is unable to forgive him."

It Is Impossible to Argue With Them

Rav Rafael Soloveitchik zt"l related that during the year 1940, at the beginning of World War 2, he was together with his father, **Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik of Brisk zt"l**, in the city of Vilna. He rented an apartment for them to live in, and his father would give shiur in that apartment to the yeshiva bochurim who had found refuge in Vilna. After the shiur, the bochurim would wash their hands before davening Minchah, which caused water to drip on the floor. This upset the owner very much, which forced them to leave

the apartment. They moved to another apartment, which was owned by a widow.

Before they moved in, Rav Rafael told her that many people were going to use the sink to wash their hands and some water would probably drip on the floor. He said that he would pay a little extra rent because of this.

A few days after they moved in, the widow came to check on the apartment. She saw the drops of water on the floor and became upset.

Rav Rafael told her, "Didn't we agree in advance that we would pay extra because there would be some water dripping on the floor? What are you upset about?"

The Brisker Rov was sitting in an inner room and he heard his son and the widow talking. He called to Rav Rafael and asked him what the conversation was about, and he told his father what was said.

When he heard this, the Brisker Rov got up and opened a Rambam to Hlichos Dayos. He emotionally read the words (Dayos 6:5): "***You should only speak to them softly. You should only treat them with respect. You should not harm their bodies with work or their hearts with rough words. You should be more concerned about their money than your own money***!"

He added, "If so, how can you argue with her?" The Rov told Rav Rafael that he should stand next to the sink when the bochurim washed their hands and tell everyone in his name that anyone who drips water on the floor is transgressing the prohibition of causing pain to a widow."



אין דבר העומד בפני הרצון – *Where there's a will, there's a way. ~ Zohar.*



Remaining Silent During a Fight



לֹא־תִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי־רַבִּים לְרָעֹת וְלֹא־תַעֲנֶה עַל־רִב לִנְטֹת אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהַטֹּת ***You shall not follow the majority for evil, and you shall not respond concerning an argument to follow many to distort***. (23:2)

Chazal say (Chulin 89A): "***The world is only sustained because of those who remain silent during times of discord***."

Sefer Divrei Yisroel uses this Gemara to explain this pasuk to mean that when a fight is going on, one should close his mouth and not answer back. (The words "lo sa'aneh al riv" can be translated to mean that one should not answer during a fight.) At such a time, the best thing is to remain silent.

ארבע פרשיות

The Arbah Parshios have a special significance, it is a time when we come close to Hashem. **Reb Pinchos of Koritz ZY"A** would await for the four Parshios, as it is a time when we are seen with Hashem.

Once on Parshas Poroh **Reb Yochonon of Stolin Karlin** exclaimed during saying Torah, the meaning of the Arbah Parshios as follows. "Shkolim! A person must evaluate himself. Zochor! One must recollect himself. Poroh! One must cleanse himself. Hachodesh! One must renew himself."

A wise man would say: "The reason a dog has lots of friends is that he wags his tail not his tongue."

L' Maaseh



An American bochur came to learn in Eretz Yisroel and wanted to learn in Yeshivas Brisk. He approach **HaRav Dovid Soleveitchik zt"l**, but the Rosh Yeshiva said he couldn't take him into the yeshiva.

Determined to join anyway, the bochur asked if it would be ok to learn in the yeashiva's beis medrash. R' Dovid was agreeable; after all, the beis medrash is open for anyone who wants to learn.

A short while later, the boy was looking for a chavrusa and asked R' Dovid if he would mind if he learned with someone from the yeshiva. This too, was met without opposition.

It was only a matter of time before he was attending shiur, and eating and sleeping in yeshiva as well. For all intents and purposes, it seemed that this bochur was learning in Brisk. He had wondered exactly what it meant that he wasn't accepted into the Brisk yeshiva, and before departing back to America he asked R' Dovid this question.

The Rosh Yeshiva explained that once a week, he travels to the kosel and davens for each of his talmidim, adding that he didn't have the emotional wherewithal to take on to daven for another talmid so he couldn't accept him into the yeshiva!

Accidents are Not Accidents By Rabbi David Bibi



On Thursday afternoon a friend came to visit. He told me a remarkable story. About a year prior his car lease ended and, on a whim, he went out and bought a two-seat sports car. With a bunch of kids at home, his wife wasn't too pleased with his selection. Not only was it impractical, but it was definitely a more dangerous a car. He noted that with Hashem's help he was never in an accident and hoped to continue that way.

But only days passed and he was stopped at a light on Ocean Parkway when out of the blue, he was rear ended by a driver not paying attention. The unexpected hit knocked the wind out of him, but being the tough guy most of us try to be he refused the ambulance's invitation to the hospital, sent the car off to be repaired and sucked up the pain which remained for the next few weeks.

Déjà vu All Over Again

The car was back, good as new and a few months passed and he was stopped at a light in Manhattan and then … boom. Again, he was hit from behind. Again, he decided to let things be and moved on without any checkup. But only a few more months passed and as Yogi Berra would say, it was Déjà vu all over again. Stopped at a light and then … boom.

His wife pleaded with him to get rid of this unlucky car. One would think, three strikes and you're out. But he again sucked up the symptoms of whiplash and went about his business and kept the car.

And then a few weeks ago, again on Ocean Parkway, he approached the light. He was in the right lane with ten cars ahead. He noticed

the left most lane had only three cars and the centre lane, perhaps six, but he was in no rush and stopped in his place. Then he saw an approaching car in his rear-view mirror and it looked like it wasn't slowing down. He tried to move over from the right lane towards the center, but the approaching driver had fallen asleep and although he knew he would be hit, the angle of the hit sent his car spinning.

An Insurance Argument Ensued

When it stopped, he realized that he wasn't so easily walking away from this. Hatzalah arrived, pulled him from his car onto a stretcher and took him to Maimonides. There they determined he had a collapsed lung.

One doctor suggested an MRI to check his head but the insurance argument ensued. They would need special approval and by then the patient wanted out. A community member who is a patient advocate stepped in and was able to arrange the MRI and convinced my friend to stay.

The test showed nothing as a result of the accident, but it did show a huge tumor pressing against his brain. Though symptomless, he was in terrible danger.

He was sent to experts in Manhattan and operated on and they were surprised that the tumor caused no damage. Apparently as a natural lefty, it was leaning on a part of the brain that lefties don't use in the same way as the rest of us. He was also told that had he gone a few more weeks, he would have been in terrible danger and they also wondered what would have happened in they caught this a year ago.

They all realized that this is something rarely caught. Who would do a brain scan without reason?

Here in my office, he sat and aside from a scar which his hair would again cover, he was perfectly fine against all odds. For whatever reason, he had this growth in his head. And by some strange happening he was hit a number of times from the back. Heaven was

begging him to take the trip to the hospital, get that MRI and overcome what nature had delivered.

Each accident must have resulted in some why me. Each accident was looked at as if judgment was being rendered and delivered. But then he knew that each came as an act of mercy to offer deliverance and a cure.

Elokim was in fact Hashem. Life is filled with many questions. Every once in a while, we get a peek into the answer. Those hints and visions are there to help us get through all the other whys. They are a reminder behind Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeynu, Hashem Echad!

Of Bagels and Locks By Rabbi Yosef Weiss Zt'l





David Greenspan grew up in the Bronx, New York, the product of an assimilated Jewish home. When he reached adulthood, he joined the family's bagel business, which had been in the Greenspan family for generations. After David's father passed away, though, David realized that he wasn't all that interested in bagels after all. He was good with his hands and he wanted to put them to use.

After taking some evaluation tests, David was told to become a locksmith. He studied hard and soon discovered that he had found his niche. Bagels were out, locks were in, and David soon had a job in the locksmith business.

The pay was good, but David really wanted to strike out on his own. He was constantly on the lookout for a good opportunity, a place where he could establish himself.

One day, David was driving through Monsey, New York. He eyed the layout of the stores in one section of the town. There was a window business there that seemed to catch his eye...was this the chance he had been waiting for?

David mustered up all his courage and entered the store to ask if he could rent out a small corner for his new locksmith business.

The store owner was agreeable, and before long, David's new business was setting up shop.

David was now in a very religious area. He figured that the local population would probably make up the majority of his customers, so an ad in the local Jewish circular would be a good idea. He arranged for the ad to be placed, and a few days later, he received his copy in the mail.

David thumbed through the circular until he found his advertisement. "Looks good," he murmured to himself. Absently, David continued flipping through the pages, taking note of the other businesses that were established in the community.

Suddenly, a short section at the back of the circular caught his eye. "Lost and found," the headline proclaimed, and underneath was a series of columns.

David began to read the items listed.

"Found: Gold bracelet. Please call..."

"Found: Large sum of money. Please call..."

"Found: Diamond earring. Please call..."

David couldn't believe his eyes. Were these people actually trying to return such valuable items? And there were so many of them! Whatever happened to "finders keepers, losers weepers?" Here, David saw an entirely different attitude, one based on helping others instead of only taking for oneself.

David figured that if this is what religious Jews were like, it was a group that he wanted to be a part of. Before long, David began to wear a kippah, and he is now well on his way in his return to his Father in Heaven. (**Visions of Greatness III**)

Etz Chaim – R' C Blau



Mr. Horenstein was A philanthropist. He was an extremely generous man who gave a lot of money to **צדקה** . An **עני** once came to his home holding letters of approval and he was crying. He said "Mr. Horenstein, I have a daughter that I need to marry off and I do not have the funds to pay for the **חתונה** ."

The **עני** thought to himself, "Perhaps he will give me generously." The **עני** never dreamed that Mr. Horenstein would offer to pay for the entire wedding!

The **עני** could not believe what he was hearing when Mr. Horenstein offered to pay for the entire wedding saying, "Listen I will give you all the money that you need right now on condition that you invite me to the **חתונה** ."

"Mr. Horenstein" the **עני** said, "Have no fear, you will be the first one to be invited."

The **עני** left with a happy heart and began all the preparations for the **חתונה** . The day of the **חתונה** finally arrived and the **עני** completely forgot to invite Mr. Horenstein.

As the Chosson and Kallah were already standing under the chuppah, he suddenly remembered his promise. The **עני** was beside himself. Finally, a thought flashed through his mind, and he made a clop on the table. "Rabbosai" he said "I feel terrible, and I ask all of you for

forgiveness, but this entire wedding was paid for by Mr. Horenstien and specifically him I forgot to invite! Hashem Yerachem right there! I plead with all of you and ask if we can all go to his home and invite him together." The crowd was excited and they all left together.

As all this was taking place, a group of heavily armed robbers arrived at the Horenstein home, in order to "confiscate" all Mr. Horenstein's wealth. They forced Mr. Horenstein to open his safe and give them all his money and jewelry that he owned. But they were not satisfied and they wanted more and more. Since Mr. Horenstein did not have anything more to offer, they tied him and his family with strong ropes to the bed posts in the house. The gangsters started to threaten them with even worse threats if they didn't tell them where they could find more jewelry and money…

Unexpectedly, the gangsters suddenly heard a very loud commotion of people coming from outside the home of Mr. Horenstein. They looked and saw tens and tens of people with a band playing music…

When the criminals heard the commotion, they dropped everything they had been planning to steal and ran for their lives. When the crowd entered the home, they were shocked at the scene and immediately untied the family.

Mr. Horenstein spoke and told everyone all that had just occurred. He told them that if they would not have come right then, who knows if they would have been alive to tell the tale and certainly he would have been raided from his entire fortune. Mr. Horenstein saw the **זכות** that his chessed had caused!

A wise man would say: "A lengthy speech is like the wheels of a wagon: The longer the 'spoke' the bigger the 'tire'!"

"Matching Campaign"

This week's Parsha discusses the Halachos of slaves.

There was once a chossid who had a poor Jewish tenant who was having trouble paying his rent and the chossid was contemplating evicting him. His Rebbah, the heiligeh **חידושי הרי"ם** heard about it and called the chossid in for a shmooze.

The chossid said to the Rebbah, "Rebbe, why am I **מחויב** to give all the **צדקה** to this **עני** and not evict him? It's true if there would be a campaign for this **עני** I would surely donate something, but here, why does this all have to fall on to my lap?

The Rebbah responded, "My *taiyereh kind*, tell me like this, if a slave is owned by two owners, you and someone else, and was he half freed by the other owner, meaning that he is still half by you, what is the halacha? The halacha is that you must let go of your ownership so that the slave can get married. But why? Why must you, as the owner suffer the loss? A slave is worth a lot of money! Shouldn't the Torah say at least that a "matching campaign" be made to pay you the price that you have to lose because you are obligated to free your slave?

The answer is, that if Hashem placed this slave in your lap, Hashem expects you to be the one take care of them. It becomes your responsibility to free him."

The **חידושי הרי"ם** then turned to the chossid again and said, "You, too, my *kind*, if Hashem orchestrated it that this Yid should be your tenant, it is your job to be compassionate towards him and suffer the loss. Hashem sent this chessed to you because He wants you to be the one to do it and not to push it to someone else **ח"ו** ."

Hashem gave man two ears and one mouth, so listen more and talk less.

Just Do It



There was once a woman who went to be menachem avel her friend whose close relative was niftar. Her friend told her that the niftar was someone who, when a chessed came his way he did **not** think, "Should I do it or not," rather, he just did it! The women heard the words and left.

On her way home she saw a car that was crookedly parked on the side of the road. It was strange. However, what was even stranger was the fact that there was a woman behind the wheel who looked like she was sleeping. Normally she would have thought to herself, "Probably everything is fine! Don't worry about it too much. I am sure that if there is a problem somebody else will help."

Yet she had just heard by the shiva she went to that the niftar was someone who just did chessed without thinking if it made sense or not, he just DID! She too, chose not to think about it and instead decided to DO.

She called Hatzalah and said, "Listen, I am not sure if there is a problem but I see a woman etc." and she proceeded to tell them what she saw and where she saw the car. Twenty minutes later she received a call that the woman in the car had been in diabetic shock, and her call saved the women's life.

Even more amazing was the phone call that she received a few months later, that she had actually saved two lives, since the woman she saved just had a new baby. All because she decided not to use what her mind told her but to use action!

It is hard to shoulder the responsibilities of taking on a chessed and helping out others. There are many reasons not to. Good reasons. However, when an opportunity comes our way one has to be a "Nachshon".

