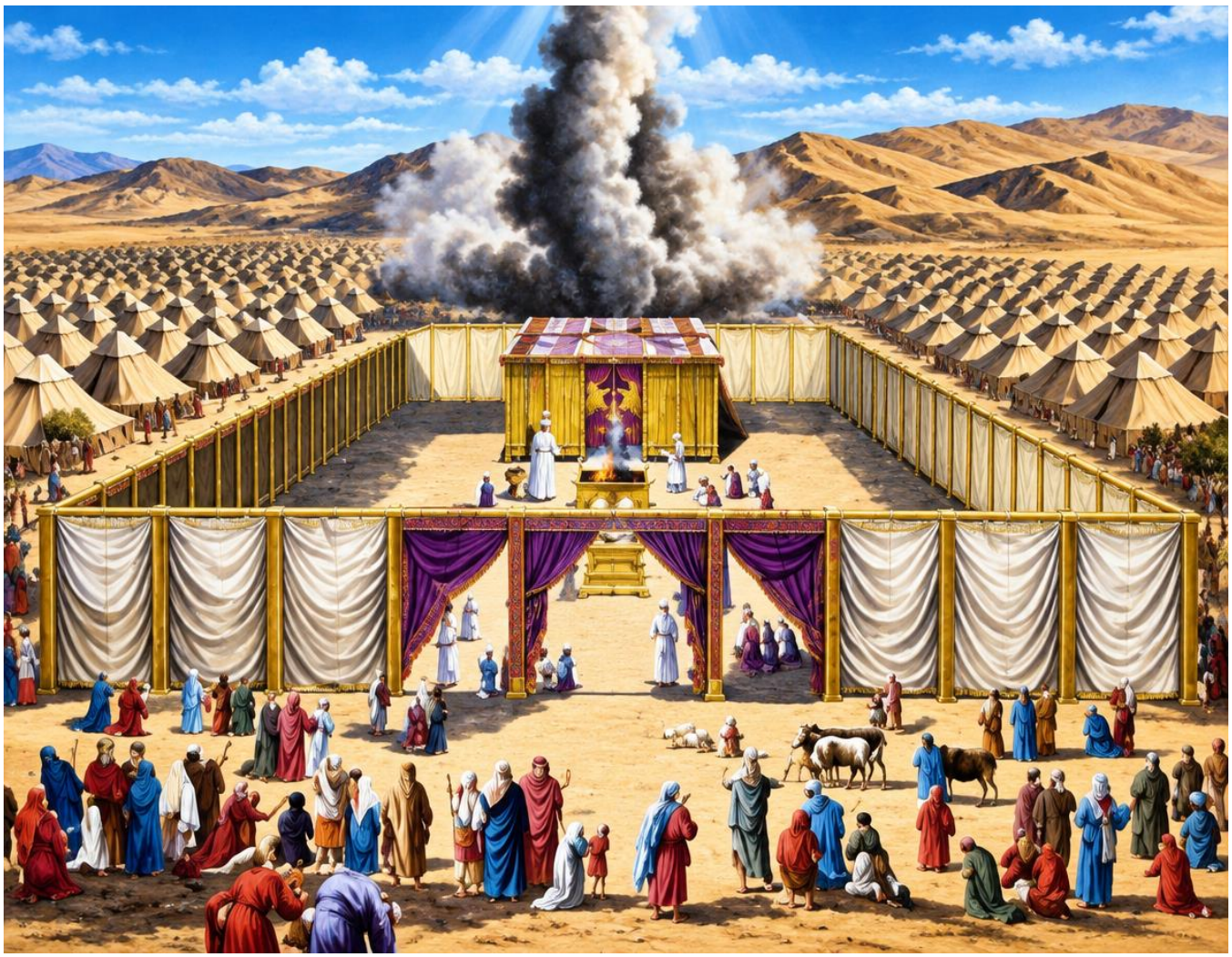
TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



פקודי

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

פקודי

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



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

In many editions of the chumash, each parashah is followed by a note indicating the number of verses in the parashah and mnemonic device to remember the number, i.e., a word or phrase whose gematria is equal to the number of verses. For example, the note at the end of the parashot, Vayakhel, states: "122 verses; the siman / sign is 'Senuah'." ("Senuah" is a person mentioned in the book of Nechemiah; the name has a gematria of 122.)

In nearly all chumashim, however, this week's parashah, Pekudei, which has 92 verses, has no such note printed after it.

R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson z"l (1902-1994; the "Lubavitcher Rebbe") was once asked why, and he responded as follows:

"It is necessary to check older prints of the chumash, for in my opinion, this originates from a printer's omission, which was later

copied by other printers. Perhaps the original siman consisted of the phrase 'bli kol' / 'without any' [see Devarim 28:55], which has a gematria of 92. Perhaps a young printer's apprentice saw the phrase 'bli kol siman' / 'without any siman' and misunderstood its meaning, so that Parashat Pekudei was, in fact, left without any siman." (**Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot**)

R' Yonatan Eyebschutz z"l (died 1764) asks: Why do we not recite a berachah before performing the mitzvah of giving charity?

Because R' Eyebschutz answers, the existence of this mitzvah is a curse. Were we worthy, we would see the fulfillment of the verse (Devarim 15:4), אֶ֫פֶס כִּֽי לֹא יִהְיֶה־בְּךָ אֶבְיוֹן כִּי־בָרֵךְ יְבָרֶכְךָ֖ ה׳ - "***However, may there be no destitute person among you; rather, Hashem will surely bless you.***" - We do not recite a blessing over something which has an element of a curse to it.

וְאֶת־הָאֶ֫לֶף וּשְׁבַ֥ע הַמֵּא֖וֹת וַחֲמִשָּׁ֑ה וְשִׁבְעִ֥ים עָשָׂ֖ה וָוִ֥ים לָעַמּוּדִֽים׳ ***'And from the 1,775 [talents of silver] he made hooks for the pillars.'*** (38:28)

The midrash relates that when Moshe finished building the mishkan and attempted to account for all of the donations, he forgot what he had done with 1,775 talents of silver, and he felt bad. Later he remembered and found peace of mind. - Why did this happen to him?

R' Chaim Aryeh Lerner z"l (died 1977) explains: Chazal teach that if Moshe had not broken the first luchot, no person would ever forget the Torah that he studied. Because Moshe's actions caused forgetfulness to exist, it was appropriate that Moshe himself suffer from forgetfulness. (Although the gemara says that Hashem congratulated Moshe for breaking the luchot, Moshe nevertheless had to share in the negative consequences of his action.) (**Imrei Chaim I, p.58**)

וַיַּ֣רְא מֹשֶׁ֔ה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָ֖ה וְהִנֵּ֣ה עָשׂ֑וּ אֹתָ֗הּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֤ר צִוָּה֙ ה' כֵּ֣ן עָשׂ֔וּ וַיְבָ֥רֶךְ אֹתָ֖ם מֹשֶׁ֑ה - "***Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! they had done it — as Hashem had commanded, so had they done!*** . . ." (39:43)

R' Yitzchak Karo z"l (Spain; 1458-approx. 1520) notes that forms of the verb "**עשה**" / "to do" appears 248 times between the verse (Shmot 25:8), "***They shall make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among them***," and here–not including between Shmot 32:1 and 33:5, which discusses the making of the golden calf.

These 248 occurrences parallel the 248 mitzvot asei / affirmative commandments. (**Toldot Yitzchak**)

וַיִּקַּ֣ח וַיִּתֵּ֗ן אֶת־הָעֵדֻת֙ אֶל־הָאָרֹ֔ן וַיָּ֥שֶׂם אֶת־הַבַּדִּ֖ים עַל־הָאָרֹ֑ן וַיִּתֵּ֥ן אֶת־הַכַּפֹּ֖רֶת עַל־הָאָרֹ֥ן מִלְמָֽעְלָה – "***He took and placed the Testimony [i.e., the Luchot] into the Aron / Ark*** . . ." (40:20)

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) notes that our verse contains two verbs ("took" and "placed") whereas the verses relating to the other implements of the Mishkan contain only one verb. (For example, verse 22 states: "He put the Table in the Tent of Meeting.") Why?

R' Kluger explains: The Gemara (Kiddushin 7a) teaches that when A gives a gift to B, who is a distinguished person, and B accepts the gift, A is considered to be a recipient because he is receiving a favor from B. This is why the Torah says earlier (Shmot 25:2), "Take a donation for Me," rather than "Give a donation to Me," because a person who fortunate enough to give a gift to Hashem actually is receiving a favor from Hashem.

In the same vein, it was an honor for Moshe to be able to put the Luchot into the Aron / Ark. Thus, when he "placed" them, he also "took" something for himself. (**Imrei Shefer**)

At the end of this week's parshah, after the Mishkan was completed, we read, **וְלֹא־יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָבוֹא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי־שָׁכַן עָלָיו הֶעָנָן וּכְבוֹד ה' מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן** - "***Moshe could not enter the Ohel Mo'ed/Tent of Meeting, for the cloud rested upon it.***" (40:35)

Rashi comments, **כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהָיָה עָלָיו הֶעָנָן לֹא הָיָה יָכוֹל לָבֹא, נִסְתַּלֵּק הֶעָנָן נִכְנַס וּמְדַבֵּר עִמּוֹ** - "***As long as the cloud was there, Moshe could not enter. When the cloud departed, Moshe could enter.***"

At Har Sinai, also, there was a dense cloud which initially prevented Moshe from approaching. How did Moshe approach Har Sinai? The sage R' Eliezer says that Hashem grabbed Moshe and pulled him in. In the yeshiva of the sage R' Yishmael they said that Hashem made a path through the cloud and Moshe entered.



R' Moshe Feinstein z"l comments: there are many times when a person feels that he cannot move forward because a dark cloud hangs over him. One should know, however, that nothing can stop him! Sometimes one can make a path through the cloud, i.e., he can navigate through his troubles without becoming embroiled in them. This is the preferable course, for who knows how he will emerge if he gets caught up in a struggle?

If one cannot go through the cloud, he should look for a path that has no obstacles (just as Moshe waited for the cloud to depart). However, if he can neither go through the cloud nor find another path, he should push forward anyway with a firm conviction that Hashem will take him by the hand and lead him through. (**Darash Moshe, Vol. II**)

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו קְרָסָיו קְרָשָׁיו בְּרִיחָיו וְעַמֻּדָיו וַאֲדָנָיו - ***"They brought the Mishkan to Moshe, the Tent and all its utensils etc."*** (39:33) - Rashi explains: **שֶׁלֹּא הָיוּ יְכוֹלִין לַהֲקִימוֹ; וּלְפִי שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה שׁוּם מְלָאכָה בַּמִּשְׁכָּן, הִנִּיחַ לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא הֲקָמָתוֹ** – ***'Bnei Yisrael were unable to raise the Mishkan. Also, since Moshe had not made any contribution to the Mishkan, Hashem left the job of raising it for Moshe.'***



R' Chaim Moshe Reuven Elazary z"l writes: here in America (in the 1940's), we have many spectacular meeting places and shuls. All of them have planks, bars, and pillars, and in them are all sorts of fancy utensils. However, one thing is missing from these structures – the spirit of Moshe Rabbenu. And, without that spirit, these structures cannot be called mishkenot/ tabernacles of Hashem.

From Rashi's comment on the above verse, we learn that a Jewish community needs people who can donate money and build spectacular structures for shuls, and it also needs people who can fill those structures with a proper spirit. We also learn that these two functions are separate. The proper spirit cannot come from the lay leadership; rather those individuals must submit to the "Moshe Rabbenu" of the community. (**Shevilei Chaim p. 144**)

וַיָּבִאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־ה' אֶל־מְקוֹמוֹ אֶל־דְּבִיר הַבַּיִת אֶל־קֹדֶשׁ הַקָּדָשִׁים אֶל־ תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַכְּרוּבִים - "***The kohanim brought the Aron/Ark of the Covenant of Hashem <u>to</u> its place, <u>to</u> the Inner Sanctum of the Temple, <u>to</u> the Holy of Holies, <u>to</u> beneath the wings of the Keruvim.***" (Melachim I 8:6 — in the haftarah read this week in some communities)

Why is the word, "to" repeated four times in this verse?

R' Gavriel Ze'ev Margolis z"l offers the following explanation (in the name of his cousin, **R' Ben Zion Aryeh Ziesling z"l**):

The gemara (Pesachim 64a) records that it was the practice in the Bet Hamikdash for one kohen to slaughter the Korban Pesach and a second kohen to catch the blood. That kohen passed the blood to a third kohen, who passed it to a fourth kohen, and so on, until, eventually, the blood was poured on the altar.

What does this teach us?

The gemara explains that it teaches us to follow the verse (Mishlei 14:28), **בְּרָב־עָם הַדְרַת־מֶלֶךְ** -"***In a multitude of people is a king's [i.e., Hashem's] glory.***"

It is for this reason, R' Margolis writes, that a baby who is to be circumcised is passed from one person to another until he reaches the mohel. Similarly, a new Sefer Torah is passed around among many people before it is placed in the Aron. Also, our verse teaches through the repetition of the word "to" ("**אֶל**"), that when the Aron was brought to the Bet Hamikdash for the first time, it was carried in in stages so that many kohanim could be involved. (**Ginat Egoz**)

"A single moment of accepting Hashem's will when one feels that he should be angry and resentful, is more powerful than 100 prayers." ~ The Chasam Sofer.



R' Eliyahu Hakohen z"l (Izmir, Turkey; died 1729) observes that the phrase **כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה** - "***As G-d commanded Moshe.***" appears 18 (chai) times in this parashah.

This alludes to the fact that Bnei Yisrael were sentenced to death for the sin of the Golden Calf, but they achieved life (chaim) because of Moshe's self-sacrifice.

After each time that the phrase "**כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה**" appears, the Torah then relates that Bnei Yisrael made another part of the Mishkan. This alludes to the fact that all of their actions were possible only because Moshe prayed for them. (**Semuchin La'ad**)



אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר פֻּקַּד עַל־פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבֹדַת הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן־ אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן - "***These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle, the Mishkan of the Testimony, which were reckoned at Moshe's bidding . . .***" *(38:21)*

Rabbeinu Bachya z"l (Spain; 14th century) writes: The gematria of "**הַמִּשְׁכָּן**" together with the five letters of that word equals 420, the number of years that our Sages say the Second Temple stood.

The gematria of "**מִשְׁכָּן**" equals 410, the number of years that the First Temple stood.

The gematria of "**הָעֵדֻת**" equals 479, the number of years that the Mishkan stood. [We read in Sefer Melachim that the First

Temple was built 480 years after the Exodus. The Mishkan was dedicated one year after the Exodus.]

R' Moshe Sofer z"l (the Chatam Sofer; died 1840) asks: Why are the 420 years of the second Bet Hamikdash alluded to by a word whose gematria is only 415, such that we must add the five letters of the word to arrive at the total?

He answers: The Gemara (Yoma 52b) relates that five elements of the First Temple were missing in the Second Temple. (For example, the Aron Ha'kodesh was missing.) These are alluded to by the value "five" that is missing from the above gematria. (**Torat Moshe**)

Captivating Stories Full of Yiras Shamayim Taken from Shmuessin That Reb Kalman Krohn Z'tl Gave in Adelphia Yeshiva



Shabbos in Siberia

My older brother, R' Paysach Krohn, has merited to write many books that were well-received in the Jewish world, such as The Maggid Speaks series, and Around the Maggid's Table. The following is a story from Around the Maggid's Table which I read recently.

The Second World War broke out when Reb Tuvia Goldstein was in his teens. Finding himself on the Russian side of the ever-changing borders, he was sent off to Siberia for difficult labor. With anti-Semitism rampant in Russia, the Jews were always given the harshest treatment. In Siberia, too, they were assigned the most difficult slave labor.

Dressed in his threadbare clothing so unsuited to the harsh winters in the Siberian taiga, Reb Tuvia and his unit of twelve men were

forced to chop down trees with rusty handsaws. This dangerous work, minimal daily rations, and bitter weather ensured a very high death rate amongst the slave laborers. As the war dragged on, conditions in the Siberian labor camp grew worse and worse.

Reb Tuvia's unit was assigned a large area in the woods that they were to completely clear of trees. Within a specified time-frame, they were to turn this forested land into an empty meadow, with not one twig remaining. The timetable wasn't just unrealistic; it was completely impossible. They would need to work day and night in order to get the entire area deforested by the deadline.

Up until that point, these courageous Jews had never desecrated Shabbos, working much harder to fill their quotas in six days instead. Now, however, they realized that it would be simply impossible to meet the deadline without working on Shabbos. Not completing their assignment on time meant certain death, and saving their lives took precedence to Shabbos.

Pained by these circumstances, they decided to avoid as much Shabbos desecration as possible. Since, according to Halacha, if two people perform an action that could have been done by a single individual, it is not considered melachah, they decided to do everything in pairs. They would work fast, but two men together would wield each saw and two men together would pull out each leaf. In this way, they would not be violating any laws outright.

To avoid the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos in a public domain, they resolved to walk no more than four amahs at a time while carrying something. After a second's break, they would lift the object again and walk another four amahs.

When the first Shabbos arrived, the group of Jews arrived at their work detail ready for labor. Their supervisor, a Russian officer, counted them and sent them off to work. Wrapped in a warm fur coat and puffing on a steaming cigar, he settled down to keep an eye on his men.

The supervisor squinted down the hill at the laboring men in surprise. What was going on? He saw two men lift a small, thin branch and walk a few steps. Then they stopped. Then they walked another few steps and stopped. The officer rolled his eyes. What was this, a show?

Then he noticed another pair of men doing the same thing. They were carrying a larger log, but nothing so heavy that it demanded the muscles of more than one adult man. They, too, kept stopping on their way to deposit the log onto waiting wagons.

Looking around in disbelief, he realized that the entire Jewish unit was operating in this bizarre fashion. Enraged, he stomped his foot and vowed to get to the bottom of this strange behavior. Whatever these men were up to, they were in for a big punishment. No one would sabotage the Russian war effort and get away with it!

That night, the Jewish laborers stumbled into their barracks, exhausted. Since every two men had done the tasks of one, they had worked with tremendous speed to make up for the missing labor. The physical strain was terrible, and they collapsed into bed, grateful the day was over.

Their sleep was short-lived, however. They hadn't even been sleeping for a half-hour when guards burst into the barracks and rounded up the twelve bachurim. Exhausted and terrified, the trembling young men followed their guards out of the barracks. Judgement, they knew, was about to be rendered.

Limbs chattering from the cold, they were led to a large room. A group of Russian officers sat around a large table, and they turned to face the group when they entered. Their expressions were hostile. The bachurim shivered.

Their supervisor stood up. "These men are traitors," he declared. "In the midst of this great national emergency, as our heroes on the front lines fight for the liberty of our entire nation, these comrades have turned the war effort into a jest. Were they asked to stand on

the front lines, hiding in trenches and felling the enemy as they risked their own lives on the battlefield? No! Were they ordered to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy? No!

"These young men were dispersed to the safety of the forests, far away from bloodshed and danger. In the comfort of their peaceful surroundings, they were given just one small task to aid our glorious army in vanquishing the enemy. All they were asked to do was clear the area for the army's use."

The supervisor paused dramatically, enjoying his own speech. "Did they do as they were commanded? No! Time is of essence, but these comrades don't appreciate that. I saw today as they worked. For every small, simple task, two men would do it together, stopping very frequently along the way."

He stopped speaking and began demonstrating the way two men together had carried one twig. The other officers burst out laughing at his ridiculous impersonation. "One twig, carried by two grown men, who stopped every few feet," the supervisor roared, laughing along with his friends.

The highest-ranking officer in the room stood up. "Well?" he demanded, wiping the mirth of his face. "What do you have to say for yourselves?"

Of all his friends, Reb Tuvia Goldstein had the best command of the Russian language. They nudged him forward to represent them. He racked his brain desperately, trying to think of a plausible excuse, and then decided to admit the truth.

"We are religious Jews," he began hesitantly. "We have a Torah with 613 laws. We sincerely respect the Russian war effort and feel both honored and humbled to be a part of it. We were merely trying to ensure that we would be following the laws of our Torah while simultaneously preparing the area for the great Russian army."

"Hmm," their judge responded, pursing his lips. "I know who gave you the Torah. Someone by the name of Moshe. And Moshe, I heard, was a very smart man." He gave the Jews a long look. "You expect me to believe that a smart man like Moshe gave you these most ridiculous laws? Really? Two grown men to carry one twig? Preposterous!"

A collective tremor passed over the defendants. They could tell that this would not end well.

"Traitors, that's what you are!" the officer declared. "A group of lowly traitors, engaged in sabotage against the mighty Russian army." He gave a thin, cold smile. "I'm sure you are well aware of the punishment that awaits traitors, eh? The firing squad!"

His announcement was met by loud applause as the officers around the table indicated their support for his ruling. Reb Tuvia and his friends began to silently recite vidui.

At that moment, they heard the roar of an engine and then the screeching of tires pulling to a halt. There was the noise of slamming car doors, and then five more Russian officers marched into the room. They were dressed in full uniform, metals glinting in the light, their rank clearly visible on their chests. These were no ordinary officers, but individuals very high up in the army hierarchy.

The other officers immediately jumped to attention, saluting in deference to their superiors.

"At ease," one of the newly-arrived majors pronounced. "As we passed through the area, something went wrong with our vehicle," he explained. "We need a place to spend the night until our truck can be repaired tomorrow morning."

"Certainly, Major, sir," the officer who had sentenced the Jews to the firing squad replied, saluting. The members of the Jewish unit, pressed silently against the wall, couldn't help but contrast his submissive attitude to the arrogance he had displayed earlier.

"Have sleeping quarters arranged for us at once, Captain," the major continued, watching as the captain saluted again and then left the room to carry out his bidding. He glanced around the room and noticed the group of twelve Jews standing against the back wall. "And what are these comrades doing here?" he demanded.

The Russians all looked toward the unit's supervisor, who look away.

"Sergeant?" the major prompted.

The supervisor launched into the story again, describing how the men had wasted time that day. "They are to be put before the firing squad," he added.

A second major stepped out from behind the first. "Is that so?" he asked coolly. "I'd like to speak to these men first. Bring them to the next room, where I can speak to them privately."

"You heard what he said," their supervisor told the Jews impatiently. "Let's go, march."

Reb Tuvia and his friends marched obligingly to the next room, wondering what was waiting for them there. The major followed behind them and shut the door.

They stood silently, facing him.

"A gutte voch," the major said softly.

They exchanged glances but did not respond, afraid of a trap.

"A gutte voch," he repeated. "You don't have to be afraid. I, too, am a Jew. Tell me what happened."

Realizing that since they were already sentenced to death, they had nothing to lose, the bachurim began explaining what happened. They described how they had managed to keep Shabbos throughout their Siberian exile, and the scheme they had come up with to avoid Shabbos desecration now that they were forced to work on the holy day.

The major smiled, appreciating their logic. "I am a Communist, and no longer religious," he said slowly. "But I grew up in a religious home. My mother passed away just recently. At her deathbed, she told me that she had no nachas from me since I stopped keeping the mitzvos. She made me swear to her that although I no longer lead a religious lifestyle, I would look out for religious Jews and assist them. I promised her I would do so.

"I never dreamed I would actually come across a situation where a religious Jew would require my assistance, and this is the first time such an opportunity arose. It seems to me that I am bound by my promise to my mother to save your lives."

He grew quiet for a moment, tapping his foot thoughtfully. "Tell me, honesty. Other than Shabbos, do you perform your duties the way you are supposed to?"

"Of course!" the bachurim assured him. "We work extremely hard, harder than anyone. As Jews, our work is scrutinized far more than that of the other laborers, and we offer everything we have to produce the best results."

"And I assume you get smaller rations, draftier barracks, and worse conditions in general?" the major guessed.

They nodded vigorously. There was no use complaining, but due to the rampant anti-Semitism among the officers in charge of their division, there was no question that their situation was significantly worse than the non-Jews.

"Let me see what I can do for you," the major promised.

Rejoining the other officers, he stated his opinion that the members of the Jewish unit were all loyal Russian citizens who gave everything they had toward the war effort. "They work harder than most of our other men, in fact," he said confidently. "And despite their loyalty, they are treated inhumanely by those in command.

"Their actions today were a genuine attempt to resolve a conflict between their religion and their desire to contribute to the Russian cause. Despite the unusual manner in which they worked, their output equaled that of the other units."

His raised his voice dangerously. "Shame!" he declared. "Shame on you, for sentencing such loyal citizens to death. Shame on you for attempting to steal loyal workers from our great country. And I ask you, who are the traitors here?!"

He didn't wait for a response and stomped out of the room, the other four high-ranking officers following him out.

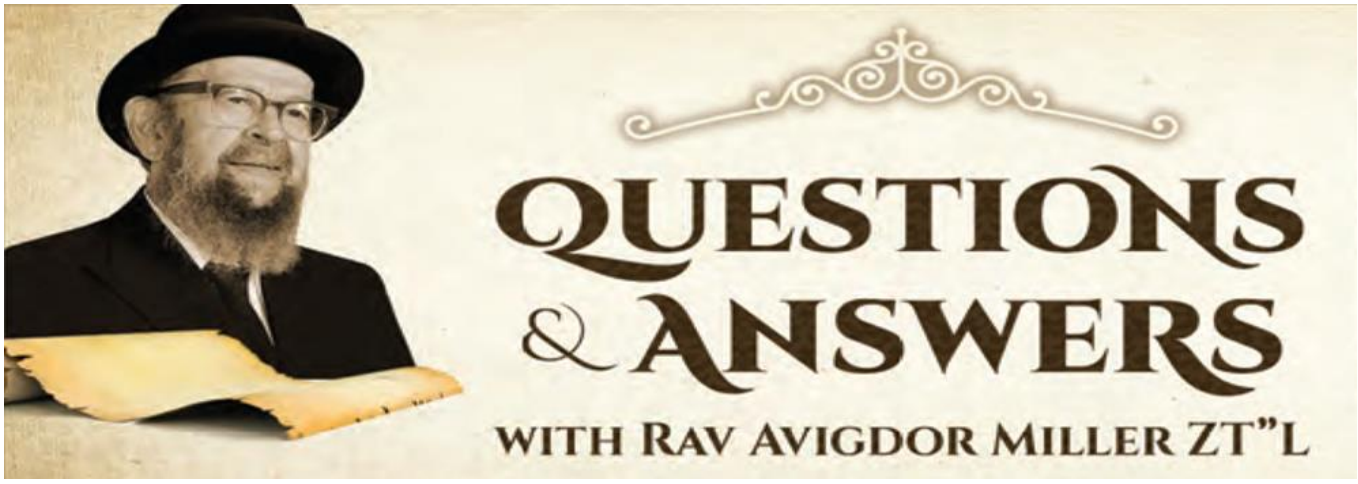
The shaken officers quickly ordered the Jews back to the barracks and rescinded the death sentence. Their hatred for Jews notwithstanding, they were afraid of the major and did not wish to defy him.

The following morning, before leaving the base with his comrades, the Jewish major arranged for Reb Tuvia and his friends to be transferred to another battalion, where the work was a lot less strenuous and significantly less dangerous.

And that was how Reb Tuvia Goldstein survived his Siberian galus.

"The world considers forgetfulness a bad thing, but in my view, it has certain advantages. Without forgetfulness, it would be impossible to serve Hashem. If a person remembered all the difficulties he has been through, and all the challenges he faces, he would never find the strength to serve Hashem. Thoughts of those events would completely unsettle him. But now, these pains can be forgotten.

This is very important advice for following the way of Hashem." ~ R' Nachman of Breslov.





What is the Purpose Of Reciting Tehillim?

Yeshiva people, you know, say Tehillim. It's a remarkable thing, how much the yeshivos pray for people. And the purpose is twofold. One is to demonstrate that we have complete trust in Hakodosh Boruch Hu that He is the only one who is in charge of our fate. By addressing ourselves to Him in time of our need or somebody else's need, it creates such a great merit that Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "In the merit of emunah and bitachon, I'm going to grant your request and show you – I'll demonstrate that your trust is justified."

There's another thing. When we repeat the beautiful, inspired songs of Dovid, you just cannot help but be changed by that; because you are walking in his footsteps, in the footsteps of his thoughts, some of these thoughts will take hold of your mind and transform you in the course of time. And that's a very great benefit.

That's why we are always busy repeating the words of Tehillim in our prayers. Ashrei, the lyric of Dovid, is one of the greatest poems ever written in the history of mankind and inspired by a ruach from above. And the Mesillas Yesharim says that repeating those words, walking in the footsteps of Dovid, encourages us in the ways of love of Hashem and true chassidus.

And in the merit of these two things – number one demonstrating that Hashem is our trust, and number two by studying the ideas and the attitudes of Dovid our great teacher, Hakodosh Boruch Hu listens to our prayers and rewards us.



I am meeting a nice girl who has yiras Shamayim but she cannot hold a conversation. Should I continue with the shidduch?

I would say you should grab her before somebody else gets her. A woman came to me. She was fighting with her husband, and she told me, "The trouble in my marriage is that there's no communication between me and my husband." I said to her, "There's too much communication between you and your husband." That's why they're arguing all the time.

Stop arguing! Stop with all that communication! Just keep quiet and everything will be alright. Communication is the trouble, not the solution. A girl who doesn't make good conversation, if she's a normal girl – that you have to find out, if she's a normal girl – the fact that she can't hold a good conversation? Very good!

"Love is a consequence of giving. When a person gives, it is as if he is giving part of himself. He therefore loves the recipient because he finds in him something of himself.

If his giving assumes great proportions and he lavishes loving-kindness on his neighbour with abundance, he will find himself included entirely in the other. Then he can love his neighbour as himself – completely as himself – without any distinction." ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler zt"l.



וַיָּקֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן. וַיִּפְרֹשׂ אֶת־הָאֹהֶל עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־מִכְסֵה הָאֹהֶל עָלָיו מִלְמָעְלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה – '***Moshe erected the Mishkan… and he put the cover of the tent on it from above as Hashem commanded Moshe***.' (40:18,19)

Moshe Rabbeinu was the one who raised the Mishkan, assembling it in accordance with Hashem's command. Betzalel was the architect of the Mishkan, preparing its parts and vessels, so that Moshe could erect it. Why Moshe? Why not Betzalel? Why not Aharon?

It is not as if all of them did not have a vested interest in seeing the finished product.

To Betzalel, it would mean that he had carried out Hashem's Will to build the Mishkan in order to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf, during which his grandfather had been murdered.

Aharon HaKohen played a role in the creation of the Golden Calf. He certainly wanted a sign that he was forgiven. Allowing him to erect the Mishkan would have been a meaningful sign that he had been absolved.

Instead, Hashem gave Moshe this honor. The Midrash (Tanchuma Pekudei, 11) teaches that all of the following made the attempt to raise up the Mishkan: the chachmei lev, wise men, whose extraordinary skill allowed them to make the Mishkan's component parts; Betzalel and his partner Ohaliav.

None succeeded in constructing the Mishkan in a way that it would remain standing. Why?

The Midrash explains that Moshe was anguished over the fact that he had not played a role in the creation of the Mishkan. He had not

contributed funds for the Mishkan. He had not worked on its creation. Hashem said, "Moshe, since you were anguished over not having played a role of any kind in the construction of the Mishkan, therefore, you will be the one to raise it."

The Tanchuma reveals a novel lesson to us. Moshe did not contribute to the Mishkan. Everyone gave – but Moshe. Certainly, he had the means. Why was he excluded? The Nesiim, Princes, waited too long to give. Their money was no longer required. Surely, this cannot be said concerning Moshe.

Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman, zl, explains that from the very onset, Moshe was not included in the command to contribute towards the Mishkan. He was instructed to take contributions from them – the people. He, however, was not told to give!

Why should Moshe, our leader, not have been encouraged to play a role – from the very beginning – in the creation of the Mishkan?

Rav Heyman observes that the source of the gold, silver etc. that the people contributed toward the Mishkan was Egypt – specifically, the Egyptians, who, during the three days of darkness, were only too happy to "lend" their precious metals and jewelry to the Jewish people.

