TORAH TREATS

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



בהר

לעילוי נשמת



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

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

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

ואשתו מרת חנה ב"ר דוד ע"ה

ר'שרגא פייביש ב"ר מרדכי צבי ערליך ע"ה

ר'יעקב ב"ר שלום הלוי פרידמאן ע"ה

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

ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

בהר

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



וְהָאָ֖רֶץ לֹ֣א תִמָּכֵ֑ר לִצְמִתֻ֔ת כִּי־לִ֥י הָאָ֖רֶץ כִּי־גֵרִ֥ים וְתוֹשָׁבִ֖ים אַתֶּ֥ם עִמָּדִֽי - *"The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for you are sojourners and residents with Me." (25:23)*

Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi z"l (Spain 1320-1376) writes: Even if the buyer and seller would agree amongst themselves that the land being sold will not revert to the seller at the Yovel, their agreement would be void, for the Torah says, "For the land is Mine."

The very purposes of this Mitzvah are to remind us, first, of the holiness of Eretz Yisrael and, second, that everything we possess is Hashem's, not ours.

**דַּבֵּ֞ר אֶל־בְּנֵ֤י יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ וְאָמַרְתָּ֣ אֲלֵהֶ֔ם כִּ֥י תָבֹ֖אוּ אֶל־הָאָ֑רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אֲנִ֤י נֹתֵן֙ לָכֶ֔ם וְשָׁבְתָ֥ה הָאָ֖רֶץ שַׁבָּ֥ת לַֽיהוָֹֽה׃ – *"Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them, 'When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a Shabbat rest for Hashem.*" (25:2)

Rashi z"l writes: This means a rest in honor of Hashem in the same sense as these words are used in the case of the weekly Shabbat (Shmot 20:10) where "Shabbat La'Hashem" cannot mean "a day for G-d to rest."

R' Eliezer Lipman Lichtenstein z"l (1848-1896; Nowy Dwor, Poland) explains: On Shabbat, we are commanded to rest, and to cause our animals and belongings to rest as well. If such a thing were possible, we should cause our land to rest and our crops not to grow on Shabbat. However, Hashem made certain laws of nature, and He does not want them to be violated regularly. Therefore, our crops do continue growing on Shabbat. In exchange, we let our land rest for His honor every seventh year–one seventh of the time, as if it had rested one day each week. (Shem Olam)



***וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מַה־נֹּאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת* - "If you will say, 'What will we eat in the seventh year?'" (25:20)**

R' Yisrael Isserlin z"l (author of Terumat Ha'deshen; died 1460) asks: Why would people worry about what they will eat in the seventh (i.e., the shemittah) year? In the seventh year they will eat the produce of the sixth year. If they have anything to worry about at all, it should be the eighth year!

He answers: It is human nature for people to hoard their belongings for the future. Thus, when they realize that there will be no harvest in the seventh year, they will hoard the produce of the sixth year to eat in the eighth year. Then they will worry, "What will we eat in the seventh year?" (Beur Mahari)

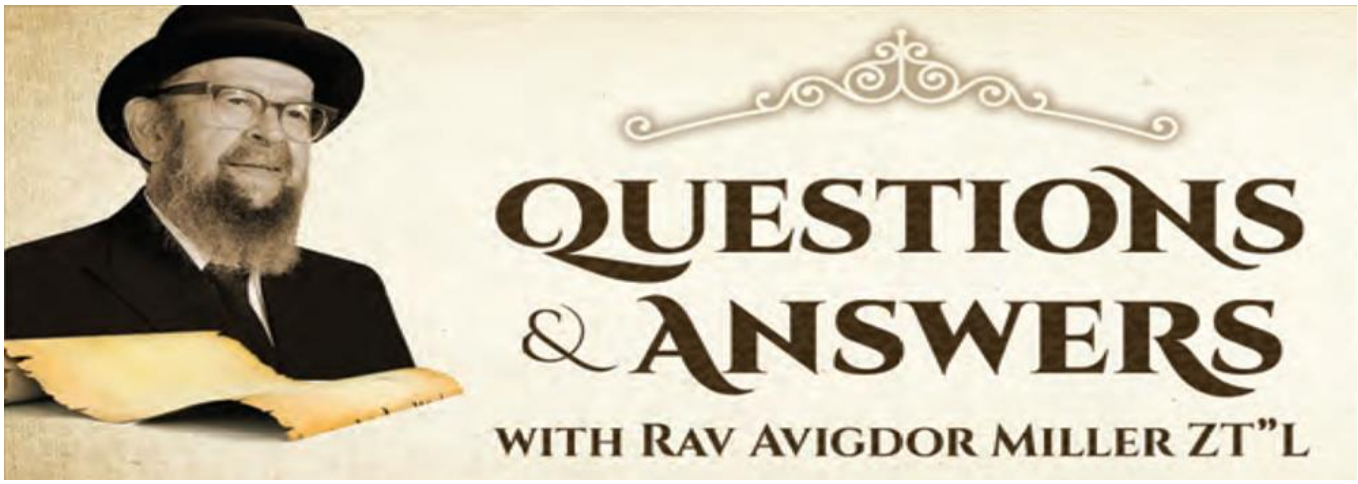


***וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ* - "If your brother becomes impoverished ..., ve'ha'chazakta bo."** (25:35)

R' Eliezer Zusia Portugal z"l (the Skulener Rebbe) observes that the grammatically correct form of this verse would seem to have been: "If your brother becomes impoverished . . . , ve'chizakta oto / you shall strengthen him." Why does the verse say, "ve'ha'chazakta bo" / "you shall be strengthened through him"?

R' Portugal explains based on the **Chafetz Chaim's** similar question about Mishlei (3:18), "It [the Torah] is a tree of life for those who hold-on to it." Since this verse is speaking of those who give financial support to Torah study, should it not have said, "for those who uphold it"? This verse's lesson is that the Torah doesn't need man's support. Rather, the Torah's merit supports those who give to its institutions and students.

Says R' Portugal: Our verse teaches the same lesson, but about supporting the poor. G-d has many agents through whom to support them. The one who truly benefits – the one who is strengthened – is the one who gives charity. (Noam Eliezer)





We have an obligation to love Hashem and to love our fellow Jews. Whom do we have to love more, G-d or man?

You have to love Hakadosh Baruch Hu b'chol livavcha, with all your heart so that leaves no space for any competition. Only that Hakodosh Boruch Hu says that you have to obey Him and He says to love your fellow Jews. Part of loving Hashem with all your heart is loving your fellow Jew. If a person, however, forgets about Hashem and he thinks he'll concentrate with all his heart on loving his fellow man, that man is wasting his life. -

And so it's a great thing to love your fellow man but that's only if you do it in the service of Hashem.

You know, we are told that the **Chofetz Chaim** was a very kindly man. He went out of his way to help people. But he wasn't exceptional in inviting people to his home. He used to help people find places to stay. He used to pay money to support them when they were visiting his town. He paid for their lodging, for their food. But to take people into his home, he didn't do that if someone else could do it – he wasn't so generous.

And somebody explained that this was because he didn't want to divide his loyalties to Hashem. He couldn't be a crony, he couldn't sit around all evening talking with his guests. He wanted to spend his time studying the Torah or to be in solitude with Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

A man who is in love with Hashem can't share his time freely with other people. And so although the Chofetz Chaim's heart was in gemilas chassadim. He did all the good deeds that you can imagine. But he did it because of ahavas Hashem. And so, he didn't spend much time with other people; if he could avoid being a crony and hanging around together with people, that's what he did. Because to do otherwise detracted from his loyalty, his allegiance and his clinging to Hashem.

And therefore, there's no question about the answer: **וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אלוקיך בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ** –You have to love Hashem with all your heart means that there's no room for anything else - **בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ** means with all your heart, with no divided loyalties.

"The Purpose of life is to serve Hashem, and the greatest pleasure a person can have, is to fulfil their mission in this world." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



How does one break the habit of losing one's temper?

Now, that requires a little more knowledge of the circumstances. But this I can tell you. If you know that there are certain things that cause an outbreak; let's say, you know that arguments about money cause you to lose it, then you have to be careful, when it comes to such questions.

You have to prepare yourself because forewarned is forearmed. So let's say, your wife comes and says she wants more money for a certain expensive item, something you think is a waste. So as soon as you hear that, what do you do? You excuse yourself and go into the bathroom. And remain there for a while and say to yourself, "Cool it, cool it! No matter what, you cool it!" And then say - this you can't say inside the bathroom but when you get out, you say **מַעֲנֶה־רַךְ יָשִׁיב חֵמָה** - "***A soft answer turns away wrath***" (Mishlei 15:1).

So even if you'll say no to your wife, but it depends how you say the no; if you say no in a gentle way, so the response won't be so explosive.



How does one know when he comes across the right shidduch?

And the answer is, he will never realize because there is no one right shidduch. There are a thousand right shidduchim. If you are rich enough and Rabbeinu Gershon wasn't born yet, you could marry a thousand women al pi Torah as long as you can support all of them. And nothing would be wrong; you could be very much in love with every one of them. And it's not silly at all.

Why shouldn't you be? But since you can only choose one, so there is no such thing as the right one. You can say, when can I know I met one of the right ones? That, I've spoken about many times; I'm not going to go over it now because the most important thing is that you should be the right one. You make sure that you're the right one and that's how you'll have a successful marriage. The one you married is one of your zivugim so you do the best you can with that one zivug and that's your success in this world.



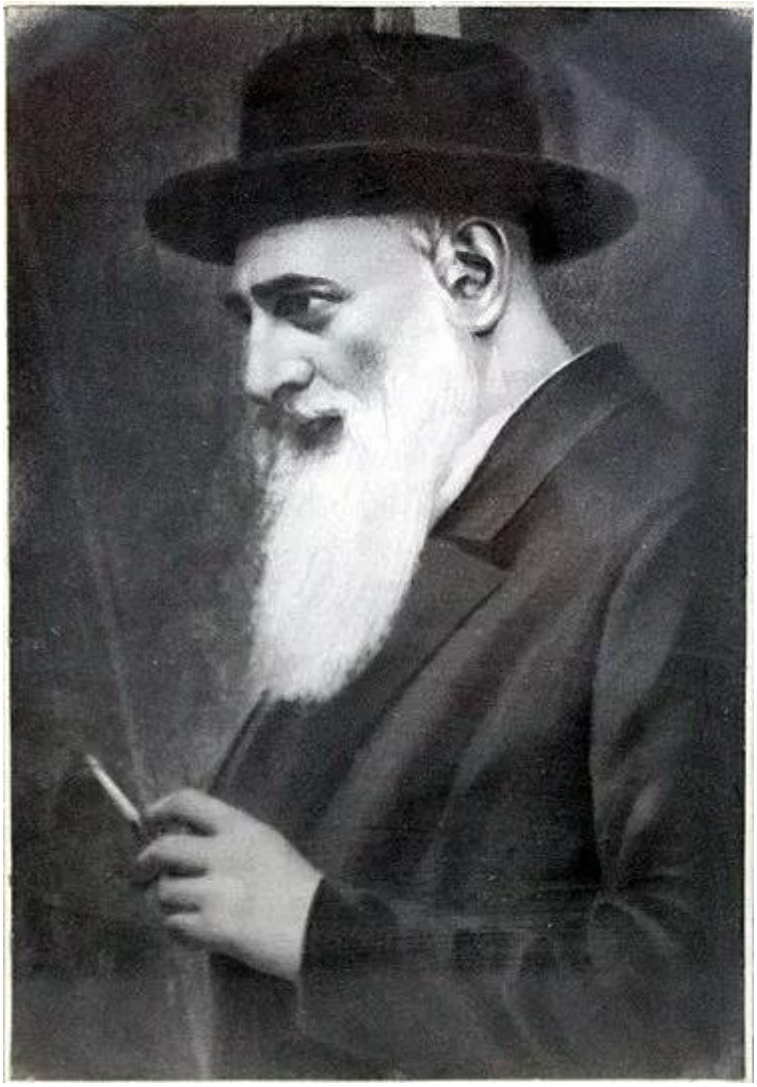
"For the Sake of Martyrs Thrown into the Fire" – The Righteous Man who Risked His Life for Thousands of Transylvanian Refugees

Elul 2 marks the yahrzeit of the **Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Eliezer Hager z"l, known as the "Dameshek Eliezer,"** after his book.

Seventy-seven years ago, the great and holy rabbi passed away after a fatal illness that took its toll on him, and he was only 55 years old.

Many hardships befell the Dameshek Eliezer of Vizhnitz, but he was often calm and peaceful, and "the joy of G-d was his fortress".

Most of his days on earth were full of agony and rage, in which broken-hearted Jews required much encouragement and comfort. And if during all his days that were good, he would "give strength and power to the people", then this was especially the case in the years of rage, during the days of the terrible Holocaust, tens of thousands of Jews were filled by the streams of faith that stemmed from his pure heart and good eyes.



In those days of evil, the Dameshek Elieser, put his life on the line by operating an amazing system of rescue which, according to testimonies, saved thousands of men, women, and children.

He did not only take care of rescuing the war refugees and finding them hiding places, but also, and above all, he cared for their livelihood and sustenance. He gave his whole heart and soul for the sake of the exiled and dying Jews.

He could have easily obtained an immigration visa to the Land of Israel at the beginning of the war, but he never even thought of such an idea. In 5700 (1940) he escaped by the skin of his teeth from the city of Vizhnytsa (Vizhnitz) to Timisoara, from where he sent food shipments for the Jews who were exiled to the swamps of Transnistria and who were starving there. For this he sold all his possessions, including his wristwatch.

Those who emigrated to the Land of Israel worked hard on behalf of the survivors and the rebirth of the glorious Vizhnitz chassidism and the holy yeshiva "Beit Yisrael and Dameshek Eliezer."

In 5651 (1891), he was born as the third son to his father, the holy **Vizhnitzer Rebbe, the "Ahavat Yisrael"** (Lover of Israel) and his mother, the righteous Rebbetzin Hinda, the daughter of Rabbi Meir Horowitz, the "Imrei Noam" of Dzikow. He was named after his mother's grandfather, Rabbi Eliezer of Dzikow.



In the year 5667 (1907) he established his home with his rebbetzin, Chava, the daughter of Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Heshel of Kopishnitz. In the same time perod he was authorized to teach by the Maharasham of Berezhany (Rabbi Shalom Mordechai Schwadron) and Rabbi Shmuel Engel of Radomysl.

During the First World War, he lived in Vienna together with his father-in-law. During these years, he was in contact with many Torah giants who stayed in Vienna following the war, including Rabbi Avraham Menachem Steinberg (author of "Machazeh Avraham"), who also ordained him as a rabbi.

His father, the Ahavat Yisrael, loved him very much and spoke about him many times in a rare way, such as in this statement:

"When I go up to the yeshiva of ma'ala (when I pass away) and they ask me what I brought up in this world, it's enough for me if I answer 'I brought my Eliezer on earth'…"

And in the year 5682 (1922), when it became clear to the Jews of Bukovina that their rabbi, the Ahavat Yisrael, did not intend to return to Vizhnitz after settling in Groswardein, and they asked him to send them one of his sons to serve as their rabbi, he ordered his third son, Rabbi Eliezer, to take on his burden. A new chapter began in the history of the city upon Rabbi Eliezer's appointment to the rabbinate of Vizhnitz, in which 95% of the inhabitants were Jewish.



With his brother-in-law, the Kopishnitzer Rebbe

Like the son of a noble king, Rabbi Eliezer appeared in the city of Vizhnitz, and the Jews were fascinated by the personality of the young rabbi whose quiet and shy demeaner embodied strong powers.

He magically began to draw the hearts of the youth back to his following, and in 5683 (1923), he reestablished the great yeshiva in Vizhnitz, in which thousands of students burning with passion for the revered Rebbe passed through.

And there were days, days of confusion and downtroddenness. In Bukovina almost no Jews lived in those days with a chassidic image of "Erlicheh Yidden" (honourable Jews). Most of them did not return after the First World War, and the young people who did return, for the most part, sadly began to loosen their religion and followed various national movements. If not for Rabbi Eliezer and his yeshiva, there would hardly have been a single religious young man left in the whole area, and as the holy Rabbi Chaim Meir of Vizhnitz and Rabbi Baruch of Seret-Vizhnitz wrote in their preface to the book Dameshek Eliezer: **He (Rabbi Eliezer) established the level of Torah in the areas of Bukovina and Romania, where the Torah was almost forgotten after the First World War, and he made ears hear the Torah and had many hundreds of thousands of students who through him drew closer to their Father in Heaven, to the Torah, and to chasidism. And the foundation of the Torah was raised and the honour of the Torah was multiplied by him,**

because with all his heart and soul, he cared for the disciples, like a merciful father to his sons, and he repaid many wrongdoers with the sweetness of his lips. He was pleasant and holy in his ways.



The yeshiva of the Dameshek Eliezer was housed in magnificent buildings because only in this way, he claimed, would there be a chance that the confused Jewish youth would return to the yeshiva's benches. Thanks to his personal charm, he was able to raise huge sums for his purposes and thus, later, with the rise of the yeshiva, he founded a Bais Yaakov school for girls, through which he also saved countless souls of Jewish girls from assimilation.

The Dameshek Eliezer encouraged many of his followers and students to immigrate to the Land of Israel, and these people became the pillar and cornerstone of the rebuilt Vizhnitzer chassidic community in the Land of Israel after the terrible Holocaust.

The years between the two wars posed existential challenges to the Jewish communities in the entire area, and thanks to the leadership of Rabbi Eliezer, whom even antisemitic Gentiles adored, Jewish

institutions and life ran smoothly. The Rebbe was on his feet and even traveled far and wide for dealings in high places, and his words would find traction in the hearts of government officials and policy makers. He was credited with the exceptional approvals granted for the Jewish institutions all over Bukovina and other districts throughout Romania.



The Dameshek Eliezer with his brother in Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim, with students who immigrated to the Land of Israel before the Holocaust in order to make the wasteland blossom

When the Romanian government decreed that the Jews should open their shops on Shabbat, the Rebbe turned worlds over to get the decree cancelled and initiated a large rabbinic gathering in Czernowitz. He then traveled to Bucharest and stayed there for two weeks, all his food at that time being bread and grapes, even though he had barely recovered from a severe lung disease that weakened his body. In the end, the Rebbe was indeed able to meet with the heads of government and get the decree cancelled, and the country quieted down.

The terrible war, which came to Romania in 5700 (1940), changed the "order of creation" and caused an unprecedented disaster on the Jewish communities that had been planted in the area for generations.

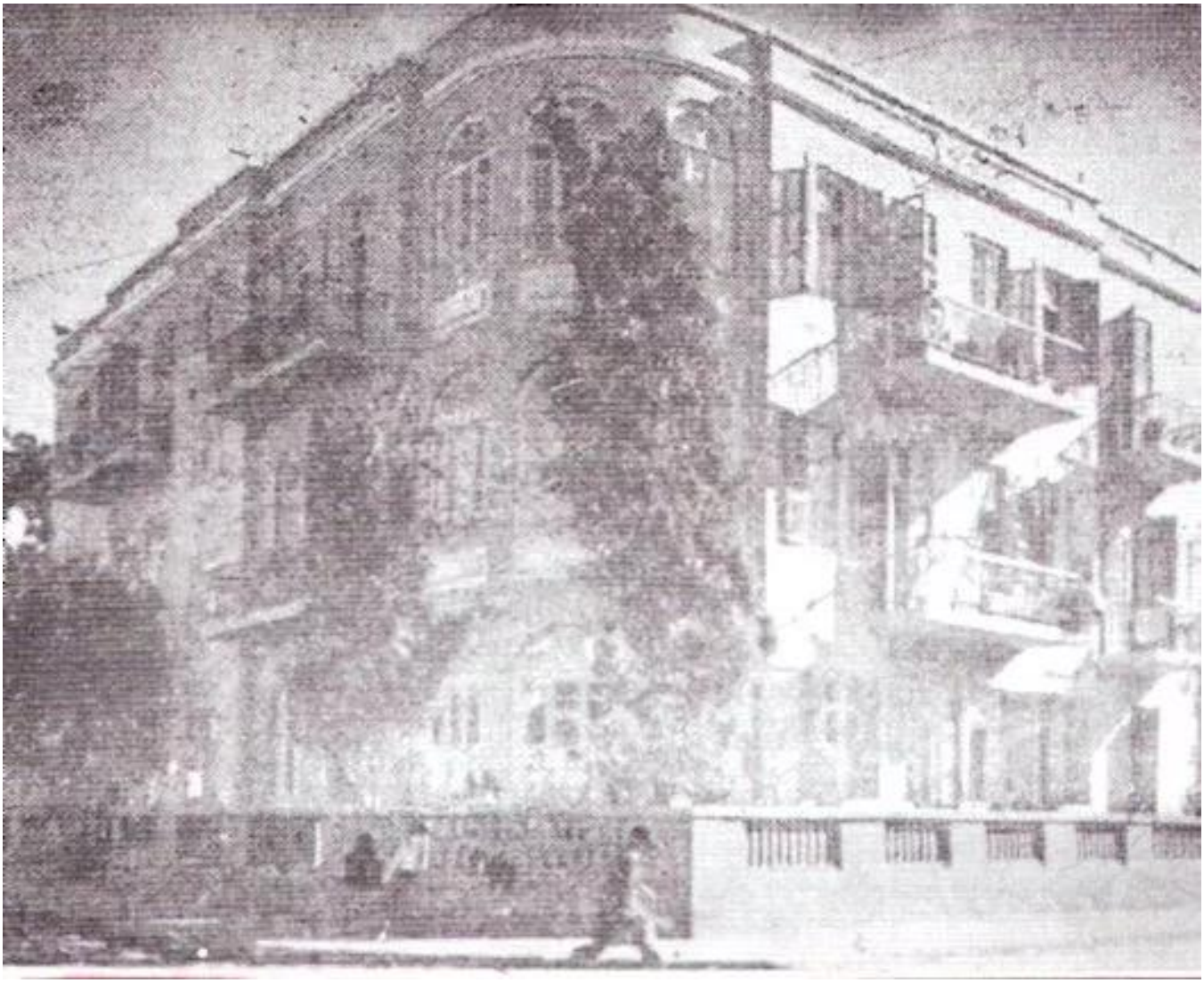


The holy Vizhnitzer Rebbe, as mentioned, could have escaped, thanks to the vigorous efforts of his numerous and influential followers, but out of self-sacrifice, he chose to stay with the Jewish community who were in trouble and captivity, and was able to save many Jewish lives. On the day he received a certificate for Israel, he said: "I am not moving from here as long as I can save even one Jew from starvation."

More than once, the Rebbe risked his life due to his actions performed both openly and in secret. He was forced to forge connections with German officers and bribe them with large sums of money for the purpose of freeing and rescuing Jews, whose number, according to those who wrote about what happened at the time, "reached thousands, both Torah and mitzvah observant and non-Torah and mitzvah observant".

In the year 5704 (1944), when the evil had ended and the salvation arrived, and he was no longer able to benefit and do good, he fled to the Land of Israel and after an arduous journey, full of miracles and wonders, he set his feet on the soil of Israel, at the end of the month of Nissan in the year 5704 (April 1944).

In Israel, the Rebbe re-established Vizhnitz chassidism and its institutions, and the first building that he purchased on Lilienblum Street became a pillar and cornerstone for the great and wonderful institutions of Vizhnitz chassidism in the Land of Israel, in Europe, and in the United States – institutions and communities with many thousands of students and followers characterized by chassidic fervor and warmth **"to Him, to glory and to splendour"**.



Lilienblum 16

Considering all this, we can conclude with what we started with, that indeed, our Rebbe, at the same time as being the rabbi of the city of Vizhnitz, was also a faithful and devoted father to the city.

He conducted his leadership in both a level-headed and pleasant way, and frequently combined the concern for all the Jews of the city and its surroundings spiritually and physically, and he did everything

with a lit-up face, with nobility, and with great love for each and every individual.



In Timișoara (Temisvar)



A wedding ceremony in Timișoara



וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדָו עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ – '***If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter on your proximity, you shall strengthen him***.' (25:35)

Strengthening a Jew who is confronted with economic challenges is a practical mitzvah. After all, if we ignore our brother's plight, what good is our personal frumkeit, religious observance? A Jew whose observance is predicated upon his relationship with Hashem, while he simultaneously ignores the challenges that his brother must confront, is deluding himself. We are all one family. One cannot expect his brother to derive satisfaction from one son, when that very same son ignores the adversity suffered by his own brother.

There is yet a deeper understanding of the mitzvah of supporting a fellow Jew who has come on hard times. As noted by the **Bais HaLevi**,

when one supports the poor, he fulfils a number of mitzvos. As a result, the ani, poor man, becomes a cheftza shel mitzvah, the vehicle through which the mitzvah is performed. During those moments that he asks for and receives alms, he is very much like an Esrog, Lulav, Shofar, etc., The mitzvah is being performed through him. When Succos is over and we no longer require the services of the Succah or Four Species, they no longer retain the kedushah, sanctity, which had been infused them during the Festival.

The Succah's sanctity is the result of its connection with the Yom Tov. Once the Festival has concluded, so, too, does the Succah's kedushah. The poor man retains his kedushah throughout the tzedakah dialogue.

Thus, just as it is prohibited to cover the blood of a slaughtered fowl (kisui ha'dam) using one's foot, because it is not respectful (being that the blood of kisui ha'dam is a cheftza shel mitzvah), so, too, it is forbidden to be lax in extending our utmost respect to the poor man who stands before us. After all, he is a cheftza shel mitzvah.



וּזְרַעְתֶּם אֶת הַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁמִינִת - *'And you shall plant during the eighth year.'* (25:22)

Shemittah observance tests one's spiritual devotion, as well as his emotional stability. It is difficult to observe the farmers around you planting and harvesting (either they are non-observant, or they rely on various dispensations), while your field lays fallow. It is hard to subsist on contributions from others who understand, respect and admire your commitment.

One who is patient, who rises to the Shemittah challenge, who perseveres despite the taunting of others, however, will be blessed with extraordinary siyata diShmaya, Divine assistance. Not only will he not lose out as a result of his commitment to Shemittah, but it

will also be the source of newly-found wealth which might not have occurred had he denied Hashem's ownership of the Land. Indeed, this is the crux of Shemittah observance. Does one acknowledge Hashem's sovereign ownership of the Land (and everything else for that matter), or does he think that it is his? It is difficult to part with something for which one has worked hard to earn and purchase.

Judaism is all about obedience to Hashem. This mitzvah is a test of one's obedience. The fact that one who observes Shemittah receives enormous siyata diShmaya is supported by a plethora of stories attesting to this verity. The following is one related by **Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein** in his Mitzvos B'Simchah:

A recent baal teshuvah, penitent, lived near the Jordan Valley and was a successful farmer who owned an enormous amount of land. Since he was a recent baal teshuvah, the Rav of his community was hesitant to relate to him all of the stringencies involved in observing Shemittah.

This sincere baal teshuvah did not wait to be told about a mitzvah; he was on a path of discovery, seeking out every opportunity to serve Hashem in any way. When he heard about Shemittah, he studied everything he could about the mitzvah; its philosophy, its ethical and spiritual underpinnings, and its halachos. When he was informed that his many fields would have to lie fallow, he embraced the idea and even complained to the Rav for not informing him of this special mitzvah. The Rav justified his reluctance, saying, "I figured when you would hear that your fields would have to shut down for Shemittah, you might balk. I am proud to say that I was wrong!"

The man observed Shemittah with every stringency. He supported himself with investments that he had made. Once Shemittah ended, and it was Rosh Hashanah of the eighth year, he approached the agricultural department and asked for seeds, so that he could now plant his fields. They looked at him incredulously, "Now you come for seeds? The planting season was months ago. All the farmers

(apparently they had not observed Shemittah) came months ago to pick up their seeds. Why did you not come earlier?" they asked.

"I observe Shemittah, followed by Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succos. Today is the first day that I am able to plant my field."

"We understand. Nonetheless, it does not alter our response. We have only one type of seed remaining: celery. If you want to plant celery, you are welcome to take home the celery seeds."



"Fine," he said. "I will take whatever you have available."

No one needs acres upon acres of celery. Yet, he planted celery wherever he had land. Hashem did the rest. That year he had a bumper crop, with the celery growing unusually large.

Farmers from all over came to stare at the amazing celery that was growing in his fields. Obviously, it was a miracle. So what? They asked. Who needs so much celery?

Hashem had other plans. That winter, Europe was struck by an unusual freeze that destroyed, among others, the celery crop. This created a serious problem for those Europeans who loved to partake of a hot soup in which celery was a primary ingredient. This was especially true during the cold winter months.

After exhausting all available sources for celery, the European wholesalers contacted the Israeli agriculture department and asked if they had celery. At first, they said, "No," but then one of the inspectors remembered the observant Jew who had planted his fields with celery, producing enough celery to feed all of Europe.

The reader can imagine what happened. Our observant farmer, who had "invested" in the mitzvah of Shemittah and relied on Hashem to take care of him, sold every last stalk of celery.

Hashem's promise to bless those who observe Shemittah was realized. The man took his profits, sold his fields, and moved to the city. He opened up a textile factory which was equally blessed – all due to his Shemittah observance.



וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדָו עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ – '***If your brother becomes impoverished… you shall strengthen him***.' (25:35)

The Pele Yoetz writes: "Chesed, performing acts of kindness, is a pillar of the world. It is one of those mitzvos whose fruits are eaten in this world, but whose principal remains for him (generating reward) in Olam Habba, the World to Come."

The Chafetz Chaim writes that the performance of chesed can engender such incredible merit that it has the power to overwhelm the Middas HaDin, Attribute of Strict Justice.

Rebbetzin Miriam Shmuelevitz, wife of the venerable Rosh Yeshivah of Mir Yerushalayim, was very involved in a successful chesed organization that reached out to Jews all over Yerushalayim. I will present the following story, which is well-known, with a different twist, in order to impart a powerful lesson which will hopefully carry an inspiring message:

A young kollel fellow who had been suffering the pain of abject poverty was gifted a box of food for Succos from the chesed organization – fish, chicken, soup, salad, challah – sufficient to serve his growing family. Tears rolled down his face as he saw this manna from Heaven.

One half hour before the Yom Tov was to commence, he heard a knock at his door. He opened the door to greet an impoverished woman, begging for "something" for Yom Tov; "Perhaps, you might be

able to share some food with me? I have nothing. Whatever you can give me will be a lifesaver," she said.

"I would love to help you," he began, "but I myself just received my Yom Tov package – barely enough for my family."

"Surely, you can give a poor woman something?" she pleaded.

"I really have nothing. This is the first time that we received a package of food that was designated specifically for Yom Tov. My children have looked forward for some time to eat a piece of chicken, to savor some hot soup. I would love to help you, but my children…" he said.

A war raged within him. On one hand, he wanted so much to help this woman. On the other hand, he had so little, he had nothing to spare. Back and forth he went, until he decided to go to the fridge and take out the chicken, cut off a piece, and share it with the woman. So, they would all eat less. It was still more than they would otherwise have had.

He went to the refrigerator, opened the door, and almost passed out! There before his eyes lay his two-year-old son, blue in the face. He had somehow crept in, and, since he was small, he fit on a shelf as the door closed on him.

Immediately, they called Hatzalah who miraculously revived the child. The paramedics told him, "Reb Yaakov – you were just given a child as a gift. Five more minutes, and we would not have been able to save him."

The kollel fellow certainly gave the chicken to the woman who "indirectly" had played a role in saving his son's life. - What are we to learn from this story?

Rebbetzin Shmuelevitz asked the Rosh Yeshivah for his insight. **Horav Chaim, zl**, said, "Obviously, the simple, most straightforward lesson to be derived is Tzedakah tatzil mi'ma'ves, 'Charity saves from death.' By giving charity to this poor woman, the kollel fellow

performed a mitzvah which ultimately catalyzed his son being saved from death.

There is another – even greater – lesson to be derived from here. This Kollel fellow was granted a 'final test' to determine if he was worthy of being his son's father. A 'final test' is not a simple test. It is the last opportunity granted to a person to give him a chance to save himself – or others close to him – from death. If he passes the test, he has earned a zchus, merit, for life. If chas v'shalom, Heaven Forbid, he fails…

Our young man was fortunate to have passed the test and saved his son's life. What if he would not have passed the test? What if he would not have opened the refrigerator? - Baruch Hashem, he did."

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ... אַל־תִּקַּח מֵאִתּוֹ נֶשֶׁךְ וְתַרְבִּית... וְחֵי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ - '***If your brother becomes impoverished …You shall not take from him interest… and let your brother live with you***.' (25:35,36)

It is our responsibility to see to it that our brother does not descend to the level of poverty such that he will have great difficulty sustaining himself. We must attempt to help him before he becomes poor, so that, with help from his brother, he can maintain his independence and raise himself up to his prior status.

Lending him money or investing in his business is among the highest and noblest forms of charity, since the beneficiary is not made to feel like a charity case.

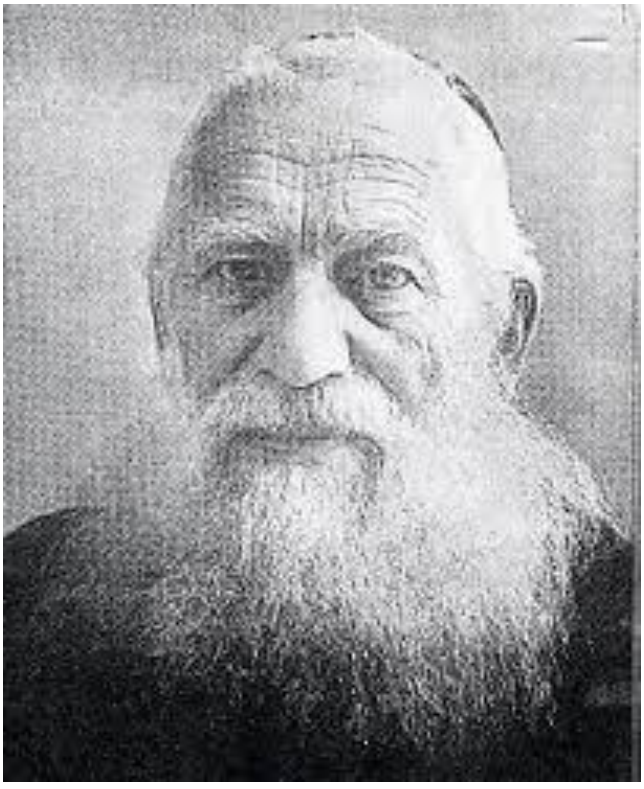
The Torah admonishes us not to lend money for interest. This is not the Torah way. When we perform a mitzvah, it should be for the purpose of carrying out Hashem's dictate – not for personal profit.

We wonder why taking interest is prohibited. Is it any different from any other form of business, whereby one makes a profit on his investment? How is this different from renting a space or an appliance from someone? The rental fee is the premium one pays for

the favor he receives. It is a simple business deal. One is, so to speak, charging rent for the use of his money. Is this so bad?

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, explains that, veritably, charging interest is neither morally reprehensible nor is it benign and inoffensive. People do it all the time, and it is a recognized and acceptable manner of doing business.

In the context of "family," however, it becomes reprehensible. It takes on a noxious image. Profiting from family members is just not right. One should reach out with complete equanimity to a member of the family. Imagine one charging his brother interest for a loan! It would be considered outrageous. (This does not mean that people do not act outrageously and reprehensibly to their siblings. These individuals have basically removed themselves from the human race.) This is why the Torah emphasizes that the person who is descending into poverty is "your brother." We are all brothers. The sooner we accept this concept and act upon it, the quicker we will realize it and act with greater compassion and decency toward one another.



The following dvar Torah from the **Ponevezer Rav, zl**, is not only timeless, but it also represents the standard by which the Rav lived. His incredible success with people was the product of his love for all Jews. He treated them all as family, because they were.

In Parashas Vayeitzei (Bereishis 29:7), when Yaakov Avinu arrived at the well in Charan and met the local shepherds, he set about rebuking them, saying, "*The day is still young! It is not yet time to gather the livestock. Give the sheep to drink and go pasture them.*"

We do not find the shepherds taking umbrage with Yaakov's rebuke. Imagine coming into a new place and, by way of an introduction, one begins by rebuking the community! Yet, amazingly, they not only did not respond negatively; they even apologized and gave an excuse for their seemingly indolent behavior, "*We cannot give them to drink until all the flocks are gathered and the shepherds roll the stone off the mouth of the well, and then we shall give the sheep to drink*" (ibid. 29:8). Why, indeed, did they respond so "nicely"?

The Rav explains that the key to understanding their exchange is in Yaakov's greeting to them. He addressed the shepherds as "brothers." That was the secret of his influence: Achai, "My brothers!" Or, as the Rav put it, Briderlach, "(My) precious brothers," indicated the closeness and fondness he had for them.

When Yaakov addressed the shepherds as "family" they felt he was close to them, that he loved them as brothers. They viewed him neither as a stranger nor as a newcomer sitting in judgment on them. They did not mind a rebuke from a "brother." When a person radiates genuine love and brotherly feelings, he can deliver his rebuke, and it will be accepted in the spirit that it is rendered. His message will penetrate the most obdurate heart and elicit a positive response.

This was the secret of the Ponovezer Rav's success. The overflowing love he manifested towards every Jew was a major component of his character. When he referred to fellow Jews as "Briderlach, briderlach," it was not a pejorative in order to impress. He meant it, and they knew this. His love penetrated because it was real.

"The most precious thing we have is time. You woke up this morning, Hashem gave you the biggest present in the world. Time is potential – Time is life." ~ Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein Z'tl.

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדָו עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ – '***If your brother becomes impoverished… you shall strengthen him***.' (25:35)

It is not always about money. Some of the wealthiest people are depressed, and, conversely, some of the poorest people are filled with joy. A person's attitude reflects his needs. V'chi yamuch achicha, 'If your brother becomes impoverished," is not necessarily about money. He might need a shoulder to cry on; a hand to pat his back; a smile to brighten his day; a compliment to make him feel relevant.

Emotional depression is worse than financial woe. People cover up their feelings. They smile, laugh, joke, all while they are crying bitterly from within.

Several years ago, a student in a mainstream yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael sadly succumbed to his overwhelming depression. Afterwards, the Mashgiach of the yeshivah lamented, "If one of us would have smiled at him that day, if someone would have included him in a conversation, if someone would have greeted him with a resounding "good morning," this gathering might not have been necessary.

We have no idea concerning the therapeutic value of a greeting, a smile, a "have a good day." It elevates a person's self-esteem and makes him feel valued. It can also save a person's life.

In Sefer Tehillim 41:2, David Hamelech says, *Ashrei maskil el dal*, "Praiseworthy is he who contemplates the needy." He does not say *nosein el dal*, who gives to the needy, but rather, who contemplates; who understands; who delves into their psyche to figure out what it is that they truly need.

The Yerushalmi Peah 37b relates the story of a poor, blind man who approached Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov for alms. R' Eliezer seated the man at the head of the table in the chair reserved for the Chief Rabbi of the community, while he sat on a lower, farther removed

seat. Thus, people would say that this must be a very distinguished man, for otherwise, R' Eliezer would not have accorded him such honor. As a result, people supported the man handsomely. He did not have to suffer the abuse of walking blindly throughout the streets, knocking on doors, asking for help.

Afterwards, the blind man discovered what R' Eliezer had done for him. He blessed him, saying, "You performed a chesed, act of kindness, for one who is seen, but himself cannot see. May the One Who is not visible, but yet sees everything, repay you in kind."

This is what is meant by *maskil el dal*. R' Eliezer not only sustained this poor man materially, but also emotionally. He lifted his spirits and gave him the opportunity – even if but for a short interval – to feel like everyone else.

When we help people – and many of us do – we must approach our aid giving rationally. Are we giving them what they really need? Do they need money – or do they need guidance? Perhaps they need help determining how to spend the money, where to spend the money. Is it possible they need help getting back on their feet?

Reaching out to help is all-important. Indeed, it is the Jewish way – but, with seichal, common sense.

During the first world war, after spending Yom Kippur with a few young men who were being drafted into the army, the Chofetz Chaim told them -

"I am glad I had the chance to meet you now, for I will not get that opportunity in the World to Come. Because of the tests you face and the sacrifices you make, you will attain extremely high levels and will be granted an exalted place in Gan Eden." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ – '***If your brother becomes impoverished, and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him***.' (25:35)

Rashi explains וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ, "you shall strengthen him," to mean that, if one sees a decline in his fellow's business, if he sees that the money does not flow in his home as it once used to, he should step in and slow the descent, helping him to regain his financial footing. It is that much more difficult once the fall has gone too far.

Rashi compares this to a donkey who is struggling with a heavy load. As long as the donkey is erect, albeit struggling, one person can support him. Once the donkey has fallen to the ground, even five people are unable to right him. - A powerful lesson may be derived from Rashi. At times, we have no idea the extent our assistance provides to the person in need. We might think, "What did I do? It was nothing." Little do we know that we quite possibly have saved the individual's life.

The Midrash Rabbah takes this idea further. "Whoever gives a poor man a penny, Hashem will give him many pennies. - Does Hashem then give him pennies? Hashem gives him his life! - How is this?

A loaf of bread sells for ten pennies. A poor man who is starved and at a point of near exhaustion must eat, or he will die. Along comes a kind-hearted man and gives him one penny. He has saved the poor man's life." He gave one penny, and he is rewarded with his life. Why? He only gave a penny! That penny was the turning point in this man's sustenance. Otherwise, he would have died.

Chazal are teaching us that it is not how much we give to the individual in need; rather, it depends on the effect it has. That poor man only needed a penny. The man only gave a penny, but that penny saved his life. Thus, Hashem will save the benefactor's life. Who knows what punishment, what decree had been lurking in his future? At least now, one of those life and death decrees will be averted – because of one single penny.

This Midrash serves as the basis of an appeal made by the Lomza Rosh Yeshivah, **Horav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon, zl,** during the dark days of the Holocaust.



From among the distinguished Roshei Yeshivah of Pre-World War II Europe, Rav Gordon was the only one who was stranded in relative safety prior to the war. As a result, he could not return. He succeeded in saving the lives of thousands through his unstinting involvement in Vaad Hatzalah, the relief and rescue organization, and through his travels through the United States raising money to save European Jewry. - Alas, he failed to save his own yeshivah and family from the death knell. Rav Gordon happened to be in America prior to the war, and, when war broke out, it was impossible for him to return.

He was shocked at the pathetic attitude of American Jewry toward their European brothers and sisters. He partnered with **Horav Eliezer Silver, zl**, and others to raise money and guide the efforts to ransom whomever he could. Basically a withdrawn and quiet person, Rav Gordon's speeches were passionate and fiery, because of his intense love for every Jew. The following is an excerpt from one of his most famous speeches.

"How can we stand idly by as thousands of our brothers and sisters are being led to their slaughter?! Let me share with you some of the terrifying events which have recently become public. When the evil beasts were gathering the poor men, women and children to be killed, anyone who had with him fifty dollars was able to buy their way to freedom – and life. "

Imagine for yourselves, if any one of you would know that for fifty dollars you could rescue a Jew from the inferno – who would not jump at the opportunity to help a fellow Jew? Yet, the yetzer hora, evil-inclination, has its ways of subverting our efforts. It raises questions: Can it really be done? Will fifty dollars really be enough? Surely, if everyone knew his moral obligation to save a Jewish life – no one would refrain. Everyone would certainly do everything within his ability – and beyond – to help his fellow Jew!"

The Rosh Yeshivah cited the above Midrash, indicating to the assemblage that, when one gives to help a fellow Jew, it is not how much he actually gives that matters, but rather, the benefit which it engenders to the subject in need.

Let us be so bold as to go one step further. Chesed extends beyond the realm of material sustenance. We quickly forget that spiritual sustenance might be even more important. Reaching out to someone who is searching, who is making the attempt to embrace a life of Torah and mitzvos, can be more difficult than writing out a check. It requires time and an abundance of patience – which may be tested at all intervals of the journey.

Chumash, Mishnayos, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, etc. require time, which many of us do not have. If it may be the catalyst, however, for turning around one's life, saving a family, changing a generation – can we say "no"?

"Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself. Humility is the internalized awareness with every fibre of your being, that everything you possess, is a gift from the Almighty Who bestows His kindness upon you. The more a person focuses on how special he is – while knowing that it is all a gift from Hashem – the greater his humility." ~ Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman 1869-1935.

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדָו עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ – '***If your brother becomes impoverished, and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him***.' (25:35)

Rashi says, don't wait until he has fallen and must be picked up. It's difficult to raise up someone who is completely down. Rather, one should support him, catching him when he is faltering. Give him sustenance; lend him a hand, give him the courage to continue.

Horav E. M. Shach, Zt'l, comments that chesed, kindness, begins with understanding and forethought. We should look around and study the plight of those around us, and with an intelligent eye try to see what it is our friend needs and how we can be of assistance. First we look, then think, and afterwards act.

Our acts of chesed should be the result of "seeing" and "thinking", not simply acting. One who thinks before he acts has a clearer appreciation of his act of kindness. Horav Schach explains that this is the reason we find the word "vayaar", and he saw; regarding Avraham Avinu's noticing the three "wayfarers", repeated twice. First Avraham saw three men, then he saw once again and ran to greet them. Avraham did not act hastily - he saw, it registered in his mind, and he acted. His act of chesed was not a spontaneous or impulsive act. It was well thought out and planned. This is the meaning of Chazals' dictum, "He who closes his eyes from charity". One who does not see does not give. The reason/excuse he has for not helping is that because he did not see, he did not know about it.

Obviously, if one wears blinders or shelters himself from exposure to other people's tzaros, problems, he will be unaware. How many of us can say that we do not look away when we see a poor, dirty man in need, or a child that is physically or mentally challenged. We think that if we do not look it will go away. Unfortunately, the only thing that will go away is our opportunity to perform a deed of kindness, to help another person in need.

'וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ... אַל־תִּקַּח מֵאִתּוֹ נֶשֶׁךְ וְתַרְבִּית... וְחֵי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ- ***If your brother becomes impoverished …You shall not take from him interest… and let your brother live with you.***' (25:35,36)

The prohibition against paying or receiving interest is beyond comprehension. Why should it be forbidden? If it is normal for one to make use of his tools, his animals and his home, why can he not make use of his money?

Logically speaking, "renting out" money should be no different than renting out a house. Moreover, interest should be the logical payment to one who has lent his own money to someone who was unable to use his money. Also, if interest is forbidden, why is it permissible to receive interest from a non-Jew? If it is wrong, it is wrong in all instances.

Horav Shimon Schwab zl, maintains that taking interest is not a breach in society as we know it, indeed, it might even be good business to "rent out" ones' money. It is not the correct thing to do in regard to a brother. One simply does not take interest from his brother. The framework of business is different. What is permissible and even correct in the context of a business deal becomes reprehensible regarding a brother. The Torah wants brothers to act as brothers. Those who demand interest destroy the very fibre of achdus among Klal Yisrael. That's why the Torah emphasized, "If your brother becomes impoverished"..... and let your brother live with you." Different rules apply regarding family. It behooves us to take stock and reflect upon the way we treat our fellow Jew. Is he like family, or have we lost that type of sensitivity?

"When the clouds get dark, it starts to rain, and rain makes things grow. Often, it is the dark moments of your life that bring rain and growth." ~ Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein Zt'l.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Medina, Saudi Arabia



The first mention of Jews in Medina, Saudi Arabia dates from the time of the First Beis Hamikdash. By the seventh century CE there was a large population of Jews in the area, who were respected by local Arabian tribes. In the year 624, the Jews of Medina were expelled.

Is there a hint to this city in the Torah?

At a meeting in 1924, Musa Kazis asked **R' Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld** about a holy Muslim city mentioned in the Torah. R' Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld told him that the Muslim city of Medina was mentioned in the Torah in the words **ארץ קדם**, the land of the east (Bereishis 25:6), where Targum Onkolos renders **ארע מדינחא**, the city of Medina.

Welcomed Wishes



When the glass is broken under the *chupah*, everyone shouts *mazal tov*.

The Sefer Matamim provides a reason for this. It is because the first letters of **מַאיש לַקחה זֹאת**, from man was she taken, spells the word **מזל**.

As for the word **טוב**, women are called *tov* as the pasuk says, **מצא אשה מצא טוב**, one who has found a wife, has found goodness (Mishlei 18:22). - Also, not having a wife is called **לא טוב**, not good. The Torah tells us, **לֹא־טֹוב הֱיֹות הָאָדָם לְבַדֹּו**, it is not good for man to be alone (Breishis 2:18) - So together we get the phrase **מזל טוב**.

In light of this, we can grasp an alternate meaning in the words **טובים השנים מן האחד**, two are better than one (Koheles 4:9), which can refer to marriage. It is better for a man and woman to get married than have two single people.

The Rokeach points out that the gematria of **השנים מן האחד** is 513. This is the identical sum of the words **חתן** (458) and **כלה** (55), who join together in marriage.

"If all the people in the world would be authors, they still would not be able to describe adequately how reprehensible loshon hora really is." ~ Maharal of Prague.

Women and Minyan

Why can't women be included in making a minyan?

The answer is based on the gemara Megilla 23b which derives from the Mergalim, spies, that a minyan is comprised of ten people since there were ten evil spies (excluding Yehoshua and Kalev).

Since the women did not participate in the sin of the spies, they are not included in a minyan, because they don't need the rectification for the sin of the spies.



Chesed

In Parashas Behar, the Torah commands us (25:35) **וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו**, "If your brother becomes destitute and his hand falters beside you, you shall support him."

The mitzvah of **והחזקת בו** is to help your fellow man *before* he becomes poor. Rashi explains, "Do not allow him to fall and collapse altogether because it can be difficult to pick him up again." Lend him money when he begins to fall, when things are difficult for him because that will help him start or improve his business and become self-sufficient. This is better than letting him become poor and only then help him because, at that point, it will be harder to reestablish himself.

Rashi writes, "To what can this be compared? To a load on a donkey. While it is still on the donkey, one person can grasp it and hold it in place. Once it falls to the ground, however, even five people cannot pick it up."

The Alshich HaKadesh explains this lesson with a mashal: The street is full of mud, but Reuven is in shape and has no trouble walking.

Reuven sees someone who is having difficulty keeping his balance. A man calls out to Reuven, "Give the man a hand and help him walk."

Reuven replies, "He is still walking; he hasn't fallen yet. I will leave him be. If he falls, I will help him."

It does not take long and the man indeed slips and falls into the mud and becomes covered with dirt from head to toe. He is in pain from the fall, and his clothes will never be spotless again.

Reuven lifts him up and washes him and his clothing, but he doesn't deserve credit for any of this. He deserves rebuke and a curse because had he cared, this could have been avoided.

This is why the Torah obligates us to support those who are falling *before* they fall.

The Brisker Rav zt'l once gave an envelope filled with money to his son, **Reb Dovid Soloveitchik zt'l**, and told him to deliver the money to a poor person.

Reb Dovid replied, "I am in the midst of a sugyah. When I finish the sugyah, I will bring over the money."

The Brisker Rav told him, "Rabbanim once gathered for a meeting, and my father [**Reb Chaim**] was present. They began discussing the **Lodzer Rav zt'l**, and someone said that the Lodzer Rav spent much time doing chesed, which is why we don't have any sefarim from him.

My father told them that he acted correctly. - He explained, 'If a Yid must close the Gemara to do chesed, then even when the Gemara is closed, the Gemara is open. - If one doesn't do chesed when he should, then even when the Gemara is open, it is closed."

"Anything that a person gets without prayer either won't last lo ng or won't be worth much." – R. Lazer Brody.

Lag B'Omer

Lag b'Omer is a joyous day worldwide. Tzaddikim call it "Reb Shimon's Day." It is a day of holiness, salvation, and immense joy.

The Mishnas Chassidim writes, "It is a mitzvah to be happy on this day, the joy of Reb Shimon bar Yochai."