Just like Nachshon took the initiative, he said, "No more thinking – just jump! Just do it!" Nachshon jumped in and – the water split! So too, people who want to do chessed if they start thinking and procrastinating, they will start saying statements such as, "It doesn't make sense for me to do this!" "I don't have the time."

The question is does it make more sense than jumping into an ocean? Probably not. However, just like the waters split for Nachshon, so too, **ניסים** will happen will happen to us because Hashem wants just to see that human beings do their upmost without a cheshbon and right then is where Hashem will "split the sea".

Short And Sweet Story Of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin



Reb Meir Shapiro, ZT"L, who established the magnificent Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, once explained what provided him with the impetus to start the yeshiva.

In the town of Galina, where Rav Meir was then the Rav, there lived a young boy named Efraim Beitrik, who was the son of a poor shoemaker. Rav Shapiro recognized that this boy had a sharp intellect and a bright future, yet Efraim's cheder relegated him to the lowest class.

One day, the school had a school-wide oral exam and Rav Shapiro was invited to attend When Efraim's turn came, he rattled off a Mishna in Baba Metzia by heart. Rav Shapiro asked him a question on the Mishna and was amazed at the originality and clarity of the answer!

Rav Shapiro then asked the boy; "Tell me, if you are so bright, why is it that you are relegated to the lowest class?" Efraim answered, "Because the principal doesn't take seriously what our Chazal said, 'Be careful with the sons of the poor, for from them Torah will come. Since I am the son of a poor shoemaker, no one cares about me!

At that moment, Rav Shapiro resolved to establish a yeshiva where each and every student would be cared about. He established Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, which produced many great sages and Tzadikim. Young Efraim Beitrik attended Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, and eventually became one of the preeminent Rabbis in Poland.

Comment: The Torah commands us to lend money to the needy (Shemos 22:24), and admonishes those who don't help out the poor (Devarim 15:9). How conscious we must be of our good fate in life and recognize our obligation to care for Hashem's poor! Each member of our Nation must be afforded a full opportunity for growth and success.

אִם־עַנֵּה תְעַנֶּה אֹתָו כִּי אִם־צָעֹק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמְעַ אֶשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתֹו ***'If you afflict them in any way, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry.'*** (22:22)

It is forbidden to chastise anyone too harshly, even if one's intentions are good. Because Penina inadvertently caused pain to Hannah (the mother of Samuel) in trying to influence her to pray to G-d for children, we find that she was punished.

One must be very careful not to cause someone to "cry out" to G-d, for He will "surely hear their cry." (**The Vilna Gaon**)



R' Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l (Beis Halevi) would say:

וְאֵלֶּה֙ הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר תָּשִׂ֖ים לִפְנֵיהֶֽם - Parshas Mishpatim comes right before Parshas Teruma because before a person can give tzedaka and show the generosity of his heart, he has to know from where the money came. Is it stolen or is it kosher money?

He can only know that from learning the dinim of Parshas Mishpatim which discusses other people's money. Once he knows the laws, he can then give tzedaka (Parshas Teruma) properly knowing the money is his and not stolen."

Who are you?

וַיְסַפֵּ֥ר לָעָ֖ם אֵ֣ת כָּל־דִּבְרֵ֣י ה' וְאֵ֣ת כָּל־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֑ים... (24:3)



A crowded United Airlines flight was canceled. A single agent was rebooking a long line of inconvenienced travelers. Suddenly, an angry passenger pushed his way to the front. He slapped his ticket on the counter and said, "I MUST be on this flight, and it has to be FIRST CLASS."

The agent replied, "I'm sorry, sir. I'll be happy to try to help you, but I've got to help these folks first. Let me finish with them and then I'm sure we'll be able to work something out for you."

The passenger was unimpressed. In an obviously loud voice so that the passengers behind him could hear, he said, "DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO I AM?!"

The agent looked up from her computer screen and smiled sweetly. Then, without hesitating, she grabbed the public address microphone and began to speak. "May I have your attention, please," she said in a voice heard clearly throughout the terminal. - "We have a passenger here at Gate Fourteen WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHO HE IS. If anyone can help him with his identity, please come to Gate Fourteen."

With the folks behind him in line clearly amused, the man glared at the United Airlines agent and gritted his teeth. He was about to raise his voice again and say something nasty, when the agent, still smiling, cut him off and said, "I'm sorry sir, you'll have to get in line for that, too!"

The Torah and its many laws, are our life-line. They direct us in our daily life and in every course of action we do. However, learning Torah and following the mitzvos should be an enjoyable experience. Anyone who finds themselves confronted with the opposite experience is obviously doing something wrong. This is a lesson for him: ***Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain***....!

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

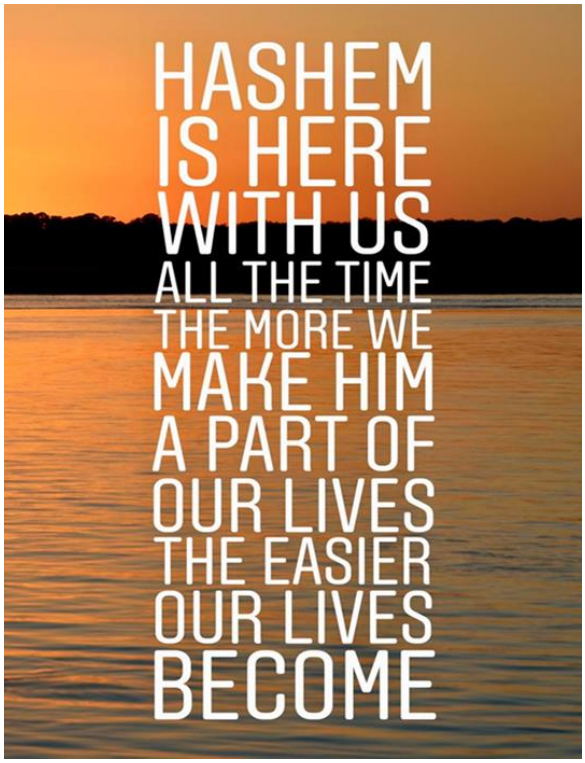
וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם

People sometimes wonder, does Hashem really care about all the intricate details of a mitzvah? Isn't Hashem busy with important things like running the world, making shidduchim, healing the sick etc.? Why should He really care if I open my refrigerator on Shabbos when the light is on? Why would He want me to have a dark, hungry and cold Shabbos?

Allow me to illustrate with a parable. Imagine you are a parent who needs to leave the house for an hour at bedtime. You have three little boys who are busy playing. "I have to go out for an hour," you tell them, "please get ready for bed. I want to see you all in pajamas, teeth brushed, and in bed when I come home!"

An hour later you come home and what do you see? One boy is still playing with the same game as when you left. One boy is in his room half undressed, starting to put on his pajamas. And the third son is lying in bed, teeth brushed, in pajamas, saying shema! So, how do you feel?

You go over to the son in bed and give him a big kiss on his head. His actions are not only an expression of obedience, but they are an expression of love! He shows that he cares about you!



The boy who is still playing his game is sending a message that he doesn't care what you say!

When we follow the mitzvos, we are expressing our obedience to Hashem. But when we do what we don't necessarily want to do but we do it in all its intricate detail, it is an expression of love!

We are saying to Hashem, we want to do Your will, even when it is not our will, because we know that You know better. You love us and only want what is good for us and by keeping the intricate details of halacha, we are expressing our belief and love in Hashem, Who truly cares about everything we do.

V'eileh HaMishpatim - these are the laws that we shall keep, that we shall embrace and strive to adhere to with the most intricate detail and stringency. Because Torah is the greatest present we ever

received from Hashem Who loves us more than we will ever know. By keeping mitzvos properly, we are saying, "***Thank you, Hashem ... I love You, too***!"

Maaseh Avos Siman L'Banim (21:19)

אִם־יָקֹום וְהִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּחוּץ עַל־מִשְׁעַנְתֹּו וְנִקָּה הַמַּכֶּה רַק שִׁבְתֹּו יִתֵּן וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא

A prominent Jewish merchant was once passing through the village of Mezeritch. Having heard of the greatness of the **Mezeritcher Maggid, R' Dov Ber zt"l**, the merchant, R' Yaakov, decided to visit him, although he was not an adherent of the Chasidic movement.



He was eager to engage the Maggid in a learned discussion, and he was not disappointed. As R' Yaakov was about to leave, the Maggid suddenly said: "Remember Yaakov, what our Sages of blessed memory said, that Hashem sends His cure to a patient through a particular doctor and a particular medicine. Sometimes the One Above sends His cure not through the medication which the doctor prescribes, but through the doctor himself. As you know, a doctor receives his healing powers by authority of the Torah, as it is written, 'And he shall surely cure him.' Therefore, the doctor has a healing angel at his side, and a very great doctor is accompanied by the Malach Raphael, himself."

As he traveled back to Vilna, R' Yaakov thought about this strange parting remark, which seemed to come out of the blue. R' Yaakov was, thank G-d, in very good health. He had never needed a doctor before, and he hoped he would not have to consult one in the future.

He hadn't asked the Maggid for medical advice, so why had the Maggid mentioned doctors?

Unable to solve this puzzle, he soon dismissed the entire episode from his mind. Several weeks later R' Yaakov returned home and fell into his normal routine. After a few days, he awoke feeling quite ill. His condition worsened rapidly and although all the best doctors were called in, each offering a different medication, nothing helped. Word of his condition spread quickly. His friends and acquaintances were devastated, for R' Yaakov was a kind and charitable man.

Then a ray of hope appeared. They heard that the ruler of Lithuania would be arriving in town, and his personal physician, who was a wayward Jew, would be accompanying him. If only they could persuade the ruler's doctor to pay a call on their beloved friend, maybe this great doctor could save his life.

The community leaders dispatched a delegation to the palace and petitioned to allow the royal physician to visit R' Yaakov. The ruler received them graciously and agreed to their request.

The hopes of his family and friends soared when the famous doctor entered the sickroom, but were soon dashed. When the doctor looked at R' Yaakov, he said disdainfully, "Am I G-d that you have brought me here to revive a dead man?"

To everyone's horror, the doctor turned to leave. Distraught, they begged him to prescribe some medication. "Nothing can help this man," he replied brusquely, casting a parting glance at the dying patient. But something caught his eye and he turned to look again. A slight bit of colour could suddenly be seen on the patient's face. The doctor took his note pad and scribbled a prescription. "Run to the pharmacy and bring this medication at once!"

Hope sprang again into the hearts of R' Yaakov's family and friends. The royal physician remained at the man's bedside, his eyes fixed on the sick man. He was amazed to see further signs of improvement.

He pulled out his pad and prescribed another medication. But no sooner had he written it out than the patient's eyes began to flicker. The doctor had never seen such a thing in all his experience.

Suddenly, the erstwhile dying man sat up in bed and addressed the physician, "I beg you, dear doctor, don't go yet. Stay a while longer, and I'll feel much better. The Angel Raphael must be at your side."

The physician was completely overwhelmed. He stared at the patient in utter disbelief, and although he didn't believe in angels, he could almost believe the patient's words. As if reading the doctor's thoughts, R' Yaakov began to relate his visit to the Maggid of Mezritch and especially the Maggid's puzzling - and prophetic - remark at the end of the visit.

The doctor, who had listened intently to the whole episode, sat engrossed in thought. It occurred to him that, great healer though he believed he was, he needed a lot of healing himself - healing of a spiritual nature.

"I would like to meet this saintly man," he finally said. "When you are fully recovered, I would like you to take me to meet him." Not very long after, the two of them, R' Yaakov and the royal physician, traveled to Mezeritch - R' Yaakov to become a chasid and the physician to return to his faith. (**Adapted from Talk & Tales, by Nissan Mindel**)

R' Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz ZT"L (Chazon Ish) said:

"Sometimes, laziness is the root of action. When we hear a whisper telling us not give in to our desires, it is laziness that prevents us from listening and rising up to fight against that desire. As a result, it is the laziness that causes us to perform the bad habit."

We are all Jewish



Lester Tanner, World War II veteran, passed away recently at age 99. At his service on Sunday, everyone talked about his incredible life, ordinary really — but full of the blessings that make life a joy.

A Harvard law degree, a thriving business, wife, children, stepchildren, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren with one on the way. All of their lives touching other lives, bringing more lives into the world. And it was all possible because nearly 80 years ago, one man was brave enough to stand in the gap and say, "***We are all Jewish***."

Tanner's story is entwined with the saga of Roddie Edmonds.

Edmonds was a master sergeant of the 106th Infantry Division, 422nd Infantry Regiment, in the United States Army during World War II. He was the highest ranking officer at the Nazi's Stalag IX, a prisoner of war camp, that captured nearly 1,300 American soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944.

The soldiers, some of them barefoot, had been marched brutally for miles in snow and cold. Tanner and many others suffered severed frostbite, which made his feet scaly even decades later.

In January 1945 in that POW camp, the Nazi commandant ordered Master Sergeant Edmonds to have all the Jewish soldiers fall out the next morning. It meant that the Nazis would separate them for extermination, Hitler's final solution. Edmonds told the men the night before that they weren't going to do that.

The next morning, all of the nearly 1,300 American soldiers lined up. The 19-year-old Tanner stood at Edmonds' right, and another young Jewish soldier, Paul Stern, was on his left.

The commandant was incensed. He approached Edmonds and yelled, "They can't all be Jewish!"



Edmonds answered, "***We are all Jewish***."

The commandment cocked his pistol and put it to Edmonds' forehead, threatening to kill him then and there if he didn't have the Jewish soldiers fall out. Edmonds refused. He said to the commandant that even if he were to kill him, "We know who you are, and you will be tried on war crimes."

The commandant relented, put his pistol back in the holster and walked away. - That day, Roddie Edmonds saved the lives of at least 200 Jewish soldiers!



מַכֵּה אִישׁ וָמֵת מוֹת יוּמָת ***He who strikes a man, so that he dies*** (21:12)

The numerical value of the Hebrew letters of the words **מַכֵּה אִישׁ** "he who strikes a man" and **אִישׁ כִּי יַכֶּה** "a man who strikes" (Lev. 24:17) is the same as the letters of the name "**עשו**." (376)

Violence and murder are the attributes of Esau, and not Jacob. (**Nachalat Chamisha**)

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ



When a person works hard to make a living and is successful, it can be difficult for him to follow the dictum to lend money to the needy and to help out those in need (22:24).

Rashi offers a way to make this easier. If we can visualize ourselves as being in the place of the needy person, we can recognize their need and thereby willingly help them.