This was all part of the Divine Plan to compel the Egyptians to pay for enslaving the Jewish people for 210 years. Hashem had promised that, "afterwards, they will leave with great wealth" (Bereishis 15:14).

We cannot ignore the fact that the component parts of the Mishkan were intrinsically connected to the enslavement of the Jewish People. The Mishkan/edifice essentially stood as a testament before Hashem to the affliction which the Jews suffered in Egypt.

A number of "reminders" before Hashem are incorporated in Jewish practice that are worthy of note. (The Mishkan is one of them.) The Kohen does not enter the Kodesh HaKedoshim, Holy of Holies,

wearing gold vestments, because gold brings the sin of the Golden Calf to mind. A human being forgets. Hashem never forgets. Even a one-time infraction becomes forever etched in the spiritual cosmos. If gold served as a reminder of sin, certainly the precious metals used for the Mishkan betoken the bitter affliction to which the Jews were subjected.

Thus, suggests Rav Heyman, it is appropriate to say that Moshe had been excluded from contributing to the Mishkan for this specific reason. The Mishkan recalls the slavery, in which Moshe did not take part.

One might ask why the shevet, tribe, of Levi had been included in the Mishkan. They, too, had not been enslaved, because someone had to maintain the bond with the Torah. Since shevet Levi learned throughout the shibud, bondage, they had not been enslaved. Nonetheless, their children, just like the children of the other tribes, had been thrown into the Nile. - They may not have labored, but they certainly suffered.

Moshe was the Rabban Shel kol Yisrael, the quintessential Rebbe of the Jewish People. Leadership positions are never easy, and certainly not worth the "fringe benefits" that result from holding them. Nonetheless, after all is said and done, the leader stands on a different plane – one that distinguishes him from the people.

When the people suffer, the leader suffers with them – but only in spirit. He is not in the trenches experiencing the danger, suffering the pangs of anxiety, as do his people. He carries his responsibility with great concern, but, nonetheless, he does not suffer the way they do. He emerges as the hero of the campaign, despite the fact that he has not experienced the campaign in the same manner as did his people. His victory is different from theirs. Therefore, the celebrations and rewards are also different.

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו - '***And they brought the Mishkan to Moshe***.' (39:33)

Rashi explains that the people came to Moshe Rabbeinu with a problem: They had formed all of the Mishkan's components, but they just could not seem to erect it. Whatever they did – did not endure. Apparently, Hashem wanted Moshe to put the finishing touch on the Mishkan.

Rashi teaches that Moshe had previously not been involved in either contributing towards or constructing the Mishkan. Hashem gave him the opportunity to put the finishing touch on their work. Indeed, without him their work would have been for naught because it could not achieve viability until it was standing erect. Furthermore, on his own, Moshe was unable to raise the Mishkan, because of the weight of the Kerashim, beams. Hashem told Moshe to "involve yourself (engage in erecting the Mishkan), and it will appear as if you are erecting it." - In other words, nothing is set up on its own. We always need Hashem.

Perhaps we can derive a deeper lesson from Hashem's insistence that Moshe be the one to raise the Mishkan. When Hashem called for contributions for the Mishkan, everyone came forward to offer his contribution. When Hashem asked for skilled artisans to construct the Mishkan's components, those who felt competent came forward. Now that the work was all done and the Mishkan was about to be raised, a setback seemed to impede the seamless progression from dream to reality.

Hashem wanted Moshe to assume the administration of the final phase. Why?

There is an important message here for all future generations – not just concerning the Mishkan. Money – regardless of the sanctity of its source – does not create an enduring Sanctuary, Torah-oriented edifice, organization or endeavor. The spiritual component which the

Torah leader provides determines its durability. The material component is critical, but, without Torah, it will not endure.

To take it one step further, the contributions – the tzedakah, charity, generosity of Jews – represent their acts of chesed. Torah supersedes chesed. Torah guides chesed. Acts of loving kindness which are neither built upon nor inspired by Torah guidance, lack spiritual integrity, and, to a certain extent, are flawed. Furthermore, the "Moshes" of each generation are acutely aware that every endeavor achieves fruition only through Hashem. Just as Moshe was told to "involve himself by lifting the beams," and Hashem would do the rest, likewise, the Torah authority knows that he is simply a figurehead. Hashem pulls the strings; He makes it work.

The individuals who so generously contribute the funds might be carried away with their material abundance, to the point that they think that they are in charge. Hashem asserts the opposite. They facilitate, but Hashem creates reality.



בֶּקַע לַגֻּלְגֹּלֶת מַחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכֹל הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים – *'A beka for every head, a half-shekel to the sacred shekel for everyone who passed through the census takers*.' (38:26)

So many people contributed towards the Mishkan. One might think that due to the sheer numbers of contributors, the individual contribution/contributor would become lost in the shuffle. Such thoughts are the result of a small mind or limited cognitive ability. Nothing is insignificant in the eyes of Hashem.

Indeed, this is true concerning all spirituality. Everything counts. One never knows what good can result from a single act of spirituality.

The following vignettes underscore this idea: A young Kollel fellow maintained an outreach program out of a small shul in central Eretz Yisrael. He was extremely dedicated to his mission and was quite

successful at it. One day, a young, assimilated college student visited his shul and requested an overview of Judaism. He was obviously a bright young man, evidenced by the fact that he was a physics major. He clearly presented himself as a level-headed, highly intelligent young man who was sincerely interested in finding out about Judaism.

After an hour of presenting cogent questions and receiving satisfactory answers, he appeared satisfied with what he had learned about the Jewish religion. This young man was, of course, Jewish, but assimilated. As an Israeli, he knew how to read Hebrew, but he was at a total loss about navigating his way through the siddur.

When the shul members came to daven Minchah, he asked to join them. Not knowing his way around the siddur, his recital of the Shemoneh Esrai took a bit longer than that of the rest of the congregants, as he read every word. His sincerity compensated for his lack of knowledge.

Finally, after Minchah, the Kollel fellow inquired of his newly-found student what had inspired his visit. He explained the following: "One day, as I was returning home from school, I was sitting on an Eged bus and reading the daily newspaper. Suddenly, I noticed an observant Jew bend down on the floor to pick up a soiled piece of bread and hold it in his hand for the duration of his ride. As we both alighted from the bus at the same stop, I asked the man, 'Why did you pick up that soiled piece of bread and hold it in your hand until now (when he put it into a garbage bin)?'

He explained that he had acted in accordance with Halachah that requires one not to permit food to be defiled, but rather, he should pick it up and put it in its proper place.

I was so impressed with his response that I felt it behooved me to learn more about Judaism." On the next visit to the shul, the student brought a few of his friends with him who were quite distant from

anything Jewish. Indeed, the school that they attended was staffed by professors whose love for observance did not exist.

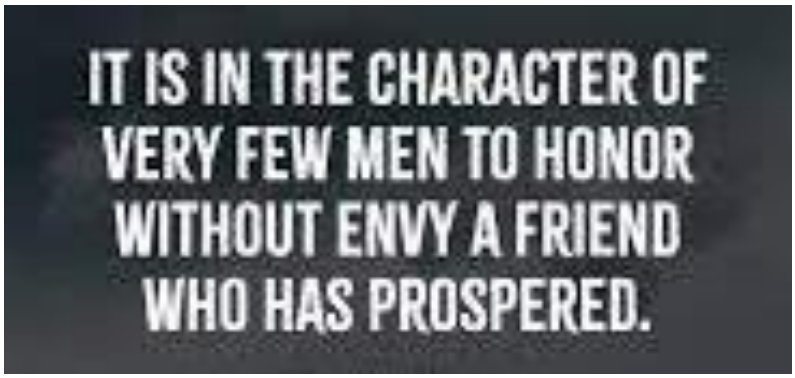
It all started with a Jew picking up a soiled piece of bread. This served as the catalyst for a group of assimilated young Jews to return to their roots. One small step engendered the spiritual deliverance of a group of lost Jews.

We should never belittle the little things that people do. What may be small to us is quite large on the spiritual screen.

One small act, an act which "some" might view as insignificant, changed future generations.

וּמָשַׁחְתָּ אֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר מָשַׁחְתָּ אֶת־אֲבִיהֶם וְכִהֲנוּ לִי ***You shall anoint them, <u>as you had anointed their father</u>, and they shall minister to Me***. (40:15)

Why did Hashem stipulate that Moshe Rabbeinu's anointing the sons of Aharon HaKohen was to be carried out in the same manner that Moshe had anointed his brother, Aharon?



The Meshach Chochmah offers a powerful and quite practical insight – one that has a profound ring of truth to it:

When Moshe anointed his brother, he did not experience even a twinge of jealousy. After all, Moshe was a Navi, Prophet; he had even held the position of Kohen Gadol prior to Aharon. Whatever the role that Moshe was transferring to Aharon was a position that he already had filled at one point.

In contrast, Moshe had every reason to feel a sense of hurt in anointing Aharon's sons. Sadly, for whatever reason, Moshe's sons

did not achieve the same spiritual plateau enjoyed by Aharon's sons. Therefore, when Hashem instructed Moshe to dress Aharon's sons as he dressed Aharon, this was a reference to his lev shaleim, complete heart, bearing the exact same sentiment of love and deep pride for Aharon's sons as he had manifest for his brother, Aharon.

Imagine, if the above exposition by the Meshach Chochmah is stated with regard to Moshe Rabbeinu, our quintessential leader, what can we say? Are we above envy? How often do we overact concerning others who went to school with our children, who just happened to excel in areas that our children did not? Clearly, although our love for our children never diminishes (at least, it should not) as a result of our perception of success, envy does creep in. As a result, we might begrudge the subject of our hurt the degree of respect, admiration and love that we should manifest towards him.

How careful we must be not to permit envy to transcend common sense.

אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן -***These are the reckonings of the Mishkan***. (38:21)

The accounting of how the various donated materials were used for the Mishkan takes up a significant place in our parsha. Every detail, every amount, is reckoned and accounted for.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, z.l., feels that the concept of a reckoning applies equally to every aspect of our lives at every moment of our existence. Just as the artisans were to account for their use of every ounce of material in their possession, so, too, must we be able to give an accounting for the wonderful "materials" and bounty that Hashem has given us.

If we think about it, this idea has a serious implication. Hashem gives us time. Do we spend our time wisely? Do we devote the days and years that have been allotted to us for Torah study, its support and mitzvah performance, or do we fritter away our time on frivolities?

We are blessed with an abundance of material largesse. Not only will we be questioned if we used our money for tzedakah, charity, and other forms of helping people, but we will also be asked if we were careful to use the money prudently and productively for these purposes.

Indeed, even in giving tzedakah there are priorities. We think that Hashem's gifts to us are ours to do with as we please. This is a gross error.

There are folios of laws detailing the proper use of property. How we use what is "ours" is determined by the Torah. Likewise, each of us is born with abilities and talents. We will have to give an accounting of how we utilized these G-d-given gifts.

We must remember that Hashem placed us on this world for a purpose. Not using His gifts defies that purpose in a manner similar to using them inappropriately.



כִּי עֲנַן ה' עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל־בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־מַסְעֵיהֶם - "***For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan by day, and fire would be on it at night…throughout their journeys***." (40:38)

A Torah scholar whose life is Torah is a microcosm of the Mishkan. He is a living embodiment of the Mishkan, as Chazal say, "The Shechinah resides within each person who is worthy of being a repository for it."

Horav Yehudah Tzedaka comments that the Mishkan had two attributes: fire and cloud. Likewise, the Torah scholar should

possess these two attributes. Cloud is an allusion to tznius, modesty. He should always be modest, unpretentious, "covered," as if by a cloud. However, when the honor of Torah is at stake, he must act as a fire, with passion and zeal, not shying away from challenge or confrontation.

Humility is a special virtue, one that every Torah leader should possess. There is a time, however, when misplaced humility and self-effacement is a liability.

When the Torah, or those who epitomize its doctrine are disparaged, one must rise to the occasion and vehemently oppose those who would undermine the Torah.



וַתֵּכֶל כָּל־עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד – "***And all the work of the Mishkan of the Ohel Moed was completed***." (39:32)

The Midrash states that originally no one could erect the Mishkan. Betzalel, the prime artisan who so beautifully fashioned the Mishkan, was at a loss. Even Moshe, who was the leader of Am Yisrael and the Mishkan's initiator, was not capable of raising it up.

The Midrash states that this was due to Moshe's disability as a result of a depression brought on by his exclusion from the work of the Mishkan.

We may well be amazed by Moshe's attitude. Was he envious of Bnei Yisrael? Was he not the one who had pleaded with Hashem on their behalf?

The only reason that Bnei Yisrael were given the opportunity to build the Mishkan was that Moshe had interceded with Hashem to forgive them for their part in the sin of the Golden-Calf. Rather than being depressed, Moshe should have been overjoyed at this moment!

We may suggest that Moshe's despondency originated from another source. Upon observing everyone's participation in all facets of the

Mishkan's creation, each Jew in his own individual way, Moshe became concerned that they were about to raise it up without first consulting with him. Perhaps they mistakenly thought that the ones who were the actual builders of the structure were the sole contributors to its existence.

They did not realize that without Moshe's guidance and inspiration the Divine Presence would not reside in this structure.

Structures which are erected to serve as mere testimonies to their builders, their physical prowess and philanthropic magnanimity, may be beautiful architectural edifices. They do not, however, serve the Divine purpose. - Specifically for this reason, only Moshe was given the ability by Hashem to erect the Mishkan.

This idea should serve as the paradigm for all future community projects, buildings, and monuments; our guidance and inspiration must always originate from the Torah and the "Moshe Rabeinus" of each generation.

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בִּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה - '***And they made… as Hashem had commanded Moshe***.' (39:1)

The Torah emphasizes the fact that all of the work for the Mishkan was done according to Hashem's command to Moshe Rabbeinu. This means that they followed the word of G-d to a "T."

One wonders concerning the superfluity of this statement. Is there a question for one moment that Hashem's instructions would not be followed to the most minute detail? What, then, is the meaning of underscoring the people's adherence to Hashem's command to Moshe?

Horav Meir Rubman, zl, derives a powerful lesson from here. Being Jewish means being completely, totally and unequivocally Jewish. "Almost" – "just about" – "sort of" – is not Jewish. One either does it right, or it is not done – period!

Every mitzvah has halachos that guide us in the proper and correct observance of the mitzvah. Anything less than total commitment is no commitment.

Imagine owing someone $5000 and paying half of the loan. Certainly, this would not be acceptable. Why should Judaism be any different?

We are taught that one must toil in Torah. Without exerting toil, the actual study is not only deficient, but it will also lead to a lack of mitzvah observance-which is the beginning of one's ultimate alienation from Judaism. Why is this? Just because he did not follow the required path of Torah study, does that make him a deficient Jew? It is "almost" right – is it not?

Apparently, "almost" is nothing! One either carries out the mitzvah in accordance with the prescribed outline given by Hashem as interpreted by Chazal – or he does not. There is no grey area in our allegiance to Hashem. One is either loyal – or he is not.

Likewise, diligence in Torah study is determined by the pasuk **וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה**, "***You should delve in it day and night***." (Yehoshua 1:8)

In Mishlei 2:4, Shlomo Hamelech writes **תְּבַקְשֶׁנָּה כַּכָּסֶף וְכַמַּטְמוֹנִים תַּחְפְּשֶׂנָּה** - that one should seek Torah "like silver and precious jewels." Are we at that point yet? One can be studious, diligent and committed, but if his Torah devotion does not meet the above standards, he is failing. True, he is doing well, but "doing well" and "almost there" do not achieve one's obligation as a Jew. - This is why the Torah underscores the phenomenon of completing everything in accordance with Hashem's command.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, personified the concept of total immersion in Torah. The Rosh Yeshivah was concerned that this would be a problem for the American mindset, which viewed material achievement as a primary goal with which to infuse their children. He worried that the American Jewish parent would want to raise a

frum, observant, child, but not one who would place gadlus, greatness, in Torah as his overriding priority in life.

In a letter to Jewish parents, he wrote, **"If Jewish parents wish to guarantee a truly Jewish life of mitzvah performance (for their child), they must expend the greatest possible effort and they must sacrifice to help create outstanding Torah personalities from among the American youth."**

A Jew who is a mediocre scholar and who views Torah study as secondary to everything else is risking his observance. One is either "in" or "out."

"We understand the need for a Jonas Salk to combat the crippling effect of infantile paralysis, but we do not even begin to comprehend our need for the Torah giant who will combat the paralysis caused by superficiality in Jewish life, and, because of this, we fail to respond to the most compelling needs of our time."

"כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה" is viewed from a spiritual perspective as the recipe for mitzvah observance: all or nothing. We do not settle for partial observance. It must be executed accurately, according to Hashem's command.

Perusing through **Rabbi Yechiel Spero's** biography of **Rav Gifter**, I came across an episode that teaches the significance of this perspective from a practical point of view.

The Rosh Yeshivah traveled to Mexico on a fund-raising trip on behalf of the yeshivah. He attempted to meet with a man who was well-known both for his wealth and for his lack of time for appointments. It was hardly possible to meet with him, he was so immersed in his businesses.

Finally, Rav Gifter was able to obtain an appointment for very early in the morning, before the workday began. When he entered the office, he saw the man was completely immersed in his business. - The man was respectful, and he told the Rosh Yeshivah, "I am very sorry, but I simply do not have the time to talk to you now."

Rav Gifter was undeterred, "Let's not converse about money. I simply want to ask you a question. When I first tried to meet with

you, I went to your house. I was greatly impressed by its sheer magnificence, and the various amenities that adorn your mansion. My question is: Since you work so hard and are so engrossed in your business, when do you have the time to enjoy your home?"

The Jew looked at Rav Gifter, somewhat incredulously, and said, "Rebbe, the house is not for me. I have nothing from my mansion. It is for my wife and children. My life is my business, and this is where I spend my every waking moment. - Rebbe, *oib mir villen matzliach zein, broch men liggen in gesheft*. 'If one wants to achieve success (in business), he must be totally immersed in (his) business.'"

Rav Gifter looked at the man, and said, "You do not have to give me any money. You have given me something more precious than money. You have taught me a lesson which I can impart to my students.

If you want to succeed, you must be totally immersed in your business. Our business is Torah!"- *Oib mir villen matzliach zein, broch men liggen in gesheft*. One is either in the business or he is out. - Part time businessmen are not very successful.

Sometimes, the motivation to grown spiritually comes from our respect for someone else, a Tzaddik, a Talmid Chacham… But this is a mistake. - We don't need to look elsewhere to find the means to improve ourselves. Everything we need is right at home.

Every day we encounter challenges that are meant just for us. If we accept them with faith and humility, and struggle with them as best we can, we will be blessed in this world and the next. We don't have to look for things about which we were not commanded, only to accept with love that which is already ours, for in this lies the path of perfection that G-d has intended for our souls. ~ R' Yaakov Meir Shechter.





Rabbi Avi Wiesefeld - Did You Ever Write a Postcard

It's a bit old fashioned, but in times past, people wrote postcards.

So, at the beginning of the postcard, you have space to write big lettering: 'Dear …. How are you? This is a picture of my vacation.' All of a sudden you realise – 'Uh Oh!, there is not much space left, and you cram in the rest of your message in small cramped lettering.

That is not what life is meant to look like.

Regarding time, you might say, "I have plenty of time. I'm still young. What's the rush? There is plenty of time."

However you should know that every moment is precious.

Rav Yaako Kamenetsky Zt'l called over his grandson on the day of his Bar Mitzva, and said, "I have a present for you. My dear grandson, I just want to tell you that before you see what the present is, you should know that this is the most valuable present that you will ever receive."

His grandson thought, "Wow, what can it be?" – He opens it up, and inside the box is a… watch! - "That's the greatest present I'll receive? What do you mean? What about the bike? What about the Shas? There are so many more valuable presents."

Rav Yaakov said, "Because this is TIME, and time is the most valuable commodity that we have.

My Rebbe – **Rav Sheinberg Zt'l** used to go around the world on speaking engagements. Sometimes the whole *shmooze* would consist of only one word – TIME! Because that's what he felt was the most precious thing that we have, and for people to realize that our time is of vital importance.

Every moment that we have on this world, every moment that we have in Yeshiva, every moment that you have to improve yourself to become a better person, - is worlds!



In 1948, When Babe Ruth died, a group of boys in the Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn were huddled in a corner discussing the news. The Mashgiach, **R' Chatzkel Abramsky z"l** came over and asked what was going on. They told him that the great baseball player had died. Later that week, after maariv, R' Chatzkel got up to speak. Surprisingly, his topic was none other than Babe Ruth!

"I asked about his funeral," said the sage. "And I asked what eulogizers said about him." - "People said that since he had been an orphan, throughout his life he was kind to orphans."

"Do you hear?" he asked the assemblage of boys. "Even the gentiles, to whom this man was royalty because of his baseball playing in this life, know that after death, it's meaningless. What matters is how he treated other people!"



Adopted Soldier- Angels in Orange – Uplifting Stories of Courage, Faith and Miracles from the United Hatzalah Heroes of October 7th by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer

A yeshivah bachur went to Ashkelon to visit a friend in Barzilai Hospital. In the bed next to his friend was a wounded soldier, who also had a friend there with him. The bachur was conversing with his sick friend when the soldier's friend interjected with a question. "Why aren't you in the army?"

"I'm not in the army," the bachur replied, "but I'm doing a lot for the army."

"Really. What are you doing for the army?" The soldier's friend was clearly skeptical.

"I adopted a soldier."

"You adopted a soldier? What does that even mean?"

"When I pray and study Torah and perform good deeds, I do these things on behalf of my soldier, keeping him in mind and praying that he should be protected."

The friend laughed. "So you're doing everything for a soldier, right?" - The bachur nodded.

"You're probably making all this up to make us feel good — or to make yourself feel good. Tell me something. What's the name of the soldier who you adopted?"

The bachur didn't miss a beat. "Itai Yehuda ben Keren." As soon as the bachur uttered the name, the wounded soldier lying in the bed turned pale. - "That's my name," he said. "I'm Itai Yehuda ben Keren."

For a second, everyone in the room was stunned when they realized that the visiting bachur had been davening for his friend's roommate. But the soldier's friend wasn't finished.

"If you're praying and studying Torah for Itai, how is it possible that he was injured?"

"The ways of Hashem are complicated," the bachur replied, "but your friend is still alive. He survived."

As the conversation ensued, Itai told the bachur that he'd been injured on Tuesday. - "What time?" - "It happened at 4:40pm."

Now it was the bachur who turned pale. "I want you to know something," he said. "I try very hard to come on time to seder. On the day that you were injured, I didn't manage to get to the beis midrash until five o'clock. You didn't have the usual protection you normally did."

By the time the bachur left, he and the soldier had become best friends, and he knew that the two of them would be deeply connected forever. And all four of the people there that day understood that Torah and mitzvos protect Klal Yisrael in ways that we can't even fathom.

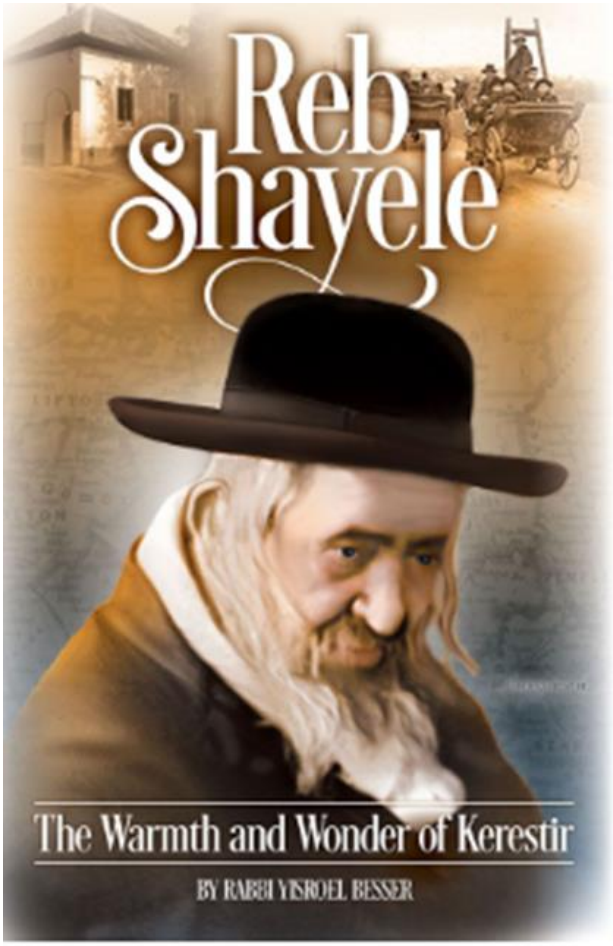


The Secular Yid Who Mocked Rav Shayala - Yehuda Z. Klitnick

There was a secular Yid living in Budapest who disliked the Rebbes. He saw that most of the people on the train were Chassidim one day. It was not the typical market day in Pest, when crowded trains were the norm, so he wondered why such a large number were traveling.

He was informed that a group of his chassidim, including the renowned Tzaddik Rav Shayala of Kerestir, were traveling on the same train. The skeptic of the Rebbe took a seat in the back of the train vehicle. Beside him sat one of the chassidim, and that confused Yid could not help but make fun of the Rebbe.

"To be fair, of course, everyone knows that Reb Shayala gives a lot of Tzeddaka," he stated. But this is rarely unexpected. Given that you, the chassidim, lavish him with wealth, why shouldn't he offer tzedakah? He has plenty of extras!



After he finished his tirade, the chassid said, "Mister, you're playing with fire," in a cool, collected manner but with a hint of menace. Before we go too far, you had better ask the Rebbe for forgiveness. The Rebbe is an exceptionally kind and gentle individual. Things will get bitter for you, I promise, if you don't ask for forgiveness for your defamatory remarks about him."

The words of criticism, surprisingly, had the intended effect. With genuine embarrassment, he went to beg the Rebbe's pardon, appearing as a sheep. There was no way the Rebbe, seated at the opposite end of the train car, could have heard what the Yid had spoken.

The Rebbe greeted him warmly and repeated what he had said about the Rebbe donating Tzedaka when he approached him to beg for forgiveness. The Yid begged the Rebbe to forgive him, shocked to learn that the Rebbe had heard his talk with his sanctified ears.

"Yes, I forgive you," the Rebbe replied, "but only if you commit to observing Shabbos."

"I have a chain of stores and a lot of employees, Rebbe," was the response. I just can't possibly expect to shut everything down each Shabbos!

"Have it your way, the Rebbe commanded roughly. However, if you refuse to stop your business on Shabbat, you will suffer the same fate as other willful Shabbos

desecrators, in addition to not being pardoned for what you said on the train today." The Yid responded, "I swear to tryand close on Shabbos." The Yid even assisted the Rebbe in descending the steep train steps, but not before the Rebbe repeated his severe warning.

When he reached home, he told his wife what had transpired on the train and what Rebbe had demanded from him. She said, "We can't survive if we close the business on Shabbos!" The woman had the last word on the subject. That Friday, the Yid was in his main store, and just as Shabbos arrived, he suddenly fainted straight away in front of his workers.

The foreman called a doctor, who revived him and examined him but didn't uncover any telltale conditions. The Yid went home that night, fell asleep, and dreamt, clear as the day, that Reb Shayala came to him and warned him sternly: "If you don't keep your word to observe Shabbos, you will not awaken from your sleep." That's all there is to it. It's now or never for you, my friend. You merited an

unmistakable sign from Heaven—as soon as Shabbos arrived with your stores still open, you fell in one stroke. You must promise me now that you will observe Shabbos, or else you will not wake up in the morning."

Still in the dream, this man solemnly promised the Rebbe to close all his stores on Shabbos and woke up shaken from the experience. He awakened his wife. She was relieved to see that her husband had recovered, and before he could tell her about the dream, she asked for the keys to the business. After all, it was morning on Saturday, their busiest day.

Her husband, visibly shaken from the dream, exclaimed, "My life is on the line, and I wouldn't be surprised about yours as well." He

related all that happened in his dream encounter with Rav Shayala Kerestirer, with his commitment that his stores were closed on Shabbos! His wife, trembling, agreed to the deal.

That day, the Yid felt a sense of uplift and realized that Shemiras Shabbos was the key to his future. Before long, the Chassidim in Pest noticed that this Yid's shops were closed every Shabbos. Word spread about Reb Shayala's influence in action. A group of chassidim visited the Yid at his home, and they got a heartfelt reception,

although they couldn't even drink a glass of water there. The Yid asked Chassidim to teach him how to daven. They then began to learn Torah with him. In a very short time, he became a G-d-fearing Jew and a devoted shomer mitzvos and loved Torah.

Harav Shraga Shmuel Shnitzler, Tchaba Rav, summed up the story by saying, "From degrading a Tzaddik, he upgraded his Yiddishkeit.



It states (*Tehillim* 19:9), **פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב**. The word **פקודי** can mean lacking (see *Bamidbar* 31:49) and **פקודי ה'** can be translated as you should know that **פקודי**, whatever you lack, **ה'**, is from Hashem. **משמחי לב**, and you will be happy because since it is from Hashem, you are sure that it is for your benefit.

"Having Bitachon requires us to have faith not only in Hashem's ability to provide for us, but also in His ability to guide us to our ultimate destiny." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.

Rav Avigdor Miller on The Beauty of The Jewish Woman



Q: ***Why should a Jewish woman attempt to look beautiful for her husband?***

A: Now the question is why did he marry her? Because she is proficient in Chovos Halevavos? Because she knows Choshen Mishpat? He marries her because she's a woman. And never forget that fact. Of course he wants a frum woman with a good character. Of course he wants a woman who will be a mother to his children. He wants many things. But suppose she decides she stops being a woman, let's say. She'll take an operation that will make her something not a woman. Good-bye! He shows her the door. Marriage is based on the fact that he is a man and she is a woman.

And therefore it's of the upmost importance always for a woman to make it her business to encourage her husband to like her as a woman. And therefore the gemara says that in the midbar when the *mann* used to fall every day, cosmetics fell with the *mann*. It's a remarkable statement! Cosmetics fell with the *mann*. You never heard that before? Cosmetics?!

The answer is that cosmetics are vital. Forty years in the midbar the women won't have an opportunity to find favor in the eyes of their husbands? It can't be. That's the medrash. Cosmetics fell with the *mann*.

You know, Ezra Hasofer made great takanos. And when he made *takanos* he didn't deal with small picayune things. He dealt with very great subjects. He was bringing people back to Eretz Yisrael. He was rebuilding a nation. He was busy with big things.

Now, among his takanos one that's recorded is a takanah that in every town, peddlers of cosmetics for women should visit every town once a week. It was a takanas Ezra! At least once a week every Jewish town should be visited by a peddler selling women's cosmetics.

Ezra had no other business than that? Ezra was busy with muktzeh. He was busy with shemoneh esrei, being *misakein* shemonah esrei. All the takanos from Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, great takanos that were forever and ever; he should be busy with a takanah about cosmetics?! Yes. This is also important.

And so, we learn how necessary it is for a woman always to keep in mind, until her last day, as long as she has a husband she has to make it her business to be presentable to her husband. I cannot overemphasize this subject.

I know there are righteous women who think that with their tzidkus alone they deserve to be respected and they are right. They deserve to be respected and Hakadosh Baruch Hu should give them great reward for all their good deeds. And still, they must realize that one of their good deeds is to be *gomel chessed* and to make a great impression on their husbands.

That's why I always say if you like mopping the floor – some women love to get on their knees and mop the floor; to wash the floor and scrub it – don't do it when your husband is home. When he's away and you're sure he won't come home soon then you can do these things. When you know he's coming home, put on a sheitel and give a dab on each cheek and try to look nice. - It's a mitzvah and you get Olam Haboh for it, besides all the other benefits in this world.

"Bitachon is the realisation that all we have, all we are, and all that will be, is a gift from Hashem." ~ Rabbi Noach Weinberg.