The Chida (*Moreh b'Etzba* 223) writes, "Be happy in honor of Reb Shimon bar Yochai because Lag b'Omer is his *hillulah,* and it is known that he desired that people rejoice on this day."

The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l said, "Lag b'Omer is the greatest day of the year." (His son, **Reb Yehoshua zt'l**, immediately lowered his head and said, "Father, give me a brachah.)

Reb Moshe Rozvedover would say that there isn't a better day in the year than Lag b'Omer. If he could, he would hold onto the sun with his teeth and not let it set, so he wouldn't have to leave Lag b'Omer.

When Avraham Kalisker zt'l went to the mikvah on Lag b'Omer, he would say, **הריני מקבל עלי קדושת היום**, as a preparation to receiving the holiness of Lag b'Omer.

The Chasam Sofer zt'l would teach Masechta Shavuos during Sefiras Ha'Omer because it has 49 daf. - Every day, he taught the daf corresponding to that day's sefirah. (Others do this with Mesechta Sotah, which also has 49 blatt.)

Tzaddikim would keep in mind the count of the Omer throughout the entire day. For example, whenever **Reb Mendel of Riminov zt'l** reminded himself of the Omer, he would count again **היום יום ...לעומר**

"The greatest service you can offer Hashem is to treat His creations with love and compassion." ~ Baal Shem Tov.

Teshuvah on Lag B'Omer

Reb Yohonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* (*Yaaras Dvash* vol.2, 11) writes, "It is proper for every *yirei shamayim* to do *teshuvah* on Lag b'Omer because Reb Shimon's merit will help him do teshuvah so that the person doesn't spend his life with foolishness, which is a *tzaar* for this tzaddik."

A hint is that **שמעון בר יוחאי** is gematriya (Yeshaya 6:10) **יבין ושב ורפא לו**, "He will understand, do teshuvah, and be healed."

The Sar Shalom of Belz once spoke about the greatness of Lag b'Omer, and his son, **Reb Zundel *zt'l***, said, "Lag b'Omer is like Yom Kippur." His father said that he was correct.

The Chasam Sofer (*Drashos* vol.2 280.) also writes that Lag b'Omer is like Yom Kippur.

On Lag b'Omer, people sing **אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אַשְׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל, לִפְנֵי מִי אַתֶּם מִטַּהֲרִין**- "Fortunate are you, Yisrael! Before Whom do you purify yourselves and Who purifies you!" – These words discuss Yom Kippur, but we sing them on Lag b'Omer because also on Lag b'Omer, our sins are removed like on Yom Kippur.

Someone described Lag b'Omer in Meron to **Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin zt'l**, saying, "Inside it is like Yom Kippur and outside it is like Simchas Torah," and he praised this description immensely.

Salvations

Year 5695: **The Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz's** children arrived in Meron on Lag b'Omer. Someone shouted, "Make room for the Viznitzer children!" – An old lady shouted back, "Near Reb Shimon, we are all children."

The Imrei Chaim zt'l of Viznitz would often repeat her words. "We are all Reb Shimon's children." A father has compassion on his children, even when they don't deserve it. This is why Reb Shimon is for everyone, even those at low levels.

When **Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin *hy'd zy'a*** was in Meron, he didn't take *kvitelach* from his chassidim. He told them that in Reb Shimon's merit, everyone has an exceptional power of *tefillah*.



Similarly, **Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zy'a** would go with his chassidim to Meron for Shabbos *parashas Behaloscha* and wouldn't accept *kvitelach* from them, as he felt that there was no need. - In Reb Shimon's merit, everyone would undoubtedly receive their salvation.

Rebbe Avraham Elimelech zt'l / Rebbe Moshe Mordechai zt'l said that after going to Meron, there is no need to go to any other *kever*.

Rebbe Avraham Elimelech *zy'a* said: "After pouring one's heart out in Meron, one should have the sensation that he left all his troubles in Meron with Reb Shimon."

There are many large stones on the mountain going up to Reb Shimon's kever. Tzaddikim said that these are the heavy stones people shed from their hearts while praying in Meron.

The Tur (428) teaches that Lag b'Omer is always on the same day of the week as Purim. About Purim it states **כל הפושט יד נותנים לו** that whatever one asks for on this day is given to him— the same applies to Lag b'Omer. It is an auspicious time for tefillah, and whatever one requests will be given to him.

The Kozniter Magid zt'l writes, "The entire Sefirah we await Lag b'Omer because that is when there is a lot of rachamim."

Lag b'Omer is a day of salvations – fortunate are those who invest in tefillah on this day.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



The Kli Yakar asks, "Why are we not allowed to charge interest on a loan?" – Renting out apartments is allowed, right? All other kinds of businesses are permitted. What's the issue with charging ribbis/ interest?

He explains that all other businesses clearly need Hashem's help to succeed. – The only business that is secure in its profit, so to speak, is lending to others with interest. – The amount of interest rises automatically; you don't need to do anything. It seems that you have nothing to daven for.

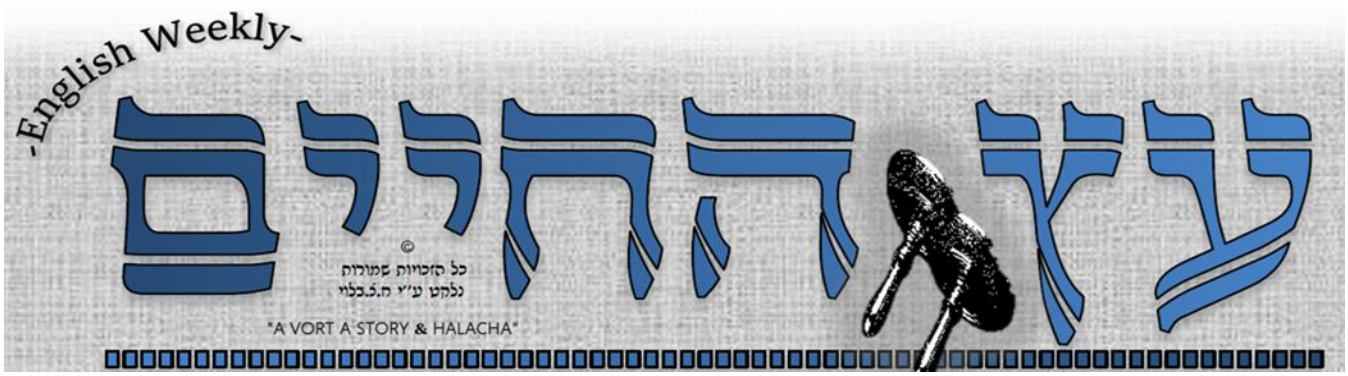
A business that doesn't lead you to place your trust in Hashem, is a 'treife' source of income! – This is why the Torah doesn't allow it.

This explains why the lender is not allowed to charge interest. His business will not allow for him to rely on Hashem. A person would love to have a secure and steady income with nothing to worry about, but Hashem wants you to have a parnassoh that will make you look up to Him.

And why is it forbidden for the borrower to pay the interest? - Because he will keep the lender from putting his trust in Hashem.

And why are we allowed to charge interest to a gentile? – Because with a gentile; says the Kli Yakar, you need help from Hashem to get back the original amount, let alone the interest! – You will certainly daven to Hashem!!

So, as we see, the main thing that Hashem wants – is for us to turn to Him.



The Moving Furniture

It is well known that the **יצר הרע** comes to a person as soon as he sits down to learn (or even before), distracting him with a million and a half things that he has to urgently take care of.

Rav Chaim Brisker זצוק״ל had a room in which he would learn undisturbed. It was known that he could not be interrupted for anything during that time.

It once happened that there was an emergency **שאלה** that needed to be asked while Reb Chaim was learning. They banged on the door and there was no response. They kept banging and called out that it was a matter of **פיקוח נפש**. They heard a whole bunch of furniture moving and then Reb Chaim appeared at the door. Reb Chaim answered the **שאלה** and he turned to go back to his learning. - The people there could not resist, and asked Reb Chaim about all the noise they heard before Reb Chaim had opened the door.

Reb Chaim answered as follows, "Every time I sit down to learn, the **יצר הרע** comes to me with many very important matters that I need to take care of, so in order to prevent myself from getting up, I push all the furniture in the room against the door. This way when the **יצר הרע** comes, I take one look at the pile of furniture and I am able to sit and learn."

"What you are needed for should be of greater concern to you than what you yourself need." ~ R' Schneur Zalman of Liadi zt"l

The Weekly Vort

● **וכי תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיד עמיתך – *When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow*** (25:14)

The Alshich HaKadosh explains that the Torah compares buying and selling to teach us that when one sets the price for his merchandise, he should ask himself, "If I were the buyer, would I feel that this is a fair price for the merchandise?"

This is a way to ensure that he is not cheating the purchaser. In addition, it is a form of fulfilling the *mitzvah* to "love your fellow as yourself." (The Torah Treasury)



The Rema and Lag Baomer - The Fire and the Soul – The Mystical Power of Lag BaOmer, Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai, and the Zohar HaKadosh by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein

The first mention of Lag BaOmer is in the Rema. There is no mention of Lag BaOmer in the Gemara, Midrash, or Shulchan Aruch.

The first time we are taught that Lag BaOmer has any halachic status is when the Rema mentions it. The Rema rules that we do not recite Tachanun on Lag BaOmer. He writes that Lag BaOmer is a day of simchah, and we do not practice the aveilus of Sefiras Ha'Omer on Lag BaOmer. Thus, it is permissible to shave and to have one's hair cut.

The Rema concludes that we do not need to wait until the 34th day of the Omer, as the Mechaber maintains. Thus, **Rav Chaim**

Kreiswirth writes, it became customary to visit the grave of the Rema on Lag BaOmer because he is the first to mention that Lag BaOmer is a day of celebration.



The matzeivah at the kever of the Rema.

The sefer Bircas Shmuel, a biography of Rav Shlomo Leib of Tichin, also records the custom to visit the Rema's kever on Lag BaOmer. The sefer recommends sending tzedakah to aniyei Eretz Yisrael. Doing so will provide the donor with the same zechus as if he had spent Lag BaOmer in Meron, at the kever of Rav Shimon. Since learning the Torah taught by an individual pays tribute to his memory and can be considered as if his kever has been visited, by extension, then, learning the Torah of the Rema on Lag BaOmer, coupled with giving tzedakah to the needy of Eretz Yisrael, can allow a person to be transported virtually to Meron, to the kever of the Tanna Rav Shimon.

Honoring the Rema on His Yahrzeit

The Shem HaGedolim, authored by the **Chida**, is an extremely important work that records all the gedolim who preceded the Chida, as well as all the sefarim that had been previously written.

In a footnote to Shem HaGedolim, Rav Menachem Mendel Krengil writes that, annually, on Lag BaOmer, thousands would travel to the

Rema's resting place, where they would daven and recite Tehillim. They would learn Torah and work to reconcile any unanswered questions that Acharonim may have raised on the teachings of the Rema. They would also give tzedakah in his memory.

Historically, Krakow was graced with numerous great rabbanim. The custom in Krakow was for the rav to give a derashah, citing the Rema's teachings, in the Rema's shul on Lag BaOmer and to incorporate a new explanation for a difficult teaching of the Rema.

Rav Shimon Sofer delivered numerous derashos on the yahrzeit of the Rema. Rav Sofer records that it is appropriately inscribed on the kever of the Rema, "From Moshe to Moshe, no one has arisen in stature like Moshe," referring to the Rema as "he illuminated the eyes of the Jewish people with his glosses on the Shulchan Aruch. "The city of Krakow should rightfully take pride that it conceived, bore, and raised the shepherd of Klal Yisrael. Krakow should rightfully be considered an ihr v'eim b'Yisrael, a mother city in Israel, with the diaspora of Ashkenaz and France reckoned as suckling from her Torah."

Connecting the Rema and Rav Shimon bar Yochai

Among numerous other works, the Rema wrote a classic commentary on the Zohar that has remained unpublished. Rav Shimon bar Yochai and the Rema sharing a yahrzeit is not mere coincidence. Their neshamos are deeply connected.

The Rema's name, Isserles, is a reference to his father — Reb Yisrael ben Yosef, known as Isser'l. Like Rav Shimon bar Yochai, whose father's name is part and parcel of his name, the Rema, too, has his father's name incorporated into his.

The Rema and Rav Shimon bar Yochai are the only two tzaddikim in our history who are not known by their own independent names. Their fathers' names are seared onto theirs. - Rav Shimon Sofer explains that this is no coincidence. These two Torah giants strove to

transmit the mesorah, and their names, which connect them to their lineage, reflect their lofty mission. Their names reflect the fact that they did not veer one iota from the mesorah they received.



משל למה הדבר דומה

וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו ... (כה-לה)

The **Chazon Ish** ***zt"l*** once asked someone to deliver an envelope containing money to a needy individual named Rabbi Berger. When the emissary returned, he informed the *Chazon Ish*, "I went to Rabbi Weinberger and delivered the envelope as was requested of me."

The *Chazon Ish* was dismayed. The money had been intended for someone named Berger, not Weinberger; obviously the emissary had heard wrong. The *Chazon Ish* immediately sent another envelope to the correct recipient.

A few days went by and the *Chazon Ish* did not hear from the first recipient. "Surely, he has received money that wasn't intended for him. Why hasn't he returned the envelope?" wondered the Chazon Ish. Finally, he concluded that Heaven had caused this mistake to happen, for until that point, no one had known that this person was in need. - From that moment on, the *Chazon Ish* made sure that that person also received an envelope on a regular basis.

The *Torah* tells us, "If you see your fellow brother going through a financial difficulty, help him out, support him.

In today's day and age, we are fortunate to have many organizations that provide a multitude of services for the needy and less fortunate people who are going through difficult times. That is wonderful. But there are always those who are ashamed to ask and would rather suffer the consequences of not reaching out for help.

This is a deeper meaning of the commandment: The *Torah* is telling us to look out for your fellow brother who looks like he's doing okay but really, he's not. - He needs your help. Use your intellect - like the *Chazon Ish* - to read between the lines and help your fellow brother get back on his feet!

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

וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ – '*And you shall not wrong, one man his fellow Jew*.'

Why would someone harm their friend - "**עֲמִיתוֹ**"? Don't you like your friends? Shouldn't it say do not harm your enemy - "**שונאו**"?

Well, the answer is a deeper look into the human psyche. A human being is his *kavod*. If a person loses his sense of pride or self-respect, he feels dead. Life is not worth living. As long as a person feels good about himself, he can function normally. He can be happy, kind and productive. If not, then he may act in inappropriate ways.

The most common is to harm other people with words - even those he loves! When one feels low about himself, it is extremely difficult to raise his spirit and change his attitude. He puts others down with ease, which, in his mind, lifts himself up! All of us, at some point in time, succumb to this terrible sin.

R' Avraham Pam *zt"l* writes that **אונאת דברים** can be a joke, a sarcastic comment, a *"shtuch"* that hurts a friend's feelings. Often, a hurtful word (even a joke) can replay itself over in someone's mind for days, months, and sometimes even years, leaving them with a bad feeling in their heart constantly. He explains that almost all *shalom*

bayis issues come from **אונאת דברים**. If husbands and wives would just work on this one thing, they would have a wonderful marriage!

Words are way more powerful than we realize. When one is carrying a sharp sword in his hand, he is especially careful not to hurt anyone. Well, guess what? Our mouths are constantly in our possession, and if we would simply be aware of its tremendous power for good and bad, and just THINK before we say something, we would probably be much happier people.

During this period of *Sefiras Haomer*, we can truly transform ourselves from animals into holy people. The word "**עומר**" can also be read with an *aleph* - "**אומר**" - which means to talk! TO SPEAK! - *Sefiras Haomer* literally means "COUNT YOUR WORDS!" If they cause even slight harm, they are forbidden! But if they are words of wisdom and kindness which bring happiness to others, then they have been used for the purpose they were created - and this truly lifts a person up to greatness.



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

In his biography, **Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, ZT"L**, founder of Artscroll, talks about the various difficulties he faced in his personal life. He explains how he was overweight since a young boy, how he got divorced, and how his life was just falling apart in every single way. He felt like one of those people that somebody might look at him and think, "Oy, Nebach."

One day, he had an appointment to speak with his Rebbe, **Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT"L**. Unfortunately, at the last minute, Rav Moshe was unable to meet because he had a *Din Torah* to attend to.



The following day, there was a huge blizzard and everybody was snowed into their homes. At the time, Rabbi Zlotowitz was sole caretaker of his three children. At end of that day, after spending hours running after them while bearing all the financial burdens on his shoulders and much emotional baggage, he felt completely wiped. One could see exhaustion in his eyes and feel his pain in his frown. Suddenly, he heard a knock on his door. His heavy frown became a little lighter as he saw Rav Moshe!

Rav Moshe walked a tremendous distance in the snow storm just to meet with him. He helped settle the energetic children, tuck them into bed and say the bedtime Shema with them. - Afterwards, he sat with Rabbi Zlotowitz and listened to him pour out his heart. Rav Moshe, feeling every ounce of his pain, encouraged and supported him, and never stopped believing in him.

Rav Moshe's empathy and support was one of the reasons why Rabbi Zlotowitz was able to turn his life around and become a person who transformed the America Torah scene through his publishing house.

Comment: The parsha deals with Shemittah laws, social justice, and acts to alleviate the plight of our brethren. In secular stories, heroes are those with great strength and physical quality, but in Judaism they are those with outstanding moral quality.

To be a hero like Rav Moshe, all we need to do is feel the pain of somebody having a dark day and help add a little light.



NEFESH SHIMSHON

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

Material Blessings

וְנָתְנָה הָאָרֶץ פִּרְיָהּ וַאֲכַלְתֶּם לָשֹׂבַע וִישַׁבְתֶּם לָבֶטַח עָלֶיהָ – '*The land will give its fruit and you will eat to satiety*.' (***Vayikra*** 25:19)



Parshas Behar speaks of *berachos*. It tells us about the abundant produce that *Eretz Yisrael* will produce. But why are the material *berachos* mentioned by the Torah so agricultural? Why only bumper crops? What's wrong with silver and gold and diamonds?

True, most people used to be farmers, but there is a more universal message as well. A person blessed with silver and gold and jewels feels self-confident. His treasures are in the safe and he has a sense of security. Even if the whole country is struck by famine, he can just pack up his riches and take them with him to somewhere else.

But a farmer depends on rain and other natural conditions beyond his control. He trusts in *Hashem* and constantly raises his eyes to

Heaven in prayer. - This type of gift doesn't disconnect him from *Hashem*; it only strengthens the bond.

When *Hashem* blesses us with health, good children, and life itself, these gifts depend on *siyata d'Shmaya*. Ultimately, even a salary that comes in every month depends on *Hashem* alone.

May our blessings only strengthen our *Emunah*. If we make sure our blessings draw us closer to *Hashem*, we will receive more and more of them.



Rav Elyashiv was once going to be the Sandek at a Bris, and his grandson, who was escorting him, had arrived fifteen minutes early. As he waited, he noticed that Rav Elyashiv was getting ready to walk out the door, and he asked, "Aren't we going to leave in fifteen minutes?"

Rav Elyashiv looked at his grandson in surprise and said, "I'm going to the Bais Medrash. It takes five minutes to get there, then I will have five minutes to learn, and it will take five minutes to walk back. Isn't it worth it?" - Exactly fifteen minutes later, Rav Elyashiv returned home to go to the Bris!

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz, zt"l, would say, "Before every Tefilah, I Daven that I will Daven during the Davening!"

בס"ד

למודי משה

Selected Insights into Various Teachings of R' Shimon bar Yochai in Honor of Lag B'Omer

Over the past few years, we have more or less discussed the various *halachos* related to Lag B'Omer, therefore, this year I would like to do something different, and would like to discuss some of the Torah teachings of R' Shimon ben Yochai.

We are told: **תּוֹרָתוֹ מָגֵן לָנוּ הִיא מְאִירַת עֵינֵינוּ הוּא יַמְלִיץ טוֹב עָלֵינוּ אֲדוֹנֵנוּ בַּר יוֹחַאי** - "***His Torah protects us, it enlightens our eyes, it advocates on our behalf for the good, our master son of Yochai.***"

We will bring various questions and answers on various teachings which talk about R' Shimon or are things that R' Shimon himself said. Read on and be enlightened. [Please note, that R' Shimon bar Yochai and R' Shimon are both the same person.]

Why Did R' Shimon Run and Hide Due to the Danger of the Romans, Surely He Could Have Killed them by Simply Looking at Them?

The Gemara in Shabbos (33b) relates that the Roman's decreed that R' Shimon bar Yochai who spoke badly about them, deserved to be killed. Originally, R' Shimon and his son went to hide in the *beis hamedrash.* However, the decree intensified and R' Shimon was scared that the Romans would torture his wife and she would reveal where he was hiding, so he went and hid in a cave.

The question is, why did R' Shimon bar Yochai need to run away, the Gemara in Shabbos (34a) relates that there was a certain person who disgraced the honor of R' Shimon, and: **נָתַן בּוֹ עֵינָיו וְעָשָׂהוּ גַּל שֶׁל עֲצָמוֹת**. – "***R' Shimon set his eyes on him and turned him into a***

heap of bones". The Gemara also says, that when he met R' Yehudah ben Gerim, he looked at him and turned him into a heap of bones.



The Gemara in Shabbos (33b) further relates, that when R' Shimon left the cave, he saw people working, and he looked at them and they were immediately burnt. If R' Shimon had this special power, why was he so scared of the Roman's, he could have simply set his eyes upon anyone who tried to harm him and turn them into a heap of bones?

The *Madanay Asher* (R' Asher Anshel Shwartz *shlita*) suggests five answers:

1) Perhaps, this holy *madreigah* [level] that any time R' Shimon looked at someone bad he turned them into a heap of bones, was only after he sat in the cave learning for many years. The Gemara in Shabbos (33b) relates that after R' Shimon left the cave he had tremendous *ko'ach* [strength].

Originally, when R' Shimon ben Yochai had a question, R' Pinchos ben Yoir would respond with twelve possible solutions. However, in the end, after R' Shimon was in the cave, R' Shimon ben Yochai would respond to him with twenty-four possible solutions. We see that after he left the cave, he had more strength than beforehand. Perhaps, the power to kill people by simply looking at them, only came after he left the cave and not before, therefore, he had no choice but to run away.

2) Perhaps R' Shimon did not want to rely on miracles, therefore, instead of relying on killing people by looking at them, he went and hid.

With this we can answer another question. The Gemara in Shabbos (30a) says, that when Dovid HaMelech was learning, the Angel of Death was unable to kill him. The Gemara in *Makkos* (10a) relates a similar thing regarding R' Chisda. If so, why did R' Shimon run to hide in a cave, he should have just continued to learn in the *beis hamedrash*? Based on the above we can answer, that he didn't want to rely on miracles.

3) He was scared, that he may not notice one of the Roman's trying to kill him, and he would not be able to kill him by looking at him, therefore, he didn't want to rely on this method of killing and he went to hide in the cave instead.

We can add that R' Shimon was busy learning all day, and if he had to constantly watch his back it would be very distracting and difficult to learn, therefore, he went to the cave so he could learn with *menuchas hanefesh* [peace of mind].

4) Perhaps, R' Shimon only had the strength to kill individual people by looking at them, however, he didn't have the strength to kill an entire nation. As a result, when it came to the Roman's which was an entire nation, he did not want to rely on looking at them to kill them and he went and hid in a cave instead.

5) The Gemara in *Megillah* (29a) teaches, that it is forbidden to look at the face of a *rosha*. Perhaps for this reason he did not want to rely on killing them via looking at them, as he didn't want to have to look at them.

The Bal Shem Tov's Ahavat Yisrael (love of fellow Jew) was beyond imagination. The Maggid of Mezritch said: "If only we could kiss a Sefer-Torah with the same love that my Master kissed the children when he took them to Cheder as a teacher's assistant!"

Why Was R' Shimon bar Yochai Allowed to Eat *Orlah*?





The Torah forbids the consumption of *orlah*, the fruits produced by a tree for the first three years (*Vayikra* 19:23). The Gemara in Shabbos (33b) relates that when R' Shimon bar Yochai was forced to flee to a cave to save his life, a carob tree miraculously sprouted there to provide him sustenance. How was he permitted to eat the fruits, which are considered *orlah*?

1) Rav Yissochar Dov of Belz cites the Yerushalmi (*Orlah* 1:1), which rules that if a tree grows in a place that is not designed for human settlement, which was the case with the cave of Rabbi Shimon, it is exempt from the laws of *orlah*.

2) Rav Chaim Kanievsky (*Derech Emunah, Hilchos Maaser Sheini* 10:6) notes that the Rambam rules that if a tree grows on its own in a public area, such that its fruits are ownerless and available to all, the laws of *orlah* do not apply to it.

3) The *M'rafsin Igri* gives a few answers. First, a tree that grows miraculously is exempt from all laws governing fruits, such as *orlah* and *ma'aser*. Second, the tree may have already been planted elsewhere for more than three years, and if it was transferred to the cave together with its roots, and in such a case its fruits would be immediately permissible. Alternatively, Rabbi Shimon may have eaten the carob fruits while they were still small and not yet legally classified as fruits that are forbidden as *orlah*.

4) The *Madanay Asher* suggests that the fruits were permissible to R' Shimon due to the principle of *pikuach nefesh* - one may transgress any prohibition, with three exceptions, to save one's life

- and since he was trapped in the cave with nothing else to eat, he was permitted to eat fruits that would normally be *orlah*.

However, he notes that it would be unusual for Hashem to miraculously save R' Shimon's life in a manner that would require him to eat otherwise-forbidden food, especially when many opinions maintain that forbidden food eaten to save one's life still causes spiritual damage to a person.



Why Shavuos is Only One Day, Whereas Pesach and Succos Are Seven/ Eight Days?

The Tanna Elokei [G-d like Tanna] R' Shimon bar Yochai mentioned in the *Sifri* (*Re'ah*, 140) teaches: – "*Pesach and Succos, which do not fall during the work season – He made one seven and the other eight. But Shavuos, which falls during the work season, is only one day. This teaches that the Torah spared Yisroel [the loss of work*]."

The Bnei Yissoschar (*Mamoray, Chodesh Sivan, Maamer* 4) writes: "There are tens of thousands of reasons, for why Pesach and Succos are seven / eight days, whereas Shavuos which is Zeman Matan Torasainu [the festival all about the giving of the Torah] is only one."

However, due to space and time constraints we will bring just one. The *Madanay Asher* suggests, that Shavuos is just one day, to teach us an important rule when it comes to Torah, a rule which we learn in Pirkei Avos. **אל תאמר לכשאפנה אשנה שמא לא תפנה** – "Don't say when I have time I will learn, as perhaps you will never have time". Many times, a person may think to himself, "today I don't have any desire to learn, however, it's not a problem, I will sit down and learn some other time".

Perhaps, for this reason, Shavuos which is the Yom Tov of Torah is specifically one day. By being only one day, we are taught that there is no opportunity for pushing Torah learning off, we must sit down

and learn today, if we don't learn today there will be no second chance to make up for it.

In the words of R' Meir Shapiro: "Every day that passes by without Torah, is like a loss object, that will never be returned".

Did R' Shimon bar Yochai Cover Himself with Sand on Shabbos, or Did He Wear Clothes?

The Gemara in Shabbos (33b) teaches that when R' Shimon bar Yochai was hiding in the cave for twelve years, he would sit covered in sand, and didn't wear clothes. He was scared that his clothes would wear out, and he only put them on when he would *daven*.

What happened on Shabbos: Did he do the same thing, sit the entire day covered in sand, and when time for *davening* came he got dressed? Or perhaps on Shabbos he was unable to sit covered in sand, as when going in and out of the sand he would be making a hole in the sand and moving *muktzeh*, therefore he wore his clothes the entire Shabbos?

The *Madanay Asher* says that it is logical that on Shabbos he didn't sit in a pit off sand due to the concern of making holes and covering holes, rather he wore his clothes the entire Shabbos

The *Maharsha* explains that the reason R' Shimon bar Yochai put on clothes for *davening* was not because of *ervah*, as he was anyway covered with sand, rather it was due to the halachah of: **הכון לקראת אלקיך** – "Prepare to meet your G-d" (see Shabbos 10a), a halachah which requires that one dress respectfully when *davening*.

On Shabbos there is an obligation to wear Shabbos clothes, due to the obligation of **וכבדתו** – "you shall honor it" (see Shabbos 114), consequently, it's logical that he wore his clothes the entire Shabbos.

A Lesson in Hasgochah Pratis



The Medrash (*Bereishis Rabbah*, 79) teaches: "Reb Shimon bar Yochai and Reb Elazar, his son, were hiding in a cave…and they ate carob fruits… One day they came out and sat at the cave's entrance. They saw a hunter trapping birds.

When Reb Shimon heard a *bas kol* announce **דימוס** – free, the bird managed to escape. When he heard the *bas kol* say **ספקולה** - captured, the hunter captured the bird. Reb Shimon exclaimed, 'We see that even a bird isn't captured unless it was decreed from heaven. Certainly, it is so for a human being. [The Romans won't be able to capture us if it isn't Hashem's decree].' They left the cave and discovered that things had calmed down. The Roman decree against them was annulled."

This Medrash teaches us an important lesson in *hashgochah pratis*. Everything is destined and planned by Hashem. Nothing happens by chance. Even if a bird should be captured is decreed from Above.

Probably, when this hunter caught a bird, he credited his expertise and experience. And when a bird got away, he scolded himself for not being a better hunter. Little did he know that it had nothing to do with him but about Hashem's decree for each creature. This is a lesson to remember in business and all areas of life. When you succeed, remember that it was from Hashem. And when you fail, it was also decreed from Above. We try our best, but ultimately, whatever occurs, is decreed in Heaven.

When Reb Shimon learned this lesson, he realized that the Romans couldn't harm him if it isn't decreed in heaven. -They left the cave.

Confluence of Events is the Ribbono Shel Olam Speaking to Us

In this week's *parsha* we have the *pasuk* (25:25) which teaches, "When your brother becomes poor, you shall support him" [*ki yamuch achicha…*]. The Medrash links this *pasuk* with a *pasuk* in *Mishlei* (22:2) – "The rich and the poor meet, Hashem puts them all together." The question is, what does this *pasuk* in *Mishlei* have to do with the *pasuk* "*ki yamuch achicha*"?

R' Frand explains this Medrash with the following true story:

In Ger, Poland, the custom used to be that when a Gerrer Chosid could not pay his rent and his landlord wanted to evict him and put him on the street, the Gerrer community would get together and raise the money to pay off the fellow's rent. The tenant would remain safe in his house and would not be put out on the street.

It once happened that a Gerrer Chosid was a tenant of another Gerrer Chosid. The tenant could not pay his rent and the landlord threatened to evict him. The tenant came to the Gerrer Rebbe and complained, "My landlord – a Gerrer Chosid – wants to put me on the street." The Rebbe told the tenant to send the landlord to him. The Gerrer Chosid landlord came before the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him: "Don't put this fellow on the street, swallow your loss!"

The landlord Chosid complained to the Rebbe. He said, "I don't understand. If the landlord is not a Gerrer Chosid then the whole community assumes the debt and the whole Kehilla pays for it. Now that I happen to be the landlord and I happen to be a Gerrer Chosid, why should I have to assume the entire problem? Why am I different from a Vizhnitzer Chosid or some other Chosid, or a non-Chosid who wants to evict his tenant? Why am I penalized just because I happen to be a Gerrer Chosid?

The Rebbe said, "That is right. If the Ribbono Shel Olam put you in that position, then He is telling you 'This is your problem.' It is no

coincidence that he is a Gerrer Chosid and you are a Gerrer Chosid and it happens to fall in your lap. A mitzvah that falls into your lap is a sign from Heaven that YOU need to take care of it." Therefore, the Rebbe told the landlord "You need to assume the entire burden because that is what the Ribbono Shel Olam wants."

That is how the Gerrer Rebbe explained the Medrash linking the *pasuk* in *Behar* with the *pasuk* in *Mishlei*. "When your brother becomes poor then you shall support him." The Medrash links this with the *pasuk* "The rich man and the poor man met, Hashem did this for you." This confluence of events was set up by the Ribbono Shel Olam. For whatever reason, the Ribbono Shel Olam is giving the rich man this specific mitzvah. Therefore, he should not try to deny what Providence is demanding of him.

The Chazon Ish writes in his *sefer Emunah u'Bitachon* that today we have no prophets. We are living in a time of *Hester Panim* (the 'Divine Face' is hidden). *Ruach haKodesh* is also not very widespread. But, says the Chazon Ish, the Ribbono Shel Olam still talks to us. If something happens in a person's life—a confluence of events—the Ribbono Shel Olam is telling you something. This is no coincidence. That is how the Ribbono Shel Olam deals with us in our time. He does not have Nevi'im speak to us and most of us do not have *Ruach HaKodesh*, so we do not know what is going on. But events—how things just happen to fall into place—represent the Ribbono Shel Olam talking to us in our day and age. This is what the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* is saying: When the poor person and rich man happen to 'meet'—this was the action of Hashem.

Therefore, "When you brother becomes poor" – the Gerrer Rebbe told his Chosid: If this fellow fell into your lap, it is a Sign from Heaven that it is your responsibility to take care of him. This is your mitzvah, this is what the Ribbono Shel Olam wants, and it will be good for you in the end. (R' Frand)



Bright Side



Reb Moshe Leib Sassover, *zt"l*, was known for raising funds for *pidyon shivuyim*. He would go all out to save the imprisoned. One time, Reb Moshe Leib and the Berdichever Rav's son, **Reb Yisrael of Pikov**, *zt"l*, were collecting much needed funds for *pidyon shevuyim*. On their journey, they one night found accommodations in the house of a particularly poor fellow.

He brought them into his dilapidated home. The roof was broken in several places, icicles hanging down from the holes, and the furnishings were of the bare minimum. The host collected some firewood to warm the house a bit. The problem with that was that the fire caused the icicles to meltg. Water dripped onto Reb Yisrael's bed.

The whole situation disturbed Reb Yisrael immensely. "We just put in a full day of work, and when we finally time-out, this is what we get?" This bothered him.

Reb Moshe Leib, on the other hand, viewed their situation in a different light. Reb Moshe Leib explained that he had thirteen reasons to be happy: "1) My right side doesn't hurt me, so I can lie

on my right side. 2) My left side doesn't hurt either, so I can sleep on my left side, too. 3) My back doesn't hurt…"

After numerating all thirteen reasons why he was happy, Reb Yisrael's mindset was changed as well. They were able to break into a dance, as their new perspective gave them the proper mindset and attitude to cause them great joy.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

As Heard From… Rabbi Dovid Hoffman (Torah Tavlin)

The Ponevezher Rov, R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman zt"l, once made the following poignant point: "We speak of the greatness of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. But what of the self-sacrifice of the Jewish children of that time, the students who risked their lives to learn the teachings of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai? They also faced the death penalty the Romans had imposed on those learning Torah!

Whenever we marvel at the spiritual heroism of our great Sages who spread Torah during a time of great danger, we must also marvel at the spiritual heroism of the children, who, in deathly fear, ran to hear the teachings of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai ... "

"Herein lies the secret of Lag Ba'Omer - a 'children's holiday' (with bows and arrows, treks in the fields and woods), when Jewish children study the same Torah that Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon taught their students. We must especially remember the self-sacrifice of those students just as we remember the self-sacrifice of their teachers. This is the secret of Lag Ba'Omer, the great 'Holiday of Teacher and Student!'

The Baal Shem Tov says in Parshas Behar: "One is to be praised for studying the Mishna "*Hamachlif Parah B'Chamor*," 'One who trades a cow for a mule' (Bava Metzia 100a) because he is involved in studying the holy Torah.

How much more so is one who ACTUALLY trades a cow for a mule, and conducts his business affairs in accordance with the Torah, deserving of praise!

Parshah Pearls (Adapted from the Ma'ayanah shel Torah)

● The Connection between Sh'mitah and Har Sinai

וַיְדַבֵּר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר *"And Hashem spoke to Moshe at Har Sinai saying*" (25:1).

What, asks Rashi, is the connection between Sh'mitah and Har Sinai?

The Chasam Sofer explains that there is no stronger proof that the Torah was given by G-d at Har Sinai than Sh'mitah. For who other than G-d, would have dared to promise three years' produce in one year, should Yisrael observe the laws of Sh'mitah (see Pasuk 21)?

● Pure Integrity

וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ - *"And do not cheat each other (by overcharging in business)*" 25:17.

The Gemara in Bava Kama (117) relates how Shmuel once purchased a golden jug from a gentile, as a metal one. Then, when he paid for the jug, he absorbed the fifth golden coin into the four that he actually paid him.

At first glance, Shmuel double-cheated the gentile, once regarding the jar, and once regarding the payment.

Firstly, **Rebbi Nasan Adler** asks, we need to understand why he behaved dishonestly, even assuming that it was halachically

justifiable. And secondly, what is the Gemara trying to tell us with this piece of information?

In actual fact, he explains, the Gemara is teaching the exact opposite of what we initially understood. Shmuel saw that the gentile sold him a most valuable golden jug for a mere four gold pieces (which was evidently way below the real price of the article). And this placed him in a quandary. Was the gentile really not aware of the article's real value, as we understood until now?

Or did he really know its worth, only the jar was stolen, and he was selling it cheap in order to get rid of it as quickly as possible? In the former eventuality, Shmuel figured, he was obligated to return the jug to the seller and to inform the gentile of his mistake; whereas in the latter case, he would need to hold on to it, to search for the owner and return it to him.

So, he decided to put him to the test. What did he do? He did not absorb the fifth coin in the four that he paid, as we at first thought, but he actually slipped a fifth coin into the four that he gave him (indeed, this is the correct interpretation of 'Mavli'a', as we find in other places).

And he waited to see what the gentile would do. Whether he would return the fifth gold coin, in which case, he would prove himself to be an honest man, and he would inform him of his mistake. Or whether he would keep the extra gold coin, a sign that he was a thief, in which case, he would make efforts to restore the jug to its rightful owner.

What the Gemara is teaching us is the pure integrity of our sages, even in their dealings with gentiles (irrespective of the fact that halachically, Shmuel may well have been justified in doing what we at first believed he did, as we explained earlier), and the profound wisdom that they applied in their daily dealings with others.

● Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right

וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹקֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם "And one man shall not cheat his friend, and fear your G-d, because I am Hashem your G-d" (25:17)

But did the Torah not already write "And one man shall not cheat his brother", asks the **Binah la'Itim**? (See also Rashi). Only the first time, the Torah is talking about cheating a decent person; whereas here it is talking about cheating 'his friend', a cheat like himself. Perhaps there, one might be permitted to cheat his friend in the same way as his friend cheated him. Therefore, the Torah adds "And fear your G-d, because I am Hashem . . . the G-d of both of you". -- And I say that two wrongs don't make a right!

● Better Not to Ask

וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מַה־נֹּאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת הֵן לֹא נִזְרָע וְלֹא נֶאֱסֹף אֶת־תְּבוּאָתֵנוּ. וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת־בִּרְכָתִי לָכֶם בַּשָּׁנָה הַשִּׁשִּׁית וְעָשָׂת אֶת־הַתְּבוּאָה לִשְׁלֹשׁ הַשָּׁנִים - "And if you will say 'What will we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we cannot sow and cannot gather our produce! Then I will command My blessing, and the land will yield enough produce to last three years" (25:20/21).

The question arises – If this is what will happen when we ask what we will have to eat, what is supposed to happen if we don't?

The No'am Elimelech quoting his brother Reb Zushe, answered that if we had full faith in G-d and asked no questions, but relied on Him entirely (on the basis of 'the one who gives life, provides sustenance'), no specific B'rachah would be required. Our sustenance would come automatically.

Reb Leibele Charif explains that if someone places his trust in Hashem, without asking questions, he doesn't require any special bounty. He does not need his field to produce excessive amounts,

which in turn, requires extra hard work, to reap more, to thresh more and to grind more.

That is good for people who harbor doubts and need to be shown what G-d can do. So their B'rachah is less substantial, more show. They need to eat a lot to be satisfied, because there is no B'rachah in what they eat.

On the other hand, someone whose faith is strong, doesn't need that. He will experience what the Torah writes in Bechukosai "And you will eat your bread to satisfaction", as Rashi explains 'He will eat little and be satisfied'. His blessing will be absolute, more substantial, less show, inasmuch as it will require less effort on his part and less expense. And when he eats, there is Brachah in every bite that he takes.

Perhaps that is what Reb Zushe meant, too.

● Borrowing on Faith

And talking of faith in G-d and Tzdakah, they once asked a Chacham whether a poor man is permitted to borrow money, in the knowledge that, short of a miracle, he will be unable to pay back. In other words, may one borrow money on faith rather than on funds.

To which he replied in the affirmative, on the condition that he (the would-be borrower) would lend someone who came to borrow from him under the same circumstances (assuming he had the money).

"The more we notice the gifts, great and small, with which Hashem fills every day, the more goodness He sends us.

Every 'thank – You' is like a korban todah brought to the Beis Hamikdash. ~ Tehillim Rabbah.

Parshah Pearls (adapted from P'ninei Torah)

● Sh'mitah from Sinai

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר **"And Hashem spoke to Moshe at Har Sinai saying**" (25:1).

Rashi comments that just as Sh'mitah was said at Har Sinai, its general rules and its intricate details and all, so too, were all the other Mitzvos said at Sinai together with their general rules and intricate details.

Why, asks the **Chasam Sofer**, is it more obvious that Sh'mitah was said at Sinai than all the other Mitzvos, one may well ask ? The answer, says the Chasam Sofer, is that Sh'mitah is the ultimate proof that Torah was given by Hashem at Sinai, and was not a book written by Moshe.

How is that?

Because no human being, even Moshe, would have dared issue a promise that if Yisrael observe Sh'mitah, they will merit three years crops in the sixth. This can only be a Divine promise, and proves beyond the least shadow of doubt, that the Torah was indeed handed down to Moshe at Sinai - from Hashem.

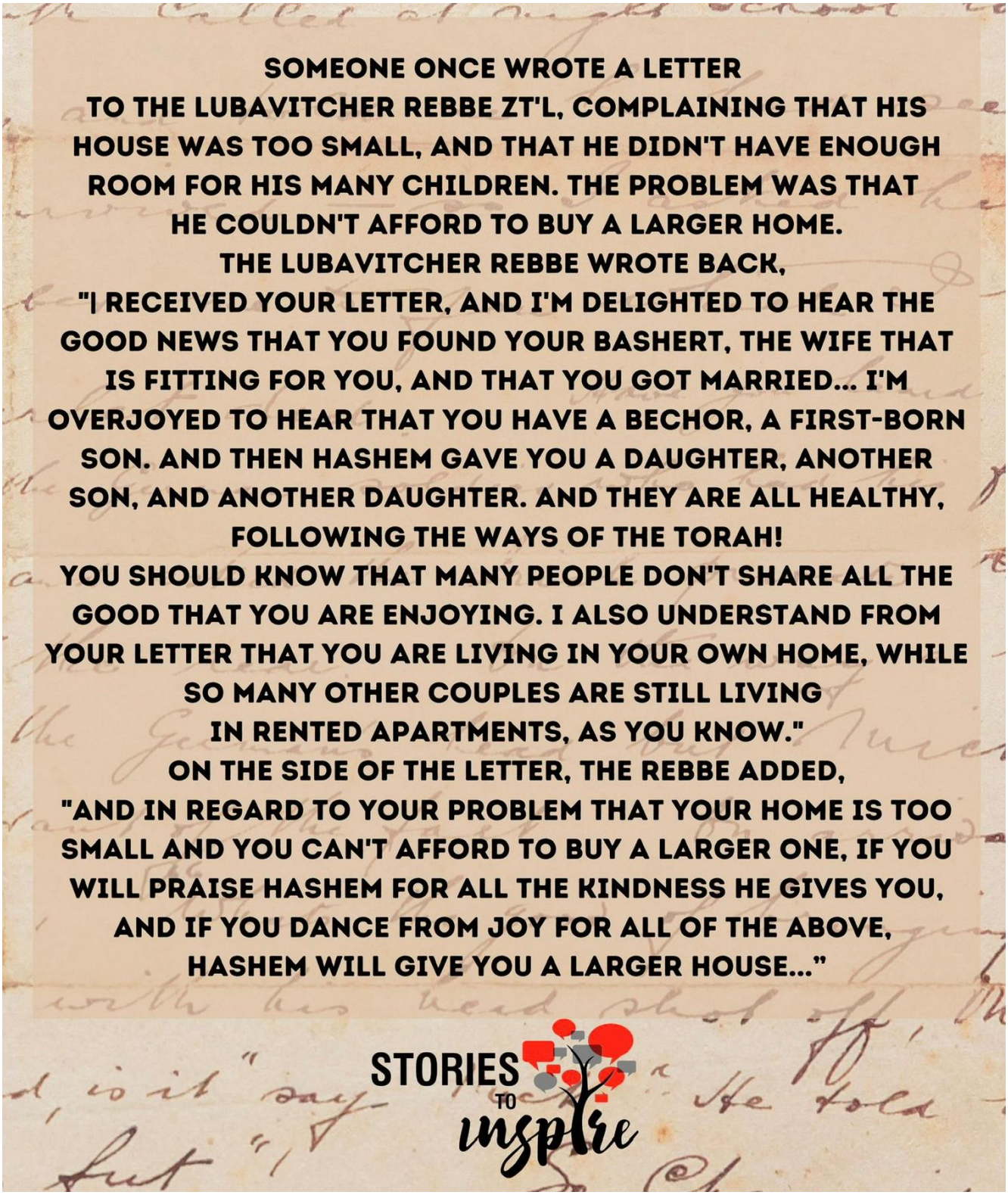
● D.I.Y.

וְאִישׁ כִּי לֹא יֵהְיֶה־לּוֹ גֹּאֵל וְהִשִּׂיגָה יָדוֹ וּמָצָא כְּדֵי גְאֻלָּתוֹ - **"And a man who has no-one to redeem him (from his gentile master), and obtains funds** ... " (25:26).

If a person has a rich uncle to redeem him, then that's fine, says **Rebbi Moshe Cheifetz**: But if he doesn't, then he should learn the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos; 'If I don't do it myself, then who will do it for me?' And if he puts his mind to it, he can be rest assured that he will succeed. Because someone who applies sufficient

determination to perform a Mitzvah is rewarded with the means to carry it out.

And that is how we might re-interpret the Pasuk " ... if a man has no-one to redeem him, then he will obtain funds to redeem himself'.



Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Menachem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotzk ZT"L (1787-1859), better known as the Kotzker Rebbe, was known for his absolute dedication to the Middah of Emes. He advocated not only for maintaining absolute truthfulness in everything that one does, but he also advocated strongly for the creation of an atmosphere of active intolerance for dishonesty. He felt that lying and dishonesty must be ridiculed and socially stigmatized.

The Kotzker Rebbe used to teach the following thought that he gleaned from a verse in this week's Parsha. The verse says וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ - "***If your brother becomes low and his hand falters beside you, "VeHechezakta Bo" – you shall support him***..." (Vayikrah 25:35).

This verse can be read as follows: "If your brother becomes low [in his observance of Emes] and his hand falters beside you [and waivers because he becomes enamored with the false dreams of wealth and honor that he believes may come with a business lie he may be entertaining], you shall, "Mach Choizek" of him [which means in Yiddish that you shall ridicule him and is a pun on the word, "VeHechezakta"] until he comes back to the straight and narrow.

The Late Shacharis Davening in Bialystok - Pardes Yehuda by Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Rav Asher Perlow, the son of Reb Aharon of Karlin, the Beis Aharon, was once traveling from Stolin with his gabbay. Although it was already late in the afternoon, the Rebbe had not davened shacharis yet, since his daily mikva immersion was a lengthy avoda, sometimes taking several hours.

They happened to be near the city of Bialystok, where the residents were strong opponents to Chassidus, and it was considered risky to

venture into town in the afternoon, hoping to find a shul where one could daven shacharis. The Rebbe told his gabbay that Bialystok was where they would daven shacharis.



The Great Synagogue in Bialystok

The devoted gabbay was quick to advise: "Rebbe, if we try to daven shacharis in a "misnagdish" shul at this late hour, they may to stone us". There's a little village not far down the road, where no one will take notice of us. Why not try davening there?"

"No," the Rebbe said. "It's Bialystok for us."

They found the main shul with no problem, but there was a large crowd outside. The gabbay found out that the Rosh HaKahal/President of the Shul was making a bris that day and all the prominent residents arrived to participate in the simcha.

The gabbay led the Rebbe to a place at the Eastern Wall, put down the Rebbe's Tallis and Tefillin, and proceeded to find a secluded corner for his own safety. The Rebbe made his preparations for tefilla and made the brocho on his tallis loud and clear.

The Rebbe's putting on his tallis at that time of day caused a commotion in shul until someone suspected that "This must be a Chassidish Rebbe. So, where is his gabbay?"

They discovered the gabbay in his corner, immersed in prayer, and interrupted him. "Who is this Rebbe who dares to come in here to daven shacharis at this late hour well after the last permissible time to daven?"

The gabbay identified his master as the Rebbe of Stolin who was traveling and needed a secure place to daven. This did not bode well, and the crowd called for the Rosh HaKahal to put a stop to the grave violation of their minhag!

The Rosh HaKahal stepped up to do his duty and confronted the Rebbe. "See here," he said with great respect. "As Rosh HaKahal, I cannot allow a breach in the minhagim of our shul. No, there will be no shacharis now."

This met with silence from the Rebbe, and the exchange was repeated. The Rosh HaKahal happened to be a talmid chacham, and rational person. However, out of aggravation, he stated for all to hear: "If these Chasidishe 'Rebbes' and their followers could at least learn Torah respectably alongside their strange practices, maybe we could overlook the illegal shacharis. But as everyone knows they neither daven nor learn properly!"

In an emotional state he blurted "Stoliner Rebbe" we were struggling with a difficult passage of Gemara this morning. If you can resolve the issues to everyone's satisfaction, I will honor you with being Sandek at my son's bris!"

"All right. Let's hear what the problem was," replied the Rebbe.

"We were bothered with a famous Gemara (Shabbos 118b)." -If all Yisroel observed two Shabbosos, they would be redeemed", and this is the teaching when is spelled with a Yud. However, there is an

alternative reading spelled with an aleph, which changes the meaning completely:

"If Yidden fail to observe two Shabbosos then they will be redeemed." How could we derive the opposite meaning just by changing one letter in the text?"

The listeners were keenly poised to see how the Rebbe whom they were convinced could not learn Torah would answer this challenging question from the Gemara.