Rav Yaakov Galinsky, zt"l, added that our responsibility is to try to feel the needs of others and to put ourselves in their shoes, so that we will want to share that which we worked hard for and earned with someone who is not as fortunate as us.

Working on our Middos

The wife of a wealthy man once came to the Rav of Budapest with a special request. She and her husband did not have children yet, and she wanted to give the Rav a donation of four hundred gold coins, in exchange for his promise that he would Daven that she should be Bentched with a child.

The Rav advised the woman to instead send the money to **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l**, the Rav of Yerushalayim. "He is a great Tzadik," the Rav said. "Let us hope that Hashem will listen to his Tefilos and Bentch you with a child." Overjoyed, the woman followed

the Rav's advice and sent the money to Yerushalayim, together with a letter from the Rav.

Weeks passed. One day, the woman's husband came to the Rav of Budapest, and he was greatly upset. "Why did you send the money to the Rav of Yerushalayim without my knowledge or consent? I demand that you give that money back to me! I want you to send a letter asking him to return the money." The Rav, of course, was reluctant to do so, offering instead to pay the money out of his own pocket.

In the middle of their discussion, the postman arrived with a letter for the Rav. Amazingly enough, the letter was from Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, and the four hundred golden coins were enclosed!

The note accompanying the package read, "I received your letter along with the four hundred golden coins. However, you write that a woman gave you the money, and I fear she may have done so without her husband's consent. I am therefore returning the money, and I ask that you hurry to return it to its owner. Of course, I have Davened for the woman regardless of the money. May Hashem accept my Tefilos!"

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Zecharia Wallerstein, zt"l, once said in a speech, "Let me share with you something very simple that holds the potential of changing your life, and all it takes is five minutes. Come to Davening five minutes early. The Gemara in Brachos (6b) states that Hashem comes to Shul to greet the first ten men who gather to form the Minyan. If one day, one of those ten men who is always there is absent, Hashem inquires where he is.

Now, why does Hashem ask this? Doesn't Hashem already know where the absent person is? The answer is that Hashem is rhetorically asking the Malachim, 'What prevented him from coming to Shul today?'

To this, the Malachim may respond, 'He's sick and he needs to get better,' and Hashem expediently issues him a recovery, because He wants him back in Shul. 'He was up very late because he works very hard,' the Malachim say, and Hashem arranges for him to find an easier, better paying job. This man, who is always early and makes the Minyan, matters so much that Hashem will do whatever is needed to get him back to Shul if he doesn't come one day.

We're always looking for Segulos, auspicious practices, that will bring Brachah and beneficence into our lives. This is a simple and guaranteed way.

Be of the first ten to a Minyan. Be early and show your commitment to Hashem. Demonstrate that you are eager to see Hashem, and that you want to talk to Him and have a relationship with Him. With that dedication, you can be sure that Hashem will reciprocate and be dedicated to you. Just five minutes. That's all it takes!"



Did You Know That

You probably know that this week's parsha tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu stayed on Har Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights. But did you know that the two brachos that are said on Krias HaTorah (Asher Bochar Banu & Asher Nosan Lanu) contain 40 words?!

The Tur (OC §139) teaches that Chazal made those brachos have 40 words in order that they should correspond to the 40 days and nights that Moshe Rabbeinu remained on Har Sinai.



Shabbos Shekalim

Rav Melech Biderman told how two brothers, Rav Meir and Rav Zanvil Kahana, came together to visit the Tzaddik, the **Imrei Yosef of Spinka**, on Parshas Shekalim. Both brothers had suffered greatly and needed a yeshua: Rav Meir's wife was ill and they had no children, and Rav Zanvil's children were weak and sickly.

On Erev Shabbos, Rav Meir entered and asked for a beracha. He was told to donate a pidyon of a hundred gold coins and he would have a complete salvation! And so he did.

His brother did not have time to enter the Rebbe's room before Shabbos and instead approached on Shabbos. At the tisch the Chassidim have the minhag to donate bottles of wine, and as each Chassid laid down his bottle at the table, Rav Zanvil approached. Soon it was his turn and he laid down his bottle and asked the Rebbe for a beracha for his sick children.

The Imrei Yosef blessed them with a beracha for a refua sheleima and then he explained: On Shabbos Shekalim all tefillos can be answered! The Gemara says in Berachos 26b that the tefillos were instated by Chazal to correspond to the korbanos. Now the purpose of the machatzis hashekel donation was to raise the funds needed to purchase the korban tamid for the entire upcoming year. Thus, the mitzva of shekalim prepared the korbanos for the entire year. Shabbos Shekalim is therefore a time when we can daven for the

prayers of the entire year to be accepted and fulfilled lerachamim uleratzon – and be answered!

Needless to say, both brothers' prayers were fully answered and they got their needed salvation! (Pe'er Yosef p. 25)

Rav Elozor Rokeach Shemen Roke'ach, Elazar Low (Shevat 27)



Already advanced in years, the Shemen Rokeach sat in the yeshivah in Santov teaching Torah to his many talmidim, where as usual the atmosphere was charged with holiness. Fiery discussions and arguments, questions and answers thrown back and forth, students and teacher swirling in the sea of learning, oblivious to their surroundings.

All at once the momentum was broken by a cry: "Fire." A man burst into the shul pale and shaken, "Fire! House after house is being consumed and you're all sitting here calmly! Soon the whole city will be engulfed in flames." Then turning to the rabbi, "Rabbeinu, come let us flee for our lives before the fire harms the people as well Rachmono litzlan."

Bewildered and panicky the talmidim wanted to rush out and help those fighting the fire, who were drawing water from the wells and trying unsuccessfully to gain control while the flames spread from house to house, rooftop to rooftop, reducing whole streets to ashes.

Raising his hand, the Shemen Rokeach restrained them, commanding them to continue learning. Calmly, he stood up and walked towards the door where he placed his hand over the mezuzoh. "When I was

in Mikolasch a fire broke out in that city. I went to the mezuzoh and pronounced three times: `Vatishka ho'esh,' and that is exactly what happened. Now too I announce: `Vatishkah ho'esh, vatishkah ho'esh, vatishkah ho'esh!'"

The talmidim sitting with him could scarcely believe the miracle they were witnessing. Through the windows of the beis medrash they could see the city silhouetted against an orange-red sky clouded by billowing smoke, bringing despair to even the most hopeful of hearts. Yet after a few minutes the news arrived that the fire had miraculously died down on its own accord.

This wondrous story was passed down the generations together with many others. When the Shemen Rokeach's grandson, the Divrei Yirmiyahu of Ujheil, came to daven at his grandfather's kever in Santov, the people came streaming to greet him and he was surrounded by individuals who retold all the miracles and personal salvations that had been wrought by his holy grandfather, the above story being repeated in graphic detail by the leaders of the community.

"The greatest wonder," replied the Divrei Yirmiyahu, "is that my grandfather the Shemen Rokeach was a boki in Shas and poskim, Sifrei, Safro Tosefta and the whole Torah, and all his days were spent in endless pursuit of more Torah and to ever elevate his service of Hashem, spreading His word and passing on our holy tradition -- that is the greatest wonder of all."

It was a terribly stormy day in the winter of 5593. Torrential rains flooded the country and the howling of ferocious winds was punctuated by crashes of thunder and streaks of lightening. Suddenly the town was lit up for a long moment by a weird white light and then the terrible smell of fire filled the air. Some buildings had been struck by lightning, among them the house of the Shemen Rokeach.

In the ensuing confusion it was discovered that the rabbi had lost his vision. All efforts of the greatest doctors were in vain; the Shemen Rokeach our guiding light remained blind until the day of his death [literally, see above!].

However his new handicap did not deter him from furthering the spread of Torah. Almost without any discernible change, he continued teaching. Only those who looked closer could notice the one difference: whereas up to now the Rabbi had quoted the gemora and rishonim from his sefer, he now did so by heart.

Hardly believing their eyes and ears, his talmidim sat around him listening to him reciting the exact words that were spread out in the seforim in front of them, and he without a sefer to refer to and without eyes to see the text. Moreover if one of them would stumble over a phrase or word, whether from the Rashbo or Shulchan Oruch, he would assist and correct the mistake.

Neither did his lost vision inhibit his work of publishing seforim. The fact that he had already written chidushim on most masechtos of Shas and hundreds of teshuvos in halocho, and that some of his seforim had already been printed, did not leave him complacent. He dictated to talmidim who wrote down his new chidushim, word for word. At the end of every sugya they would read out all they had written under his instruction and the Shemen Rokeach would counter and check, add and retract, ensuring the text was fit to be printed. (Recently, a handwritten manuscript of his chidushim on Nezikim, written by one of his talmidim, was discovered and at the top was an annotation that the Shemen Rokeach had instructed his talmid to write due to his blindness.) - "***As long as Hakodosh Boruch Hu sustains my life," he used to say, "I'll stand like a loyal soldier on duty; and if He took away my eyesight then the power of concentration of my eyes have been transferred to my other senses and I'll use those to serve Him***."

Ten days after his passing on 27th of Shevat, the holy **Chasam Sofer** gave a long hesped during which he said, "The ways of Hashem are hidden, we have no way of understanding the reason behind various concepts such as His distribution of poverty and riches, sickness and health etc. However, it seems to me that the reason why the gaon of Santov became blind in his later years is as follows:

Throughout his earthly life, a tzaddik toils, rising ever higher until he almost reaches the peak of holiness. However, his physical body with its mundane qualities keeps him somewhat anchored to the gashmiyus of this world preventing him from reaching the spiritual summit to which his soul aspires.

Hashem therefore removed the sight of this angel among us, freeing him from that physical chain so that his soul could ascend the lofty heights unencumbered by his body. Let us now appropriately eulogize the tzaddik that has been taken from our midst." Zechuso yogen oleinu.

Rav Chananya Yom Tov Lipa Teitelbaum Kedushas Yom Tov (Shevat 29)

The Brachos That They Both Gave

During one of his visits to the Kedushas Yom Tov, Rav Menachem Mendel asked him to give him a bracha. The Kedushas Yom Tov answered him, "Shouldn't it be the other way around? You are older than I, and the word zaken stands for Zeh Kana Chochma ("you have acquired more wisdom"). You are also a talmid of the Chasam Sofer. Therefore, it would surely be more proper for me to receive your blessing!"

Rav Menachem Mendel disagreed: "But you are descended from the holy Yismach Moshe of Uhjel, whom I once merited to meet face-to-face, and I heard drashos from his holy mouth that blazed like a flaming fire – so it would be more proper for you to bless me!"

In the end, each tzaddik spread his hands over the head of the other, and in this manner they blessed each other! (Gedulas Mordechai)

Shrayim To Heal The Sick - As heard directly from the Kedushas Yom Tov's son - Rabbeinu Yoel zt"l.

When Rav Yoel was a child, he once observed his father enter his room while he was sleeping and prepare some pieces of cake by the window.

The Kedushas Yom Tov was a known gentleman and would always remove his shoes while entering a place where someone was sleeping in order to avoid waking them. However, this did not deter Rav Yoel - since he needed little sleep and was always keen on observing his father. This action got the best of his curiosity and he waited to see what would happen. The next day, the (Nir) Bater Rav came to the Kedushas Yom Tov and announced that he would like to stay for Shabbos. The Kedushas Yom Tov replied that although he appreciated his company, however he would like for him to return to (Nir) Bater immediately.

The Kedushas Yom Tov informed him that the wife of the Rosh HaKuel (President) of the (Nir) Bater's shul was sick. Then the Kedushas Yom Tov took the prepared pieces of cake and gave it to the (Nir) Bater Rav and told him to give it to the sick wife with the instructions of the Kedushas Yom Tov as follows:

"It says **ועבדתם את ה' אלקיכם וברך את לחמך ואת מימיך והסרתי מחלה מקרבך** *'You shall worship Hashem, your G-d, and He shall bless your bread and your water, and I will remove illness from your midst*, [Parshas Mishpatim 23:25]) – consequently eating shirayim, (the Rebbe/Tzaddik's leftover food) is mesugal (good omen) for health."

Being that the Rebbe was his uncle, the (Nir) Bater Rav had no choice but to follow directions. He went home and asked the Rosh HaKuel to come see him and repeated what the Kedushas Yom Tov told him.

The Rosh HaKuel was shocked because his wife just became sick that day and he was in awe of the Kedushas Yom Tov's Ruach HaKodesh.

Years later, when Rav Yoel repeated the story – he would add that there are many fascinating features with this story: How did his father know the Rosh HaKuel's wife was sick? How did he know that the (Nir) Bater Rov was coming to visit him and would be able to take back the shirayim? However, most intriguingly to Rav Yoel was the fact that the Kedushas Yom Tov said that [his] shirayim would heal the sick.

Rav Mordechai Yaffe Baal HeLevushim (Adar II 3)

Levushim



Rav Simcha Bunim of Otwezchek, grandson of Rav Yitzchok, son of the Vorker Rebbe, told: When Rav Mordechai Yaffe was a young man, he was exceedingly handsome. A gentile noblewoman saw his beauty, desired him for herself and hatched a plot to ensnare him. When he realized her evil intentions and tried to escape, she threatened him with torture and imprisonment.

Seeing no other way out, he escaped through a sewer grate and ran off. While in the sewers, he was befouled and choked from the stench and the putrid fumes of decay and despoiled garbage. All ten of his garments were soiled and ruined, covered in sludge and sewage.

When he emerged, a great tumult occurred in Heaven. They recognized his great self-sacrifice and it was decreed that he would

merit authoring ten magnificent seforim corresponding to the ten garments he had lost during his flight from the evil temptress.

He therefore called his ten writings and seforim Levushim – clothes or garments: Levush Chur, Techeles, Ateres Zohov etc.

After he succeeded in overcoming this test, he davened that none of his descendants should be comely or attractive so that they would never be tested in a similar way. His tefillos were accepted and all his descendants were of dark complexions thereafter.

Rav Simcha Bunim concluded, "Nine of his seforim were printed in his lifetime. How I wish someone would reveal and print the tenth!" (Bais Yitzchok, p. 270)

Rav Eliyohu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim Aderes Adar I 3 - How Much The Netziv Admired The Aderes

The Aderes writes, "It was on Leil Shishi (Thu night) that I left Bialystok for Warsaw to travel to see the Gaon the Netziv, who was very fond of me, though I had not yet ever met him.