תַּכְשִׁיטֵי נָשִׁים - Cosmetics of Women



The copper from which the *kiyor* was made had a unique origin. The copper was donated by the women. They gave over their copper mirrors used to beautify themselves for their husbands.

Rashi explains: **בְּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיוּ בְיָדָן מַרְאוֹת שֶׁרוֹאוֹת בָּהֶן כְּשֶׁהֵן מִתְקַשְּׁטוֹת וְהָיָה מוֹאֵס מֹשֶׁה בָּהֶן מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעֲשׂוּיִם לְיֵצֶר הָרָע, אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא קַבֵּל, כִּי אֵלּוּ חֲבִיבִין עָלַי מִן הַכֹּל, שֶׁעַל יְדֵיהֶם הֶעֱמִידוּ הַנָּשִׁים צְבָאוֹת רַבּוֹת בְּמִצְרַיִם**

The women gathered at Moshe's tent with the copper mirrors they used to beautify themselves, intending to donate them. Moshe was uncomfortable accepting these mirrors, because they were seemingly used for the bidding of the evil inclination. Hashem told Moshe to accept them, "for they are most precious to Me of all." (Rashi to Shemos 38:8.)

But where did the women get make up from to enhance this idea of beautifying themselves for their husbands?

Cosmetics came down with the mahn in the midbar!

The Gemora in Yoma 75a says: **"אוֹ דָכוֹ בַּמְּדוֹכָה", אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב, וְאִיתֵּימָא רַבִּי חָמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: מְלַמֵּד שֶׁיָּרַד לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עִם הַמָּן תַּכְשִׁיטֵי נָשִׁים, דָּבָר שֶׁנִּידּוֹךְ בִּמְדוֹכָה** – ***'The verse states: "Or beat it in a mortar" (Numbers 11:8). Rabbi Yehuda said that Rav said, and some say it was Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina: This teaches that women's perfumes fell for the Jewish people with the manna because they are an item that is beaten in a mortar.'***

תַּכְשִׁיטֵי נָשִׁים - Cosmetics of Women

Rashi says that these were fragrant spices that they would crush with a mortar and adorn themselves so that their scent would be pleasing to their husbands.

The Maharsha says: All the relevant verses imply that the manna resembled some form of bread, which is processed by grinding and baking rather than by pounding in a mortar and cooking. Thus, this verse, which relates that the Israelites "pounded in a mortar," does not refer to the manna itself, but to something extraneous that fell along with it - ***women's cosmetics, which require pounding in a mortar!***

Ben Yehoyadah says - **מְלַמֵּד שֶׁיָּרַד לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עִם הַמָּן תַּכְשִׁיטֵי נָשִׁים** He understands that "pounded in a mortar" indeed refers to the manna and teaches that the manna itself possessed the qualities of those herbs and spices that are pounded in a mortar to produce the oils, rouges, lipsticks and perfumes that women normally use to beautify themselves. For the women of the Wilderness generation, eating manna produced all the desirable cosmetic effects!

Makeup

Cosmetic, skincare and haircare products serve a few purposes. They can enhance one's appearance, strengthen and enrich skin and hair, prevent or treat damage, and create a pleasurable feeling.

Perfumes

According to a midrashic tradition, perfume has long been important to Jewish women, so much so that the forty years of Benei Yisrael wandering in the wilderness were unique in part because women didn't use perfumes there.

ספרי במדבר פרשת בהעלותך פיסקא פט

כל ארבעים שנה שהיו ישראל במדבר לא צרכה אשה למיני בשמים אלא מן המן היתה מתקשטת - ***'All forty years that Israel were in the wilderness, a woman did not require varieties of perfume, rather she adorned herself with the manna…'***

The Gemarah **בבא קמא פב.** says: **עשרה תקנות תיקן עזרא...ושיהו רוכלין מחזירין בעיירות.** *Ezra made ten enactments…and that peddlers should travel between the cities.* Rashi explains: **רוכלין – מביאים**

בשמים לנשים להתקשט בהם - Peddlers- *bringing perfumes to women to adorn themselves with.*

Gemorah Bava Basra 22a & Bava Kama 82b state that women require cosmetics to be available so that they should be beautiful for their husbands.



In **Rabbi Pesach Eliyahu Falk**'s sefer 'Oz Ve-hadar Levushah: Modesty, an Adornment for Life' on tzinus, page 430, he quotes gemara Shabbos 64b "***a woman could require cosmetics to improve her appeal to her husband***" and Kesubos 52b, "..***an adult girl might need it so that she looks graceful and b'cheint for shidduchim purposes***". Moreover, an Eishes Chayil spreads simcha to her surroundings, and this requires a healthy and cheerful countenance which can necessitate the use of minor, well placed makeup.

However, he cautions against excessive, bright, non-tzinusdik applications." ***Cosmetics are to be used with moderation. Cosmetics are to enhance – not to be conspicuous***."

Medrash Rabba (Breishis 17:8) says: They asked Rebbi Yehoshua…Why does a women require perfume, and a man doesn't? He said to them, "Adom is created from earth and earth never becomes malodorous, while Chava was created from bone.

The analogy is: If you leave meat for 3 days without salting it, it will immediately spoil and putrefy. - Perfume isn't just an enhancement for women rather it is an intrinsic need like salt is for meat.

The norms and trends found in rabbinic literature emphasize the value of the family, nurture the connection of the couple, and

protect its vitality. The desire for purity and sanctity as values that can be applied in daily life in general, and in family life in particular, is expressed in the attention that the sages gave to the value of beauty between man and wife within the family framework.

We can view makeup and perfume as serving to further enhance one's Divine gift or as a means for heightening alignment between one's external looks and more beautiful internal qualities. Rashi (Mo'ed Katan 9b) relates how makeup can contribute to a woman's own sense of well-being.

Rav Mordechai Eliyahu says that at times when a woman does not wear make-up, we should- '***view inner beauty as an expression of the soul that comes through, unadorned***.'

Why I Believe in Moshiach – Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair



My father ע"ה was a keen Zionist. In fact, he got into trouble with my mother when at their wedding reception which was a few days after the founding of the State of Israel, he managed to toast the State of Israel, but then somehow neglected to mention my mother.

My father amongst many people of that era did not believe in the coming of Moshiach. I said to him once, "Daddy, you were born in 1910, you saw the most horrific atrocities unleashed on the Jewish people in history. And four years after the end of the 2nd World War, you saw the establishment of a Jewish sovereign state for the first time in over 1000 years.

If I had been around in 1930 and told you all about what was going to take place, you would have laughed at me. So, is the coming of Moshiach that much more outlandish?"



Imagine if you have never seen water boil. Imagine that you lived in a world where there was no means with which to heat water to a high enough temperature to boil. You would think that water just got hotter and hotter. The idea that a cataclysmic change was about to take place where the water would turn into steam/vapour, would seem absurd and fanciful in the extreme.

It is difficult for us to imagine cataclysmic change. Today was like yesterday, and yesterday was like the day before, but things do change, and sometimes – cataclysmically.



There is no realistic 'Day After' scenario for the war in Gazza. It's clear that Hamas will not settle for a state unless it is 'From the River to the Sea'. On the other hand, Israel isn't about to meekly accept a set of 'water-wings' supplied by the UN, and happily peddle out into the Mediterranean with Tel Aviv fading into the distance.

This an existential war without a solution. It is not a question as to how to divide the cake and draw a line on a map – You get this bit, we'll swop you this bit. This is a war of ideals; A titanic clash of cultures that will not and cannot end in a stable compromise.

As a believing Jew, it's clear to me that the only solution to this situation is Moshiach, for Whom we daily wait and pray.

Now, I'm sure that this too is a 'pipe-dream', because nothing in our experience has ever resembled Moshiach.

Hashem promised the Jewish people that He would bring us Moshiach. And just as He promised us that He would preserve us throughout our long and arduous years of exile and torment, I believe that He will bring His redeemer – Moshiach.

I am looking forward to seeing water boil!

Rabbi Eli Mansour



I know it myself, and I'm sure that everybody has stories in their lives and careers, where they had ups and downs. I've never met anybody that only had a straight road in life.

I know it myself in my own career. I was in a very high place, and suddenly everything turned around. I found myself going backwards in life. It put me in a very dark place. I was feeling very low.

I met a great Rabbi in Israel - **Rabbi Reuven Elbaz**, and I told him my concerns. He said, "Rabbi Eliyahu, let me tell you what Chazal says. They say that every blade of grass has an angel, and that angel is the administrator of that particular blade of grass. The angel has a stick, and he hits the grass, and he says to the blade, 'grow, grow.'"

So Rabbi Elbaz asked me, "Why does the angel have to hit the blade of grass? Why can't he just tell the grass to grow?"

And he answered, "because before every growth spurt, there has to be a *makka*."

"And therefore", he said, "What's happening to you now is that you are going through the *makka*. But I guarantee you that the makka will lead to greatness."

Many people when they get hit with something, they can become depressed, debilitated, or paralyzed. However, you should know that Hashem is setting us up for something great!

Be prepared – Something amazing is about to happen!

Midrash Rabbah, Bereshis 10:6.



אָמַר רַבִּי סִימוֹן אֵין לְךָ כָּל עֵשֶׂב וְעֵשֶׂב, שֶׁאֵין לוֹ מַזָּל בָּרָקִיעַ שֶׁמַּכֶּה אוֹתוֹ, וְאוֹמֵר לוֹ גְּדַל - "***Said Rabbi Simon: 'Every single blade of grass has a corresponding 'mazal'/ constellation in the firmament which hits it and tells it to grow.***"

Rabbi Moshe Shapiro, *Zt'l*, says that from this Midrash we see that some things need a 'hit' in order to grow.

There's story told about **Rabbi Avraham Kook, *zatzal*** and **Rabbi Aryeh Levine, *zatzal***. They used to study the Torah together and often they would study outside. On one occasion Rabbi Levine plucked a flower from a tree. Rabbi Kook was upset and told him that in all his days he had never plucked so much as a leaf from a tree, based on the above-mentioned Midrash.

The Babi Sali by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



An entourage of men once came to the great Gaon and Sephardic Sage; The Babi Sali Zt'l. The men came out of their convoy of cars wearing dark suits. They were all sombre and their hair was overgrown. They came before the Babi Sali and explained to him that their son / brother who was an Israeli soldier, had gone on a dangerous mission that failed, and he had never returned.

The army called up and said, "We regret to inform you of some bad news." And so, the family began to sit shivah.

Baba Sali is listening. They ask Baba Sali, "Please give us some words of Nechama, comfort."

Baba Sali begins to look, and he moves his head backwards and forwards, and he says, "Shall he who cleans, not clean? Shall he who cleans, not clean?"

It was difficult for them to understand what the Babi Sali meant, as he mixed in words of Hebrew and Arabic. They thought, maybe the Tzaddik doesn't understand them. Maybe he's in a different place right now. Eventually, they all got up and the entourage left.

Three weeks later, once again the entourage appeared before the Babi Sali. This time they were wearing coloured festive suits, clean shaven with their hair trimmed smartly. All of them walk in smiling. They came bearing boxes of fruit, candy, cakes and drinks. In with them walks this missing soldier! The soldier that they thought was dead.

The soldier comes before the great Gaon, and Babi Sali looks at him and says, "Tell me, which special mitzva do you do?"

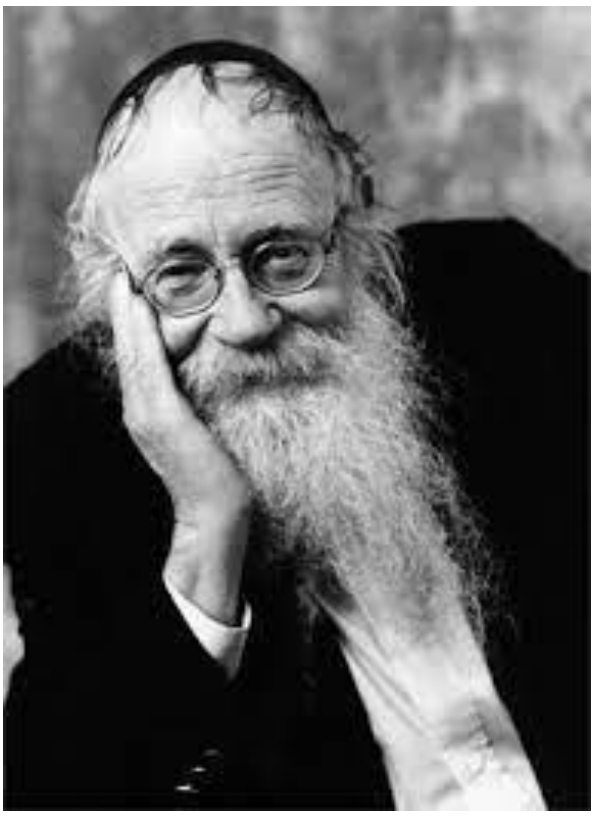
The soldier is a humble and modest person, and replies, "I'm just like everybody else. I don't do anything special at all."

Babi Sali says, "I command you to tell me which mitzvah do you do that is special?"

The soldier says, "On our army base, we have a little Beis Hamedresh. The soldiers that pray there are always in a hurry, and most times the seforim and siddurim are left all over the place. I come in every Friday afternoon, and I put everything in order. Then I sweep and mop the floors."

Baba Sali looks at everybody and says, "Shall he who cleans, not clean? Shall he who cleans, not clean?"

My Greatest Regret by Rabbi YY Jacobson



One Shabbos afternoon, I was praying in a shul in the old city of Jerusalem. A man approached the great sage **Rabbi Adin Even Yisrael Steinsaltz** and asked him if he had any regrets in life.

Rabbi Adin responded, "***I made many mistakes, and I regret them, but what I regret the most are the things that I never attempted to do, because I feared making mistakes***."

Never let the fear of making mistakes get in your way!

Oct. 7th Miracle!



On Simchat Torah, October 7th, two Hamas terrorists arrived at a synagogue in Sderot, Israel and listened in for a while, only to encounter complete silence by its doorway.

Given that mosque services are typically loud with sounds every few seconds and not knowing any better, they assumed the building was empty and didn't bother entering, opting instead to move on.

However, the synagogue was full! After the Chag ended that evening, the Rabbi and members of the synagogue reviewed the synagogue's cameras and observed the two terrorists at the door who paused to listen and then mysteriously left. Upon checking the time, it coincided exactly with when all the synagogue members were praying The Silent Amida.

Binyamin, the young man who is originally from France, was leading the prayer service and added that before Rosh Hashanah, he had sought a blessing from his Rebbi in Bnei Brak, the **Rebbe of Tchernobil**. The Rabbi encouraged him to pray with a deeper focus and to double the time he spent in The Silent Amida, which according to the camera timing, may very well have ended saving his and his entire synagogue fellow members' lives.

"Chulent Tazil M' Movet"



Every Friday we deliver food to various bases. 5000+ meals are prepared every week by our Satmar friend Menachem Teitelbaum. Yes. Related to the Satmar Rebbe. The favorite item of all the fish , meat , dessert etc is a big pot of steaming hot chulent. Takes two chayalim to lift out of my car.

Last week Menachem received a call from a commander in Gaza who called him to say that the chulent is a life saver. Menachem answered that the chulent is really good but hardly a life saver. The commander, between tears, said it is truly a life saver. Here is what happened:

They were about to enter a building that they thought was hiding a number of terrorists. As they were about to enter the commander said to his soldiers before we go let's first have some of the chulent. They went back to where the pot of chulent was located and as they were about to eat that very same building collapsed in a major explosion. The building didn't house terrorists. It was loaded with explosives, a trap for the chayalim. Seems the terrorists were waiting nearby, thought the chayalim had entered the building and triggered the explosion.

So now we have a new maxim. "Chulent tazil m' movet". Nissim v' niflaot.

"אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ" by Rabbi Shlomo Farhi



A man came up to me and told me a story. His name was Bara makakiyan. He previously lived in Iran. In 1979, he needed to escape the Ayatollah's regime. His plan was to disguise himself as 'one of the boys', and he grew his beard bushy and long and dressed himself in the traditional Muslim garb like a local Imam. He looked for all intents and purpose like a religious fundamentalist.

He booked himself a flight to the border of Iran, where he had arranged for others to meet him there and take him to Pakistan and then on to safety.



He's praying and praying that nobody should recognise that he's travelling in disguise or scrutinise his documents too carefully, or he would be finished.

He gets on the plane and sits down. Others get on the plane, and of all the people to sit in the seat right next to him – is another real Mullah/Imam! Not only that, but the two rows in front of him, and the two rows behind him sit all his chassidim/followers!

He looks up, and says to himself, "Ribboino Shel Olam – how could You do this to me? I disguised myself and am attempting to escape only because I am a Jew. What more do You want me to go through? I finally get on the plane, and You have all these guys sit around me? If the Imam sitting next to me asks me one religious question, I will straight away be

found out as a fraud, and I will be as good as dead. He tries to stay calm, but his heart is beating out of his chest.

The Imam sitting next to him makes small talk and asks pleasantries. He makes pleasant and non-evasive conversation. They don't ask him their version of 'what's this week's sedra about'!

Boruch Hashem, he seems to get away with it. He continues to pray, and finally the plane lands. He thanks Hashem, but he is wondering why Hashem is putting him through this additional challenge when he is so close to his destination.

As they are getting off the plane, he sees that there is a long line ahead of him. Security guards are doing a deep scan and inspecting everyone's papers very thoroughly. Now he is really concerned that his papers are going to reveal exactly who he is. There is no way out - he's going to get caught. He's praying and crying because he knows that his life is over.

But as the line progresses, he suddenly sees that all the heavily armed security guards bow their heads in respect for the Imam and all his followers. The Imam says, "All these 'Chasidim' are with me, and this is my new friend!

They allow them all to pass through security, him included without so much as a short cursory glance at their papers.

Don't look back – look forward. Live with faith. Live with Emunah.- Hashem should bless all of us to live in a world where G-d's presence is palpable and understand what Hashem wants from us, and we will get to see His hand lighting our path and every step.

"True bitachon is not the absence of challenges, but the unwavering belief that Hashem is with us in every challenge." ~ Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsburgh.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Avoiding Arguments



How do we say hello? With the word **שלום**. This same word is also how we say goodbye. This is because even if we disagree it is all within the context of peace, that we love each other.

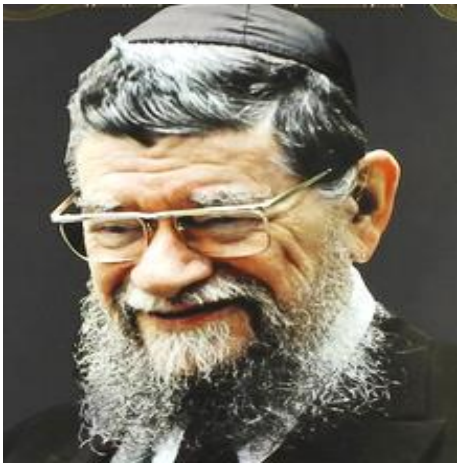
The Satmar Rebbe (1887-1979) vehemently disagreed with others yet he gave them *tzedakah* because in essence he loved them. The argument was within the context of peace.

It may come as a surprise to some but the Satmar Rebbe, who was especially known to be against the State of Israel, fasted for the six days of the Six-day War (he ate at night) and davened constantly during that period that the Jewish soldiers not get injured or killed.

We see this with other great people such as **R' Ovadia Yosef** who refers to **R' Elyashuv** as **ידידינו**, our friend, even though the styles of these two greats differed significantly.

Despite the seriousness and intensity of the clash between **R' Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld and R' Kook** regarding the Zionists, the dispute never invaded the personal realm, and each displayed his high regard for the other.

Even at the height of the dispute, whenever R' Yosef Chaim and R' Kook would meet at a bris or wedding, they would engage each other in friendly conversation.





When **R' Gifter** was considering closing his Yeshiva, the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** sent a messenger to R' Gifter, who opposed Chabad. The message was that if he wants to close the Yeshiva for financial reasons, he should rather leave it open and the Lubavitcher Rebbe will take full responsibility for the finances.

There were two Chassidishe Rebbes that were involved in a *machlokes*. When one of the Rebbes passed away, his son made peace with the other Rebbe. - When his Chassidim asked how he could make peace with the other Rebbe if his father didn't, he answered, "I don't have the Torah or Tefillah of my father. Should I also hold on to the *machlokes* of his?!"

When **R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz** spoke about divisions that had plagued the Jewish people in the past, he would mention the following parable: There was a wealthy man who lived an opulent lifestyle with two sons-in-law, one who ate no meat and the other ate no dairy. For many years, the rich man fed them both in his house according to their tastes. One sat at one table with his family eating meat and the other sat at a second table with his family eating dairy.

Eventually the father-in-law lost his fortune and served the whole family bread and potatoes. He told his sons-in-law, "Now that I can't afford meat or dairy delicacies,' why sit at separate tables?"

Similarly today, said R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, we lack the greatness, the scholarship, the zeal and the intensity of those from earlier times — we have neither meat nor dairy — so there is no point eating at separate tables!

Pearl Harbor Lesson



A person should be so busy with good deeds that he has no time for sin. A person who is busy learning Torah, davening, performing acts of kindness and the like doesn't have time to sin.

The Kotzker Rebbe told his Chassidim that their sins didn't bother him as much as that they had time to sin. He would say, "I don't expect my Chassidim to have the fortitude not to sin. I expect them not to have time to sin."

Concerning the many cases of mental illnesses today that require psychiatric help, an elderly man once commented that when he was younger "We were too busy making a living to be crazy!"

There was a 17-year-old who worked aboard a ship at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On the infamous day of December 7, 1941, following the Japanese attack, this boy rescued numerous people throughout the night. The next day he grappled with intense trauma, reliving the harrowing events.

Seeking guidance, he confided in a mentor who questioned, "If you are struggling now, how did you manage to save so many lives on December 7th?" - The boy explained that he was so busy aiding others that he didn't have time to think.

His mentor then suggested, "Why don't you continue to help people?"

The boy then enrolled in a Paramedics course and dedicated his time to rescue efforts. This is what kept him going. [Of course seeking professional help for trauma is essential. This story just emphasizes the importance of engaging in meaningful activities.]

The Weekly Vort

● **אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות** – ***These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony*** (38:21).

The parsha begins with a detailed listing of the amounts of gold, silver and copper that were contributed for the Mishkan.

R' Moshe Feinstein explains that this teaches a profound lesson: Just as the artisans of the Mishkan had to account for their use of every ounce of material that was donated for the Mishkan, so must we be able to account for how we have made use of Hashem's blessings upon us.

R' Moshe applies this to both time and resources. Do we devote our days and years to Torah and mitzvos, or do we squander them on empty pursuits? Do we dedicate a proper amount of our money to tzedakah? These are questions that every Jew must ask himself. (More Shabbos Stories)

● **משכן העדות** – ***the Mishkan of Testimony*** (38:21).

According to Rashi, the Mishkan bore tangible witness that Hashem had forgiven the *cheit ha'eigel*. How did the Mishkan testify that Hashem had granted atonement?

The Gaon HaMalbim explains: Moshe's reckoning must have been flawless; otherwise, Hashem, Who hates theft, would never have rested His Presence there. Thus, the Mishkan testifies to the fiscal propriety of all those involved in its construction. (The Torah Treasury)

"The Torah understands the depths of our nature and reveals to us that we are indeed capable of guarding our tongues." ~ Chaftez Chaim.



Don't be Jealous of the Wealthy

A very wealthy person sent his two sons to a distant land, and occasionally, the father would send them gifts or money. Once, the father sent only one jacket, and he didn't say which son it was for.

When such matters occurred, the brothers found an amicable way to choose which brother would get the item. The other brother was mevater. But this time, a costly diamond was in the jacket's pocket, and each brother claimed that the jacket was sent specifically for him. - It turned into a major fight. Their loud voices were heard outside the home, and neighbors came in to offer their opinions.

After this went on for some time, someone came in and asked what the commotion was all about. They told him about the jacket, the precious diamond in its pocket, and the uncertainty of whom the father intended to send the gift.

The person replied, "It isn't hard to figure out who their father intended it for. Just see which brother fits into the jacket."

The thin brother put on the jacket and it fit him perfectly. The heavyset brother didn't even try to put it on. He admitted that their father intended to send the gift to his brother.

The nimshal is that sometimes we see wealth by others, and we think that it should be ours. But it wasn't intended for you. It doesn't suit you. And therefore, there is no reason to be jealous.

"All of my lofty spiritual achievements were attained through joy in the performance of a mitzvah." ~ The Arizal.

The first letters of the alef beis **א' ב' ג' ד' ה' ו' ז'** are roshei teivos for **וייל דער באשעפר האט געוואלט אזוי זאל זיין**, "Because Hashem wanted that it should be so." Why does that person have wealth and not me?

Because that is what Hashem wanted. If you ask why the words of this *remez* are out of order of the alef beis, we reply that this is the entire purpose, to believe in Hashem even when things seem out of order.

There was a time when **Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlita** had to spend a lot of time at home, cleaning and caring for the children. One Friday afternoon, he came to beis medresh and saw his friend, the tzaddik **Reb Shmuel Shapiro zt'l**, saying Shir HaShirim in a sweet tune. He had been saying the Shir HaShirim in this manner for two hours straight.

Reb Yaakov Meir commented, "Hashem wants Reb Shmuel to say Shir HaShirim for two hours on erev Shabbos, while He wants me to clean and mop for two hours on erev Shabbos."

Everyone has their service to do for Hashem. You don't have to be jealous of the service of others; just do what Hashem wants from you.

Reb Meir Tzvi Roth Shlita told me that years ago when he lived in Bnei Brak, he owned a sefarim store, which many gedolei Yisrael would frequent. Once, the **Steipler Gaon zt'l** was in his story to buy sefarim, and Reb Meir Tzvi tied them up in a bundle so it would be easier for the Steipler to carry home. (There were no plastic bags in those days.)

Someone offered the Steipler to carry home his bundle. The Steipler wittily replied, "Every person carries his own bundle." - Each person carries his personal package of tzaros, and no one can carry it for him.

At airports, many suitcases lie around, and often, no one is watching. Why don't people just pick up a stranger's suitcase and take it home? Perhaps they will find expensive items inside.

The answer is that they are worried, "Who knows what is in this suitcase? Maybe I will be caught at customs control carrying contraband."

The nimshal is that sometimes you see someone else's package, it appears beautiful from the outside. But you don't want it because you don't know what is really inside.

Gratitude



The Pnei Yehoshua felt so much gratitude to Hashem, expressing that he couldn't even thank Hashem for a millionth of all the kindness he received, while immediately after writing that, he describes the devastation he endured, r'l.

May Hashem save us all from tzaros, but this is an example of how a Jew thinks. They focus on Hashem's kindness.

Some people cry and complain their entire lives. They have complaints instead of gratitude. But here we have a great person who went through terrible times, and yet he saw the good and felt that he couldn't praise Hashem enough. - This is a lesson in gratitude that everyone should keep in his heart.

"Hashem isn't punishing me – He is polishing me." ~ R' Uri Lati.

Counting Money



One morning, the **Chofetz Chaim** noticed a banker davening *shacharis* very quickly. The Chofetz Chaim approached him and advised him not to go to work that day.

"Why not?"

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "It is written in halachah that 'one shouldn't skip over words of *Pesukei Dezimrah* or swallow the words. He should say the words like someone counting money' (*Darchei Moshe* 51). - If you are going to count money as quickly as you davened, you're better off staying home today."

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l said that saying korbanos before Minchah is mesugal not to need to visit a doctor.

For all those who claim that they don't have time to say korbanos, let them remember that the few moments it takes to say korbanos is a lot shorter than the time people spend waiting for a doctor, r'l.

"Don't consider any deed small, because what is small for you, is enormous in Hashem's eyes.

We can compare it to the sun. One sees the sun moving a small distance in the sky, but it is actually moving a far greater distance in heaven." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.



Miracles Unveiled: Inside the Mind of a Hamas Terrorist & The Divine Intervention That Saved Lives by Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi

Rabbi Chaim Zayeed just publicised the following story: The Israelis just interrogated one of the Hamas terrorists that was caught by the IDF. They interrogated him to find out more information about his mission on October 7th.

He was in charge of a whole group of terrorists, whose mission was to go to a place called Tifrach in the south of Israel close to the Gaza border, where there was a community kibbutz. - Tifrach is known worldwide for its very large yeshivah, with over 800 talmidim.



Their specific job was to break into this kibbutz and yeshiva on Simchas Torah, and kill as many Jews as possible.

This terrorist went through his bag that he was carrying, and inside, he had the full schedule of times of davening and learning zemanim! He knew exactly when shacharis was etc. When Musaf was and all the hakafot! When mincha was and the yeshivah lunch etc.

And more than that, he had a picture and schematics of the building with all the entrances and exits marked up. His plan was to send a group of five terrorists to each entrance/exit. Their plan was to kill

as many people as possible in the building. - Baruch Hashem, his mission did not go according to plan.

The *katzin* – person in charge of the interrogation who told this story to Reb Chaim Zayeed, asked the terrorist, "What happened? Why did you not go through with your mission? What stopped you from breaking in and taking over this kibbutz and yeshiva?"

The terrorist answered with the following unbelievable account: "As we arrived at the gate of the kibbutz, I saw that the yeshiva of Tifrach was burning on fire with flames and smoke billowing out from all directions – it was completely engulfed in fire! I figured that the job had already been carried out by others, so why should we waste our time here, so we left!"

We all know that this was not the reality. The bochurim at the time were davening and dancing on Simchas Torah, and praying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. – The terrorist testified that he saw the building on fire, but there was no fire!

But there was a spiritual fire! What he saw coming out of the building was a spiritual fire made up of Torah, Tefilla and simcha! - The fire and smoke that they saw, was an open miracle.

Every time we learn Torah; Every time we daven – It really makes a huge difference in the world. If we have the right glasses on, we will see flames and ash of kedusha!

"The Hebrew word for life חיים is in the plural form. Indeed, life is an experience to be shared." ~ R' Shlomo Wolbe zt"l.

"A person who truly trusts in G-d is truly rich. But a person who is only reputed to trust in G-d is like a person who is only reputed to be rich." ~ R' Yisroel Salanter zt"l.



Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) was the great-grandson of the holy Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement. He championed a unique path of divine service, urging his followers to serve Hashem with simplicity and joy. While it has been over 200 years since his passing, Rebbe Nachman's teachings continue to provide clarity, hope, and comfort to his followers. - In his magnum opus, Rebbe Nachman famously teaches, "A person must cross a very, very narrow bridge. The main rule is: Do not be frightened at all!" (Likutey Moharan II, 48:2)

We hope these words provide inspiration and encouragement as we navigate the narrow bridge of life.

מַאֲמִינִין בְּנֵי מַאֲמִינִין הֵם - They are believers, the children of believers (Bamidbar Rabbah, Naso 7:5)

When Hashem informed Moshe that the time had come to free the Jewish nation from the Egyptians, Moshe feared that the people would not believe him. Hashem reassured Moshe, "They are believers, the children of believers."

Our belief is not founded on blind faith… We believe because we stem from a long lineage of believers - people who have placed their faith and trust in Hashem, despite seemingly dire and desperate circumstances.

We believe, because we are the children of Avraham and Sarah, who stood up to the entire pagan world.

We believe, because we are the children of Moshe Rabbeinu, who stood up to Pharaoh and his regime.

We believe, because we are the children of Dovid HaMelech, who stood up to the towering Golias.

We believe, because we are the children of Queen Esther, who stood up to the wicked and cruel Haman.

We believe, because we are the children of the Maccabees, who stood up to the mighty Greek empire.

We believe, because we are children of those holy souls who stood up and looked evil in the eye during the crusades, pogroms, inquisitions, and horrifying holocaust.

We believe, quite simply, because it runs in the family. - Am Yisrael Chai.

Before Entering the House

Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach was once walking home with a *talmid* who noticed him straightening his frock (coat) and adjusting his hat before entering his house. The *talmid* couldn't help asking, "Is the Rebbe expecting a special visitor?"

Rav Shlomo Zalman said, "no".