The Rebbe had a captive audience when he delivered his wondrous resolution. Without thinking, the Rebbe explained: We have four occasions throughout the year

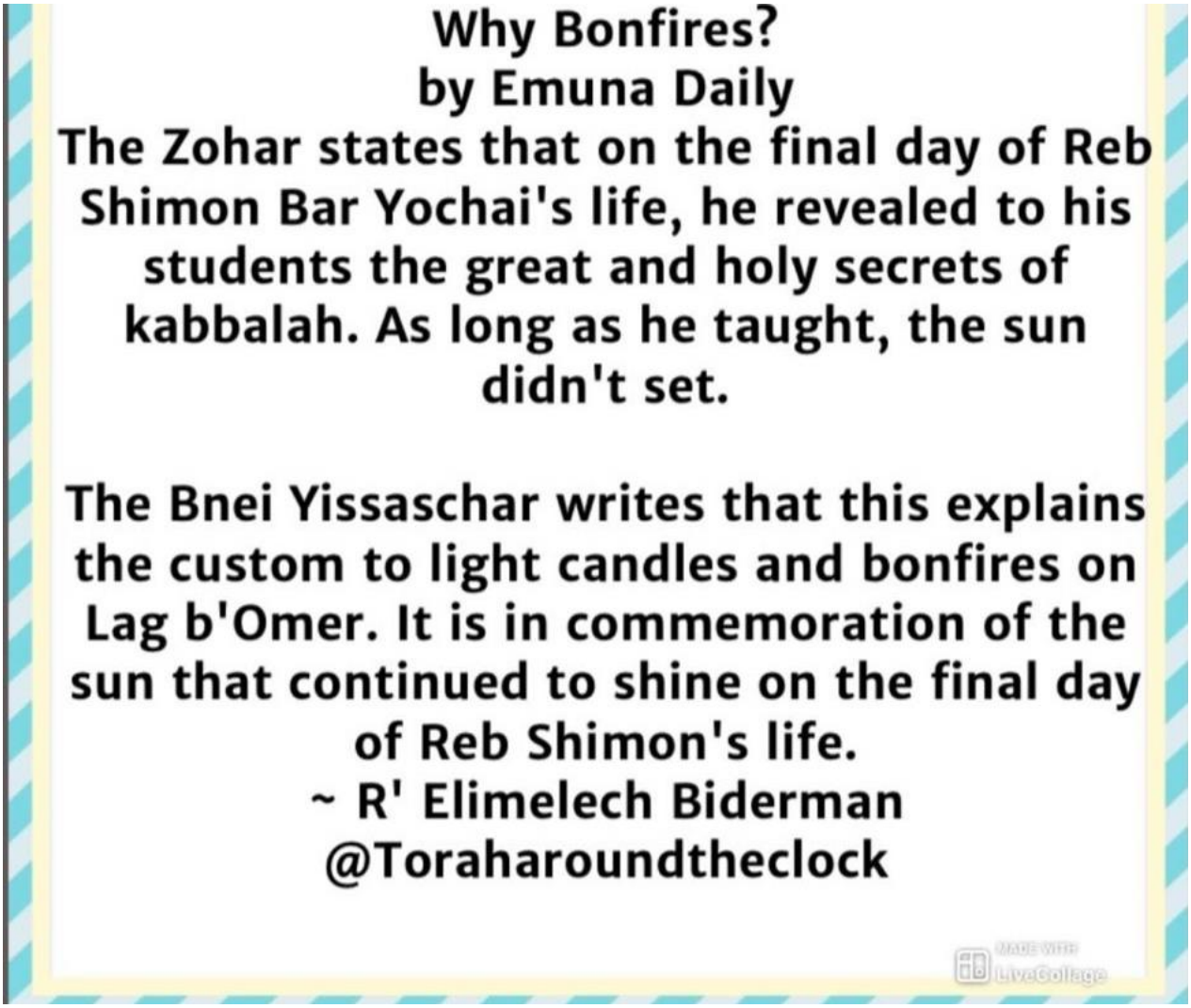
which are ideal to repent. The first, and most favorable circumstance, is before closing our eyes to sleep for the night -- before the soul has ascended to Shomayim, where the day's sins can be recounted, and one does Teshuva.

The next most favorable circumstance is Friday afternoon, Erev Shabbos, when one can do teshuva for sins from the preceding week. Similarly, although not as having a striking effect, Erev Rosh Chodesh is the chance to do teshuva for the entire month just past. Unfortunately, most people simply rely on and wait for the last of the four times for real teshuva, and that is Yom Kippur, which the Torah terms, a Shabbos of Shabbasim"—our 'two shabbosos', in a different sense.

Now look back at that Gemara with the aleph-spelling you asked about, building on that version of the text, Chazal teach us that if Yidden did not postpone their teshuva until the "two Shabbosos" (Yom Kippur) but would do so every night, or every Friday, or at least every Erev Rosh Chodesh, then they would have long ago been redeemed!" (The word "mishmarim" can mean "wait, delay" as well as "observe", as we see from Yaakov Avinu, "V'aviv shomer es hadavar."

The audience was overtaken by the Rebbe's novel and brilliant explanation. This marvelous drasha was enough to spur the people to do teshuva on the spot. The Rebbe was welcome to finish his Davening in peace. - Afterwards, the Rebbe was honored with being Sandek at the bris as promised by the Rosh Hakahal.

This episode according to the Stoliner chassid and gaon Reb Hersh Leib Asia z"l lead directly to the establishment of a major Stoliner shtibel in Bialystok which numbered over five hundred mispallelim before the War. Rabbi Asia's grandfather was the Rav in that Shul. The Rebbe was niftar 15th of Av 5673.



Is Anybody Home? By Rabbi Yechiel Spero

It was a heat wave the likes of which Jerusalem had not seen for many years. The temperature had reached nearly 110 degrees and the air was stifling. Warnings were issued and signs were posted cautioning citizens to keep up their liquid intake, and not to venture out of doors unless it was absolutely necessary.

Reb Nota Weiss, a maggid in Jerusalem in the 1920's, spoke every week in a shul in Shaarei Chesed. His dynamic, fiery speeches inspired all who were privileged to hear them to make the extra effort, to go the extra mile. Reb Nota's derashot became a Shabbat afternoon staple for many loyal followers. However, this particular week Reb Nota walked into the bet midrash at 3:00 in the afternoon and not a soul was there! Apparently the oppressively hot weather was keeping everyone indoors.

He decided to wait a bit longer to see if anyone would come, but when time passed and the room was still empty, Reb Nota made a decision: a custom is a custom. If the custom was for him to speak, then he would speak.

He walked up the steps toward the aron kodesh and adjusted his streimel. Though at first he felt strange speaking to an empty room, within moments his usual fire-and-brimstone pitch reverberated throughout the Shaarei Chesed shul. From the outside one would never have been able to detect that Reb Nota was speaking to himself! And speaking with the same energy and excitement as when the shul was full.

Forty-five minutes after he began his lecture Reb Nota stepped away from the aron kodesh and headed for the exit. Suddenly he heard a voice shouting from the balcony where the ladies' section was situated, "All right. I'll do teshubah! I promise I'll improve!"

Reb Nota looked up and saw a young man about 18 years old. He was completely disheveled. Apparently, he had been sleeping in the

ladies' section. The young man, who had been struggling with his learning and avodat Hashem, had apparently been searching for a place to escape from his problems, and had figured that the ladies' section would be an ideal place to catch a Shabbat afternoon nap. But in the middle of his nap, he had been awakened by the sounds of a fiery lecture - spoken only to him, in a seemingly empty room.

This lecture - that was almost not delivered - had made its mark. (Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "Touched by a Story 2")

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

Miracle Shemittah Grapes

וְאֶת־עִנְּבֵי נְזִירֶךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר שְׁנַת שַׁבָּתוֹן יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ 25:5



"7 years ago, before Shmittah began, I informed the wine experts who were helping me harvest the grapes and produce grape juice and wine that I would not be touching my fields during Shmittah.

They told me that this was a death sentence to my young, vineyard. They said that since my vineyard was relatively new, it had to be pruned and well-cared for throughout the year and if not, the young grapevines would simply die.

I answered them that I believed in Hashem who promised the vines would be safe and that they would produce 3 times as much produce in the year prior to Shmittah.

These guys had a good laugh and said that it simply wasn't possible.

Well, here's what happened. Normally, my vineyard produces 4 tons of grapes each year. In the year prior to Shmittah – with the exact same work on my part – my vineyard produced 14.5 tons of grapes! That is actually even more than 3 times the amount.

I immediately called the wine experts who told me that while they were very impressed, these grapes were undoubtedly of low quality and that I would have to throw them out.

Once again, I did not listen to them and, instead of throwing them out, I made them into wine. What was the result? This wine won 1st place and was awarded the gold medal in Israel's national wine competition!

By the way, during the entire year of Shmittah I sat and learned in Kollel in the "Od Yosef Chai" Yeshiva of Yitzhar. My vineyard continues to thrive! - I am looking forward to this coming Shmittah when I will, once again, sit and study – with no worries at all about my field."

From our Sages

אַל־תּוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ – ***'You shall not defraud one another.'*** *(25:14)*

Legally, it is only forbidden to defraud one's fellow. But a chassid must go beyond the letter of the law, and take care not to delude himself, either. (**Rabbi Bunim of Pshischa**)

"It is easy for a rabbi to establish prohibitions, but a rabbi's real strength is to teach Torah and rule on law with an emphasis on what is permitted." ~ Chacham Ovadia Yosef.



◣ A Time For Peace - Kli Yakar

וּבַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ - "***But in the seventh year; there shall be a complete rest for the Land.***" (25:4)

During Shemittah, there is no sowing or harvesting, nor has anyone contributed to the produce in the fields. Consequently, no one has any rights or claims of ownership. - Since most arguments originate from the impulse for ownership, the Shemittah year, when everyone is equal, is the true formula for peace.

◣ It Goes Both Ways - Rabbi Abraham Zelmans of Warsaw

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ - "***If your brother becomes impoverished and his hand becomes shaky among you, you must support him...***" (25:35)

A Rav was asked whether one may borrow money when one knows that, in the normal course of events, he would not be able to repay the loan but has faith that Hashem will help him clear the debt.

"You may," the sage replied, "provided that you yourself would be willing to lend money to a person who lacks the means to repay the loan because you are confident that the person's faith in Hashem's eventual help will be rewarded. But if you are unwilling to lend money to a person with only the person's faith as collateral, you, too, must not borrow money under such conditions."

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Last week, I heard of a story that my late dear brother Shloime, **שלמה ישיעה ב״ר חיים אריה ז״ל**, used to tell his children, repeatedly, at the Shabbos table, and again close to his *petirah.* The purpose in his story telling was to show that no *tephillah* is ever wasted or goes unheard by the *Eibishter.*

Shimon and Leah Landau* lived, before the war, in Crakow, Poland. When the Nazis y"s invaded that country, they rounded up the Jews and put them in Ghettos; like they did with so many other Yidden. The Landaus already had 6 children and Mrs Landau was expecting her 7th child. When the baby was born, both mother and baby were transferred to a hospital outside the ghetto, for a short while, because the child needed some specialist care.

The following year Mrs Landau gave birth to another child, her 8th, and again, both mother and baby were taken to hospital because the baby had a similar complication as its sibling. The doctor who attended to them, was the same as on the previous occasion.

The doctor was fully aware of the hunger, over-crowding and poverty that was prevalent in the ghetto, so she tried to persuade the mother to remain outside the ghetto, offering to look after both the mother and baby. But Mrs Landau couldn't be persuaded, because she had left her other children, and husband behind in the ghetto. The doctor, however, persisted, and told Mrs Landau to leave the baby in the hospital, whilst she returns to the ghetto and smuggle the rest of her family out.

Leah Landau did just that, and shortly after, managed to bring all her close family out. The doctor took the whole family to her home, and settled them in her basement, where she continued to look after all their needs.

The Landau family remained in this basement until the end of the war, after which they left Poland and, eventually, settled in Boro

Park, New York. There they started a new life, re-establishing themselves, and also kept in touch with their saviour, the doctor, who continued to live and work in Crakow. Whenever the Landaus made a simcha, they would invite their doctor friend to come and join them.

On one of those joyous occasions, one of the Landau children (now grown up), plucked up the courage and asked the doctor as to what had motivated her to risk her life to save this whole family for the duration of the war.

"I can tell you why," she began. "When I was in school as a child, we had a religious study lesson once a week. Not being religious, myself, the lessons didn't mean much to me, except that is, until we learnt the story in Genesis (Bereshis) about the Patriarch Abraham when he prayed in the hope of saving the city of Sedom. I remember being fascinated how Abraham 'argued' and pleaded with G-d, that if he could find 50 righteous people, or even 45, then 30, and 20 or even 10 righteous persons in Sedom, they be a merit for the salvation of the entire population. But Abraham, in the end couldn't find enough people to save the city. I couldn't fathom how righteous these people had to be, to tip the balance, for even Lot and his family didn't, in my mind, fit that picture. But, nevertheless, a subtle difference there must have been."

"Now, personally, I don't know the difference between the righteousness of Jews and non-Jews, but the one thing I did see, was the wicked things the Germans were doing to the Jews. In my eyes the Jews became the righteous ones, and if I could help 10 or more of these righteous people, then G-d will surely help me and my family survive those bad times."

My brother would then tell his children, "don't think for one moment that Avrohom Avinu's tephillos for Sedom were wasted. Those *tephillas* may not have helped to save Sedom, but three thousand six hundred years later it inspired one single goy to risk her own life,

and look after (and save) 10 yiden, and that's all due to Avrohom's tephillos, so many years back.

We never know whether the *yeshuos* that we experience, today, are as a result of our own tephillos, or from our forefathers and foremothers. We certainly need to daven for our children's and grandchildren's future, too.

ויעזרם ד' ויפלטם *(Hashem helped them and caused them to escape)* **יפלטם מרשעים ויושיעם,** *(He will cause them to escape from the wicked and He will save them)* **כי חסו בו** *(for they took refuge in Him).*

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Open My Eyes!

גַּל־עֵינַי וְאַבִּיטָה נִפְלָאוֹת מִתּוֹרָתֶךָ - *"Open my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your Torah…"* (Tehillim 119:18)

I heard an incredible insight from **Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita**: The word of **גל** (*"Gal"*) – (open and reveal) are the same letters as the word of **לג** (*"Lag"*).

This pasuk may be referring to *Lag Bomer*, on which Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai revealed the secrets of the Torah!

"The first thing needed to fix this world is that Jews should love each other and be united. And this can begin even without a planning committee and without funding. It can begin with you." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● We're Tenants

Anyone who reads this week's *parsha* knows that in ancient times there was a great "earthquake" that shook the land of Eretz Yisroel every fifty years. Now, the land did not actually shake but on the tenth day of the year, soon after Yovel came in, a loud shofar blast was blown in Eretz Yisroel, and it was a sound that reverberated throughout the land causing great turmoil. It was a blast that was the catalyst for such great commotion, such movement and upheaval, that it was as if an earthquake had shaken the land.

What did the sound of the shofar mean? It was an announcement, a grand proclamation to all the residents of Eretz Yisroel that: **וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמָּכֵר לִצְמִתֻת** – "The land shall not be sold forever" (Behar 25:23), and what that meant was that the fields and homes that had been purchased in the last forty-nine years were now returned to their previous owners.

That's how it was in Eretz Yisroel in the times of the first Beis Hamikdash; whenever someone sold a property, it would revert back to the previous owner when Yovel came around. And so, as the Yovel year began, many people who had purchased real estate during the last fifty years had to pack up all their worldly possessions and leave

their homes. Many large families with many children were uprooted from their homes.

The Real Estate Tumult

Fifty years! That's a long time! People had become accustomed to living on this property and they invested a lot of money and effort into beautifying their lands and their houses. And now, when that shofar sounded, it was a decree from the King that all the fields that had been purchased in the last fifty years were to be surrendered back to their original owners. And that meant that there was a great flow of people, a tremendous commotion, as people moved from one place to another. Many who had no land of their own for fifty years, people who had wandered like beggars because they had to sell off everything to pay debts, were now restored to their ancestral estates. And on the other hand, there were those who had been living in style in big beautiful houses, on spacious grounds – but they had bought them – so now they moved out, back onto the street.

Of course, it wasn't a surprise; they knew it was coming, but as prepared as they could have been, we understand that it was a big disturbance for the nation. It had to be, because when real estate must change hands it's not a simple matter. You'll have to set records straight, and there are bound to be arguments to settle; this man says that the implements on the land – his plow or the livestock – belong to him, and the other one disputes that. There was a great deal of arranging to do and it wasn't simple. The whole land was in a hubbub. The roads were packed with families; mothers and fathers walking, wagons filled with children and belongings, some heading back home, others leaving their homes. Nobody felt settled; the nation was in an uproar.

It's All Mine!

Now, such a ceremony, such a national displacement – multitudes of people leaving their homes and traveling the roads – had to have an important purpose! And therefore we should pay attention to what

the Torah tells us about this great commotion of Yovel; why is everyone moving? So we take a look at the reason Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives: **כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ** – "The land belongs to Me! You can't sell My land outright!" **כִּי גֵרִים וְתוֹשָׁבִים אַתֶּם עִמָּדִי** – "You are merely sojourners, settlers, who are living by Me." That means, "I am your host, and you are My guests."

And now we learn a reason for this great commotion. It was a message for the nation; all over the country, they were learning the lesson that the land has a landlord. And it's a lesson that had to be learned. Otherwise, it would be easy to forget. Here's a man who came in with Yehoshua bin Nun when they conquered the land and he had delighted in a beautiful fertile land that he found spread out before him. So he invested everything he had into it. All of his energies and all of his time, he put into the land, both he and his children. And so, after a while, they forget that this land once was not theirs and they therefore had to be reminded that somebody had given it to them.

And so, once in fifty years all the purchased properties returned to their previous owners to show that *nobody* has a right in the land. Everybody took notice. Even the people who had no minds, people who didn't think, they became aware. They saw movement, moving off land, moving into the land. "What's happening here?!" And that was the great drama of the Yovel that Hashem intended. In order to make everyone understand – not just understand, but in order that everyone should *feel in their bones* that they are only visitors on the land.

● Hurtful Speech

In Parshas Behar the Torah warns the *Am Yisroel* against dealing unjustly with one another in monetary transactions: **וְכִי תִמְכְּרוּ מִמְכָּר לַעֲמִיתֶךָ אוֹ קָנֹה מִיַּד עֲמִיתֶךָ** – *When you're doing business with your fellow Jew; if you're selling to him or you're buying from him,* **אַל תּוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו** – *you shouldn't aggrieve him by cheating him or*

overcharging him (Behar 25:14). It's a fundamental Torah law, what the Gemara refers to as *ona'as mammon*, the *aveirah* of causing sorrow to your fellow Jew in monetary matters.

But then, in *possuk* 17, when the Torah comes to the end of this subject matter, we're warned the same thing a second time: **וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת עֲמִיתוֹ** – *And you should not aggrieve your fellow man.* And the Gemara (Bava Metzia 58b) is bothered by that – what's this repetition for? What is the second *possuk* coming to teach us?

And what the Gemara answers introduces us to an entirely new Torah commandment altogether: **מַה אֲנִי מְקַיֵּים** – *How do we explain this second possuk?* **בְּאוֹנָאַת דְּבָרִים הַכָּתוּב מְדַבֵּר** – *the possuk is talking about hurting a person with words.* The seeming repetition of these *pesukim* above actually is no repetition at all. It's not speaking about preying on your fellow Jew's money but about preying on his emotions – it's a specific *lav* against speaking words that hurt a fellowman's feelings.

Two Storekeepers

And even more than that, the Gemara tells us a big *chiddush* there. It says there that not only is it an *aveirah* to hurt somebody with your words, but it's even *worse* than hurting him monetarily. That's what Chazal say: **גָּדוֹל אוֹנָאַת דְּבָרִים מֵאוֹנָאַת מָמוֹן** – *It's worse to hurt a man's feelings than to steal his money* (*ibid.*). Hurtful words are worse than taking his money!

I always give the same *mashal*. Here are two storekeepers on the same avenue. One of them, when you walk in there, you have to watch him very carefully because when he's weighing the merchandise on the scale, sometimes he pushes down with his hand. He wants to add a little bit more weight to the banana you're buying so that he can overcharge you. You have to say, "Mister, please take your hand off the scale." Also, with him you always have to count your change. However, this cheating grocer is a polite fellow; he's always kind to you and he doesn't say any mean words. You have to watch out when

he's handling your bananas and your money, but you don't have to beware of a sharp tongue.

Now, on the other side of the street, there's another grocer. He's a man who is perfectly honest, 100% honest. He wouldn't even think of cheating you out of a nickel. If you accidentally left a penny of your change on the counter he would put it on the side for you; he would hold it for you and give it to you next time you come in. But on the other hand, he is mean. If you say an extra word, if you ask him where the tuna fish is, he answers you with a sharp word: "Look right in front of you on the shelf! Can't you see?!" He'll never steal even a penny from you but he'll hurt you with his careless tongue.

The Bigger Crook

Now, the question is, who is better? Of course, neither of them is good because every man must strive for perfection in *all* areas of *avodas Hashem*. But for the sake of understanding our subject we have to answer this question: Who is better? The pleasant crook on this side of the street or the grocer on the other side who's mean, but is straight as an arrow when it comes to money?

Listen to what the Gemara says about this: **גָּדוֹל אוֹנָאַת דְּבָרִים מֵאוֹנָאַת מָמוֹן** – *The sin of hurtful words is worse than the sin of cheating a man out of his money.* The nice crook on this side of the street is better — he's only cheating you out of your money, but at least he's not hurting your feelings. And who's the bigger crook? The honest grocer who would never take a penny from you.

We're learning now that if you put your hand in somebody's pocket and take out his money, it's a smaller *aveirah* than saying something to hurt his feelings. Here's a nice Jewish boy who would never even dream about stealing from his mother – a son wouldn't sin against his mother like that. But suppose his mother is talking a little too much, so he says, "Ma, don't talk so much." Ooooh! He's hurting his mother's feelings! That's worse than stealing money out of her pocketbook!

Special Fear

Gadol ona'as devarim — hurtful words are worse than *geneivah*. And the Gemara (ibid.) explains three reasons why it's worse. Number one is this: Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai points out that in the first *possuk,* by stealing or cheating in money matters, it doesn't say anything about fearing Hashem. Of course we know that we have to be afraid of Hashem – everybody knows how serious it is to take away money from a Jew – but still nothing is said there about fearing Hashem.

But in the second *possuk,* when we are being warned against hurting your fellow Jew with words, the Torah goes out of its way to add the words **וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹקֶיךָ** – *You should be afraid of Hashem.* Which means, *especially afraid! A* cheater also has to be afraid, but for the man who hurts feelings, the Torah says: "Be afraid of the repercussions!" No question about it. Hakodosh Boruch Hu takes action if you hurt people's feelings.

Words Are Sticks and Stones

Now, Rabbi Elazar adds a second reason why *ona'as devarim* is worse than stealing money. *Zeh b'gufo v'zeh b'mamono* – When you hurt his money it's only his money, it's something external to him, but when you hurt his feelings, you're hurting him. Words hurt the body. He's affected physically – his nerves, his heart, his mind is hurt. It's actually painful. **יֵשׁ בּוֹטֶה כְּמַדְקְרוֹת חָרֶב** – *Sometimes words that come out of your mouth are like the piercings of a sword* (Mishlei 12:18).

And Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini adds yet another reason. *Zeh nitan l'hashavon v'zeh lo – Money you could always pay back but hurt feelings you can't pay back.* You can't make it up to him!

Money you can always repay. You can do *teshuva*. You took it away, you give it back. If a man stole from you, he might mail in a check some day and pay it back; but if he hurt your feelings no check can make that up. If the feelings are hurt, they're hurt, and you can

never pay back the hurt feelings. And even if you asked for *mechila* and he says wholeheartedly, "I am *moichel* you," but his feelings are still hurt – the effect is still there.

Scarred Forever

Let's say you wound somebody; you make a cut on him with a knife. Right now there's a gash and it's going to leave a terrible scar. So you asked for *mechila* and you also paid his medical bills. Wonderful; very good. But the scar is permanent; he's a *baal mum* forever as a result. That's how it is with feelings too; they are forever.

We remember the words – even though you are kind hearted and you're *moichel,* but you still remember the incidents when your feelings were hurt by somebody. And you remember them years and years. When you'll be an old man of a hundred years and you'll look back, you'll remember, "This one hurt my feelings," and "That one hurt my feelings." It's engraved in your mind.

Now, I'm ashamed to admit it but I remember what people said to me many years ago to hurt my feelings. I'm *moichel* them with a *mechila gemura* but I can't forget it. I was in the *yeshiva* for many years; I dealt with maybe two thousand boys. Every one of them was polite to me; everyone was nice and polite. Only five *bochurim* in my entire career – nineteen years I was in the *yeshiva* and only five *bochurim* said something fresh to me. I remember it. Hakodosh Boruch Hu should bless them; they should have *bracha v'hatzlacha b'chol ma'aseh y'deihem.* They should grow old and have great grandchildren and they should have *parnasah b'revach.* All good things should happen to them. But what happened still remains, it remains.

The Criminal Record

You know, there's a beautiful custom that some husbands and wives have, to ask *mechila* of each other before the *yamim no'raim.* Rav Yitzchak Petterburger, when he went to shul on *erev Rosh Hashana*,

before he walked out of the house he turned around and told his wife, "*Zeit mir moichel* – Forgive me, my wife." And she said, "Forgive me too." It's a very good *minhag* to imitate! And you don't have to wait for *erev* Rosh Hashana either. It's very wise to do that.

But even if you do that, you have to know like the Gemara said, it's *bigufo* and it's not *nitan l'hishavon.* It's pain that cannot be repaid. A man who hurts his wife with words, it's not forgotten – and even though she is willing to overlook it, in her heart it rankles! The pain is still there and it's considered a blot on his record.

And if it happens many times he should know that when he comes to the next world, the record will be taken out before the *Dayan Emes,* and he'll be judged; he won't be able to get away with the things that he did – neither will she. It's a very serious matter! It's a pity that so many people have their records filthied with blots on them. Because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is listening and he puts it down in the *sefer hazichronos.* A fine couple, living together loyally, but still they spend their lives in hurting each other's feelings – it will be played back for them and each word is going to cause them an unimaginable guilt. *U'magid l'adam mah sicho* and they'll be condemned for every word (See Chagigah 5b).

The Devil and the Deathbed

Of course it could be that they forgive each other before they die. On her deathbed, she forgives her husband. He approaches the bed and says, "Please forgive me for everything I said." At least he should have *seichel* to say *that.* Some don't even have *seichel* to say that. And when he is dying, his wife should approach him and say, "Please, my husband, forgive me for everything I said or did against you."

I know one man who was evil to his wife; he was always belittling her. He made her life a *Gehenom*. I know the story very well. I spoke to him; I called him a devil! And he was a *frum* man! A *frum* devil! And when she was on her deathbed, he came to her and he asked her to

forgive him. And she said, "I won't forgive you." And then she died. A true story. He was finished! She had left the world and he hadn't acquired her *mechila.*

Frum Hamsters

That's why the subject of *Ona'as Devarim* just can't be ignored. We have to realize that hurting someone's feelings is a *lav* just the same as eating ham. It's worse. Eating ham is a *lav d'oraysa*, but it never happens. *Frum* Jews eating ham? We cringe at the thought of eating *chazir;* but when it comes to *ona'as devarim* we're trampling on it all the time.

And I want to tell you something – the place where many of us are trampling it most often is in our homes. So many people are sinning with their mouths in their homes. Imagine a Jewish home where all day long they're eating ham. A bite of ham in the morning, a ham sandwich in the afternoon, and some ham for supper! Is that a *frum* house?

A home where a husband and a wife or where brothers and sisters are transgressing *ona'as devarim* all the time, what kind of home is that? A place where they're transgressing a very serious *lav* all their lives – very many times; sometimes thousands of times – is that a *frum* home?

Rabbi Chaim Vital quotes the Arizal as follows: "know, the greatness of a soul is dependent not on the actions of that person, but on the time and generation in which it is found. - For even the tiniest action of holiness in our generation is equal to many tremendous mitzvos of the previous generations since today, the forces of evil are so strong." ~ Rabbi Yaakov Meir Shechter.



Slave To The Master of The World by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

Later on in the Parsha, the Torah discusses the chapter dealing with the laws of a Jewish slave, who must indenture himself to feed his family or to repay a debt. The Torah is very clear however, that this period of servitude must end after six years, and that a Jewish slave should not opt to continue his servitude at the end of the six year period. This is because doing so would cause a Jew to forget the fact that he is already a slave to the Master of the World, and in order to fulfill his Heavenly obligations, he needs to be a free man. - This is because even though a Jew may be able to physically keep the commandments of the Torah while being an indentured servant, his mind and his heart will not be free to serve Hashem. If a Jew forgets this fact, he is treated very harshly and must have his ear pierced by a large awl as an acute reminder that he is deviating from his true purpose on this earth.

What does it mean to be a servant to Hashem? A true servant must not only give all of his physical and spiritual energy to his master, he must also completely subjugate his opinions to his master's will. Even when his master commands him to do things that make no sense to him, he must fulfill these rules with the same alacrity and enthusiasm as he would a command which appealed to his intellect. This demonstrates a complete humility and trust in the master that although the master's words seem counterintuitive, he is confident that the master's ability to understand the situation is superior to his own.

We too have a responsibility as Jews to treat Hashem in this manner, as we demonstrated at Mt. Sinai when we said those fateful words,

"Na'aseh V'nishmah". We committed ourselves to serving Hashem completely, regardless of whether or not that service appealed to our feeble intellect because we accepted Him as our uncontested monarch.

Many Bar Mitzvah boys celebrate that momentous occasion by completing a tractate in the Talmud, or a quantity of Mishnayos, but there was a unique young man around a century ago, who had something else in mind. **The Chazon Ish** at his Bar Mitzvah, got up at the podium, and quietly announced that from then on, he was accepting upon himself to study Torah solely for the sake of Heaven for the rest of his life. At his funeral, one of the speakers got up and said that every great accomplishment the Chazon Ish managed to achieve, was due completely to that one decision which the Chazon Ish had made so many years ago.

When R' Dovid Soloveichik from Brisk heard about this eulogy, he explained to his students that the man giving that speech was trying to pacify himself and all the other funeral goers as to why the Chazon Ish reached such incredible levels in his learning, and none of us can come near him.

When the Brisker Rav heard this explanation from R' Dovid, his son, he agreed with it, but he added that he had a much simpler explanation. Because the Chazon Ish had accepted upon himself to learn Torah under any circumstances, he therefore did not allow anything else to distract him and spent his life learning consecutively without ever stopping. For this reason, he was able to merit to reach such incredible levels notwithstanding his other commitment to learn for the sake of Heaven. We, who learn only when it is convenient for us, can never reach that level.

May we all merit to muster the strength it takes to serve Hashem faithfully, with all our being!

Yoke Of Torah

כִּי־לִי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים עֲבָדַי הֵם 25:55

The Sefas Emess explains, when Hashem declares: "You are My slaves," this means He does not want us to have any other yoke upon us. If we show Hashem that we truly want His yoke, and want to be His slaves alone, Hashem will certainly help us.

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv was known for his rigid adherence to his learning *sedarim*. Many times people tried to enlist his participation in matters of great importance to the Torah-observant public, but he kept his personal involvement to a minimum, so as not to take away from his learning *seder*.

One notable exception was when **Rav Shach** founded Degel HaTorah, holding two major rallies, one in Jerusalem and the other at the Yad Eliyahu Stadium in Tel Aviv. Due to the political situation prevailing then in Israel, the founding of Degel HaTorah was viewed in the international news media as an event of historic importance. When Rav Shach insisted that Rav Elyashiv attend, he agreed.

Indeed, Rav Elyashiv's attendance made a tremendous impact, as his willingness to give of his time for such an event was the greatest demonstration of how important it was.

When the event came to a close, many people approached Rav Elyashiv to thank him for his participation and describe the effect his attendance made on the public. Rav Elyashiv's main concern was to get home as soon as possible.

"I'm missing 2 and a half hours of learning," he told one of his grandchildren. This grandchild relates that soon after Rav Elyashiv arrived at home in the middle of the night, he made up his lost 2 and a half hours of learning — even though this meant losing more than half of his usual night's sleep.

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

The Hospital Volunteer

Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk used to say, "Everyone prays to the Creator when they want something from Him, but they don't consider that faith obligates them to heed His will."

Hakadosh Baruch Hu sends us challenges, and we need to understand that often He sends us these hardships to test us, to measure the strength of our faith and devotion to Him.

There was once a girl-modest, kind, with excellent character traits-who couldn't get accepted into a high school. The reason: her grades, particularly in history, geography, and math, weren't good enough. Her parents did everything they could to change the school's mind, to convince the principal to accept their daughter, but nothing helped. Their daughter had nowhere to go to school. The parents felt dejected, and their spirits were broken.

But the girl herself, all of thirteen years old, wasn't broken and she wasn't dejected. On the first day of school, when all her friends would be starting the ninth grade, she decided to volunteer at one of the local hospitals.

Let's take a pause here and marvel at this girl. All her friends were happily on their way to their first day of high school, while she, who had learned with them for eight years, hadn't been accepted into a school. Rather than being despondent, she went to volunteer at a hospital.

This girl was well aware that a person can't understand Hashem's ways, why certain things happen, and other things don't, and she decided that if Hakadosh Baruch Hu had orchestrated this situation, then she must accept it and continue serving Him to the best of her ability while hoping for a yeshuah.

When she walked into the hospital, the head nurse directed her to a patient, and the girl who couldn't get into school spent her day helping the patient with whatever she needed.

That afternoon, she was about to head for home, when a woman entered the room and was greeted happily by the sick girl. The woman was the patient's grandmother.

"What are you doing here in the hospital?" the grandmother asked the young volunteer after her granddaughter introduced her. "Don't you have to be in school?"

The young girl was a little embarrassed to admit the truth, but the grandmother wouldn't relent, and in the end the girl told her that she had no school to attend. She hadn't been accepted anywhere because her grades were poor.

The patient's grandmother was stunned. She gazed at this girl sitting by her granddaughter's bedside and said, "Well, I can tell you that as of tomorrow you'll be able to go to school."

What? How could that be?

The woman who had come to visit her granddaughter-and who now witnessed this girl's superlative middos-was the principal who had refused her entry into high school. Now that she had seen how special this girl was, she understood that she had made the wrong decision, that superlative middos overshadow low grades. On the spot, she accepted the girl into her school.

I heard this story from Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein. It teaches us that a person should always do what he can and never despair. This young girl didn't allow herself to feel broken but continued to serve her Creator while awaiting her yeshuah.

And so it was that the yeshuah wasn't long in coming.

A Message from the Kalever Rebbe

The Reward for Silence

אֶת־כַּסְפְּךָ֙ לֹא־תִתֵּ֣ן לוֹ֔ בְּנֶ֖שֶׁךְ - *"Do not give him your money with interest."* (Vayikra 25:37)

Words Hurt

In our times, the misuse of speech—ona'at devarim, causing harm with words—is becoming increasingly widespread. This includes not only insults or mockery, but also speaking harshly, talking back, or responding with disrespect.

We must strengthen ourselves not to follow the ways of the surrounding culture, which often normalizes sharpness and sarcasm in everyday conversation.

One of the greatest challenges in this area, is the temptation to make a clever or cutting remark about someone else. It's a moment where one can display wit or intelligence, perhaps to win a laugh or impress others. But beneath the humor often lies a subtle form of self-promotion—using another's dignity as the cost for feeling smarter, funnier, or more important.

R' Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz, zt"l, once said, "With a straight joke (i.e., what is called in Yiddish 'Gleich Vert'el' after a name that hurts and pierces the soul of the person about whom the joke is said) a person can go straight to Gehonim."

The Reward of Silence

The reward for a positive attribute is far greater than a negative one. Therefore, if a person overcomes his Yetzer Harah and restrains himself from saying hurtful words, Hashem will send him an immediate reward, as it says in Menoras HaMaor (Siman 58), one who is careful not to cause pain to others, will merit that all his requests to Hashem will be answered.

The pasuk says (Mishlei 21:14): מַתָּן בַּסֵּתֶר יִכְפֶּה־אָף -"***A gift given in secret appeases anger***..."- **R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk** interpreted this pasuk to mean, that when a person restrains themselves from making a clever but cutting remark at someone else's expense, it is considered as if they gave a "secret gift." Such an act of self-control, he taught, has the power to nullify any harsh decrees that may have been issued against them in Heaven.

R' Aharon of Belz similarly taught in the name of his father, **R' Yissachar Dov of Belz**: "When a Jew has the opportunity to hurt someone or say something sharp, and instead holds back, it is regarded in Heaven as if he had fasted 84 fasts."

R' Aharon then added, "That's what my father said in his time. But now—after the devastation of the Holocaust, when people's spirits are more fragile—if someone refrains from hurting another, it is considered even greater. And greater. And greater still."

The great sage **R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld** once remarked, with his characteristic sharp wit:

"It is well known that the dogs were rewarded for not barking at the Israelites during the Exodus, as it says (Shemos 22:30), 'You shall throw it to the dogs.'

"But this raises a question. The frogs are praised for jumping into the Egyptians' ovens—willing to be burned alive in order to fulfill Hashem's command. Why, then, didn't they receive a similar reward?

"From this, we learn a profound lesson: Remaining silent is even more difficult than jumping into a burning oven. And for that silence, there is eternal reward."

Real Joy

R' Elimelech of Lizhensk, in Likutei Shoshana on Mishlei, offers a beautiful explanation of the verse (Mishlei 15:23): שִׂמְחָה לָאִישׁ בְּמַעֲנֵה־פִיו - "***Joy to a man through the answer of his mouth***..." - He

teaches that when a person disciplines their mouth—holding back from forbidden or harmful speech—they are rewarded with true joy.

In the Tanya (Part I, Chapter 27), it teaches that when a Jew holds back from speaking words that his heart burns to express, he brings about a powerful spiritual effect: the forces of impurity in the upper worlds are subdued, and the forces of holiness are strengthened. In return, a higher level of holiness is drawn down upon him—empowering him and uplifting him in his service of the Creator.

In Pirkei Avos (5:23) it says, "According to the effort is the reward (Lefum tza'ara agra)... Some explain that the Aramaic word "Lefum" means "to the mouth" in Hebrew (peh). Meaning, that when a person puts in the effort to control his speech, the reward is unique and special.

According to this, we understand what is written in this week's parsha. The pasuk says (Vayirka (25:17), **וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹקֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** - ***And you shall not wrong, one man his fellow Jew, and you shall fear your G-d, for I am the L-rd, your G-d***...This teaches that Hashem himself provides the reward for someone who restrains himself from hurtful speech.

We can now interpret our pasuk that says "Do not give him your money..." The word for money, (kaspecha) can also be translated as "your desire": - When you desire to say something, as the pasuk instructs, you cannot give it with interest. Meaning, do not use words that sting, that can be hurtful to someone else.

The pasuk concludes, "I am the L-rd your G-d, who took you out of Egypt..."—teaching us that Hashem Himself will reward this restraint. Just as the Jewish people merited redemption from Egypt because they did not adopt the Egyptian language or its harmful speech—using words to wound—so too, one who guards their tongue today aligns with that same merit and is promised Divine reward.



Misery Loves Company

Parshas Behar contains both the mitzvah of the Shmitah [Sabbatical] year and the mitzvah of the Yovel [Jubilee] year. The Yovel year follows seven of the seven-year Shmitah cycles. This 50th year was basically an extra year of Shmitah, an extra year of "rest" for the land.

In addition to the standard agricultural restrictions of Shmitah, there is a positive command to blow a "Tekiah" blast from the Shofar on the Yom Kippur (10 Tishrei) of the Yovel year. This shofar blast announces: "You shall sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom throughout the land for all its inhabitants; it is a yovel year for you, and you shall return, each man to his ancestral heritage and you shall return, each man to his family." [Vayikra 25:10].

The halachik import of this last pasuk (which happens to be inscribed on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia) is that all Hebrew indentured servants go free during the Yovel year. When the Shofar was sounded on Yom Kippur of the 50th year, it signalled the time for all these servants to leave their masters and return to their homes.

The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 331) offers a psychological reason for the blowing of the shofar on this occasion. The Sefer HaChinuch writes that it was very hard for the owners to give up their long-time servants. Imagine a business owner who has a dedicated worker who has been with the company for many years or decades. All of a sudden, he must let the worker go. It is not so easy to do.

It is common for a close attachment to develop with a maid or nanny who is with a family for many years. Sometimes we go to

a Bar Mitzvah or wedding and we see someone there who does not look like part of the crowd, for obvious reasons. It's the nanny! She knew the kid when he was born. Now, 20 years later, he's getting married. Of course she'll be invited to the wedding — she's part of the family!

Picture the situation with the Hebrew servant. He might have been part of the family for forty-nine years — since right after the last Yovel. Now he has to be let go. It is very difficult for the master to send him away. Therefore, writes the Chinuch, to arouse the owners concerning the importance of the matter and to give them strength of conviction to do what needs to be done, the Torah requires universal blowing of the shofar on that Yom Kippur. This will help the masters realize that their sacrifice is something that they are sharing with other masters throughout the land. The knowledge that everyone else is experiencing the same financial and emotional self-sacrifice is a powerful psychological aid in arousing a person to do what he is required to do.

If I recognize that everybody is in the same boat, that everyone has to give up their servants, their trusted employees, then it is much easier for me to handle my own need to give up my servant. Tzaras rabim, chatzi nechama. [The problems of the masses are half a measure of consolation.]

Everyone faces challenges at different stages of life. Some people have money challenges. Some people have health problems. Some people have problems with their children. That is life. Life is unfortunately a series of challenges or problems, and how we deal with them and cope with them. Many times we think to ourselves, "Boy, do I have problems! No one else has challenges like mine!" We look around at others and see that they are happy. They look fine. They act fine. We think "only I have problems".

We have to remember the sound of the silent shofar that isn't sounded but should be sounded: Everybody is in the same boat. The

next person may not be facing the same type of problems, but we should not fool ourselves into thinking that we are so unique. Life is full of a myriad of problems, but the universality of challenges and problems can be half the consolation.

Your Customer Has A 'Famous Father'

The pasuk says, "When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow, do not aggrieve one another." [25:14]. When we sell an object to our brother, there is a Biblical prohibition against cheating him. Three pasukim later the pasuk says: "Each of you shall not aggrieve his fellow, and you shall fear your G-d, for I am Hashem your G-d." [25:17].

The Sforno offers an insight into the connection between the warning against cheating and the statement "For I am the L-rd your G-d." Obviously, such a statement could be attached to any prohibition in the Torah: Do not eat pig for I am the L-rd your G-d. Do not wear shatnez [linen and wool mixtures] for I am the L-rd your G-d. Why is this statement specifically mentioned in connection with the prohibition of cheating?

The Sforno explains: It is as if to say: "I am the G-d of the purchaser and I am the G-d of the seller and I am particular about either party being cheated." In other words, if someone comes to purchase an item from a store and the storekeeper is debating whether to cheat him or not, G-d is telling the storekeeper: "Remember, this customer is my son."

If someone comes into a Jew's store and the storekeeper notices that it is a simple person who is not keen in the ways of business, he may be tempted to take advantage of the customer. If however, if the customer happens to be the son or grandson of a great Rosh Yeshiva, the storekeeper might hesitate before trying to pull a fast

one. "I'm not going to cheat the son of Rabbi Ploni. That would just not be right!"

That is exactly what the Almighty is telling us here. Do not cheat your fellow Jew, because I am the L-rd your G-d. "It is My son who is buying that suit from you. Do not cheat him!"

A Chance to Do a Favour to Another Yid

Some twenty years ago in New York, a certain Mr. Fogel - a middle-aged Chassid - was listening to a Torah tape of the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** while driving home late one evening from work. He had heard this one particular one tens of times but for some reason he liked it. But suddenly one sentence really struck him. It was as though the Rebbe was speaking to him directly: ***"As is known, the Baal Shem Tov said that a soul can come into this world for seventy, eighty years just to do a favour for someone, especially a fellow Jew."***

Suddenly Mr. Fogel became lost in thought. 'Could it be that I could live my entire life and never fulfill my purpose! Could such a thing really happen? After all who knows the secret ways of G-d if not the Baal Shem Tov?' He became serious. His eyes even began to fill with tears and he began to pray. 'Please, Hashem, guide me to do what I'm supposed to do, I don't want to miss my purpose!' Deep in thought he began to imagine the hundreds (today there are thousands) of Chassidim all over the world going 'out of their ways' to wake up Jews spiritually. Nothing is more important. nothing!

When he came out of his reverie, he realized that he was in a strange place and it took him a few seconds to figure out what happened. He had passed his turn-off, gotten off the expressway several stops too late and now was in a different district of Brooklyn. He was looking for a place to make a U-turn when something caught his eye. To his right, at the side of the road was an older man standing before the open hood of a stalled car.

The street was unusually empty, so Mr. Fogel slowed down, opened his right side window and had a better look. The fellow looked up at him and signaled. It didn't look suspicious so he pulled over and asked what was wrong.



"Ahh! What rotten luck! I can't figure it out." The fellow yelled out. "The thing just died on me! Now I'm really stuck!! A tow truck stopped about ten minutes ago but they wanted six hundred dollars to tow me home! Six hundred! And I only live fifteen minutes away!" Mr. Fogel pulled his car even closer and the fellow continued. "And I'm stalled in a no parking zone. Look at this! Even if I caught a taxi. If I leave the car here they'll tow it away."

Fogel pointed to a spot about fifty yards ahead and said. "Just don't worry. G-d will help. Here, look over there! About a hundred feet away is a place you can park. See! I'll push you. Get in your car and I'll push you. Then you can take a taxi home."

"Thanks!" he yelled back as he walked to open the door to his car. "But I've been waiting here for a long time and not one taxi has passed. The road is deserted. But I guess you're right. Worrying doesn't help."

Mr. Fogel was totally convinced that this fellow was telling the truth. So after pushing him to the parking place and the fellow locked his car up, he offered to take him home. After all it was only a fifteen minute ride. The old fellow couldn't stop thanking him. He got into Fogel's car and kept talking.

"Wow! Thanks a million! I really appreciate this!! Now all we have to do, my wife and I that is, is order a cab." He looked at his watch,

"Whew! It's really late! I hope we don't miss our plane. We're flying to Florida to visit our daughter and the plane is leaving in an hour."

"Listen" said Mr. Fogel "It's no problem. You know what. I'll take you to the airport, after all it's only a half hour drive and my wife won't worry. Just don't ask questions. As soon as we get to your house get your wife and suitcases and let's go! You have no time to waste."

The old fellow tried weakly to protest but realized that this Chassid was right, so in no time he and his wife were in the car and before they knew it were at the airport. "I can't thank you enough" said the old man as he pulled his suitcase from the trunk. "Listen, you got to let me pay you! Here, do me a favour. Take a hundred dollars." He pulled a bill from his wallet. "Nu! It's the least I can do. Just take it! But Fogel would have no part of it.

"Sorry, my friend! First of all thank G-d I don't need the money. Second, it was a favour, so I don't want the money. And third it was no big deal; the whole thing took less than an hour and I enjoyed it, so I don't even deserve the money." But the old man insisted, even took another hundred out and kept pushing it at Fogel saying "Just take it. Nu! Don't argue. Just take it."

Until finally Mr. Fogel said. "Excuse me but you're Jewish, right?" the fellow shook his head yes. "So, listen, if you really want to repay me then, you know what? Put on Tefillin. Do you put on Tefillin? Do it every morning for a month."

The man shook his head no. In fact, it was exactly what he did not want to hear. Tefillin?! No way!! I'm not doing no mitzvos! No MITVOS! Not me!"

"Alright, so then don't put on Tefillin." Fogel replied. "You were the one that wanted to pay. As far as I'm concerned you don't owe me anything but if you want to pay, this is what I want. Nu? What do you say? Just buy yourself a pair of Tefillin and put them on when you can. Okay?"

The old fellow looked at Fogel with foggy eyes for a second, shook his head reluctantly and said ."All right. I'll do it!" Then he shook Fogel's hand, looked at his watch and ran to get a luggage cart.

As soon as her husband was far enough away, his wife approached Fogel with tears in her eyes, dabbed them with a small kerchief and said. "Thank you! G-d just sent you!"

She spoke in a low voice, keeping an eye on her husband to make sure he was involved with the cart but, although she tried to hide it, she was obviously very emotional, her eyes were red from crying.

"You don't know what you just did. It was a miracle! We are holocaust survivors. We met after the war, got married, moved here to New York and agreed that we wouldn't do anything Jewish. Nothing. We were mad at G-d, you know."

She started crying again. "But as we got older, I began to yearn for the things from my mother's house.. you know, like lighting candles before Shabbos. But each time I mentioned it my husband said 'NO MITZVOS!! Our children got married, we are alone in the house, but he still says 'No Mitzvos'!!'

"So, yesterday I felt so bad that .. I did something I haven't done since the war.. I prayed. "I begged G-d to send some miracle to change my husband's mind. And now you came . You are a miracle!! "I'm sure that this Shabbos we will have Candles."

A day that isn't part of the week, but the source of the week... This a Shabbos we can look forward to. This is a Shabbos we can come to enjoy, even to love. A Shabbos we can battle l'shmor - not "to keep", but to guard, to protect. Because Shabbos is so fragile, so precious - in today's world more than ever. ~ Rabbi Yaakov Klein

Rabbi Joey Haber - Shabbos is Set Up for Peace



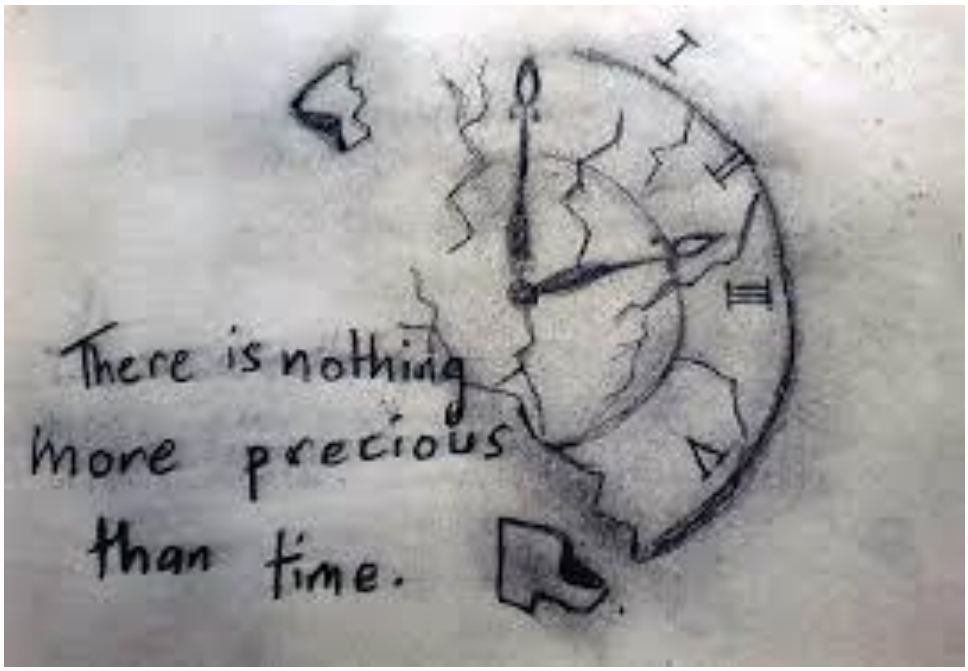
The Gemara (Gittin 52a) recounts that once, there were two people whom the Satan instigated against one another, and they would fight with one another every Shabbat night. Rabbi Meir arrived at this place and prevented these people from fighting for three Shabbatot until he was eventually successful in restoring peace between them. They then heard the Satan exclaiming, "Woe unto me, for Rabbi Meir has thrown me out of my house."

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz Zt'l asks, "Why did the arguments and fighting happen specifically on Shabbat?"

He says the reason is as follows: We say in the Mincha Amida on Shabbos, **מְנוּחַת שָׁלוֹם וְשַׁלְוָה וְהַשְׁקֵט וָבֶטַח** - Shabbos has within it, the calmness and tranquility of real true peace. Shabbat is so set up for peace, that's why the Satan comes before Shabbat, to do everything in its power to creat havoc and disharmony. There, where peace is the greatest and most beutiful, that's when the forces come to disrupt it the most.

Maran Rabbeinu Ovadia Yosef *zt"l* (in his Chazon Ovadia-Shabbat, Volume 1, page 20) quotes the words of Maran Ha'Chida (in his Moreh Be'Etzbah, page 140) who writes that Friday afternoon is especially susceptible to fights between husband and wife or the head of the household and his servants and the Evil Inclination does his utmost to create strife. Thus, a G-d-fearing individual should do his utmost to suppress his Evil Inclination and abstain from any form of anger and strife; on the contrary, one should always pursue peace and love.