I arrived Erev Shabbos after having traveled all night long. After davening and eating breakfast, I asked my mechutan to accompany me to meet the Gaon the Netziv, and we found him sitting in the company of Dr. Rottenberg and Rav Kasavski.

Rav Kasavski introduced me to the Netziv as the son-in-law of Rav Leib Chazan. Then the Netziv realized who I was and he called out, "This must be the Rav of Ponevezh, Rav Eliyohu Dovid!" They replied in the affirmative. He quickly stood up fully and with trembling he recited the full berocha with Shem Umalchus of Shehecheyonu vekiymonu vehigi'onu lazman hazeh!

Since I did not sit without his leave, he continued standing on his feet and his wife the Rebbetzin berated him for standing while sick. He answered her back, "Don't you see that he is standing? How can

I sit while he stands?" And so I asked leave to sit and was granted, and we both sat down. Everyone present was amazed at his love for Torah and those who engage in its study and that he pronounced the berocha of Shehecheyonu over me with Shem Umalchus.

As long as I was in Warsaw over the next two weeks, I visited the Netziv daily and we delighted in discussing topics of Torah. I highlighted some ideas and remarked on some of his chiddushim and points of his Torah commentary, which he was editing to reprint, and he showed his writings on Shas and some of his responsa in Halocha." (Seder Eliyohu p. 84)

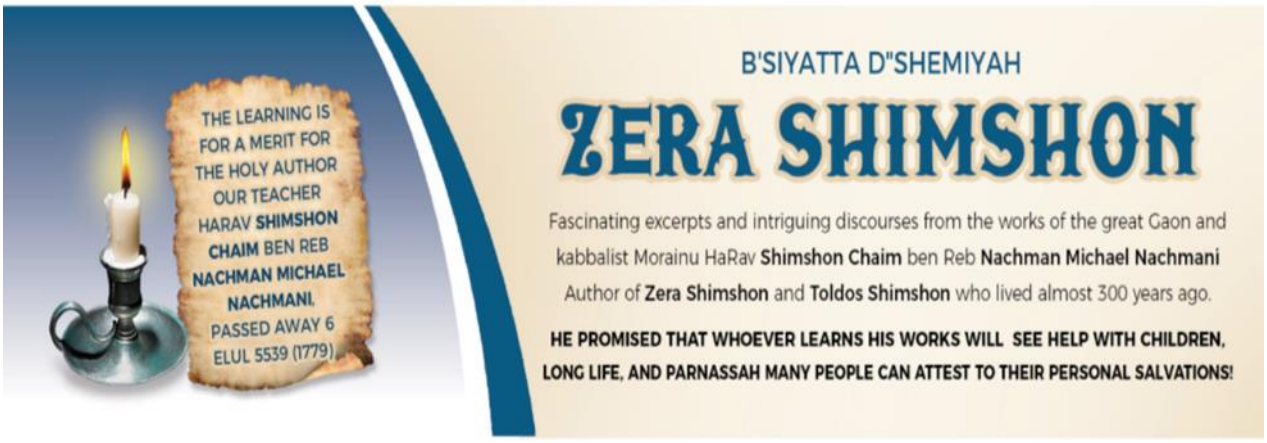
Circle Time

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ "***If you will lend money to My nation, the poor among you***…" (Shemos 22:24)

Wealth is given to the rich in order to be distributed to the poor. The letters of the word in Lashon Hakodesh meaning money **כ-ס-ף** are preceded in the alphabet by the letters **ע-נ-י**, which mean "poor." This teaches that the money was only granted to the rich as a solution for the poor (Shach).

The letters before **כסף** also spell **עין**, which hints that when the Torah says **עין תחת עין**, it refers to money, because **כסף** is "under" (i.e., after) **עין**. • **כסף** with its "inner letters"—**כ'ף סמ'ך פ'א** - has the gematria 301 = **אש**.

This teaches that if the person who has wealth does not give or lend support, it may be destroyed (Shach). • **כסף** with its "inner letters" can be spelled **כ'ף סמ'ך פ'ה**, which has the gematria 305 = **כפרה** and = **שה**, to teach that the tzedakah brings atonement like a korban (Chida). • **כסף** = **160** = **עץ**, to teach that money can be a tree of strength, but only for those who use it to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah! (Chida)



וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע "... ***and they said, "Everything that Hashem said we will do and fulfill.***" (24:7).

The Gemara (Shabbos 88a) relates that when the Jewish people said **נעשה ונשמע**,we will do and we will accept, a Heavenly voice proclaimed, "Who revealed this secret to My children? This manner of serving Hashem is the a secret that (only) the angels use".

The Zera Shimshon asks - what is the 'great secret'? What is so great about the attitude that angles use that Hashem refers to it as a great secret?

The Zera Shimshon explains this based on the following Chazal. Chazal say that even a non-Jew that studies Torah is equated to a Kohen Gadol! The difference though is that the non-Jew is deemed as one who is not commanded yet still fulfills what he knows to be the desire of Hashem and a Jew is on a higher level - he is commanded and fulfills, negating the automatic influence of the Yetzer Hara to stand in the way of one that is commanded by Hashem to do something.

However, the highest level a Jew can reach is taught in the Mishna (Avos 1:3) even though we are promised reward for our adherence to Hashem's commandments, nevertheless, one should strive to serve Hashem without the ultimate reward being what drives a person to do Hashem's will, rather, one should serve Hashem because Hashem commanded him to do so. The depth of the Jewish peoples' proclamation of **נעשה ונשמע** was about this kind readiness

to do Hashem's will. Obviously, they first had to actually hear the mitzvos from Hashem in order to know what to do. Their saying **נעשה ונשמע** was a way of saying they are ready to serve Hashem as one who serves Him out of his own desire - without even being commanded. Hence, **נעשה** ,we will do, before **נשמע** ,we will hear, meaning we are ready to serve Hashem as one who has not even been commanded - such a person is not concerned about reward and still he serves Hashem.

This is what the Jewish people meant by **נעשה ונשמע** they were ready to serve Hashem at the highest level. This is the way angels serve Hashem. They do not receive reward for their actions but this is not their concern. They serve Hashem without even being concerned about reward.

The Jewish people mirrored this attitude when they said **נעשה ונשמע** and this is the secret that the Heavenly voice was referring to.

Nefesh Shimshon – from the teachings of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l - The Purpose of Pain

וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא ***He shall heal***. (*Shemos* 21:19) - This is the source that a doctor has permission to practice healing. (*Berachos* 60a)

Painkillers

When *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* brings illness upon a person, he is allowed to try to heal the illness. However, one of the biggest fields in medicine today is painkillers. In the past, doctors focused mainly on remedying illness. But today there a highly developed science of pain relief even if the disease itself cannot be cured.

Pharmacists say that only about fifteen percent of the medicines sold by them are remedial. The rest are pain relievers, whether it is physical or emotional pain.

In the past, people considered pain to be part of life. It is recounted that one of *tzaddikim* of past generations suffered greatly from pain in his legs. When he grew old, those close to him urged him to go to a doctor. He did, and the doctor healed him, and his pain was relieved. The *tzaddik* then remarked that he suddenly realized it is possible to walk around in *Hashem's* world without pain.

He said that he always thought pain to be an integral part of life. Just as a person sees and hears, so he also has aches and pains.

But today, if something hurts us, we quickly take a pill to alleviate the discomfort. And if that doesn't help, we take two. When we are in pain we find it hard to function. Life stops, and we feel we must get rid of this pain.

Nowadays a dentist is considered good if he can treat patients painlessly. Even when we get a shot nowadays, for vaccination or something else, they spray a little anesthetic on the spot, so it won't hurt us too much.

What does the Torah say about this? Are aches and pains a superfluous burden, or perhaps they have a role to play in our *avodas Hashem?*

The Shechinah's Pain *Chazal* say as follows about experiencing pain: When a person is in pain, what does the *Shechinah* say? "My head feels heavy, My arm feels heavy." Rashi explains that the *Shechinah* feels heaviness of head and arm, so to speak, similar to how a person feels when he is exhausted and worn out.

My grandfather would tell of a certain pious Jew who was badly beaten in the street by non-Jews. While he was being hit, the Jew cried out, "It doesn't hurt me! It doesn't hurt me!"

Afterward, people asked him what he meant by that. He explained that when a Jew experiences pain, *Hashem* suffers, too, and he didn't want *Hashem* to suffer because of him.

When a person is in pain, the *Shechinah* does not just empathize with his pain. It is much more than that. It is as if the *Shechinah,* too, is in pain and suffering.

There is a concept called **נושא בעול עם חבירו** . When a friend or relative suffers, we are concerned about his wellbeing. We look for ways to help him. Not only does *Hashem* show us this type of concern, but it is if *Hashem* Himself is experiencing the same pain. **עמו אנוכי בצרה** – "*Hashem* is with him in his trouble."

When we have a headache, the problem is not our pain, but *Hashem's* pain. There is nothing as powerful as pain to connect us tightly to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

We need to take advantage of this wonderful connection to *Hashem*. Pain is not an end in itself. In the physical world, pain indicates that something in the body is not functioning properly.

When a person has an infection, his body temperature rises. Running a temperature is a warning signal that there is a problem somewhere in the body and it needs to be treated. Something in the vital processes is not working right.

There are people whose body does not react to infection by a rise in temperature, and they are in a high-risk category, because the infection is likely to spread throughout their body without them noticing it. Pain is a sign from *Hashem*. It has one clear purpose: that we should exercise our will to live.

The Drop of Ink

The following allegory illustrates this. A young child is being taught how to paint. The teacher guides the child in producing a painting of steps leading up to a building, and the painting comes out great. The child worked on it day after day until it was a real work of art.

Suddenly a big, ugly drop of paint fell in the middle of the picture. The child broke out in bitter tears. The picture he worked on so hard, for such a long time, is ruined!

The teacher reassured him, saying, "Don't cry, we have a picture of steps here, and in the middle of it is a drop of pant. Let's add in a child walking down the steps, and we will incorporate the drop of paint into the picture of the child." Now the painting is even better than before.

All of life contains hidden meaning. Just as *esrog* has hidden meaning, just as *matzah* has hidden meaning, so life itself has hidden meaning. We don't know the purpose for which we are alive or what role we are meant to play in the world. These are hidden matters known only to *Hashem* Who created us.

When suffering comes upon us, or anything else that is ostensibly disturbing our routine, this is like a drop of pain falling into the middle of our tranquil life. There is a hidden meaning in this drop of paint.

Hashem has a reason for sending it to us. What should we do with it? If we try to erase this "drop of paint," if the child in the above-mentioned allegory will try to wipe away the drop of paint that fell on his picture, it will smear all over and ruin the

whole painting. So instead of trying to get rid of suffering, we should rather incorporate it into our life. We should accept its presence and bring out its true message, the message that *Hashem* has sent us.

We should create "life" out of it. Growth and eternal deeds. Then, our whole life will take on a completely different dimension, a much more wonderful dimension. Life will be much more beautiful than it was without this suffering.

The Danger in Suffering

Although suffering brings us a wonderful opportunity to connect to *Hashem*, it can also lead us in the opposite direction, *chas v'shalom.*

When suffering comes upon a person he is liable to say, "I can't *daven* in such a state, I can't learn Torah like this," and so forth. Suffering

is like a car. It can get us very far quickly and easily. But if we don't know how to drive, a car can be detrimental to us.

There are people who are very emotional, and when something bothers them, when something is disturbing them and worrying them, they go to the fridge and start to eat.

This is one way to deal with a stressful problem. But if we follow this way, we lose out on a precious treasure. We lose the opportunity to connect with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. We were granted a wonderful gift: emotional distress. And instead of taking advantage of it to connect ourselves to *Hashem*, we connect to a piece of chocolate cake.

Pain, Yes. Sadness, No.

"Pain" is not synonymous with "sadness." There is happiness and there is sadness. Happiness expresses hope, growth, aspiration. Sadness expresses despair. There is an expression of *Chazal* that we could apply to this: ***Poverty follows the pauper***.

Poverty follows poor people around. By contrast, nothing brings more riches to a person than riches itself. Nothing brings more poverty to a person than poverty itself. When a person conducts himself in a wealthy and dignified manner, this itself brings him wealth and dignity.

In the same way, nothing brings a person more joy than joy itself. The best *segulah* for *simchah* is to create joy artificially, and true joy will follow.

When a person is in pain he should not try to escape. If he trains himself to overcome it, he can live with the pain. But there is one thing we must do, and that is learn a lesson from the pain. We should take the force of pain, which stimulates our will to live, our will to grow, and take advantage of it for true life.

We should *daven* with more *kavanah*, draw ourselves closer to *Hashem*, become partners with Him in His world. Then the suffering will turn into a wonderful gift that *Hashem* gave us.

Suffering is the force that awakens the will to live, the will to increase our growth. We should take advantage of it to build ourselves and elevate ourselves spiritually.



Do you know what the difference between sympathy & empathy is?

Sympathy is to feel pity or sadness FOR someone. Empathy means to feel pain or worry WITH someone.

This week the Torah tells us **עזב תעזב עמו** - "You shall surely help WITH him"

In other words, dont just have pity, try and take a walk in someone else's shoes!

Often people attempt to live their lives backwards; They try to make more money in order to do more of what they want, so they will be happier. - The way it actually works is in reverse. You must first be who you really are, then do what you need to do, in order to have what you want.



For the Shabbos Table

כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמֹור שֹׂנַאֲךָ רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מַשָּׂאֹו וְחָדַלְתָּ מֵעֲזֹב לֹו עָזֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמֹּו "***Perhaps you will see the donkey of someone you hate lying under its burden, will you refrain from helping him? - you shall surely help along with him***" (Shemos 23:5)

The Pasuk refers to one who is prepared to assist a fellow Jew, yet finds themselves reluctant. The Torah commands him to overcome this and assist his fellow. The pasuk, however, is clearly discussing a fellow whom he hates. If so, why does the pasuk describe this merely as one who is "hesitant to assist"? Would it not be more accurate to describe this as the person having no interest at all in this fellow's predicament?

Rav Aharon Dovid Willner shlit"a explains that even one who is entrenched in a dispute with another person, wishes deeply to extricate themselves and resolve the conflict. It is only the frailty of human nature and the inability to overcome one's ego that prevents one from pursuing peace.

Thus, the pasuk guides us to follow our inclination to do good and overcome the egoistic nature that is impeding our inner desire to make shalom.