"Is the Rebbe fixing himself up for the Rebbetzin?"

"No," he answered.

"So why is the Rebbe adjusting his hat and coat?" the *talmid* asked.

Rav Shlomo Zalman explained by quoting the *gemara*, "When a man and wife enjoy marital harmony in their home, the *Shechinah* dwells in their home, as the letters denote – there is a *yud* in the middle of '*ish*' and a *hei* by '*isha*,' which combine to spell Hashem's name. Thus, I am preparing myself to greet the *Shechinah*." ~ From the book, The Gadol HaDor.

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דרגה יתירה

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

מִשֶּׁנִּכְנַס אֲדָר מַרְבִּין בְּשִׂמְחָה – '*When the month of Adar begins, one increases rejoicing.*' (Taanis 29a)



We have now begun the month of *Adar Sheni*, and let the *simcha* roll! It is the time to be really happy! Even if we were happy before, *Chazal* tell us that now we must INCREASE our *simcha*!

So, what are we doing about that? How are we going about it?

Well, let's start by thinking about what it is that makes us unhappy. What can we do to avoid that feeling?

There is a famous story about a water carrier who was quite elderly and not in the best of health. Day after day, he trudged along carrying water pails for the townspeople. He woke up one morning and said, "Oh *Hashem*, how long can I continue *schlepping* these heavy pails of water? I am way too old for this. I am not a well person and I think it is unfair that a man my age with my health problems should have to do such a physically taxing job. Woe is to me that this is my lot."

The next morning, the water carrier woke up again and this time, he thought to himself, "Wow, *Baruch Hashem*, I am alive. Although I may be old and sick, I am still capable of supporting myself! I am so fortunate that I do not have to come onto anyone for money. I can do so much *chessed* with my job, bringing water to all the people in my town. I am so blessed. Thank you *Hashem* for giving me the strength to be a water carrier!"

What changed? Nothing! But everything changed because he changed his attitude about his situation.

What an amazing discovery! What makes us happy or unhappy? It is not the situation that we are in, but rather, it is how we perceive the situation we are in. Gratitude is a combination of two words ... a great attitude! This is what we need if we want to be happy people.

In life we do not choose our circumstances. We have no power over the things that will happen to us throughout the day. But we do have the freedom to choose our reaction.

Our response to the circumstances we are in determine the attitude we take in life. If we make the correct choice enough times in our lives, then we can create a positive attitude and a happy life.

Shortly before the Gaon of Vilna's passing, he gathered his tzitzis in his hands and began to cry. "Why are you crying?" his students asked.

"Here on earth," he responded, "we have unlimited opportunity for growth. For the minimal task of placing a four-cornered garment with tzitzis upon ourselves each morning, we will be rewarded immeasurably for having fulfilled mitzvos every second of the day. - I am about to depart for a world where I will no longer be rewarded for my actions."



Besamei HaTorah - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

'...***and he placed the screen of the gate of the Courtyard, and Moshe completed the work***.' (40:33)

The final words of the completion of the Mishkan are **מָסַךְ שַׁעַר הֶחָצֵר**, '*...and he placed the screen of the gate of the Courtyard*', immediately followed by **וַיְכַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמְּלָאכָה**, '*and Moshe completed the work*', indicating that all work was done.

The Midrash Lekach Tov states that the Mishkan was named after Moshe because whoever completes something, that item is named after him, as we always follow after the completion. Moshe also set his seal in the completion by adding his name to the first letters of the final three words of the completion: **מסך שער החצר** . (Chaim Shel Torah quoting Sifsei Kohein al HaTorah)

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Yeruchem Silber, who learned in **Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman's** Yeshivah in Eretz Yisroel for six years, shared a story that he heard from Rav Gustman himself.

A few years before Rav Gustman opened his Yeshivah, he went to see the **Tchebiner Rav, zt"l**, to ask him for guidance about opening the Yeshivah, and he said that he wanted to open it in the Geulah neighborhood.

The Tchebiner Rav indeed advised Rav Gustman to open a Yeshivah, but surprisingly, he told him not to open it in Geulah. He said, "Geulah

doesn't need another Yeshivah, but Rechavia does. Go build a Yeshivah there, and bring Torah to that neighborhood."

The cost of a building in Rechavia was significantly higher than in Geulah. Buildings were four times higher there. The Tchebiner Rav gave him a Brachah that he will be successful in this endeavor.



Rav Gustman told Rabbi Silber, "I went to the Kosel and spoke to the Ribono Shel Olam. I said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, the Gadol HaDor, the Tchebiner Rav, advised me to buy a building in Rechavia and open a Yeshivah there. The Rambam writes at the beginning of his work that everything is from You, and the words of the Gedolim are really Your words. Hashem, I have a dilemma. I can buy a building for the Yeshivah in Geulah for $40,000, or I can buy in Rechavia where it costs $150,000. The Tchebiner Rav told me to purchase the one in Rechavia, so that means that You say so as well, correct?'"

Rav Gustman waited a moment before continuing. "All right, Hashem, Your silence means that You agree! However, I have no idea where the money for this will come from. But the truth is, Ribono Shel Olam, the money is all Yours, and since You agree with the Tchebiner Rav that I should open a Yeshivah, I suppose that means that You will help me find the means to purchase it. Wherever I open a Yeshivah, it would only be because it is You Who would be giving me the means to do so. So please, Hashem, I ask You to please help me follow the direction of the Tchebiner Rav!"

With that, Rav Gustman walked away, completely content with his request from Hashem, and within days, he had the money he needed for the building of his new Yeshivah, Netzach Yisroel, in Rechavia!

Sterling Character

Those who get angry, their life is not life. Therefore, Chazal have instructed us to distance ourselves from anger, to the point that he can conduct himself with complete disregard and indifference in regard to feelings of anger, even for things that tend to provoke someone to be angry. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 29:4)

Dismissing Anger

The Likutei Piskei Teshuvos cites a few Segulos that can help someone control his anger. **The Noam Elimelech** advises (Tzetil Katan) that if one feels anger coming on, he should say the words from the Pasuk in Shemos (3:8), " **הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי**." - **The Chasam Sofer** (Drashos for 7 Adar) says that if one feels anger rising up, he should take hold of the corner of the garment that he is wearing.

The Kav HaYashar (85) writes that one can also look at his Tzitzis, and this will also help the anger settle down. Additionally, the Kav HaYashar notes that the time when one puts on his Tzitzis in the morning, it is an Eis Ratzon, an auspicious time to Daven to be saved from anger, among other bad Middos. He also includes a Tefilah specifically for this, which he learned from his Rebbe, **HaGaon Rebbe Yosef ben Rebbe Yudel zt"l**, and this is the text of the Tefilah:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, ה' אֱלֹקַי וֵאלֹקֵי אֲבוֹתַי, שֶׁלֹּא אֶכְעַס וְלֹא אַכְעִיסֶךָ, רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם! זַכֵּנִי לְמִדַּת עֲנָוָה וּלְמִדַּת הַכְנָעָה, וְדֶרֶךְ שֶׁקֶר הָסֵר מִמֶּנִּי וְתוֹרָתְךָ חָנֵּנִי! הַדְרִיכֵנִי בַּאֲמִתֶּךָ וְיַחֵד לְבָבִי לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל, הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, בְּכָל לְבָבִי וּבְכָל נַפְשִׁי וּמְאֹדִי - *"May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d and the G-d of my fathers, that I should not become angry or cause You to become angry. Ribono Shel Olam! Grant me the Middah of humility and the Middah of submission. Remove the path of falsehood from before me and favor me with Your Torah! Guide me in the way of Your truth and unify my heart to love and fear Your great, mighty, and awesome Name, with all my heart, soul, and resources!"*



Rav Dovid Orlofsky said that one time a friend of his was waiting on a line in a store, and the person who was in front of him was dissatisfied with something the shopkeeper had done. This fellow then took the 'obvious' next step, and he started screaming at the shopkeeper in a blazing fit of rage, until he was literally red in the face from his furious shouting.

"However," Rabbi Orlofsky said, "to my friend's great surprise, no matter what the customer said to him, the guy behind the counter just wouldn't get upset. Not a twitch of reaction could be seen on his face. He just sat there calmly taking it all in.

My friend was shocked. He had never seen such calm, such reserve. 'How did you do that?' he asked the shopkeeper after the incident had ended, and the angry customer had left. 'How can you take that type of aggravation and not get upset?'

The shopkeeper looked up at him and explained, 'It's simple. I have a very serious heart condition. Without exaggeration, If I get upset, I could die. It's just not worth it to me.'"

Rav Orlofsky said, "What a powerful lesson! If we are given such choice, between controlling our anger or facing dreadfully dire consequences, then we can find a way to maintain that extreme level of control. We just need the push that will help us get there, but we can do that is every situation we find ourselves in as well!"

"Recognize that everything is in Hashem's hands, and you will have nothing to fear." ~ Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.



The Whole Story

● The Generous Donation

There was once a heartbroken fellow who, after losing a close family member and experiencing other challenges, approached **R' Shlomka of Zeville** with the following question:

Chazal say that upon losing a family member, one must make the *brachah* of *Dayan Ha'emes*, and that the *brachah* should be made with the same joy as one would have when making a *brachah* on good tidings, *Ha'tov V'Ha'meitiv*. But why is it that only someone confronted with challenges makes that *brachah*? Shouldn't there also be a *brachah* for someone who doesn't have any problems? That's also worthy of a *brachah*! Why is there only a *brachah* for one faced with extreme difficulty?

R' Shlomo answered him with a powerful analogy:

When one comes collecting for a certain cause, and the donor asks him for two-dollars change before giving him the donation, what enters the collector's mind at that moment? That the donor is giving him a five-dollar bill. If he asks for five-dollars change, the collector expects he's getting a ten-dollar bill. If it would be thirty-dollars change, he'd expect a fifty-dollar donation, etc. In short, the more the change, the greater the donation.

"In the same vein," continued R' Shlomke, "Hashem follows suit. The more 'change' we have to give Hashem, i.e., the more we have to endure, the greater the 'donation' we can expect Hashem will give us. Thus, when one has to 'give Hashem' more, the more he can anticipate receiving.

"That is why one must make a *brachah* on the bad and not on just having tranquility and stability. Only the one who has bad has this extra good awaiting him, and that's the cause for this *brachah*. The other person doesn't have this excitement facing him, so how can he make this *brachah*? He doesn't have the assurance that anything's awaiting him, and thus he can't make the *brachah*."

When one has a big challenge, in the light of his *emunah*, he can see the ultimate salvation coming. That is surely reassuring and exciting, as it means that extreme good is waiting for him. Hence, already at the time of the difficulty, he makes a *brachah*.

One day, a person told **Reb Moshe Kliros, *zt"l***, the Rav of Teveria, about his many difficulties in life. Reb Moshe told him, "Why are you telling me only half of the story?" The man didn't understand.

"You are in the middle of the story," Reb Moshe assured him. "Wait a bit, and you will see how everything turns out well."

● The Caterer's Menu



One of the major parts of a *simchah* is the food one serves at the event. By many *simchas*, the *baalei simchah* hand over this task to a caterer, freeing themselves to be involved in the other elements.

If one would go into a *simchah* hall's kitchen, it isn't always evident what type of event they're catering for. But, by looking at the amounts of food being prepared, one can usually guess what they're catering for.

If he sees them making a pound of *chrein*, horseradish, then it's probably a family Shabbos meal, maybe a *sheva berachos*. If there's five pounds of *chrein*, then it's more likely a bar mitzvah meal. Ten pounds of *chrein* are probably more for a *chasunah*, while twenty pounds would be more for a "Rebbishe" *chasunah*, and so forth. Again, the bigger the amount, the larger the party.

R' Elimelech Biederman uses this *mashal* to explain a similar point to what we've brought above. When a person confronts a bit of *chrein*, i.e., bitterness in his life, then he could anticipate a nice Shabbos ahead. While it's certainly an enjoyable meal, it doesn't compare to that of a bar mitzvah. If there's more bitterness, he can look forward to something better. The greater the darkness, the better the salvation awaits him.

So, when someone feels like he is encountering the greatest darkness, you know what he should expect? He should expect extreme good. The greater the darkness, the greater the forthcoming light.

Remember: "When the pot is bubbling, something good is cooking."

● L'chaim



Someone complained to **Rebbe Sholom of Kaminka** about his bitter lot in life. Rebbe Shalom told him, "Everything is sweet. You just think that it's bitter." The man replied, "How can you say my life is good?"

Rebbe Shalom answered, "Alcohol tastes bitter for those who aren't accustomed to it. But this bitter drink leads to joy… Similarly, although things seem bitter, it is really joyous. Something good will come from it."

This can be compared to a person lost in a forest for a long time. Finally, after wandering for days, he notices a clearing in the distance. He rushes there and sees that it is a cemetery. He is overcome with relief because he knows he is near an inhabited area.

Finding a graveyard isn't a joyous occasion, but for this person, it was a joyous sign because it signified he was near civilization.

People don't generally associate hardships with happiness. Nevertheless, when you know that the difficulties are a sign that something good will follow, you will be happy with the hardships too.



NEFESH SHIMSHON

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

Just Use Your Dyes

וַיָּקֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־אֲדָנָיו וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־קְרָשָׁיו וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־בְּרִיחָיו וַיָּקֶם אֶת־עַמּוּדָיו - '***Moshe erected the Mishkan. He placed the sockets and put in the planks and inserted the bolts and stood up the pillars***.' (*Shemos* 40:18)

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* saw what was entailed in constructing the *Mishkan,* he realized it was impossible. Only G-d could make a *Mishkan.* Then *Hashem* told him that he has only to do his part. He only needs to build the *Mishkan* according to the prescribed plan, and *Hashem* will do His part and bring the *Shechinah* to rest in it.

This is in fact what happened. Moshe built the *Mishkan* from physical materials and *Hashem* brought down the *Shechinah* to dwell in it.

We can apply the same principle to every area of life. When we are about to do a *mitzvah* we recite the blessing of **אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו**. We thank *Hashem* for sanctifying us through His *mitzvos.* But why do we call them "His" *mitzvos?* It is our job and obligation to do the *mitzvos,* so we should call them "our" *mitzvos!*

When we do *mitzvos, Hashem* completes our actions and grants them their *kedushah,* their special spiritual qualities, their heavenly power. - It is written: **אֶקְרָא לֵאלֹקִים עֶלְיוֹן לָקֵל גֹּמֵר עָלָי** – I will call out to the exalted *G*-d, to the *G*-d Who finishes for me (*Tehillim* 57:3).

When we do *mitzvos* to the extent we can, when we learn Torah on our level, *Hashem* finishes the act and brings it to completion and absolute perfection. He places great *kedushah* on the *mitzvos* we do. He finishes what we were unable to.

This is the meaning of **אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו**. The *mitzvos* we perform do not receive their value from our actions alone because then they would be lacking and malformed. *Hashem* comes and completes what we can't do ourselves. The level of sanctity that our *mitzvos* have is thus according to *Hashem's mitzvos.*

When we recite a blessing before doing a *mitzvah*, we are saying, so to speak, "*Ribono shel Olam,* we did as You commanded, we finished our part. We can't do more than that. Now we ask of you to sanctify us with Your *mitzvos.* You finish whatever is needed so the *mitzvos* we did will receive the value and the qualities appropriate to Your *mitzvos. G*ive our *mitzvos* what only You can give them."

And *Hashem* hears our request. He examines our deeds, and if we did all we can, He finishes our *mitzvah* acts and grants them His sublime *kedushah.*



Never Stuck - Living with Hashgachah Pratis by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman

A couple complained to their rebbe that they were "delayed and stuck somewhere" for Yom Tov. He assured them, "A Jew is never stuck. A Jew is sent. Wherever you are — you have been sent there. Wherever a Jew is, he is where he is supposed to be." As the Gemara states, our footsteps are Divinely guided. We're led to where we're summoned.

Every situation, every encounter, is masterfully orchestrated by Hashem for a purpose. We were put in that place, along with the people who are there with us, for a reason.

Hashgachah Pratis: Dovid Gross was a teenaged boy who was enrolled in a summer camp in Cleveland. Unfortunately, he ended up in a hospital bed, miles from his home, suffering from ulcerative colitis.

Feeling nervous, Dovid's mother, Leah, went to see him. She sat down on the plane next to her seatmate, a non-Jewish middle-aged woman, Abbey. Uncharacteristically, Leah opened up to a total stranger. "I'm on my way to see my teenage son, who was just diagnosed with an acute case of ulcerative colitis," she said.

Abbey's mouth dropped open. "You will never believe it, but I am a nurse practitioner for a doctor who specializes in ulcerative colitis. I see patients with this disease every day," she told Leah.

Leah was stunned. They spent the rest of the flight with Leah asking questions and Abbey walking her through the treatment options. Most of all, she stressed that ulcerative colitis is a chronic illness,

but she had seen many patients recover and go on to lead healthy lives.

Just before the plane arrived in Cleveland, Leah asked Abbey, "How did you end up on this flight?" Abbey smiled. "I wasn't even supposed to be on this flight. I worked in the Cleveland Clinic for years and I was going back to visit my family in Cleveland for the weekend. However, my mother wasn't feeling well, so I rescheduled my ticket for today. "More surprising, I hardly ever chat with people on a flight. I usually catch up on my sleep. But when I sat down next to you, you kind of looked stressed out, so I thought I would just try to calm you down a bit."

Before the two women went their separate ways, Leah thanked Abbey and said a special thanks to Hashem for sending a nurse out of nowhere to calm her and give her vital information.

As she got into her rented car, Leah began to cry — no longer tears of fear, but tears of thanks and connection to Hashem. "Thank You, Hashem," she said. "Thank You for reminding me that I am never alone."

In each of life's journeys, we can find reassurance in the knowledge that we're never lost but are guided by Hashem. Each twist, each turn, is a chance for a loving connection, an opportunity for spiritual growth, and a manifestation of Hashem's plan.



Shalom, of course means peace, hello and goodbye. But what's the fourth meaning? Shalom is also one of the names of Hashem. So central and crucial is the concept of peace in our tradition, that it is embodied within the very essence of the existence of the Almighty.

In parashat Pekudei, the Torah describes the great celebration that took place when we dedicated the new Mishkan, and the altar within it, in the wilderness.

For the Haftorah, we have a matching passage from the Prophets, in the first book of Kings, which describes King Solomon's celebration when he dedicated the first Temple. At that time, Solomon reflected on the fact that his great father King David had wanted desperately to build the Temple. In fact, David saw this as his ultimate mission in life – and yet, he was denied this privilege!

But why?

In the first book of Chronicles we are told that Hashem said to David **כִּי אִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת אַתָּה וְדָמִים שָׁפָכְתָּ** – '*for you are a man of war and you have shed blood*'. Now of course, the purpose of all the wars that David fought and led our people into, was in order to preserve life, to protect us from our enemies who sought to destroy us. He engaged in wars through which he hearkened to the word of Hashem, to defend our people. Nonetheless, since he had blood on his hands, he was not the ideal person to build the House of Hashem.

Instead, his son Shlomo, coming from the route '**שלום**'- meaning peace, was the ideal king to do it. Indeed, throughout his reign, King Solomon did not fight a single battle. We can now understand why in parashat Yitro Hashem tells us that for the purpose of a stone altar, we may not use hewn stones. And the reason is **כִּי חַרְבְּךָ הֵנַפְתָּ עָלֶיהָ וַתְּחַלְלֶהָ**, because for that purpose you would have had to use knives or swords which can be implements of war and therefore you would be defiling that altar.

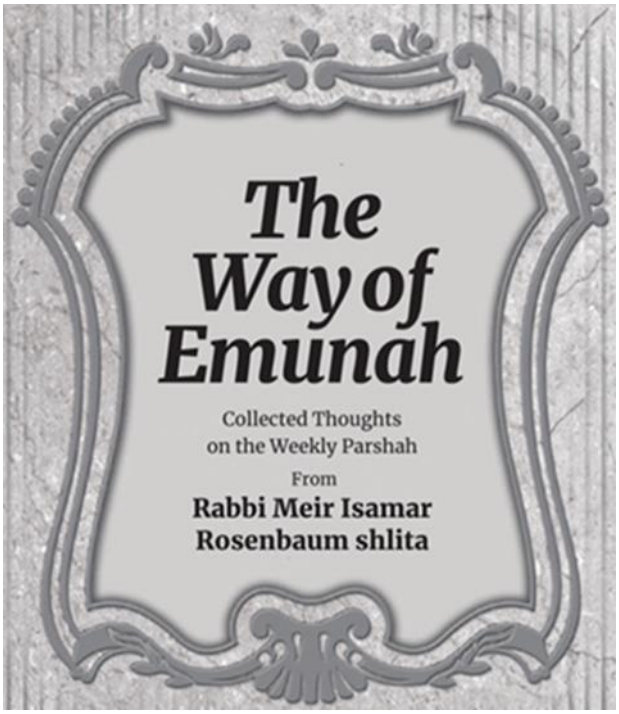
That is why Shalom is the concluding word, it's the bottom line of all of our most important prayers. It's the last word of our Kaddish, it's the last word of our **ברכת המזון**– Grace after meals. It's the last word of **ברכת כהנים**- the priestly blessings. It is the last word of the Amidah.

In **פרקי אבות**- The Ethics of the Fathers', Hillel taught that we should be the disciples of Aaron the High Priest, to be **אוהב שלום ורודף שלום** - to love peace and pursue peace always. Therefore the Gemarah in tractate Brachot tells us that it is so important, that every single morning in our prayers, we should praise Hashem who is **עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת־הַכֹּל** - *'He makes peace and He creates everything'*, indicating that nothing is of any value unless there is peace.

It is therefore so suitable that 'Shalom' is one of the names of the Almighty. When I greet you and I say " **שלום עליכם**", I am not just saying may peace be upon you, I am also saying may Hashem be with you. Of course, on Shabbat we want peace in our homes, and we want the spirit of Hashem to be with us. As a result, the blessing that we give is Shabbat Shalom.

On Shabbat there is a stronger bond with Hashem so let's please join together to pray with all our hearts, for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of those taken as hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, police officers, medical professionals, firefighters, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet Shabbat.

"When we plant seeds in the earth and they rot, it looks like nothing will come from them. But these seeds will sprout, and soon the field will be covered with produce. – Similarly, we must believe that even if we go through a difficult period in life, something extraordinary will sprout from it." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.



אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר פֻּקַּד עַל־פִּי מֹשֶׁה - *'These are the numbers of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony which were counted at Moshe's command'*. (38:21)

The More Wealth One Has, The More He is at Risk of Stinginess

In Yeshivas Radin, there learned a young man who was known for his extreme diligence and brilliance. He also was very poor, and he would often complain to **the Chofetz Chaim zt"l** about his poverty. He would say, "Rebbi, if Hashem would grant me wealth, I would give tzedakah very generously!"

After some time, the young scholar began to engage in business and, indeed, he saw much success. Within a short time, he became very wealthy. However, he forgot his promise to give a lot of tzedakah and, on the contrary, he became very miserly.

The Chofetz Chaim came to visit the city where this rich man now lived. The man came to greet him and the two began to converse. During their conversation, the man said, "Rebbi, I am ashamed to admit that I have been stricken with the trait of stinginess. It feels like my hand is closed with a lock and key and I cannot bring myself to give away any of my money. What can I do about this?"

The Chofetz Chaim told him, "Let me tell you a moshol: A villager once approached a storekeeper with a small sack and asked to but a ruble's worth of flour. The storekeeper said to him, 'Go ahead and fill up your sack by yourself.'

"When the villager heard that he was permitted to take the flour by himself, he ran home and got his biggest sack, which he proceeded to fill with flour. He then walked over to the storekeeper and handed him one ruble.

"The storekeeper told him, 'You filled up a huge bag and think you only have to give me one ruble?'

"The man said, 'I told you that I only wanted to spend one ruble on flour, and you said I could fill up my sack.'

"The storekeeper replied, 'That was when I saw you with a small bag, but you switched it for a big one. If you use a bigger bag, you'll take more flour, and that costs more money.'"

The Chofetz Chaim concluded, "You think you can gather a lot of wealth and your yeitzer hara will remain the same as when you were poor. The truth is that the more wealth you get, the bigger your yeitzer hara not to give tzedakah will grow, and it will make your middah of miserliness bigger and bigger."

L'Maaseh...

A represent of a local beis medrash in Toronto sent a representative to R' Moshe Reichmann to solicit funds for its general operating budget. When the shaliach mitzva arrived, Mr. Reichman answered the door, apologizing that he couldn't invite him in as he was sitting with a certain rosh yeshiva of a major yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel.

He pulled a folded check out of his pocket and handed it to the man standing at the door. Following proper protocol, he only looked at the check after he returned to his car and was surprised to see that it was written out for $175,000, clearly a mistake.

He immediately called the Reichmann home to clarify. "Yes," agreed Mr Reichmann, "it was in error, but one doesn't take back tzedakah funds, so please keep the check and use it to dedicate the aron ha'kodesh in the memory of…".

When **R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z"l**, the great sage and posek, recovered from one of his last surgeries, well into his 90's, he commented to a rabbi that he felt a tremendous debt of gratitude to the entire Jewish People.

"I know it is because of their prayers that I merited a successful operation, and I need to repay them somehow. But how can I repay everyone?" The Rav nodded sympathetically.

"What I CAN do, though," continued the gadol, with determination in his voice, "is get up earlier to learn Torah, for when one learns Torah, that helps everyone!"

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM
Lights Of Our Righteous

Gedolim Be'Masayhem
Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Yitzchok Isaac Taub הרב יצחק אייזיק בן משה יחזקאל טויב זצ"ל Adar II 7 , 5581 The Kaliver Rebbe

Rav Yitzchak Isaac was born in Serentsh, Hungary in 5511 (1751). In his youth he was taught by Rav Isaac of Pshevorsk, who was then a melamed in Galicia who had been invited to teach in Serentsh.

According to tradition, it was Rav Leib Sarah's who drew him close to chassidus and brought him to Rav Shmelke of Nikolsberg. Rav Leib Sarah's told Rav Yitzchak Isaac widowed mother that he had a high lofty soul from the supernal world of Song.

He studied under the Rebbe Reb Shmelke and the Rebbe Reb Meilech of Lizhensk until 5541, when he returned to Kaliv. He married the daughter of his uncle Rav Uziel Katz of Tertzal. Rav Yitzchak Isaac lived in Kaliv for forty years teaching Torah and

chassidus across Hungary. Kaliv is a Hasidic dynasty founded by Yitzchak Isaac Taub. He was famed as the first rebbe in Hungary and someone who drew back thousands to do teshuvah.



He composed many popular Hasidic Nigunim (melodies). Often he adapted Hungarian folk songs, adding Jewish words, by that transforming it to sacred songs. He taught that the tunes he heard were really from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and were lost among the nations over the years, and he found them and returned them to the Jewish people. He said that the proof that it was true was that the gentile who would teach him the song would forget it as soon as the rebbe learned it.

His songs, especially those in Hungarian, became famous for their heartfelt messages, especially Szól a kakas már.

He passed away on Shabbos Kodesh, 7 Adar 5581 (1821).

● The Vanishing Rebbe

On the day preceding each Biblical festival, Rabbi Yitzchak-Isaac Taub of Kaliv would disappear for many hours; no one knew where he went.

One year on erev Sukkot, the lay leader of the Kaliv Jewish community, Mr. Yaakov Fisch, was determined to discover the *tzadik's* secret. While the *Rebbe* was occupied, Fisch hid himself in the wagon, where he remained undiscovered until the Rebbe was well on his journey.

When Reb Yankel revealed himself, the *Rebbe* became visibly distressed. He exclaimed, "What can I do with you now?" He made the stowaway promise not to ask any questions, not of himself nor of anyone else.

Soon they arrived at a city which Yankel did not recognize. The *Rebbe* abruptly stopped the wagon and began to walk down a narrow path that led to a *mikveh*. He instructed his passenger to wait while he immersed himself there.

Yankel waited in the wagon until he was overcome with curiosity and impatience. Forgetting the *tzadik's* warning, he hopped off the wagon and sought to question the people nearby. "Excuse me," he asked in Yiddish the first man he stopped, "but where am I?" "Don't you know where you are?" the astonished fellow replied, thinking that he was dealing with a madman. "Where do you think you are?"
"Well, I was just in Kaliv, Hungary, a few hours ago," Yankel began. "Now I know you're mad," said the man, "How could you possibly get from Kaliv to Tzfat in a few hours?"

"Tzfat?!" cried Yankel. "You're the one who is mad! How could I be in Tzfat, in Eretz Yisrael, if I was just in Kaliv?" The argument intensified, and in the heat of the debate Yankel forgot to get back to the wagon before the *Rebbe* reappeared. To his dismay, he arrived back at the *mikveh* just in time to see the wagon pulling away. Yankel was beside himself. Here he was, stranded in a town of "*meshuga'im*" (insane people) who thought they were living in Tzfat!

However, he had no choice but to ask one of them to take him in to his home for the Sukkot holiday. Already during the first hours of the festival, seeing the different customs and hearing people speaking in the Holy Tongue and in Arabic as well as Yiddish, Yankel realized that indeed he was in Tzfat, Astonished, it dawned on him as an epiphany that the *Kaliver* used a Divine Holy Name for *kefitzat*

haderech (a miraculous contraction of a journey) to come to Tsfat every erev *Yom Tov* in order to immerse himself in the *mikveh* of the holy *Arizal,* Rabbi Yitzchak Luria.

His amazement was quickly joined by shock as he realized that he was compelled to remain in Tzfat until the *Rebbe* would return the following Yom Tov. How else could he possibly get all the way back to Europe?

Meanwhile, back in Kaliv, the Fisch family was frantic about Yankel's sudden disappearance. They ran to the *Rebbe* for advice. The *Kaliver* smiled as he assured them that there was no need for concern, promising that Mr. Fisch would return just in time for the *Passover Seder*!

And so it was. Six months later, Yankel Fisch was delighted to see the *tzadik's* wagon arriving at the *Arizal's mikveh* on *Erev Pesach*. This time he made sure not to miss the ride back home. The *Rebbe* extracted a promise from Yankel not to reveal this incident in his lifetime; it became known only after the *Rebbe* passed away in 1821.

● Hallel On Parshas Beshalach

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Kaliv was once in Lizhensk during *Parshas Beshalach*. The Rebbe Elimelech asked the *Kaliver* to be absent when he recited Torah at the *tisch* for some secret reason that the *Rebbe* would not divulge, but the *Kaliver* did not wish to miss the opportunity to hear the *Rebbe's Chassidic* discourse and so he remained.

As soon as the *Noam Elimelech* began to say Torah, the *Kaliver* jumped up away from the table and began to run to and fro in the entire house, singing *Hallel* at the top of his voice!

Everyone present was very surprised by such aberrant behaviour. Afterward, the *Kaliver* explained himself: "When the *Rebbe* said

Torah about the weekly *Parsha*, I was infused by such excitement, and it set me aflame with such *hislahavus* that I imagined myself to be in the midst of offering the *Korban Pesach* – and so I sang *Hallel*!" (*Ohel Elimelech* #274)



● Praise Him Amongst The Righteous

The Sanzer Rov zy"a testified that the holy songs composed by the Kaliver Rebbe are "kodesh kodashim." It is known that when the Sanzer Rov would sing the song "Solo Kokosh", his table would become soaked with the tears that flowed from his eyes.

The Chozeh of Lublin zy"a (quoted in Sefer Eser Tzachtzachos) said that the Seder night of the Kaliver Rebbe was unique in its generation and it created a light that was unlike any other in the world.



● Chazan for the Yomim Noraim

The Rachmastrivke Rebbe of Yerushalaim shlita related that the residents of Kaliv once went to ask the Rebbe whom they should choose to serve as the chazan for the Yomim Noraim. He told them, "I will teach you how to choose a baal tefillah by telling you a story that happened to me."

He proceeded to relate: I once came to a certain city close to Minchah time. I was very hungry and I saw that the residents of the city were preparing a seudah for after Maariv. I thought that I would wait until after Maariv and then eat with them.