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt -Making the most of our time



Why did Hashem make it that there are days, months, years, seasons and the like? Why couldn't it just be one long continuum, without being bound by different seasons or times?

We see a common theme when we observe beginnings. The first Mitzvah is **החודש הזה לכם** - Rosh Chodesh. The Torah begins **בראשית ברא אלקים** - Shulchan Aruch starts **יתגבר כארי** - one should arise like a lion as he shouldn't waste his time sleeping. The Gemara learns from Avraham, the first believer in Hashem- **זריזין מקדימים למצות**. When we were taken from Mitzrayim it was done **בחיפזון**; in a haste, Zerizus. This is to tell us the importance of time. The Minhag is to give a gold watch to a Chosson- alluding to the fact that time is golden.

The Klausenberger Rebbe preferred a wristwatch over a pocket watch since it takes time to remove and put back a pocket watch. In Kelm, they would have a 5-minute Seder, in order to instil the importance of 5 minutes.

The Chassam Sofer said he became who he was in 5 minutes- as he learned with the few extra minutes he found at random times.

The Chofetz Chaim was very adamant on wearing shoes without laces. He calculated that shoes with laces take up an extra minute

as they require tying. 1 minute a day is approximately 360 minutes yearly which is 6 hours. In lifetime that comes out to be 420 hours! The Chofetz Chaim was not willing to forfeit 420 hours of his life on that which is unproductive.

R' Yisrael Salanter was once asked by one who said he had only 5 minutes in his day to learn what he should learn? He responded learn 5 minutes of Mussar because then you'll see you really have a lot more time.

One can possess many coins but when converted into bills we see it is a smaller amount than it originally appeared. Likewise, one may have many seconds and minutes to his life, but his life span is only 70 years. For this reason, Hashem made it that there are different seasons, days, nights and so on. One should say to himself at the end of the day- another day has gone by- what did I accomplish. The same applies to months, years, seasons and so on. The saying goes "fear not death rather unlived life."

Food for Emuna



There are those who worry where the food for tomorrow will come from. There are many words that connote battle and mean food since earning a living is a battle and is a real test in Emuna.

The following are some examples: **מלחמה** is war and **לחם** is bread. **טרף** means to tear up and also means meat. **מחי ה** - is nourishment and also means to erase, wipe out as in **מחיית עמלק** . We have bread called **מצה** on Pesach. **מצה** also means strife, contention. **שבר** is interpreted as provisions as well as to break. **כלי זין** is

weaponry and **מזון** is sustenance. We need to live with the reality that Hashem provides each day just as he did in the Midbar with the **מן** and as we say **שעשה לי כל צרכי**; who has provided me my every need. Indeed, **מן** is rooted in the word **אמונה**.

Shemita is the idea Emuna as we don't work on our fields and trust completely in Hashem that He will provide. This explains why for the sin of not observing Shemita we get exiled. If we are lacking Emuna, measure for measure, we get Galus since the purpose of Galus is **לגלות**; to reveal Hashem. With this we can comprehend a deeper meaning in **וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית**; if you will say what will we eat in the seventh year. If one will say, what will we eat tomorrow, the response should be- remember the Shemita year- Emuna.

The Holy Zohar writes:



"Countless blessings, both physical and spiritual, come to us through Shemitah.

A person who views his financial success as a result of his own efforts, really enjoys limited success. However, one who observes Shemitah declares that it is, in fact, Hashem, Who enables him to achieve.

When we realize that, we can be blessed with His limitless bounty."

The Reward Does Not Fall Far from the Apple Sanctity by Rav Yissochor Frand

A person by the name of Rav Asher Anschel Eckstein, a Dayan in the Belzer Community in America, told over the following story, which he heard with his own ears from the family members involved in the story.



Parshas Behar contains the mitzvah of Shemitah. On the seventh year a person may not plant, and anything that grows needs to become ownerless (hefker) after a certain point. What is even more amazing is that any produce that grows on its own in the Sabbatical year is sanctified (kodesh). In chutz L'Aretz, these laws do not directly affect us, but imagine this: A cucumber that is kodesh! A cucumber peel that is holy! An apple peel that needs to be treated with sanctity, as if it was a sefer!

This is an amazing thing. All the produce that grows in the seventh year must be treated with holiness. The story is as follows:

A woman in the holy city of Jerusalem had a housekeeper who was a foreign national, not an Israeli citizen, not Jewish, simply a non-Jewish foreign worker. She had been working for this Jewish woman for some time. One day she said to her employer, "I am leaving Israel, I am going back home to my native country." The Jewish homemaker wanted to give her long time housekeeper a going away present as a token of appreciation for her many years of good service.

She searched her house high and low for some kind of appropriate gift but could not find anything that seemed suitable. Finally, she told her: "You know what, I would like to show my appreciation for your years of loyalty to our family – please take this bag of apples for your family." This was not much of a going away present, but it was all she had at the moment when she needed to come up with something.

The homemaker's husband came home a short time later and his wife told him "Our cleaning lady is going home to Thailand, so I gave her a bag of apples as a going away present." He was horrified: "You gave her a bag of apples? It is Shemitah! Those apples have kedusha, how can we give her the apples? She does not know how to handle fruit with Shemitah sanctity properly. Furthermore, Shemitah fruit may not be taken to chutz l'Aretz. They must stay in Eretz Yisroel!

The wife said, "Oh, my gosh! I forgot! I will run after her and get back those apples. I know what bus she takes. I will run to the bus stop and catch her." She ran out of her house, ran to the bus stop just as the bus with her cleaning lady was pulling away from the stop. People asked her, "What is the problem?" She answered that she needed to catch someone on that bus. They told her that the bus took a circuitous route and that if she ran ahead to another stop, not far away she could expect the bus to be there in ten minutes.

She ran huffing and puffing to that next bus stop and once again, as soon as she got there the bus started pulling away. She started waving frantically to the bus that she needed to get on. The Israelis on the bus saw her waving and yelled to the bus driver "Atzor! Atzor!" [Stop! Stop!]. Finally, the driver stopped the bus and the breathless housewife boarded the bus. She looked around and finally spotted at the back of the bus her housekeeper from Thailand! She ran over to her and the housekeeper started crying! The housekeeper tearfully said, "I'm sorry! I am sorry! Here it is!"

Apparently, the homemaker took her own going away present. She went into the woman's jewelry box and took her most expensive jewelry. She assumed that her employer was running after her to get her jewelry back. She said, "Here is the jewelry! Here are the apples! Just don't tell the police!" The Jewish woman said, "Okay. I won't tell the police."

Because of being particular about the sanctity of Shemitah fruits – that they should not be abused and should be treated with Shemitah sanctity – the Ribono shel Olam rewarded this woman on the spot, and she was able to get back the jewelry that she had not yet discovered was missing.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]



Don't Worry, Be Happy!

בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ שַׁבָּת לַה' שָׂדְךָ לֹא תִזְרָע וְכַרְמְךָ לֹא תִזְמֹר ***"But in the seventh year… you shall not sow your field…." (Vayikrah 25:4)***

There are times when a person is out-of-work and is worried how he will provide for his family. This was a real concern for the Jews who immigrated to the United States in the early 1900's. They were told that they would be fired from their jobs if they would not work on Shabbos.

At the beginning of every seventh year, the *Shmittah* year, during the time of the Beis haMikdash, the Jewish people had the mitzvah of *Hakhel*. All the men women, and children had the mitzvah to listen

to the king read a specific part of the Torah (Devorim 31:10-12). In this way, *Shmittah* was ushered in through Torah study.

The **Ibn Ezra** explains that **this Torah study should continue throughout the entire year of *Shmittah*** (Devorim 31:12; Shmos 20:8). It seems from the **Ibn Ezra** that the purpose of *Shmittah* is the suspension of work to facilitate the study of Torah. Nowadays, we still have the mitzvah of *Shmittah*. During the year of *Shmittah*, there are many Israeli farmers who do not work their fields. Instead, they learn Torah the entire day.

Every seventh year, during *Shmittah*, Jews in the Land of Israel are not permitted to plant, prune, or do any work in their fields or vineyards. Their rights to the land are no greater than that of their servants or strangers. Anyone who wants, may eat the produce that grows in the field. The farmer may not lay ownership to the land, but he has the same right to eat from it as others.

The concept of Shmittah is to impress upon us that we own nothing! Everything that we have is from Hashem.

You may have a serious concern. If you can't work your field, what will you eat the entire seventh year? True, you have equal access, as everyone else, to whatever grows on its own, but will that be enough? Furthermore, what will you eat in the eighth year? You must start planting at the end of the seventh year and it will take time for the crops to grow.

Rashi and the **Sforno** (25:19) address this concern. It is true that the amount of food that you will have will be minimal. However, Hashem will miraculously enable you to feel full and satisfied on the little that you do have to eat.

According to this explanation, the Torah's next two psukim don't seem to make sense. The Torah writes, "*And should you ask, 'What are we to eat in the seventh year, if we may neither sow nor gather in our crops?' I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year, so*

that it shall yield a crop sufficient for three years… until its crops come in." Don't be concerned that since you didn't work the field you will not have enough to eat in the seventh year. Hashem will bless your crops. The crops of the sixth year will be so bountiful that it will feed you in the sixth, seventh, and eighth year!

What does the Torah mean? What possible concern could you have? We already explained that there will be a blessing that your stomach will be satisfied even if you eat less.

The **Sforno** explains Hashem's promise that you will feel satisfied with little, won't be enough to allay the concerns of some people. They will feel nervous and won't feel total trust and confidence in Hashem. For **those people**, Hashem promises an added blessing, one that can clearly be seen! The sixth year will produce enough food to last for three years! Even if one has a little less faith in Hashem, he will see with his own eyes that he has stored enough food for three years. He won't worry what he will have to eat and therefore, he will be able to keep the laws of *Shmittah* calmly. **Look how much Hashem loves us and does extra to make all of us feel at ease.**

The mitzvah of *Shmittah* helps us realize that Hashem is the source of our livelihood. If we are on a high level of faith, then we won't have to be worried when Hashem tells us that we can't work for a year. We know that Hashem will provide for us by our miraculously feeling satisfied even when eating a small amount. If we are not quite on that level, Hashem **lovingly** tells us not to worry. We will see the bumper crop of the sixth year, know we have plenty of food, and will not worry. - ***Hashem provides us with our needs whether or not we are working!***

In siberia, they took everything from me, but they could never take my emunah. ~ Rav Yechezkel Abramsky.

Don't Bully Me!

וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹקֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם "Each of you should not aggrieve your fellow, and you should fear your G-d; for I am Hashem your G-d." (Vayikrah 25:17)



Verbal bullying includes teasing, name-calling, taunting, or threatening to cause harm. It is a serious issue.

The Torah tells us not to harm another through words. The Torah was aware of the harmful effects of bullying.

The *Talmud* (*Bava Metzia 58B*) lists some examples of words that should be avoided as they could cause anguish to another person:

1. Don't remind a newly observant Jew about his past sins.
2. Don't remind a convert about the sins of his fathers.
3. If a person is afflicted by serious troubles or illness don't say it is a result of his sins.
4. If someone is looking to buy something, don't send him to a place that doesn't sell it.
5. Don't ask someone, "What is your opinion on this topic?", if you are certain that the person is ignorant about it and would have nothing to say. (This example is brought by the *Rambam*.)

At times, verbal bullying isn't outwardly noticeable. Therefore, the pasuk concludes, "… you should fear G-D". Hashem knows what is in your heart and what your intention is. Hashem knows whether you were ignorant or whether you were taunting.

Rav Moshe Alshich explains the motivation why one person would bully another as well as a solution to prevent the bullying. The pasuk says "Ish", that a "Man" should not cause pain to his fellow Jew. The word "Ish" in the Torah denotes an important or distinguished person. The bully views himself as an important person. He feels that he is more distinguished than his victim and that gives him the right to taunt him. To that, Hashem says that I view the two of you as equals. He is also as important as you. Furthermore, when you bully, you are doing more than disrespecting this person. This person's soul is part of Hashem's soul, just as yours is. Therefore, when you bully someone else, you are disrespecting Hashem.

The Sefer Hachinuch says that the root of this mitzvah is to create peace amongst people. May we all realize the importance of every Jew. May we understand that each Jew has a part of Hashem's Holy soul within him. May that lead us to respect every Jew and foster peace, which is the source of blessing.

A Shmittah a Day Keeps the Locusts Away!

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וְשָׁבְתָה הָאָרֶץ שַׁבָּת לַה' ***"Speak to the Jewish people… when you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a Shabbos rest for Hashem" (Vayikrah 25:2)***

How will I earn a living? Where will I get food from? How will I manage?

These are all valid questions that could be asked by a farmer in the land of Israel, prior to the shmittah year (Every 7th year is shmittah. There is a mitzvah not to work the land in Israel). To answer all those questions, the Torah promises that the farmer will have an abundance of food in the 6th year – enough to sustain him & his family for the 6th, 7th & 8th years (until the new crop is harvested). What a special blessing!

Two famous shmittah miracles occurred in the religious settlement of Moshav Komemiyut, a settlement that kept the laws of shmittah. At the close of the shmittah year in 1952, they were left without any wheat to plant. With great difficulty they bought leftover wheat that was in terrible condition, cracked, and full of worms. People from nearby farms, who had not kept the laws of shmittah, laughed at them. A miracle occurred, and it rained at the best time for the crops of Moshav Komemiyut. They actually harvested a bumper crop and were the only settlement in the area that had any yield on the crops.



During the Shmittah year of 1958-1959, a swarm of locust struck the neighboring settlements, destroying most of their crops. The entire swarm then headed towards Komemiyut. As soon as the swarm reached its borders, it turned away and flew away as quickly as it had arrived. Another miracle had occurred for those who kept the mitzvah of shmittah!

What message can **we** learn from the challenging mitzvah of shmittah?

The pasuk says "Shabbos laShem". Why is shmittah referred to as Shabbos? **Rav Ovadia Mibartunura's explanation** of Rashi is that shmittah, like Shabbos, testifies to the fact that Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. When you abstain from work on Shabbos, you show your belief that Hashem created

and continues to oversee the world, determining what you will earn. You show that same belief when you don't work your land during the entire 7th year.

In a similar vein, **the Alshich explains**, shmittah shows that your successes are not the result of your hard work. Your bumper crop wasn't due to your 12-hour days of plowing, planting, weeding, watering, etc…. Rather, your success is solely due to the graciousness of Hashem.

During the time of the prophet Yirmiyahu the Jews spent too much time working their fields at the expense of Torah learning. Yirmiyahu showed them the jar of manna that had been saved in the Bais HaMikdash. His message to them and to us as well, was that Hashem will provide for your needs, just as He provided in the dessert, through the manna.

Even though you are putting in effort to earn a living, remember that the actual income comes from Hashem. Hashem wants you to remember to do what is of primary importance – to learn Torah!



וְחִשַּׁב עִם־קֹנֵהוּ - *He shall calculate with his purchaser 25:50*

A story is told of a wealthy man from Poland whose wife needed to travel to a faraway land for medical therapy and procedures to treat a protracted and debilitating illness.

A journey like this, centuries ago, was no small undertaking and the man gave his wife a large sum of money to tide her over. Unfortunately, her money ran out before she completed her therapy, and she wrote a letter to her husband asking him to send another 50,000 rubles.

The rich man received the letter and was eager to send his wife the money. There was just one problem: how would he get the funds to her?



In the olden days, before the advent of electronic banking, if one wanted to send money overseas or to a foreign country, he needed to find a messenger who would carry the cash in a protected sack and hand deliver the money. Of course, a number of requirements were necessary for this to work. One, the messenger must be a reliable person who won't just take the money and run away, never to be heard from again. Two, he must ""ensure"" that the money would arrive where, when and to whom it was supposed to. Three, due to the extreme nature of the business, the messenger could charge an exorbitant fee to carry the funds from place to place, incurring the risk, danger and tribulations of travel. All in all, finding the right messenger willing to do all this was not an easy task.

Fortunately for the rich man, he located a person who was deemed honest, reliable and responsible, who just so happened to be travelling to the exact city where his wife was located. The messenger and the rich man met, and the negotiations began. The man asked for an enormous sum; the rich man countered with a more measured amount. Neither side was willing to concede, and it looked as if the entire deal was falling apart.

Finally, the rich man threw up his hands and said, "I'll tell you what. I will give you the full amount of 50,000 rubles and you give my wife whatever you want!" The messenger smiled. Now we're talking, he thought. How could he possibly ask for a better deal than that?

They shook hands and a contract was hastily drawn up. In it, it declared that the messenger would be transporting 50,000 ruble to

this particular city, and upon the safe completion of his mission, he was to give the man's wife whatever he wanted!

The very next day, the man set out and his journey lasted a number of weeks, but eventually he arrived and went straight to the address he was given. Once there, he met the man's wife and informed her that he had brought 50,000 rubles from her husband. She was delighted but her smile faded when he told her, "As per my agreement with your husband, I will be giving you 2,000 rubles and I will keep the remaining 48,000!"

She could hear the gloating in his tone of voice. She could not understand why her husband would do something like this. First of all, he was a smart businessman and such a deal made no sense. On top of that, she actually needed 48,000 ruble – what good would a measly 2,000 ruble accomplish?

She tried to argue but the messenger pulled out his contract and showed her what it said. She read and reread the words and saw her husband's signature and she knew it was a real document. The man laughed heartily as he peeled off 2,000 rubles and handed it to her with a flourish. "Pleasure doing business with you," he said, but she stopped him and insisted that she wished to take the matter before the local Rabbi and have him determine what to do.

The messenger was none too happy with this idea, but he did not object as he knew he had a signed and sealed contract and his case was airtight. That very day, the woman and the messenger appeared before the local Rabbi and she explained the case. The Rabbi examined the contract and determined that it was in fact a valid document. He listened carefully as both sides presented their claims and he asked many questions, especially of the messenger.

After a while, the Rabbi himself was puzzled. Why, indeed, would a smart businessman like her husband make such a deal? It made no sense. He asked for one night to mull it over. The next morning, both claimants returned to the Rabbi, and he asked to look at the

contract one more time. Then, he smiled as he announced, "It seems that this woman's husband was not so stupid after all.

He told the messenger to give his wife whatever he wants. Well, this messenger made it very clear what he wants. He wants 48,000 rubles! So, my ruling is that he must give the 48,000 rubles that he wants to this woman and he may keep the remaining 2,000!" *(Tiv Hamaasiyos)*



וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדָו עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ ***If your brother becomes destitute and his hand falters beside you, you shall support him [whether] a convert or a resident, so that he can live with you. 25:35***

Charity organizations and interest-free loan funds have been established in almost every Jewish community. With complete integrity, those in charge of tzedakah funds manage large sums of money for lending to anyone in need of cash to support his business and get back on his feet.

Indeed, this is the essence of the mitzvah, as Rashi explains in this week's parsha: "You shall support him. Do not allow him to fall down and collapse altogether, in which case it would be difficult to pick him up again. Rather, 'support him' while his hand is still faltering ... like the load on a donkey. While still on the donkey, one person can grasp it and hold it in place. Once it falls to the ground, however, five people cannot pick it up."

Of course, money is important. But, adds the **Sefas Emes zt"l**, aside from the financial aspect, when a person knows that there is someone out there willing to help him and allow him to thrive and succeed in the big scary world of commerce, there is no greater manner of **וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ** - supporting and strengthening a fellow human being to become the best that he can be.

A true story occurred in 1892 at Stanford University, in southern California. It is a story within a story, and it displays the goodness of the human psyche, and how that goodness can accomplish so much for so many people.



An 18-year-old American university student was struggling to pay his fees. He was an extremely bright fellow and looked forward to a great future. However, he was an orphan, and was severely strapped for cash. Not knowing where to turn, he came up with a bright idea. He and a friend decided to host a musical concert on the Stanford campus to raise money for their education. They reached out to the great Polish pianist, Ignacy J. Paderewski. His manager demanded a guaranteed fee of $2000 for the piano recital. A deal was struck, and the boys began to work to make the concert a success.

The big day arrived. But unfortunately, they had not managed to sell enough tickets. The total collection was only $1600. Disappointed, they went to Paderewski and explained their plight. They gave him the entire $1600, plus a cheque for the balance of $400. They didn't have the money yet, but they promised to honour the cheque as soon as they were able to.

"No," said Paderewski. "This is not acceptable." He tore up the cheque, returned the $1600 and told the two boys: "Here's your money. Please deduct whatever expenses you have incurred. Keep the money you need for your fees. And just give me whatever is left."

The boys were shocked - and thrilled - and they thanked Paderewski profusely. It was a small act of kindness. But it clearly marked Ignacy Paderewski as a man with a great big heart. He had no reason to do what he did. He did not ask for nor expect anything in return. He did it because he felt it was the right thing to do.

History will show that Ignacy Paderewski went on to become the Prime Minister of Poland. He was a great and beloved leader and worked diligently to have an independent Poland accepted among the League of Nations.

When World War I officially ended on November 11, 1918, it signalled the end of a harsh, dramatic and battle-fatigued war. But hostilities are only officially ended on a specific date; the effects of hostilities carry on well into the future. By 1919, millions of children in Poland were starving. There was no food to provide for a suffering nation. The newly formed government of Poland had no resources with which it could buy food. Desperate to help his people, the Prime Minister of Poland, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, turned to the United States Food and Relief Administration for help.



The head of the administration was a man named Herbert Hoover - who later went on to become the U.S. President. Hoover immediately agreed to help and quickly shipped many tons of food and grain to feed the starving Polish people. A calamity was averted. Paderewski was relieved. He travelled across the ocean to meet Hoover and personally thank him for his kindness.

When Paderewski began to thank Hoover for his noble gesture, Hoover quickly interjected and said, "You shouldn't be thanking me, Mr. Prime Minister. You may not remember

this, but almost a quarter-century ago, you helped two young students pay their way through college. Due to your generosity, they succeeded. I was one of them!" The world is a wonderful place. What goes around comes around!

Torah Tavlin

R' Moshe Alshich zt"l (Toras Moshe) would say:

אַל תִּקַּח מֵאִתּוֹ נֶשֶׁךְ וְתַרְבִּית וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹקֶיךָ וְחֵי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ 25:36 – When a person lends money on interest, he profits with every day that passes. Thus, the lender wants every day to be as short as possible so that more days pass and he will earn more money.



The borrower prays that each day should become longer so that he will have to pay for fewer days. Consequently, these two people have a different outlook on time. By giving an interest-free loan, the lender will not pray for a shorter day and the borrower will not pray for a longer day and, 'your brother will live together with you' - with the same outlook on time."

"Imagine if you once received a personalized gift from the King of the world. How honoured and thankful would you be? In truth, Hashem sends us gifts at every moment of our lives - many of which we are unaware of.

If only we focused on these gifts, we would be filled with gratitude and love for Hashem." ~ Rabbi Zamir Cohen.

Chacham Rabbeinu Avraham Sabba zt"l (Tzror Hamor) says:

וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מַה־נֹּאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת 25:20



Why is it important for the people to ask, 'What will we eat?' The answer is that it is important for the wealthy people who own much land and never know from wanting, to once in a while put themselves in the position of the poor people.

During Shemita, when the fields must remain fallow, even the rich people begin to ask, 'What will we eat?' This way, they can better empathize with the needy and be more receptive to helping them."

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני ה' ***My Sabbaths shall you observe and My Sanctuary shall you revere, I am Hashem.*** (26:2)

Chazal state (*Shabbos* 118b): "If the Jewish people would only observe two Sabbaths according to their law, they would be redeemed immediately"! Perhaps this is hinted at in this *Posuk*: if "My Sabbaths" – in plural and the minimum plural is two – "you observe", that is, if you observe two Sabbaths, then you will merit "and My Sanctuary shall you revere" – an expression of sight, immediately you will merit to see the *Bais HaMikdash*! (***Rebbe Eliezer Tzvi of Kamarna as brought in Mesukim MiDvash***)

R' Aharon Dovid Goldberg shlit'a (Shiras Dovid) would say: אַל־תִּקַּח מֵאִתּוֹ נֶשֶׁךְ וְתַרְבִּית- *You shall not take from him interest or increase 25:36*

The Baal HaTurim writes that **נשך** has the same gematria as **זה נחש** (this is the snake). **The Kli Yakar** writes that the prohibition of Ribbis is rooted in the fact that when a person charges interest, he knows exactly what he will be making as a profit. Thus, he has no need for Emunah B'Hashem, to believe that Hashem will provide for him his needs since he feels he is providing for himself.



The **נחש הקדמני** was punished that he will crawl on the ground and 'eat dust all his life.' The snake, too, knows exactly what it will be eating for the rest of its life, so it too, lacks this element of emunah. Thus, a person who deals in usurious practices - a **בעל נשך** - is akin to a snake – **זה נחש**.

אוֹ־דֹדוֹ אוֹ בֶן־דֹּדוֹ יִגְאָלֶנּוּ 25:49 *Or his uncle or his cousin shall redeem him*

R' Chaim Yossel Kofman (Machsheves Halev) would say: אוֹ־דֹדוֹ אוֹ בֶן־דֹּדוֹ- Why is the word **דֹּדוֹ** meaning uncle, spelled both times without a vav? The Gemara Sanhedrin (98) tells us that either Dovid HaMelech himself or one of his descendants will be the eventual Moshiach. Therefore, with regard to our salvation, the word **דֹּדוֹ** without a vav can be rearranged to spell **דוד**. This tells us that either Dovid himself, or **בן דוד** - a child of Dovid, **יִגְאָלֶנּוּ** - will be our Moshiach, b'mheira b'yameinu."

Torah Gems

וְנָתְנָה הָאָרֶץ פִּרְיָהּ וַאֲכַלְתֶּם לָשָׂבַע.. וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת־בִּרְכָתִי לָכֶם 25:19-21

The gemara Bava kama 30a cites an opinion regarding the method one should use to make himself pious and righteous.

Among other things, he should be vigilant in the halachos dealing with berachos and the manner in which to bless Hashem.

R' Yeshaya Levy Shlit'a offers a new understanding in this idea of being vigilant in **מילי דברכות** based on an incident that took place with **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ZT"L**.

One day in early spring, R' Shlomo Zalman was walking with a talmid and talking in learning. The talmid noticed that they passed a number of fruit trees upon which they could have made the **ברכת האילנות** - the blessing recited over blossoming fruit trees in the month of Nisan.



However, R' Shlomo Zalman passed by these trees and instead paused in front of a lone fruit tree. There, he recited the special blessing with intense concentration. The young man was surprised and wondered out loud why the Rov hadn't made the blessing over a cluster of trees -a halachic preference-rather than making it on a single tree.

R' Shlomo Zalman smiled and said, "My son, take a good look at the tree and tell me what you see." The young man looked closely and saw nothing out of the ordinary. "Look again," said R' Shlomo Zalman. This time, he said, "Rebbi, all I see is a house behind the tree, and an elderly lady standing in the window watching."

You have seen well," said R' Shlomo Zalman. "This lady is a widow who waits every year for Rabbi Auerbach, the well-known rabbi, to recite a blessing over her tree. This gives her great pleasure. How can I deny her that pleasure by making the blessing someplace else?"

What is מילי דברכות? It is blessing Hashem by acting with righteousness, humility, and the need to help others!

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב וָחַי עִמָּךְ ***If your brother becomes destitute and his hand falters beside you, you shall support him [whether] a convert or a resident, so that he can live with you. 25:35***



There are many people who have elevated the mitzvah of Tzedakah to an art form. Not as many, though, have been able to create an art out of accepting charity. **The great Baal HaTanya, R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi ZT"L**, was well known as a champion of the mitzvah of Pidyon Shvuyim - redeeming Jewish captives. He once came to a city that was famous for its miser. It seems that this stingy man, despite his considerable wealth, was loath to share his blessings, no matter how worthy or urgent the cause. Rabbis and beggars alike avoided his home.

Anyone who did unwittingly end up on his doorstep was offered a single rusty copper coin, which even the most desperate pauper would promptly refuse. When R' Shneur Zalman arrived in the town, he adamantly insisted on being led to the miser's home. The next day, the Rebbe, accompanied by two communal members, were standing in front of the miser's mansion. Before knocking on the door, the Rebbe requested that his companions not utter a word, no matter what they hear or see.

Several moments later they were sitting in the luxurious parlour and the owner was returning from his safe with a small velvet money pouch. "Yes," said the rich man, after listening to the Rebbe's heartfelt plea, "A touching story indeed! Widows and orphans in captivity. Ah, the suffering of the Jewish people! When will it all end? Here, please take my humble donation." He handed over a single rusty copper coin.

The others looked away with distaste, but the Baal HaTanya seemed pleased by the gift. He was actually smiling warmly as he put the coin into his pocket and said, "Thank you. May Hashem bless and protect you always." The Rebbe stood and warmly shook the man's hand looking him deeply in the eyes with admiration. "And now," he said, turning to his two companions, "we must be on our way. We have a lot of collecting to do tonight."

As the three rabbis walked to the door, the Rebbe turned and bade his host another warm farewell, thanking and praising him in flowery terms. The minute they were outside and the door was closed, however, one of the accompanying rabbis hissed loudly, "Rebbe, you should have thrown it back in his face. You call that a donation?" "Don't turn around and don't say another word," whispered the Rebbe as they walked down the path to the front gate.

Suddenly, they heard the door opening behind them and the miser calling: "Rabbis, please come back for a minute. Please, I must speak

to you, Please … please come back in." They turned, surprised, and in a few moments were again sitting in the plush parlour.

The rich man quickly asked, "Exactly how much money do you need to ransom these prisoners?" "About five thousand rubles," the Rebbe replied. The rich man raised his eyes and looked impressed. "Five thousand? That's a lot of money. Well, I have decided to give you one thousand rubles," said the miser as he took a tightly bound stack of bills from his jacket pocket and laid it on the table.

The other Rabbis were astounded. They stared at the money and were even afraid to look up at the miser, lest he change his mind. But the Baal HaTanya smiled, shook the miser's hand warmly thanking him, and wrote out a beautiful receipt replete with blessings and praises.

"That was a miracle!" whispered one of them to the Rebbe as they left the house and were again walking towards the gate. Once more the Rebbe signalled him to be still. Suddenly, the door of the house again opened behind them. "Rabbis, please I have changed my mind, please come in once more." They entered the house for a third time as the miser said, "I have decided to give the entire sum needed for the ransom. Here it is, please count it to see that I have not made a mistake."

"What is the meaning of this?" wondered the Rebbe's astonished companions after they had left the rich man's home for the third time that evening. "How did you get that notorious miser to give 5000 rubles?" "That man is no miser," said R' Shneur Zalman. "No Jewish soul truly is capable of stinginess. But how could he desire to give, if he never in his life experienced the joy of giving? Everyone to whom he gave that rusty old penny of his threw it right back in his face!"

R' Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter Z'tl (Sefas Emes) would say:



"Bnei Yisroel wanted to know whether their food during the year of shemitah would come through natural or supernatural means, like the Mann that fell in the desert for them. The first letters of the words **מַה נֹּאכַל** - 'What will we eat' spell out the word **מן**. Hashem answered that a miracle would take place - much like the miraculous quality of the mann -in the form of nature itself and they would harvest crops in great abundance."

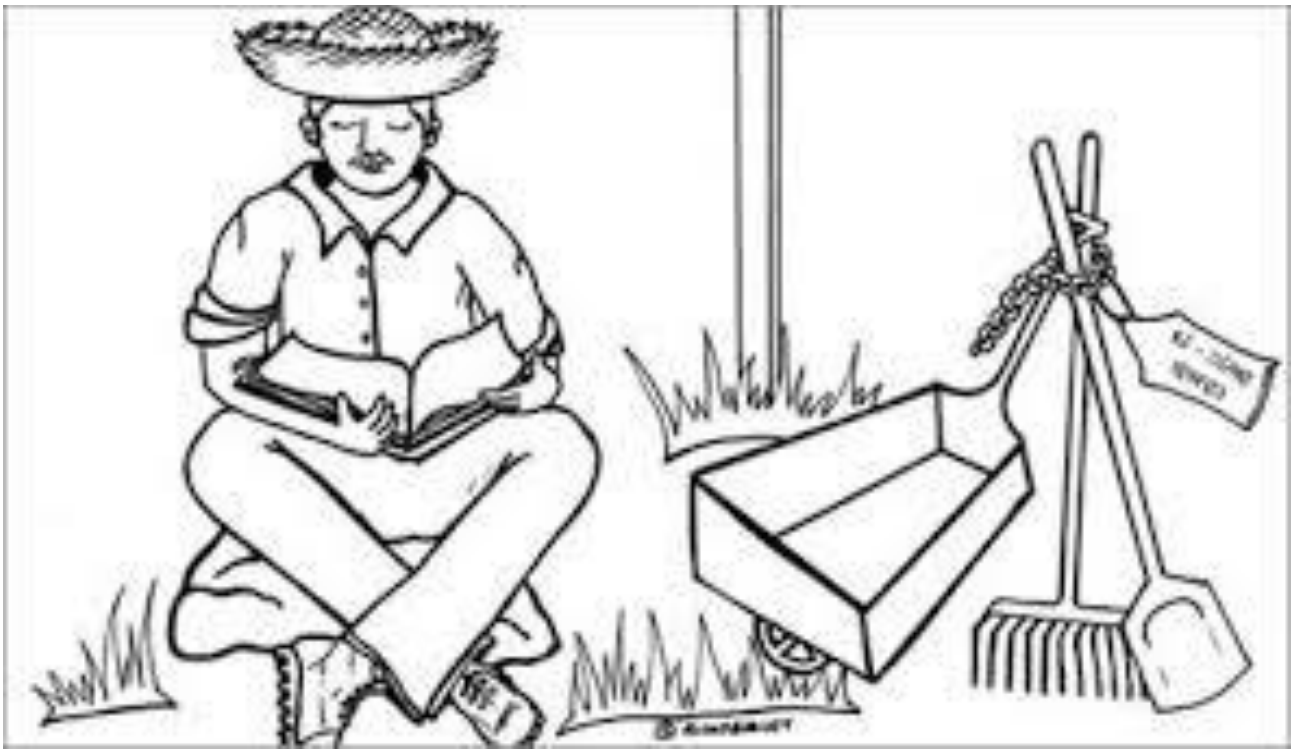
Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The *Mishnah* in *Avos* (1:14) states, "He (Hillel) said, if I am not for myself, who will be for me?" He follows this with questioning the point of one's self-concern, "And when I am for myself, what am I?"

The *Dvar Avraham* explains that although one has to be concerned about himself, he has to realize that he is incapable without assistance from others, as we see from this week's *Parshah* (25:36), "And your brother should live with you". Only through living as part of a unit, in *achdus*, we can reach our complete individual potential.

"In daily life, it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy."

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וְשָׁבְתָה הָאָרֶץ שַׁבָּת לַה׳: *"Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them, 'When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a Shabbat rest for Hashem." (25:2)*



Rashi z"l writes: This means a rest in honour of Hashem in the same sense as these words are used in the case of the weekly Shabbat (Shmot 20:10) where "Shabbat La'Hashem" cannot mean "a day for G-d to rest."

R' Eliezer Lipman Lichtenstein z"l (1848-1896; Nowy Dwor, Poland) explains: On Shabbat, we are commanded to rest, and to cause our animals and belongings to rest as well. If such a thing were possible, we should cause our land to rest and our crops not to grow on Shabbat.

However, Hashem made certain laws of nature, and He does not want them to be violated regularly. Therefore, our crops do continue growing on Shabbat. In exchange, we let our land rest for His honour every seventh year--one seventh of the time, as if it had rested one day each week. *(Shem Olam)*

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ וְנִמְכַּר־לָךְ לֹא־תַעֲבֹד בּוֹ עֲבֹדַת עָבֶד ***"If your brother becomes impoverished with you and is sold to you; you shall not work him with slave labour. Like a labourer or a resident, he shall be with you; until the Yovel/Jubilee Year he shall work with you." (25:39-40)***



The Parsha prohibits a master giving a servant work that isn't really necessary (e.g., telling a servant to warm things up when the master doesn't really need it). Why does the Torah prohibit this, since the servant has no idea that his work is unnecessary? The Torah wants us to feel an inner respect for the dignity of others, since we are all created in Hashem's image. *(Growth Through Torah)*

Living Jewish

אַל־תִּקַּח מֵאִתּוֹ נֶשֶׁךְ וְתַרְבִּית ***Do not take of him any usury or increase ("ribit") (Leviticus 25:36)***

The numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word **רבית** is 612 - one short of the 613 mitzvot of the Torah - teaching us that the mitzva of not charging interest is considered as great as all the other mitzvot combined. *(Baal HaTurim)*

If you could see yourself the way Hashem sees you, you would never doubt yourself again. ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810).

Etz Chaim – Stories of Gedolim



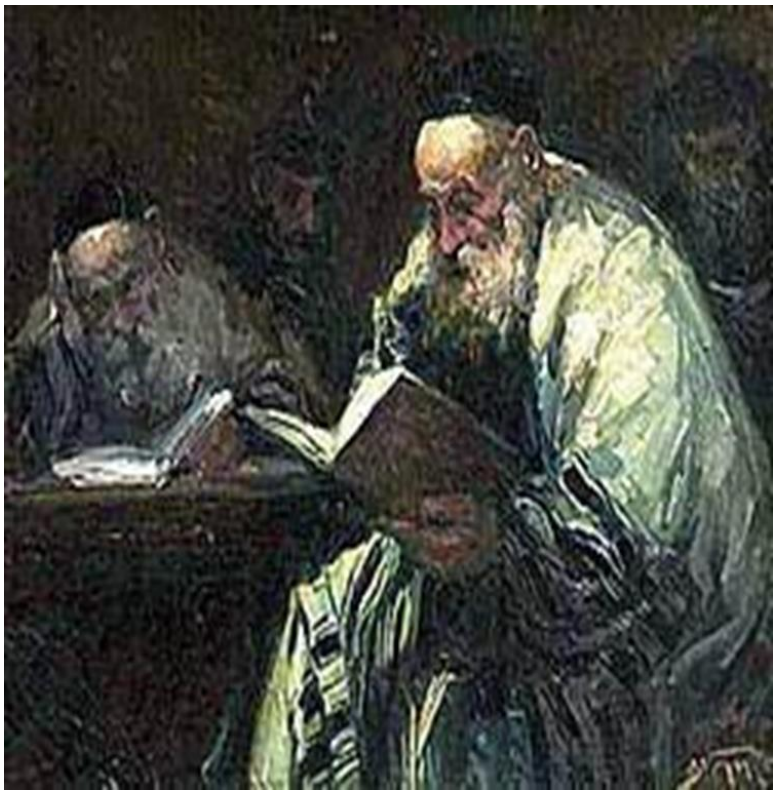
Hashem gives each Jew unique talents and potential, but unfortunately many times these lay dormant and are not used for the purpose they were given: to serve Hashem. But many times Hashem arranges events so that a person can become aware of his potential and messengers are sent to help reveal it.

Once **Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l**, was speaking to a group of young boys growing up on a kibbutz in Eretz Yisroel. One day a boy raised his hand to ask the Rosh Yeshiva a question. Impressed by the question posed, R' Aharon responded "A boy that asks such a question should be learning in a Yeshiva".

The young boy took the Rosh Yeshiva's kind, positive words to heart and decided to begin to learn Torah. This boy made beautiful progress and eventually became the famed Mashgiach **Rav Don Segal**.

R' Don Segal was known to daven with intense concentration, and his recital of Hallel was a sight to behold. Upon reaching the verse "Hodu L'Hashem ki Tov Ki Le'olam Chasdo" Praise Hashem for He is good forever is His kindness, Reb Segal's immense gratitude to his Creator was clearly apparent for all to see. One positive remark said to a little boy, the result: a life devoted to the service of Hashem.

L'Maaseh



After World War II, those Jews who survived the war were placed in DP (Displaced Persons) camps. Soldiers from the United States army were there to attend to the basic necessities of these survivors. Rabbi Goldman was an observant Jewish chaplain who went out of his way to provide for the needs of his brethren. One of his functions as chaplain was to determine each survivor's most urgent needs. He would mount an army truck and with the help of a megaphone, instruct the people to line up. The survivors would then file past the truck and tell Rabbi Goldman what they needed as soon as possible.

One of those who stood in line was Mr. Schwartz, a battered survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp. When his turn came, he looked up at the chaplain and said, "I need a Gemara Bava Kamma." Rabbi Goldman did not believe what he was hearing. He looked at Mr. Schwartz and said in a kind, soothing voice, "I am here to try to get you clothing, medical supplies— whatever you need to become healthy again. How can I help you?"

Mr. Schwartz looked up and responded, "Let me explain my immediate needs to you. Five and a half years ago, I was studying Masechta Bava Kamma. Then the Nazis came and destroyed Jewish life as we knew it and sent me away to the camps. I have not seen a Gemara since that day. Now, Baruch Hashem, I am free to study

Torah again, and I want to resume my learning. What I need most right now is a Gemara. Please help me to obtain it."

Rabbi Goldman just stood quietly and looked at Mr. Schwartz and thought to himself. Five and a half years in the Nazi concentration camp, and all this man wanted was a Gemara. He decided that he would do whatever he could to find a Gemara for Mr. Schwartz, and he soon succeeded in locating an old Mesechta Bava Kamma among the contents of a Hebrew library dumped by the Nazis.

Words cannot describe how Mr. Schwartz's eyes lit up when Rabbi Goldman gave him the Gemara. Five and a half years of misery, torment and longing — for freedom to learn Torah and to live as a Jew should live — all came to a climax when Mr. Schwartz thanked Rabbi Goldman and took the Gemara. His heart rejoiced that he was finally able to learn again!

Living Jewish

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ ***And if your brother becomes poor, and his means fail with you, then shall you uphold him*** (25:35)

The Jewish people is likened to a single body, with all the corresponding physical components and organs: head, heart, etc. Just as when there is pain in one limb the entire body suffers, so too should every Jew experience the pain of his fellow and take steps to alleviate it.

If you see someone floundering in the mud, the only way to help him is to jump down and pull him up. To help a fellow Jew, we must be willing to sink down into the mud up till our neck. (**Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin**)

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני ה' כו:ב



'My Sabbaths shall you observe and My Sanctuary shall you revere, I am Hashem.' (26:2) - Chazal state (Shabbos 118b): "If the Jewish people would only observe two Sabbaths according to their law, they would be redeemed immediately"!

Perhaps this is hinted at in this Posuk: if "My Sabbaths" – in plural and the minimum plural is two – "you observe", that is, if you observe two Sabbaths, then you will merit "and My Sanctuary shall you revere" – an expression of sight, immediately you will merit to see the Bais HaMikdash! (*Rebbe Eliezer Tzvi of Kamarna as brought in Mesukim MiDvash)*

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

Mitzvos are meant to be done after the *Brachah* is recited over them. However, sometimes one can't say a *Brachah* because the action has to be performed first, for example, washing the hands before saying the *Brachah* of *Al Netilas Yadayim*. Therefore, the *Rama* explains (*Orach Chaim* 158:11) that one should wash his hands, say the *Brachah* of *Al Netilas Yadayim*, and then dry the hands after. This way, it is considered as if the *Brachah* was said before doing the action, since drying the hands is also part of the *Mitzvah* of washing.

What I Learned From A Burned Out Radiator Pipe

Written by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מַה־נֹּאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת - And if you will ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year; for we will not sow or gather in our crops?!" I will enact My blessing for you in the sixth year and it will yield a crop lasting for three years *(25:20-21)*

Ostensibly, the mitzvah of Shmitta and Yovel — leaving the land fallow and not growing crops — appears to be a difficult mitzvah to appreciate. After all, the mitzvah causes landowners anguish over their inability to provide sustenance for their families. And while it is true that Hashem will bless the previous crop, it appears from the Torah that this only comes in response to the landowners' distress.

Interestingly, the **Tzror HaMor** says that this is precisely the point of this mitzvah! He explains that while the poor live in constant worry whether they will be able to provide food for their families, the rich generally take their lifestyle for granted. So much so, that they often forget about the suffering of the poor. Therefore, Hashem instructs that wealthy of society to refrain from producing crops so that they will also wonder what they will have to eat and how they will provide for their families — the same feelings that the poor people face every day. As a result of being placed in the same situation as those less fortunate, once the Shmitta and Yovel years end, they will feel more responsible and willing to provide for the needs of those less fortunate.

This week, I personally came to appreciate this message. As I drive to a Kollel in the afternoons — often at the last minute — I occasionally pass people who are looking for a ride to different places on the way ("*tremping*" is a common form of transportation in Israel!) Because I want to reach my *chavrusa* on time, I do not always stop to pick up people on the way because it will usually cause me some delay. However, this week, my car radiator pipe needed repairing and I found myself without a car for the day.

After the bus dropped me close to my home, I began to walk up the steep hill ten minutes from where I live. In the sun, with a suit and hat, I really began to appreciate the difficulty of those who make this walk on a daily basis. I also felt the relief and gratitude when someone stopped to give me a ride up the hill. For me, this was my "Shmitta and Yovel" for it forced me to appreciate the difficulty that others face, which I had come to take for granted. As such, I decided, *bli neder*, to set out earlier on my daily route so that I have the time to pick up anyone who wants along the way.

This is one example of applying the Tzror HaMor's message in our daily lives. I would never have wanted Hashem to give me the car trouble that I faced, but I am grateful to Him for reminding me of what I had forgotten.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

As part of the husband's *Erev Shabbos* preparations, he should make special time to prepare the Shabbos candles. Some have the custom that he even lights them and blows them out right away. This is so the candles will light more quickly when they are lit later for Shabbos. This also gives the husband a way to be included in the mitzvah of lighting candles. (*M.B.* 263:12)

Shmittah Is A Proof Of The Revelation At Sinai!!

Written By Benjamin A Rose



The parsha starts by telling us that Hashem spoke to Moshe on Har Sinai. Then it goes on to talk about Shmita. Rashi asks, "Mah Inyan Shmita Eitzel Har Sinai"; what does Shmita have to do with Har Sinai. He answers that this teaches us just like all the halachos of Shmita with all the details was given on Har Sinai so too were all the mitzvos and their intricate details.

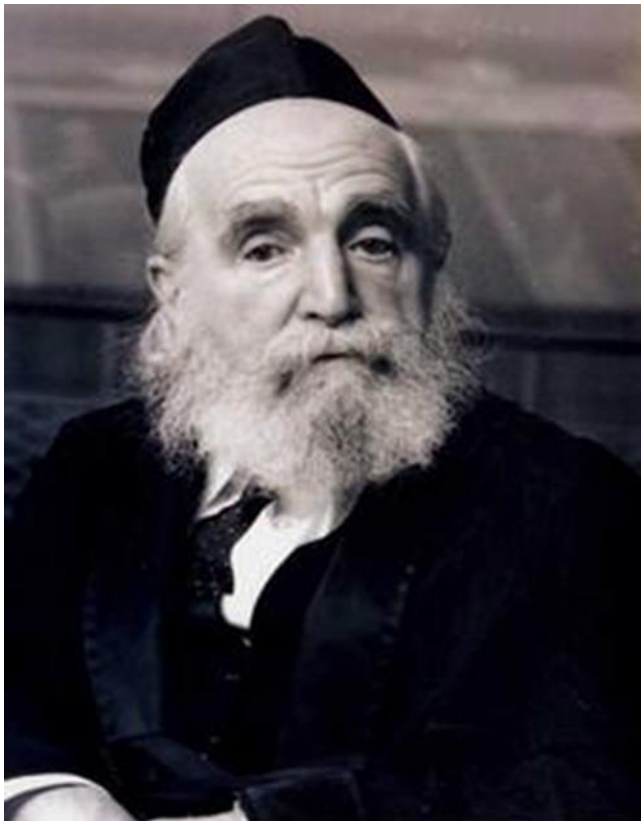
The Chasam Sofer asks why did the Torah choose specifically the mitzva of Shmita to teach us this lesson?

He answers that the Torah promises the farmers that even though they will not plant during shmita, Hashem will bless them with such an abundant crop the year before that it will last them for three years until the next crop is ready. This is a mitzva that is obviously given from Sinai directly from Hashem and not invented by man, for who else would dare make such a promise other than Hashem alone. Therefore the Torah tells us, just like Shmita was clearly given over by Hashem on Har Sinai so too were all the other mitzvos.

"Chesed is the virtue of the Divine; when a person does Chesed, he is walking in the footsteps of the Creator." ~ The Maharal of Prague.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BEHAR

Photographing Rav Moshe



One day a photographer set up a small ladder in the Bais Midrash from where he'd be able to take some pictures of the eminent Rosh Yeshiva, **R' Moshe Feinstein z"l**.

As they began the shiur, this fellow moved to different spots to get a better shot of the holy sage. Some of the students were upset and began to berate the fellow for disturbing them.

But R' Moshe quickly put an end to that. "Leave him alone," he said to his students. "He doesn't mean to disturb us. He is merely trying to do his job which is to get photos of me for whoever hired him."

With that, R' Moshe looked at the man and gave him a big smile for the camera, before returning to the shiur he was giving. He understood that letting the man take his picture was an act of kindness to a fellow Jew. *(Migdal Ohr.)*

A Last Request From Auschwitz

Rav Daniel Ochayon relates that he once spent Shabbos in Antwerp, Belgium. He went into a local Bais Medrash to Daven, and since he had arrived a little early, he began to peruse the Sefarim in the large bookcase at the back of the Shul.

Suddenly, he came across a Sefer that he had never seen before, which was written by an author with whose name he was unacquainted with. The thick Sefer was comprised of a question on a Mishnah in

Masechta Keilim, which is one of the most difficult Masechtos to master, and it had one hundred and thirty-seven answers which were given by the author.

Clearly, this author was an outstanding Talmid Chacham. As Rav Ochayon was standing by the bookcase and looking at the Sefer in amazement, he had learned and understood the question and was able to read through one answer, when he was approached by a man who was a resident of the community.



"I want to introduce myself," the man began. "I am the nephew of the author of the Sefer that you are learning. The author perished in the Holocaust. He was a businessman, a Koznitzer Chosid, who was one of Krakow's wealthiest Jews. I was able to salvage some of his manuscripts, and this is one of them."

The idea that such a volume of brilliant Torah learning was authored by a businessman who did not spend his entire day immersed in Torah, but only learned a few hours in the early morning and late evening, was by itself an incredible feat. It was the rest of the man's story that was truly stirring.

The man continued, "I had the sad occasion to meet up with my uncle in the Auschwitz concentration camp. We were together for three years. One night, he woke me from a deep, exhausted sleep and said to me, 'You should know that because of your youth and good health, you will probably be the only one to live through this Gehinom. I have

a feeling that tomorrow is my last day on this world. My time has come, and I sense that I will meet my fate in the gas chamber. "I ask one favor of you. This will be my final testament, my will, which I ask you to execute. I have been Bentched with a prolific memory. As a result, I remember the entire Shas, both Bavli and Yerushalmi by heart. From the very smoment that I entered the accursed gates of Auschwitz, I have not stopped learning. I have a daily and nightly Seder, where I review all the Masechtos.

"I estimate that by the time they take me in the morning, I will have reached Masechta Mo'eid Katan, Daf Zayin. I want you to promise me that when Hashem frees you from here, you will complete the Masechta for me.'"

Rav Ochayon was astounded at the type of Yidden that were lost in the Holocaust. He realized that the other six million Jews who were killed have the same last request from all of us, and they are begging us to complete the Masechtos and Sefarim that they would have completed, but they couldn't. He said, "If they could ask us, they would request that we do it for them, and finish many Masechtos that they couldn't get to!" *(Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

The Reward of a Forgotten Chesed - Rabbi Dov Brezak

Many years ago there was a poor man by the name of Reb Getzel. He was a simple and G-d fearing man. He was also very strong physically. Reb Getzel was always happy and never complained even though he was poor. One day he became sick and he felt that his days were numbered. He sent his wife to the Rav of the town to request that he pay a visit to their home. Reb Getzel wanted to speak with the Rav before he would leave this world.