The Mishnah in Avos (1:12) states that Aharon Hakohen was an ohev shalom and rodef shalom, a lover of peace and pursuer of peace. Rashi explains that when Aharon would see a conflict, he would tell each side that the other party asked him to make peace between them. Each person, upon being convinced of their adversary's

interest in peace, would swiftly come to the table to make shalom. Seemingly, Aharon Hakohen was bending the truth, albeit for the noble cause of making peace.



However, Rav Willner, quoting **Rav Shneur Kotler zt"l**, explains that Aharon's words were in fact the truth, as the reality is that every Jew wishes deep down to be at peace with their fellow man. It is only the weakness of human nature that stands in the way of the blessing of peace.

Treatment of Widows And Orphans Determines One's Reward and Punishment By Rav Yissocher Frand

The parsha contains the Biblical prohibition against mistreating orphans and widows. G-d threatens us "If you make an orphan or a widow feel bad, watch out! I hear their cries and I will take revenge against you." [Shemos 22: 21-23]

The Ramba"m writes in Hilchos De'os Chapter 6, "A person must take heed of orphans and widows. Even though one does not get lashes for this offense (because there is no specific action involved), it is (nonetheless) a severe offense because its punishment is spelled out in the Torah. 'My anger will lash out against you… by sword'.

G-d made a special covenant with widows and orphans that when ever they cry out as a result of oppression, their cries will be answered."

There are a number of incidents documented from the life of the **Chofetz Chaim** that seem out of character for him. When the Chofetz Chaim would see that someone was not kind to an orphan or a widow, he would say, "Wait and see — this person will be punished!"

This is surprising. The Chofetz Chaim was not the vindictive type. We do not find that the Chofetz Chaim made statements such as, "This fellow spoke Lashon Hara, watch it — he will be punished." He never said "This person desecrated the Sabbath — watch it, he will get it."

Such things are not our business. They are the domain of G-d. But regarding someone who did an injustice to an orphan or a widow, the Chofetz Chaim would say, "Wait and see — he is going to get it."



There was an unfortunate practice in Russia that children would be seized and drafted into the Czarist army. Their enlistment was not for 4 years or for 8 years, but for 30 years. Any children that wound up in the Russian army, if they lived to tell the tale, invariably emerged as broken people.

This was a living death sentence. Unfortunately, the practice was that when the Czar's officers would come looking for children, people would arrange for other children to be taken to fill the quota. Particularly, orphans were taken. There was no one to bribe the authorities; the quota had to be met; so who was taken? the orphans.

There was a wealthy Jewish butcher whose son was supposed to be inducted into the army. He bribed an officer to take an orphan rather than his son. When the Chofetz Chaim heard this story, he

said, "Wait and see. This man will receive punishment and pay the price."

Thirty years later that butcher's son came down with cholera and died. The Chevra Kaddisha refused to touch him because of the contagious disease. That same butcher had to dig a grave and bury his son with his own hands.

Was the Chofetz Chaim being vindictive? No, the Chofetz Chaim was being a believer. When G-d promises "I will hear his cry" then that becomes a part of belief in Torah — to believe that the oppressor will receive his punishment.

I heard recently that **Reb Chaim Ozer**, the Rav in Vilna, said, "For years I thought that my "ticket" to the World to Come will be the Achiezer (his classic multi-volume collection of thousands of Responsa). However, I now (towards the end of his life) believe that my "ticket" to the World to Come will be that I was responsible for the sustenance of widows and orphans throughout Europe." Hundreds of thousands if not millions of rubles passed through his hands. He supported Yeshivos and the impoverished; widows and orphans. That, he believed, was his crowning glory to take to the next world, despite his monumental contribution to the annals of Torah literature.

כָּל־אַלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תְעַנּוּן ***'You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.'*** (22:21)

"Affliction" in the above verse refers to both physical and emotional pain (see Sefer HaChinuch, mitzva 65).

Commenting on this verse, Rashi says: "The same applies to all people (i.e. one is not allowed to hurt physically or emotionally any Jew). Here, the Torah speaks of the common situation, since widows and orphans are weak and are frequently hurt."



Feeling For Others Rav Yaakov Bender (24:10)

וְתַחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לִבְנַת הַסַּפִּיר וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לָטֹהַר - '*And beneath His feet was that which had the form of a sapphire brick*.'

Rashi, at the end of Parashas Mishpatim, tells us how the Bnei Yisrael beheld the glory of Hashem: The form of a brick was in front of Hashem throughout the years that Bnei Yisrael were slaves in Mitzrayim in order that He remember the suffering of the Bnei Yisrael, who were toiling with bricks.

Ein shikcha, there is no forgetfulness, before Your Kisei HaKavod. If nothing is forgotten in Heaven, what does the Torah mean when it says that Hashem remembered?

We are mandated to follow in His ways, V'halachta bidrachav. We are meant to study Hashem's middos and try to emulate them. Of course Hashem did not forget — but He wanted to teach us not to forget the pain of others, to find ways to make sure that the realities and challenges facing those around us are front and enter in our minds as well. - When Yidden hear the tzaros of another, they react with a Yiddish word, "nebach," the timeless Yiddishe reaction to bad news. Chassidim say that there is no source for this word. Rather, it is an acronym, and it stands for "**n**osei **b**e'ol im **c**haveiro" — feeling the pain of those affected. The Torah is called Rachmana, because learning Torah and living Torah should make a person more compassionate, more empathetic, and more able to feel with others.

One of our talmidim, Yitzchak Alter, told me a pshat in a Gemara that I found so profound. The Gemara in Bava Kamma (92a) says that one who davens for his friend to be helped when he himself needs help in that same area will be helped first.

The mefarshim have different suggestions as to why this is so, but this talmid suggested his own pshat: If a person needs help in that very area, then he feels the pain. He knows what it's like. He gets the reality. And then, with that sort of empathy, he can really daven for his friend properly!

Talmidim in Ponevezh saw the mashgiach, **Rav Chatzkel Levenstein**, in bed one day, lying immobile. It was unusual to see him lying down, and frightening to see him like that, as if frozen. Later, the mashgiach explained that he had been davening for one of the talmidim who suffered from seizures, and often, the disorder sent the boy to bed, where he was unable to move, as if trapped in his own body. Rav Chatzkel, determined to maximize that koach of tefillah, was trying to imagine what the bachur felt like, and in order to do that, he enacted it, adding intensity to his tefillos for another.

As **Rav Chaim Shmulevitz** would say during the dark days when Jews were trapped in Entebbe, "*M'darf krank verren far zei*, One has to get physically ill with worry for them." It's what Yidden do.

Perhaps that middah of rachmanus is what makes our tefillos more effective, and thus, this is how we can help. It's what the pasuk teaches us, the practice of the Ribbono Shel Olam Himself!

Life is too short. Grudges are a waste of perfect happiness. Laugh when you can. Apologize when you should and go of what you can. Take chances. Give everything and have no regrets. Life is too short to be unhappy. You have to take the good with the bad. Smile when you're sad. Love what you got and always remember what you had. Always forgive but never forget. Learn from your mistakes but never regret. People change and things go wrong. But always remember, life goes on.

וּמַכֵּה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת One who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. (21:15)

One who curses his father or his mother (using Hashem's name) shall surely be put to death. The Gemara says about one who strikes a parent will be put to death by strangulation. One who curses a parent will be put to death through stoning, a more severe type of death. - How come the punishment is more severe for one who curses a parent than one who hits a parent?

When one strikes a parent, he is saying that the world exists by itself and there is no Hashem running it. He is actually denying the existence of Hashem. He is an Apikores.

One who curses a parent using Hashem's name is admitting that Hashem rules the world. So much so that he is invoking Hasem's name to help him curse his parent. His sin is worse because he admits that Hashem exists and runs the world and violates the Mitzvos anyway. (Tiferes Yonason)

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk



Parshas Mishpatim contains numerous laws and rulings of all sorts. We find two pesukim that seem interrelated, yet there is a third posuk, seemingly unrelated, placed between them. The first verse says that one who hits his father or mother shall be put to death. The next says that one who kidnaps another and sells him shall be put to death. Then, the next verse reverts to the topic of parents, and says that one who curses his parents shall be put to death.

Why is the posuk about kidnapping inserted here, interpolated between these two references to parents?

R' Shimon Schwab z"l gives an insightful explanation. One who hits his parents is to die. But parents, be aware that if you treat your children as captives, stifling them and dousing their youthful aspirations and dreams, you are setting yourself and your children up for a rebellion, where they will come to hate you and curse you. Instead, we must give our children the chance to spread their wings and take flight. Do not restrain them -- guide them.



The Weekly Haftorah By: Reuben Ebrahimoff - The Haftorahman - The Jews Transgress the Mitzvah of Freeing Their Hebrew Servants

The Haftorah is read from the book of Yirmiyahu, 34: 8-22 and 33:25-26 –

The connection of the Haftorah to the Parsha: The first laws of Parshat Mishpatim deal with the Hebrew servant. The Jews had suffered in Egypt as slaves and they knew first hand what slavery meant. Therefore, Hashem expected the Jews to empathize with their servants; do not take advantage of a person when he's down.

The Haftorah speaks of a time when the Hebrew servant was being taken advantage of too much. The storyline of this week's Haftorah: The Jews transgress the mitzvah of freeing their Hebrew servants.

Part 1 - Jeremiah's word of doom. This section establishes the setting: a royal proclamation by King Zedkiyah that all Hebrew slaves must be set free. After the initial compliance with this "covenant" the slaveholders violate the edict and force their compatriots back into slavery. This elicits the prophet's condemnation. The previous episode is juxtaposed to the event at Mt. Sinai, when Hashem "made a covenant" with all of Israel to release its slaves every 7th year. The present revocation of manumission is deemed a profanation of Hashem's name. The consequences of this breach of the slaves

"release" are announced: those who have violated the "covenant" will be punished. Jerusalem and its inhabitants will be destroyed.

Part 2. The natural & supernatural. Hashem swears that as surely as He established a "covenant "with nature He will never reject the promises made to the descendants of the patriarchs. Israel will be restored in love.

Yirmiyahu's Biography: • The definition of his name is "Hashem will elevate". • Born circumcised, to Chilkiya, also a prophet, in 640 B.C.E. about 2650 years ago, on Tishah Be'Av in Anatot, 2 miles north of Jerusalem, in the land of Binyamin. • Was a Kohen and a descendant of Rachav, the Yericho (Jericho) innkeeper that Yehoshua saved. • Spoke at childhood, cursing the day he was born. Began prophesying at age 18, continuing for 40 years. • Lived in Jerusalem. He never married, and had no children. • Was the head of the Mishmeret Hakohanim (The Guard by the Priests doing work in the Holy Temple). They were the custodians of the Ark of the Lord. • Known as the Weeping Prophet, for he endured the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Symbolically, he wore a wooden yolk around his neck. • His prophecies took place before, during, and after the destruction of the Bait Hamikdash (Holy Temple). Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon destroyed the Temple. He remained in Jerusalem after its destruction with Gedalyah ben Achikam, the man whom the fast of Gedalyah is named after. Shafan was his scribe. Shafan brought the scroll he found in the Bait Hamikdash to Jeremiah, which was originally written by Moses. It was open to the verse "Hashem will bring you and your elected King to a nation unknown to your fathers." That scared people into changing their ways. The diary of King Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon He was stoned to death after fleeing to Egypt, Alexandria. • Wrote 3 Books: His own, Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah); Eicha (Lamentations), read on Tishah Be'Av; and Melachim (The Book of Kings). . The time span of the book Jeremiah was 66 years. Famous phrases: Jeremiah 30:1, "Al tira, avdi Yaakov" "Have no fear, my servant Yaakov" This phrase is the chorus of a

poignant song sung at the Melaveh Malka, Farewell to the Shabbat Queen, Meal.

Haftorahman's Lesson of the week: Both "what goes around comes around" and never forget from where you came from. You are not aloud to take advantage of a Jew's weaknesses. On the contrary: you must deal with them charitably.

Timeline: This story took place about 2450 years ago.



Nefesh Shimshon - Rosh Chodesh Adar

Rosh Chodesh Adar is a day on which we are to be happy, to be b'simcha. **משנכנס אדר מרבים בשמחה**. So maybe we should talk a little about this thing called simcha, usually translated as "happiness" or "joy."

Are we happy and joyous people?? And what actually makes us feel happy?? And why is it hard for us to be b'simcha?

Did it ever happen to you that you saw someone who was happy, and you asked him, "What happened?? Why are you happy?" In our subconscious, we understand that something special needs to happen in order for us to be happy.

Why is it that way? Why can't we be b'simcha all the time?

My father **Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l** explains that simcha comes when there is newness, when something is a chiddush. When everything is ordinary and regular and unchanging, it doesn't engender simcha. Only when there is something new, this is the root of simcha.

If I will tell you the pasuk of **בראשית ברא אלקים** as a dvar Torah, will it make you happy and joyous? No. Because it isn't a chiddush. Only if I tell you something new and innovative that you didn't hear before, then it will make you happy. Because chiddushim bring simcha.

At sheva brochos we say when bentching, **שהשמחה במעונו**. This is because Hashem has joy. The Kol Bo explains that Hashem's joy is because new angels are being created all the time. The newness of the angels brings joy to Hashem's heavenly abode.

And what does this have to do with the month of Adar? Because the miracle of Purim was something totally new, something that never happened before.

There was a true decree of annihilation on the Jewish people, and it was signed in blood. This was because their participation in Achashverosh's banquet with the other nations disconnected them from the Source of life, which is Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and this removed their right to exist. They were as good as dead. And when Hashem annulled the decree, it was a real Techiyas Hameisim.

This is a tremendous newness, and this is the cause of the great simcha that breaks out boundlessly. It is the joy of newness, of chiddush. - There is no experience more novel than a dead person coming back to life.

This is the uniqueness of the month of Adar, which is the last month of the year. It is the month of the end, of despair. Of the feeling that life has come to its finish. - But exactly then comes the newness and says that we can renew ourselves and start everything over again from the beginning with great simcha.

The Zodiacal sign of the month of Adar is Pisces, which means "fish." This is because fish constantly multiply. There are always new fish.

And what about us? How can we renew ourselves and experience simcha?
There is a way to do it. The true power of newness and self-renewal is in ruchniyus, in kedushah, in connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who creates the world anew at all times. He is the Source of all newness.