When the tzibur davened Maariv, they spent a very long time on the tefillah of Ahavas Olam. For two full hours they recited this prayer with utmost devotion and warmth. After davening, I asked them why they spent so much time on Ahavas Olam. They told me that my question would be answered during the seudah.

During the festive meal, they began to read the following story from the chronicles of the city: Many years ago, the local government issued a decree to massacre all of the Jewish residents. There was one noblewoman who liked the Jews. She secretly went to the home of the Rosh Hakahal and warned him about the decree. Of course, the Jews engaged in much prayer and fasting. However, the shamash of the city, who was a wise and learned man, said, "The decree has not been annulled. I will tell you the reason for the decree. It is because the chazan for the Yomim Noraim was a sinful, decadent man. The way to cancel the decree is to do the Yomim Noraim over again. Therefore, we have to go back and start the month of Elul once more."

This occurred in the middle of the winter. With no other choice, the Jews began to do teshuva again, as if it were the beginning on Elul. They may have even said Selichos again (due to the danger). They then observed Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur again.

The baal tefillah was the shamash, who was a great man. On "Yom Kippur", every man, woman and child gathered in the shul. This very day was the one that the gentiles planned to murder every Jew, and they surrounded the bais knesses as the Jews prayed with devotion. When the davening ended, the shamash announced, "The decree has been rescinded."

At that moment, every gentile outside the shul went insane and they began to kill each other – and the Jews were left in peace.

When the Jews saw that they had been saved, they rose to daven Maariv with much joy. They were going to daven quickly, as is usually done at the end of a fast day, but the shamash said, "Don't daven quickly. After such a Yom Kippur, you have to daven Maariv with kavanah!"

The shamash again served as the chazan and, when he reached Ahavas Olam, everyone was overcome with d'veikus, and this tefillah took two full hours.

The Jews of the town then accepted to celebrate this day every year by reciting Ahavas Olam slowly and with devotion, and to then hold a festive seudah to commemorate the miracle.

The Kaliver Rebbe concluded, "You can see from this story how important it is to have a proper chazan for the Yomim Noraim!"

● And the Fire Subsided

The Kaliver Rebbe once spent Shabbos in a certain village. During Kabalas Shabbos, people began to scream that a fire had broken out in the silo of his host. The host wanted to run to save his grain, but the Rebbe grabbed his hand and said, "Stay here. I want to tell you a story."

He related, "The Rebbe Rav Zushe zy"a was once saying Tehillim with much enthusiasm before Kabalas Shabbos. He suddenly heard people screaming that his house was on fire. They yelled, 'Zushe, it is burning!' He did not respond and he kept saying Tehillim. After the people yelled at him a few more times, he said, 'So what if it is burning? It is stated: '**וַתִּשְׁקַע הָאֵשׁ**' -*And the fire will subside*." (Bamidbar 11:2)

As soon as the Kaliver Rebbe said these words, they could see that the fire had extinguished itself.

● Finding Leniency

A shailoh on a chicken was once brought to the Kaliver Rebbe. He told his student, Rav Shaul, the son of the Chozeh of Lublin zy"a, "Look into this shailoh. The man who brought the chicken is very poor and needs it for Shabbos."

Rav Shaul picked up the chicken and, without any inspection, said, "It is kosher." The Rebbe asked him, "How can you say it is kosher without inspecting it?"

He replied, "From the Rebbe's words, I was certain that it must be kosher."

The Rebbe said, "You are correct. You ruled correctly!" He then related that a renowned tzadik, who also had a very pleasant voice, once was nifter. When he ascended to the World of Truth, they honored him with serving as chazan for Kabalas Shabbos. However, a woman stepped forward holding a chicken and said, "I once brought a shailoh on this chicken to this Rov and he did not want to spend time to find a leniency. He ruled that it is treif and I had no meat for Shabbos. If he had taken the time, he could have found a heter."

The Heavenly Court ruled that since he denied a woman of her joy on Shabbos, he could not serve as the chazan for Kabalas Shabbos. "Therefore," the Rebbe said, "it was good that you ruled that the chicken is kosher."

● The Be'er of Miriam

One erev Yom Kippur, right before Kol Nidrei, the Kaliver Rebbe called to his shamash, Rav Yaakov Fisch, and said, "Prepare the carriage and let's go for a short ride."

All of the men were already in shul, wrapped in their taleisim and tearfully reciting Tefilas Zakah. Rav Yaakov was very surprised by this request, but he did not say anything. He got the horses and carriage and the two of them rode to the outskirts of the city, where Rav Yaakov owned a field.

They came to a small brook on Rav Yaakov's property, and the Rebbe hurriedly removed his clothes and immersed in the water several times. He then put his clothes back on and they quickly drove back to the bais knesses, where the Rebbe went to the amud to lead the tefillos.

Rav Yaakov had never seen this brook on his property before and he had no idea how it had suddenly appeared.

On Motzoei Yom Kippur, he went back to the place where it had been, but it was gone. He ran to the Rebbe and said, "Rebbe, I have never asked questions on you before but I have to know what this brook was."

The Rebbe answered, "It is a shame that you weren't toivel. This was the be'er of Miriam. It was passing by that spot, so I ran to immerse in it!"

● Cleaning Neshamos

The Rachmastrivke Rebbe of Yerushalaim shlita related that a group of the Kaliver Rebbe's chasidim who lived in the city of Nanash, Hungary, once asked him, "Who should we accept as our Rebbe after you leave this world?"

He answered. "If you find a Rebbe who is able to take the soul of a man who wants to do teshuva and clean it until it is spotless, and then returns it to him, that is the man you should accept as your Rebbe."

After the Kaliver Rebbe's petirah, they went in search of a Rebbe. They came to the Ropshitzer Rebbe zy"a and saw a sinful man approach him and list all of his sins.

The Rophshitzer Rebbe told him, "What did Hashem do wrong to you? Why did you do all of this to Him?"

When the man heard these harsh words, he fainted. When the chasidim from Nanash saw this amazing sight, they smiled. The Ropshitzer said to them, "Is it nice to smile when a Jew faints?"

They told him about how their Rebbe had told them to find a Rebbe who cleans neshamos, and they had now found the Rebbe he had described.

May the memory of the tzadik be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.

Mr. Charlie Harary - Candy-Coated Diamonds



One of the great impediments to success is understanding your challenge. If you don't understand it, it's hard to overcome it. In life, one of the greatest challenges is taavos, desires. We don't really understand what they are, and we think that unholy taavos is an indication that we are unholy. But that brings its own level of disgust and despair.

What is taava?

I want to share with you an insight that changed my life, from a Rav named **Rav Itche Meir Morgenstern** in his sefer B'yam Darkecha.

Years ago, I read about this drug cartel that was evading the authorities. The authorities didn't know how this gang had so much money. Even after blocking every bank account and watching everything about these guys, somehow, they still remained wealthy and were able to corner the market in drugs. Until the authorities got tipped off to the real secret behind their success.

The gang was offering peasant farmers the ability to cross the border but weren't feeding them until they got extremely hungry. Then, on the vans, they would pass out candies that the farmers would eat. The gang would continue crossing the border, passing through without the slightest cause of alarm, where the farmers would get sick. The gang would then bring them to special, private facilities where some would heal, and some would die.

Why were the farmers getting sick? Because the gang was taking diamonds and congealing a candy shell around them. The farmers in their hunger would consume several of these candies and get sick from them. Then, once across the border, they extracted these

diamonds. Under such surreptitious conditions, they were able to maintain their illegal activities.

You want to know what taava is? - Rav Itche Meir Morgenstern explains that everything in this world is sustained by Divine sparks (nitzotzos). They contain a bit of Hashem, a bit of light. Sometimes you can access the light through positivity called mitzvos, but sometimes Hashem puts the light in a candy shell, in something that is forbidden. The reason why you want that isn't for the candy, it isn't for the taava. You want it because your neshama wants that Divine spark; it wants that spiritual pleasure. As such, you're drawn toward that thing.

But when your eyes and heart see it, you say, "I know why I want it. I want the shell, I want the candy." For so many people, they go for the shell and grow spiritually sick.

But some people say, "Why is the yetzer hara giving me all of these taavos?" These people look at the shell and don't go for it. And by not going for the shell, you know what they do? They unlock it. They unlock the outside and they release the spark, accessing much more pleasure than they ever could have gotten from the outside shell.

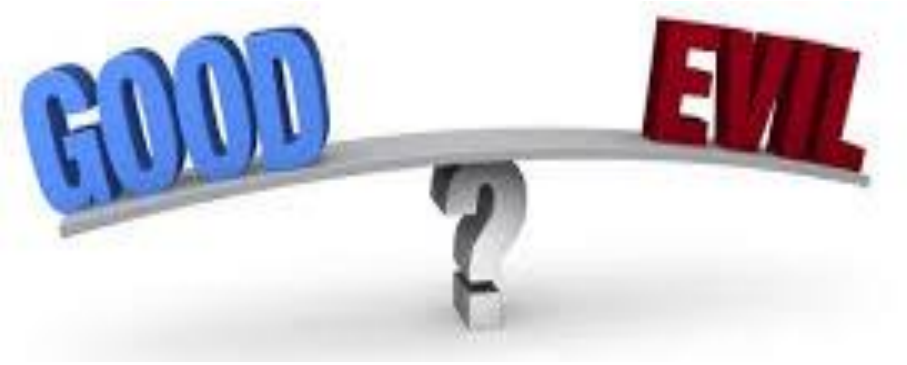
"Through overcoming the challenge, a person receives the Divine Spark and experiences extreme pleasure," writes Rav Morgenstern. You gain that spark, that deeper pleasure. When you feel taava, don't think, "I'm unholy." Think, "Hashem is going to give me a spark. I'm about to be satisfied spiritually." All you need to do is not take the candy and just take the diamond. Can you imagine if one farmer would have taken a whole bucket of those candies and stuck it in his pockets? He would be a millionaire.

Every day, Hashem says, "I'm sending you candies left and right. Don't take them. Resist. Because if you do, you will get much more than candies. You'll get diamonds."

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

Each plank in the walls of the Mishkan had two pegs on the bottom. These pegs fit into the adanim, a pair of silver sockets for each plank.



The Chasam Sofer says that these planks are symbolic of Man, who stands on two legs. Beneath him are two silver sockets representing his two inclinations, his "good" yetzer tov and his "evil" yetzer hara. Man's goal is to be a master over both of these forces, using them both to serve HaShem. These sockets were made of the silver given in the form of the machtzis ha-shekel, the half-shekel each person gave when the Jews were counted.

It is quite fitting that this was the purpose for which this donation was used. Just as a person has two inclinations pushing him in opposite directions and he must choose which way he follows; money can be a tool for extreme good or extreme evil. It is up to a person to ensure he does what is right with his money and be a master over it, rather than the other way around.

"When we find ourselves in challenging situations, we should look back at how many hills Hashem has helped us climb, and that will give us the encouragement to go on and recognize that the salvation will happen." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

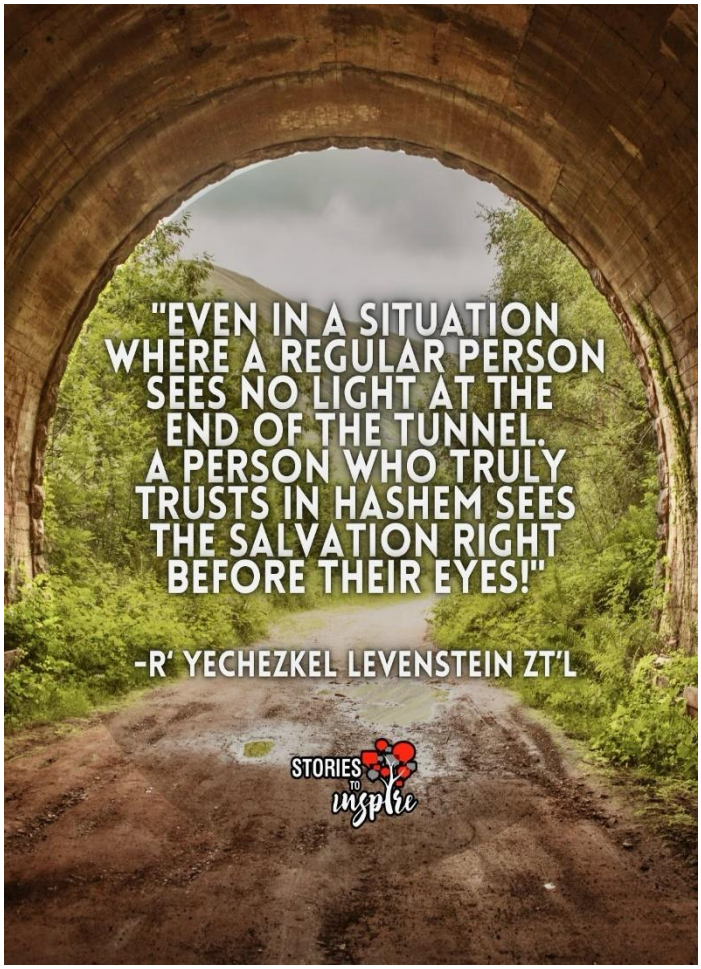
Parsha Points to Ponder

In its discussion of the Kohen Gadol's Tzitz, the Torah says (Shemos 39:30), "*They* wrote on it 'Holy to Hashem.'" Why were multiple people involved in the inscribing of a mere two words on the Tzitz?

The **Moshav Z'keinim** explains that one of the words on the Tzitz was Hashem's Holy name, so it had to be written in front of 10 men. This requirement is not limited to the Tzitz, and every time a sofer writes Hashem's name in a mezuzah, tefillin, or a Sefer Torah, he must first immerse in a mikvah and then write Hashem's name in the presence of a minyan.

Rav Moshe Shternbuch writes that this opinion is quite novel and is not quoted by other poskim.





OHR HAMERCAZ

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





Horav Yaakov Galinsky's זצ"ל wife had a stroke and the doctor said that she will never be able to speak again. Rav Galinsky went to **Horav Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל** for a beracha that his wife should have a refuah sheleimah. - Rav Chaim said that it was not possible for a woman not to talk, since the גְּמָרָא says that women took nine out of the ten measurements of speech that came from שָׁמַיִם. He then gave Rav Galinsky a beracha that his wife should have a full recovery.

Rav Galinsky went back to the hospital and saw that his wife was much better and was able to speak like anyone else!



PARSHA THOUGHTS

By Mordechai Sapoznick *Flatbush*

When Moshe saw that the מִשְׁכָּן was finished, he gave Bnei Yisroel a beracha that the שְׁכִינָה should dwell in it. Why did Moshe give Bnei Yisroel this beracha? The reason the מִשְׁכָּן was built was so that the שְׁכִינָה should dwell in it!

Horav Dovid Shnuer answers that we see from here that one should always try to get a beracha from a tzaddik because the beracha of the tzaddik will help one have success in their accomplishments. [**ספר פנינים על התורה**]

Chizuk - Inspiration

There are generally two types of elevators - traction and hydraulic. A traction elevator is a type of elevator that uses a system of ropes and pulleys to move the elevator car up and down. A hydraulic elevator works by pressurizing hydraulic fluid with an electronic pump and forcing it into a cylinder. The pressure created pushes a piston that moves the elevator upwards. To lower the elevator, this functions in reverse with pressure decreasing, lowering the elevator cab.



The traction elevator is less expensive to run and is the typical elevator in use in the residential buildings in Israel. The cost to use the elevator to ascend four flights in a residential building in Israel is around one kilowatt hour - about 18 cents.

An essential part of acting with integrity is to be meticulously honest when using other people's resources. Once, **Rav Avrohom Genechovsky ZT"L** the Rosh Yeshiva in Chebin, arrived at someone's apartment door in Israel, out of breath and perspiring heavily. It was obvious that Rav Avrohom had taken the stairs rather than the elevator.

The apartment owner asked Rav Avrohom, "Why didn't you take the elevator?"

Rav Avrohom said, "The elevator is for the residents of the building, or for people who are here to benefit the residents of the building. As an example, one who is delivering groceries to residents of the building may use its elevator. I am here to visit you, not for your

benefit but rather to fulfill a personal need of mine. It would not be right for me to place the expense of the use of the elevator that is being used for my personal needs, on the public.

A Lesson Can Be Learned From…….

The first Belzer Rebbe, the "Sar Shalom", was orphaned at a young age. His father, R' Yehoshua, had always availed himself of the services of a local gentile shoemaker to constantly repair his shoes. Whenever he would go pick up his shoes, he would always negotiate with the shoemaker, knocking down the price of the repair.

Eventually, a Jewish shoemaker moved into his neighborhood and from then on, R' Yehoshua began to use the Jew exclusively. His neighbors noticed that not only would R' Yehoshua not negotiate price with the Jewish shoemaker, but he also added a little to the price and he paid it with glowing Simcha on his face.

When asked why, R' Yehoshua explained to them that in all the time that he had no choice but to use the gentile shoemaker, he was afraid that he might be overpaying him, which would result in his transgression of **לא תחנם** – giving a non-Jew a gift.

For this reason he always "handled", attempting to knock the price down a little, hoping that this would remove the possibility. Now, however, that he no longer needed to use the non-Jew, not only was he happy to give all his business regularly to a Jew, he was even happy to overpay. (Pleasant Ridge Newsletter)

"Emunah is the ability to see the world as it truly is, with all its challenges and difficulties, and still believe that Hashem is in control." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

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From our Sages

וְלֹא־יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָבוֹא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי־שָׁכַן עָלָיו הֶעָנָן וּכְבוֹד ה' מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן
Moshe was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested on it and the glory of G-d filled the Tabernacle. (40:35)

Rav Zerika raised the following contradiction: One verse reads, "Moshe was not able to enter into the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested on it," whereas another verse (Exodus 24:18) says, "Moshe entered into the midst of the cloud"?

This is to tell us that G-d took hold of Moshe and brought him into the cloud. (**Talmud, Yoma 4b**)

Said Rabbi Chama bar Chaninaa: Can it be that Moshe feared the cloud? Is it not already written, "Moshe entered into the midst of the cloud"? . . . In what sense was he "not able"?

Because Moshe accorded honour to the Shechinah, and did not enter until he was summoned inside. (**Midrash HaGadol**)



The Story, by Rav Paysach Diskind

A person once asked **Rav Avigdor Miller** why Hashem made it hot and humid. Rav Miller answered with the following analogy.

A man comes home, and he has to go through the kitchen in order to go to the restroom. He tells his wife, "What? In this hot weather, you're cooking? It's too hot in here." So she says, "Yes, dear, I'll turn off the stove," and she turns off the stove. He comes out and he says, "Is supper ready?" And she says, "Sorry, not today."

So, too, in September all the ripe red apples are out on the stands. How does an apple become red, juicy, and sweet? It's only because HaKadosh Baruch Hu turns on the heat. The summer is the "kitchen" that ripens delicious fruits that we are going to eat all winter.

So the next time it is hot and humid, rather than complain, we should think of the good times that are waiting for us.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● **Why did Hashem choose Moshe to inaugurate the Mishkan?**

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו קְרָסָיו קְרָשָׁיו בְּרִיחָו וְעַמֻּדָיו וַאֲדָנָיו (39,33) "***And they brought the Mishkan to Moshe, the tent and all its furnishings, its clasps, its planks, its bars, its pillars and its sockets.***"

The reason why the setting up of the Mishkan and the inauguration of its service was done initially by Moshe, and only afterwards by Aharon, can be explained by Chazal's teaching that Torah sages are called Kohanim, as it says in Shmuel (8,28) "and the sons of Dovid were Kohanim".

Moreover, a Torah sage has the right to be first, because Chazal taught that there are three crowns - the crown of Torah, the crown of royalty and the crown of priesthood, but the crown of Torah is above all of them.

Therefore, Hashem commanded that the inauguration of the Mishkan, both its setting up and its offerings, should be done first by Moshe and only afterwards by Aharon, to show everyone that Moshe is also a Kohen and is first in all things of holiness.

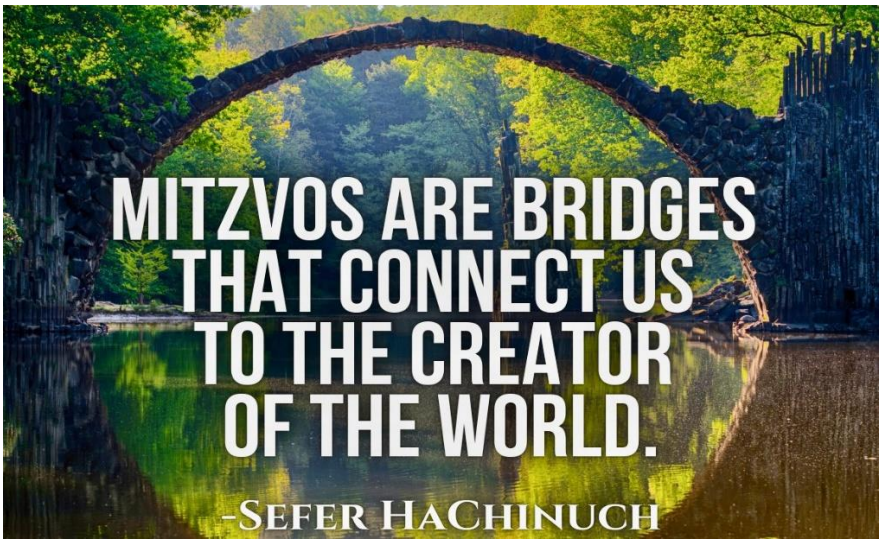
● **What did Moshe do thirty days before he erected the Mishkan?**

וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ אֹתוֹ כֵּן עָשָׂה (40,16) "***And Moshe did according to all that Hashem had commanded him, so he did.***"

Behold, this posuk seems to be superfluous, because the subsequent posukim relate in detail that on the first of Nisan, Moshe did all that Hashem had commanded him. So what is the purpose of this posuk?

But we can explain that since the halachah teaches that one should discuss the laws of Pesach thirty days prior to Pesach, and in the opinion of many authorities this law applies to other festivals, here also, since Moshe had been commanded to erect the Mishkan and offer sacrifices on the first of Nisan, he started to discuss this thirty days before.

This is what the posuk is saying: "And Moshe did according to all that Hashem had commanded him" - just as Hashem had commanded him about Pesach Sheni thirty days before the date of Pesach Sheni, from which Chazal learned that one should discuss the laws of an event thirty days before, here too "so he did" - he discussed the laws relating to the Mishkan thirty days before, and then on the first of Nisan he actually erected the Mishkan.





◣ Attesting To His Kingship - Chiddushei Harim

וַיְהִי מְאַת כִּכַּר הַכֶּסֶף לָצֶֽקֶת אֶת אַדְנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת אַדְנֵי הַפָּרֹכֶת מְאַת אֲדָנִים לִמְאַת הַכִּכָּר כִּכָּר לָאָדֶן - "***The hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets for the curtain.***" (38:27)

The number of sockets needed for the Sanctuary was one hundred, the same number as blessings that must be recited daily. - This implies that just as the sockets served as the Sanctuary's foundation, so the daily blessings represent the foundations for a Jew's sanctity.

Adon, the Hebrew word for "socket," is related to adon, the term for "master." Both the sockets and the blessings attest to the fact that the Holy One, blessed be He, is the Master of all Creation.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Many people get frustrated when their applications for extending their homes or other projects are rejected by the planning department of their local council. One may be of the opinion that their rules are antiquated, the by-laws are incomprehensible and the officers making the decisions may have their own agendas. However, these people at the council have rules to follow and must implement policies which were adopted by predecessors, and have, indeed, a difficult job being fair and constructive. They can't just rubber

stamp every application they deal with, without due deliberations. However, one can sympathise with the applicant.



Yeshivas Nezer Torah, Gateshead, led by its Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Naphtoli Meir Lieberman, started with 6 bochurim about 10 years ago, but the number of talmidim soon grew. In 2015, the yeshiva purchased a large building on the fringe of the Gateshead Kehilla. The building was previously used for some 150 years as a public house (pub), known as the Borough Arms, and had recently closed. In its heyday, it was very popular and had many regulars who not only came 'to down a pint' but to avail themselves of the numerous other facilities it offered. With the decline in the demand for these sorts of places of entertainment, and also due to local regeneration, the Borough Arms had closed down.

After obtaining planning permission in 2015 to change the interior into a college (yeshiva), Yeshivas Nezer Torah purchased this building. However, the exterior was classified as a listed building. There was little or no objections from the public, as usually expected, in view of the nostalgic image of the building remaining a local feature.

The building was initially spacious and suited the needs of the yeshiva. However, the student intake continued to grow. A few months ago, the yeshiva applied for permission to build an extension

on the side of the building. Despite extensive lobbying and appeals, this application was refused. The reason stated, that as a listed building, any extension would change the exterior character of the building.

One can sympathise with the deliberations and the dilemma that the yeshiva was now faced with. They seemed to have come to 'the end of the road', and besides *tephillas,* only a miracle could help them.

Talking of miracles; three days later, the office of the yeshiva received a picture postcard. The sender was a woman now living in Kent. She wrote that she is the daughter of the former landlord of the Borough Arms and grew up helping serving the customers and washing the glasses, and has many fond memories of that time. She was saddened that the pub had to close, but was pleased to hear that the building was now being put to good use as a college for students. She wanted to send her best wishes. The picture on the front of the card was of the Borough Arms in its early days.

On close examination of this 'antique' picture, one could see that the facade of the building was much larger then, than the present structure. After some further research, it was determined that, indeed, the original building was larger, but at some time, possibly a 100 years ago, a fire had destroyed a wing of the pub, and instead of repairing the building, the, then, owners had simply demolished the damaged part.

The Yeshiva now submitted a new planning application, together with this old picture, stating that they wished to reinstate the listed building back to its original size. Now it was the turn of the planning officers to be perplexed. Planning permission was, naturally, now granted.

אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבא עזרי – עזרי מעם ד' וכו'

Good Shabbos

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● The King's Scroll-Room

וַיְהִי בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בַּשָּׁנָה הַשֵּׁנִית בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הוּקַם הַמִּשְׁכָּן – The greatest day in the history of the world had finally arrived. On the first day of Nissan the dwelling place for Hashem was established and the Presence of Hashem would now rest among His chosen people. The Mishkan was now going to be *the* place for the revelation of Hashem in this world, the fulfillment of Hashem's promise: **וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם** – "*And I will dwell among them*" (Shemos 25:8).

And what was the first thing that Moshe did after spreading the roof over the Mishkan? He set up the *kodesh kodoshim*, the holiest space on the face of this earth, the room where the Presence of Hashem would dwell most intensely.

Now, if you would have asked me what I would have set up in that room where Hashem would now reside, so with my little head I would say, a throne; a big beautiful golden throne, something resplendent and ornate, placed in the middle of the *kodesh kodoshim*; and that would symbolize the *kisei hakavod*, the place where Hashem rests His Presence in this world.

"Nothing doing," said Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "I have other plans for My room, for the *kodesh kodoshim*": **וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֵדֻת אֶל הָאָרֹן ... וַיָּבֵא אֶת**

הָאָרֹן אֶל הַמִּשְׁכָּן ... וַיָּסֶךְ עַל אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה הַשֵּׁם אֶת מֹשֶׁה – Hashem commanded that into this holiest part of the Mishkan, the room that symbolized His place in this world, should be placed the two stone tablets engraved by the Hand of Hashem, and afterward the Torah itself was put alongside the *luchos* (Devarim 31:26).

What we're learning here is that preparing a home for Hashem to live among us, really meant preparing a home *for the Torah* to reside among us. And the Mishkan in its entirety was actually an altar of devotion to *the Word of Hashem*. And so instead of a throne for Hashem to rest His Presence on, the revelation of Hashem in this world came by means of His Torah. And the Am Yisroel in the *midbar* lived according to that revelation.

● What Did They Do All Day?

I'll explain that. Because really we have to ask ourselves: What were the Am Yisroel doing in the *midbar* for forty years after all? They ate what fell from the clouds; they didn't have to go to the factory to get a paycheck. And so we have to understand that for forty years they had nothing to do except to study Torah. The entire nation actually became one big *yeshivah*.

And it was a *yeshivah* where they studied day and night. They didn't have newspapers to read, or radio to listen to. And even if they would have been able to get their hands on something; let's say a *ben Yisroel* would try to pick up a newspaper from a neighboring tribe, from Midian; you couldn't get away with such a thing in the *machaneh Yisroel*. You were in a *kollel*, and every *kollel* has a *mashgiach*. And this *kollel* in the *midbar* had more supervision that any *kollel* since then. Every nine men had a *mashgiach* who watched them, the *sar asarah*, and so they had to behave. And every forty nine men had a super *mashgiach*, the *sar chamishim*. Every ninety nine men had a super super *mashgiach*, the *sar mei'ah*. And every nine hundred and ninety nine had a super super super *mashgiach*,that was the *sarei alafim*. You couldn't sneak anything past this army of *mashgichim*.

And Moshe Rabeinu with his watchful eye was overseeing the whole thing, the whole *Yeshivas Hamidbar.*

But the *mashgichim* didn't have a very difficult job, because they were serious *yungerleit* in that yeshivah. Never, in any subsequent era, was the Torah so supreme and so studied as under the forty-year rule of Moshe Rabeinu, the Torah teacher par excellence. - The sole occupation for the *dor hamidbar* was Torah study. The *midbar* was actually a forty-year *Kollel*, a Torah Academy.

And from then on, the study of Torah became *the* national vocation and pastime. Never did the Am Yisroel, in all its subsequent history, ever use their leisure time for anything else but Torah. There was no telling stories of adventure and war, and no playing sports. There were no theaters or stadiums and no amusement parks either. We found everything we wanted and everything we needed in the study of Torah and in the raising of families to be *ohavei Torah.* The word entertainment doesn't exist in the lexicon of our people.

● Why Are We Still Here?

And that's what Rav Saadia Gaon meant when he said (Sefer Emunos V'deios 3:7) **אֵין אֻמָּתֵנוּ אֻמָּה אֶלָּא בַּתּוֹרָה**, that we are a nation only as a Torah nation. It means the following: We have no right to exist. We should have long ago disappeared. Where is Edom? They disappeared! Where is Amon? They disappeared! It's all gone! Where is Ancient Mitzrayim? All gone! Ancient Greece is all gone, everything is underground. You're going to need a lot of shovels and you'll have to sweat a lot before you can see all the ancient nations of the world.

So why are we still here? We're also one of the ancient nations, so why didn't we also disappear along with all the others? And the answer is that we are only here because of the Torah. We are a Torah-nation and that's the cause of our existence. It's the study of Torah that defines the Am Yisroel; it's our life-breath, our way of life. We are a nation of Torah learners and that's why we are

forever. Hashem is forever, His Torah is forever, and we who study His Torah will be forever.

● Nothing But Torah

Once upon a time Jewish men didn't stay home at night. They weren't at the movies either; they were in the study halls, in the *shuls*. When fathers and sons would return home at night from the *beis medrash* they would bring all their baggage of Torah with them. Mothers and sisters would hear nothing but Torah. And therefore the Jewish street used to be a street of Torah.

I remember when I was a little boy in Baltimore, when the new immigrants arrived, they used to laugh when they saw that the *shuls* were locked during the day. Locked?! "Aren't there people learning all day in the *shuls*?" And it wasn't the *talmidei chachomim* who laughed; it was the peddler, the poor working man trying to eke out a living. It was something impossible to them! Because in Europe, even a hundred years ago, they were still emulating the *Dor Hamidbar*, and still learning the lessons of the Mishkan. Some were there all day, some would come in for an hour here and there, but to close the *shul*?!

● The Greatest Mitzvah

Everybody desires things in this world, all good things; health and happiness, *nachas*, long years, and wealth. But nothing compares to one word of the Torah.