The Rav, who was very dedicated to the people of his town, summoned his assistant and together they went to Reb Getzel's

house. As the door was opened for the Rav, the Rav, with a look of astonishment on his face, closed the door. After a moment he then opened the door and proceeded inside.

Reb Getzel's pale face lit up at the sight of the Rav. With a very weak voice he apologized for troubling the Rav to come, but he immediately proceeded to explain why he did so.

"I know that my days are numbered, and therefore I am very afraid. I am not a learned person, I never had the opportunity to learn Torah. All that I learned was how to say the daily prayers and to recite some chapters of Tehillim by heart. Even that I do not do so well."

Reb Getzel sighed deeply and continued, "Now that I am to stand in front of the Heavenly Court, I tremble at the thought that I have nothing to show for myself after a lifetime in this world. But even worse than that I have no one to say kaddish for me or to learn for the merit of my soul. This is the reason I had the audacity to trouble the Rav to pay a visit to my home. I humbly ask forgiveness for the trouble.

"Please find me someone that will say kaddish for me and that will pray for my soul, even though I have no way to pay this person in return", asked Reb Getzel.

"Certainly Certainly", said the Rav as he attempted to calm Reb Getzel down. "I am sure you have nothing to worry about" continued the Rav, "You have surely done the best you could in your situation.

"Please share with me some of the good deeds you have done in your life" asked the Rav of Reb Getzel. "But Rebbi, I have nothing. I am leaving this world with empty hands. I have no good deeds that will accompany me to the World of Truth", said Reb Getzel.

"I am certain that you have done something special", said the Rav. "Try to remember. Try to remember which great and special mizva you have done."

Getzel closed his eyes and was quiet. All was quiet except for Reb Getzel's belabored breathing. After a few minutes he opened his eyes and he said, "I remembered something that can perhaps be considered a good deed but I don't think it was anything special. If not for your request, Harav, I wouldn't even think that it was worth mentioning.

"It happened many years ago. One day I was on my way to work, in the slaughterhouse which was far from our town on the other side of the nearby mountain. I climbed the mountain with ease, as I was young and strong, and the climb was no challenge for me.



Suddenly I saw a wagon full of people speeding down the mountain. The men woman and children were all wearing festive clothing, apparently, they were on their way to a wedding. The horses were racing wildly.

"It was clear that the wagon driver had lost control of the horses. When I saw the danger the passengers were in, I walked towards the horses and stood in their path. I stuck out my hands on each side hoping that the horses would see me and slow down. They didn't slow down. At the last minute I jumped aside, I grabbed the reins of one of the horses and managed to climb up on him. Somehow I was able to get from there to the wagon. I grabbed the reins from the drunken wagon driver, who didn't even realize the danger he had gotten his wagon into.

"With great difficulty I was able to hold back the wild horses. Bechasdei Hashem they calmed down and slowed down. I continued to drive the wagon to the nearby town where the wedding was apparently to take place. When I realized that, aside from the shock of what happened, no one was hurt, I left the scene and went to work.

"That's all that happened, concluded Reb Getzel, in his simple way."

"You did a great thing", said the Rav. "Its merit will certainly stand you by. As for your request I will see to it that someone will say kaddish and pray for your soul.

"At this point though, I wish to ask that you return a favour for a favour. Promise me that if you will be able to, you will tell me how your judgment went in the Heavenly Court." Reb Getzel promised and the Rav left.

On their way home the Rav's assistant asked for an explanation for the Rav's strange behaviour.

"When we first came to Reb Getzel's house after opening the door the Rav closed the door and after a few moments opened it again?"

The Rav replied, 'I will explain what happened. When I first opened the door I saw a lit menorah over the head of Reb Getzel. I understood that the Yid that was in this bed was not a simple person rather a great zaddik. I hurried and closed the door so that I could think how to conduct myself with him.

"Now, we both know that that this Yid endangered himself to save the lives of others. He saved an entire wagon of people and proceeded on his way without even thinking he did anything special. He will certainly merit to be in a very special place in Gan Eden", concluded the Rav.

Reb Getzel passed away. On the third day after his passing, he appeared to the Rav in a dream. "I came to fulfill my promise and tell

you what happened in my judgement at the Heavenly Court", said Reb Getzel.

"When my trial [in shomayim] began a giant scale was placed before me. On the left side were placed all the aveiros that I had committed, big and small. On the right side to my surprise, I discovered many mitzvos and good deeds. Still as I suspected the left side was heavier and was tipping the scale .

"Then, right before my judgement was passed, as if from nowhere a wagon with horses appeared. It went onto the right side of the scale. The wagon, the horses, all the people in the wagon including the drunk wagon driver, and even the mud on the wheels, all of these went onto the right side of the scale and tipped the scale in my favor.

"Immediately after that the call went out, 'Open the gates of righteousness for the zaddik'. Before I was sent to Gan Eden I was told that I have to fulfill my promise to you the Rav. More than that, I do not have permission to say. ***Honorable Rav, Please publicize how great is the mitzva of kindliness to another Yid for even something that appears simple and without value in this world, could be important and the deciding factor in the next world."***

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The *Chazon Ish* said about himself, "I never met a person who is more naturally lazy than I am."

Rav Ephraim Wachsman, Shlit"a, taught from this statement that if we look at how much the *Chazon Ish* accomplished despite the fact that he was lazy, anyone can overcome their natural inclination to be lazy and accomplish vast amounts more than one thinks he can accomplish!

Mind Your Own Business



Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, zt"l

One Shabbos, the **Kopicznitzer Rebbe**, Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, zt"l, noticed two non-religious Jews standing outside and smoking a cigarette. The Rebbe had tremendous Ahavas Yisroel, love for his fellow Jew, and he could not pass by without sharing his concern for them.

He began to speak to them in a soft and gentle tone, and said, "Good Shabbos, Yidden." Respectfully, they replied, "Good Shabbos, Rebbe."

The Rebbe said, "May I ask you a question?" and they answered, "Of course." He said, "Shabbos is such a holy day, and you are such fine Jews. Why are you smoking on this holy day?"

One of the men said to the Rebbe, "Rebbe, there is a saying, 'Mind your own business!'"

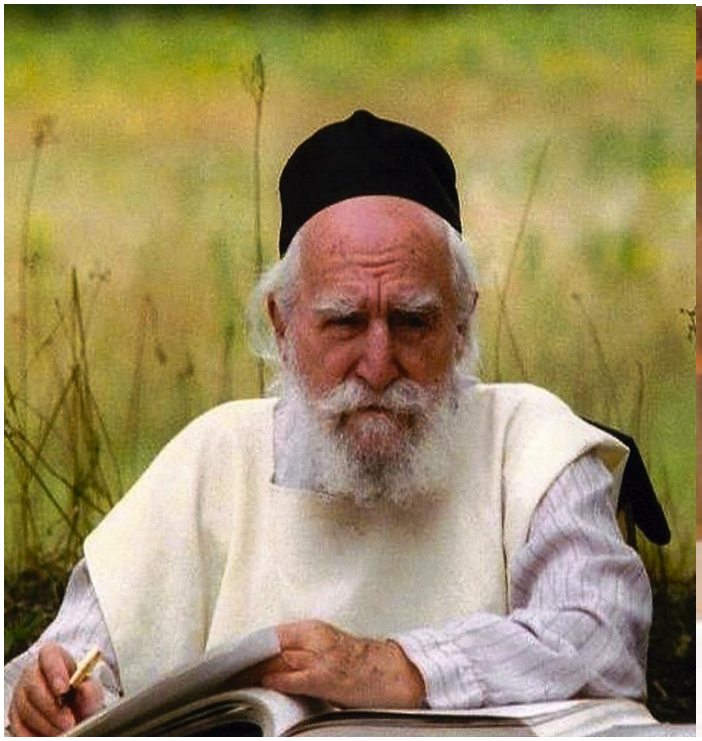
The Rebbe was unfazed and asked them another question. He said, "This street that we are on is very busy with many cars going back and forth. If someone Chas V'Shalom would be hit and lying here heavily bleeding, would you also say, 'mind your own business?'"

They said, "Of course not, Rebbe! With someone bleeding to death, we would do what we can to help him!"

The Rebbe responded, "Well, it is the same situation right here. I see two fine Jews standing on the street with their Neshamos bleeding to death. How can you tell me to mind my own business? Can you blame me for wanting to help them?"

The two men were touched by the Rebbe's sincerity and feeling, and they immediately threw the cigarettes away and promised to never smoke on Shabbos again! *(Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

The Danger of Outside Influences Corrupting One's Mind



Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l



The Steipler Gaon, zt"l

The Steipler, of blessed memory, once sent a messenger to Rav Moshe Feinstein, of blessed memory, regarding an important issue which the Steipler wanted Rav Moshe to become involved in. The messenger discussed the issue with R' Moshe and told him all the details.

When he was finished, he pulled out a Jewish newspaper, explaining that this newspaper happens to have an article about the matter. Rav Moshe declined to take the newspaper, saying that he had already heard the details so there was no need for him to see the article. The messenger persisted, explaining that it was possible that he missed one or two important details.

Rav Moshe responded, ***"I have not held a newspaper in my hands for seventy years. As soon as I read a newspaper, I will no longer be qualified to pasken because my mind will not be one hundred percent Da'as Torah (Torah understanding)."***

Comment: This is not a rant against newspaper reading. This is an appeal for maintaining a Daas Torah-mindset. The more outside influence we allow into our minds, the more diluted our understanding is of Hashem's Torah and the realities of the world.

The Torah Any Times Newsletter - Rabbi Aharon Walkin zt"l - I Love You, You Love Me

Rav Chaim Volozhin, in his commentary Ruach Chaim to Pirkei Avos (6:1), explains the meaning of Torah Lishma, known to be the highest and purest form of learning Torah, as meaning that one is engaged in the study of Torah out of love for Torah.

Along these lines, the concluding words of several Gemaras are, "And all of your children, learned of [the Torah] of Hashem…" Simply speaking, this refers to the fact that all of our children should be those who learn Torah. However, I once heard a Chassidish explanation, which takes these words to mean, "And like all of your children… should be your learning of the Torah of Hashem." Just as you feel for all of your children unlimited love, so should you feel unlimited love for the words of Hashem, for the words of Torah.

In one of my grandfather's introduction to his seforim, Beis Aharon, he writes words which stands out. He, so to speaks, talks to his sefer and writes, "My daughter, until now you were home and you were with me. Now you are to be published and given over into the world… I don't know if everyone will treat you the way I treat you with so much love… There will be some people will love you as they look for the truth in their learning and you will be of tremendous value…" Several gedolim commented that from these introductory words,

you can see the unbelievable love for Torah the Beis Aharon had. He spoke to his sefer as if it were his child, as if it were his daughter. "And like all of your children… should be your love of learning the Torah of Hashem."



The great **Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz zt"l** was known to never hold a Gemara clutched at his side and carry it as such. He rather held it tightly, wrapped around by his arms and held close to his heart. Remarking as to why he did this, he said, "The way you carry a child is the way you carry your Gemara." Certainly, no one would carry his or her child at their side. You carry the child close to your heart. The same is to be true of our dear seforim.

Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank *zt"l*, the esteemed Rav of Yerushalayim, and his family were told during the 1948 war that they needed to leave their home and take refuge in bunkers. Given these conditions, it was unknown as to when they would return to their home. Now, what does a person do when he has to leave his home for a long period of time, especially if he is unsure if he will ever return and even if will, is still unsure if the house will remain standing?

Rav Tzvi Pesach went to his bookshelf, where all his seforim were situated, and gave each sefer a kiss and said, "I'm leaving, but I hope one day to come back… I hope one day to come back… I am going to miss you…" For Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, his goodbye to his seforim was as if he was saying goodbye to a beloved child. "And like all of your children… should be your love of learning the Torah of Hashem."

At the conclusion of a Mesechta, as we make a Siyum, we tell the Mesechta, "*We will return to you, and you will return to us; our mind is on you, and your mind is on us; we will not forget you, and you will not forget us.*"

It is a real relationship. We love the Torah, and the Torah loves us…

Why I Matter



R' Chaim Yaakov Mordechai Gottlieb z"l (1899-1973; pre-war rabbi in Oyber-Visheve and other Hungarian towns) said in his Shabbat Shuvah derashah in 5686 (1925):

Typically, a fortress wall is not the outermost fortification that the fortress has. Rather, there may be a moat and/or a series of lower walls intended to prevent enemies from even approaching the main walls. Similarly, certain mitzvot are the fortresses that protect Judaism, and each of these is protected by Rabbinic decrees that prevent the deterioration of the mitzvah in question.

One of these mitzvot is emunah / faith. Emunah means believing the 13 articles of faith set forth in the Ani Ma'amin. One must accept these ideas upon himself when he recites Shema. And, when one recites the verse "Ve'ahavta" / "And you shall love Hashem . . . with all your life," he must accept upon himself a willingness to give his life for these beliefs. What are the outer walls that guard this fortification?

To believe in the words of our Sages; to pray with a minyan in a shul, taking care to say every single word; and to recite, "Amen, yehei shemei rabbah . . ."

A second fortress is Shabbat. When one keeps Shabbat as required, two angels accompany him home and say, "May it be His will that next week will be the same." On the other hand, if one transgresses Shabbat in public, he is like an idol-worshiper. The yetzer hara knows well the importance of Shabbat, but also knows that it can't seduce an observant Jew to transgress outright. Instead, the yetzer hara may tell a person, "You will earn more if your animals work on Shabbat, while you, of course, rest."

This is a big mistake, for Shabbat is the source of all sustenance and blessing. One who attempts to become wealthier by working on Shabbat is like one who attempts to extinguish a fire by throwing straw or kerosene in it. It's true that we don't see immediately that one who should know better but transgresses Shabbat loses his wealth, but in the end, G-d makes an accounting. What are the outer walls that guard this fortification? Not doing business on Shabbat; not directing a gentile to perform labor on one's behalf on Shabbat; and not moving muktzah items. *(Derashot Yagel Yaakov)*

From our Sages

שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע שָׂדֶךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְמֹר כַּרְמֶךָ ***For six years you shall prune your vineyard*** (25:3)

The Jewish people are called a "vineyard" by the Prophet Isaiah: כִּי כֶרֶם ה' צְבָקוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל "***For G-d's vineyard is the army of the House of Israel***" (Isaiah 5).

Each and every Jew must work at clearing up and pruning his own vineyard - his unfavourable traits such as jealousy, hatred, lustfulness, etc. (**The Alter Rebbe**)

Migdal Ohr - J. Gewirtz



One night, **R' Yisrael Salanter**, the great mussar master, walked past the home of a shoemaker. Despite the late hour, the shoemaker was still hard at work by the light of a dying candle.

"Why are you still working," he asked. "It is very late and soon that candle will go out."

The shoemaker replied, "As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend."

R' Yisrael spent the entire night excitedly pacing his room and repeating to himself that urgent life lesson: "As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend." This is a lesson we should always remember.

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

והיתה שבת הארץ לכם לאכלה לך... ולבהמתך The resting of the land shall be yours to eat, for you… and for your animals (25:6-7)

Why does the eating of man precede the eating of animals when it is forbidden for a person to eat before feeding his animals ?

Rav Chaim Kanievsky *Shlit"a*, answers that when it comes to *Shmitah* it is just the opposite, that which is fit for man to eat is prohibited to animals. If this is so, then the eating of man comes first and then what is not fit for man is given to his animal. (*A Gishmake Vort*)

Shabbos Treasures



Mitzvos are meant to be done after the Brachah is recited over them. However, sometimes one can't say a Brachah because the action has to be performed first, for example, washing the hands before saying the Brachah of Al Netilas Yadayim. Therefore, the Rama explains (Orach Chaim 158:11) that one should wash his hands, say the Brachah of Al Netilas Yadayim, and then dry the hands after. This way, it is considered as if the Brachah was said before doing the action, since drying the hands is also part of the Mitzvah of washing.

Maasei Emunim - A Story About Amen and Tefillah

It was at the end of 5774/2014, during Operation Protective Edge which began after Gaza terror organizations kept firing a steady rain of missiles and mortars on the Gaza Envelope region.

It was late at night. The brigade of elite soldiers, who were specially trained and equipped, made its way in the thick blackness of Gaza City. Their hearts pounded with prayer, as they focused on the mission they had been sent to, to help defend the residents of Eretz Yisrael, and especially those in the southern region, from the murderers who were targeting them.

Under cover of tick darkness, the brigade advanced carefully into the lion's den that is Gaza; the soldiers maintained absolute silence. When they reached their interim stop, they each took up their

positions, making sure to maintain a distance between them and to camouflage any unusual movement. They knew that on any corner not far from them, terrorists were lying in wait, with deadly weapons; these murderers just wanted their blood.



The soldiers carefully scanned the area for any movement. Shrieks of mortar shells sliced through the air constantly, and the atmosphere was tense and fearful.

After two sleepless nights, the soldiers were tired, but none of them could even dream of catching any sleep at the height of the fighting.

The exhaustion did not have a good solution at the time, but it was even harder for them to overcome the gnawing hunger. They hadn't eaten a thing in hours. As long as they were in the middle of battle, they did not pay attention to it, but now, as they were in a resting state, the hunger began to gnaw at them.

It was the glory hour of those small candies and sweets that the fighters had stuck into their pockets before going out to battle. These sweets had been sent to them by children on the home front who wanted to provide some encouragement. They were small

candies, but they were big enough to warm the heart and to silence the hunger for a time.

Like the rest of his friends, Shai, one of the soldiers, stuck his hand into his pocket and pulled out a chocolate coated wafer. The wrapper was wrinkled and the wafer was crumbly, but at the time, it was as precious as gold…

Shai tore open the wrapper and was about to swallow the wafer, when he suddenly noticed a small note that had been taped to it. His curiosity overpowered his hunger and forced him to peek.

The note was adorned with childish drawings, and stated, "Dear Soldier, Enjoy this and good luck. Please don't forget to make a *brachah*."

Shai looked at the note and felt a tear rolling down his cheek. The innocent note reminded him of home, and triggered a storm of emotions. The thought of the anonymous little boy living out there, who had chosen to send a small wafer with these heartfelt words to a person who he did not know, touched him deeply. But the contents of the note also confounded him.

On the one hand, he was very hungry, it was just a simple wafer and a little boy. But on the other hand, in the eyes of this little boy, the wafer was like a precious treasure that he had generously given to Shai, and his innocent request was so easy to carry out… Shai would have been happy to make a *brachah*, but being a *tinok shenishbah*, he had no idea how to do it. He tried to think hard but could not remember what he was supposed to say.

For a moment, he thought of skipping it, assuming that the boy would forgive him. But he quickly quashed the errant thought and decided that no! He would not eat this wafer until he found out what *brachah* to make on it.

He looked at the other soldiers sitting around them, hoping one of them could help him. Suddenly he noticed Moshe, the only religious

soldier in the brigade, sitting a few meters away. Moshe surely knew what *brachah* to make, but how could he ask him? He couldn't call to him; any unnecessary noise could bring calamity upon them. He also couldn't wait because he was very hungry and who knew how much time they had left here to wait.

He had only one option remaining – crawling. Shai began to crawl slowly and quietly towards Moshe, and when he reached his destination, he whispered the story of the wafer and the note, and asked him to help him fulfil the child's will.

"Sure," Moshe said. "Say after me, '*Baruch Atah Hashem…Melech Ha'olam Borei Minei Mezonos*.'"

Shai said the *brachah* and Moshe answered amen with *kavanah*. At that moment they heard a huge explosion, much closer than Shai had ever experienced in his life.

It turned out that a terrorist cell had suspected that the soldiers were there and decided to check it out by firing a mortar. Within a few seconds, the cell was eliminated, and the fighters got the order to scan the area to make sure there were no casualties. Shai also looked around where he was, and when he realized how great the miracle was, he emitted a cry of surprise. Apparently the mortar had fallen exactly where he had been taking cover a moment or two earlier.

Shai could not think of what would have happened if he would have capitulated to his hunger and given up on the *brachah*.

Rav Nochum Partzowitz, zt"l, Rosh Yeshivah of Mir, Yerushalayim, could not wait to go to Cheder in the morning, as his desire to learn Torah was so great. - He would often go barefoot because it took him too long to put on his shoes!

The Nazi and the Kabbalas Shabbos Surprise

In all matters of life, we have to sense *Hashgacha Pratis*, Divine Providence from Above, at all times. Even in the most dire of times and circumstances we must sense the guidance of Hashem. In 1943 during the Holocaust of European Jewry, when the Children Israel were being murdered and slaughtered through *Kiddush Hashem*, there were still times that it was quite clear that Hashem was watching over His Nation of Israel.

It had already been more than three years since the Nazis invaded France, yet, the main *shul* in Lyon continued to operate and function, and conducted regular *minyanim*. One *Erev Shabbos*, the militia of the city of Lyon known as 'The great shock of the Vichy government', decided that it was time to disrupt the prayers of the Jews and to destroy the synagogue.

The Rav of the *shul*, who survived the war with amazing *Hashgacha*, relates that on that particular Friday evening during *Kabalas Shabbos,* a Nazi furtively came into the *shul* and stood in the back. He was holding three hand grenades. His intent was to throw them at the congregation and then immediately run outside.

The Nazi opened the door of the *shul* and entered without being detected. A few moments after entering the *shul*, he armed the grenades and wanted to throw them. However, what happened at the very next moment shocked him and he stood wide-eyed as the grenades fell from his hand where he stood and he ran for his life. Indeed, the explosion injured some of the *mispalelim*, but *Baruch Hashem* there was no loss of life.

What made the Nazi run? At the exact moment that he wanted to throw the grenades at the congregants, the entire congregation – as one – turned towards the back of the *shul* where he was hiding. He thought that they had received some kind of sign or symbol that someone wanted to harm them, and they were turning on him to get him. He did not understand what happened and who informed on him.

He did not understand how he could enter the *shul* without being detected, and how it was that every person without exception turned around towards him??!



What really happened was that at that exact moment, the congregation reached the last stanza of *'Lecha Dodi' – 'Bo'ei b'shalom ateres ba'alah', 'Enter in peace, O crown of her husband',* when every congregation in all of Israel turns towards the back, towards the entrance to greet the Shabbos with joy and delight.

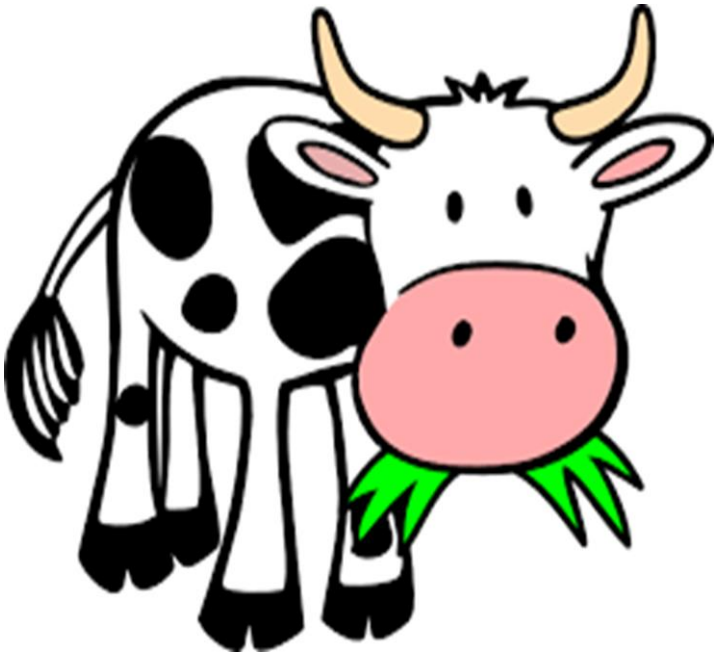
The lesson from this is that although we might find ourselves in the worst possible situation and it seems that there is no hope at all, we still must believe in our hearts that *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* is able to rescue us from any distress, and from any tragedy and illness, and if we continue to have faith and to totally rely on Him, then we will merit salvations and consolations. Only He knows all the times and only He arranges all that is happening in the world, and only Hashem could prevent the curse from entering the *shul* at the exact moment that the congregation was greeting the Shabbos.

Just as Hashem brought salvation to that *shul*, may we continue to have faith in Him and may He bring an immediate end to our exile!

We must thank Hashem. Not just for today. But for every milestone we've reached from birth to this very moment. ~ Living Emunah.

The Chofetz Chaim's Cow

As was the custom of most of the people who lived in the Shtetls of Poland, the Chafetz Chaim, O"BM, had a cow to provide him with dairy products.



At one point in his life, the Chafetz Chaim decided to temporarily leave his village of Radin so that he could devote himself entirely to his studies. He moved to Visilshuk and would correspond with his wife, who had remained behind, through the services of the wagon drivers in Radin.

Perhaps because of the high regard in which the Chafetz Chaim was held even by the most ignorant peasant in Radin, one of the wagon drivers could not over overcome his curiosity and opened the letter to see what the holy man had written to his wife.

One can imagine his surprise when he discovered that the bulk of the letter consisted of instructions that she must not allow their cow to leave their yard on market days. The Chafetz Chaim explained that on those days Radin was full of wagons belonging to non-Jews and that their cow might inadvertently eat some of the fodder that the owners had prepared for their own livestock.

Although the value of what their cow might eat was probably less than a Perutah (penny), one could not count on the gentile to forgive them for their cow's theft and they would therefore be guilty of sinning. (*Talelei Oros*)

Mrs. Tzipi Caton - The Pretzel Vendor



The smell of freshly baked pretzels could be sensed quite a distance away, as one pretzel vendor stood still waiting for customers amid the cold winter day. One day, a man who had never before frequented the area approached the vendor. "Excuse me, how much is a pretzel?" "25 cents," came the reply. And with that, the man took out a quarter and placed it down on the table.

Yet before the vendor could grab the steaming pretzel and hand it to the gentleman, he already began walking away. "Sir," yelled the vendor, "you forgot your pretzel!" But the man kept on walking without missing a beat. "Sir, you forgot your pretzel!" No response. Not wishing to leave his pushcart unattended, the vendor had no choice other than to return the pretzel back to where it belonged and keep the change.

The following day, the same scene repeated itself. The gentleman came over, asked how much a pretzel cost, put down a quarter and walked away without taking anything. Day after day, the same thing happened. Eventually, the vendor stopped reminding the man how he forgot his pretzel.

A year later, the man still paid for the pretzel every day but never took it. Yet one day, as the same scene which had occurred so many times unfolded, the vendor chose to no longer remain silent. "Wait! Wait!" he yelled. But the man kept on walking. This time the vendor left his pushcart and began chasing the man block after block.

Finally, he just barely grabbed a hold of the man. "What do you want?" asked the gentleman. "I don't need your pretzel. It's fine." "That's not why I'm here," replied the vendor. "I came to tell you that the price went up. The pretzel is now 35 cents."

This may sound humorous, but in truth, it reflects how we often live our lives. Many times, Hashem grants us the most wonderful, blessed life on a silver platter. Yet we take it for granted and move along without appreciating its gift and counting our blessings. And then the day comes when Hashem sends us a reminder and awakens us to just exactly what we have been receiving all along. He whispers to us, "Appreciate every moment of every day and use it wisely." The last thing we want is a rude wake-up call that we have been ignoring the beautiful price of life and forgotten to thank and praise the One who grants us every breath we take. ***As in the analogy, we would be wise to never forget who the true vendor is and how much the pretzel costs.***

The Rebbe's Perceptive Questions of the Chasan



Rabbi Chaim of Sanz never turned away anyone in need, but when Shmuel needed to marry off his daughter, the tzadik just looked at him and refused to give him a penny. "I will give you some advice," said the Rebbe, "and I will provide you with a letter of introduction to a person in Vienna named Nachum ben Yosef.

You must get from him 500 gold rubles. Just remember one thing: Don't take even one penny less than that amount." "But Vienna is a great city; how will I be able to find this person?" asked a stunned Shmuel.

"Don't worry. Just go into one of the shuls. There you will meet a man who will take you to him for five silver coins," replied the Rebbe.

The poor man soon found himself outside of the Rebbe's room, perplexed at his situation. The way to Vienna was very far; his pathetic old horse would never make it. He sat down on a bench and thought for a while. He decided to sell the horse and proceeded on the journey.

When Shmuel finally arrived in Vienna there were many shuls. He entered the first one and went up to the caretaker.

"Perhaps you know a person named Nachum ben Yosef?" Shmuel was afraid the man would laugh at him, but instead, he replied, "Yes, I know him and I'll lead you to him for five silver coins." The traveler was thrilled with his good fortune. He gave the man the silver coins and a short time later they were standing in front of Nachum's house. Shmuel knocked on the door and a distinguished-looking gentleman invited him inside. Shmuel handed him the letter from the Rebbe.

"I don't understand why the Rebbe thinks I should give you such a tremendous sum of money. I will be happy to give you one or two rubles, but five hundred is out of the question."

"No," protested Shmuel, "The Rebbe told me that I am not to accept even a penny less than the entire sum, and I am following his instructions!"

"All right, I'll give you fifty rubles, but that's it."

"You don't understand. The Rebbe told me I have to get the entire five hundred, and I must do exactly as he told me!"

This continued for another half hour or so, with the gentleman offering a bit more, and Shmuel flatly refusing to budge. Finally, the Viennese gentleman was so frustrated he didn't know what to do. He wanted to honor the Rebbe's request, but five hundred rubles was a fortune! He decided to ask his wife's opinion on the matter.

After reading the letter from the Rebbe the woman said, "Please give him all the money he requests, and I will explain everything to you. "Do you remember our trip to Budapest? When we were there, the Rebbe was also visiting. A wedding was about to take place, but none of the rabbis would agree to officiate because no one knew the groom. The bridal party was in a tizzy, not knowing what to do, when word was brought to them that the Rebbe himself would come.

"Finally the Rebbe arrived. He stood to the side, deep in thought, and suddenly asked that the bride's parents be brought to him. 'Tell me, 'He asked, 'Did you ever have other children?'"

'We had a little boy who drowned many years ago,' replied the father.

"'Would you tell me how it happened?' asked the Rebbe."

'One day, we went on an outing to the countryside. The children went bathing in the river, and our son disappeared under the water. We ran, but by the time we came, there was no trace of him.'

"Do you remember if he had any particular distinguishing mark on his body?' asked the Rebbe."

'Yes,' answered the mother, 'He had a deep scar on his knee where he had once fallen on a tree trunk.'

"The Rebbe called over the bridegroom and asked him to roll up his trousers. Sure enough, there was the exact mark the mother had described. The parents fell on their son's neck with tears pouring down their cheeks. With the power of his holy vision, the Rebbe saved the brother and sister from a terrible transgression. Word of this miracle spread from town to town, and people flocked to see this tzadik with their own eyes.

"I was present at the time, and I also went to the tzadik. I offered to give him a large sum of money to distribute to the needy. At the time, I didn't understand his reply, for he refused to accept any

money from me. He said that one day, one of his Chasidim would come and I could 'pay him back' then. Now I am asking you to give this man the entire sum of money that the tzadik requests from you."

The gentleman took the sum of money from a drawer and presented it to the Chasid. When the Chasid left, the woman turned to her husband and said, "There is one more thing I didn't tell you. The bridegroom in the story is none other than our own son-in- law, the husband of our daughter!"

Overcoming Challenges



"He was abandoned by his parents at the Soroka Hospital in Beersheva as soon as they heard his bleak diagnosis from the doctors. 'He will not have fingers or toes, and there will be a real chance of mental disability,' the doctor said.

The parents, despairing of having the ability to deal with such a complex case, opted with a heavy heart to give him up. They returned home, leaving their new-born child in the hospital."

This is how Rav Zand, a popular lecturer, described the story during a chizuk gathering two weeks ago in Arad for a group of people who had undergone a kidney transplant. One of the participants shared the extraordinary details of this account with me, and I confirmed it directly with Rav Zand. I truly appreciate his giving me permission to publish it.

With the parents gone, staff members at Soroka began an attempt to find a family that would accept a child who would face such a grim future. It surprised no one that there were no offers. Finally, a kind

nurse offered the child to her relatives, a childless chareidi couple from Bnei Brak.

Reb Eliyahu and his wife tentatively agreed to accept upon themselves this mitzvah, and they authorized the hospital to begin the bureaucratic process of adoption. They were hoping that the zechus of the mitzvah will help them have a child of their own. However, when they asked their rav, he stated that they should rather focus their energies on treatments to have a child and leave aside the adoption process.

Coming from a family where daas Torah is paramount, the couple called back the hospital and informed them that due to joyful circumstances they were placing the adoption process on hold.

Meanwhile, a long time passed without anyone expressing a willingness to take in the abandoned child. The hospital decided to give him up to the only institution willing to accept him — a Christian institution whose motive was not compassion but a passion to convert Jews to their religion R"l.

Hearing this terrible outcome, Reb Eliyahu and his wife were distraught beyond words. The image of a Jewish child growing up as a Christian — when they could have prevented it — tortured them to no end. On the other hand, they had the psak from the rav not to pursue the adoption.

On the advice of a friend, Reb Eliyahu went to consult with Rav Yosef Chaim Zand zt"l, a Holocaust survivor who combined a tremendous amount of Torah knowledge with the gentleness of the humble servant of Hashem. Rav Zand had a large family and a meagre income; he earned a living working for the local chevra kaddisha in Cholon.

Rav Zand listened carefully to the entire narrative. When Reb Eliyahu concluded, Rav Zand told him, "You asked daas Torah and you were advised to not go ahead with the adoption process. You are

therefore prohibited from following up on that." He then requested the number of their relative who worked at Soroka Hospital.

After Reb Eliyahu departed, Rav Zand went to consult with his rebbetzin, and they came to the decision that they would adopt the child themselves rather than give him up to missionaries. They did not look at their lack of funds or the small amount of space which already housed many souls — they would make room for one more, disabilities and all. Thus, Oded from Israel's south became an integral part of the Zand family of Bnei Brak.

Happily, it turned out that he was not affected mentally — to the contrary, he had a sharp and inquisitive mind. Even his physical disabilities were ameliorated with the advances of modern medical knowledge. His legs were amputated and he had prosthetic legs installed. It took Oded a while to learn how to use them, but relatively soon he was walking like everyone else.

For his hands, Hashem sent the Zands a hand specialist from Germany. It was 1974 and the doctor, a world-renowned specialist in his field, had come to Israel specifically to volunteer his time to heal soldiers who had been injured in the recently concluded Yom Kippur War.

He performed a delicate surgery on Oded that gained for him the use of his hands, even without fingers. For every step of the way, the Zands felt, it was possible to write an entire book. For example, how Oded overcame the challenge of bringing a child with such a severe disability to cheder.

The secret of his success, Oded emphasized, was his decision that "I am not someone to be pitied. I will grow up as a child like everyone else, despite my difficulties." This is how Oded successfully managed to cross the turbulent sea of his life, swimming without usable hands...

The Zera Shimshon explains in this week's parsha the Gemara which says that "Someone who is beloved to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, He brings suffering on him."

Asks the Zera Shimshon, why would Hashem, the epitome of chesed, oppress a tzaddik? He explains that the purpose of suffering for the righteous is to increase their reward in the next world, where goodness is supreme and tranquillity is everlasting.

The Gemara, though, adds a condition to this, that the man receiving the suffering must accept it with love. It then is counted as if he had brough a korban asham.

"Therefore," adds the Zera Shimshon, "He sends [suffering] on the person to see if he will receive them with love, as the pasuk says [regarding korbanos], "voluntarily." We also see this at the story of Bava ben Buta, who would donate an asham tolui every day."

Indeed, Oded accepted with love the challenge that Hashem chose to give him. He practiced writing without fingers, and even when the melamed once gave the class a punishment to write Ashrei three times, Oded joined his friends in the penalty. "I did not mean you," the melamed told him in surprise.

Oded responded, "I deserve the punishment just like everyone else, so I wrote it, too," His hand ached from the strain for a few days, but he was satisfied that he was no different.

It was inevitable that people would stop and stare at Oded and his hands. But he got used to it from a young age, bravely ignoring the looks of curiosity and pity of children and adults. "I did not let myself be pitied or allowed myself to be treated differently," he recalled.

When he rode the bus, he would always prepare the exact change to pay the fare because he couldn't hold coins in his hand. Oded once got stuck without a small coin so he paid with a bill. The driver handed him the change in coins, placing it in the palm of his hand.

The coins scattered all over the floor of the bus, and the driver began screaming, "Kid, you don't even know how to take money!" Oded was mortified, but he ignored the shouting. He bent down and began collecting the coins as best as he could.

Other passengers noticed what was going on and came to his aid. At that point, driver realized what he had done and apologized.

Riding public transit was always an uncomfortable experience for Oded. Because of his disability, he was forced to sit even when there were older people standing in the aisle. He was at the receiving end of a full-fledged mussur drasha quite a few times, such as when one person yelled at him, "Mechutzaf, don't you see that there are older people standing?" But he continued the policy he promulgated as a youth — **"I am not to be pitied."**

There were several times when Oded was forced to explain that the reason he did certain things was because of his disability — for example, when he was once davening Shacharis at a shul and the gabbai offered him hagbaah. "I signalled to him," Oded said, "that I could not lift the Sefer Torah since I don't have fingers."

That did not end his embarrassment. Following davening, one of the respected members of the shul called him over to explain the severity of not accepting the honour of hagbaah. Left without choice, Oded showed him his hands.

How fitting are the words of the Zera Shimshon on our parsha of the tremendous reward awaiting those people who get insulted by someone but do not respond — "And those who love Him will be as the sun comes out in its strength."

Explains the Zera Shimshon, "It is known that the mitzvah of tochecha is not to shame his friend — as the Pasuk writes, '**You shall reprove your friend but do not sin on his account.**' It therefore stands that those who in their rebuke end up shaming them are certainly not righteous and one can respond to them, 'Before you

rebuke me for the [minor sin of having] a toothpick in my tooth, remove the [much larger sin of the] beam from your eyes.' And yet, they still do not respond. This is why he is termed beloved to Hashem."

Quietly and without fanfare, Oded learned to remain cheerful even when he suffered more than his share of insults. To the contrary, as he grew stronger, he discovered more ways to overcome his challenge.

"I learned how to drive a vehicle that was adapted to my needs and which gave me the opportunity to get around like everyone else," Oded related. "Once, I tripped and fell and injured one of my hands and the doctor placed it in a cast. But I had no choice, I had to drive. I was stopped by a police officer who wanted to give me a ticket for driving with a hand in a cast. I raised my 'healthy' hand and showed him — there was no cast there but also no fingers. The officer panicked and told me 'Get out of here immediately,' in his words."

Back at the seminar for those with kidney transplants, Rav Zand looked around at his enraptured audience before delivering the punchline.

"That boy," he exclaimed, "is me!" To prove it, he raised his hands in front of their stunned eyes, showing that he had no fingers.

"This is all thanks to my adopted parents who embraced me warmly and gave me the strength and energy to succeed, who constantly imbued in me the belief that 'You can and you will succeed.'"

"Indeed," he added, "against all odds, I succeeded in yeshiva and accomplished some things in life. I am the author of the sefer Pnei Hashulchan on the laws of basar b'chalav, and here it is." He took out his sefer and asked them to purchase a copy...

Oded's sheer will, his toil in Torah, his striving to conquer nature without full use of his hands and feet, is a powerful lesson and an encouraging message for all of us.

Today, Oded has become a much sought-after inspirational speaker.

"I am called to lecture at many seminars and to listen to and advise people who are going through a crisis who feel that the stormy seas of life threaten to drown them," he says.

"I was recently asked to provide chizuk to the family of a child whose fingers were severely mutilated by a meat grinder. The parents were completely broken and in despair.

When I arrived at the parking lot near their house, the injured boy was waiting for me. I invited him into my car and we took a drive around the neighbourhood, subtly showing him how I, too, do not have fingers but I can drive and lead a normal life.

"By the time I began my conversation with the parents," Oded Zand revealed, "the boy had already convinced himself that he can handle his personal crisis." Reb Oded teaches us all that it is possible to successfully swim through our personal Yam Suf and cross it safely, despite the challenges or limitations that Hashem has chosen to place in our portion. Amazing!

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"וכי תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיד עמיתך אל תונו איש את אחיו"
"When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow, a man shall not aggrieve his brother."
(25:14)

QUESTION: Why is the emphasis on one's "brother"; isn't it forbidden to defraud anyone?

ANSWER: The famous *Chassidic* **Rabbi, Reb Nachum of Chernobyl** was once approached by a distinguished-looking person who offered to teach him secrets of Torah. Reb Nachum said, "I cannot accept your offer until I consult with my Rebbe." When he

sought his Rebbe's advice, the Mezritcher Maggid replied, "It is good that you came to ask, because that person was a representative of the spiritual forces which oppose holiness."

"Incidentally," the Rebbe asked his disciple, "What gave you the idea of inquiring before accepting his suggestion?"

Reb Nachum answered, "When I was young, my mother passed away and my father remarried. My stepmother was very cruel to me. I once came home from *yeshivah* for lunch when she was not home and noticed that she had left some fried eggs on the stove. Not wanting to waste time, I decided to serve myself and took a portion smaller than what she would normally give me. She returned home while I was eating and abruptly struck me across the face. I began to cry, and pleaded with her, 'Why did you hit me? I took less than what I normally receive!' She replied, 'I am punishing you because ***alain nemt men nit*** — One should not take anything alone without permission.' Since that very day I learned not to take anything without permission, regardless of how good or desirable it may be."

One may rationalize that it is justifiable to cheat a brother because he should extend his assistance to help family members in time of need. Moreover, as a "brother" he will surely understand and forgive. Therefore, the Torah declared, "A man shall not aggrieve his brother" — it is forbidden to take from anyone, even a brother, without his knowledge and permission. (**שמעתי הסיפור מהמשפיע הרב שמואל הלוי ז״ל לעוויטין**)

The Chazon Ish (Igros 3:1) said, "I want to discuss the foundations of emunah because emunah is the entire essence of man. A weak perception of emunah is the root of the illness of negative and foolish thoughts that enter the courtrooms of a person's heart."

"את כספך לא תתן לו בנשך" *"Your money you shall not give him upon interest."* (25:37)

QUESTION: The Hebrew word for interest is *"ribit";* why is *"neshech"* used here?



ANSWER: Rich and poor alike sometimes need a loan, and a person may feel somewhat depressed when he has to ask for a loan. The word *"neshech"* can also mean "bite." The Torah is teaching that when you are approached for a loan, give it with a smiling countenance and a pleasant attitude. Do not make biting comments that will distress the borrower.

The same also applies when giving *tzedakah* to the needy — give it with a smile, and don't say anything that would, G-d forbid, add to the pain of the poor person. (**מלאכת מחשבת**)

"כי ימוך אחיך ומכר מאחזתו ובא גאלו הקרב אליו וגאל את ממכר אחיו" *"If your brother becomes impoverished and sells part of his possession, his relative who is closest to him shall come and redeem his brother's sale."* (25:25)

QUESTION: Why is this law stated in the singular, while the laws stated in the previous *pesukim* are in the plural?

ANSWER: Often, success and affluence bring great popularity. An affluent person has many friends and associates who enthusiastically greet him and eagerly participate in his celebrations. When the wheel of fortune takes a turn and he is no

longer on the giving end, friends and even family suddenly turn down his requests for help, advising him to turn to someone else.

The Torah, therefore, speaks in the singular, to stress that when one is in need, everybody should consider it his responsibility to offer help and to see himself as the sole *individual* capable of coming to his brother's aid. (**אלשיך**)

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

After little **Yaakov Kamenetsky** was born, his family moved to a small town by the name of Dolhinov, where the people of the village had an unquenchable love for Torah. As a young child, his father would take him on Shabbos night at two in the morning to the *beis medrash* which was filled with the sounds of Torah learning, as if it was in the middle of the day.

At the age of eleven, the young R' Yaakov Kamenetsky left home to learn in the yeshiva of Minsk, where he passed an entry exam with the *rosh yeshivah*, *HaRav* Shlomo Glovenchitz, displaying his brilliance in learning. The *rosh yeshivah*, however, was still unsure whether he should accept such a young boy into the *yeshivah*, and told him: "You are not even *bar mitzvah* yet." With the innocence of a child, the young R' Yaakov replied: "Well, I came here to learn, not to be the tenth man of a minyan."

R' Yaakov was accepted into the *yeshivah*, and made his way to become one of the greatest Torah giants of his generation.

Gratitude to Hashem

Opens your eyes to his presence. Each sincere 'Thank You' draws you closer to him and perfects your soul. ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



Rav Yissachar Frand relates: "I would like to share an incident that I heard in the name of Reb Chatzkel Besser. He personally heard this story from the ***Sadegerer Rebbe*** in Tel Aviv. So much of life is being in the right place at the right time or being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The *Rebbe* had to be in Vienna on *Shabbos Parashas Zachor*, March 12, 1938. That was a very inopportune *Shabbos* to be in Vienna. On that Friday the brown shirted Nazis marched into Vienna and ransacked Jewish homes. Subsequently, the Nazis invaded Vienna and that was the beginning of the end for Viennese Jewry.

Ironically, the famous Reichman Family was also in Vienna in 1938. That *Shabbos* was supposed to be the *Bar Mitzvah* of the eldest brother Edward Reichman. Unfortunately, or at least what they thought was unfortunate at the time, Mrs. Reichman's father, who still lived in Hungary, had a stroke. They wanted very much that the grandfather should be at the *Bar Mitzvah*, but he was in no condition to travel to Vienna. So, the week before the *Bar Mitzvah*, the Reichman family with three of their children left Vienna to celebrate the *Bar Mitzvah* in Hungary. Samuel Reichman (the father) never stepped foot in Vienna again. That is how he was able to make it out of Europe. He fortuitously happened to be in Hungary.

The *Sadegerer Rebbe* had no such luck. The brown shirted Nazis zeroed in on every prominent Jew they could find. They grabbed Jews out of cabs, out of shuls, out of every place they could find them. They captured the *Sadegerer Rebbe*. This is the background to the story

I want to tell. I will relate what happened to him very soon. Years later, Reb Chatzkel Besser visited Tel Aviv. Early one morning, he was walking into the *Shul* of the *Sadegerer Rebbe*. He noticed the Jewish street cleaner sweeping the street and the sidewalk on the block of the *Shul*.

When the street cleaner reached the sidewalk immediately in front of the *Shul*, he stopped sweeping, walked past the shul, and then resumed his cleaning operation on the next block.

Reb Chatzkel Besser sensed anti-religious discrimination here and went over to the street cleaner and objected. "What's wrong with this piece of sidewalk?" The street cleaner responded "The *Rebbe* does not allow me to sweep there."

Reb Chatzkel Besser did not believe him, and repeated his question, to which the street cleaner repeated the same answer. He thought the street cleaner was making up the story or just being lazy. He went into the *Shul* and found the *Rebbe* and asked him directly, "Why won't the street cleaner sweep in front of your *Shul*?"

The *Rebbe* put him off and did not give him a straight answer. This was Friday morning. He kept badgering the *Rebbe* Friday night, *Shabbos* morning, *Shabbos* afternoon: "What does it mean 'The *Rebbe* does not allow him to sweep there?'"

At the end of *Shabbos*, the *Rebbe* explained the true story to his guest. When he was in Vienna that *Shabbos* in March of 1938, the Nazis took him and dressed him up in one of the uniforms of the street cleaners of Vienna, and they gave him a tiny little broom. They placed him by the steps of the Vienna Opera House and ordered him to clean every step. Of course, this was a humiliating experience for the *Rebbe*. He was wearing one of those little street cleaner's caps and essentially holding a toothbrush, cleaning the massive steps of the Vienna landmark.

He related that at that moment he made a 'deal' with *Hashem*. He said, "Master of the Universe! If You help me escape from here, I promise You I will sweep the streets of *Eretz Yisroel*!" He eventually made it out and he kept his promise. When he arrived in *Eretz Yisroel* and set up a *Shul* there, he accepted upon himself that he would not let anyone sweep outside his *Shul*. He would do it himself.

Every day, he would sweep the sidewalk in front of his *Shul*, to honour the deal he made with *Hashem* for saving his life!"

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin would occasionally go visit an elderly relative with his *gabbai*. The relative was bed-ridden and always looked forward to her visitors. When they arrived, they couldn't help but notice how poorly lit the apartment was, and how dirty and odorous the rooms were. As usual, Rav Yehoshua Leib asked if there was anything he could do to help.

Although the sick relative never allowed him to help, she replied that this time she had a request. "Please *daven* for me that I merit to live a long life!"

The *gabbai* was shocked at her words, thinking of the poor quality in which she lived, and wondered why it was so important for her to cling to life? The woman explained herself to him and said, "You must be wondering why I want to live many more years in such conditions." She continued, "Once every two weeks, a nurse comes to bathe me and clean my room, and for an hour or two after that, it remains fit for me to say blessings to my Creator.

There is a *shul* across the street, and I am able to open my windows and respond *Amein* and *Yehei Shmei Rabbah* to the *tefilos*. It is my hope to live for many years to come so that I can continue *davening* and answering *Amein*, even if it is only once in two weeks!"

Rav Yehoshua Leib was so impressed by her words that he repeated them to others many times and urged everyone to appreciate being able to go to *shul* regularly and without difficulty.

The Siddur Speaks

A grandson of the ***Steipler Gaon, zt"l***, once mentioned to his grandfather that he was going to *daven* by the *Kosel*. The great Sage asked him, "Please mention my name in your *tefilos*, and please *daven* for me". The grandson was astonished and said, "How will my *tefilos* matter when I mention you to Hashem? You are so much closer to Hashem than I am! How will it make a difference?"

The *Steipler Gaon* answered, "Please listen carefully. No *tefilah* ever goes unanswered. It's a fact of Creation that every single word of prayer that leaves the mouth of a Jew accomplishes something. It may not be now or tomorrow, and may even be fulfilled in ten days or in ten years, but results are always produced. Never underestimate the power of *Tefilah*, because success is guaranteed!"

The *Steipler Gaon* further explained that one can speak to Hashem at any time any day, and any time a Jew has a problem and cries out to Hashem, he is fulfilling a *Mitzvas Asei*, a Positive Commandment. The *Medrash Rabbah* comments that sometimes Hashem wants to hear numerous *tefilos* from us before granting our request, because sincere, heartfelt prayer is so precious to Hashem. We must realize that the closer we get to completing all the prayers wanted from us, the more the *Yetzer Hara* tries to dissuade us from *davening*!

The *Steipler Gaon* taught that one should never give up *davening* and asking Hashem for something, or think that his prayers are worthless, *Chas V'Shalom*, because every *Tefilah* is heard and answered by Hashem!

Hashem is the One who Does Everything For Us – Rabbi Yosef Palacci

We have a young boy that is twelve years old, who davens with us every Shabbos in our shul. One Friday night he is not in shul. I went to his house to see him. I met his father and asked him, "where is Eli?" His father said that he had eye surgery. I said, "Oh my goodness, how is he doing?" He said, "Rabbi it wasn't good."



I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I wasn't good, but it is good now." He explained that the surgeon who was supposedly the top specialist in this field came in with such an arrogance and said to me, "I don't think that this surgery is going to be successful."

He looks at her and says, "You are not going to do this surgery."

She replied, "What do you mean, I am not trying to offend you, I am just telling you the statistics".

He repeats, "You are not going to do this surgery. It is Hashem that does the surgery. You are just His messenger. I heard that you carry out the best surgery in the world. So be G-d's messenger and please go ahead with the surgery and make it happen."

She does the surgery, and after tells Eli's father, "You should know that you were right. I wasn't doing that surgery. While operating, I saw things that in all my years of carrying out surgery and I never experienced such a smooth operation. I attribute this to your faith in your G-d. He was there doing it with me. I was just His messenger."