Only through Torah and maasim tovim can a person attain true newness. Today's tefilah and learning and maasim tovim are not a continuation of yesterday's. They are something new. Every day we keep mitzvos and daven to Hashem anew.

Let's get up every morning happily, and take fresh joy in the fact that we are Hashem's children and that we live a life with true content. And when a person experiences newness every day, he is always b'simcha, because every day and all the time he has novel things, and he lives a happy and joyous life constantly. This is the power of the month of Adar: to fortify ourselves with this power of renewal and joy, and thereby spread simcha to the whole year. **And even if we manage to experience newness in something small, this will bring us great joy.**

May Hashem help us to feel joy in this month of simcha, and all year long, Wishing you great blessing,

Harav Yosef Dov Pincus - Rosh Hakollel

The "Wisdom" of the Fox



Rabbi Twerski writes in his book Twerski on Chumash about how a great rabbi was once challenged by a government official. "Why do your rabbinic courts dispose of a case so quickly? We have lawyers that study both sides of the case and gather evidence. After the court rules, there may be several appeals. That way we know justice is carried out." The rabbi responded with a mashal—parable.

A wolf once made off with a lamb from a flock, but he was accosted by a lion who took the lamb from him. The wolf protested, but the

lion insisted that as the king of all animals, he has the right to all prey. The wolf and lion decided to take their dispute to the fox, the wisest of all the animals. The fox ruled that both the wolf and lion had rights to the animal, so he determined they should share the lamb equally, so he proceeded to divide it. He saw one piece was larger than the other, so he ate from it to make the pieces equal. He nibbled a bit too much, so he ate from the other to make the pieces equal. By the time they were equal to each other, almost nothing was left.

The rabbi said, "That's your judicial system. With endless litigation, the lawyers end up receiving most of the money. In a Bet Din, both sides have their say, and the ruling is swift." This gives us insight into the Torah's legal philosophy.

Rabbi's Message - Rav Mordechai Schifman of Emek Hebrew Academy in Los Angeles.

כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמֹור שֹׂנַאֲךָ רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מַשָּׂאֹו וְחָדַלְתָּ מֵעֲזֹב לֹו עָזֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמֹּו - "*If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden...you shall surely help him...*" (23:5)

The Torah relates that we are obligated to help a person in a predicament even if we strongly dislike him. The terminology used by the Torah to describe the assistance is "**עָזֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמֹּו** " - "*you shall surely help him*".

The use of the term "*azov*" to describe the help which we are obligated to offer is perplexing. The Hebrew word for help is "*azor*", not "*azov*", which is usually translated as "to leave". This would lend the opposite interpretation to our verse, i.e. "if you see a person requiring help, you shall surely leave him".

Why does the Torah use a word to describe assistance which has the opposite connotation?

The Vilna Gaon teaches that if a person wants to understand the true definition of a word, he should find the first time that it is mentioned in the Torah. The Torah first uses the term "*azov*" in Parshas Bereishis (2:24) when describing a man leaving his parents' home to find a mate for himself: **עַל־כֵּ֗ן יַעֲזָ֤ב־אִישׁ֙ אֶת־אָבִ֔יו וְאֶת־אִמּ֖וֹ וְדָבַ֣ק בְּאִשְׁתּ֑וֹ** *"- "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife*".

The reason why marriage is described in terms of leaving the parents' home is to teach us that marriage entails an individual separating from his parents and acquiring his own independence. Only when a child is in a position to be become independent of his parents is he ready to establish a new home with his wife. The term "*azov*" means more than just "to take leave of", rather it should be understood as "to become independent of" as well.

The greatest assistance we can offer a person in need is to bring him to a point where he no longer requires support. In so doing, we are giving him his independence.

The Torah is teaching us that when we assist our fellow man, it should be done as an act of "*azov*", providing the recipient with the ability to take leave of us and no longer need our assistance.

■ **ושחד לא תקח** – ***And you shall not take a bribe…*** (23:8).

The Hebrew word for bribe is **שחד**. In the sequence of the *aleph bais*, we find that the letters that follow the letters **ש- ח- ד** yield the word **תטה**, *you will be inclined, bend, deviate.*

By accepting a bribe, a judge will surely *be inclined* to rule in favour of the person who gave the bribe, will *bend* the law and *deviate* from the path of true justice. [Chomas Anoch] (Torah Treasures)

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

וְרַפֹּא יְרַפֵּא

The following are some segulos and counsels for refuos.

Obviously, the first and foremost counsel is to daven to Hashem for a refuah. Yesod HaAvodah (end of sefer) writes, "*After all the counsels, there is no greater counsel than to ask and to plead before Hashem Yisbarach, and to trust and to rely on Him and on His kindness, and on His great love to His nation, Yisrael.*"

Another counsel for refuos is to daven with a minyan. It states in this week's parashah (23:25) **וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם וּבֵרַךְ אֶת־לַחְמְךָ וְאֶת־מֵימֶיךָ וַהֲסִרֹתִי מַחֲלָה מִקִּרְבֶּךָ** - "*You shall serve Hashem, your G-d, and He shall bless your bread and your water and I shall remove illness from your midst.*"

The Rebbe of Radoshitz zt'l explains that **וַעֲבַדְתֶּם** refers to tefillah, which is called **עבודה שבלב**, the service of the heart. It is written in plural as an indication to tefillah b'tzibur. The pasuk says that if you will daven b'tzibur, Hashem will bless your parnassah and remove illness from your midst.

Following the Torah and mitzvos brings refuos. As it states in parashas Beshalach (15:26), **ויאמר אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלקיך... ושמרת כל חוקיו כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רופאיך** – "If you hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, and you do what is proper in His eyes, and you listen closely to His commandments and observe all His statutes, all the sicknesses that I have visited upon Egypt I will not visit upon you, for I, Hashem, are your healer."

Rebbe Itzikel of Skver zt'l commented that this is a difficult remedy. One must keep the entire Torah, and then he merits *refuah*.

In parashas Yisro it states that when the nation received the Torah everyone was healed. But that is also a difficult prescription for a *refuah*, to accept the yoke of the entire Torah.

But in parashas Mishpatim, there's an easier method. It states (21:19), **רק שבתו יתן ורפא ירפא**, all one needs to do is **שבתו יתן** - to keep Shabbos, **ורפא ירפא**, and he will have a *refuah*.

Particularly, being happy on Shabbos is a segulah for refuah. **Shem MiShmuel** (*Shelach* 5677) writes in the name of his father, the **Avnei Nezer** *zt'l*, "Even if someone has an ill person in his home, if he can refrain from complaining and from thinking about his troubles, he will certainly be healed." - "If you honor Shabbos, by not having tzaar on this day," it will result in refuos.

The Gemara (ibid.) also says that one should say, **שבת היא מלזעוק ורפואה קרובה לבוא** - "*Shabbos one doesn't shout, and the refuah will come soon*." So, avoiding tzaar on Shabbos is a catalyst for yeshuos and refuos.

Eliyahu Rabba says that this is *midah kneged midah*. He blocks out his tzaar on Shabbos, so Hashem removes the cause of his tzaar and distress. This applies to all troubles a person deals with r"l.

Chazal tell us that on Shabbos, one should feel **כאילו כל מלאכתך עשויה** - as if you have nothing to take care of, and everything is perfect in his life (Rashi, *Shemos* 20:9). When one thinks that way on Shabbos, it becomes so.

Masuk m'Dvash (Reb Yitzchak Parchi 6) writes, "We saw with our own eyes people who had a *tzarah* before Shabbos, and on Shabbos they forgot about their *tzarah* entirely, and were happy with Shabbos, as it is proper to be happy on Shabbos. They didn't have any distress or worries on Shabbos despite their *tzaros*, and they

merited that they were saved from their troubles in miraculous ways."

Tiferes Shlomo teaches that the foods of Shabbos are a segulah for refuah. He found a hint to this in the Mishnah (Shabbos 14:3) **כָּל הָאֳכָלִין אוֹכֵל אָדָם לִרְפוּאָה** - "All foods a person eats for a refuah..." - The Tiferes Shlomo explains that this refers to the foods of Shabbos kodesh. They have the ability to bring refuos. This is alluded to in the pasuk **רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן וְרַפֵּא יְרַפֵּא**. This hints that if you keep Shabbos with the meals of Shabbos, there will be refuos.

Reb Shalom of Shatz zt'l said that **רַק שִׁבְתּוֹ יִתֵּן** hints to a person who spends money to honor the Shabbos. This will result in **וְרַפֵּא יְרַפֵּא** - refuos. (See also Arugas HaBosem).

Heichel HaBrachah from **Rebbe Isaac of Kamarna zt'l** writes that the letters **רפא** spelled out **ריי"ש פ"א אל"ף** is gematria **שבת**. This is another hint that keeping Shabbos results in refuah.

Chasam Sofer teaches that living in harmony with others, without machlokes, is mesugal for refuos. A hint to this is the pasuk (Yeshayah 57:19) **שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם לָרָחוֹק וְלַקָּרוֹב אָמַר ה' וּרְפָאתִיו**, "*Peace, peace, for the far and near,' said Hashem and I will heal him.*" - This is as the Chasam Sofer explains: When there is peace, there is good health.

There is another segulah for refuos, written by **Reb Chaim Palagi** (Refuah v'Chaim 12:74). He writes, "When someone is ill in a person's home, he should be mevater, even to birds of the sky. It is tested and proven that they will pray for him." - The birds will pray for him.

Certainly, when one is mevater for people, they will pray for him. In this manner, the unwell person will be cured.

We conclude this discussion with the Gemara (Shabbos 32a) that says, "A person should always daven that he never become ill, because if he becomes ill, heaven will say, 'Bring a merit, and you will be cured." - Better than finding segulos and cures for illnesses is when one avoids the illnesses entirely, from the outset. - This is accomplished through tefillah.

The Holiness of a Yid

וְאַנְשֵׁי־קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֻון לִי People of holiness shall you be to Me. (22:30)



Reb Yeruchem of Mir zt'l spoke about the first people who moved to America from Spain and other countries, around five hundred years ago. They rode horses, just as they did when they lived in Europe. To the native Indians who lived in America for centuries, this was a novelty. They knew that there were horses, and they knew that there were people, but they never thought that they could go together, and that a person could ride a horse. Therefore, when the Indians saw the newcomers riding on horses, they thought it was a new kind of creation, something like a human with four feet. But when they

saw the human get off his horse, they discovered that they were two entities, the horse and the human being.

Reb Yeruchem explained that every person is a combination of human and animal. His neshamah and his good desires are his human side, and his physical drives are his animalistic side. He must know that he isn't a person and an animal. He is a human being, and only a human being. He has lofty desires, and the good that's in him is his genuine self. He was placed together with animalistic drives. Just like a person riding a horse isn't the horse, the negative isn't a part of his true self.

During Shovavim, a person purifies himself and trains himself to desire ruchniyus. When this occurs, it is compared to when the rider descended from the horse, and it was clear that they were two entities.

It states (24:10) **וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לָטֹהַר**, "*Like the essence of the heaven in purity.*" - **The Divrei Binah of Biala zt'l** explains that the pure heaven is a description of Bnei Yisrael. Although there are times when the sky is covered with clouds, it is a temporary situation. When the clouds part, you see that the heaven is pure.

The same is with a Yid. Although, due to aveiros, it can appear that he is covered with clouds and aveiros, the essence of a Yid is always beautiful and pure.

'A person must know that he was not created only for himself. The essence of man is to expand his sense of self until it includes others — family, community, the Jewish people, and ultimately all of creation. When one sees only oneself as "I," this is smallness; when one includes others within the boundaries of self, this is true greatness.' ~ Rav Shimon Shkop.

"How much is ten plus ten?"

A story is told about **Baron Rothchild**. He once advertised that he was looking to hire an accountant. During the job interview, the Baron asked the first candidate, "How much is ten plus ten?" He replied twenty. The Baron doubled the numbers: "How much is twenty plus twenty?"

"Forty," the man replied.

"How much is forty plus forty?"

"Eighty," the applicant replied. The Baron informed him that this job wasn't for him.

Several other candidates applied for the position, and the same scene repeated itself. The Baron asked the same questions, received the same answers, and rejected the candidates.

One person came for the interview. But before going to the Baron, he asked some of the Baron's employees what had happened at the interviews of the others who came before him. He heard that the applicants were asked simple arithmetic questions. They answered correctly, but for some reason, the Baron didn't hire them.

When it was his turn for the interview, the Baron asked him, "How much is ten plus another ten?"

The man placed his finger to his mouth to imply that he didn't want to speak in a loud voice. He stood up and shut the windows. Then he returned to his seat, bent over, and whispered to the Baron, "How much do you want it to be?"

The Baron hired him.- This is because the Baron wasn't looking for someone who knows math. He wouldn't need an accountant for that. He was looking for someone to help him grow his wealth, to be creative and innovative, to know how to achieve the desired results even when the reality was less than optimal.

There is a nimshal that we can learn from this story:

It states (Mishlei 24:16) **כִּי שֶׁבַע יִפּוֹל צַדִּיק וָקָם**. This means that a tzaddik will fall seven times, but in the end, he will pick himself up again.

Mathematically, this isn't a great record at all. He fell seven times more times than he picked himself up. However, one must know how to do the math. It isn't easy for a person to pick himself up again, after falling so many times. When he does, that one time is extremely valuable.

In other words, not everything is quantified with numbers. Quality and value are added to the equation. Therefore, a person should value himself, despite his faults, because the good he has may immensely outweigh his faults.



Reb A. M. Rutner zt'l said that the pasuk cannot mean that the tzaddik fell seven times in a row because after he fell once and he is on the ground, how can he fall again? It must be that he fell and picked himself up. Then he fell again, and he picked himself up. After every time he fell, he raised himself up again, and this is why he deserves the title of "Tzaddik!"

Four Foundations

Humility, appropriate silence, control of desire, and happiness with one's lot are the four foundational character traits a person must acquire. ~ R' Chaim Vital zt"l.

JEP 50 OVER 50 YEARS
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You Have Money, Now What?!

אִם־כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ לֹא־תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה לֹא־תְשִׂימוּן עָלָיו נֶשֶׁךְ

"If you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not lay interest upon him." (Shemos 22:24)



Parshas Mishpatim introduces the mitzvah of lending money graciously and lending without charging interest.