One line of Torah is more important than all the *mitzvos* put together. How can that be?! It's astonishing! All the obligations of the Torah cannot compare to one thing of the Torah. You sit down, open a Gemara and learn one line, it's such a tremendous happiness, such a great achievement, that it eclipses, it far outdoes all the good things together. If you can open the Gemara for one line, you should know what you're doing for yourself in this world. I'm not saying you're a *talmid chochom* already; that takes work after all. But

you're already joining the aristocracy of the Am Yisroel; you're emulating the upper class, the elite of our nation. You're becoming a Torah Jew; because that's the function of a Jew in this world.

The Kosel In Your Living Room

You know it has become the style today to travel. People are busy traveling, going, doing, visiting, and there's no time left for the most important function of our lives. Even to Eretz Yisroel, people are traveling back and forth, back and forth. For what? Who needs you there? You're going to give up learning, even one line of *gemara*, for travel?!

If you want to go to the Kosel Ma'aravi, then you should know that the Shas Bavli is your Kosel Ma'aravi. Make the *seforim shrank* with the Shas Bavli in it, your Kosel Ma'aravi. That's your success! The success of life is transferring the contents of the Shas into your mind. So stand in front of that big Shas on the shelves and make *that* your Kosel Ma'aravi. You want to give that up to travel thousands of miles to Eretz Yisroel? If you want to, you can put *kvitlach*, prayer notes, in between the *gemaros* on your shelf and pray to Hashem for success in becoming a *Shas yid*.

There's nothing more important to Hakodosh Boruch Hu than the place where Torah is studied (Brachos 8a). There's nothing in the world more *kadosh*, more special to Hakodosh Boruch Hu than the study of His Torah.

Women Lamdanim

Now you'll ask me about the women. How do women do that? Women encourage their husbands to learn Torah. They say, "Chaim, go to the *shiur*". "Chaim, go to the yeshivah". They encourage them to go, so they have *full partnership in all the Torah* of their men and that's going to be their great happiness. That's what the Jewish nation once did. In Europe of long ago every *shul* used to be a place where people sat and learned. Some men worked part of the day, but others

were forced by their wives to go and learn *all day long*. Their wives ran little businesses, they managed the family, and their husbands were expected to do nothing but learn for their entire lives.

But way back, throughout our history, all the *shuls* had a big populace of learners. Many men were driven away to the shuls by their wives. These dedicated women, the *noshim tzidkoniyos*, said "Don't work; you sit and learn and I'll take care of the *parnassah*." All over Eastern Europe it was a frequent thing. Even when I came to Europe in 1932, when it was already ruined, I saw it. The wife stood in the store and her husband sat in the *beis medrash*.

Right now in Gan Eden all the men and women are enjoying the great splendor of eternal happiness because of their portion in Torah – in addition to all the good things that they do. You're all invited to go to Olam Habo. Even a *pashute Yehudi*, is basking in happiness in the World-to-Come. But those people who spend some time learning Torah are far, far more privileged, beyond all the rest of them.

But if you understand this lesson of *Parshas Pekudei*, you understand that these yeshivah men are the aristocrats of our nation. Because it was in the *midbar* that the Am Yisroel learned that our nation is only a Torah nation. That's the lifeblood of our people; it's what we are. **אֵין אֻמָּתֵנוּ אֻמָּה אֶלָּא בַּתּוֹרָה** – *"Our nation is a nation only because of the Torah."* And it's those who keep pumping the blood of Torah through the veins of our nation, who are keeping us alive. And therefore *it's the Torah learners* who are the aristocrats of our nation, the ones whom we admire and emulate. Once you understand this, you have gained a new perspective on the Am Yisroel, and you've learned to see our nation the way Hashem sees them.

"Believe in yourself. Know that you are greater and stronger than any obstacle you face." ~ Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Proper Accounting

'These are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony; all that Hashem had commanded.' **אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת ... אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳.** (38:21,22)

Rav Moshe Feinstein in **דרש משה** says that the real accountings are **שצריך האדם לעשות חשבון על כל דבר שנתן לו הש״ת** – We need to make an ultimate accounting for everything that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has given us. Whether it's the time (life) that Hashem has given us – What have we done with that precious commodity called time? [When Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky's son became Bar Mitzvah, Rav Moshe bought him a watch as a present to show him the value of time, and which is the greatest gift that Hashem has given us.] Did you use your time productively, or was it wasted? Or for the accounting of the bounty of parnasso. What did you do with your money? Did you use your money wisely? – You can't just do what you like with the money that Hashem has given you.

ולכן צריך לעשות חשבון על כל דבר, וכמו כן מה עשה בכל הכוחות והכשרונות שנתברך בהם, אם השתמש בהם כרצון הש״ת לתורה ולמצות – Everybody has got to make an accounting on everything. What does a person do with his abilities and talents that he has been blessed with, to do the will of Hakadosh Baruch Hu for Torah and mitzvos.

Always Travelling

The last pasuk in parshas Pikudei and sefer Shemos says: **כִּי עֲנַן ה׳ עַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל מַסְעֵיהֶם** – ***'For the cloud of Hashem was upon the Mishkan by day, and there was fire within it at night, before the eyes of the entire house of Israel in all their journeys.'*** 40:38

Rashi has a problem: The cloud was only on the Mishkan when it was stationary. [**בְּהֵעָלוֹת הֶעָנָן מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֹל מַסְעֵיהֶם**] On every journey (**מַסָּע**) that they were traveling, the cloud would rest

in that place where they encamped. The place of their encampment is also called a journey (**מַסָּע**)… Since from the place of their encampment they resumed their journeys, they are all called "journeys" (**מַסָּעוֹת**).

When Klal Yisrael were stationary, when they were encamped, then the clouds came and settled on the Mishkan. (See **שפתי חכמים**)

Says **Rabbi Isaac Bernstein**, the **מְקוֹם הַחֲנָיָה**, the place of their encampment, is called a **מַסָּע**, a journey. Even when the camp is stationary, that's still considered part of the journey. That is a lesson for the whole of galus. We could live in Poland for 900 years or in Spain for 750 years or Lithuania for 1000 years – We might be encamped there, but we are still considered travelling.

There is an amazing gemara in **בבא בתרא עג:** that brings a mashul: *Rabba bar bar Chana said: Once we were traveling on a ship and we saw a certain fish upon which sand had settled, and grass grew on it. We assumed that it was dry land and went up and baked and cooked on the back of the fish, but when its back grew hot it turned over. And were it not for the fact that the ship was close by, we would have drowned.*

The **מהרש"א** says that this story is a mashul referring to galus. Sometimes we get comfortable living in a particular place - **כ הוה סברינן דיבשתא הוא** – It's our dry land. [In Yiddish, Poland is called 'Poh lin' - here we are going to stay forever. But we know only too well that this idea was snuffed out within a few years.]

We have to know that the journey continues, and we will only encamp in Eretz Yisrael when Mashiach comes **בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ**.

"The true test of a person's spirituality is how they treat other people." ~ Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz (1873-1936).

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

Where Did Your Rabbi Learn?

Chaim Segal*, an affluent real estate developer, entered the Chazon Ish's office carrying an expensive leather briefcase. The Chazon Ish sat in his regular position with a sefer open on his desk, utterly absorbed in the world of Torah, yet upon sensing the man's presence in the room, lifted his eyes and greeted him with a warm smile.

"Please have a seat." He gestured to the chair opposite him. "How can I help you?"

The businessman opened his briefcase and removed a thick pile of papers. "I am on the verge of purchasing a large lot in the center of Haifa," he began. "I plan to build a large building on the property." He spread the blueprints s on the Chazon Ish's desk, pointing to the plans and schemes.

"Here is where I plan to build my own apartment," he explained, indicating the top floor penthouse. "On the entrance level, I want to build a shul and beis medrash that will house a kollel, and here, on bottom level," he pointed to the basement, "I will build a mikvah that will be open to all local residents."

The Chazon Ish listened attentively, studied the plans carefully, asked several questions and then replied, "I would like to see several stones from the ground of the lot that you plan to buy."

The developer hid his surprise at this bizarre request, but heeding the word of the gadol hador, he quickly collected his papers and left to fulfill the Chazon Ish's bidding.

On the bus back to Haifa, Segal had time to mull over the tzaddik's instruction. Stones? What will he do with stones from the property? Maybe there's some segulah there, some hidden secret he's gleaned from the Torah...

It was dark by the time he returned to Haifa, so early the following morning, the man headed to the vacant lot, collected several pebbles from the ground and took a bus back to Bnei Brak, arriving at the Chazon Ish's home in the late afternoon. Entering the Rav's sanctum, he placed the pebbles on the simple wooden desk.

The Chazon Ish fingered the pebbles and then lifted them to his eyes to study them carefully. Rising from his seat, he approached his overflowing bookcase and selected a small pile of sefarim, opening and perusing one sefer and then another. After a long moment, he lifted his eyes and nodded affirmatively.

"I believe that this is possible. You should have brachah and hatzlachah in this sacred endeavor!"

With a broad smile, Chaim expressed his effusive thanks and took leave of the gadol hador with shining eyes, envisioning the stately edifice that would soon be his. This was the culmination of a lifelong dream - a house that would literally also be a beis medrash and beis vaad l'chachamim.

Without delay, he proceeded directly to the seller and purchased the property on the spot, and the following morning, met with an engineer to present his plans for the building.

Segal spread the blueprints on the engineer's desk and requested his opinion. The engineer studied the documents closely and replied, "I don't see any obvious issues with the general plans, but as far as the mikvah goes...." He examined the papers again and said, "I have to see the lot first."

Chaim's eyes widened in surprise. "See the lot? Why?"

"Why do you ask?" the engineer retorted suspiciously, wondering if his client had something to hide.

"No... It's nothing." Chaim preferred not to explain to the non-observant man. Exiting the office together, Chaim joined the engineer in his car and directed him to his newly purchased lot.

Twenty minutes later, the engineer was studying the earth. After some time, he looked at his client in ill-concealed surprise. "You've already purchased the lot, is that so?"

"Yes," Chaim confirmed. "Is there a problem?"

The engineer grimaced and didn't mince words. "Next time, I suggest that you consult with an engineer before you purchase a property, and not after the fact. It's not the recommended choice of action, and in your situation, as a private developer, rather irresponsible."

The businessman was nonplussed. "What's the problem?"

"Look, the ground beneath us is solid stone. You'll never manage to dig to the necessary depths in order to build a mikvah here."

Chaim remained perfectly serene, secure and empowered with the brachah of the gadol hador. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"Am I sure?" retorted the engineer. "Why did you hire me as a consultant if you don't think I'm sure?! What do you know about the capacity of different types of earth? I am giving you my professional opinion: You cannot possibly dig into this stone. Hair will grow on my palm before you build a mikvah over here!"

"I'll tell you why I ask," Chaim presented his case, hoping that the non-religious man would understand the import of what he was saying. "Before I purchased this property, I approached the Chazon Ish, who I'm sure you've heard of, and asked for his opinion. He studied the plans carefully and requested that I bring a sample of stones from the lot. He inspected the stones and then gave me his blessing for success. The Chazon Ish's word is truth, and this is why I'm so convinced that it is possible to build both a building and a mikvah on this property."

The engineer sneered. "Tell me, did your rabbi go to college? Does he have a degree in engineering or architecture? I have a lot of

respect for rabbis, but I don't understand how he can offer a 'professional' opinion on something he knows nothing about!"

"Why don't you come meet him?" Chaim proposed, his eyes radiating faith and certainty. "You can see for yourself." To his surprise, the engineer agreed.

Several days later, Chaim and the engineer stood at the entrance of the Chazon Ish's house. Based on his client's description, the engineer presumed that he was about to enter an opulently furnished study of a distinguished rabbi, with a vast library featuring a range of religious and academic works on subjects ranging from philosophy to geology to science. He was astounded, therefore, when he was led into a narrow room that carried the distinct odour of old books, and his eyes fell upon diminutive sage seated behind a worn desk piled high with large tomes that nearly blocked his face.

The rabbi's head was bent over a large book, and the engineer felt a fierce wave of aggravation rising from his belly into his chest. This is who he dragged me all the way to Bnei Brak to see? he reflected in fury, tempted to turn on his heel and storm out of the little house. Yet when his eyes met the profound, clear gaze of the tzaddik's, his feet refused to budge.

"Welcome," the Chazon Ish greeted him with trademark warmth. "What do you say about Reb Chaim's plans?"

"I say that it is impossible to dig into solid stone," the engineer retorted firmly and launched into a prepared lecture about the properties of the rock.

The Chazon Ish intervened. "Our holy Sages, may their memory be blessed, were familiar with each and every stone." He opened a Gemara and pointed to the text.

"Here it says that this type of stone gradually dissolves under the gradual flow of water. When water drips slowly onto it from a thin pipe, it will soften and then crumble, making it possible to dig in the

earth."

Throughout the next hour, Chaim and the engineer sat in the Chazon Ish's study, riveted as the gadol expanded with an impromptu lesson on geology. When they emerged sometime later, the engineer shook his head, marveling at the wealth of knowledge and wisdom he had just gained.

"Your rabbi is a genius. I see that we engineers, geologists, and scientists still have a great deal to learn!"



Police Chase



A Rav from a neighboring town had a *chavrusa-shaft* with **Reb Meir Simcha of D'vinsk**, otherwise known as the Ohr Someach every Friday night. Several times, the visiting Rav noticed the Rav of D'vinsk short of breath, and that even while they were learning, he was trying still to gasp for air. He attributed this to Reb Meir Simcha's build, as Reb Meir Simcha was tall and broad.

One Friday night, this Rav showed up early and was shocked by the scene that unfolded before his eyes. He saw Reb Meir Simcha's daughter chasing him around the dining room table. The visitor was beside himself to see the Gaon himself in such circumstances. He

burst into tears, unable to control himself seeing his *rebbi* suffer so from his *one and only* daughter.

When this daughter had been of marriageable age, Reb Meir Simcha had sought the finest shidduch for her. Sometime after the *chasuna*, though, while living in Warsaw, she had lost her mind, and while the couple had initially remained together, eventually her ailment had required them to divorce. She had returned to her hometown of D'vinsk, and now that she was back with Reb Meir Simcha, she was disturbing him and destroying the house. This is what bothered the guest.

After a few minutes of "cops and robbers," Rav Meir Simcha's daughter lost vigor and called it a game. She sat down to rest, and Reb Meir Simcha went on to greet his *chavrusa* and begin their learning *seder*.

Reb Meir Simcha noticed that this episode was very bothersome to the viewer, so he remarked: "*Vus meint ihr as dus is* – what do you think this is? *In Himil zie vilin zhen vee Meir simcha lernt Torah in a zelicheh umshtendigen* – in Shamayim, they want to see how Meir Simcha will learn Torah under such circumstances. Hashem purposely placed me in this situation to see how I'll react under these limitations. He knows about it, and he wants to see if I'll derail because of it. There is nothing to pity."

Facts About Syrian Jews By Menachem Posner

● There Are Halabi and Shami Jews

The two greatest centers of Jewish life were in Aleppo and Damascus. Aleppo is referred to in Hebrew as *Aram Tzova* . Its Arabic name is *Halab* (which was mangled into "Aleppo" in English), and its people are referred to as Halabi.

Damascus is referred to among Syrians as *Al-Sham*, and the Jews of Damascus and their descendants are referred to as Shami.



Ancient synagogue in Jobar, near the center of Damascus, and destroyed in the Syrian Civil War in 2014

● There Were Many Notable Syrian Rabbis

The classic collection *Likdosim Asher Baaretz* by Rabbi David Laniado lists hundreds of notable Syrian scholars, each of whom contributed to the advancement of Torah learning. Here is a sampling of some of the best-known scholars, some of whom called Syria home and some who just passed through:

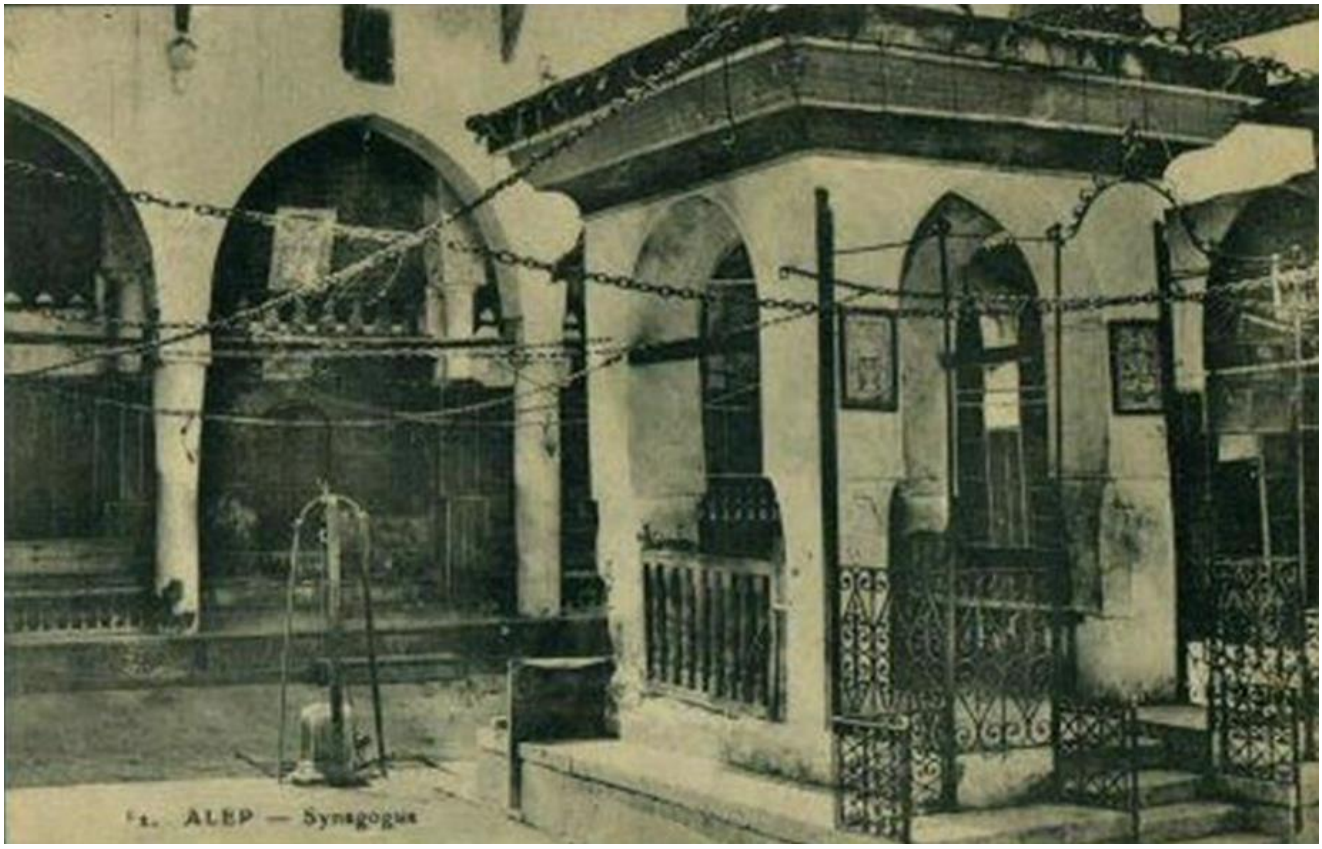
Rabbi Saadia Gaon (c. 882-942): Brilliant leader of the Babylonian Torah academy who rendered the entire Torah into flowing Arabic, and whose teachings and traditions remain central to Judaism today. While in Aleppo, he was instrumental in preventing the Jewish world from fragmenting into a situation that would have involved different places using different calendars.

Rabbi Yosef Bar Yehuda (c. 1160–1226): A student of Maimonides, he was an outstanding scholar, physician, and philosopher in Aleppo, where he lived for many years. Maimonides wrote the *Guide to the Perplexed* to assist him in his efforts to reconcile his philosophical beliefs with belief in G-d.

The Dayan Family: As their name indicates (*dayan* is Hebrew for "judge"), successive members of the Dayan family, direct descendants of King David, served as rabbis in Aleppo for centuries.

Rabbi Shemuel Laniado (--1605): Born in Aleppo to Sephardic parents, he studied under Rabbi Yosef Karo in Safed before returning to his hometown where he served as chief rabbi for four decades. He was known as the *Baal Hakelim,* because the titles of many of his published works began with the word *keli.*

● Aleppo Had a Giant Synagogue Complex



Postcard showing of the outdoor section of the Great Synagogue of Aleppo

The Great Aleppo Synagogue including an outdoor sanctuary that was used during the dry summer months. It had seven holy arks on the southern wall, consistent with the tradition that synagogues face toward Jerusalem (Aleppo is north of Jerusalem).

The synagogue was destroyed during the 1947 violence that broke out after the UN's declaration of the partition of Palestine. It has since been partially restored but is rarely, if ever, used.

● **Their Language Was Arabic**

Historically, the Jews in Syria spoke Arabic, similar to their non-Jewish neighbors. When Sephardim originally converged on Syria, they brought along their language, Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish. However, after hundreds of years of becoming one with the existing Arabic-speaking locals, Ladino was largely forgotten among the descendants of the Spanish exiles.

● **Some Light an Extra Chanukah Candle**

On Chanukah, some Syrian descendants of the Spanish exiles light a second *shammash* candle on the menorah, celebrating their ancestors' safe flight from the Spanish Expulsion.

● **They Have a Rich and Unique Canon of Synagogue Music**

For hundreds of years, Syrian Jews have woken early on winter Shabbat mornings to sing *bakkashot* (prayer hymns). Some of them were composed by the great Sephardic Kabbalists and are known across the Jewish community, but others were composed and are sung only in the Syrian community.

● **Syrian Jews Live All Over**

The fabric of the Syrian economy began to unravel in the mid-19th century, when the industrial revolution and the opening of the Suez canal meant that there was much less East-West trade passing through Syria. As Jews emigrated elsewhere, a Syrian diaspora sprung up in Israel, the United States, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Panama and elsewhere.

● **They Famously Banned Conversion**

Fearing that their rapidly assimilating community members would arrange perfunctory "conversions" for non-Jewish lovers, Syrian rabbis in Argentina—and later on in the US—decreed that no conversions would be performed and that no Syrian Jews could marry converts.

● **Jews Were Persecuted Out of Existence in Syria**

The 55,000 Jews in Syria after the establishment of Israel were severely restricted, and by 1964, there were barely 5,000 left. They were even more harshly persecuted, and they were not even allowed to travel from city to city. Their every move was watched by the Mukhabarat (secret police). The more they were tortured and confined, the more determined people were to leave Syria.

Chizuk - Inspiration

In the small Polish town of Radin where he lived, the **Chofetz Chaim** once received a letter containing a substantial sum of money. The sender had addressed it to "The Famous Rabbi of Radin." The Chofetz Chaim's heart raced when he saw the unexpected bounty as his struggling Yeshiva desperately needed the funds.

The Chofetz Chaim realized that while he was indeed a rabbi in Radin, there was another distinguished rabbi in town who also had a significant following. The ambiguous address meant the sender might have intended the money for the other rabbi.

The Chofetz Chaim immediately set out to clarify the sender's intentions. He sent a messenger through the cold and snow-covered roads to contact the sender in a distant town, explaining the situation and asking who the money was meant for.

For weeks, the Chofetz Chaim waited to hear back from the messenger, watching his students in the unheated study hall, knowing that the money sitting in his drawer could be used to buy firewood and food. Yet he refused to touch the money until he knew with absolute certainty it was his to use.

Several agonizing weeks later, the reply finally arrived - the sender had indeed intended to give the money to the Chofetz Chaim. Only then did he accept the funds for his Yeshiva.

When his astonished students asked why he had gone through such trouble, especially when the money had been delivered to him directly and therefore was most likely his, the Chofetz Chaim's eyes blazed.

"The Torah teaches us that even the slightest possibility of possessing something that is not rightfully ours must be eliminated," he declared. "It doesn't matter that the money was probably meant for me, or that our Yeshiva desperately needed the funds. When it comes to questions of honesty, 'probably' isn't good enough."

Once, Rav Chaim Sofer Zussman (author of *Machaneh Chaim*) received a visit from a destitute man, and people of the town were surprised that their Rav spent an unusually long time speaking with him and then trying to help him. Their Rav never had this much time even for his closest *talmidim*! Why was he devoting so much attention to this unknown, impoverished Jew?

When the visitor left, the Rav explained: "When I was a boy, a Jewish doctor who had abandoned Torah observance asked my father: 'How can you send your sons to a yeshiva? One day they will have to support themselves. How can they devote themselves to Torah study alone and not learn viable professions?'

"My father answered: 'Hashem gave me these children in order that they study Torah and keep the mitzvos. How will they support themselves? This is for Hashem to worry about, not me. My job is to make sure that they study Torah and grow up as upstanding Jews.'

"Today, all my brothers serve either as rabbanim or dayanim of established Jewish communities. That destitute man, however, was the son of that doctor. Every moment I spent with him reinforced my understanding of the special bracha Hashem gives those who study His Torah."

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Daring Difference

How can we explain the difference between *emunah* (faith) and *bitachon* (trust)?



Imagine a daredevil walking a tightrope between two buildings. He confidently announces that he can walk back and forth while pushing a wheelbarrow. The crowd watches and believes he can do it. Then he asks, "Who is willing to sit in the wheelbarrow while I cross?" Everyone hesitates—except for one young boy who steps forward without fear.

The difference is clear: The crowd *believed* he could do it, but only the boy *trusted* him enough to put his life in his hands. When asked how he had the courage, the boy simply replied, "Because he is my father."

This is the difference between *emunah* and *bitachon*. *Emunah* is believing in Hashem, but *bitachon* is actively relying on Him. Just as the boy trusted his father completely, we must trust that Hashem, our Father, will take care of us.

"Always remember, Hashem wants to help you, Hashem has helped you, and Hashem will help you." ~ Rabbi Yisroel Brog.

Shalosh Seudos

One time, the holy **Baal Shem Tov** and some of his Chasidim spent Shabbos in a certain village. When it came time for Shalosh Seudos, he noticed that one of the leaders of the town went and gathered many of the men from the village. They sat and ate together, and then they sang Zemiros and gave praise to Hashem.

At that time, the Baal Shem Tov realized that his Ruach Ha'kodesh was higher and stronger than ever before. After the Seudah, he went over to the town leader and asked him why he did this specifically at the third meal.

The man answered, "When a person is about to leave this world and his Neshamah will go up to Shamayim, people gather together so that the Neshamah leaves among a group of Yiden. On Shabbos, each person has a Neshamah Yeseirah, an extra Neshamah, which leaves on Motza'ei Shabbos. Therefore, I gather everyone together for Shalosh Seudos, so that when our Neshamah Yeseirah leaves us, it also goes out among a group of Yiden!"

JEP 50 OVER 50 YEARS
Jewish Education Program
Queens

He Did The Impossible And Jumped Over The Crater!

The Allies bombed the road that the Germans were building across Poland. The road became full of craters. The Nazis were furious. They took out their anger on the Jews in their concentration camp. In the middle of the night, they awakened the Jews who had been sleeping. The Nazi commander screamed, "Each of you dogs who wants to live must jump over one of the pits and land on the other side. Those who miss will be shot!"

It was clear to the prisoners that they would all end up in the pit and would be shot. Even at the best of times, it would have been impossible to jump over the pit, more so, on that cold, dark night. The prisoners standing at the edge of the pits were skeletons, feverish from disease and starvation, and exhausted from slave labor and sleepless nights. How could they possibly jump over the crater?



A non-religious Jew turned towards **Rabbi Israel Spira, zt"l, the Bluzhever Rebbe** and said that he would rather be shot than perform for the Nazis. After all, it was impossible to successfully jump over the crater. Rabbi Spira told the man to hold onto his hand, close his eyes and jump with all his strength. He did so and jumped with the Rebbe. They opened their eyes and miraculously landed on the other side. (Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust by Yaffa Eliach)

Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb, which profoundly changed peoples' way of life. His success did not come easy or quickly. He failed at thousands of attempts before he succeeded. The Wright brothers invented the airplane. Before their attempts succeeded, they failed thousands of times. Giovanni Marconi invented the wireless telegraph after many failing attempts. Even his father thought he was crazy and demolished his invention. Many technological breakthroughs came the same way. Success was attained after many disappointments and frustrations.

These scientists and inventors persevered despite the fact that their goals seemed insurmountable.

After all the parts of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, were completed, no one was able to assemble the Mishkan due to the massive weight of the beams. The Jews turned to Moshe for help. Even though Moshe was very strong, he couldn't imagine how a mortal being could lift the beams.

Rashi (Shmos 39:33) says that Moshe turned to Hashem who told him to place his hands on the beams. It would appear as if he was lifting it. In reality, the beams would miraculously rise on their own accord. Hashem would consider it as if Moshe had lifted the beams on his own, as the pasuk (Shmos 40:18) says, "Moshe set up the Tabernacle…."

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l learns a valuable lesson from this Rashi. Sometimes situations arise where the goals seem impossible to attain. One may even be hesitant to attempt to accomplish the goals because he feels that success is impossible. Yet, if a person truly desires to accomplish the task and devotes his energy to it, hopefully he will receive help from Hashem to achieve his objective.

One should never hesitate to undertake projects that can benefit Klal Yisroel. Even if success does not seem possible, one may receive help from Hashem to succeed if he tries his hardest.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l (Sichas Mussar ma'amer 24) gives an added explanation to this idea. He says that we should always keep in mind that success or failure is in the hands of Hashem. Even herculean efforts do not guarantee success. Hashem determines the outcome! When one toils and puts in great effort with all his strength, then he merits help from Hashem to succeed in his task.

Midrash (Vayikra 26-9) says that Aharon HaCohen had 5 special attributes. One of those attributes was strength. How did he exhibit his strength? Part of the ceremony designating the Leviim for the service of Hashem necessitated that Aharon physically pick up each Levi, and wave him forwards and backwards, up and down. This had to be done on one day. Even picking up one Levi would have

required great strength. There were 22,000 Leviim! There are 1,440 minutes in a 24-hour day. That meant that Aharon had to pick up more than 15 Leviim per minute without stopping. If the procedure had to be done only during the 12 hours of daylight, then Aharon would have had to pick up and wave about 35 Leviim per minute. That was an impossible task!

Rabbeinu Bachya says that Hashem brought a miracle to enable Aharon to do it. The question is, if Aharon needed a miracle to do this, then why was this considered a proof of his strength? The only reason Aharon merited this miracle was because he put all his energy and strength into it, doing as much as he physically could.

When Hashem sees a person putting in his maximum effort, often Hashem will help him succeed beyond that which he could have accomplished on his own.

Likewise, Pharoah's daughter, Batya, had stretched her hand to reach baby Moshe's basket when it was floating in the Nile River. Since she truly wanted to reach Moshe, Hashem performed a miracle and enabled her hand to extend a distance which was humanly impossible.

We should never hesitate to start a project that seems to be impossible. Hashem determines success, not our wisdom or our strength. If we try as hard as we can, often we will receive Divine assistance, and Hashem will help us succeed.



Once, construction was being done in the room adjacent to where Rav Elyashiv was learning. The deafening noise of a drill was heard throughout the neighbourhoods, but when Rav Elyashiv was asked later if the noise bothered him, he replied: "Noise? What noise?"



בס"ד

למודי משה

(Adapted from Birchas Mordechai, by Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi)

In *Parshas Terumah* and *Tetzaveh* the Jews are instructed in all the details of how to build the *Mishkan*. Now, in *Parshas Pekudei*, the actual building is related. It is very noteworthy that when the *Chumash* reports that the Jews built the *Mishkan* it states that they constructed every article, "just as Hashem had commanded Moshe."

This statement must be important because it is repeated no less than 18 times! Why was it so important to make this point so many times? Was it so hard to build the *Mishkan* exactly as Hashem commanded? Of course, they followed instructions to a "T". This was the generation which witnessed Yetziyas Mitzrayim and who had received the Torah. How could they have done anything less?

But think about it. When someone is given a job, he usually performs it "roughly" or "approximately" according to instructions. Perhaps even better than he was told, sometimes not as good. However, whatever he does, he feels satisfied that he has really performed his duties. It was good enough. Who expects more than doing something "pretty good" "almost perfect"?