This is what we always have to know. Any doctor or any person in life, are all messengers of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But at the end of the day, Hashem is the one that does everything for us.



Getting Your Hands Dirty By R' Paysach Krohn

A principal of a school told me told me, that the Rosh Hayeshiva, Rabbi Isner, (who taught the eight boys who were murdered in the Mercaz HaRav massacre, [6 March 2008], in which a lone Palestinian gunman shot multiple students at the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva in Jerusalem.) was going around speaking at various venues.

He said something remarkable and amazing. He lives in Israel where they wash the floors with a method called ***'sponga'***. They pour soapy water all over the floor and push all the dirty water down a central drain.

He said that a while ago, his daughter was in his house, and while they were doing ***'sponga'***, her diamond ring got trapped down the drain. She started screaming and she ran to her father for help. He said, "Let me see what I can do."

He bent down and put his hand in the filthy, mucky water. He managed to find it, and was about to pluck it out, when a stark realisation came to him.

This is amazing! "Here my hand is in all the filth and dirt, but I don't care. My main thing is that I must retrieve the diamond ring."

He said, "When I am teaching, and I see that a kid is out on the street, with all the dirt and all the filth, I don't have to worry about all that. My main task is to pluck out that diamond. That is how I look at every child.

What an insight! Every one of us is a shining diamond. Who cares if there is some dirt around us.



Self-Made Trillionaire by R' Yitzchok Fingerer



When I was growing up, I knew somebody who was blind. I had a very close relationship with him, and I once had the gall and audacity to ask him this question, but I needed to know the answer. I asked him, " What would you give in this world to have the gift of sight?"

He went very quiet, and then he said, " You know what, I would give an inestimable amount. If I had millions, I would give millions. If I had trillions, I would give trillions. I would give anything in this world to be able to see my children smile."

And then he said something that I will never forget. - "You boruch Hashem have the gift of sight. Do you know what that means?

That means that you have within you, not millions, but trillions of Dollars. When you wake up in the morning and you look in the mirror, and you can see, what is your nett worth? Not what's in your bank account, because that comes and goes. ***Be aware and appreciate the trillions you possess.***

R' Shlomo Ephraim Luntzitz ZT"L (Kli Yakar) says:

"During Shemitah, there is no sowing or harvesting, nor has anyone contributed to the produce in the fields. Consequently, no one has any rights or claims of ownership. Since most arguments originate from the impulse for ownership, the Shemitah year, when everyone is equal, is the true formula for peace."

Nothing to Give? by R' Shlomo Landau

I heard an amazing story that I would like to share with you.

There was a survivor from Auschwitz that was asked sometime after his liberation, what was his lowest moment in the years that he spent in that gehenim?

He said he had been in Auschwitz for a while, and he was deteriorating at a rapid pace. He was literally starving to death. One morning he woke up and he felt that his hours were numbered. If he didn't get something to eat that morning, he knew that he wouldn't make it through the night.

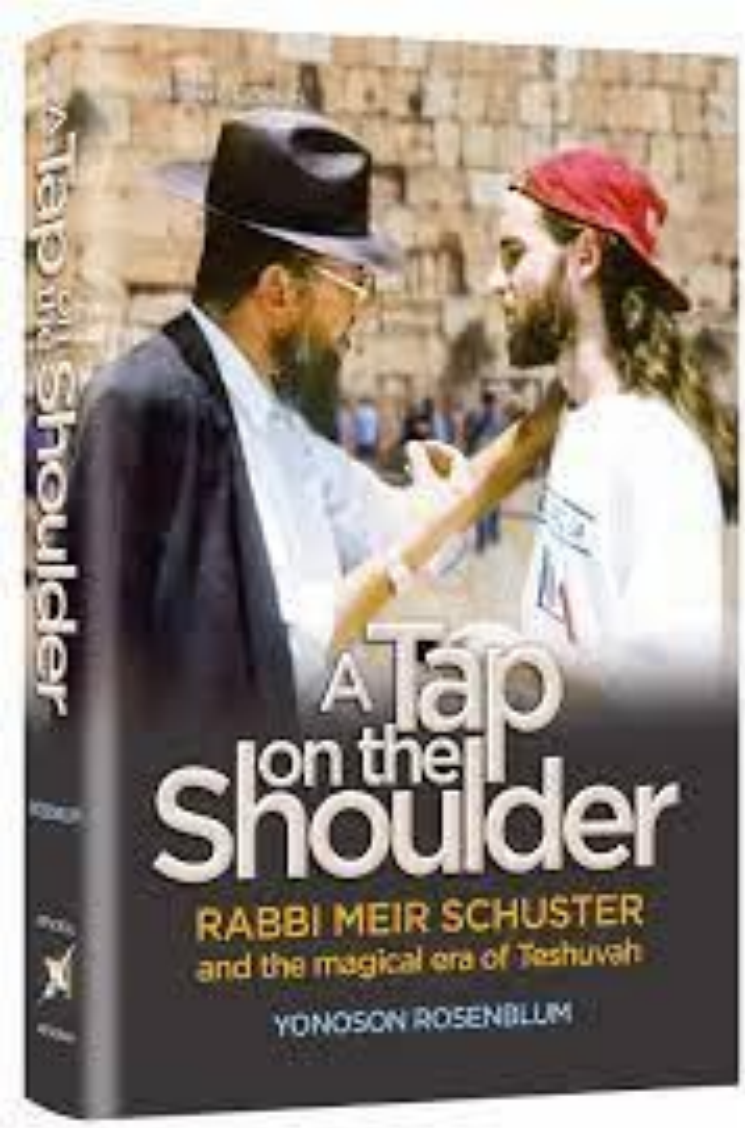
He went round to any Yid and begged for something to eat. "Please give me something – I am going to die. I am not going to make it to nightfall." But nobody had anything to give him.

And then one Yid said, "listen, I have no food for you, but come here, there is one thing that I can give you – I can give you a hug". He clasped the starving man and gave him a caring embrace and hug. He empathised with him and shared his pain.

The survivor said that that was my darkest and lowest day when I felt that I was going to die. But it was also the most amazing day in my life, because after that hug, something happened. I felt my strength returning. I felt the will to survive somehow washing over me, because somebody cared. And that is what I ultimately attribute my survival to – the hug of one Yid to another. That is true gadlus. ***There is always something you can do to help someone.***

The more we notice the gifts, great and small, with which Hashem fills every day, the more goodness He sends us. Every "Thank You" is like a korban todah brought to the beis hamikdash. ~ Tehillim Rabbah.

A Tap on the Shoulder by R' Joey Haber



There was a young man in Kollel. He had a large family and lived in a very small house. He came to the Rosh ha'kollel and said I am not sure what to do. My kids are going out of their minds. I need more room for my family. Perhaps I need to have an extension to my house, but it is going to cost more money than I can afford. We are already living hand to mouth.

So the Rosh said to him that it would be a good idea if he went to the kossel to daven to Hashem. So the man goes to the kossel and while he is davening, he bursts into hysterical crying.

Finally, he is finished, and while he turns around, a well-dressed man taps him on the shoulder. He says to him, "You look so sincere, what is happening? So, he tells the man his story.

He said, "Look, I just came here from America, and he pulls out his cheque book and writes him a blank cheque and tells him to fill it out for the full cost of the extension".

The man can't believe it and goes back to the Rosh to tell him that his tefillos had been answered.

There was another Kollel man who overheard this exchange. He said that wow! that is a great story. He also has a small house, and he also

needs an extension. He goes to the kossel, stands in exactly the same spot of the other guy and starts davening. He cries his eyes out and is waiting. Finally, he gets a tap on his shoulder. He turns around and…. It's a poor person who wants a Shekel! He gives him a shekel, and continues waiting, but nothing happens.

He goes back to the Rosh Kollel, and says, "I don't understand. My friend went to the kossel, he got the tap on his shoulder and got everything that he needed. I went to the kossel, got a tap on the shoulder and got a guy that wanted a Shekel – What happened"?

The Rabbi said, "It is very simple. Your friend went to the kossel trusting in Hashem and waiting for His response. You went to the kossel waiting for a tap. So you got a tap. You got exactly what you were waiting for!"

The truth is, we need to internalise our relationship with Hashem and life in this way. Our expectations are sometimes so large , that when we get a disappointment, we get despondent and over-react. Rejection is painful. However, your job is to stop the bleeding, and don't allow the rejection to equal dejection.

The only way to do it, is to realise that everything is from the Riboino Shel Olam.

Shlepers!

Horav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz זצ"ל once saw two bochurim, each carrying a chair to a shiur. He asked them who were the chairs for, and they answered that they we're carrying it for themselves.

Rav Shraga Feivel said, "Then you are just being shlepers! If you would carry it for each other, you would be doing a chessed of helping your fellow Jew."

Your Tribe by R' Paysach Krohn



Many of you will remember the extraordinary Rebbetzen Sheila (Chava Soroh) Feinstein O'H [wife of Harav Reuven, youngest son of Reb Moishe]. Everybody that knew her would admire her. She was an extraordinary person.

There was a Rebbi here in Staten Island, who taught in elementary school. Every morning he had to be in the yeshiva by 8.30 am. What happened was that one day he got up late, and he in a rush to get there on time. He was driving too fast, and he smashed into an expensive car. He knew that it was his fault.

He got out and apologised straight away to the non-Jewish woman. He said, " I am so sorry, I hope you are ok. It is totally my fault. I take full responsibility. Here is my name and contact number. Please take it to a body shop, and whatever it costs, I will pay without going through insurance".

Three days later, she called him up and gave him the price of the repair which was a lot due to the high-end car that it was. He said to her, " Maam, I am a teacher, and I am on a basic salary. I promise you that I will pay in full, but please will you do me a favour and be willing to take it in for a second quote to my local body shop to a friend of mine called Sam. I'm sure that it will come out considerably cheaper for me. Please check his work to ensure that you are satisfied, but I know that it will be carried out to a very high standard." - She said, "Yes, that is no problem."

She took the car to Sam. She was very satisfied with the quality of his work, and the quote was considerably less than before, and agreed to have the repair carried out there.

After Sam repaired the car, he asked the Rebbi for full payment. So the Rebbi calls up the lady, and says, "I spoke to Sam, and of course he wants to get paid straight away. However, as I told you, I am a teacher, and I don't have a big salary. So, I have a request to make to you. If you don't want to do it, I will understand. But is at all possible, that you will kindly lay out the full payment for me now, and allow me to pay you back in twelve monthly instalments?"

She thinks for a minute and says." Yeah, that will be ok."

And every month he sent her a cheque. When the twelfth month came, he calls her up. And says that the last payment I would like to pay in person. I would like to talk to you.

She said, "yes, that's fine". He gets her address, and he comes to give her the final payment.

Before he gives her the cheque, he says, "Maam, I have to ask you something… You know, I have been wondering this ever since the day that I smashed into your car – You have been so incredibly kind to me. You don't know me, and I don't know you. I would like to know why such kindness? Why would you do all this for me?"

She said, " I work in the public school system. Sheila Feinstein is my principal. When I knew that you were from her tribe, I knew that I could trust you."

Can you imagine that. I guarantee you that Sheila Feinstein never said a word to this woman about this accident. But she was a walking talking Kiddush Sheim Shamayim. And this made an impression on this non-Jewish woman. And that was why she was willing to trust somebody from the same tribe.

You too can be a walking kiddush Hashem.

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

In Your Best Interests

The Baal Shem Tov was once approached by a student who complained that he was unable to come closer to Hashem. He said, "Each time I feel that I am approaching closer to Him, I find myself farther away than ever."



The Baal Shem Tov replied with an example. "When a parent wishes to teach his child to walk, he first waits until the child is well enough developed to be able to stand firmly. He then stands close to the child, and stretches out his arms within inches of the child.

"Although the child is afraid to move so he does not lose his balance and fall, the closeness of knowing that his parent's protective arms are right there, combined with his desire to reach his parent, encourages him to take the first step. When this is accomplished, the parent moves back a step, and continues to urge the child to come to him. As this process is continued, the child learns to walk."

The Baal Shem Tov explained that the child is undoubtedly thinking, "What is going on here? Every time I make a greater effort to reach my parent, he distances himself more and more from me! What is actually happening, is that the parent and child have different goals. The child's goal is to reach the parent, but the parent's goal is to teach the child to walk. Allowing the child to reach him too soon would stop the child's learning process. Your situation is quite similar," said the Baal Shem Tov.

"You wish to reach Hashem. However, Hashem's goal is for you to learn how to search for Him, because that is how you grow in Ruchniyus. If Hashem were to allow you to reach Him as you desire,

your growth would come to an end, and this is not in your best interest!"

[Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5782 from the Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.]

Judging People Favorably – R' Moshe Gruenstein



Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein writes that a parent got a call that their son was in a terrible car accident. He gets to the hospital, and the doctors tell him, that the situation is not good. He needs an immediate operation on his brain.

There is only one specialist surgeon in Eretz Yisrael that can do this type of operation. They get hold of him, but he says that he can't come right now as he is busy, but will come as soon as he can.

So, they wait one hour, two hours, three hours. The father is going out of his mind. He calls the surgeon again who says, "Listen, I can't come right now, I am in a situation and have an emergency. But as soon as I can get to you, I will come.

Four hours, five hours. Six hours later he showed up. He walks into the hospital, doesn't say hello to anybody, and goes straight into the operating theatre. He carries out the operation, and straight away leaves without saying a word or goodbye to anyone.

As he is walking out, the father sees him and is exploding with anger. He couldn't take it anymore, and shouts to the surgeon, "You know, if this would have been your son, would you have also come six hours later?" The surgeon does not respond and walks straight out.

Later on, the father finds out that at exactly the same time that his son got involved in the car accident, this surgeon's son was also involved in a car accident in which his son died at the scene.

The reason why he couldn't come right away, was because he was busy with the levayo of his son. And after the levayo, instead of going home to sit shiva, he came straight to the hospital to perform the operation! Who knows what this man was going through? And that is why he couldn't greet anybody.

Never could you entertain the possibility that something like this could ever happen. The father didn't know where to hide out of embarrassment. He obviously had to ask for mechila.

This is what דָּן לְכַף זְכוּת means. This is something that we all have to work on. Don't jump to conclusions about other people.

Do Something by R' Yisroel Majeski

The Chofetz Chaim said over in the name of **The Dubno Maggid:**

The Dubno Maggid was walking in Vilna, and he sees a blind almanah - widow, walking with her young son. He says to her, "Hello, what can I do for you. What do you need?" She breaks down crying, and says, "My husband passed away. We have no food or heating in the house."

The Dubno Maggid says, "My home is your home." He takes them under his protection. He hires a melamed to teach the child Torah. They became part of his family.

The Chofetz Chaim says, "Do you know who this 8-year-old boy turned out to be?..... **The heilige Rav Shloime Kluger Zt'l!**

The Chofetz Chaim would cry, and he would say, "How many other people saw that blind almanah and her son every day, but just gave her a few coins, and say, 'Oy nebech'?" But the Dubno Maggid took them in and took personal care of them. From this we got one of the gedoilei olam.

The Chofetz Chaim would conclude by saying, "How many more Rav Shloime Klugers are there out there, and we just walk by?"

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein would say, "And how many Sorahs, Chayas and Esthers are there out there? How many future mamas of klal Yisrael are out there, that people are just willing to walk by?" To Rabbi Wallerstein, there was no such thing as 'just walking by.'

In New York there are signs on the subways that say, "If you see something – say something." Rabbi Wallerstein's mantra was, "If you see something – DO something."

Emunoh In Our Lives

There is a *Yid* in America called Rav Nissan Mangel. Young Nissan was just 10 when he was sent to Auschwitz and a year later his father was killed on the day that Auschwitz was liberated. Nissan was sent on the notorious death march, endless days of constant walking without a morsel of food. If he would have stopped for a moment's rest he would have been shot. Eventually, Nissan felt that his strength was giving way and he prepared to step out of line.



Suddenly he had a vision. He was sitting around his **שבת** table, and his father was telling a story…

There was a **חסיד** who came to visit the **בעל שם טוב**. Whilst there, he received a message that his wife was about to give birth and he should return home immediately. It was already dark, but the **בעל שם** instructed him to leave. The **חסיד** said, "but *Rebbe*, I have to travel through the forest, where there are gangs of bandits. How can I travel there at night all alone?"

The **בעל שם** looked at him and responded, ***"ah Yied geit kein mohl nisht alein" (A Yied never walks alone).***

Young Nissan fortified himself, survived the death march and built a beautiful family. Because he knew that ***"ah yied geit kein mohl nisht alein"***...

Rabbi Yisroel Majeski - I'm Not Giving Up



My first Pesach program I spent with Rabbi Wallerstein in Arizona, I received a call from someone I was vaguely familiar with that her sister was coming over Chol Hamoed to join the program. I took in the news and planned on finding the right time to have a brief conversation with her. I eventually did, though she sat still, with her eyes looking down. I knew that she was going through a difficult time.

Years later, I called the girl and asked if she could go back to that Pesach program and share with me some of her experiences with Rabbi Wallerstein. She told me the following.

"I was feeling extremely empty in my life, and knew that I needed to get away from my family and my home. I was in eleventh grade and took a flight to Las Vegas and found two Jewish couples I could stay with. No one knew where I was, except my sister. My sister didn't know what to do, so she called Rabbi Wallerstein.

"I then received a call from a man who introduced himself as Zecharia Wallerstein, but I had no idea who that was. 'What are you doing in Vegas'? he asked me. 'Who are you?' I shot back, and with

that, I hung up the phone. But Rabbi Wallerstein wasn't going to give up easily. He called me back and said, 'Listen, I'm booking a flight right now for you to Arizona, and you'll come to my Pesach program and spend the rest of time here.' 'You're crazy!' I said. 'I'm not going anywhere. I came here to get away from everyone and everything, and I'm not going to your program.' But Rabbi still wasn't stopping. He called back yet again.

'Listen, you're with people who your family is not comfortable with, and you need to be elsewhere. You need to come here.' Rabbi told me that he'd take steps to make sure I wouldn't remain where I was, which I didn't think he'd do, but he actually did. So, with his insistence, I took the ticket and got on the plane. I figured I'd go there for a few days, make Rabbi happy and then leave.

"I arrived at the Pesach program, and I didn't want to look at him, let alone talk to him. I was so angry at him. He gave me my own hotel room, but I still remained upset.

"Towards the end of Pesach, when I had settled in, he sat me down and began telling me about the Ranch. 'You have to go to the Ranch,' he said. It took me six months to finally make it to the Ranch. I got to the point where I realized that I needed the help. I was a mess at that time.

"But you don't know how bad I was. I got kicked out of the Ranch. For that to happen, it must have been serious. The Ranch is a place filled with love and care, and to be asked to leave is no small deal. I was a troublemaker, though, but a leader as well. I would lead the other girls to follow what I was doing, and the Ranch couldn't have it that I led the other girls to unsafe emotional places.

"So I went to a hospital for some time. Eventually I made it out, and I wanted to go back to the Ranch. But they said they were sorry that they weren't equipped to deal with me. I called Rabbi Wallerstein and told him my predicament. There was another rehab that I wanted to go to, and so, Rabbi called them and talked to them

about me getting in. But once they heard about me and what had happened, they didn't accept me. I had been kicked out of a lot of places in my life, but when this happened, I had never felt so dejected in my life. I got kicked out of the Ranch and another rehab wouldn't even take me in?

"I called back Rabbi Wallerstein and told him, 'Rabbi, if you don't get me into a place by tomorrow, it's done. I'm going to go back to my old life.' Rabbi then told me the following.

'I'm going to get you into another place, and I'm not giving up on you, because you're my child.' He said those words and I can't describe to you how it went straight into my heart. I knew he really meant it. The next day he got me into a rehab in New Jersey, and that's when my life turned around. He has been there for me ever since. I have brought to him everyone I've ever gone out with. He calls me before every Yom Tov and always has a good word to say. Whenever I would call, he would say, "I'm so excited to hear your voice!" That's a line a parent would tell a child.

But there's something else to the story.

After she had told me everything, I asked her, "Can I ask you one question?" "Sure," she said. "Who picked you up from the airport when you landed in Arizona?"

"Rabbi Wallerstein," she said.

When you run a Pesach program, your head is somewhere else. There were so many people he could have asked to pick her up from the airport. But he went to pick her up, because when it's your daughter at the airport, you don't send someone else to pick her up; you do it yourself.

Rabbi Wallerstein was known to have said that we must treat our Jewish children as our own sons and daughters. But it wasn't just talk for him. He walked the walk. It was real. He lived that way.

When it's your daughter, there are no excuses. You go the full length and do anything and everything to be there. Rabbi Wallerstein was such a man, and we must be that way too.

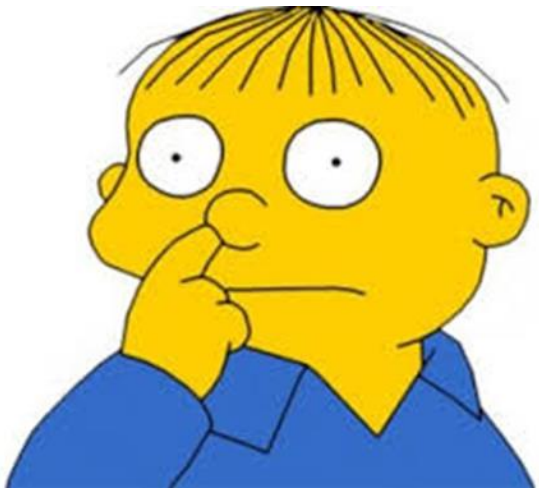
Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Once, when the **Bluzhever Rebbe, zt"l**, was already in his eighties, someone invited him to attend a Bris Milah, but he was unable to join in the Simchah. He said, "I cannot make it to the Bris, but Bli Neder, I will come to the Bar Mitzvah!" Thirteen years later he went to the Bar Mitzvah as promised!