The *pasuk* says, **אִם כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת עַמִּי** - "***Im*** *means* "**if**". If someone lends money to a fellow Jew, then he should be gracious if the borrower can't repay the loan on time. He also should not charge interest on the loan.

There is a positive mitzvah to lend money to a fellow Jew in need. The Torah does not use the word "***Im***" in connection with any other positive *mitzvah*. We would expect the Torah to state emphatically that one is <u>obligated</u> do this mitzvah. Why does the Torah make it seem as if it is optional by the using the word "if"?

Rashi explains that in this case, the word "*Im*" does not mean **if**, that it is optional. Rather it means **when. If one is in the position to do so, then one is** <u>obligated</u> to lend money.

The **Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh** is puzzled as to why, in fact, the Torah uses the word connotating "if" since one is <u>obligated</u> to lend money. After all, the Torah does not say "if" by other mitzvos that you one is obligated to fulfill.

The **Ohr Hachaim** gives a fascinating explanation of the pasuk. Hashem gives the wealthy person an opportunity to use his wealth constructively through the performance of charitable deeds. The word "if" means, if one has more money than he needs for himself and he is wondering why Hashem gave that to him, and his needy friend does not have all that money, then he should realize that IT IS NOT HIS MONEY!! The surplus money that he has is money that by right should go to the poor man, because it really belongs to the poor man!! "**הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ**", *the poor person* ***that is with you***. It is actually the poor person's money that happens to be deposited **WITH YOU**!

Therefore, "**לֹא תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה**" That does not mean, "do not act toward him as a creditor". Rather, it means, "do not lord it over him". "**נֹשֶׁה**" comes from the expression *nesius*. You have no reason to lord over him since you have money and he does not. The fact that you have money has nothing to do with your brains or your good luck. The money that you have, actually belongs to the poor man. It is as if his money is deposited with you. (**Rabbi Yissocher Frand**)

The **Alshich** says a similar idea. According to the **Shulchan Aruch** (Choshen Mishpat 246:4) if a father allocates all of his properties to one of his children, then we assume that he just assigned that child to be a trustee for all the other children. The reason is that it is highly unlikely that a father would give everything to one child and nothing to the others. Why would a person give all his money to one of his children, knowing that this would cause irreparable damage to the child's relationships with his siblings, for the rest of their lives?

We are all Hashem's children. When Hashem makes some of His children rich and others poor, it is unlikely that Hashem will endow one child at the expense of others. Clearly, the wealthy man is just a trustee for the poor man's money. He has a responsibility to distribute the money accordingly. The **Alshich** says that this idea is implicit in the pasuk, "the poor among you". That means that the

share of wealth that rightfully belongs to the poor is among you. (quoted in Talelei Oros by **Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rubin**)

Besides lending money, a wealthy person is also obligated to give tzedakah to a fellow Jew in need.

There is a famous story told by Howard Schultz, who was the chairman and chief global strategist of Starbucks from 1986-2000. In the 1990's Howard Schultz, together with other wealthy Jewish businessmen, went to Israel and met with Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt" l, the former Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir. The Rosh Yeshiva shared with the businessmen a profound life lesson from the Holocaust. Rabbi Finkel zt"l described the horrific sleeping conditions in Auschwitz. Moreover, only one person was given a blanket for every six people. Rabbi Finkel zt"l pointed out that the person who received the blanket had to decide if he was going to pull the blanket towards himself to stay warm or if he was going to push the blanket to the five other people who did not get one, so that everyone else could be a little warm. Rabbi Finkel concluded that the blanket was, more often than not, pushed to the five others. With that, Rabbi Finkel told the businessmen, "Take your blanket. Take it back to America and push it to five other people". In other words, Rabbi Finkel was telling them that they should use their wealth to help others.

The **Talmud** (Bava Basra 9B) lists numerous blessings to those who habitually perform acts of charity. One of those blessings is having children. Hashem will also furnish the charitable person with money, enabling him to continue to perform his acts of charity. Rabbi Akiva said that the charity that one gives to the poor will save him from the judgment of Gehinam.

The **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l often spoke sadly about the impoverished Jews of Poland. He pointed out the foolishness of the rich who, in their miserliness, failed to properly support the poor.

With wealth comes great responsibility. **Rav Yisroel Salanter** once heard that his wife had purchased a lottery ticket. The news upset him very much since wealth was not given to a person for his own enjoyment alone but also as a trust to distribute among the poor. **Rav Yisroel Salanter** knew that this was a very big responsibility and he did not want to be burdened by it (Talelei Oros).

There was a Jewish billionaire who gave enormous sums of money to tzedakah. He gave to many Jewish causes. He established and maintained many yeshivos and shuls. Unfortunately, his business had a terrible downturn, and he lost all his wealth. Interestingly, he felt that the downturn was as a result of his not having given enough money to tzedakah. He probably donated hundreds of millions of dollars, yet he felt that based on his assets he should have given even more!

We live in times when Boruch Hashem, many in our Jewish community are very comfortable financially and many others are very wealthy. With that benefit comes a great responsibility to ensure that we are using our wealth properly. Furthermore, even if we are using it properly to help others, we always must think, "Can I do even better?"

The **פלא יועץ** says: **הקב"ה** gave us two locks to our mouth; lips and teeth - to guard and protect our tongue from speaking evil, unnecessarily and hurtful words. This can be understood with a **משל** to a safe containing diamonds and a lot of cash. One lock won't suffice; a double lock is necessary.

Our most precious possessions are the ones that we keep safeguarded and locked away. Therefore, the tongue which is the gift given to man must have this "double lock" . The **עבודה** is to understand when to open the safe and when to keep it locked.

רְפוּאָה וּבִיקוּר חוֹלִים

R' Yaakov Bender, rosh yeshivah of Yeshiva Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, New York, told me an illuminating story regarding bikur cholim (visiting the sick). When his father, **R' Dovid Bender** (1912–1965), was a young man, he enjoyed a close relationship with his rebbi, **R' Shlomo Heiman** (1892–1945), rosh yeshivah of Torah Vodaath.

For four years they learned together in the beis midrash of Torah Vodaath, as chavrusos (study partners). Later, when R' Heiman's final illness prevented him from coming to the yeshivah, R' Bender would go to his home in Williamsburg, and they would study there.

When R' Heiman was hospitalized at the end of his life, R' Bender was constantly at his bedside. One day the doctors told him, "The Rabbi is not allowed to have visitors. He is too weak. You must keep everyone out — no exceptions."

Later that day, **R' Moshe Feinstein** (1895–1986) came to visit R' Heiman. R' Bender was conflicted. On one hand, how could he not allow R' Moshe to enter, especially since R' Shlomo would certainly be happy to see the great Torah scholar? On the other hand, the doctors said that no one should be allowed in, as the strain could be harmful to the patient.

R' Bender explained the severity of the Rosh Yeshivah's condition and the doctor's orders that no visitors should be allowed in. He apologized profusely.

R' Moshe smiled and said, "In that case, then the mitzvah of bikur cholim today is **not** to visit. However, the mitzvah is comprised of two parts: the first is to visit the patient, and the second is to daven for him." - R' Moshe stood outside the hospital room, recited a perek of Tehillim, and left. No pressure, no complaints, just compliance — with the Shulchan Aruch and with the doctors.

מחשבת הלב

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

זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל־הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מַחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ 30:13



Rashi in *Parshas Ki Sisa* on this *posuk* cites *Chazal* who explain the word "זֶה" in this context to mean, not merely a conceptual *shekel*, but a real physical picture of one. Because *Moshe Rabbeinu* was somewhat unsure as to what this coin was, *Hashem* showed him a מַטְבֵּעַ שֶׁל אֵשׁ. Why enlighten Moshe with a fiery coin and not an actual metal coin?

The **Chiddushei HaRim** ***zt"l*** says that the word *shekel* shares the same three letters as the Aramaic word שָׁקַל - which means to take. Meaning, he says, this donation of the half-*shekel* was meant to inspire each *yid* to *take* control and establish oneself to be firmly rooted in *avodas Hashem*.

Moshe was perplexed as to how such a seemingly small donation can effect such profound spiritual stimuli. *Hashem* then showed him a מַטְבֵּעַ made out of fire.

A baal darshan in an *Ashkenazic kehilla* once expounded on this thought and explained that with *hislahavus* - a burning passion - one can be catapulted to extraordinary spiritual heights. Hence, even a nominal monetary donation, if given with *"hartz"* and fervency will favorably inspire the donor.

When the **Kotzker Rebbe** ***zt"l*** heard this interpretation, he was astonished that a *Litvishe* rabbinic figure could say such a beautiful *drash*. He said that since this particular *kehilla* was meticulous in the *mitzvah* of *hachnosas orchim*, they were *zoche* to reveal this *pshat*.



Inspired by Time - Elevating Every Yid – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

We are standing at the threshold of an extraordinary Shabbos. It is Parshas Mishpatim, Shekalim, Mevarchin Adar, and the closing moment – the very final day – of the holy weeks of Shovavim. The gates have not yet closed. The opportunities are still before us.

This is not a Shabbos to let pass. It is a Shabbos to grasp, to draw from, to absorb and internalize. A Shabbos to gather whatever light, clarity, and strength we can from these elevated days – and to ensure that they do not remain behind us but move with us, shaping what comes next.

Begin with a Thief?

There is an obvious question that confronts us the moment we open the Chumash this week. The Parsha opens with the halachos of an Eved Ivri. At first glance, it hardly seems troubling. These are laws of civil order – what happens when a Jew steals, how he repays what he has taken, and how a Jewish master is obligated to treat him with dignity. Straightforward halachos. Necessary halachos.

But when we step back and look at the broader context, the question becomes impossible to ignore. Just last week, we stood at Matan Torah. Klal Yisrael had emerged from the depths of Mitzrayim, crossed the Yam Suf, witnessed the ten makos, and completed a journey drenched in open miracles. They arrived at Har Sinai and experienced the most elevated moment in all of human history.

All of creation stood still. The lions ceased roaring, the birds stopped singing, the seas fell silent. This was the moment that all of creation had been waiting for. And then – Hashem spoke. Not through a malach. Not through a navi or even Moshe. Hashem

Himself addressed Klal Yisrael, and they were zocheh to hear the first two of the Aseres haDibros directly from the Ribbono Shel Olam. Never before, and never again, would there be such a revelation. - And then the parasha ends.

We turn the page. We open Parshas Mishpatim. What would we expect? After such holiness, such transcendence, surely the Torah would carry us even higher. Shema. Tefillin. Shabbos Kodesh. Mitzvos that keep us soaring, suspended in the heavens.

But that is not what happens. Instead, the Torah begins with the laws of an Eved Ivri – a Jew who stole, who took what was not his, who fell so low that Beis Din must sell him into servitude in order to repay his debt.

Is this really how the Torah continues from Sinai? After the thunder, the fire, and the kol Hashem – we begin with a thief? Why here? Why now? Could the Torah not have chosen something more fitting, more elevated, more spiritual, to follow the greatest moment of revelation the world has ever known?

The Most Important Message

The mefarshim and ba'alei mussar explain that the Torah is seizing the opportunity to deliver a profound and critical message – one that is deliberately embedded in the opening of Parshas Mishpatim, immediately after Ma'amad Har Sinai.

The Torah takes a person who has fallen. A Jew who stole, who failed badly. And instead of crushing him, instead of branding him forever by his mistake, the Torah does something astonishing – it restores his dignity. - The Torah teaches us that this person is no less beloved to Hashem, no less precious, and no less a part of Klal Yisrael than any other Jew.

The master is obligated to treat the Eved Ivri with the same standard of living as himself – in every area. He may not be given degrading work. He must be honored. He must be respected. Chazal

tell us that if the master owns only one pillow, he must give it to the eved. The Torah goes out of its way to protect this person's dignity.

Why does the Torah make such a "big deal" about this? - Because it means to deliver a critical message.

The Most Destructive Tool of the Yetzer Hara

One of the strongest and most destructive tools of the yetzer hara is not temptation – it is the destruction of a person's self-worth. The yetzer hara whispers, "You are nothing. You are worthless." And if a person has already fallen, the voice becomes louder and crueller: "You stole. Look who you are. You're a failure."

The Torah responds with the exact opposite message. Do not crush him. Do not lock him away. On the contrary – give him back his dignity. Restore his self-image. Teach him that even if he failed, even if he stumbled badly, he is still enormously valuable.

And this message is not only for the Eved Ivri, it is for every one of us. How many people walk around carrying quiet guilt?

"I didn't learn enough."

"I wasn't careful enough in my mitzvos or in my davening."

"I wasn't careful enough with shemiras einayim."

"So who am I, already?" - The Torah says: Stop.

Your worth is not erased by a fall. Your value is not defined by a failure. A Jew remains precious even when he struggles, even when he stumbles, even when he is in the middle of repair.

This is the chinuch of the parasha – to raise our self-image, to recognize our importance, to know who we are.

When a Child Lets Us Down

In this parsha the Torah does not only teach us how we should view ourselves after a fall, it teaches us how to view others. How we should respond when someone disappoints us. How we should react

when a person we love – a child, a student, a Jew we are responsible for – is struggling, slipping, pushing back, or drifting.

Because it is easy to be warm to the shining ones. It is easy to encourage the child who is "doing well". It is easy to smile at the one who makes you proud. - The real test is what we do when we feel let down.

When we love our struggling children and talmidim without conditions, when we refuse to define them by their failures, when we stay connected even when it hurts—that love itself becomes a voice in Shamayim. It becomes a merit. A claim. A koach. And with that love, we come before Hashem and daven, asking Him to treat His children the way we try, imperfectly but sincerely, to treat ours.

Loving a Thief

Now the opening of Parshas Mishpatim shines with meaning.

Right after Matan Torah, the Torah does not begin with the soaring mitzvos we expected. It begins with a fallen Jew. A Jew who stole. A Jew who collapsed. A Jew who has every reason to feel worthless, and the Torah says: restore him. Protect his dignity. Lift his head. Give him a future. Because the deepest Torah is not only how high you can rise when you feel inspired – it is how you treat a person when he is low.

This is the message of Eved Ivri. Do not let the yetzer hara convince you that failure means you are finished. Do not let him convince you that someone else's struggle means they are lost. A Jew is never a lost cause, he is always a child – and our Father in Heaven never stops loving His children.

That is the most powerful message of this week. If we learn to see every Jew as Hashem's beloved child, if we treat the struggling with dignity and love, then we unlock endless rachamim – for them, and for ourselves.