This attitude is very widespread. Where does it come from? It emanates from a distorted understanding of the plan. The question is, why does it happen?

Hidden within the deep recesses of our subconscious, a person feels a resistance of obedience to another. He feels threatened that he is being made totally subordinate to whoever is issuing the command. This creates an irresistible need to also be a "partner" in the planning, the blueprint; to also be the one giving the orders.

A person wants to feel "the boss" regarding everything he does. This is engrained so deeply within himself, it forces him "to rationalize," "to explain," "to understand," "to feel" out everything, to express his own opinion, and make his own decisions.

This motivation to do everything "approximately" is really quite precise. It is the force within that directs everything one does and thinks. He rationalizes, "this is the only way to use your head." This force can be quite ingenious in its rationalizations.

Eighteen times. The Torah accents, repeats, and points out again and again that Bnei Yisroel did exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe. Because Bnei Yisroel built the *Mishkan* out of absolute submission to Hashem's words alone. This is the special quality that only Yisroel has, to be totally subservient to Hashem's commands; with no personal calculations; with no personal collaboration: with no expression of personal possession of the action.

They built the *Mishkan* with a clear understanding that the highest Divine goals can be reached only with absolutely no interjection of one's self; throwing oneself totally into Hashem's commands.

18 times the Torah made this exalted point. Bnei Yisroel did exactly as commanded. Not "approximately." There was no devious interjection of one's self. There was no coupling whatsoever of any ego. 100% subservience to Hashem's word.

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה - "Just as Hashem commanded Moshe."

One must show a tremendous inner strength, to understand that obedience is the epitome of service, the epitome of understanding: total subservience to Hashem's word: the epitome of perfection.

(R' Eliezer Parkoff)

The 27th of Adar is the Yartzeit of Morainu Rosh Hayishiva Harav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg זצוק״ל.

At times people would ask the Rosh Yeshiva - Harav Hagaon R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg **זצ״ל** if he needed anything. The Rosh Yeshiva would answer wittingly "**סייעתא דשמיא**, we need **סייעתא דשמיא**." There are countless stories with the Rosh Yeshiva how we saw how Rav Scheinberg merited this Siyata Dishmaya.

It's known that at the end of the rosh yeshiva's life, Ruach Hakodesh was a normal occurrence.

About 12 years ago I was visiting the kever of Maran HaRav Chaim Pinchos Shienberg **זצוק״ל** on **הר הזיתים**. As we were leaving, I asked **Rav Shea Chaitovsky שליט״א**, if he had a story that he could tell me about the Rosh Yeshiva, and this is what he told over…

"We went to a Chasunah in northern New York and the Rosh Yeshiva was the Mesader Kedushin. After the Chuppah the Rosh Yesiva headed to the car and went inside. There was a couple who was married for five years and had not yet been blessed with children, and I brought them to the Rosh Yeshiva to receive a Bracha.

When the couple came to the car I opened the window and told the Rosh Yeshiva that they needed a Bracha for children. The Rosh Yeshiva said, "Ahh, they don't need a bracha."

I'm telling you, I was so embarrassed I wanted to bury my face in shame. I told the Rosh Yeshiva again, "They're married for five years, and they need a Bracha!" - But again, the Rosh Yeshiva told me the same thing.

Two days later I received a call that the couple had not yet known that they had Baruch Hashem already been expecting their first child…

A Message from the Kalever Rebbe

If you guard your speech - your prayers will be accepted

"These are the numbers of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony." (Shemos 38:21)

R' Avraham Abish of Frankfurt was traveling from town to town by carriage. As they approached a certain city, the wagon driver suddenly remembered that it was a non-Jewish holiday and feared it might be dangerous to pass through the non-Jewish city. He suggested that they take a detour through the fields instead.

However, R' Avraham replied, "The side road is rough and full of stones, which will cause unnecessary hardship for the horses. I would rather travel through the city. There is no need to worry about the non-Jews. I am praying that by the time we reach the city's streets, a fire will break out in their church, keeping them too busy to even notice us. We will be able to pass through peacefully and safely."

The wagon driver trusted the Rebbe's words, and they continued into the city. Just as R' Avraham had predicted, as they entered the main street, the church caught fire. The townspeople cried out, "Fire! Fire!" and, in their panic, paid no attention to the travelers, allowing them to pass through undisturbed.

The driver stared at R' Avraham in amazement. Sensing his astonishment, R' Avraham said, "Listen, this is not such a miracle. All my life, I have been careful never to defile my tongue with falsehoods or improper speech. Because of this, when I speak, Heaven fulfills my words. This idea is hinted at in the verse: 'He shall not profane his word; whatever proceeds from his mouth, he shall do' (Bamidbar 30:3). This means that when a person guards his speech, the Almighty ensures that his words come true."

He then added, "You, too, can attain this if you are careful to guard your tongue."

This principle is explicitly stated in Sefer Chassidim (Siman 582) that says, "a person should not speak unless he knows that it is the will of the Creator. Then, 'You will decree a thing, and it will be established for you' (Iyuv 22:28)."

The Shlah HaKadosh (Sha'ar HaOtios, Shetika) writes that this was the greatness of the early sages — their prayers were answered because they were careful not to defile their mouths with idle chatter or other impure speech. As a result, their prayers were pure and brought divine pleasure, awakening Mercy from above.

This idea is alluded to in the name Mishkan HaEdut—"The Tabernacle of Testimony." The Mishkan was a place designated for those who are fit to testify—truthful and upright individuals. Those who speak falsehoods and improper speech are disqualified from giving testimony. Since people come to the Mishkan to daven, they must guard their speech so that their prayers will be accepted.

Walking into Chodesh Nissan with Great Excitement – Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff

In Torah terms, the month of Nissan is the beginning of the whole year. It is the beginning of a new cycle, much more even than Rosh Hashana which is called **חודש השביעי (תשרי)**. Nissan is **חודש הראשון** as we lein - **בְּיוֹם־הַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ תָּקִֽים אֶת־מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד** (40:2) The meforshim say **נגאלים בחדש ראשון**. But why is this month central to the idea of Geulah?

The meforshim explain that **חדש האביב** - the 'spring season' is where the trees once again start to blossom and flourish. The sun starts to shine again. Similarly, everyone in his own life is rejuvenated with a certain freshness and new connection to The Ribboino Shel Olam.

Rosh Hashono is a different type of beginning. It is with the fear of din and judgement when we need to cleanse ourselves from all the terrible things that we have acquired over the year.

However, Nissan is a totally different beginning. It is the beginning of a re-birth. A beginning full of simcha and positivity. We are not focusing on who we were till now – That is not relevant for us. This is a newfound connection to The Ribboino Shel Olam. It is a period of great chessed and love. **הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם**.

The last thing Moshe did in completing the Mishkan was that he "erected the courtyard." One cannot "erect" a courtyard. Rather, by putting up boundaries, the courtyard is de facto created.

This syntax teaches us that by establishing boundaries, we elevate what is inside of them. When we set limits to the things we will do or not do, we can elevate ourselves. This is the role of Torah in our lives, teaching us where to draw the line.



Even When We Are Camped, We Are Travelling

I heard the following beautiful homiletic observation on the last *pasuk* in Sefer Shemos from **Rav Isaac Bernstein, *z"l***: "For the Cloud of *Hashem* would be on the *Mishkan* by day, and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all of the House of Israel throughout their journeys." (Shemos 40:38). The Cloud was upon the *Mishkan*in all of their travels.

Rashi explains that whenever they would camp, the Cloud would cover the *Mishkan*. However, he asks, the *pasuk* is imprecise. It says that the Cloud was on the *Mishkan* when they travelled. However, in actuality, it was not on the *Mishkan* when they travelled – only when

they camped! It should say "The Cloud was on the *Mishkan* in all their encampments!" Rashi answers that when they camped—that was also part of their travels. Even when they were stationary, it was considered "*mas'eyhem*" (their travels).

This is a thought, Rav Bernstein says, that we all need to remember: Even when we are encamped, we are still travelling. Jewish history is replete with a mindset which assumes that wherever we happen to be residing, "this is our place."

Jews were in Poland for one thousand years. They used to quip in Yiddish that Poland was a transliteration of the Yiddish expression '*Po Lin*' (Here we will sleep). In other words, this is where we are and this is where we will stay. When people are in the same location for a thousand years, they can easily assume that "this is it", "this is our home." The Jews were in Spain for hundreds of years. Unfortunately, Jewish history is a testimony to the fact that no matter how comfortable we may get, we are not home yet!

America is no exception. This is a *Malchus shel Chessed*. It is the most hospitable place that the Jews have settled in their long history. One can easily make the mistake that "we have come to the resting place and to the inheritance." (Devorim 12:9).

This Rashi is implicitly teaching that this assumption is not to be relied upon. The places of their encampments are part of their travels. Even where we find ourselves encamped, it is still just part of our long journey. We are on this long journey until we finally see the rebuilding of Zion and the comfort of *Yerushalayim* with the coming of *Moshiach*, may it be speedily, in our time.

The greatest proof that Hashem loves us is that He gave us each other. ~ Meaningful Minute

Teaching of Darkei Shalom

There is a difficult Medrash Tanchuma in Parshas Pekudei. The Torah states that the Mishkan and all of its keylim [vessels] were brought to Moshe [Shemos 39:33]. The Medrash seemingly makes a very strange comment that many things were enacted for reasons of preservation of peace (darkei Shalom) and that in this case, Moshe enacted the proscribed sequence for calling up people to read from the Torah — Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael.

We can easily understand the concept of preventing fights by having an orderly sequence for calling up Jews for Aliyahs. However, what is the connection Moshe's enactment and the pasuk teaching that the Jews brought the Mishkan and its vessels to Moshe?

Maharal Diskin gives a beautiful interpretation. He asks why the people brought the various components of the Mishkan to Moshe. Why didn't Moshe go to the people to collect these components?

The Maharal Diskin explains that Moshe hesitated to go to the people to collect because of the dilemma – Whom would he go to first? To avoid this problem he instituted the rule: "You come to me." This was an example of Darkei Shalom [a peace-inducing method]. That is why the Medrash on this pasuk cites the wide spread practice of Chazal to implement procedures which embody Darkei Shalom, such as the order of Kohen – Levi – Yisrael in the Torah readings.

The Shemen haTov cites a practice amongst a number of prominent Chassidic Rebbes that if one of their Chassidim wants them to be Mesader Kiddushin (officiate at their marriage) the rule is "You come to me" rather than vice versa. The Choson-Kallah must come to the Rebbe's house or the Rebbe's courtyard and he will officiate there. The Rebbe does not accept invitations to perform weddings away from his "home-base".

The Shemen haTov explains that this rule to is designed to avoid machlokes. If the Rebbe had to decide which wedding invitation to accept and which to reject, which he could attend and which were too far away, then there would be fights and resentment among the Chassidim. This is the same theory as "they brought the Mishkan to Moshe" (rather than having Moshe go around collecting the pieces from each and every donor).

Great is peace. We must always look creatively for ways to enhance peace amongst Klal Yisrael.

We Toil And Receive Reward — For The Toil!

Parshas Pikudei concludes the construction of the Mishkan. All the individual components, the parts were brought to Moshe. Rash"i quotes the Medrash Tanchuma which explains that the reason why the Mishkan was brought to Moshe was because everyone else was unable assemble it. The Mishkan was simply too heavy for anyone to lift. Since Moshe had not been personally involved in any part of the construction of the Mishkan, HaShem reserved the privilege of final assembly for him.

When HaShem told Moshe to assemble the Mishkan, Moshe protested that it was too heavy for him to lift as well. HaShem told Moshe to make the effort. "Make it look like you are trying to erect it." Moshe made the effort and miraculously, it was assembled by itself. Since Moshe made the effort, he received the credit for having put it up.

Rav Meir Rubman explains that we can learn a very important insight regarding spirituality from this Medrash. The Medrash teaches us that regardless of the difficulty of the task, we must make the effort. In other areas of endeavor, a person is only given credit for producing. However, when it comes to Judaism, HaShem is not necessarily interested in results; He is interested in the effort.

The concept that a person receives an "A" for effort is usually a backhanded compliment. In actuality, you received a "D", a near failing grade, but at least you received an "A" for effort. That is the way it is in other areas of life. But when it comes to Mitzvos, all Hashem asks from us that we make the effort. Whether the task is actually accomplished or not is often out of our control and up to Hashem.

At the conclusion of a Mesechta, we say the prayer "We toil and they toil. We toil and receive reward and they toil and do not receive reward." – What does it mean "they toil and do not receive reward"? This does not seem to be a true statement. People do not work without receiving payment!

The answer is that when we work (at religious tasks), we are paid for the effort, regardless of whether or not we produce. But 'they' are only paid for the bottom line. In all other areas of endeavor, toil that does not produce results does not receive reward.



Thanks from the Recipient's Perspective

The verse says, "וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה," ***and Moshe blessed them***. 39:43. After Moshe saw that the entire Mishkan was completed as G-d had commanded, he blessed the people. The Medrash comments that this is a source for the custom of giving people a compliment of "Yasher Kochacha" [well done] upon successful completion of a task. After the Jewish people did everything they were supposed to do, Moshe Rabbeinu gave them a "Thank you".

The Reishe Rav questions why they were deserving of any compliments. This was not a voluntary action on their part. They merely did that which G-d commanded them to do. They really had no choice in the matter! The specifications of the construction of the Mishkan were dictated down to the last detail!

This teaches us a fundamental principle in the concept of "Hakaras HaTov" [recognition of a debt of gratitude]. A person has an obligation to say thank you and 'Yasher Kochacha' when he receives something. The fact that the person who gave or did something had no choice in the matter and was merely doing his duty is irrelevant.

The Mishneh in Tractate Sheviis [4:2] says that the poor people, who are entitled to take the ownerless crops in the Seventh (Shmita) year, would nevertheless go to the owner of the field and say 'Thank you'. [They thanked the owner, even though the owner had no choice but to allow the poor to take the crop from his field during that year.]

The Rasha"sh comments that this Mishneh is the source of the widespread practice that when the Kohen descends from the platform after blessing the people with the Priestly Blessing, the members of the congregation thank him for the blessing.

The Rasha"sh points out that the Kohen also does not really have any choice. If he would not offer the blessing, he would be neglecting the fulfillment of a positive Biblical command. "Why should I have to thank him for just doing 'his thing'?" The Rasha"sh says that we learn to say thank you in this case from the Mishneh in Sheviis. The circumstances which caused the giver to provide me with something does not diminish my obligation to thank him by one iota. Saying 'Thank you' has nothing to do with what one gave. It has to do with what one received.

This is the Jewish understanding of the concept of saying 'Thank you'.

"The greatest kindness you can do for someone is to believe in them even after they have stopped believing in themselves." ~ Reb Elazar of Lizhensk (1742-1806)



Limitless Chessed -Rav Mattisyahu by Avrohom Birnbaum

It was more than thirty-five years ago. I was a young bachur learning in Gateshead when my father took ill. The Mashgiach, **Rav Mattisyahu Salomon**, understood the situation and called me into his room to schmooze. He asked me if I was aware of the seriousness of my father's condition. I answered in the affirmative.

From that moment on, he slowly and sensitively began to prepare me for the days, weeks, and months ahead. A short time later, my father passed away. I was devastated, but I had already been somewhat prepared by the Mashgiach on how to cope with the new situation.

The Mashgiach did not come to the shivah, but the very next day, the day after the shivah, there was a knock on the door. Standing there was Rav Mattisyahu, who had made the five hour trip from Gateshead to London just to visit us. He came in and sat with my mother, my brother, my sister, and me, giving us chizuk, comforting us, and preparing us for the difficult road ahead.

Time passed. Before long, the first Yom Tov after my father's passing was approaching. It was a few days before Shavuos when I asked Rav Mattisyahu permission to go home for Yom Tov. Surprised by my request, he gently prodded, "You don't plan on being in yeshivah for the day of kabbalas haTorah?"

"My mother is alone," I explained. "I can't leave my mother alone for Shavuos!" The Mashgiach offered what seemed to be a simple eitzah. "So let your mother come here for Yom Tov." - "But my mother doesn't know anyone in Gateshead." "That's not a problem" was Rav

Mattisyahu's rejoinder. "She should come to us! We would love to have her as our guest for Yom Tov!"

A day or two later, the phone rang in our home in London. It was Rebbetzin Salomon calling. After making small talk, the Rebbetzin warmly and enthusiastically invited my mother to come to Gateshead for Yom Tov. The invitation was given with such heartwarming sincerity that my mother couldn't turn it down.

She arrived in Gateshead before Shavuos, and despite the differences in backgrounds, she instantly felt an extremely close connection with the Rebbetzin, and they became friends. The Mashgiach invited me, my brother, and my sister, who was in Gateshead Sem, to eat all the Yom Tov seudos together with them. It was a memorable, wonderful Yom Tov.

Barely three months later, the phone again rang in my mother's home in London. It was the Rebbetzin this time, inviting her to come for Rosh Hashanah. My mother accepted the invitation, came for Rosh Hashanah, and davened in the yeshivah. As a result, I also ate the Rosh Hashanah seudos at the home of the Mashgiach.

I was a talmid in the Gateshead Yeshivah for the next four years. Every Yom Tov during those four years, my mother came as a valued guest of the Salomons. But her Yom Tov visits did not end after my four years there. No! The Salomons continued to invite her, and she returned to Gateshead for Yom Tov even after I had left.

The Mashgiach made a personal chavrusashaft with me, and our connection continued for many years. In truth, our connection transcended the typical mashgiach-talmid relationship. Rather, the Mashgiach served as a father figure who took our entire family under his wing.

For the Guinness Book of Records

וַיְרַקְּעוּ אֶת־פַּחֵי הַזָּהָב וְקִצֵּץ פְּתִילִם – ***"And they beat out the plates of gold, and they cut it into threads*** … " (39:3).

In all the Meleches ha'Kodesh, says **R. Bachye** citing the **Ramban**, this is the sole occasion where the Torah actually describes the method that they used in producing an item for the construction of the Mishkan.

The reason for this, he explains, is because this was the first time in history that gold threads had been manufactured, so the Torah proudly describes how they arrived at that achievement.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – A Life Full Of Life



R' Yehonasan Eibshitz wouldn't say the Bracha of **שלא עשני גוי** - ***not having made me a non-Jew***, in Shul at Shacharis. He would recite the Bracha of **הנותן לשכוי בינה** followed by **שלא עשני עבד**. When asked about this practice, he explained that when he arises in the morning and says **מודה אני**, he gets so excited and full of joy that he is a Jew that he can't wait to say the Bracha of **שלא עשני גוי**. As a result, he said it immediately in the morning!

When **R' Shimon Schwab** was 19, he spent Shabbos Parshas Beshalach- which speaks about the **מן** - with the **Chofetz Chaim**. He related that at the Shabbos table, the Chofetz Chaim asked what the **מן** tasted like? They answered whatever you thought- meat,

candy and so forth. He then asked, what did it taste like if you didn't think? He told them that it would then be tasteless. The same applies to Yiddiskeit: if one doesn't think and just acts by rote, then *Yiddishkeit* is tasteless for such a person.

R' Yonatan Eyebschutz z"l (died 1764) asks: Why do we not recite a berachah before performing the mitzvah of giving charity? Because, R' Eyebschutz answers, the existence of this mitzvah is a curse. Were we worthy, we would see the fulfillment of the verse (Devarim 15:4), "However, may there be no destitute person among you; rather, Hashem will surely bless you." We do not recite a blessing over something which has an element of a curse to it.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP] Why be Jealous?



וּמָשַׁחְתָּ אֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר מָשַׁחְתָּ אֶת־אֲבִיהֶם וְכִהֲנוּ לִי "...and [you, Moshe] anoint them [Aharon's sons] as you have anointed their father, that they may serve Me as priests." (Shmos 40:15)

"Someone opened a store right next door to mine. He will take all my business away!" complained a storekeeper to ***Rabbi Meir of Premishlan****. The sage replied, "Have you ever seen a horse drink water from a river? He walks into the water and stamps his hooves. Do you know why? He looks down at the water and sees his reflection. He thinks that another horse is also drinking. Envious and afraid that the "other" horse will drink up all the water, he kicks his mirror image. That is the attitude of the horse, continued Rabbi Meir. However, you know*

better. You realize that there is enough water in the river for all the horses, and that no one can touch what Hashem has prepared for his friend. Place your trust in Hashem and you will nothing to fear and nothing to be jealous of". (from Ethics of the Fathers by Rabbi Moshe Lieber)

The Midrash says, when Moshe spoke to Hashem at the burning bush, he requested from Hashem that his sons take over the reins of leadership from him after his passing. Hashem told him that they won't.

In this Parsha, The Tabernacle was set up. The Tabernacle was anointed and hallowed with a special oil. Hashem asked Moshe to inaugurate Aharon and his sons into the Priesthood by dressing them in the clothes of the kohanim and anointing them with the same special oil. Hashem told Moshe to anoint Aharon's sons **"the same way he annointed Aharon"**. Why did Hashem have to emphasize to Moshe to anoint Aharon's sons **"the same way he annointed Aharon"? The Meshach Chachma** (Rabbi Meir Simha HaKohen Dvinsk) **says** that Moshe was happy to anoint his older brother and inaugurate him into the priesthood. He highly respected Aharon and even would have preferred if Hashem would have appointed Aharon instead of him to take the Jewish people out of Egypt. However, Hashem knew that even a tzaddik like Moshe could possibly feel stirrings of jealousy in his heart. Moshe would be anointing Aharon's sons, continuing Aharon's legacy while Moshe's own sons would not follow in his footsteps of leadership. Therefore, Hashem gave Moshe the added encouragement to annoint Aharon's sons with the same great joy and overflowing love with which he had anointed Aharon.

Jealousy is a feeling that could have challenged even Moshe Rabbeinu. Jealousy is often an automatic response to what you feel is unfair. Perhaps you and a friend both interviewed for a job. Yet, he was hired, and you were not. Perhaps a friend is wealthy, and you

are struggling. Perhaps his children seem to have it all, whereas yours have challenges. Perhaps his children are all married whereas yours are still single.

You feel consumed by feelings of jealousy. It affects your happiness and even your relationship with your friend. What do you gain through these feelings? Nothing! Nothing is changed except that your stress level is higher, and your level of happiness is lower. Rabbi Elazar HaKappar says in Pirkei Avos that jealousy is emotionally debilitating. King Solomon said that jealousy penetrates in and corrodes the inner being of a person.

The way to combat jealousy is as Rabbi Meir of Premishlan quoted from our rabbis. Hashem knows what is best for each one of us. Hashem gives each of us what we truly need in life. It is impossible for us to take anything that is not coming to us. We can't even get one penny that is not coming to us. We are unable to take anything away from someone else. So, we have absolutely nothing to gain by being jealous.

Jealousy harms our health. Hashem gives us everything that we need to fulfil our purpose in life. We can't get even one extra penny for ourselves if it was supposed to go to someone else. With this understanding, why be jealous?

No jealousy here– MI K'AMCHA YISROEL: After a fire on January 12, 2019, destroyed Yossi Heiman's Fish Market, his ***competitor***, Shea Langsam, offered space in his nearby fish store for Yossi to run his business.

R' Nachman of Breslov ZT"L would say:

"When you are happy, you are able to cheer up others which is a tremendous chesed. A happy person spreads positive feelings."

4-Minute Mile - Ari Blum



For many years, it was known that it was impossible to run a mile in under 4 minutes. That was until Sir Roger Bannister did it on May 25th, 1954, completing the distance in 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds. Nobody thought that record would be beaten. In fact, the UK's Daily Telegraph described the goal as something "as elusive and seemingly unattainable as [climbing Mount] Everest" (a goal which had been reached recently by Edmund Hillary and Tenzig Norgay). But to the amazement of the world, it was indeed broken, surprisingly soon after it was achieved. Just a month later, Australian John Landy ran the distance in 3 minutes 57.9 seconds. A year after Barrister's achievement, 15 runners repeated it on the same day. And it's been done many times over since then. What happened? None of those runners took steroids. Human beings didn't change overnight. But something amazing happened on that historic day.

Our mindset began to change. We realized that the impossible had been possible all along. We could do it. It always was doable. This goes for anything in life you may want to achieve. You can lose that weight. You can earn a good parnassah. You can learn a daf every day. **אין דבר העומד לפני הרצון** say Chazal as nothing stands in the way of

getting what you want out of life. The only obstacles we face are the ones in our minds. No excuses. You CAN do it. So, go for it! *(Eiruvin, Daf 93)*

Torah Tavlin

R' Eliyahu Mishkovsky zt"l (R"Y Knesses Chizkiyahu) would say: **כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה** - When a person is elevated to a position of great power, his name is widely known and respected throughout the land, and his office requires him to allocate jobs and responsibilities necessary for the internal maintenance of the land.

Moshe Rabbeinu, however, who was chosen by the Almighty to appoint workers for the construction of the Mishkan, is not even mentioned once in the entire parsha that deals with the appointments for the Mishkan's construction (Tetzaveh).

Once the Mishkan was totally completed, though, Hashem paid him back many times for his humility by mentioning his name no less than 18 times, as we find the words **כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה**: written over and over again."

וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר בֵּין־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבֵין הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן שָׁמָּה מַיִם לְרָחְצָה 40:30

One of the final acts of Hakamas HaMishkan (erecting the Sanctuary) was the instalment of the Kiyor, the copper wash basin from which the Kohanim would wash their hands and feet before doing any form of avodah. This is referred to as **קידוש ידים ורגלים** - sanctifying hands and feet. We, too, wash our hands and immerse in a mikva to sanctify ourselves at certain times, much like the Kohanim did in the times of the Mishkan and Batei Mikdash.

The Sefer HaChinuch provides us with an insight into the unique power of water and washing one's hands. He writes that the world was created with water covering the entire planet. Hashem said, "Let

the waters gather in one place and dry land emerge from the waters." Just as the dry land emerged from the water, a new and fresh entity, similarly a person who is under water (and cannot exist for more than a matter of seconds) emerges new and fresh from the "waters on earth" of the mikva. He comes out almost an entirely new entity with the previous undesirable effects washed away. So too, we must not underestimate the power of the hand-washing water to purify and sanctify ourselves when we keep the halachos of washing properly.



Upon the death of the famed **Noam Elimelech, R' Elimelech of Lizhensk zt"l**, two of his close chassidim felt bereft and lost without the guidance and purity of their Rebbe. They wandered from place to place, seeking new leaders and mentors who can fill the shoes of their previous Rebbe, but who can replace a tzaddik like the Noam Elimelech? Their quest seemed almost impossible, and this caused them no uncertain amount of angst, despair and hopelessness. As they wandered, they came upon the town of Anipoli, and one said to the other, "Why don't we seek out the Rebbe's brother, **R' Zusia of Anipoli zt"l** Perhaps he can guide us or at the very least, direct us in our never-ending quest."

His friend liked the idea, but as the day was beginning to fade and nightfall was fast approaching, they were forced to stay overnight in a small inn, a few kilometres from Anipoli. It was not a Jewish inn, and the proprietor as well as the patrons were not Jewish, so these

two chassidim felt quite alone in the loud and unsavoury environs of the tavern. It was cold and dark outside, and the well of water was located a short walk from the inn.

Unlike today, when we turn a faucet and water spurts forth to our heart's content, in those days of old, one needed to draw water from the outdoor well and bring it inside for use. Water drawing was almost exclusively done during the day and if one did not prepare water for himself, he would have no choice but to wait until the following morning to have access to water.

The two chassidim had arrived late and had not prepared water for themselves. This put them into a quandary as they needed water for Netilas Yadayim in the morning, upon awakening.

The gentile who rented them the room laughed when they asked if he had any water for them and no one was willing to go out and draw water at that time of night. What were they to do? One chasid said to his friend that this is a classic example of **אונס רחמנא פטריה** - when the Torah absolves a person of his obligation due to his inability to fulfil the mitzvah. In the morning, when he can obtain water, he will wash his hands then. But this didn't sit well with his friend. How can a person go about his day without washing Netilas Yadayim? He would prefer not sleeping to waking up and not having water to wash with. But then, he had a brilliant idea. He went back into the tavern and bought a bottle of beer. He kept it near his bed and first thing in the morning, he washed his hands with a full bottle of beer!

The two friends continued on their journey first thing in the morning. One had washed his hands with beer while the other waited quite some time until he managed to acquire some water and then he washed.

They arrived in Anipoli and immediately made their way to the home of R' Zusia. He met them at the door and warmly ushered them in. But then he stopped and looked straight at the man who had waited

to wash his hands. Refusing to shake his hand, he said, "You must have been a chasid of my brother, R' Elimelech. I can see that all the years as your Rebbe, he worked hard to remove your impurities and defilement of sin, but as a result of not washing Netilas Yadayim correctly, it has all come back!"

The two chassidim were shocked at the obvious Ruach Hakodesh of R' Zusia and immediately took him to be their Rebbe!



וְלֹא־יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָבוֹא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי־שָׁכַן עָלָיו הֶעָנָן 40:35

Rashi comments, **כל זמן שהיה עליו הענן לא היה יכול לבוא, נסתלק הענן נכנס** ***"As long as the cloud was there, Moshe could not enter. When the cloud departed, Moshe could enter."***

We find a similar occurrence at Har Sinai, where a dense cloud initially prevented Moshe from approaching. How then was Moshe able to reach Har Sinai? The gemara brings two differing opinions: R' Eliezer says that Hashem grabbed Moshe and pulled him in. In the Yeshiva of R' Yishmael they said that Hashem made a path through the cloud and Moshe was able to enter.



R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L learns from this posuk an incredible insight into the manner in which a person must approach impending obstacles that he might find in his way. There are many times when a person feels that he cannot move forward because a dark cloud hangs over him. He feels paralyzed and unable to get on with his life.

One should know, however, that nothing can stop him! Sometimes one can make a path through the cloud, i.e., he can navigate through his troubles without becoming embroiled in them. And if he cannot go through the cloud, he need not despair. He should simply look for a path that has no obstacles, just as Moshe waited for the cloud to depart. However, if he can neither go through the cloud nor find another path, he should soldier forward with a firm conviction that Hashem will take him by the hand and pull him through.



R' Pinchas Menachem Yustman zt"l (Sifsei Tzaddik) would say: וַיִּרְקְעוּ אֶת־פַּחֵי הַזָּהָב וְקִצֵּץ פְּתִילִם:39:3 Rashi explains: ***'They would spin the gold together with the threads, beating the foils thin and cutting from them threads along the length of the foil, making the threads intertwined with every kind of material on the breastplate and ephod.'***

From this we learn that people whom Hashem has blessed with wealth must not consider themselves superior to others. Rather, they should act humbly and 'intertwine' with those people who have not been similarly blessed, like the thread of gold that was interwoven with the other components."

"If you think you're too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ 39:32



A young Jewish man from London was drafted into the British Army and fought against the wicked Nazis in a number of European theatres during the Second World War. On one of his furloughs, he came back to London and made a point to visit **R' Yechezkel Abramsky zt"l**, the chief Dayan of London. R' Chatzkel knew the man and inquired as to how his religious observance was faring.

The young man replied that he was careful to keep kosher, but due to the stress of war and battle, he smoked heavily and could not restrain himself even on Shabbos. He hoped Hashem would forgive him for this "slight" misdeed, as he called it. R' Chatzkel told him that after 120 years, when he went up to face the heavenly tribunal, he will find two books open before him. In one book, it will state how he was moser nefesh to fight against a terrible enemy in a war against the Jewish nation, a huge mitzvah indeed. In the other book, it will state how a Jewish man was mechalel Shabbos by smoking on this holy day, a terrible sin.

"Believe me," said R' Chatzkel, "Hashem will not weigh your sin against the value of your mitzvah. He will reward you for the great mitzvah you have done, but he will punish you severely for the sin of violating the Shabbos. Don't ever think that Hashem overlooks your 'misdeed' and lets it pass. Everything has its own reckoning."