The Bluzhever Rebbe always lived with pure and simple faith. He did not believe in the natural way of the world, as people looked at an old man and they thought he was close to the end of his life. Rather, he always said that everything is in the hand of Heaven!

~~~~~

Rav Simcha Wasserman, zt"l, said about Chinuch, "It's very important to always have a smile for a child. Always be friendly. Take him in your hands. And even when you need to say 'No', it should be done in a friendly way!"



Murderer

People say (*Bereishis* 49:6), **כי באפם הרגו איש**, it's possible to kill someone with your nose. If you turn up your nose in a derogatory manner, you killed your fellow man's mood, and sometimes you ruined his life.



Slanty Eyes

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* told the following *mashal*: There was a person who had a problem with his eyes; he saw everything slanted.



He lived in a small town, and he thought the houses were collapsing because he saw them on a slant. But they were tiny houses, and even if they fell, it wouldn't be a great tragedy.

Then he moved to a large city with skyscrapers. He shouted, "Be careful. Run away! The buildings are falling."

People panicked and started running away. One wise person said, "There is no reason to run. All we need is an eye doctor. Is there an eye doctor here?" People didn't understand how an eye doctor would stop the buildings from falling.

An eye doctor came forward, checked his eyes, and discovered that his eyes were the source of the problem. The problem wasn't with the buildings, but rather with his eyesight.

The *nimshal* is, that people have crooked eyes. They panic, they don't see how they will support themselves, etc., but it is all because they don't see matters correctly. When you see the world correctly, and know that *parnassah* is from Hashem, you will never worry.

Hashgachah Pratis

Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* would say, "When you experience *hashgachah pratis*, tell it to others! Let people know Hashem's wonders."

On this note, we share a *hashgachah pratis* story. The purpose of telling this story is to praise Hashem and teach us to notice *hashgachah pratis* in our lives.

A wealthy person in Bnei Brak lived on the third floor of an apartment building. He was getting older, and it was hard for him to climb the three sets of stairs each time he came home, so he had an elevator installed in his building.

He agreed with the neighbours that they wouldn't have to pay for the installation of the elevator, but if the elevator breaks down, everyone would chip in to pay for the repairs.



Once, the buttons that operate the elevator doors broke. An elevator technician fixed it, and everyone in the building paid their share. It was a significant sum. The wealthy person was *niftar* a couple of years ago. Shortly after his *peterih*, the elevator broke down again. This time the doors opened and closed, but the elevator wouldn't move from its place. The doors worked, but everything else was broken.

The neighbours realized it would cost a lot of money to fix it. Since no one in the building really needed the elevator (the one who needed it wasn't alive anymore), they decided that the elevator would remain out of order in the meantime.

The wealthy man's first *yahrtzeit* was approaching, and his family planned to have a *yahrtzeit seudah* in his old apartment. The rich man's son felt that they should fix the elevator since many guests will come, including rabbanim and respectable people. He ordered a mechanic to look at the elevator.

The mechanic opened the door and found a child inside!

A few hours earlier, this child was playing with the elevator's buttons, opening and closing the doors, when suddenly the doors closed and wouldn't open again. The child shouted and cried, but no one heard him. The mechanic came just in time to save the child's life. (The mechanic never fixed the elevator. When the wealthy man's son heard the outrageous amount it would cost to fix it, he decided to forgo the luxury. So, the mechanic came primarily to save the child and put a lock on the elevator so that such stories shouldn't happen again.)

When we hear this story, our hearts shout out, **מה רבו מעשיך ה'**, "How great are Your ways, Hashem!"

Indeed, miracles happen to us all the time, we just need to get into the habit of recognizing them.

Short And Sweet Story of The Week with Rabbi Mordechai Levin

There lived a great Talmid Chachom in Yerushalayim, Rav Klapholtz. He was renowned for his diligence in learning; the entire week he never removed his shoes to go to sleep as he only slept on his shtender while learning.

One day, he realized that he could not afford to marry off his oldest daughter, so he travelled to the **Chazon Ish, ZT"L**, in Bnei Brak to ask for advice. The Chazon Ish wasn't feeling well that day, but luckily Rav Klapholtz met him as the Chazon Ish was coming out of

his room to wash his hands before Mincha. Rav Klapholtz explained that he needed money to marry off his daughter and wondered if he should travel to America to collect.

The Chazon Ish asked him whose idea this was, and he replied that it was his. The Chazon Ish said, "If it is your idea, travel and be successful". Rav Klapholtz went to say goodbye to his Rebbe, the **Tshabiner Rov, ZT"L**, before leaving for America.

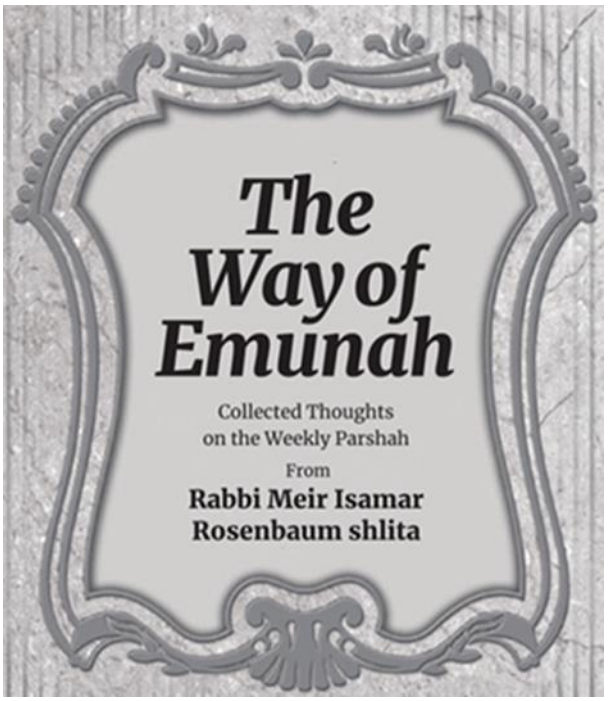
The Tshabiner told him that if the Chazon Ish said to go, then he must go, but since the Chazon Ish didn't tell him how to raise the funds, he should travel to America and simply continue learning day and night.



Upon arrival in New York, he went into a Bais Medrash and began learning. After a week he saw the **Satmar Rebbe** walking by, so he ran out of shul to ask the Rebbe a question in learning, and the two ended up speaking in learning for a while. The next day, the same thing happened and continued at the same time each day for two weeks.

After two weeks, the Satmar Rebbe, who by then was very impressed by Rav Klapholtz's Torah knowledge, asked him why he was in New York. Upon hearing his plight, the Satmar Rebbe said that he would gather his Chassidim and raise money for Rav Klapholtz. Sure enough, a few days later the Satmar Rebbe sent for Rav Klapholtz to give him a large sum of money. The Rebbe added: "I am constantly raising money for various needs, and I have never succeeded in raising as much money as I have raised for you! You now have enough to marry off not only one but two daughters."

Comment: In Parshas Behar, the Torah warns us to be fair in business (Vayikra 25:14). When a person truly believes in Hashem, he realizes that all livelihood comes from Hashem. Cheating another person won't make the cheater wealthier, as only Hashem provides and takes care of those who have true Emuna (faith in Hashem).



Helping One's Friend Before He Becomes Poor

וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהֶחֱזַקְתָּ בּוֹ
If your brother becomes destitute and his hand stretches out to you, you shall support him...(25:35)

Rashi states: "Do not allow him to fall down and collapse altogether, in which case it would be difficult to pick him up again; rather, support him while his hand is still stretched out to you."

The Rambam writes (Sefer Hamitzvos, Mitzvah 197) that this is the best way to give tzedakah. Do not wait until your friend becomes poor. Rather, help him when he begins to fall, before he falls completely. One early morning, the **Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch zy"a** was walking to the beis haknesses. On the way, he bumped into a simple Jew, who asked him if he could lend him 30 rubles for one day. The man explained that it was market day and he wanted to purchase some merchandise to sell but he was 30 rubles short of the amount he needed. The Rebbe told him, "I don't have any money on me right now but after davening I can go home and if you come to me then I will give you the money."

When the Rebbe got to shul and put on his talis, he began to think about this Jew. He thought about how this man worked hard for his

living and felt that he may have been wrong to delay giving him the loan until after davening. He realized that the man might need the money right away and the delay could cause him to lose some profit that he could have made. Immediately, he took off his talis and hurried home. He took the money he had there and ran to the market to find the man. When he finally found him, he gave him the money. Only then did he return to shul to daven.

Gemilus Chasadim Saves from Danger

What can a person do to be saved from suffering? How can we avoid having to go through hardships? The answer is to engage in helping others because gemilus chasadim is like a shield from danger.

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l writes (Sefer Ahavas Chesed, Chelek 2, Perek 5): "Today, Hashem's middah of judgment is ruling over the world. It seems like there is no way to be protected from the new difficulties that appear every day. Therefore, it is important to strengthen one's acts of chesed. This will lead to an increase in Hashem's middah of chesed.

Chazal say that when Hashem sees us doing chesed with each other, He will do chesed to us." He quotes the Tanas D'Bei Eliyahu (Rabbah, end of Perek 25) that says that when Klal Yisroel were in Mitzrayim, everyone made a pact to do chesed to each other. He explains that when they realized that they had no way to protect themselves from Pharaoh's decrees and saw that their suffering was getting worse every day, they decided to perform chesed for each other, knowing that if they do so, Hashem will do chesed for them and save them.

In fact, this idea worked. The pasuk says (Shemos 15:13): "With Your loving kindness You led the people You redeemed; You led them with Your might…" Chazal say (Pesikta, quoted in the Yalkut, Parshas Beshalach, Remez 251) that this means that Hashem redeemed us in the zechus of our chesed.

The Chofetz Chaim says: "How good it will be if this spreads throughout our holy nation and everyone would run to do this mitzvah. Through this, the world will be full of chesed. This could lead to all suffering coming to an end all over the world."

Rav Avigdor Miller on The Evil Eye



QUESTION: How should we understand the principle of ayin horah, the evil eye? And how do we avoid it?

ANSWER: It was explained here once but I'll explain it again. What is the evil eye? The evil eye is as follows: If you are proud of your possessions and you practice ostentation – you display your wealth or your success – then you cause a certain sorrow to other people who don't have that success.

That is why Jewish mothers who have a brood of a lot of children, they make it their business that when somebody comes into the house, they shoo the children out. The visitor may be a childless person or somebody who doesn't have that much nachas; why should he be pained to see how successful you are in building your family?

Now, you have to know that even though it's not your fault – on the contrary you are doing a great thing by raising a big family — nevertheless Hakodosh Boruch Hu takes into account the distress of every individual. And it doesn't mean that there will be some drastic action but there could be some kind of penalty for causing distress to people.

And that is why it is always good to cover up your success. Don't display your wealth with expensive diamonds, expensive necklaces; you can never know what is going to happen. Maybe Hakodosh Boruch

Hu will cause a bum to come along and snatch it off you. And that would be the easiest way to get away with it! Sometimes a physician might have to take it off you in the operating room.

And so, it's always good not to display your success. Try to be as plain as you can. That is why it is good for wealthy people to teach their children to live plainly; not to give them too much money to spend; and they should try to act like people of the poor. You wealthy people, see to it that your children are always like poor children.

They shouldn't have things to display and come among other children in the yeshiva and they show expensive watches or expensive toys to others and it hurts the poor boy or poor girl who can't afford it. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu doesn't keep quiet. And that is ayin horah; that is a bad eye, because people look at you with an eye and they feel bad and Hakodosh Boruch Hu will take some action. That is why it is so important.

Now, the things that people do to ward off ayin horah are all foolish things. The best way is not to be ostentatious, not to display your success. But if you are displaying it, it's not going to help you to put a piece of garlic in your pocket!

למודי משה United As One Person, With One Heart

During Matan Torah there was no poverty amongst the Jewish people. The Gemara in Bechoras (5b) teaches us that every Jew left Egypt with ninety donkeys loaded with Egyptian gold and silver. Despite all their wealth, the Torah testifies that the Jewish people camped around Har Sinai: **כאיש אחד בלב אחד**– united as one person, with one heart." They were all equally wealthy, and therefore no one felt that he was better or more worthy than anyone else due to his financial superiority. It was with this feeling of equality that they received the Torah.

דרך החיים Ruach Hakodesh

R' Chaim writes in his Orchos Yosher that when someone constantly learns Torah "**רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ מְדַבֶּרֶת מִתּוֹךְ גְּרוֹנוֹ**", "*Hashem speaks through his throat*".

R' Yisroel Meir Druk relates that someone once came and asked R' Chaim if he could name his daughter Adina. He replied, "Adina was the wife of Lovon." After hearing this R' Druk related this to someone who had a daughter named Adina. He became very alarmed to hear this and went straight to R' Chaim. When he asked him if there was a problem with the name, Rav Chaim replied, "Adina was the mother of the imohos. There's no problem."

Clearly, in the first case, Hashem was saying through R' Chaim that the man shouldn't name his daughter Adina, and in the second case, that they should keep the name. Both answers were completely true and came from the same source.

R' Yisroel Meir Druk relates, that throughout the pandemic he was the only person who didn't close any part of his yeshiva and R' Chaim told him that he wouldn't come to any harm. All of his yeshivos and chadorim functioned throughout. A hundred and twenty bochurim from Ponevezh even came to his yeshiva because their yeshiva was closed. At the beginning of the pandemic, two policemen walked into the beis hamedresh and saw it packed, but they walked out without giving a fine, even though they gave one to the yeshiva next door.

One final story is that during the Gulf war R' Chaim told everyone that Iraq wouldn't use chemical weapons and so there was no point in wearing gas masks, not even in Yerusholayim. "It's only good for Purim," he said. Someone wrote to R' Chaim, "All of the other chachmei Yisroel are saying that we should wear gas masks, and only one chocham is saying we shouldn't, to whom should we listen?". R' Chaim replied, "listen to the one who knows."

Meoros Hatzaddikim - Stories & Anecdotes

A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits. - Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

Rav Mordechai Twersky Likutei Torah (Iyar 20)

How Much Is Mud Worth?

Rav Mottele of Chernobyl arrived in a certain town and was dismayed that one of the wealthiest Jews did not come to visit him. When he sent his gabbai to see the wealthy resident and ask him why he hadn't yet called on the Rebbe, the baal habayis responded rudely, "I would gladly welcome the Maggid into my home! It's not the Rebbe I don't want, it's the Chassidim!

Listen, I have a fine home expensively and tastefully furnished and decorated by fine silks, elaborate, finely woven rugs and carpets, and the Chassidim will come in and ruin them with their heavy, muddy boots! Tell the Rebbe that he is welcome without his Chassidim!"

The attendant relayed the message. The Maggid, who was collecting, as usual, on behalf of the thirty-six hidden Tzaddikim, agreed. As was customary, the host was expected to gift the Tzaddik a sizable donation, but the Rebbe stopped at the threshold and explained that he had only agreed to enter the house and no more. "I agreed to enter, but if you want me to mount the stairs and enter your sitting room, you will have to increase the donation by each stair I climb!"

The wealthy host agreed and by the time the Rebbe sat at the table he was looking at a large sum of money indeed. "Now," said the Maggid, "I hear that you fear mud and dirt! Let me see if I cannot change your mind and shift your perspective just a bit with the following story:

"There was once a wealthy merchant who travelled in a fine coach pulled by strong, healthy steeds. As he travelled through the forest one day he came upon a rundown, rickety old wagon stuck in the mud.

The poor Jew, struggling to dislodge it, had two broken-down old mares, whose bony, weak bodies struggled unsuccessfully to pull the wagon out of the squelching muck.



The wealthy merchant dismounted and harnessed his own horses to the wagon, but this too was insufficient. Finally, he disrobed, divesting himself of his fine overcoat and silk gloves, and they climbed together into the mud side by side, pulling and pushing, until he finally saved the sinking Jew and his wagon from certain death in the swampy mire.

"After many years, the merchant left this world and came to the world of judgment. As he stood before the heavenly tribunal, the black prosecuting angel brought wagons full of sins to weigh on the scales of justice, while white-robed angels of mercy and defence also brought wagons full of merits and mitzvos, attempting to balance and tip the scales in his favour.

To his horror, it wasn't enough! The scales tipped to the side of judgment against him! Then the defence brought the merit of saving the life of the Jew in the swamp. They took the whole wagon, with the Jew and the horses – and the weight of them all balanced the scales as they swayed to and fro.

Just then another angel piped up and yelled to the Bais Din Shel Maala, 'You forgot to add all the mud! This wealthy, refined individual got down in the squelching, stinking mud, sullied his fine waistcoat and breeches and stank of filth to save his fellow Jew – surely all that mud counts for something!' "And they heaped on all the mud,

which tipped the scales in his favour," concluded the Rebbe, his eyes dancing.

The merchant understood the message all too clearly. It was his past life in the story; the Maggid meant his previous gilgul. He got up, walked to the door, swung it open wide in welcome and declared to the Chassidim outside, "Come in! Come in! Welcome and don't forget not to wipe your muddy boots on the mat. In fact, the more mud the better!!!" (Yehi Ohr #230-231)

A Rebbe's Debt to A Hitchhiker

As he approached Chernobyl, the Chassid was in a happy mood. And why not? Silently he counted his blessings: a loving wife and children, a flourishing business, and soon he would be in the presence of his holy Rebbe, the famous Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl. With these thoughts in mind, he was enjoying the scenery, when suddenly he spotted a poor Jew trudging along with a bundle on his shoulders.

Stopping the carriage, he offered the traveller a lift, which was gratefully accepted. For the first few miles both men were silent. But after a few minutes the poor Jew turned to the Chassid and asked him where he was headed. "To Chernobyl," the man replied, "to my holy Rebbe." "Aha!" the traveller said with a smile. "So, you're going to Mottele."

The Chassid was immediately offended. How dare this shabby-looking fellow refer to his holy Rebbe in such a familiar manner, as if they were intimates! On second thought, he decided to remain quiet. "Are you indeed one of Mottele's Chassidim?" the stranger persisted. "Yes," the man replied curtly in an attempt to end the conversation.

"What chutzpa!" the Chassid thought to himself. Under other circumstances he would have put this impudent clod in his place, but he had no wish to ruin the journey further. But the stranger was

clearly in the mood to talk. "How do I know that you're really a Chassid?" he inquired. The Chassid was very surprised by the question and said nothing.

"A man is measured by his deeds, and especially by his pocket," the stranger continued. "I'll tell you what – if you will pay me the twenty gold coins your Rebbe owes me, I will believe that you are his Chassid." The Chassid was shocked. What kind of nonsense was this? "If you can prove to me that my Rebbe owes you the money, I will gladly pay his debt," he blurted out.



The stranger smiled and fished around in his knapsack until he found a piece of paper: a promissory note for twenty gold coins, signed by the Tzaddik of Chernobyl. The Chassid examined it carefully. Yes, it really did appear to be the Rebbe's signature, and try as he might he could not find any evidence of forgery. Nodding his head, he folded the note several times and placed it in his snuffbox. He then took out his moneybag, counted out exactly twenty gold coins and pressed them into the stranger's hand. The rest of the journey was conducted in silence.

On the outskirts of Chernobyl, they reached a crossroads and the stranger asked to be let off. Before he climbed down from the carriage, he thanked the Chassid for his kindness and blessed him with success. The Chassid watched the stranger walk off into the distance. Within minutes the man and his bundle were no bigger than a tiny dot that eventually disappeared over the horizon.

The Chassid took out the promissory note and inspected it even more closely, but again could find no fault with it. By that time, however, he realized that he had arrived in Chernobyl. With more important things to attend to, he slipped the note back into his snuffbox and promptly forgot about it.

It was Friday when he arrived, and Chernobyl was filled with hundreds of Jews who had come to bask in the Rebbe's presence. Shabbos was spent in a state of spiritual elevation. To the Chassid, the opportunity to daven with the Rebbe and hear his words of Torah was nothing less than a foretaste of Paradise. When Shabbos was over the Chassid requested a private audience with the Rebbe.

Oddly, the first thing the Rebbe asked him was whether he had any snuff with him. "Certainly," the Chassid replied, immediately proffering his snuffbox. As he opened it, he saw the note he had forgotten about, and after a moment's hesitation handed it over to the Rebbe, who had noticed him pause. "How did this come into your hands?" the Rebbe asked him.

The Chassid related the whole unlikely story of the stranger who had claimed that the Rebbe owed him money and was shocked when the Rebbe verified it as true. "As Divine Providence has led you two to meet, I can reveal to you that that stranger is one of the thirty-six hidden Tzaddikim in every generation in whose merit the world exists," he explained, adding that he had taken it upon himself to uphold him financially.

An involuntary shiver passed through the Chassid's body. A hidden Tzaddik had travelled in his carriage – and he hadn't known! He had even mistaken him for an impudent clod…

Noting his distress, the Rebbe eased his mind. "Don't worry, you've done nothing wrong," he reassured him. "If you were chosen to share in the mitzva of supporting a hidden Tzaddik, there is no doubt that it is a good sign."

From that day on, each year during his annual visit the Chassid gave the Rebbe twenty gold coins for the hidden Tzaddik. And for the rest of his life he hoped to meet the stranger again. But it never happened. [Source: Yerachmiel Tilles]

Rav Chaim Hager Toras Chaim (Iyar 25)

I Would Recognize Eliyohu Hanovi

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz told the following stories about his illustrious forebear, the **Toras Chaim of Kosov**: The Toras Chaim once said about the zemer Eliyohu HaNovi recited as part of the Motzo'ei Shabbos Melava Malka zemiros, "We sing ashrei mi shero'a ponov bachalom – happy is he who saw Eliyohu HaNovi's face in a dream – but who knows what Eliyohu HaNovi looks like? If no one knows what he looks like, how would he be able to recognize him in a dream? I, however, concluded the Toras Chaim, would be able to recognize him if I saw him in a dream because I once saw him when I was awake, with my father the Ahavas Sholom, and this is how it happened:

"When I was a young child," told the Toras Chaim, "I often used to sleep in my father's bed. One night, I was awakened from my sleep to the sound of a conversation taking place between my father and someone else in the room. I looked up and was amazed to see an elderly man with a shining countenance sitting on my father's chair and my father sat at his side. I was upset by this – who dared take my father's seat at the head of the table?

My father said to the guest: 'Eliyohu, here in bed lies my Chaim'nyu – I would like you to give him a berocha!' "When I heard that this was none other than Eliyohu HaNovi, I was seized with fear and trembling and hid beneath the covers.

Eliyohu HaNovi reached in below the covers, placed his holy hands on my head and gave me a berocha. I took a peek from underneath the covers and saw his holy face!" "And so therefore I tell you,"Concluded the Toras Chaim, "that if I saw him in a dream, I could recognize him because I saw him when I was awake!" (Sarfei Kodesh 429-430)

The Apta Rav's Approval

There was once a dispute between Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and the Ahavas Sholom of Kosov regarding one of the shochtim in Nadworna. When the Kosov Chassidim heard that the Apta Rav seemed to side with the Radviller, they decided to get the Apter to meet with their Rebbe, the Ahavas Sholom, instead. One day, they heard that the Apta Rav was on his way to meet Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and they set out to put their plan into action.

When the Apta Rav travelled he used no passport to cross borders; instead, he always carried a mezuza with him and showed this at the crossing to the gentile guards, who would examine his pass and then wave him on. This time, when he presented his mezuza-passport, the border guards arrested him. This was because the border guards were none other than the Ahavas Sholom's Chassidim, disguised as border guards manning an imaginary border crossing.

In Kosov, a lavish welcome had been prepared at the Ahavas Sholom's home to welcome the guest from Apt. When the Apta Rav realized that he had been fooled, he was very angry and upset. He took two cups of mashke and asked the Chassidim who were dressed as guards to drink them.

The Toras Chaim, the Ahavas Sholom's son, realized that if the Chassidim drank the cups of wine, the Apta Rav would send them away from this world as a punishment. "Don't drink the wine!" he warned them, and he blocked the Chassidim and covered the cups, preventing them from drinking.

"Who is this young man who thinks he can interfere in matters not his own?" asked the Apta Rav. "Chaim'nyu!" chastised the Ahavas Sholom, "stand up so the Rebbe can see you properly!" When the Apta Rav's gaze fell on the Toras Chaim, he was greatly impressed, and he left the matter as settled. (Sarfei Kodesh 429–431)

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto Ramchal, Mesilas Yeshorim (Iyar 26)

After seeing the Mesilas Yeshorim, the **Vilna Gaon** said that if the Ramchal were still alive he would travel across Europe by foot to learn from his wisdom. Unfortunately, the Ramchal, who lived a short life, filled with persecution and suspicion, was niftar when the Vilna Gaon was just seventeen and the two never met.

About Mesilas Yeshorim, he said, "This book is witness to the greatness of its author, and his extraordinary vision of the human potential for elevation…"

Rav Shlomo Goldman Zvhiller Rebbe, Reb Shlomke (Iyar 26) - The Erev Yom Kippur Ganav's Feelings

The Rebbe's kevod habriyos – his compassion and caring for his fellow Jews – was on such a level that it astonished others. Here is a well-known anecdote: It was Erev Yom Kippur in Zhvill. The Rebbe had four gabbo'im sitting outside, simultaneously writings kvittlach and refereeing the throngs queued outside the Rebbe's door, the multitude of Chassidim and non-Chassidim, all the Jews of Zhvill, waiting patiently for the opportunity to receive the Rebbe's berocha Erev Yom HaKodosh!

Just then, the door to the Rebbe's inner sanctum opened and he quickly departed for his short visit to the old Bais HaChaim, where his forebears, Rav Moshele and Rav Michele, were buried, to daven in their zechus for a kappora for Am Yisrael. When the Rebbe returned, the audiences and berochos continued well into the seuda itself. At some point, when there was a lull in the tides of people and the tense rush quieted down and finally the house was empty, the Rebbe and his son went back toward the Rebbe's room – but the holy aura of the approaching Yom Kippur was broken by the sounds of someone searching around in the Rebbe's desk drawers in his room!

A ganav – a thief! On Erev Yom Kippur, in the Rebbe's room, obviously tempted by the large sums from the pidyonos of the Chassidim!

The Rebbe's son felt an arm on his shoulder restraining him. The Rebbe shrank back against the wall and allowed the thief who, panic-stricken at his discovery, fled. The entire time, rather than to confront the brazen thief, the Rebbe did his best to ease the ganav's discomfort and shame. He pretended not to notice and avoided him, averting his gaze. Such was the Rebbe's compassion toward the ganav stealing from him on Erev Yom Kippur. (Tzaddik Yesod Olom p. 193–194)

Rabbi Eliezer Parkoff - Hashgacha Pratis Story

There was a fellow in Israel, totally non-religious. He was a Mafia type of person, a real tough character. Interestingly enough he had a very special wife. His wife unfortunately became very sick with cancer. Her husband had a lot of money, so he flew in the best doctors from all over the world to treat her. But when they came, they all said, there's nothing we can do for you.

The guy got very upset. "What kind of doctors are you? Where'd you go to medical school? Some kind of clown school? Who were your professors? A bunch of clowns? You guys don't know anything." His wife, who was a fine woman, said to him, "My dear husband, doctors can't heal. You have to turn to the ultimate healer." "So who's that?!" "The Almighty." "Ach. Don't start up with this Almighty business! I don't believe in that nonsense. I don't want to hear about G-d."

But Hashem did get involved in that person's life at the right time. After his wife died, he had one child, a daughter. This girl got involved in Yiddishkeit. When the father found out about it, he blew a gasket. He wasn't the type of guy who liked taking no for an answer. He told his daughter, "If you don't cut out this nonsense,

get out of this house, get out of my life." But she didn't care. She ended up in a seminary in Bnei Brak where she became very frum.

One day the rebbetzin said, "I have a gevaldike shidduch for you. The guy is a real Ben Torah. One problem. He has the same background as you. But there's a difference. His parents, in spite of being totally secular, are totally supportive of him. They support him and want to help him build a Torah home. We think it's a good shidduch."

They met a few times and saw that they were a perfect match. They were ready to get engaged. The girl said, everything is fine and dandy, except my father. If he gets ticked off, my father could kill this chosson. The rebbetzin told her, "Go hint to your father about the upcoming simcha." So, she gently hinted to her father about the engagement. He blew his gasket. "I'd better never see you with that guy if you want that guy to continue walking on his two feet."

So, the daughter ran out of the house and ran to the rebbetzin. "My father is furious; he's not going to let this go through."

The rebbetzin didn't know what to do, so she went to ask her Rav. The Rav also said, I don't know what to do, you'll have to ask the Gadol Hador. She went to the Gadol Hador. He told the rebbetzin to tell the girl, keep a distance from your father for one week. Don't talk to him, don't say anything to him. Make believe you don't exist. And after one week, we'll see.

"That's not hard to do. My father's a very busy man, he's not around much anyway." Her chosson was aware of the Gadol's answer, he had emunas chachomim, so he didn't say anything. She didn't speak to him for a week.

At the end of the week, they were planning on getting engaged. They were going to make a vort in secret. But they weren't very comfortable with that. The day of the vort, the chosson said to his father, "I want to go to the Kosel to daven. I've got to air myself

out and talk to Hashem to help me." The father said, "You know what? I'll drive you." So, the father drove him to the Kosel, and the son poured out his heart to the Ribono Shel Olam and he felt much better.



They got back into the car, and as they were driving out of Yerushalayim they came to a junction called Shaar Hagai. They saw a car parked on the side of the highway broken down. The father said, "Hey, this guy's stuck under his car. It's almost nightfall. We've got to help him out."

So, he pulled over to the side of the road and backed up. He came out and said "Chaver. Ma nishmah? What's the problem?" The guy got out of his car and said, "I don't know. It's a brand-new car. Broke down on the highway. I'm trying to reach a towing company, but nobody's available." The father said, "You know, I know about cars." "So do I, but I can't figure out what the problem is." "Listen, let me take a look. Doesn't cost any money."

The father went under the hood and spotted the problem right away and fixed it. He came out from under the hood, and turned to the guy and said, "My friend, your car is fixed." "How much do I owe you?" "Ach. It's nothing. I don't take money." In the meanwhile, while the father was fixing the car, the son, the chosson, turned to this fellow and said, "You're here two hours sitting in the hot sun, you must be thirsty." He had a thermos of coffee in the back seat, so he poured him a cup. He gulped it down. "Thank you. That hit the spot."

The guy from the car said, "I've got to tell you the truth. I hate frum Jews. Religious Jews? There's no one I hate more than them.

And I can't believe you're a frum Jew. You stopped to help me, and you gave me a coffee. I can't believe it.

You know, I have a daughter who became frum, and she wants to marry a frum guy." The son said to him, "What's her name?" "Aviva." The young man said, "That's interesting. You know. I'm getting engaged to a girl named Aviva." "What's your name?" "Mayer." "Oh! Wow! She said his name is Mayer! You're the chosson? I'm supposed to break your legs! "

The girl's father got on the phone with his daughter. "Aviva. Go and buy cakes and drinks. All you want. Tonight, we're making that engagement party you wanted. This is the greatest guy in the world. Unbelievable!" So, the Ribono Shel Olam showed him how Hashem is in charge. They followed the Gadol for one week, and Hashem arranged it.

Avraham's Onion Crop by Rabbi David Sutton



At the Agudah Convention this past year, a special guest named Avraham was brought in from Israel to share his story, which was especially relevant to the mitzvah of shemitah which was observed in Israel last year.

Avraham was born in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, in 1945, to a Holocaust refugee from Poland and a native of Odessa. The family emigrated

to Israel in 1948, and Avraham's father fought in Israel's War of Independence.

Having lost all their relatives during the Holocaust, Avraham's parents gave up Torah observance. The only Jewish topic they ever spoke about was the Holocaust. Avraham left home at the age of 13 and lived on the streets until he joined the Israeli army.

During his term of service, he fought in the Six Day War. After the emotional capture of Jerusalem's Old City and the Temple Mount, Avraham visited the Kotel. It proved to be a moving and inspirational experience, and on that day, Avraham decided to begin observing Shabbat and kashrut. He eventually married and worked as a farmer.

Though he devotedly observed Shabbat and kashrut, Avraham was not committed to other areas of Torah – until an experience he had one Shabbat, which had a profound impact upon his life. He and his fellow farmers had placed their onions out to dry before Shabbat so they would be ready to be taken to the market and sold after Shabbat.

Suddenly, after Shabbat begun, as though out of nowhere, a cloudburst erupted, and rain began to pour down from the sky. Avraham's neighbours scrambled to cover their onions, in violation of Shabbat, but Avraham remained committed to Shabbat observance, and decided to leave his onions exposed.

On Sunday morning, Avraham went out to the fields and saw his neighbours crying. The weather became oppressively hot – topping 100 degrees Fahrenheit – and all the onions that were covered by plastic had become rotten due to the moisture trapped beneath the coverings. Avraham's onions, however, had completely dried and remained fresh. He and his wife decided to move forward and commit themselves to all the mitzvot, including the mitzvah of shemitah.

The Danger of a Thoughtless Jest

Often though, a practical joke or words spoken in jest without thought, can lead to misunderstandings which have the potential to do harm. For example, one year, late in the day on Yom Kippur, **the Kedushas Yom Tov, R' Chananya Yom Tov Lipa Teitelbaum zt"l**, of Sighet, went into his private room a few minutes before Neilah, and remained there for quite some time.



People began wondering what had happened to the Rebbe and what was taking him so long. One man even approached the Rebbe's young son, Yoelish, who was still a child at the time, and asked him if he knew where his father was.

Yoelish smiled and answered the man, tongue firmly planted in cheek, "He probably went inside to take a bite to eat before Neilah!"

No sooner had the words left his mouth, did the young boy regret saying them to some random man whom he did not know. Maybe the man actually believed him and thought that his father, the Tzaddik, was really eating on Yom Kippur!

Search as he might, the boy could not locate the man, and this caused him no small amount of distress. The Kedushas Yom Tov passed away in 5664 (1904) and his son, **R' Yoel Teitelbaum zt"l**, went on to become the famous Satmar Rebbe. On one occasion, the Satmar Rebbe traveled to Chicago in 1953, to raise funds for the Satmar Mosdos, and many people came out to greet the renowned Tzaddik, and receive a blessing from him.

One elderly man sat before R' Yoelish and reminisced how many years previously, he had been in Sighet and spent Yom Kippur with the Kedushas Yom Tov. He could not seem to recall the precise year but he did remember that right before Neilah, the holy Rebbe went into his private room and a young child who was there told him that the Rebbe was hungry and took a bite to eat!

R' Yoelish jumped up and cried, "That young child was me, and chas v'sholom that my holy father should eat on Yom Kippur!" With a reassuring smile, the Satmar Rebbe explained to the witless old man that all those years previous, he had made a joke and regretted it immediately.

He could not contain his excitement and relief at having been afforded the opportunity to make amends for a humorless jest that had left his mouth close to sixty years ago. R' Yoelish would always warn people to be ultra-careful to watch what they say because not everyone is given the same chance like he was for teshuvah!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



The *Medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 11:2) tells us that a person's face lights up on *Shabbos*. *Yefei Toar* explains that this happens for two reasons: the extra *Simchah*, happiness, that we have on *Shabbos* actually brightens up our faces.

Also, the *Neshamah Yeseirah* that we get on *Shabbos* makes our faces shine more than during the week!

This Date in Jewish History



On the 20th of Iyar, 5660 (1800), the Jewish slaves held on the island of Malta were freed. The tiny Mediterranean islands of Malta (between Italy and Tunisia) were a place of terror for Jewish travellers during the 17th and 18th centuries.

In 1530, the Christian king Charles V of Spain installed a band of monks on the island armed with ships and weapons. Their job was to attack any Muslim sea traffic passing nearby, because Muslims and Christians were at war.

When the war ended, the monks continued attacking passing ships for hundreds of years. Called the Order of the Knights of St. John, the monks destroyed ships and took the passengers as slaves. Most of the travellers in the area were Jews, and there were thousands of Jewish slaves in Malta at any one time.

It was almost impossible to escape. Some Jews were ransomed by their communities, but many were imprisoned for a long time.

A Turkish invasion of Malta was possibly sponsored by Jewish communities in an attempt to solve the problem, but it failed. A revolt of slaves in 1749 also failed. The Knights were finally disbanded when Napoleon captured Malta in 1798. The Jewish slaves were sent home two years later.

Circle Time – Gematria



כִּי לִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (כה:נה) ***Because Bnei Yisrael are Mine…*** Throughout the generations, anti-Semites have referred to Jews as "dogs."

Why did hashgachah make them come up with this particular insult?

The Sefer Kushyos finds a comfort for Klal Yisrael in the answer. **כלבים**= **102** = **בנים** = Dogs = children. They are reminding us that we are Hashem's children! The first letters of כִּי לִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל hint to this idea, as they spell **כלבי**.

Chizuk From Our Chachomim

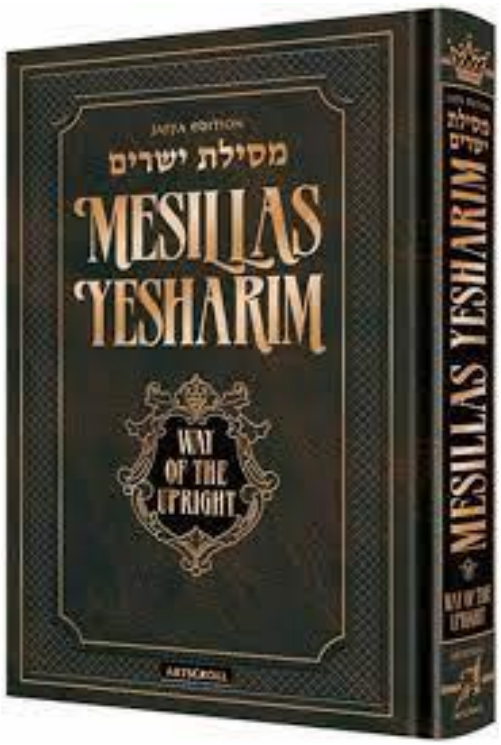
כ"ו אייר marks the Yohrzeit of **Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto** זצ"ל, commonly referred to as the **רמח"ל**, author of the **מסילת ישרים.** Reb Moshe Chaim was born in the year 1707 in Padua, Italy, to Rav Yaakov Chai and Diamente Luzzatto. His primary *Rebbe* was the **רב** of Padua, **Rav Yeshayahu Bassan** זצ"ל. At the young age of 14 he already knew the entire **זוהר, תלמוד בבלי** and **כתבי האר"י** – all **בעל פה**! He was also an accomplished **פייטן**, composing 150 **פיוטים** corresponding to the 150 **פרקים** of **תהילים**.

At the age of 15, he headed a **חבורה** called **מבקשי ה'**. They had many interesting **תקנות**, including long **סדרים** of uninterrupted learning of **זוהר** which was implemented to abolish a **גזירה** which hovered over the Jewish **קהילה** at that time.

At the age of 20, many secrets in **קבלה** were revealed to him in a dream by 'the **מגיד** '. His new revelations caused controversy and he

was forced to make a **שבועה** that he would not further publish **ספרים** with new *Kabbalistic* revelations.

In 1731, he married Rebbetzen Tziporah Finzi, daughter of the **רב** of Mantua, Italy, and 4 years later he travelled to Amsterdam, where he felt he would be able to pursue his learning and teaching of **קבלה** away from his detractors. In Amsterdam, he was welcomed by the Portuguese Jewish community where he taught many **תלמידים**. During his time there, he published his famous **מסילת ישרים, ספרי מוסר** and **דרך ה'**, amongst dozens of other **ספרים** that he had authored.



In 1743, he moved to **ארץ ישראל** and settled in Acco. Just 4 years later, at the young age of 40, he and his family were **נפטר** in a terrible plague. Since his **פטירה**, his **ספרים** have been widely accepted and learned by all of **כלל שראל**.

The Vilna Gaon was known to be especially attached to his **ספרים** and stated that the first ten **פרקים** of **מסילת ישרים** do not contain one single extra word and that if the **רמח"ל** would have still been alive, he would have walked from Vilna to learn by him!

Yieden from all over the world travel to *daven* by his **קבר** which is reported to be in **טבריה**. **יהי זכרו ברוך**

The last word - A one-liner worth remembering

"If you will not be a better person tomorrow than you are today, what's the point in having a tomorrow?" – Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Home Free - For All

It is probably the most famous Biblical verse in American History. Each year thousands of people come to see its bold raised lettering prominently encircling the rim of the revered icon of our country's independence. Many visitors hardly notice the verse. Instead, their gaze is transfixed upon another, much less divine symbol, that bears the painful message of that sacred verse. But the large crack they come to see has no inherent meaning. It is only the result of the constant resounding of the words that are sacredly enshrined on its oxidized metal. Those words are from this week's portion, **וְקִדַּשְׁתֶּם אֶת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וּקְרָאתֶם דְּרוֹר בָּאָרֶץ לְכָל־יֹשְׁבֶיהָ יוֹבֵל הִוא תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם וְשַׁבְתֶּם אִישׁ אֶל־אֲחֻזָּתוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ תָּשֻׁבוּ "*proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all its inhabitants thereof*"** (Leviticus 25:10).

Truth be told, however, those words refer not to a revolution or liberation, they refer to the mitzvah of Yovel — Jubilee. Every 50 years, all Jewish servants, whether employed for only a six-year period or on an extended docket, and even those who desire to remain as servants to their masters, are freed. They return home to their families, and their careers of indenture are over.

But the verse is confusing. It says, "proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all its inhabitants thereof." Isn't the Torah referring to the freedom of slaves and the servants. Isn't that a proclamation of freedom for only a select few? Why would the Torah use the words "and to all its inhabitants," when only some of its inhabitants are going free? The masters and employers were never slaves. They are not going free. Or are they?

In the first volume of his prolific Maggid series **Rabbi Paysach Krohn** relates the following story.

It was a cold and blustery day and **Rabbi Isser Zalman Melzer**, the dean of the Eitz Chaim Yeshiva in Jerusalem, was returning home from a long day in the Yeshiva. Accompanied by his nephew, Reb

Dovid Finkel, who normally walked him home, Rabbi Melzer began to ascend the steps to his Jerusalem apartment. Suddenly, Reb Isser Zalman stopped and retreated down the old staircase as if he had forgotten something. As he reached the street, he began to wander aimlessly back and forth, in thought. His nephew began to question the strange actions of the Torah sage. "Did Reb Isser Zalman forget something?" "Why didn't he enter the home."



The winds began to blow, and despite the chill Reb Isser Zalman walked back and forth outside his home. About 15 minutes passed and once again, Rabbi Melzer walked slowly up the stairs, waited, and then headed back down.

His nephew could not contain himself, "Please, Rebbe," he pleaded. "What's the matter?" Reb Isser Zalman just shrugged and said, "just wait a few more moments. Please."

"But, uncle, it's getting cold. Please answer me. What are you waiting for?"

Rabbi Melzer realized that he could no longer keep his motivations to himself. "I'll explain. As I walked up the steps, I heard the young woman who comes once a week to help with the housework in the kitchen. She was mopping the floor and singing while she mopped. I knew that if I were to walk in she would have become embarrassed and stopped her singing. The singing helps her through her work, and I did not want to make her work any bit harder, let alone deny her the joy of her singing. Despite the cold, I decided to wait outside until she finishes her work and her song. Then I'll go in."

The Torah uses a very significant expression this week that synopsizes the true meaning of ownership and servitude. "Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all its inhabitants thereof." When one employs, he is also indebted to his employee. In addition to the paycheck, he is responsible for the workers feelings, working conditions and welfare. He is responsible for providing a safe environment, suitable provisions, and above all mentchlechkeit. And when Yovel arrives and the workers and servants return home, they are not the only ones going free. A great burden is lifted from the shoulders of the master. Freedom is declared for all the inhabitants of the land. The servants are not the only ones who are "home free."

Torah Tavlin

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻון יָמֶיךָ – Shemos 20:12

After the terrible tragedy on Lag Ba'omer in Meron last year, when so many bochurim and yungerleit were taken from us suddenly, many people were looking for ways to improve themselves as a tikkun for the tragic deaths. R' Shlomo Zalman Friedman shlit'a, Rov of Khal Zichron Elazar Santov, recently received a phone call from Reb Aharon Walkin, a resident of Lakewood, NJ, who told him over the following incredible story.

"I have a son, Moshe, who learns in Yeshivas Mir in Yerushalayim. Some time before Lag Ba'omer last year, he called me and said that one of his close friends had gotten a ticket for the hadlakah of the Toldos Aharon Rebbe in Meron. The ticket gave them the privilege of pouring oil in preparation for the fire at the kever of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai.

His friend had asked the organizer for a few more tickets, so he could invite some good friends to join him at the hadlakah and share the privilege of pouring the oil. The bochur told my son that he had

a ticket for him as well. My son was very happy and excited that he'd be able to take part in the hadlakah along with a number of friends.

"A few days before Lag Ba'omer, I called my son. I told him that because I had not visited Eretz Yisroel for a year and a half due to the coronavirus, and I hadn't seen my father, R' Chaim Walkin shlit'a, mashgiach of Yeshivas Ateres Yisroel, now that I had received an entry permit, I was planning to arrive in Eretz Yisroel on Erev Lag Ba'omer. First I would go to Yerushalayim to visit my father, and then, later that night, I would go to Meron, to the kever of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. The plan was to return to Yerushalayim for Shabbos.

When my son heard this plan, he told me that even though he'd gotten a ticket for the hadlakah at Toldos Aharon and had made up with his friends that they would go together, he would change his plans. They had even rented an apartment in Tzefas for Shabbos. Nevertheless, because of the mitzvah of kibbud av, he was happy to forego all those plans. He'd wait for me and join me wherever I went.

"I arrived in Eretz Yisroel on Erev Lag Ba'omer in the afternoon. Moshe waited for me, and we went first to visit my father. We spent a few hours there, and we also heard a vaad that my father gave to the bochurim of his yeshiva. We then set out for Meron late that night.

As we neared Har Meron, we were stopped by police and told that a tragedy had occurred at the kever, and they had shut down the entire mountain to visitors. No one could get there. There was no point in going further. "I was disappointed, because I was finally in Eretz Yisroel, and almost at Meron, yet I couldn't even go in and say a kappitel of Tehillim or write a kvitel.

My son, Moshe, was much more distraught. He had a ticket to pour the oil at the hadlakah; he'd missed that, and the entire hadlakah and the experience with his friends. Not only that, but now he wouldn't even be able to say Tehillim at the tziyun of Rashbi. But we

had no choice, so turned around and drove back to Yerushalayim, hoping that all of this was for the best.

"On Friday morning, when the magnitude of what had happened became clear, Moshe was understandably stricken. He was trembling at the news that two of his closest friends, Habochur Dovi Steinmetz z"l and Habochur Yosef Yitzchok Kohn z"l, whom he was supposed to be standing next to the previous night, had perished in the tragedy.

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

בְּיוֹם֙ הַכִּפֻּרִ֔ים תַּעֲבִ֥ירוּ שׁוֹפָ֖ר בְּכָל־אַרְצְכֶֽם - On Yom Kippur you shall sound the Shofar throughout the land. (25:9)



The gemora explains that the Shofar was sounded throughout the land on Yom Kippur of the Yovel, Jubilee Year to announce that it was time for all the Jewish slaves to leave their masters and return to their homes.

The Sefer HaChinuch offers an incredible insight why there was a special Mitzvah to blow the Shofar at this time.

He explains that it would have been very difficult for the slave-owners to release their Jewish slaves. Let alone the financial loss and the help they received, the many years that they had spent together were coming to an end, and the fulfillment of this Mitzvah of freeing their slaves would have distressed the slave-owners immensely. Therefore, the Shofar was sounded so that every slave-owner would know that they were not facing this challenge alone.

By knowing that others also faced this test, the slave-owners would be comforted and strengthened to fulfill this Mitzvah with great joy.

From these words we learn how much we are affected by our surroundings, and for this reason alone we see how important it is to dwell among righteous people, as the Gemora tells us: "Goodness (is bestowed to a tzaddik (and as a result) goodness is bestowed to his neighbour"



Long True story but worth the read!!! Get your tissues out!!!

Hi. My name is Shmuel, and I am 28 years old. Most of the people who know me simply call me "Shmuly."

I am not used to telling stories. I'm the kind of guy who does better with action. That is why it took me some time to put together all the parts of my personal story and write it down so that I can share it with you.

My story began about eighteen years ago.

I was ten years old, a pretty regular kid, just like everyone else…except in one area. I had a really hard time sitting in one place for a prolonged period of time. And when I say "time," I don't mean what you probably think. My concept of time is different than most people's. "Too much time," for me, means a few seconds. Yeah, I'm a "spring," if you will.

If this would be today, I would surely get a diagnosis comprised of a string of initials (along with a pill or two), but in those days there weren't that many interpretations, so the nickname given to me was short and friendly, "Shmuly the Spring."

Honestly, I didn't mind. I knew that it was true, and I could actually relate to the imagery. Baruch Hashem, I had no complaints. I had

incredible rabbeim who didn't make a big issue out of my hyperactivity.

Everyone in my class was already used to the fact that Shmuly the Spring is the one who is sent to bring the rebbe coffee in middle of class, and other such jobs, basically keeping me busy. And truthfully, I liked the arrangement, too.

I would sit in front of the rebbe and try hard to listen and understand what he was teaching. Then, when I couldn't focus anymore (usually after a few minutes), I would look for something to do. At that point I would hear the rebbe's voice calling to me, "Shmuly, please get us some more chalk." I would happily get up and run to perform the chore.

That was basically what my life in school was like.

One morning, as we waited for our rebbe to enter the classroom, the principal walked in instead. He stood behind the rebbe's desk and asked for silence.

"I'm sorry to share this with you," he said, "but your rebbe has suddenly fallen ill and had to undergo emergency surgery last night. He will not be coming back for the next few weeks."

We were in shock. We loved our rebbe and were really worried about him. The principal continued, "Now, boys, let's say some Tehillim for his recovery." We said some Tehillim with extra kavanah for our rebbe's speedy recovery. That day, the principal taught us, but the following day he walked into our classroom with a man we didn't know.

"Boys," the principal said, "this is Rabbi Substitute. He is going to be your substitute rebbe until your regular rebbe gets better, be'ezras Hashem." Rabbi Substitute walked over to the rebbe's desk, and the principal left the classroom.

I'm not sure what made me immediately realize that my life was not going to be easy with Rabbi Substitute. Maybe it was the stern look

on his face, or the hoarse voice with which he addressed us, but something told me there was going to be trouble soon.



I was right. It was only a few minutes later when I sensed a heavy shadow over me. I looked up and found Rabbi Substitute staring angrily down at me through his somewhat-dirty glasses.

"What are you busy with over there?" he thundered.

I dropped the beautiful paper airplane I had just completed. The stunning plane did not have a chance inside Rabbi Substitute's clutched fist, and I felt my heart tearing inside me along with it. I found myself standing shamefacedly in the principal's office. After recess was over, I returned to the classroom. But this scenario repeated itself over and over again in different variations.

After a few days of mounting frustration on all sides, my parents were called to the school. "In my class, all students must learn," Rabbi Substitute told them firmly. "What do you think he's going to grow up to be like if he doesn't use his brain?" He refused to allow me to perform the various tasks that had been my lifeline until then.

Every day, I would be punished and sent out of the classroom in humiliation. I began to feel disappointed and disgusted with myself. I always knew that I was not exactly a typical child, I knew that I was better with my hands than with my head, but I always managed somehow, thanks the energy that Hashem endowed me with and the fact that I loved to help people.

For Rabbi Substitute, however, these qualities meant nothing.

One day, Rabbi Substitute decided to call an emergency meeting to discuss my problems. My parents and I were both called in for a long, painful lecture. I remember my father trying to say something like, "Our Shmuly has other qualities… Maybe his head is less at work but he has amazing hands…", but Rabbi Substitute didn't allow my father to say a word.

And here, I remember how Rabbi Substitute's face reddened. He pointed a finger at me and shouted, "If you don't start using your head, you'll amount to nothing! Nothing!" Then he added under his breath, "Good hands will make you a good plumber, nothing more."

The days passed, somehow, and finally, finally, our regular rebbe recovered and returned to the classroom. I never saw Rabbi Substitute again. With time, I even managed to forget his hurtful words. Most of the time.

Sometimes, unexpectedly, I would hear his words playing in my head and shrink into myself with humiliation. When that happened, I would feel like an absolute nothing.

Is that all I could ever hope to amount to? A plumber? Could I really do nothing more? Was I truly worth nothing?!

I admit, though, that this did not happen often. Most of the time, I was busy performing the countless chores and tasks that my rabbeim came up with to keep me busy and confident.

I grew up, finished cheder, and then yeshivah ketanah. I was accepted to a good yeshivah gedolah thanks to my many other talents. So maybe I was not the brightest boy in the class, but I had other things going for me. The many small jobs I did in yeshivah helped me tremendously. The yeshivah and summer camps were where I felt proud and happy.

When I started shidduchim, I knew more or less what kind of girl I wanted to marry. A short while later, I met my wife who wanted me just as I was.

We got married, and I began my married life in kollel. Of course, at the same time, I was searching for some action to fill up my day too; something that would keep me busy and allow me to feel good about myself.



I found that in Israel's medical emergency response team, a job that saves me from myself. I do many shifts, am always first at the scene and the last to leave it.

Some people might make a face hearing that, but I love the drama and the action, and – more than anything else – the tremendous chessed that I can perform for people in the most critical moments of their lives.

Slowly, I started climbing up the ranks. I did further training. At some point, MADA became my second home.

One night, I woke up to the sound of the dispatcher calling all nearby volunteers to rush to an emergency nearby. Apparently, someone had lost consciousness and needed help.

The address was nowhere nearby, but for some reason I decided to rush to the scene anyway. I figured that there were not many volunteers in that area, and the late hour would make it even less likely that someone could get there quickly. MADA's headquarters were also too far from the scene.

I jumped into my car and quickly drove over to the address the dispatcher had announced. As soon as I arrived, I realized that I had indeed arrived first. I grabbed my first-aid kit and rushed up the stairs. The panicked voices and the light coming from the

apartment led me directly to an elderly man lying on the living room floor. A woman stood next to him – his wife, I presumed – crying hysterically.

I quickly began checking his vitals and performing CPR. Things were not looking good… No pulse. No breathing.

As I worked, a Hatzalah volunteer arrived at the scene and began working alongside me.

"No pulse or breathing," I reported to the station. "Send MICU urgently." The Hatzalah volunteer and I continued working furiously. This guy doesn't have much of a chance, I thought. Who knows how long he's been lying like this, in this condition.

But I'm used to leaving my thoughts for my own pillow… for when I try to fall asleep at night. Right now, I had to focus on what I needed to do – and do it.

The ambulance arrived and with it, more advanced equipment. The full team and I continued to do our best, but…nothing. The guy wouldn't wake up.

The team gave up, but I refused to. I continued to put in every bit of strength I could muster, without thinking.

Yair, a fellow paramedic, placed his hand on my shoulder. His eyes were telling me, Forget it, this is a lost cause.

But I kept going.

The other guys knew me already. They weren't going to try explaining to me for the umpteenth time that I was too naïve.

I pushed. I pushed again. And then suddenly I felt something change. I checked carefully and began screaming like a madman, "There's a pulse! There's a pulse!"

The paramedics looked at the patient and immediately realized that I was right. They all began working feverishly again. Somehow, they

managed to stabilize him and rushed him to the nearest hospital together with his tearful wife.

Honestly, I was very emotional as I watched them go. I've been in this field for years, but it is still rare to succeed in performing a successful resuscitation - especially in such a case, where the man had been lying unconscious for so long.

I gathered my things and headed back home.

A month passed, and I nearly forgot the incident. One morning, my phone rang.

"Hi, is this Shmuly, from MADA?"

"Yes, who am I speaking with?"

The young man on the other end of the line told me that he was this elderly man's grandson. My thoughts went back to that fateful night, and I asked him with some hesitation, "How is he?" I wasn't sure what I was going to hear. I knew that not many people survive after being deprived of oxygen for so long, and even those who do survive are generally badly crippled as a result.

"You have no idea," the grandson told me with obvious emotion. "You gave us our grandfather back!"

I was so moved that I could hardly get any words out of my mouth.

The young man told me that they had been searching all week long for the phone number of the "angel who saved their grandfather" – that was how he described me. He told me that his grandfather had been discharged and is completely back to his usual self. "We would love to have you join us at the seudas hodaya that we are making in honor of this miracle!"

I could not refuse. I still remembered the address, so I just asked him for the date and time.

On the day of the seudah, I came to the house again. The apartment was filled with family members and tables laden with cakes and candy.

They all welcomed me with hugs and joyful greetings. I have never met these people before, but it seemed that to them I was like family. I was given a seat at the head of the table, next to a dignified-looking man with a white beard.

His face looked familiar…but now I was seeing his face with a healthy coloring.

When he saw me, he stood up and enveloped me in a warm hug. I felt his tears wetting my shoulder, and then my own tears coursing down my cheeks.

He murmured words of thanks, and it was obvious that he was very, very emotional. I myself was feeling my own storm of emotions – and not only because of the opportunity I had been given to save another man's life.

With shocking clarity, I suddenly realized that this man who was now looking at me with such gratitude-filled eyes was none other than my childhood teacher, Rabbi Substitute. It must have been his voice that made all the memories surface, but I had no doubt about it. I gently asked him about his life and where he was from. Yes, it was him…

He did not seem to recognize me, but that was understandable. Unlike him, my own appearance had changed drastically since I was ten years old…

It was difficult for me to contain myself. I felt an unexplainable urge to tell him who I was.

I asked one of his sons, who was sitting next to me, to allow me to speak to his father privately. He looked at me in surprise, but apparently, my status as the "savior" helped ward off questions. He stood up and whispered into his father's ear.

I saw Rabbi Substitute's eyes looking at me, and then his head nodding in agreement. We were led to a side room. After we both settled on the day bed in the room and the door closed behind us, I burst into uncontrollable tears.

I had planned to talk to him, but the wave of emotions was stronger than me. I myself had not realized, until that moment, just how deeply he had hurt me.

I felt his hands on my head, and then heard his soothing words trying to calm me. He obviously could not understand what was happening to me.

After I calmed down somewhat, I raised red-rimmed eyes and began to tell him who I was. It took a few moments for him to recall. "You're Shmuly?" he pointed a shaking finger at me. I saw understanding dawn, and his face suddenly became very white.

I felt a pang of panic. I had already seen his face looking like that. Slowly, however, his color returned. And then it was his turn to cry.

We did not exchange more than a few words, but to me it seemed like we had spent hours in deep conversation.

We simply didn't need any words. The tears said everything. The deep hurt…the frustration and the pain…the insidious effect of his behavior toward me in the classroom… and also, his regret, his remorse…

He hugged me again, and I returned the hug, feeling forgiveness wash over me. A huge rock was lifted from my chest.

"And I told you that you'll amount to nothing," he whispered, his voice filled with indescribable regret. He asked for my forgiveness again and again, and I told him I was fully mochel.

We walked back into the living room, both of us with red-rimmed eyes and blotchy faces. People looked at us in bewilderment.

When Rabbi Substitute reached his seat, he motioned for me to sit on the adjacent chair, but he himself remained standing. He told everyone that he wanted to say a few words. Within seconds, everyone fell silent. It was clear that they all wanted to know what had happened.

Rabbi Substitute first began by praising me for saving his life. He especially emphasized the illogical efforts I had put in despite the fact that realistically, there was no longer any hope. He focused on the main point, in his opinion, which was that I worked against all odds and used my heart, not my head.

Then he told everyone who I was and where we had first met.

He told them everything. He repeated the words he had used then, at the fateful meeting with my parents, and the things he said about me in front of the entire class. At this point, people were crying unabashedly. In a broken voice he turned to me and asked for my forgiveness again.

I could not speak. I only nodded my consent, my own throat choked with tears.

Rabbi Substitute ended in a heartfelt statement. "Twenty years ago, I told you that you do not use your head. Yet what saved me now was precisely the fact that you did not follow your head – but your heart. Years ago, I thought you had a problem and were not thinking enough. Now I know that what you have is actually a huge heart."

He hugged me again, and I returned the hug. That is my story.

It was not easy for me to write it all. You must have realized by now that I am not the sort of person who can easily sit and write things down. But I did it anyway, because I want you to always remember:

There are some kids who have a great head. There are kids who have a great heart. And they are all Hashem's children.

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Words Can Save

Some time ago I was at a Shabbaton when a young man came over to me and shared what a difficult time he had growing up in the school system. By the time he was fourteen years old, he had been expelled from eight yeshivas. Why so many?

"Everybody wanted me," he said. "I like the attitude," I shot back. The truth… nobody could deal with him. At home, his father was even harsher than the principals. He would come home and his father would punish him, double the amount, because of what happened in school. Instead of feeling the safety and the embrace of his father, he was given distance and apathy. When he turned fourteen, his father put him on a plane to Israel. "Even he couldn't stand me," the man said.

When I arrived, I started going to one Slonimer shul in Bnei Brak. I had no other place to go. Every day, there stood a ninety-five-year-old man, whom I later learned was Asher Arkovitch. He had been a Partisan in the Second World War and survived. He got married, but for the past ten years, his wife had been ill, and he had taken care of her. Recently, she had passed away, leaving Reb Asher, at age 95, alone. But even with his loss, Reb Asher davened as if he was truly talking to G-d. It was a real, bona fide conversation. You could feel his words in the room.

One morning, after everyone had filed out of the shul, those who remained were the boy and Reb Asher. With just the two of them, Reb Asher turned to him and said, "I haven't seen you around before. What are you doing here?"

The boy told him exactly the situation. "I haven't had luck in any school system. I was expelled from eight schools, and my father sent me here to Israel." Reb Asher looked the boy in the eye and gently said, "You know, we say every day in the prayer of Ashrei, **לְהוֹדִיעַ לִבְנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרֹתָיו**... - ***To inform mankind of Your [G-d's] greatness***."

Literally, it means that G-d wants us to spread recognition about His strength and royalty. But the **Maggid of Lechevitch** provided another interpretation. You know why we talk so much about G-d's infinity and majesty? To inform each and every person of their own greatness.

With every person you meet, draw out their strength and let them know about it. Show them their own beauty, their own glory, their own profundity, their own holiness. We talk about G-d's greatness, not because He needs our compliments, but because we need to do the same to others.

If G-d is great, that means He didn't make a mistake when He created you. If G-d is omniscient and omnipresent, that means that when He created you, He was making the statement that the world is incomplete without your contribution. Make others cognizant of their own power, of their own fortitude, of their own majesty, of their own creativity, of their own inner, infinite dignity and light and gift.

"Rabbi Jacobson," said this man, now an adult, standing in front of me, "I got into another yeshiva in Israel, and six months later, I was expelled. I then got into a tenth school a half a year later, until the principal said, "You're not for us."

Here I was, 15 years old with a record of ten schools expelling me. I had nobody to turn to. I didn't have a father to call. I was so lost in the world that I decided I can't live any longer. The pain was just too deep. The loneliness, the solitariness was just too profound.

One morning I walked to the roof of a tall building. It was 11 o'clock in the morning. I began pacing at the edge of the roof, about to jump and take myself out of my agony. And suddenly, I had a flashback of that conversation I had one year ago when this old Jew. Asher Arkovitch found me and told me, '***Whatever happens, never forget about your strength***.' And there and then, on that rooftop, I told

myself, 'You know, before I jump, I first have to become aware of my strengths and then I'll make a decision.'

I walked back. I went down. I got my life together, and here I am today, married with three beautiful children and an extraordinary wife. And I built a successful business.

I looked at the man who had tears streaming down his eyes. My eyes also moistened. Would Reb Asher ever have known the impact his words had on that morning in a Slonimer Shul in Bnei Brak to a fourteen-year-old boy? Could he have imagined the life-altering influence? They literally saved a life from suicide.