The "Coin of Fire"



Rashi (30:13) says **הֶרְאָה לוֹ כְּמִין מַטְבֵּעַ שֶׁל אֵשׁ** – *'Hashem showed Moshe a coin of fire.'*

Why specifically fire?

● The coin of fire teaches that tzedakah is like a candle:

Just as one candle can light thousands without diminishing itself, so too giving charity does not reduce a person's wealth.

● **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin** says that the *Ribono shel Olam* was trying to teach something to Moshe Rabbeinu by specifically showing him a fiery coin, rather than one made from precious metal. We cannot live without fire. It cooks our food. It heats our homes and makes us comfortable. Yet fire, as we all know, can be terribly destructive. Fire has this duality – this paradox – that a person cannot live without it, and yet it can be one of the most destructive forces.

This is what the Ribono shel Olam was trying to show Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe, you are perplexed as to how money can be a *kaparah* (an atonement)? Money can be a *kaparah* because it depends on what you do with it. You can do tremendous things with money, and the world could not exist without money. We would not be in the building we are in without money. We would not be as educated as we are without money. However, just like when fire is not properly controlled, it can be extremely hazardous, so too, if money is not properly controlled, it can be extremely hazardous. That is when it becomes destructive.

● I saw another insight on the symbolism of a fiery coin. There is an interesting Medrash Rabbah in parsha Tezaveh explaining the metaphor "**כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אוֹר**" – *'for a candle is a mitzvah and the*

Torah is light' (Mishlei 6:23). It is a well-known fact that it is difficult for people to part with their money. For some people, it is more difficult and for some people it is less difficult, but in general, it is not easy for a person to part with his hard-earned money.

Hashem speaks of a "coin of fire." The idea is that it is possible to light a thousand other candles from a single lit candle without diminishing the first candle's light at all. This census donation is the first time *Hashem* is asking us to give *tzedakah*. *Hashem* is reminding us that *tzedakah* is like fire: When you give, it does not diminish the fire from which it came.

The Rambam writes in *Hilchos Matonos L'aniyim*: "***A person never becomes poor from giving charity***."

The "coin of fire" teaches us this lesson: Don't think you will be lacking after giving this half-*shekel* coin. Just as a single candle can light a thousand candles without diminishing its light at all, that is the way *tzekakah* is as well.

This fits in with a comment of the **Baal Haturim** (Shemos 30:12)- "וְנָתְנוּ אִישׁ כֹּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ..." '*and a man will give an atonement for his soul...*' . The Baal Haturim writes that the word וְנָתְנוּ is a palindrome and can be read forwards and backwards without changing its meaning or spelling. This teaches, he writes, that whatever a person gives in *tzedakah* will return to him and he will not be missing anything from having given it.

A person needs to keep these facts in mind: A person never becomes impoverished from *tzedakah* and *tzedakah* is like fire in that it can light other fires without its light being diminished. [**Rabbi Y Frand**]

● **Rav Simcha Zissel** says that fire can build or destroy. Similarly, money can build or destroy. The fiery coin teaches correct direction.

● **The Rebbe of Stropkov** explains that one of the properties of fire is its ability to cleanse. Machatzis hashekel cleanses sin.

Rabbi Hillel Feldman - A Payment of Passion

The Gemara (*Megillah* 13b) teaches that Hashem, Who foresees all of history, anticipated that Haman would one day offer Achashverosh an enormous sum of money in exchange for the right to destroy Klal Yisrael. Before Haman could present his "*shekalim*," Hashem instituted ours. The annual mitzvah of *machatzis ha'shekel* would precede and counterbalance Haman's payment.

But what exactly was Haman's "*shekel*"? What was the spiritual force behind it that required preemption?

R' Tzadok HaKohen (*Tzidkas HaTzaddik*) explains something profound. The power of Amalek, embodied by Haman, is the power of *cheshek*, burning passion.

Amalek attacked Klal Yisrael immediately after Kriyas Yam Suf. At that time, the nations trembled and no one dared confront a people who had just witnessed open miracles. Amalek knew they would lose militarily. Yet they attacked anyway. Why? Passion. Hatred so intense it overrode logic. A fiery, irrational drive.

And when did they attack? At Refidim, when Klal Yisrael had grown weak in Torah, weak in spiritual fervor. Amalek's passion confronted our cooling.

The same dynamic appears in the Purim story. Haman, descendant of Amalek, emerges at a moment of spiritual vulnerability. Chazal (*Megillah* 12a) teach that Klal Yisrael partook in Achashverosh's feast and they bowed when they should not have bowed. There was a subtle weakening in our *avodas Hashem*.

Haman demonstrated passion. He was prepared to empty his treasury for his cause. He exhibited *cheshek*, even if for evil. That intensity gave him spiritual leverage. - So Hashem responds measure for measure.

"You think you have passion?" Hashem says to Amalek. "Look at My people." Every year, Klal Yisrael gives the *machatzis ha'shekel*. They

open their hearts and their wallets for the Beis HaMikdash. They demonstrate devotion. The counterforce to Amalek is not mere compliance. It is *cheshek* for kedushah.

We can sometimes approach *mitzvos* as obligations to be endured. We place them on a scale: inconvenience versus reward, sacrifice versus benefit. "I have to do this. I'm a Jew. This is what's required."

Yes, *mitzvos* require sacrifice. But they are meant to be performed with passion, with love. "You shall love Hashem with all your heart" (*Devarim* 6:5). When a Jew gives tzedakah with enthusiasm, keeps Shabbat with joy, learns Torah with fire, performs *chesed* with eagerness, that *cheshek* neutralizes Amalek.

When we serve Hashem not merely out of duty but out of love, when we bring passion to Torah and *mitzvos*, we generate the spiritual force that overwhelms Amalek's fire. - That is the message of Shekalim before Purim. Haman brought silver filled with hatred. Klal Yisrael brings silver filled with love. And love, when it burns brightly enough, always wins.

"This shall they give "

Rashi says, "Hashem showed Moshe a coin of fire, the weight of which was a half shekel, and He said to him, 'Thus shall they give.'"

Why did He use a fiery coin? Hashem demonstrated with a fiery coin to illustrate the positive and negative qualities of money. Fire has both beneficial and destructive effects. Fire can destroy, but through the smelting of metals, it can also unite and join together.

Similarly, money can destroy a relationship or family, or unite and help build a beautiful family. The fiery coin was Hashem's way to caution the Jewish people to use money properly and reap its benefits.... (**Noam Elimelech**)

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

כִּי תִרְאֶה חֲמוֹר שֹׂנַאֲךָ – *'If you see your enemy's donkey..'* (23:5)



There is a vort from the sefer **Bris Menucha**:[a very holy sefer written by a Kadmon, a talmid of the Ramban. The sefer Bris Menucha never left the tables of the Belzer Rebbes.]

The pasuk says - **כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמוֹר שֹׂנַאֲךָ רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מַשָּׂאוֹ** - *If you see your enemy's donkey buckling under its burden…* The pasuk continues.. **עָזֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ** – *You shall surely help along with him.*

Why does the pasuk say **עָזֹב תַּעֲזֹב**? It should say **עָזוֹר תַּעֲזוֹר** - *You shall surely help.* **עָזַב** literally means to let go, not to help?

The Targum explains: **מְשָׁבַק לֵיהּ מֵיפְרַק תְּפָרֵק עִמֵּיהּ** - *'Let go of the grudge in your heart against him and help him unload!'*

The Bris Menucha explains - **מְשָׁבַק תְּשָׁבוֹק** – **מְשָׁבַק** -If you are holding a grudge against someone, let go of your hatred, and forgive him for your hurt. Hashem says **תְּשָׁבוֹק** – 'I will unload all your peckalech!'

In one moment, all your sins will be forgiven. Hashem will remove all your challenges and difficulties weighing you down!

"It's not about having enough time; it's about making enough time."

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

It states in parashas Mishpatim (23:25) וַהֲסִרֹתִי מַחֲלָה מִקִּרְבֶּךָ, "I shall remove illness from your midst."

The Ksav Sofer writes that this refers to the illness of not being content with one's lot.

A foolish man planted his field and watered it generously. The crop grew well, earning him a large profit that year. The following year, he decided to double the amount of water in the field. He figured that doing so would double his yield and his profits. - Naturally, the seeds rotted, and the entire crop failed.

The nimshal is that bounty has a limit, and when it goes over the limit, it doesn't do good. This explains why some people have less money, less success, etc., than others. Sometimes, people complain and ask, "Why can't I be like this one, or that one, who has more than I?"

But Hashem knows the amount each person needs. If He would give you more than what you receive, it would cause more harm than good. Trust that Hashem is leading you in the best way and be happy with your lot.

Torah Is Compared To A Strong Flowing Spring.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains: Just like a spring can sometimes get a little "clogged" with rocks and dirt, at the end of the day, the force of the spring will keep on pushing and will eventually wash away the dirt and the pebbles that are in its path.

So too, is the koach Hatorah. Even if a person got "dirty", the koach HaTorah will eventually purify him.



ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע וגו' (כד-ז)

The question is asked: When the Bnei Yisroel were at Har Sinai, each person called out his acceptance of the Torah. Since each person was answering for himself, shouldn't the words have been **אעשה ואשמע** - *I will do and I will obey?*

The great Rebbe, **R' Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha ZT'L** answers with a parable. A group of people were stranded in an arid barren desert, with no protection from the elements. They were all parched with thirst, languishing in the blistering sun. Suddenly a well-stocked caravan arrived on the scene. A man descended from the wagon, bearing large flasks of cool water. Approaching one of the thirsty individuals, he asked, 'Would you like some water?'

Thankfully, the man replied, 'Yes! We would be so grateful for some water.' He spoke in the plural for he knew with certainty that every member of the group was as desperately thirsty as he was.

When the Bnei Yisroel were in the Sinai desert and Hashem asked them whether they wanted the Torah, each member of the nation felt with certainty that his neighbor had as great a desire to hear the word of G-d as he himself did. They were as one man with one heart, and each could say confidently that all his fellow brothers were united in this longing.

R' Yisroel Salanter ZT'L would say:

'A person who seeks honor and recognition may believe himself to be independent and self-sufficient. But, where would he be without others to supply his ego needs? He is the most dependent person in the world!'

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ויהי משה בהר ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה וגו' (כד-יח)

Many stories are told of the great masters who were able to uplift themselves to such an exalted spiritual state, that their entire being would seem to enter the Heavenly spheres and deal directly with the celestial angels.

The famous *tzaddik*, **R' Chaim Sanzer ZT'L**, was one of these great *rebbes* who would often go into states of profound meditation, during which he appeared to lose all contact with the physical world. It would seem that he actually lost control of his physical body in pursuit of reaching higher and higher level of holiness.

For example, R' Chaim had a congenital weakness in one of his legs, which required much care and delicate manoeuvring, yet during these moments of profound meditation and inspired prayer, he would sometimes get carried away with such fervor, that he would stamp his legs heavily, in a repeated manner, until it would actually begin to bleed. R' Chaim himself, was obviously unaware of the bleeding and the pain and could not control his actions, and attendants would constantly have to rush over to stem the bleeding and sit the *rebbe* down.

The *rebbetsin* would plead with the *rebbe*'s private *shammash* - attendant, to take measures to protect his weak leg, but he always replied, 'Believe me, it is pointless. I assure you our master has no idea which leg he is stomping on and there is little we can do about it.'

One time at a public gathering, the *tzaddik* was in a state of spiritual ecstasy, when he was suddenly seized by a severe coughing spasm. Only after a number of minutes and with great difficulty, his son aroused R' Chaim from his trance, and urged him to drink some hot tea in order to relieve the coughing spell.

"Why did you interrupt me," the *rebbe* turned to him, just the slightest bit annoyed, "I was in the highest of celestial spheres, and in those conditions of spirit, one has no need for hot tea."

"True, father," the son countered respectfully, "but in those exalted states of trance, one does not cough either!"

R' Chaim looked at him and smiled. "You win," he admitted, accepting the hot cup of tea readily now, "You win." And he gladly drank of the steaming cup.

MAGA Advice



OK, it's not advice. It's a halacha. Whether it applies to gentile leaders like Donald Trump or King Charles, or only to Jewish kings, is up for discussion, but the Torah this week tells us, **נָשִׂיא בְּעַמְּךָ לֹא תָאֹר.** (**שמות כ"ב:כ"ז**) - "A leader of your nation you shall not curse."

We live in a free country, why can't I exercise my freedom of speech? Well, the United States might believe in saying whatever you like, but the Torah doesn't. We have many rules about what we say, and the Sages go to great lengths to discuss the dangers of saying too much and speaking to freely.

Here, the Torah tells us, "Despite your personal opinions, you may not curse the king."

Why not? I'm glad you asked.

The Sforno says, "In general, when one curses the king or leader, it leads to a detriment for the nation as a whole, and great damage to the community."

This would seem to imply that one should not condemn or badmouth a sitting leader because doing so can harm society. This is a far cry

from what people believe today, but an objective observer would see that indeed, bashing our leaders hurts our society.

More than this, we have numerous laws against Lashon Hara. Not only because of the damage that might be caused, but because speaking negatively is a low, base behavior, beneath a Jewish person, and probably beneath any human being.

And lest you think "speaking out" is your moral duty, let's learn a fascinating Gemara in Bava Basra 3b. King Herod was a slave of the Hasmonean dynasty who killed his masters and assumed the throne. Knowing he was not truly a king, as the Sages taught, "You must appoint a king from amongst your brethren," he had most of them killed. He kept alive one sage named Bava ben Buta, but he blinded him by piercing his eyes with a porcupine skin.

One day, King Herod came to Bava and disguised his voice. He tried to get Bava to curse Herod, but he refused. He quoted a verse that we cannot curse a king.

"He's not really a king!" replied Herod.

Bava persisted, even if he was only a wealthy man, the Torah prohibits cursing him even in your private chambers; or even if he was merely a leader.

When Bava ben Buta refused to curse Herod, the king revealed his identity and lamented, "If I'd known how careful the rabbis are with their words, I never would have killed them." - He wished to repent, and asked Bava for guidance. He was advised to refurbish the Bais HaMikdash.

It would seem that keeping our mouths closed and following the Torah is the way to have the Bais HaMikdash rebuilt. It's not the protesting or badmouthing that help anyone; that only hurts. So let's study history and not be doomed to repeat it.