Don't be stingy with words. Don't be stingy with gestures. Don't be stingy with hugs. Don't be stingy with embraces. Don't be stingy with letting every person you meet know about their strengths, their beauty.

Time



The Taamai Haminhagim (p. 102) relates that **R' Shalom of Belz** (1781–1855), the first Belzer Rebbe, recalled his younger years when he would smoke. Once when he was learning in the Beis Midrash, he saw one of his peers clean out his pipe and fill it. While he did this, R' Shalom learned a page of gemara.

After observing this, he said, "If this object can take me away from a page of gemara, I cannot put it in my mouth anymore." - From then on, he never smoked again. (Even if smoking wasn't dangerous to our health, we must realize what a waste of time it is. - A person who smokes for a half hour a day wastes close to 200 hours yearly!)



וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ ***Each of you shall not wrong his fellow Jew.*** *(25:17)*

The *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, was well-known for his brilliance, his sharp wit and uncompromising search for the truth. His aphorisms are deep insights into the manner of serving Hashem, as well as to how one should live.

He was wont to say, "*Lo signov*, 'Do not steal' means that one should not steal from himself – do not deceive yourself."

In addition, he offered the following insight, "Better a *rasha*, evil person, who knows that he is a *rasha,* than a *tzaddik*, righteous man, who knows that he is a *tzaddik*." A *tzaddik* who thinks he is a *tzaddik* is far from being a true *tzaddik*, because one's level of humility should be commensurate with his level of virtue. He should know how distant he is from true righteousness. If he thinks he is there – he is nowhere, neither here nor there.

One primary area in which we deceive ourselves is with regard to *frumkeit*: We either feel that we have to put on a show for others in order to be accepted; or we judge others by some of their actions, thus labelling them as "different.". Let us glean a lesson from the saintly *Chafetz Chaim*.

The *Chafetz Chaim* was well aware of the spiritual havoc which the *Haskalah*/Enlightenment movement had wreaked. One of the sage's cousins had "freed" himself from the "shackles" of Orthodoxy and was living a completely secular life, devoid of any religious observance.

One day, the *Chafetz Chaim* received the tragic news that his cousin and wife had drowned as a result of a boating accident. Their only

son, David, was attending a school in Paris, and, as the *Chafetz Chaim* was the only relative to be found, the lawyer for their estate asked if the Kagan family (*Chafetz Chaim, Horav* Yisrael Meir Kagan) would recognise the plight of this eleven-year-old orphan and open their home to him. The Kagans immediately accepted the responsibility to prepare a home for David.



The boy arrived one month later. While he was emotionally stable following the tragedy, he was totally secular and ignorant of Jewish law and ritual. He brought with him many books written in French, a library of classical music, and a small violin.

David loved music, and he asked if he could continue practicing on his violin. His wardrobe was au courant, adhering to the latest styles worn in western Europe. His turn-of-the century French attire caused a stir in the small town of Radin – a bastion of Torah, but neither up to date nor caring about the latest in fashion.

Since David wanted very much to fit in with the *Chafetz Chaim's* family, he was willing to change his attire for the more simple, almost dull, Lithuanian village wardrobe. He also agreed to study Hebrew and religious subjects. The *Chafetz Chaim,* however, refused to have him change certain things about himself.

Every Sunday morning, a smartly dressed man arrived at the train station where the *Chafetz Chaim* picked him up and accompanied him to his home. After the man entered the *Chafetz Chaim's* home, one could hear violin music emanating from it. The neighbours assumed that their holy *Rav* had hired a violin tutor for young David.

While the music was pleasant to listen to, it was not Jewish. Who knew where this would lead? What had their spiritual leader done? Their fears became more alarming when they discovered that the

man was not merely teaching music, but French subjects and even philosophy as well!

When the rumblings reached the ears of the *Chafetz Chaim*, he decided to clear the air. [The people meant well, but their understanding of the larger picture was limited.] He explained that, by accepting responsibility for David, he obligated himself to avail the boy of his needs which heretofore had been part of an alien culture and lifestyle.

The *Chafetz Chaim* viewed his cousin as a survivor whom he had plucked from the abyss of spiritual extinction. True, he dressed and acted differently, but he was climbing the ladder to spiritual return. It would require time and patience.

What about what people would think?

Apparently, the *Chafetz Chaim* felt that this boy's future was more important that what a few people might think. We are here to do what is proper and correct – not to satisfy the insecure feelings of people whose self-inflicted myopia allows them to focus only on the small picture.



וְחֵי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ ***And let your brother live with you****. (25:36)*

With regard to the above, *Chazal* (*Bava Metzia* 62a) quote a debate between Bar Petora and Rabbi Akiva. Two men are traveling in the desert. It is hot, and they are thirsty. The problem is: They have only one water canteen. If one of them drinks the water, he will live, but his friend will die. If both drink the water, they will both die.

Bar Petora says that it is better for both to drink and take their chances that a miracle might occur, than one drink and watch his friend die. Rabbi Akiva disputed this ruling, citing the above *pasuk*, "Let your brother live with you" – your life takes precedence over your friend's life.

The *Chafetz Chaim* added (*Ahavas Chesed*) that the concept of one's life taking precedence applies only to his life. His wealth, however, does not take precedence over his fellow's life.

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, relates a story which, on one hand, demonstrates the overwhelming sense of *chesed*, kindness, manifest by a *yeshivah* man who eventually became a distinguished *Rosh Yeshivah*, but leaves us wondering how he had ignored the *pasuk's* directive to save his life first.

It was post liberation; World War II was over, but the Jewish suffering had not ended. Huddled together in a DP (Displaced Person's) camp, the survivors were more concerned about where they would get their next rations than setting up schools for the young children who had somehow survived the war.

They were not many, but pockets of children existed, and, if they did not receive a Jewish education, their religious conviction and observance would be inadequate. Certainly, they had not been spared in order to turn their backs on Hashem.

Rav Galinsky worked together with ***Horav Gershon Liebman, zl,*** who later became *Rosh Yeshivah* of Novoradok in France, where he ultimately established forty Torah institutions. Together, these two intrepid *Rabbanim* went through the DP camp offering and begging parents to enrol their children.

It was not easy, and they expected to receive backlash from the secularists, but, when they encountered open hostility from an observant Jew, they were thrown for a curve. Indeed, it was the representative of the religious community who viewed *Rav* Galinsky with suspicion.

"Who sent you?" (He was concerned about who was behind the schools. He was aware of varied approaches to education, based upon the student's background and affiliation. Was it *chassidish, litvish*, modern, *heimish*?

Until he knew what would be the *derech halimud* and under whose aegis the school would be, he was not prepared to support it.)

Rav Galinsky replied, "It is under the aegis of *Hashem Yisborach*!"

The man countered, "If that is the case, I do not need you. I have a direct line to the Almighty."

"If that is true, then you must have done something to address the religious needs of the children" was *Rav* Galinsky's rebuttal.

The man said that he had not done anything for them.

"How can you say that you are the religious representative if you have done nothing to save the children from heresy?"

The man saw that he was bested, yet he persisted. "Who is supporting your endeavour?" he asked.

"It is a private initiative under the direction of someone whom you probably never heard of; *Rav* Gershon Liebman."

As soon as he heard the name, the man's entire tone took an about face, "If *Rav* Liebman is behind you, I will support anything you want. I am yours. You see, I know *Rav* Gershon from the camps."

The man then related an incredible, moving story.

"In the concentration camp, we had two constants: hunger and forced labour. If one survived these two, he had a chance to deal with the multiple challenges to his physical and emotional health. These, however, were the immediate concerns to which the Jewish inmates by the droves were succumbing. They went out every day to participate in hours of brutal forced labour in the bitter cold or in the scorching heat, to return at the end of the day for their meagre rations, consisting of a small slice of stale bread and a cup of watery soup.

This is all we had for the entire twenty-four period – day in and day out. Many died from the hunger. Others succumbed to the brutal labour. Every morning, some did not wake up, their hearts giving out.

Sadly, these conditions caused others to lose their minds and fight for that slice of bread – even if it meant taking it from another wretched prisoner. [Obviously, we may not judge, because we have no idea the extent of their suffering.]

Indeed, I looked contemptuously at someone who stole his fellow's bread, but *Rav* Gershon would admonish me, saying, 'Do not judge another person until you are in his place.'

"One morning, we woke up to see that another one of our block friends could not arise from his bed. This was a sign that his end was near. The man murmured something, but we were unable to make out his words. He was a *talmid* of *Yeshivas Pinsk*, but here he was a prisoner like us all.

We rushed to the food line because we knew that, if he did not eat soon, he would no longer have to eat. I looked back and saw *Rav* Gershon standing over the man and patiently giving him sips of soup drop by drop. The man was able to swallow some of the soup, but the rest dribbled down the side of his mouth. He opened his eyes and showed signs of life. We just stood there watching *Rav* Gershon feeding the man. What else could we do?

"When the soup was finished, *Rav* Gershon tore the slice of bread into tiny pieces and fed them to the man one-by-one. He held his hand over the man's mouth, so that he was compelled to swallow.

Finally, by the time *Rav* Gershon had finished, the man was revived and sitting up.

"*Rav* Gershon did not eat that day. He needed that slice of bread and water for himself, but he was not going to let someone die if he could prevent it. For a person like that, I will do anything."

Inspiring story. We are left with a question: Was *Rav* Gershon acting appropriately by endangering his life, so that the other Jew could live? What about *V'chai achicha imach*? Your life comes first.

I think the answer lies in the understanding of *v'chai* – you should live. *Rav* Gershon felt that to watch another Jew die, for him to live when he might save another Jew, is simply not living!

Rav Gershon did put his life first, but he could only live if his friend lived. This was the way in which he understood the *pasuk*.

Short Story of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin

One time, a concerned father came to **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, ZT"L**, seeking advice regarding his teenage son. The young man was a genius and had been showing a bright future as an Talmid Chacham. However, he loved mathematics, so much so that he had begun spending his entire day engrossed in complex mathematical concepts, and had completely stopped learning Gemara, etc. The father was now seriously considering enrolling his son in a college yeshiva. This would allow him to pursue an advanced degree in mathematics while also hopefully learning Torah at least part of the day.

Rav Shteinman replied that he would like to study *bichavrusa* with the young man, the Sefer Sha'agas Aryeh. Rav Aharon Leib explained that this Sefer utilized calculated thoughts and reckoning in order to prove Torah ideas, and the young man would renew his love for Torah via learning in this manner.

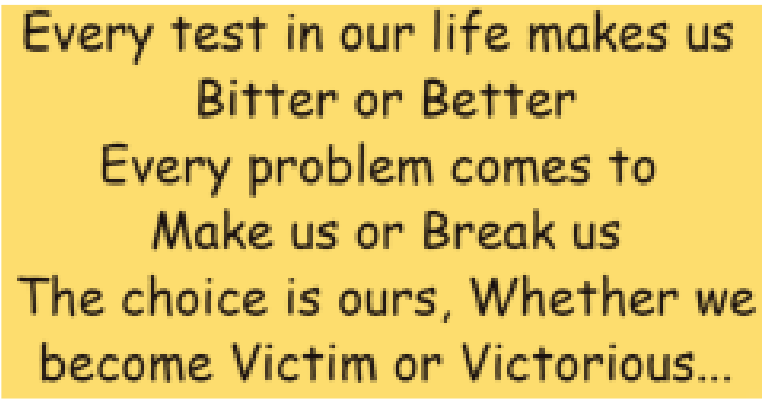
Rav Shteinman learned the Sefer Sha'agas Aryeh with the teenager, and successfully brought him back to learning Torah.

Comment: The first Rashi in Parshas Behar explains that the Torah that was related to Klal Yisroel on Har Sinai encompassed all aspects of every Mitzvah. We are taught that there are 70 ways to learn each part of the Torah. Each of those 70 ways was also transmitted to us at Har Sinai. A person must discover his own path in Torah learning and embrace the one method that gives him enjoyment and fulfilment.

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

Days That Are a Daze

Hashem tests those who are able to handle it. [**R' Tzadok Hakohen** writes that every test is something new, that no one was tested in this way ever before. Every person is a combination of many factors—his situation, nature, surroundings, etc. Since no one was ever tested with the very same circumstances as another, each person experiences a test differently.]



Indeed, the Midrash says Hashem doesn't test the wicked rather only the tzadikim because the wicked can't withstand the test. This can be compared to a strong animal and a weak one as surely a person would put his load on the strong animal.

Another analogy is with banging a nail into a piece of wood. A person only bangs according to what the piece of wood can tolerate because otherwise it will break.

We must realize that the difficulties of life are intended to make us better, not bitter. Every day we must evince more of our greatness and who we are.

Many view pain as bad. A Rabbi debunked this and said that the Torah view is that pain is not bad. Rather it is the price you pay for greatness.

A man who saw a cocoon noticed the butterfly inside trying to make its way out of the tiny hole. The butterfly struggled and tinkered, to no avail. Feeling sorry for the butterfly, the man cut a large opening through which the butterfly could leave. The butterfly exited but the man noticed that his body was contorted, and its wings were shrivelled.

This is how the butterfly lived its entire life — small, shrivelled and unable to fly. It is the struggle to exit the cocoon that has the effect of transforming fluid from the butterfly's body to its wings which is how they develop.

Although he thought he was doing a favour by ending the struggle, really he thwarted its growth. Struggles we go through can make us develop wings so that we can reach great heights.

There is a saying, "If you want a place in the sun you'll have to expect some blisters." We must realize that just over the hill is a beautiful valley, but we must climb the hill to see it.

In a row of houses in Lakewood where all the homes had the same landscaping, each lawn had a large tree planted in the same location. During Hurricane Sandy, some of the trees fell while others didn't. This was because those watered with automatic sprinkler systems didn't remain intact since the systems collapsed. Those not automatically watered had to spread their roots deep into the ground to access the water and nutrients they needed. Thus, they were firmly rooted in the ground and able to withstand the hurricane's winds. The other trees received their water easily and thus were not strong enough to survive the storm.



The struggles we endure build us into strong, great people. There is an expression, "There is no elevator to success. You have to take the stairs."

Whenever we find ourselves doubting how far we can go, we need to remember how far we have come. Remember all we have faced, all the battles we have won and all the fears we have overcome. We must do something today that our future self will be proud of.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ונתנה הארץ פריה ואכלתם לשבע וישבתם לבטח עליה ... (כה-יט)

A fascinating story is told about the neighbourhood in Jerusalem known as Meah Shearim and its humble origins. In Hebrew, Meah Shearim means one hundred doors. The Jerusalem neighbourhood by that name refers to the one hundred gates evoked in the Torah and the Parshas HaShavua that was read in the Beis Haknesses during the week in which the district was created.

It was built during the 19th century, as life in the Old City of Jerusalem became too uncomfortable. The neighborhood houses consisted of two rooms for about ten people, each built next to each other, forming a natural wall, while schools and yeshivos remained in the Old City.

About 120 years ago in the holy city of Jerusalem, lived an askan by the name of R' Zalman Baharan zt"l (son of the holy R' Nochum of Shadik zt"l). He had a beloved student by the name of Yissachar who was engaged to be married to a girl from a fine Jerusalem family, with a high pedigree and lineage.

Unfortunately, two years passed after their initial engagement and the couple were still not married. Eventually, the bride's father gave Yissachar an ultimatum: either marry my daughter at once, or break off the engagement.

The problem was that poor Yissachar did not have two pennies to rub together, let alone enough money to make a wedding and support a wife. He did not know what to tell his prospective father-in-law. So he said nothing and waited for Divine salvation.

R' Zalman Baharan was touched by the young man's plight and longed to help him. At first, he considered going door to door collecting donations, but he knew that his student would never accept such a handout. To further complicate matters, his own dire financial straits prevented him from helping Yissachar from his own pocket.

R' Zalman had a cousin who was also named Zalman. To differentiate between the two cousins, one was called R' Zalman Baharan and the other was known as R' Zalman Baharil (ben Harav Yaakov Leib).

R' Zalman decided to ask his cousin's advice, and the two Zalmans put their heads together to devise a plan. It was obvious that they couldn't take out a loan, for how would they ever repay it?

R' Zalman Baharil then suggested that they wait until Sukkos and sell esrogim, but his cousin countered that it would deprive the regular esrog merchants of their livelihood. In the end it was R' Zalman Baharan himself who came up with a viable plan: There was a vacant lot north of the city, that they hoped to eventually use to build a settlement, although they had yet to obtain enough money to start building.



"Why don't we use part of the land to grow wheat for shmura matza?" he suggested. "We'll have lots of customers, as people know they can trust our integrity. We can earn money, and the profits will pay for Yissachar's wedding!"

A fine idea indeed. That very day the residents of Jerusalem were astonished to see two of its most distinguished citizens - R' Zalman Baharan and R' Zalman Baharil - setting out early in the morning, with gardening equipment slung over their shoulders.

For three days straight, the two Zalmans weeded and ploughed until the ground was ready for seeding. The day after the wheat was

planted, a light rain fell - a sign, the two men agreed, that Hashem approved their plan. Indeed, the crop seemed to take to the land, and it was not long before they began to see results.

A few days later, R' Zalman and his cousin informed the girl's father that the wedding would take place before Pesach. After that, they were able to secure a loan, confident that they could repay it in time. Yissachar and his bride were blissfully wed.

At the end of the season, the two Zalmans harvested the wheat, bundled it into sheaves, and personally milled and sifted it. It was a very fine quality of wheat, and kosher for Pesach according to the highest standards of kashrus. It sold well, and with the money they earned, they easily repaid the loan.

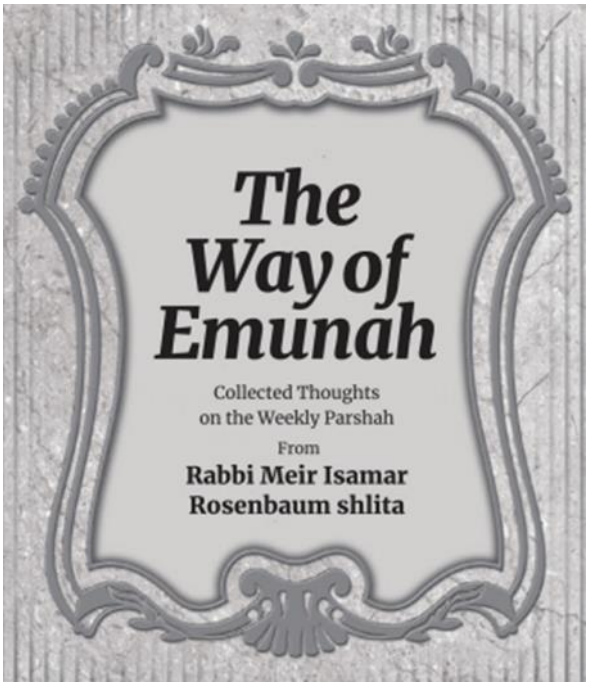
They continued to succeed in this righteous endeavour until they earned enough money to begin construction on the land, and in this way, the holy community of Meah Shearim was founded on the basis of a mitzvah.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



When the telegraph was first invented, people described the wonder to Rav Moshe of Kobrin. He responded that there is nothing new under the sun.

'Each Jew has a telegraph in his mouth – He davens in one place and his voice is heard in all the worlds…'



Meriting Goodness Even When The Pipes of Goodness Are Blocked

***וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מַה־נֹּאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת הֵן לֹא נִזְרָע וְלֹא נֶאֱסֹף אֶת־תְּבוּאָתֵנוּ And if you should say, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we will not sow, and we will not gather in our produce?"* (25:20)**

Sefer Noam Elimelech quotes his brother, **Rav Zushe of Anipoli zy"a**, as asking why the pesukim are in a question and answer format. Why does it say: If you ask what you will eat, the answer is that Hashem will send His blessings. Why doesn't it just say that Hashem will send his blessings without the need for the question?

He answers that the nature of the world is that everyone is provided with as much as he needs. But if someone lacks bitachon in Hashem, the pipeline of goodness is blocked for him and he stops receiving his full share of sustenance.

In this case, if the people are asking what they will eat, they are causing their pipes to be blocked. Therefore, Hashem specifically guarantees that even people whose bitachon is lacking and who ask such a question will be sent His blessing and they will receive enough produce during the sixth year to last for three years.

"If a person tells me that he has a severe headache and he cannot concentrate properly on his prayers, I tell him, 'Who told you to pray with your head? You should be praying with your heart!'" ~ R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk zt"l.

A Test of Bitachon

Rav Yisroel Salanter was once speaking on the topic of emunah and bitachon. He said: "***One who truly trusts in Hashem does not need to do any hishtadlus at all to earn a living***."

A painter who was present was startled, and asked, "One who has bitachon really doesn't need to work at all?" Rav Yisroel answered, "I guarantee you that if you would have genuine bitachon in Hashem, He would give you 10,000 rubles!" The painter immediately gave up his job and began to sit and recite Tehillim all day. He placed his trust in Hashem and waited for the day when He would send him his 10,000 rubles.

A few weeks went by, and all of his meagre savings were depleted. He had no money to even buy bread for his family, but he still trusted that Hashem would send him the money.

When his children began crying form hunger, his wife told him to go back to Rav Yisroel and to ask why his guarantee hadn't been fulfilled. Rav Yisroel listened to his complaint and said that he still fully believed that Hashem would send him the money. However, he told the man that if he didn't have the patience to wait, he would purchase the rights to the money from him. He said that he was prepared to give him 5,000 rubles on the spot in exchange for the 10,000 rubles that he had promised him. The painter was delighted with the deal and agreed to it immediately.

Rav Yisroel then turned to him and said, "Go back to your job. If you were willing to trade 10,000 rubles for 5,000 rubles, it is a clear proof that you never had complete bitachon. That's why you never would have gotten the money. If you really believed that the money was coming, you would not have given away 5,000 rubles so easily."

"Life's challenges don't define us – they refine us!"

Cast Your Burden Upon Hashem



Sefer Otzros Hatorah also relates the following story that was told by the famed Magid, **Rav Sholom Schwadron zt"l**:

Rav Sholom related that he heard this story from an elderly man who had been a Rov in Lithuania. In 1935, he was drafted into the army. He utilized every means possible to try to get an exemption, but he was unsuccessful. Therefore, he decided to flee to Eretz Yisroel. However, he did not have enough money to pay for the trip. He only had sufficient funds to get him to Egypt.

Still and all, he decided to "cast his burden on Hashem" and rely on Him to help. And he set off on his journey. He first made his way to Germany, where he wanted to catch a train to the dock, where he planned on boarding a ship.

He went to buy a train ticket and gave the ticket agent a bill worth 10 marks. The agent made a mistake and thought that he had given him a 100 mark bill and gave him a lot more change than he was supposed to get. When the Rov saw what happened, he thought to himself that this is a case of "gezel akum", and he should return the money. He went back to the agent to give back the extra money, but the man yelled at him to get lost!

He then thought that the agent must not have understood what he was saying, so he went back a second time and tried to explain that he had given him a ten-mark note and had been given change for 100 marks. However, the worker refused to listen to him, and he again screamed at him to go away and stop bothering him.

The Rov couldn't understand why the agent wouldn't agree to take the money back until a passer-by explained to him that in Germany, if a worker made a mistake he would be fired from his job.

Therefore, it was worth it for the agent to pay the amount from his own pocket, rather than to admit that he'd made a mistake.

Because of this worker's mistake, the Rov now had enough money to travel to Eretz Yisroel!

Parsha Points to Ponder by R' Ozer Alport



The Gemora in Bava Metzia (62a) discusses a case in which two people are lost in the nearest settlement, but if one of them drinks it, he will be able to survive. Rebbi Akiva derives from a verse in our parsha (25:36) that **חייך קודמין** –the one with the water should drink it all, as his life takes precedence over that of his friend.

If three people are lost in the desert and one of them has sufficient water for himself and one other person, it is clear that he should drink one supply of water, but what should he do with the second?

The Chiddushei HaRim points out that in this case, the arguments of Rebbi Akiva and Ben Petura, who disagrees with him, don't apply. Rebbi Akiva's focus on the individual's life is irrelevant, for he has enough water to drink.

Ben Petura argues that where there are only two people, they should split it so that nobody has to witness the death of his friend, but in this case the person with the water will have to witness somebody's death regardless. - He suggests that he should simply put the water down and allow the other two to sort it out. However, in a case where the other two are each locked in separate rooms and it must be given to one of them, he is at a loss as to what one should do.



The Shul is a Mikdash

וּמִקְדָּשִׁי תִּירָאוּ *You shall fear My sanctuary. (Vayikra 26:2)*

Chazal say that every *shul* is a **מקדש מעט**, a small *Mikdash*. However, many people misunderstand what this means. They think it is not much more than a figure of speech. In truth, nothing changed in our connection and relationship with *Hashem* when we lost *Beis Hamikdash*, because the *shul* is today just like it always was.

This can best be illustrated by a metaphor.

Thirty or forty years ago, the tape machine, which people used for audio recording and playback, was a large and clumsy object. Now we have small cassette machines.





How did it get smaller? Did someone come and cut half of it off, leaving us with half of the original tape machine? Obviously not. Everything that the big tape machine had, the small cassette machine has, but in miniature.

The "small *Mikdash*" is like this. It is not a little piece of the original *Beis Hamikdash*. It is a complete, full *Mikdash* in miniature. It has all the presence of *kedushah* that the *Beis Hamikdash* itself had. The *Beis Hamikdash* was a closed place where the Jewish people

secluded themselves with *Hashem*, and nothing else was there but *Hashem* and them.

And so it is until this day, in *Galus*. The *deveikus* and revelation of *Hashem's* Oneness that once were in *Beis Hamikdash* have not ceased. They are completely here in the *shuls* of our generation, which are "a small *Mikdash*," in other words, a miniature but complete *Beis Hamikdash*.

For this reason, we should not change anything in our *shuls* from their original form, which is the form of *Mikdash*. Because if we slice off anything from it, it won't be *Mikdash* anymore.

We need to know that even in this whole long, bitter *Galus, Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is with us. And we, too, need to be with Him absolutely, without any turning toward other worlds.

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

All his life, **Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l**, was a man of peace. When asked why he thought he merited living such a long life, he answered, "My whole life I never caused another person pain."

And it was true. He was universally loved by Jews of all types and from all over the world. He would say that it is not enough to learn Torah, but one must learn Toras Shalom, the Torah of Peace, and he would quote the Rambam that the whole Torah was given to promote peace, as the Pasuk says. **דְּרָכֶיהָ דַרְכֵי נֹעַם וְכָל נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שָׁלוֹם** -***"The Torah's ways are ways of sweetness, and all the Torah's paths are paths of peace."***

"You don't need to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."



On the Parsha

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz Shlita is one of the leading Roshei Yeshiva and Kabbalists in the world. He is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Shaarei Shamayim, the Yeshiva that was headed by **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ZT"L**. Rav Gamliel, in his Tiv HaTorah (on Sefer VaYikrah p. 411) provides us with a fascinating Kabbalistic interpretation of the following verse in this week's Parsha.

וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמָּכֵר לִצְמִתֻת כִּי־לִי הָאָרֶץ כִּי־גֵרִים וְתוֹשָׁבִים אַתֶּם עִמָּדִי

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land belongs to Me, for [**כִּי**] strangers and temporary residents [**וְתוֹשָׁבִים**] you are [**אַתֶּם**] with Me." (VaYikrah 25:23)

Before we discuss Rav Gamliel's fascinating interpretation, a brief introduction is in order: We are unique among all the nations of the world because of our unique ability to achieve a Dveikus B'Hashem — a cleaving and closeness to HaKadosh Baruch Hu by emulating his Middos. This Deviekus leads to a dramatic leap in our spirituality and allows us to reach exceedingly high levels in prayer, Torah study, and character improvement.

However, not all of us can reach this lofty level of Dveikus, where the above referenced leap in spirituality can occur. Many of us are not even close to this level as we are mired in Gashmius (the material world), overvaluing the possession of material things which impedes our spirituality. We have become estranged from both Hashem and the Torah.

However, Rav Gamliel offers us hope with his explanation of the verse above.

Rav Gamliel explains that the word **כִּי** in this verse can mean "for" or it can mean "when." Therefore, in the aforementioned verse, we can read it as follows: **כִּי** strangers = when you are "estranged" [from Me or from My Torah], there is still hope for there are two tools, two methods or devices that can bring you back to me – that can once again cause Bnei Yisrael to be what it once was - to be "with Me."

What are those two tools? Let's continue reading the verse. Throughout the **Zohar**, and other Kabbalistic works, we find that the rearrangement of letters carries great significance. The two tools, that can bring Bnei Yisrael back to Hashem are the next words in the verse - **תּוֹשָׁבֵי֥ם** the observance of Shabbos which is hinted at as the word contains the letters

ת , **ש** and **ב**– when rearranged, the letters of **שבת** -Shabbos; and the second device is "**אַתֶּם**" which, when rearranged, spells the word "**אֱמֶת**" truth. The last word in the verse is "with Me". Putting it all together, the verse is saying that, "When you are estranged from Me or my Torah, through Shabbos and Truth, notwithstanding your temporary estrangement, you will ultimately merit to return to Me."

Truth is the signet ring of Hashem (Shabbos 55a) and can bring us back to Him as we learned above. It is quite the opposite with falsehood which distances us from him. Dovid HaMelech writes in Tehillim (101:7) "He who deals deceitfully shall not live in my house; he who speaks untruth shall not stand before my eyes."

We see the words of Rav Gamliel's Kabbalistic interpretation come to life every day in the Baal Teshuvah movement. There are thousands of Baalei Teshuvah (those who were not observant – estranged from Hashem, who have returned to an observant life), whose grandparents, although not necessarily observant, led simple honest lives. This honesty is what ensured that their estrangement would be temporary as their children would ultimately find their way back to Hashem.

Rav Moshe Sherer zt"l: An Appreciation on his 25th Yartzeit By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



Rav Moshe Sherer was a remarkable individual whose skills and abilities helped shape the Torah World in America, as we know it today. He was a master shtadlan – with an uncanny perception of the political scene and a deep understanding of the psychology of people. This man had dealt with presidents and prime ministers, senators, mayors, business leaders. He was also trained under the greatest of our Gedolim: he worked with **Rav Elchonon Wasserman, Rav Reuvain Grozofsky, Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Moshe Feinstein** – and received their advice in shtadlanus.

His selfless devotion to Klal Yisroel and to Agudas Yisroel of America – fashioned this organization into the champion of Torah values that it is.

In Europe, many of the Yeshivos were recognized by the Russian government as legal institutions of higher learning, Slabodka and Telze – to name just two. This was due to the efforts of **Rav Reuvain Grozovsky**, who was asked to do so by the **Alter of Slabodka**.

In America, however, the Yeshivos would not be approved by any of the existing accreditation agencies registered by the U.S. Dept. of Education. Rav Moshe Sherer saw to it to help create AARTS and was instrumental in ensuring that it got off to a good start. Imagine what the finances of the yeshivos would be without the grants that AARTS helps to provide students.

Some of his pet projects were Camp Agudah and Camp Bnos. He loved what the camp was able to do in terms of inspiring boys and girls with a true *bren* and love for Torah and Yiddishkeit. He loved bringing gedolim to camp, thus exposing Klal Yisroel to their Gedolim.

Under his direction and the able leadership of Meir Frischman, the camp was always completely full – months before any other camp was. He also ensured that there were ample scholarships available for those who needed it. He especially took a filial role in ensuring that Russian Jewish children receive their long-forgotten birthright – the birthright of Sinai. There are thousands of families that are Torah-observant and live the ideal of Ki haim chayeinu on account of this man.

Rav Moshe Sherer was at the forefront of saving Iranian Jewry and ensuring that many of them receive a true Torah education. The logistics of such a project were truly amazing and he spearheaded the effort. Our Persian Jewish brothers and sisters are such a strong Torah community largely because his efforts bore remarkable peiros.

The same is true of Rabbi Sherer's efforts in meeting the challenge of Soviet Jewry. Rav Sherer saw what his task was and this was the challenge of our *dor* – he would say. What did we do to ensure the Torah continuity of Russian Jewry who were nearly wiped out on account of Communism? He took the bull by the horns and arranged for new Yeshivos to open, new scholarship funds, camps, shidduchim – all of these and much more.

His assistance to the Klal was both on a grand scale as well as for individuals.

I recall him relating to me, many years ago, when the AIDS epidemic first came out. Someone who had suffered from haemophilia had, unfortunately, received the dreaded illness from a blood transfusion. That young man was a chosson about to marry his kallah

and he refused to inform his kallah about his illness. The doctor who was treating him was a Reform Jew. The doctor could not legally warn her, and Rav Moshe Sherer was asked by the doctor's clergyman if he could assist.

Painstakingly, Rav Moshe Sherer received psakim from every Admor across the spectrum that one who does such a thing is considered a halachic rodef. The doctor showed the kol korehs to the patient – who informed his kallah of the situation. Rav Sherer zt"l saved her life – and created a remarkable Kiddush Hashem in the process.

And Kiddush Hashem was his raison d'être. He intensely disliked the word "Ultra-Orthodox." He would often lambast the secular press for using this term to describe the Torah-observant community. Ultra means extreme, beyond the pale, too much. "How dare they paint an entire group of people with such a pejorative term? Would they do so to any other group? This was one rare area, in which he did not succeed. The term is still used widely.

During the Reagan administration, AIPAC had hired a new executive director, Thomas Dine. Dine had bowled over Washington with his sophistication and aggressiveness. Dine was a veteran of Capitol Hill and had worked on the staffs of Ted Kennedy and Senator Frank Church. Dine was very capable but had a serious flaw. He had a visceral dislike for religious Jews.

In mid June of 1993, he described Orthodox Jews as "Smelly" and "low class" and how he disdained sitting in proximity to them on airplanes. Rabbi Sherer was horrified. How could a man who had such feelings be the head of AIPAC? He went to work, writing, cajoling, and within a week, Thomas Dine resigned his position. He later took a consulting position for Alhurrah, an Arab American Satellite Television Organization that has been described in the WSJ as a platform for terrorists.

There was a time when Klal Yisroel's leadership was virtually torn apart on account of a messy divorce situation. The Satan had

somehow managed to cause a rift within Klal Yisroel. This pained him to no end, and he likened the situation to someone whose parents were going through a divorce. He handed it in such a remarkable and exemplary manner that both sides were impressed with the *anivus* and *gadlus* of the man. One even remarked, "Both of the two sides could learn a lot from him."

Rav Sherer's respect and awe of Gedolei haTorah was a mussar shmuess in and of itself. This author would even venture to say that Rabbi Moshe Sherer was to a large extent the founder of contemporary Kavod HaTorah in the world of Baalei Batim. How so? Now the lay leaders of Agudah have the utmost respect and reverence for the Gedolei HaRosh Yeshiva and Gedolei Torah on Moetzes.

In my research, I have been privy to letters written to and about Gedolei HaAgudah prior to Rav Moshe Sherer's time. Suffice it to say that they were vastly different than now. The primacy of following gedolei Torah that exists in our world today is due in large part to the efforts of Rav Moshe Sherer.

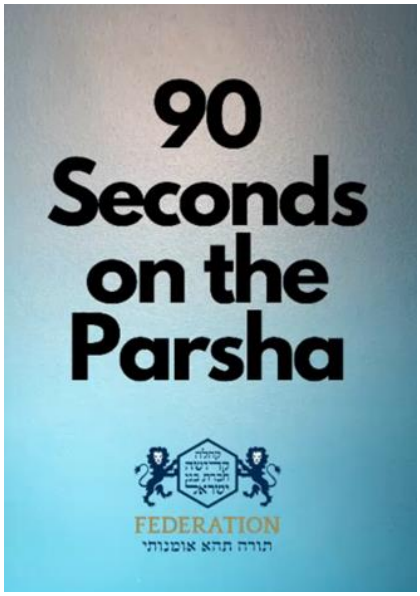
Rabbi Sherer would often say that he and his wife had actually four children: their daughter, Rochy, (Langer), their daughter Elky (Goldschmidt) , their son, Rav Shimshon Sherer, and their fourth child, Agudath Israel of America!

Always the gentleman, Rav Moshe Sherer recognized the fact that her unwavering support for his avodas haKodesh was what enabled him to achieve his remarkable accomplishments.

One wonders what he would have said and done in the current situation. After just having lost the **Novaminsker Rebbe zt"l**, and 22 years after the passing of Rav Sherer we are truly bereft of leadership.

This Motzai Shabbos, the 21st of Iyar will mark his 25th yartzeit. His legacy to us is three-fold: One, the remarkable Torah

community that he helped build. Two, the organization that is Agudah and all that it does for Klal Yisroel. And three, a shining example of what one person can accomplish in a lifetime. Yehe zichro boruch!



Rav SF Zimmerman



In the days of Sefirah, we mourn the loss of the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva. The Gemara in Yevamos says that their failing was that "**שלא נהגו כבוד זה בזה**" – they did not respect each other.

The Medrash says a different reason – **שנהגו צרות עין זה בזה** – they were jealous of each other. They didn't *fargin* each other. So it seems like a conflict of opinions.

The Ponovitcher Rav explains as follows: The Gemara is describing **the action** they did - **שלא נהגו כבוד זה בזה**. But why were they not respectful? Did they not recognize each other's achievements?

The Medrash says - No – the root cause was that **שנהגו צרות עין זה בזה** – they didn't want to respect another person, because they thought that it would be taking away something from themselves.

And therefore, in these days of Sefira, our avodah is to work on **טובת עין** - we should be happy for other people. We should be joyous at other people's accomplishments. And only then will we be able to **נהגו כבוד זה בזה**.

Techiyas Hameisim Through Reciting Tachanun

Sefer Zichronam L'Bracha relates the following story in the name of **Kobetz Ohr Hatzafun** (Nissan 5773).

In a village near Belz, there lived a Jewish man who owned a tavern that was frequented by the non-Jewish residents of the area. The gentiles would come into the tavern every day and get extremely drunk. After drinking, many of them would "forget" to pay for their beverages. One day, the owner made a new rule: Everyone who wanted a drink had to pay in advance. This was the only way he could make sure that he got paid at all.

It once occurred that the tavern's owner had to travel away for a few days, and he left his wife and sons in charge of the tavern.



While he was gone, a young gentile entered the bar and asked for a drink of whiskey. The owner's wife told him that payment had to be given before the drink was served. The young man said, "Don't worry. I'll pay right after I drink." She was convinced and gave it to him.

After his first drink, the man asked for a second. She gave it to him and he asked for a third. This time, however, she firmly said that she couldn't give him anymore until he paid. Now that the man had started to become inebriated from the drink, his secret emerged. He admitted that he had no money to pay.

When she heard this, the woman became very angry at the man who had tricked her. She was so mad that she picked up a heavy cup and threw it at his head. The glass cup struck the man and knocked him to the ground. He hit his head and died.

The woman realized what she had done and knew that she was in grave danger. She had no idea what to do, so she closed the tavern

and waited until her husband returned home. When the owner got home, his wife met him and told him what had occurred. He told her, "Let me go quickly to Belz to get a bracha from the Rebbe before the gentiles hear about what happened and come to take revenge against us."

The man quickly travelled to Belz. He entered the Rebbe's room and began to cry. He related what had happened and how he and all of the local Jews were now in danger.

Rav Yissochor Dov thought for a minute and said, "Go home and daven Minchah with kavanah in your tavern. When you get up to Tachanun, have a lot of kavanah and Hashem will send you a salvation."

The man followed the Rebbe's instructions. He went home and davened with intense devotion and with a broken heart. While saying Tachanun, tears rolled down his cheeks as he poured out his heart. Suddenly, an amazing thing happened! The dead gentile stood up while the man was in the middle of Tachanun. He opened the door of the tavern and walked outside. He kept walking until he was two streets away, and he then fell down and died again, right in front of the passer-by who had no idea that anything had happened to him previously. They called his parents to come get him, and nothing more was said about the matter.

When the man saw the great miracle that he had witnessed, he travelled back to Belz. When he entered the Rebbe's room, he was so excited that he couldn't catch his breath. He said, "Can I please ask the Rebbe one question? If the power of saying Tachanun is so great that it can bring the dead back to life, why do we skip it every time there is a Yahrzeit, seudas mitzvah or the like? Why don't we make sure to say it every day?"

The Rebbe smiled and said, "Do you want all of the dead gentiles to wake up!?"

Shabbos

This story occurred some 30 years ago.



David Solomon was what you would call a self-made man. He lived in Manhattan and had built himself up from almost nothing with his own 'two hands'. Today was a multi-millionaire with several factories, had substantial holdings on Wall Street and knew exactly how loud money 'talks'.

Of course there was no place in his life for Judaism and no time for anything except business ... and family.

The most precious of all his possessions was his eighteen-year-old daughter. She was the apple of his eye. Her picture was on his desk and every wall of his office. He dreamed of the day that she would marry, and he would see grandchildren. He even had a special fund saved up to buy her a new house and whatever she needed. And that day would soon be here.

He was sitting in his office when the phone rang. 'Mr. Solomon?" asked an official sounding voice on the other end of the line. - "Yes."

'Have you got a daughter by the name of Sarah Solomon? - "This is a police officer speaking from County hospital. You'd better get down here fast, Mr. Solomon. Your daughter has been in a pretty severe automobile accident."

Mr. Solomon asked a few questions to make sure it wasn't a prank, slammed the phone down, grabbed his keys and raced out of the office.

It was a nightmare. She was in critical condition. In a coma. Wires and instruments were attached to every part of her body. The doctors said that it was impossible to operate until her condition stabilized. - He stood there weeping. What could he do? His wife arrived and she too burst out in tears.

The next few days were almost without sleep. They waited in the hall for some news from the doctors. Perhaps she opened her eyes? Perhaps there would be some improvement?

But the only message of hope he received was his father's suggestion that he consult with **the Lubavitcher Rebbe**.

"He's the only one that can help" his father said. "I have friends that he did big miracles for. If anyone can help you, he can. Just go, get an appointment and get to see him.

David's emotions began flipping. At first he was excited; there was hope! But then he became disappointed .. in himself. What? I, Dovid Solomon, a normal, successful, normal American businessman going to Rabbis? And who ever heard of Rabbis doing miracles? Rabbis give speeches and are, at best, communal leaders….what do Rabbis have to do with healing people.

But maybe this was something different? After all, this was a respected Jewish Rabbi. He even heard that he was a great leader, a serious person. He was uncertain.

Then suddenly he was afraid. "I don't do any commandments. I don't even own a yarmulke! How can I go to this Rabbi? I'll be so ashamed."

But then his confidence returned. He remembered his money. "I'll give a big donation and the Rabbi will certainly hear what I have to say."

Dovid got directions, jumped in his car and drove down to the Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn to arrange a private meeting (called 'Yechidut'). There he learned that usually people had to wait for even months but because of the urgency that evening he was

given precedence and that evening, many hours later, he was standing before the Rebbe in the Rebbe's office room.

"Rebbe!" He began to cry. "My daughter had a terrible accident. She is in critical condition. Rebbe, can you save her? Here, here is a cheque for fifty thousand dollars! For your institutions."

The Rebbe just looked at him without seeming to notice the cheque and said. "If you want to save your daughter you must begin to observe Shabbat."

"Shabbat? You mean not drive or turn on lights and those things on Saturday? Rebbe," he replied "I can't promise such a thing. I'm a very busy man and I'm not a religious Jew. Here!" he took out his checkbook put it on the Rebbe's desk and began writing, "Here. One hundred thousand dollars! Please, Rebbe, please add this to the first cheque. Just save my daughter."

The Rebbe looked at him even more intently and said. "Mr. Solomon I am here to help you. That money might help my institutions but if you want to help your daughter keep the Sabbath."

"Rebbe, here!" Said Solomon as he signed his name to another cheque and placed it before the Rebbe. "It's an open cheque. Write what you want. Take what you need, just save her!!" He was really crying now. Looking deeply into the Rebbe's eyes for some hope.

"G-d is responsible for her healing." the Rebbe replied. "You must appeal to Him. I can only help with prayer, but you must also do your part". "At least keep the Sabbath. Then your daughter will be healthy, and you will even see grandchildren from her."

Mr. Solomon gathered up his cheques. Said he would think about it, shook the Rebbe's hand and left closing the door after him. He waited around for a while outside the door hoping that the Rebbe would call him back. But he didn't and Solomon returned to the hospital empty handed.

That night he couldn't sleep. The meeting with the Rebbe made a deep impression on him. The Rebbe's face danced before his eyes saying "I am here to help you, not to help my projects. Keep Shabbat". It was the first time in his life he met a man that was not interested in his own personal profit.

Meanwhile Sarah's condition deteriorated.

"Nu" He said to his wife. This Shabbat we won't drive or turn on any lights. I mean we'll be staying in the hospital anyway, so we have nowhere to go. And I think I remember how my father used to make Kiddush; we can at least begin to do what Rabbi Shneerson said."

That Sunday there was some improvement and the next Sunday she opened her eyes for the first time in a month.

Mr. Solomon became a 'Shomer Shabbos' Jew and his daughter Sarah not only became completely healed, she eventually got married and had several children. Just as the Rebbe said.



The Afternoon Shower

My dear friend, **Rabbi Avraham Krupnik**, a prominent *posek* and author of *From the Desk of Rabbi Avraham Krupnik*, once shared with me an extraordinary story. It illustrates how one who strengthens himself in Torah is granted remarkable, even visible, Heavenly protection.

His father, **Rabbi Eliyahu Krupnik**, was a fixture in the Montreal *kollel*. From the moment *seder* began, he remained in the *beis midrash*. But he did not allow himself to plateau. Remaining stagnant was not an option.

Where was there room to grow?

He resolved that whenever an errand or interruption was absolutely necessary, he would leave only at moments when his *chavrusa* was already stepping away so that not a minute of learning would be wasted.

And so it was.

One summer afternoon, in the late 1990s, when his *chavrusa* stepped out to take a brief break, Rabbi Krupnik seized the opportunity and tended to something quickly outside the *beis midrash*. When he returned, he was met by a startling scene. *Bochurim* were gathered near his seat, visibly shaken. When he approached the front of the *beis midrash*, he noticed that the tall glass window over his chair had shattered into thousands of jagged shards.

Only then did the story emerge.



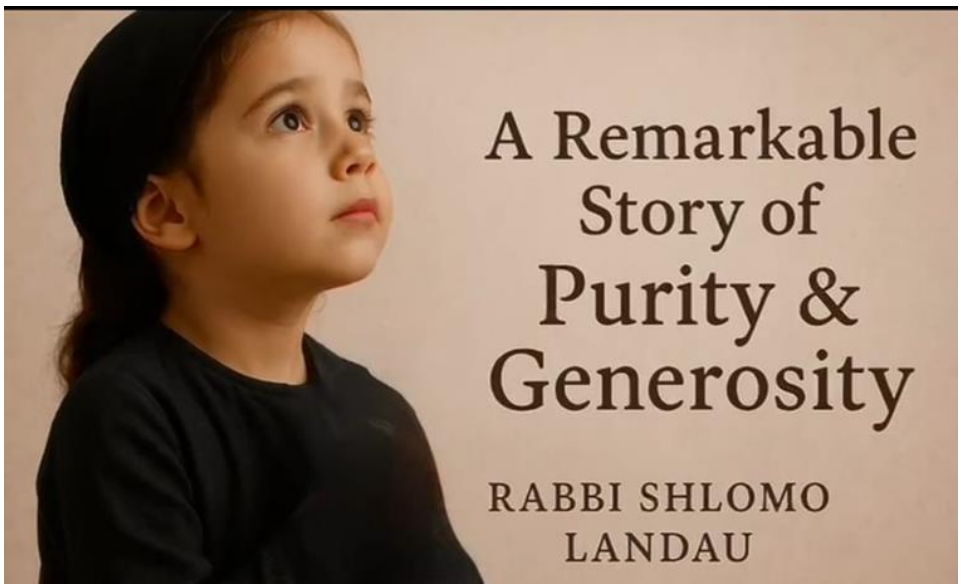
Adjacent to the *kollel* was a school. A group of boys had been playing a spirited game of baseball outside. One energetic boy hit a clean home run, and the ball soared straight toward the *kollel*'s building — smashing through the large stained-glass window that exploded into a shower of glass… **directly onto the seat where Rabbi Eliyahu had been learning moments before.**

It was obvious to everyone what had occurred. Had he remained in his place, he would have been seriously injured — perhaps worse.

Yet he wasn't there.

Because of his unwavering commitment to Torah — adjusting even his breaks to preserve every possible second — he merited a clear shield of Divine protection.

There are countless *segulos* in the world. But sometimes, Hashem shows us openly that **Torah itself is the greatest protection a Yid can shelter beneath** — both in the Heavens above and in the events that unfold right here on earth.



Rabbi Murad Maslaton probably did more chesed in his lifetime than a thousand people. There are hundreds and hundreds of stories about his chesed, but here's one that's so beautiful and so powerful.

One Pesach, Rabbi Murad Maslaton and his family hosted a widow and their three orphaned girls. Immediately, Rabbi Maslaton realized that they didn't have adequate clothing. So he called his friend, Eddie, a fellow who owned a huge children's clothing business, said, send someone over to measure the girls and please outfit them for Yomtov and beyond.

The next day, Eddie comes over and he delivers the clothing to the three little girls. One of those orphans was six-year-old Elizabeth. She was so overwhelmed by the kindness, by the generosity, that she turned to him, and she said to him, 'sir, your children must be so lucky to have a father like you.'

Unbeknownst to her, Eddie and his wife were married for many years and didn't have children. And that line was like a dagger strike in his heart. He kind of mumbled and muttered to her and said, 'well, actually, we don't have any children'. The little girl was shocked. And in the purity and innocence that only a child could have, she raised

her eyes heavenwards, and she said, 'Master of the universe. How could it be that a man that's so kind, like Eddie, doesn't have any children? Please give him children.'

Within the year, Eddie and his wife were blessed with a child and subsequently several children afterwards.

The generosity of Eddie, the purity and tefillah of a little girl brought together by the pure generosity of Rabbi Murad Maslaton.

Elizabeth's childlike innocence and direct prayer highlight how faith and purity can move hearts and, as the story suggests, influence Divine blessings.

SHABBOS STORIES – Kindness that Brings Joy

Reb Shalom was a poor man. He made his living doing occasional repair and renovation work in his hometown of Afta: patching a leaky roof here, plastering a crumbling wall there, or fixing a cabinet on the verge of collapse. With such work, some-times there was work, sometimes not—and so it was with his meager livelihood.

Now, his eldest daughter had reached marriageable age. Reb Shalom had not a single coin for her dowry, and without a dowry, the chances of finding a suitable match were slim. The daughter quietly endured her pain, as a virtuous Jewish girl with good character, never complaining or pressuring her father. Her mother, however, did not relent. Not a day went by without reminding her husband—though he needed no reminder—that a father's duty to his children is not complete until he brings them under the chuppah.

Coming to the Tzaddik One day, while agonizing over his daughter's unmarried status, Reb Shalom's feet carried him to the home of the tzaddik, the **"Ohev Yisrael" (Lover of Israel) of Apta (Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, 1748-1825).**



The Kever, burial place of the Apter Rov, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, zt"l

"I am poor and have no money to marry off my daughter, who is kind, modest, and pious," he poured out his troubles. The tzaddik looked at him with compassionate eyes and recognized a hardworking man, not one who begs from wealthy patrons. He thought carefully and then spoke.

"Truly, you have nothing? No savings, no valuable jewelry to sell?"

"No," Reb Shalom replied.

"And what about a loan?" the tzaddik asked. "How much do you need?"

"One hundred rubles," said Reb Shalom.

"And why do you not borrow it?" asked the tzaddik.

Reb Shalom lowered his eyes in helplessness. "One hundred rubles is too large a sum, and I know no one who would lend me that amount. Besides, I truly don't know how I could ever repay it," he said.

"G-d helps," the tzaddik waved away his concerns. "When a Jew takes a loan for a holy purpose, G-d helps him repay it," he said. "Think a little more," the tzaddik encouraged. "Perhaps there is something of value in your home that you could pledge?"

Suddenly, a spark of hope lit Reb Shalom's eyes. "I have a printed shas (full set of the Talmud) from Slsvita," he said.



"Bring it here," said the tzaddik.

Within an hour, the shas was in the tzaddik's home.

"This is a very precious shas, far more valuable than one hundred rubles," said the tzaddik, with admiration. "If you pledge it, you can receive a loan of two hundred rubles!"

Moments later, he opened his desk drawer, took out two hundred rubles, and handed it to Reb Shalom. Stunned, Reb Shalom could hardly contain his shock. After regaining his composure, he thanked the tzaddik warmly and returned home joyous.

Before long, Reb Shalom's daughter was engaged. Sometime later, a messenger arrived at Reb Shalom's home, carrying the shas back from the tzaddik. "The Rebbe said that this shas is very valuable and he does not want to bear the responsibility of guarding it from damage or theft. Thus, he believes it is best that it remains in your home, where you will care for it properly," said the messenger, and departed.

The day of Reb Shalom's daughter's wedding finally arrived. It was customary for the bride and groom and their families to visit the tzaddik for his blessing. Reb Shalom, his wife, and their children came with the bride. After receiving the tzaddik's blessing, Reb Shalom was asked to remain for a private moment.

"With this," the tzaddik said, "I forgive you the repayment of the loan. The two hundred rubles you borrowed from me are now a complete gift."

Reb Shalom, overwhelmed, could barely respond, stammering, "Why... I mean, for what reason...?"

A broad smile spread across the tzaddik's face. "Listen carefully," he began. "As you know, G-d created the world entirely for the sake of the Jewish people. In theory, one might think that the world should operate openly to show that all existence is for the Jewish people. In practice, however, we live in exile, with Jews oppressed and immersed in the burdens of the world.

"I considered this deeply and concluded that there must be a special moment in a Jew's life when his heart is completely joyful. When is that? Every day he is preoccupied with livelihood, raising children, and other challenges. Years pass and finally comes the happiest day: the day he brings his children under the chuppah. In that moment, all suffering is forgotten, and his spirits soar as he thanks G-d for His kindness. This is true and complete joy."

The tzaddik paused, then continued: "I realized that if, on that happy day, you remembered the precious shas you pledged and thought of the two hundred rubles, it might disturb your joy. And was not the world created for the Jewish people? Therefore, I decided to transform the loan into a full gift. Mazel tov, mazel tov!"

Thus, was born another story illustrating how truly deserving of his name was the "Ohev Yisrael" of Apta.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Holocaust Survivors

We readily recognize the sanctity of those who were murdered in the Holocaust *al kiddush Hashem*. But what of the survivors?

R' Michoel Ber Weissmandl addressed this question with a powerful analogy. He compared Holocaust survivors to the limbs of an *olah* offering that had been placed upon the *mizbeach* but were not

burned. Those limbs retain the full sanctity of the *olah*. Likewise, the survivors were placed upon the *mizbeach* of the Holocaust but were miraculously not burned. They therefore retain the same sanctity as those who were consumed upon the *mizbeach* of *kiddush Hashem*.






The Imrei Emes once related to **Leibel Eisner**, himself a Holocaust survivor: Chazal teach, **לוּחוֹת וְשִׁבְרֵי לוּחוֹת מוּנָּחוֹת בָּאָרוֹן**, both the complete Tablets and the broken Tablets rest in the *aron*. (Berachos 8b) The survivors are the broken Tablets, standing together with the *kedoshim* who were killed—the complete Tablets. Both reside together in the Aron.

In this spirit, the **Satmar Rav** would say that one who seeks a blessing from a tzaddik should approach a Holocaust survivor bearing a number tattooed on his arm.

Learning Torah is like eating the mann. The mann could taste like any delicacy a person wanted, but if he does not think of anything, it has no taste. - Torah is so sweet, but only if you think. Otherwise, you sit by the Gemara and it has no flavour at all! ~ The Chafetz Chaim.

Landing on the Moon





Where do we see a hint in the Torah for a person landing on the moon?

R' Chaim Kanievsky provides the answer. The gemara (Eruvin 55a) comments on **לא בשמים היא** - the Torah is not in heaven, and that if it were in heaven, you need to ascend to get it.

R' Chaim Kanievsky says from this you see that a person can ascend to heaven and land on the moon, located in heaven.

Emunah Creates Parnassah



Sefer Avodas Binyomin relates that a man once came to the home of **Rav Binyomin Rabinowitz zt"l**, Dayan on the Badatz of the Eidah Hachareidus, and told him, "I have a lot of bitachon, but I still have very little parnassah."

Rav Binyomin asked him, "When you were a kid, did you ever worry about whether or not you would have meat and fish for Shabbos?"

The man answered, "No. I knew my father would take care of that." Rav Binyomin continued, "Did you ever in your life not have meat and fish for Shabbos?"

"Yes," the man said. "I once was sick and the doctor told me not to eat fish and meat until I got better, so my father didn't give me any that week."

"Think about what you just said," Rav Binyomin told him. "When your father knew that it wasn't good for you to eat fish and meat, he didn't give you any, and you understood. So too, if you ask Hashem for a lot of money and He doesn't give it to you, it is because your Father in Heaven knows that it wouldn't be good for you. Just have bitachon and trust that He is giving you what you need and withholding you from things that you shouldn't have for your own good."

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

עשה לך רב! - Make for yourself a Rov!

A personal reflection on the impact on my life by the Manchester Rov, Horav Menachem Mendel Schneebalg, Zt"l (b 5681 – nifter – Acharon Shel Pesach 5781), presented as a three-part series.

Part 3

With my family growing, Boruch Hashem, living in Westwood Avenue was getting difficult. So we looked to move to a larger house. One house that we went to view was on Broom Lane. Although the house would have been suitable, the fact that I had at that time 3 brothers living on Broom Lane bothered me, because I once heard the Rov make a comment regarding too many brothers living on the same road. I informed the agent that we were interested in the house, subject to contract AND also subject to approval from the Rabbi.

When I presented my shaala to the Rov, he replied "That sort of question one needs to ask a Rebbe not a Rov" To which I replied, "The Rov is the Rov of the town, and he made a comment regarding this subject. The Rov can ask his Rebbe but I will do what the Rov tells me". He said, "In that case, come back on Monday, and I will give you a Teshuva.". The following Monday, he said to me "better not". I went straight home and phoned the agent to withdraw my interest in that house.

Regrettably, I was, once, party to upsetting the Rov, and receiving a telling off. The Pirchim Annual Siyum was once held, one year, at the Peacock Suite in the Piccadilly Hotel in the centre of Manchester. My brother Shloime Z"L and myself were both 'machers' (organisers), with others, of course. We had given the task of organising the fetching the Rabbonim to someone, who was responsible for sending different drivers for each Rabbi.

Unknown to us, he had decided to fetch the Rov himself. The problem was that his car had a puncture on the way, and he didn't call anyone to take over. This was in the days before mobile phones. So, by the time he got it fixed and bought the Rov it was already quite late. Meanwhile, we, in the hall, were on *spilkes*. With nearly 1000 children, as well as many Ba'alei Batim, we had to begin the proceedings, so we said the Hadran, and then called up each of the Pirchim Boys who were scheduled to speak, served the main course, let the choir sing etc, whilst anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Rov. The chairman had just called up the scheduled second speaker, when the Rov arrived. The Rov was very upset, and stated "it's never happened before that I wasn't the first speaker" - I sincerely hope he was Mochel us all.

The way the Rov interacted with all types of people, made a deep impression on each and every one of them. There was a Yid who started davening during the week in MH, in the period that I worked in the Shul. He used to belong to the wider community whilst having

a business in the bag trade. Many Yiden used to be in this section of business. When he closed his business, someone suggested that he be a driver for Meshulochim. This brought him closer to MH and also the Rov. Moshe* (not his real name) related to me how the Rov's sense of humour made a big impression on him. This is Moshe's story:

He was going to Eretz Yisroel for Yomtov, and as a way of introducing himself to the Rov (as a newish Mispallel in the Beis Hamedrash) and to wish the Rov a Good Yomtov, he went to visit the Rov in his home. The Rov invited him in, sat him down and schmoozed with him for some time. Then Moshe asked the Rov his 'shiila' (Litvish/Cockney accent). I am going to Israel for Yomtov, do I keep 1 day of Yomtov or 2? The Rov assured him that he had a good question but he nevertheless had to keep 2 days of Yomtov.

Next Yomtov, Moshe was back at the Rov's house, with a similar question, but this time he was staying on after Yomtov for a couple of weeks. How many days Yomtov does he need to keep? Again, the Rov explained that he needs to keep 2 days.

Next Yomtov, again Moshe is going to Eretz Yisroel, but this time he is staying in his son's flat which he owns. The Rov again says he still has to keep 2 days.

One Succos, Moshe was going already before Yom Kippur, and went to the Rov before Rosh Hashono with a bottle of wine, and to wish him a 'Shono Teivo'. The Rov stopped him at the door, and said, "If you've come to ask me how many days you need to fast on Yom Kippur, I can't accept the bottle of wine".

Moshe told me several times that he was so impressed with the Rov's patience, hospitality and especially his sense of humour. That is what gave him the courage to take on more mitzvas.

Our Chayim Aryeh, is a proud wearer of a Shtreimel, which he has worn since his aufruf. The Rov was very happy to be honoured with

putting the Shtreimel on Chayim Aryeh's head on that erev Shabbos, and showered him (and also me and my grandson, Elya, who came with), with Brochos. This parsha actually started years before in the Rov's house. Chayim Aryeh loves to dress up on Purim, and one year he dressed up as a chassidishe bochor, with the full set of clothes, groomed his beard (what he had) and twirled his peyos accordingly. He really looked the part. When Chayim Aryeh came into the Rov, the Rov said to him, all straight-faced, "Why are you not dressed up?" This wasn't an admonishment, but a note of approval. And as they say, the rest is history.

I like, from time to time, to go around shops, looking for ideas that would be of benefit to others. I once found a disposable waterproof warehouse coat, for less than a pound each. I bought a dozen and put them in my box in shul.

One Summer Shabbos afternoon, it suddenly started raining during the Rov's weekly Perek Shiur. Realising that many of the people at the shiur hadn't bought a coat, I offered my 'gmach' warehouse coats to people's delight. However, the Rov declined. I respectfully asked him if he *stam* didn't want one or was there a problem, to which he replied, 'I dont consider it a *Malbush,* because if it stops raining one might be tempted to discard it immediately in the street, it would, therefore, be considered as 'carrying', rather than wearing."

I immediately collected up what I could see and put them away. However, 2 had been taken. When I caught up with one of the two people on my way home, I *taker* noticed that he was no longer wearing one of my g'mach coats.

(The g'mach coats were put to other use. I used them on family outings to the country).

The Rov once instructed me to remove from the notice board in Shul, any adverts selling unused or part used train tickets. He explained that every ticket states clearly 'not transferable', and even though the initial ownership can not be proved, he considered it 'ill behooves'

a Shul to display such an advert. Although, I adhered to his instructions henceforth, he did repeat himself, later, several times, from which I understood that he held the honesty of this matter strongly in his mind.

We all had Rabbonim, Roshei Yeshiva, mentors, etc who helped us in numerous ways, but, nevertheless, I am proud to have lived all these years under the influence and guidance of the Manchester Rov ZZ"L, יהי זכרנו ברוך

Good Shabbos Aaron Leitner

Rabbi Yakov Galinsky was exiled to Siberia. At one stage, he was punished with starvation rations for 40 days. When the 40 days were over, he was served a hot soup. As he had not eaten proper food for 40 days, it was the greatest delicacy he could dream of.

At the same time there was another Yid by the name of Cholev, who was still in the middle of his 40 days of starvation rations, and he looked extremely hungry. Rabbi Yakov debated inside himself whether or not he should share his soup with this other Yid. Finally he decided, 'how can I eat alone when there is a starving yid right next to me?' He shared the soup with the starving Cholev, who enjoyed it tremendously.

Many years later Reb Yakov lived in **ארץ ישראל**. At that time the Zionist Government, were bring over yidden from the Arab countries and housing them in immigrant camps run by secular administration, whose intent was strip the immigrants of their religion and heritage.

Knowing that many of the refugee-parents would want their children to go to Torah schools, the **חזון איש** sent Rev Yakov and another

person, to go to the camp and find out how many parents there were interested in having their children attend frum schools.

They arrived at the camp and were stopped at the entrance. They were told that in order to enter it was necessary to have a special pass. They returned to the **חזון איש**, who told them to dig a tunnel under the fence in order to gain entry. Armed with a new order from the **גדול הדור** they returned and managed to dig under a fence and smuggle themselves inside. It did not take long before the directors of the camp spotted them and demanded to know what they were doing. These directors were European Jews, who only knew how to speak Yiddish. This was deliberately arranged so that the immigrants would not have a common language with the directors, thus the secular Zionists' plan would not be ruined.

When the directors demanded, in Yiddish, that they should leave the camp grounds, Reb Yakov and his friend pretended that they did not understand Yiddish. Reb Yakov then heard one saying to the other, soon Cholev will be here, he will decide what to do. The name Cholev rang a bell in Reb Yakov's head, and after racking his brains, he recalled the incident of the soup in Siberia.

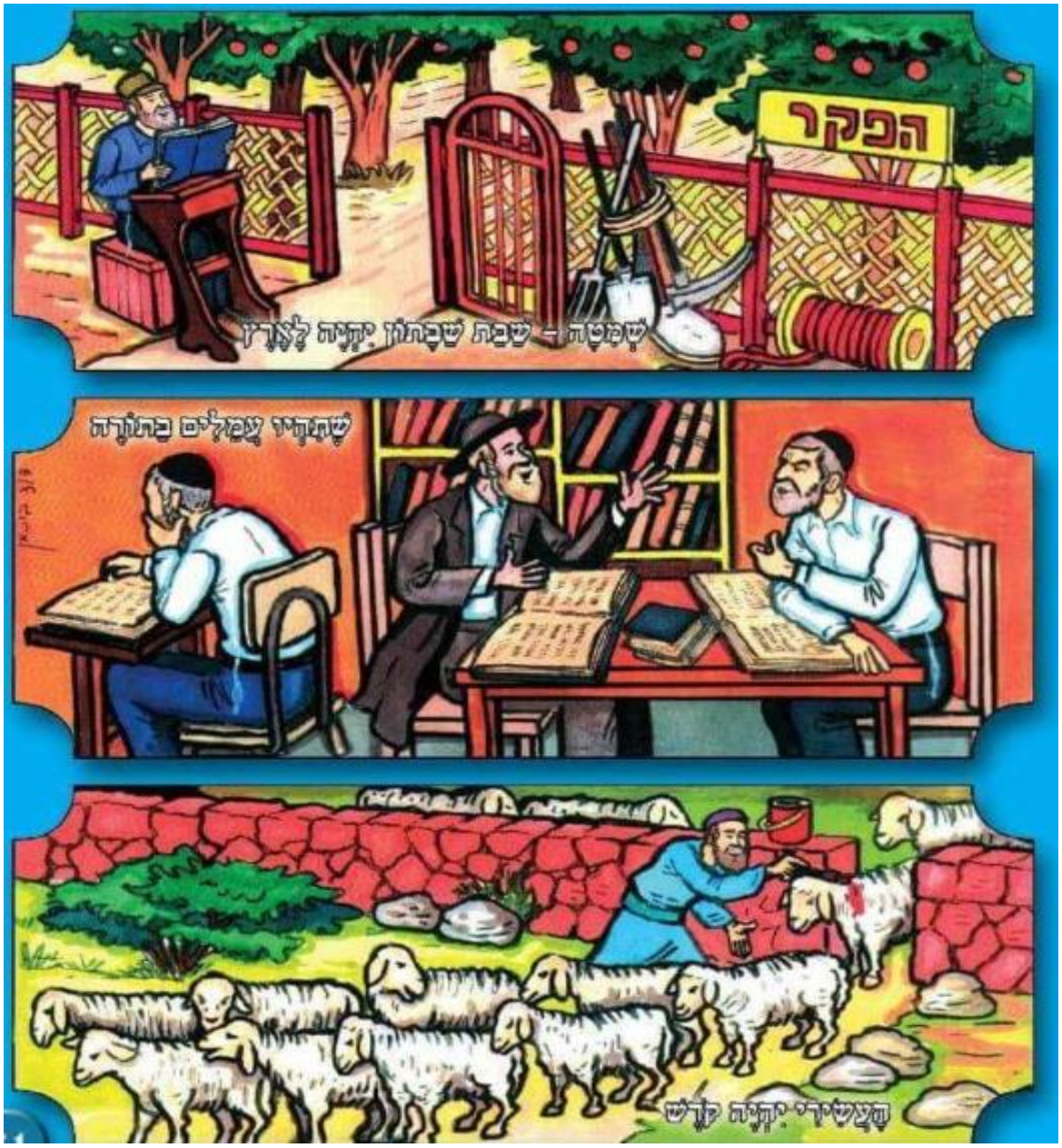
It turned out that Cholev was the head of the camp, and when Cholev arrived, Reb Yakov recognised him and Cholev also recognised Reb Yakov and was delighted to see him. He patted Rab Yakov on his back and asked him if he needed help finding his way out? "I know how to do that myself," Reb Yakov replied.

Rav Yakov saw that Cholev had remembered the soup and decided to cash in on it. He took Cholev to the side and asked him to find out how many parents were interested in enrolling their children in Torah schools. Cholev was taken aback by the request, but his feeling of gratitude towards Reb Yakov was too deep for him to reject the request.

"Wait until the directors leave and I will find out for you," he promised. Shortly afterwards, Cholev returned with a list of 65

parents. With the aid of this list many children were enrolled into Torah schools and went on to build Torah homes. All because of sharing some soup.




הכרי
שְׁמִטָּה – שַׁבָּת שַׁבָּתוֹן יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ
שֶׁהָיוּ עֲמֵלִים בַּתּוֹרָה
הַמַּשְׁיר יִהְיֶה קֹדֶשׁ