Some people feel that since they give charity or assist others in many ways, therefore they can relax their standards in other areas of avodas Hashem. The Torah here tells us that even after the Jewish people went above and beyond to donate their jewellery, gold, silver and precious stones to the Mishkan, nevertheless, "All that Hashem commanded of Moshe, they fulfilled." They were not satisfied to say we've done enough; we did what Hashem asked, and now we can go back to our normal ways.

Hashem reckons each action independently, and one cannot ease up on his mitzvah performance just because he does other good deeds.

Why the repetition we get the point already!!!

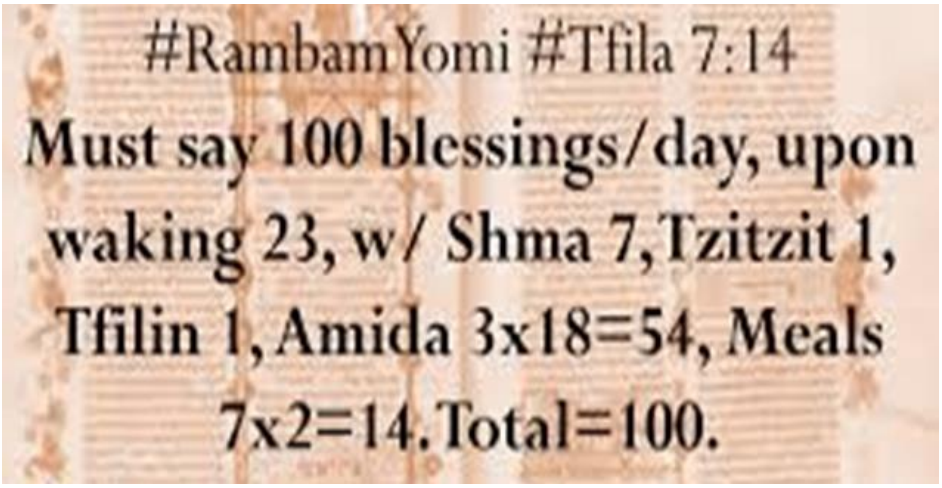
The Posuk says כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה ***"Like Hashem Commanded Moshe"***

In the Parsha we find, after each item that Betzalel made it says, he made it exactly the way "Hashem commanded Moshe". Why was it necessary for the Torah to repeat this so many times?

The Bais HaLevi answers, the sin of the Egel was that Klal Yisroel decided to make something to serve as a "go between" – between Hashem and the Jews. Although their motives may have been L'Shem Shamayim, they sinned by not asking Hashem if he agreed to this way of serving him. Their sin was not doing "like Hashem had commanded".

Since the purpose of the Mishkan was to atone for the Egel, they had to make the Mishkan in total compliance with Hashem's command in order for the atonement to be acceptable. Therefore the pasuk tells us after each step of its completion, that it was done exactly the way "Hashem commanded Moshe".

R' Yaakov Meir Schechter Shlit'a



(Sefer Hamevarech Yisbarech) would say: **מְאַת אֲדָנִים לִמְאַת הַכִּכָּר כִּכָּר לָאָדֶן**- ***'A hundred sockets for a hundred talents, a talent for a socket.'***

Sefer Sharei Orah writes that the 100 sockets that formed the foundation of the Mishkan are an allusion to the 100 blessings a person is required to recite each and every day.

This, too, is found in the words of the **Baal HaTurim** that the 100 sockets were made of refined gold, and based on this, we recite 100 blessings each day. Similarly, it is quoted that that Beis HaMikdash was 100 amos (cubits) high, a further allusion to the 100 blessings.

Thus, we see clearly, that this concept of reciting 100 blessings every day is steeped in the concept of Hashra'as Hashechinah, when Hashem will draw down His Divine Presence into Israel, as well as the construction of the Temple itself, which will come speedily and in our days."

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

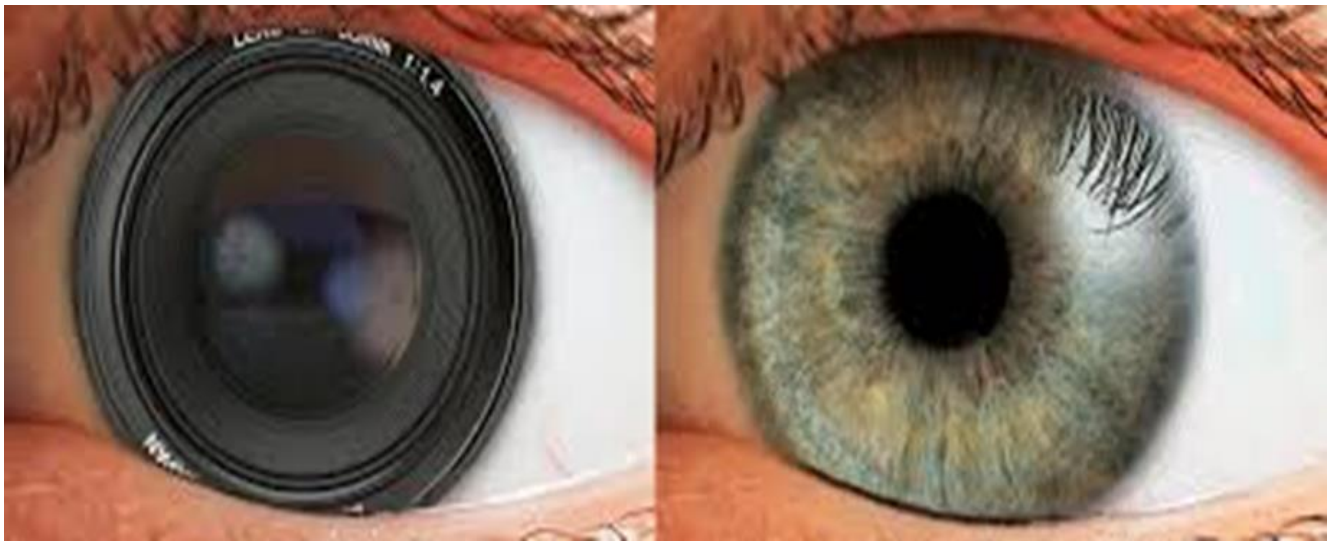
Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch, zt"l, would say, "It's not how much or how little you have that makes you great or small, but how much or how little you accomplish with what you have!"

Rabbi YY Rubinstein - My First Student

When Project SEED found its way from America and took root in Gateshead, every Wednesday night a group of thirty boys from the Yeshiva of Gateshead would cross the River Tyne and learn with someone from the city of Newcastle. I was one of those individuals who crossed the river to teach Torah.

Fast forward thirty-six years.

When my son, who now lives in Israel and works as a photographer, was fourteen years old he was bound to a wheelchair and had to undergo major surgery on his feet. He had been through tough times, having lost his mother to cancer not too long before. At one point, my son phoned me and said, "Dad, I didn't want to worry you, but I have just come back from the doctor, and they have confirmed a diagnosis: I will be totally blind in ten years' time." When my son told me this, I was totally shocked.



Shortly after being diagnosed, he was in Manchester photographing a wedding. Scheduled to fly back on the German national airline Lufthansa from Manchester to Frankfurt and then to Israel, at the last minute the plane was cancelled. And so, he had to fly on a cheap airline in Europe called Jet 2. The seats were made of plastic and the cup holder was clearly fashioned from an unscrewed coat hanger. My son therefore decided to pay some extra money and get a seat with a little bit more leg room up front.

Taking a seat beside another gentleman, after some back-and-forth conversation, my son mentioned that he was he born in Gateshead." "Oh, I know Gateshead very well," said the man. "When I studied medicine at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I used to learn every week with a very well-known Rabbi from Gateshead. Have you ever heard of Rabbi YY Rubinstein?"

"Yeah, I have heard of him. He's my father." My son, realizing that he was going to be spending the next five hours on a plane sitting next to a doctor, knew what this meant: free consultation. And so he began telling this doctor all about his problems. He mentioned the trouble he had undergone with his legs and how his mother had passed away. And now, he had just been informed that in ten years' time he would be unable to see.

The doctor turned to him and said, "Well as a matter of fact you are wrong. I am an eye specialist, and we developed a surgical technique that stops this disease you have in its tracks. I will do this surgery for you."

"This doctor," concluded Rabbi Rubinstein, "was the first person I ever taught Torah to. He was my first student for whom I crossed the River Tyne to teach. My very first student was to be the one who would help save my son's eyesight. All those one-on-one night learning sessions were remembered by Hashem and now used to merit that the very man I taught would help save my son's sight."

As we are all sons and daughters of Hashem, when we teach and take care of our fellow Jews, we are taking care of Hashem's children. We may never know the reverberating impact of touching even one Jewish soul until years later; but indeed, every effort spent on helping another is well worth it. And truth be told, they may return one day to repay the deed.



One morning, before R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT"L left his house to daven, sounds of a loud argument were heard from a nearby house in Batei Machse. R' Yosef Chaim, asked his daughter-in-law, who was living in his home, to go see what the issue was.

She came back and told him that one of the women of Batei Machse had hired a Yemenite Jewish woman to be her washerwoman for the day. (A laborious job that involved rubbing laundry in a barrel of warm water from dawn till dusk.) But when the poor woman arrived for work, the woman of the house told her she had forgotten it was Rosh Chodesh, and the custom is for women not to do any work.

The Yemenite woman cried that if she did not work today, she would not have anything to feed her little children, for her husband was sick in bed and she was the sole source of support for the family.

When R' Yosef Chaim heard the story, he told his daughter -in-law, "Go quickly and hire that Yemenite woman to do your laundry. Causing pain to a poor Jewish woman with small children is worse than breaking a custom!" After the washerwoman had sat down to work at R' Yosef Chaim's house, the other woman came running. "Please, please come back and work by me. If for the Rav it is allowed to do laundry on Rosh Chodesh, it is allowed for me too!"

Rosh Chodesh Nissan is the start of the month of redemption, when we do so many mitzvos and customs that pertain to the holiday of Pesach and beyond. However, the lesson every Jew must learn is that

no custom or practice is above the feelings and considerations of a fellow Jew. Loving your brother as you love yourself is our guiding refrain, and the holiday season is the best time to show our love.



וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֵפֹד... וַיְמַלְאוּ־בוֹ אַרְבָּעָה טוּרֵי אָבֶן 39:8/10

The Torah describes the twelve settings in the Choshen (Breast Plate) that were filled up (**וַיְמַלְאוּ**) by the precious stones known as the **אבני מילואים** (Filling Stones). Rashi there explains that they were called "Filling Stones" for the very simple reason that they served to fill in the settings on the Choshen. However, is this not a bit demeaning and insulting to call such precious stones "fillers" whose basic purpose is to just cover space? Would it not have been more complimentary to call them "Precious Stones" and we would know that they are meant to fill in the Choshen? Imagine, for example, a newly engaged bride who just received her diamond ring. When she shows it to her friends, they say her beautiful setting had a hole in it, and she decided to fill it up with a diamond! How insulting would that be?

R' Shmuel Berenbaum ZT"L, Rosh Yeshivah of the Mir Yeshivah answers that one can learn a beautiful lesson from these simple words of the Torah. The Baalei Mussar teach us that the Torah's hashkafah (viewpoint) is that the biggest compliment one can achieve is not about one's own self-worth or value, for these tend to

change with the winds of time. Rather, what one accomplishes for someone or something else, is a true measure of a person's worth.

The Choshen had twelve holes in it - holes that caused it to be considered "lacking" without the stones that filled it up. These special stones were the objects that supplied what was missing in the Choshen. Consequently, the biggest compliment for these stones, despite their own intrinsic and costly value, was to show that they were able to fill up what was lacking by something else - the Choshen no less.

This, of course, should also be our viewpoint: to always see how we can help somebody else and "fill in" whatever we can that may be lacking by them.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

38:21 אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר פֻּקַּד עַל־פִּי מֹשֶׁה



Is there any other mitzvah in the Torah that has no less than four parshiyos dedicated to it? It seems like Parshas Vayakhel is a repeat of Parshas Teruma and Tetzaveh is a repeat of Pekudei! But why? Why does Hashem dedicate so much "extra" space to the construction of the Mishkan?

Because the Mishkan represents the heart and ratzon (will) of every Jew. Chazal tell us when the nesiim (princes) offered to wait until everyone finished bringing their donations to the Mishkan and they would fill in whatever was missing, it seemed like a noble act.

Imagine if someone at a parlour meeting to raise money for a yeshivah stood up and said, "Please give generously for this important cause, and whatever money is lacking at the end, I will make up the difference!" Such a person would probably get a standing ovation! And yet we see that this was not Hashem's reaction to the generosity of the nesiim. In fact, they were rebuked by having the letter "yud" omitted from their name.

Why? Because they missed the whole underlying point of the Mishkan. Had the Mishkan been about constructing a physical abode, their reaction would have been praiseworthy; but the Mishkan was all about heart, it was all about expressing love to Hashem. The fact that they WAITED and didn't run to partake in its construction showed a lack of enthusiasm for kirvas Hashem. All they wished was to complete the building and yet the letter "yud" that symbolizes completion was left out so that their title remains incomplete.

We can all be involved in the construction of a Mishkan every single day - in our hearts. By doing mitzvos with excitement and "bren," we express what is truly inside, thus fulfilling the mitzvah of building a Mishkan for Hashem.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Avraham Yaakov *HaKohein* Pam, *zt"l*, was known for his exceptional sensitivity that he had for others. Once, one of his younger colleagues asked him why he attended so many weddings, especially when it had become a physical ordeal for him to do so. He told Rav Pam, "You have come to thousands of weddings! Isn't it enough?"

Rav Pam smiled and answered, "You are right. To me they are thousands of weddings, but for the *chasan* it's the only wedding!"

Torah Gems

וַיַּ֣רְא מֹשֶׁ֔ה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָ֖ה וְהִנֵּ֣ה עָשׂ֑וּ אֹתָ֕הּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֖ה ה' כֵּ֣ן עָשׂ֑וּ וַיְבָ֥רֶךְ אֹתָ֖ם מֹשֶֽׁה 39:43



In Parshas Pekudei, the words **כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֖ה ה'** are phrased together eighteen times. Rabbeinu Yonah explains that this expression appears eighteen times because it corresponds to the eighteen vertebrae of the spine. The lesson is apparent: Every commandment that Hashem decrees upon the world is represented in each and every individual person. This supports the principle that each individual is a microcosm of the entire universe as explained in the words of Chazal:- *Whosoever maintains a Jewish soul, is as if he maintained the entire world."*

R' Yissachar Dov Loriner ZT"L adds that the purpose of building the Mishkan was because Hashem desired to dwell on this earth and He required a "house" worthy enough for the King of Kings. He, therefore, commanded Bnei Yisroel to build a Mishkan.

The Mishkan is the central point for the dwelling of the Shechina, and man is the fulfilment of creation. Thus, heeding each and every **ציווי** that Hashem commanded and erecting the Mishkan according to His exact specifications (corresponding to the eighteen vertebrae that support a person) enables a human being to stand upright.

In the first chapter of Pirkei Avos, Shimon Hatzaddik states that the world stands on three pillars: Torah, Avodah, and Gemilus Chasadim. Nowadays, when we have no Bais Hamikdash, and are unable to offer korbonos, our tefillos serve as a substitute for the

pillar of Avodah. Thus, the Sages instituted eighteen berachos in the Shemona Esrei prayer that we recite three times each day, to correspond to the vertebrae of a person and to the eighteen times that the phrase כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ appears during the construction of the Mishkan.

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו קְרָסָיו קְרָשָׁיו בְּרִיחָיו וְעַמֻּדָיו וַאֲדָנָיו 39:33

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way. Then a peasant came along. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant tried to move the stone to the side of the road.

After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. Satisfied, he was about to continue on his way when he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand; every obstacle presents an opportunity for one to gain.



When the Mishkan was fully complete, no one was able to erect it due to its enormous weight. Moshe even asked how a human being can put

it up. Hashem answered, "Involve yourself with your own hands and it will rise upright on its own." Explains **R' Moshe Sternbuch**, of course a person couldn't do it on his own. But what Moshe needed to do was show his effort and Hashem would take care of the rest.



R' Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtze ZT"L would say: "If one opens up a large fish, he will usually find a smaller fish inside. However, the tail of the small fish is never facing in the same direction as the tail of the large fish. On the contrary, the head of the small fish is always facing the tail of the large fish. This indicates that the large fish did not make the effort to catch the small fish; the small fish swam right into the large fish.

So too, a person need not spend all his effort trying to earn a living; Hashem will make sure that his living will come right to him!"

Pearls of Wisdom

The Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah, Rav Alexander Ziskind of Horodna, zt"l, used to Daven to Hashem right before he would Bentch. His asked Hashem to please prevent anyone from knocking at his door while he was Bentching, so that he might be able to recite the entire Birchas HaMazon without having his concentration interrupted!

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

Protection and Blessings

Dovid HaMelech instituted the saying of one hundred brachos daily. These daily brachos drive away any barriers that separate yidden from Hashem. The Zohar teaches that the brachos are keys that open up doors to Hashem's salvation and brachos.

The Zohar writes, "When a soul is ready to descend to this world, Hashem makes it swear that it will keep the mitzvos and do Hashem's will. Hashem gives him one hundred keys...". The Zohar explains that the keys are the one hundred brachos that we say daily. These keys open up the doors for all types of blessings. We shouldn't be surprised, therefore, that the one hundred brachos can bring so much goodness. Every brachah is a key, opening up blessings for the individual, and for the entire world.



It is hard for many people to fathom that something as easy and as simple as reciting a brachah can bring so much good. Perhaps this is the reason people do not attribute the proper respect and appreciation for the brachos. But we must know that there are matters that seem small, which are truly great in Hashem's eyes. The Zohar also teaches, "When a yid recites a brachah, there are no doors or angels that will stop it [from going up to Hashem]. [In heaven] they proclaim, 'This is a gift for the King!' And the brachah causes [the person who made the brachah] to be blessed.'"

People are prized by Hashem like the stars. Why are they compared specifically to stars? **The Ben Ish Chai zt"l** explains that stars seem small, but really each star is extremely large. There are millions of stars; each one appears to be tiny and almost insignificant, but each star is far larger than we can imagine. Similarly, the gabai tzedakah and the milamdei tinokos are doing precious communal services. The value of their deeds isn't always recognized and appreciated, but like stars they are extremely precious to Hashem. Similarly, there are many deeds we do that we think are small and insignificant – and an example is saying brachos. We say one hundred brachos daily. They seem small and unimportant, but from them we enjoy immense blessings and protection. They are small in our eyes, but they are great to Hashem's.

In every single brachah, we have the awesome privilege to say Hashem's name. Hashem created the world with this holy Name. Therefore, when one makes a brachah, he is keviyachol tapping into the source of creation.

Rabbi Yoel Gold - The Master Plan

The year spent learning in Israel as a seventeen-year-old boy was phenomenal for Joel Bess. It instilled within him a love for learning and a love for Israel. As the summer rolled around, Joel said goodbye to Israel for the meantime and headed back home to Los Angeles for the next couple of months. He obtained a summer job and enjoyed the time at home.

One day, Joel received a call from a friend of his, Yechiel Saltzburg, who had been his roommate back in Israel. "Joel, I've always wanted to come to LA. Would it be okay if I come visit for a short while and stay at your home?" "Of course you can!" Joel enthused. And so it was.

Yechiel planned the trip out to LA along with his friend Mordy. After Yechiel and Mordy landed in LA, Yechiel rented a car in his name that only he was permitted to drive.

One night, Joel had trouble falling asleep. As he looked over to his side, he noticed that Yechiel had left his car keys on the table. It seemed like a fun, enjoyable idea to go for a spin together with Mordy in the middle of the night, and that is exactly what they did.

"We were only four blocks away when all of a sudden a car backed up and we smashed right into it. I remember panicking and telling Mordy that we better get out of there." The car was under Yechiel's name and Joel had no idea what that would mean for himself and insurance. Without delaying much, Joel and Mordy ran back to the house shaking.

When they finally made it back to the house, they were completely beside themselves. Just barely getting out the words, they relayed to Yechiel how they had borrowed the car without permission and had gotten into an accident. As young teenagers, they did not know what to do.

"I have an idea," Joel said. "Why don't you, Yechiel, go back to the scene of the accident and tell them that you drove the car, but thought that you were being carjacked, so you immediately ran away. Now that you feel safe, you are coming back and want to pay for the damage."

The three boys agreed on the idea, and headed back out. Joel guided Yechiel towards the accident site, while he and Mordy watched from a distance. As Yechiel approached the cops, who had by now surrounded the area, he began explaining what had happened. "I was driving and not paying full attention, and the next thing I knew, I rammed into the car next to me. I got scared because I had heard about carjacks in the past, and so I ran. I'm not from LA, and I was frantic." "Sir," said the officer in a firm tone of voice, "you hit someone else and you left." "Yeah," replied Yechiel, "but here I am

now; I came back." "Sir, that is a hit and run." "The next thing I knew," said Yechiel, "they handcuffed me." Joel and Mordy looked at each other mortified. They could not believe what had just happened. Yechiel was getting arrested for no fault of his own. They led Yechiel into a holding cell with a number of other convicted fellows. It was an absolute nightmare for Yechiel, all as a result of something he didn't do.

Yechiel got out on bail the next day, but he could not bear to look at Joel or Mordy. He was beyond infuriated and disgusted with them. "I will never forgive you Joel," he said. "I never want to see you again!"

Joel and Yechiel did not speak for some twenty years. They completely lost contact, aside from Joel staying aware that Yechiel spent considerable time flying back to LA to hire lawyers in a fruitless attempt to clear his record.

Twenty-five years later, Yechiel had moved on with his life. He lived with a beautiful family in Far Rockaway, New York, putting behind himself the incident which had occurred when he was a teenager. One day, though, he came across a gentleman whose last name was Bess. "Are you by any chance related to the Bess living in Los Angeles, Joel Bess?"

"Joel's my brother," the man replied. "That's amazing," said Yechiel. "I need to talk to him right now." Within seconds, Joel was on the phone. "Joel?" his brother said, "Yechiel wants to talk to you."

"Joel, it's Yechiel, I need to tell you a story. When is the next time you're going to be in New York?" "Just tell it to me," Joel said. "No," insisted Yechiel, "I need to tell you in person." Joel later arrived and met Yechiel, who told him, "Joel, I'm going to tell you a story you're not going to believe.

"Ten years after that incident with the car, I graduated from college with a finance degree. I began looking for a job, and after a

while, I knew that one particular interview I was going for would pretty much set me up with a steady position. After the interview, I was directed to Human Resources, where I just needed to fill out some employee paperwork, after which I would be all ready. I readily answered all the questions, until I got to the last one. 'Were you ever arrested?' I thought to myself, 'Yes, I was, but it wasn't my fault.' Yet I checked off yes anyway. I never heard back from them. Apparently, they didn't want to hire someone who had such a record."



At this point, Joel felt terrible and began profusely apologizing again to Yechiel. "Yechiel," he said, "I'm so sorry." Yechiel grabbed Joel's arm. "Joel, listen. It turned out that the criminal record that you gave me saved my life. You see, that job I would have gotten would have placed my office at the World Trade Centre. I would have been there on that fateful day of 9/11 and I wouldn't be here today talking to you. If I hadn't sat in jail back then, who knows what would have happened to me?"

"When I heard what Yechiel had to say," related Joel, "I didn't say to myself, 'Oh wow! I'm so happy I stole the car.' Rather, I then realized that even when we make unwise decisions that we regret, G-d still has a plan for us. Even then, everything that happens is for a reason."

But what was even more incredible about this whole story came to light when Yechiel looked back at his court documents which he had

kept from the court proceedings. Yechiel himself had never realized before that the expungement letter which wiped his record clean and was sent to him by the judge was dated 9/11.

Ultimately, there is much more to what occurs in the world than we know and can understand. G-d has His master plan and knows what each and every one of us need in life. All we can do is our best, and Hashem will take care of the rest. "I definitely learned that lesson from that day," said Joel. "I will never forget it."

Rabbi Yitzchok Fingerer - A Very Important Person

It was a known fact in the school. One particular boy was notorious for being a difficult student who wouldn't follow school rules and classroom directions. Teachers were not too thrilled to have him as their student each year, considering that they could just imagine the challenges they were bound to confront.

But one day during his sixth-grade year, it all changed. The surprising thing was that it literally changed overnight. One day he was misbehaving, non-compliant and disruptive, and the next he was respectful, attentive and studious. His friends and even more so his teachers were at a loss to explain the cause for such a turnaround in his behaviour and attitude. A few years later, after developing even more as an excellent student, he went on to become the 8th grade valedictorian and serve as the recognized pride of the entire school. It was quite phenomenal.

While he and his friends and teachers placed his past history of elementary school years behind him, one teacher was particularly interested in something. No one had ever asked the boy what was it that brought him to where he was that day of graduation? It was a puzzling mystery that no one had ever understood. What was the impetus for him completely changing and becoming such a great a student? That was the million-dollar question.

"No one has ever asked me about this," the boy told the teacher, "but I'm glad you have." The boy then went on to explain.

"There was a day in my life when things were pretty rough. I had gotten into trouble in class and I knew the principal wanted to have a talk with me. I was called into the office and the principal sat me down. We began talking until, all of a sudden, he received a phone call, to which he answered. But the conversation did not last that long.

"Excuse me," the principal told the other person on the line, "would you be able to call me back later; right now I have someone very important in my office." And with that, the principal hung up the phone and turned back to me to resume our discussion. I ended up not getting expelled from the school, although I was not in the greatest position at that time.

That night I went home a bit confused. Who was the very important person in the principal's office that he was referring to? As far as I knew, it was only the principal and I in the room. I tossed and turned at the thought of who he could have meant, but it simply baffled me. Until, to my surprise, I figured it out. He must have been referring to me. I was the very important person. I had never before been called important, let alone by the principal or any other esteemed authority figure. But there must be something to it.

I began thinking of why I was in the principal's office altogether, and if the very important person I was understood to be in fact belonged there. I rightfully concluded that I could expect much more from myself, and ought to in fact try to do so. I decided to do my best to improve my behaviour and work harder to become a better student. Sure enough, I began to see improvements, which my teachers also noticed. By the end of the year, I was looked upon as a completely different student than I had been before. And things only progressively got better from there. I scaled up and up the academic ladder of achievement and proved to myself and

everyone else that I did have the capability to be an exceptional student.

It all began at that moment in the principal's office - "Excuse me, would you be able to call me back later; right now, I have someone very important in my office." Those words were seared into my heart and mind and provided me with the motivation to achieve extraordinary results, the likes of which neither my teachers nor I ever anticipated.



We are all important. Our children are important, because they come from parents who are important and are surrounded by friends, family and teachers who are also important. It is precisely this attitude which creates standards which we strive to attain and sets goals which will propel us to heights that we never imagined we were even capable of. But indeed, we are.

Essential Rabbi Nachman - The benefits of forgetting

Most people see forgetting as a problem, but I see it as a great benefit. If you never forgot anything, it would be impossible to serve G-d because remembering everything from the past, you would never be able to lift yourself up to G-d. Whatever you tried to do, you would constantly be disturbed by your memories of the past. But having the power to forget, you do not need to be disturbed by the past.

This is very important when trying to serve G-d. Most people are troubled by the past, especially when trying to pray. Precisely then

their minds become filled with all kinds of distracting thoughts about their business, household and other affairs. They worry that maybe they did something wrong or should have acted differently.

When a person tries to pray or study, he can easily become troubled by thoughts about past wrongdoings and personal failings. This is a universal problem, as we all know. The best advice is simply to forget! As soon as something is over and done with, regret whatever you must and then push it out of your mind and pay it no further attention. Don't even start rehashing things that are over and done with. Understand this well, because it is a very important principle.

In Torah study too, G-d gave us the power to forget so that we should always appreciate the Torah as we did the first time we learned it. Since you forget, relearning or reviewing a lesson is like learning it anew, and you appreciate it as much as the first time.

Imagine a group of men who have been hired to fill up barrels that are full of holes. Everything they pour into the barrels leaks out. The fools ask what purpose there is in trying so hard to fill the barrels if everything poured in leaks out. But the wise man says, "What do I care? I get paid for each day of work. Even if the barrels leak, my wages won't be reduced!"

Similarly, even if you forget what you learn, your reward will not be reduced. In the future G-d will make you remember everything you ever learned, even if you forgot it during your lifetime. The same applies to those teachings of the true Tzaddik that you do not understand. In the world to come you will be able to understand them. In the life to come, your soul will remember and understand all the Torah you heard and learned in this world.

Happy is the man who spends his days in Torah and devotion. *Sichot Haran #26*

נפלאות הבורא - Hashems Amazing World



The Crocodile Bird - Egyptian Plover

The bird widely known as the "crocodile bird" is correctly called an Egyptian plover, or Pluvianus aegyptius. It lives in parts of Africa, frequently around tropical rivers and human activity. This tiny bird grows to about 7 to 8 inches long and weighs less than 3 ounces. You might think the little bird is either brave or stupid. But there's a method to what appears to be madness. The plover routinely sticks his head in a croc's mouth and lives to tell the tale.

So why do these little plovers do it? Why are they so careless about their health and safety?

The crocodile bird, despite the fact that it acts like a dental hygienist, is merely enjoying a good meal. After the crocodile eats a large animal, such as an entire cow, he suns himself on the banks of the river with his mouth open. Crocs swallow their prey whole, but bits of meat gets stuck between their teeth anyway, and they can't very well floss. Crocodiles cannot sweat through their skin like humans can, or through their paws like dogs. To dissipate heat, they bask on the banks with their mouths open. The plover comes along and, using his sharp little beak like a toothpick, removes the bits of meat from between the crocodile's teeth. This feeds the plover and removes parasites from the croc's mouth.

The plover serves as a security alarm system for the crocodile. If, while in the croc's mouth, the plover senses danger from an oncoming

animal, she screams and flies away. This behaviour alerts the crocodile to the imminent danger, so he can slide into the water and out of harm's way as well. In this way, the plover keeps her source of free food safe for future use -- a service the croc, no doubt, appreciates regardless of the motive.

This is but one of many unlikely cooperative arrangements that we find in the plant and animal kingdoms. Every one of these relationships speaks for a Creator and against the idea that either these creatures, or their cooperation, evolved naturally. Evolutionists have written whole books on the subject. Yet they don't seem satisfied that they have explained how these relationships could develop through evolution.

We agree that they have no explanation. Nor are they ever going to find one, since the only answer is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made a beautiful and perfect creation! (Rabbi Eliyahu Tobal)



A person starts his day in the morning and makes himself a cup of coffee. He puts the bitter coffee in a mug, and adds the sweet sugar to it, pours in the boiling hot water, and then adds some cold milk. He is now holding a cup full of contrasts: hot, cold, bitter, and sweet. Then he says, "Ribono Shel Olam! I don't know how my day will be, bitter, sweet, hot, or cold. But one thing I know for sure, it will be Shehakol Nehiyeh Bidvaro, everything will be as You say it will be!" And that is how a Jew should start their morning, knowing that Hashem will choose just what is right for him out of a world of contrasts!

Hope For the future just like the Tribe of Don Written by Benjamin A Rose

וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לֶשֶׁם שְׁבוֹ וְאַחְלָמָה: "the third row: leshem, shevo, and achlamah" *(39:12)*



The Kohein Gadol (the High Priest) wore the Choshen (Breast plate) that contained 12 gems, each representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The "leshem" gem represented the tribe of Dan. This gem was unique in that it reflected images upside-down.

A question can be asked, why was this particular gem a suitable match for the tribe of Dan? I would like to propose the following answer, Bezras Hashem: In Bereishis 46:23, it states that when Yaakov and his sons entered Egypt , Dan had only one son named Chusim. To many it would appear that the Tribe of Dan would be the smallest tribe.

Yet, in Bamidbar 2:26 when the Israelites were being counted in the desert, the tribe of Dan is the second highest in terms of the counting. This is precisely the reason why the "leshem" stone was chosen for the tribe of Dan in order to teach us a very important lesson. Whatever a person's reality may be presently, is by no means an indication of the future… This is why an upside-down image is a characteristic of Dan's gem.

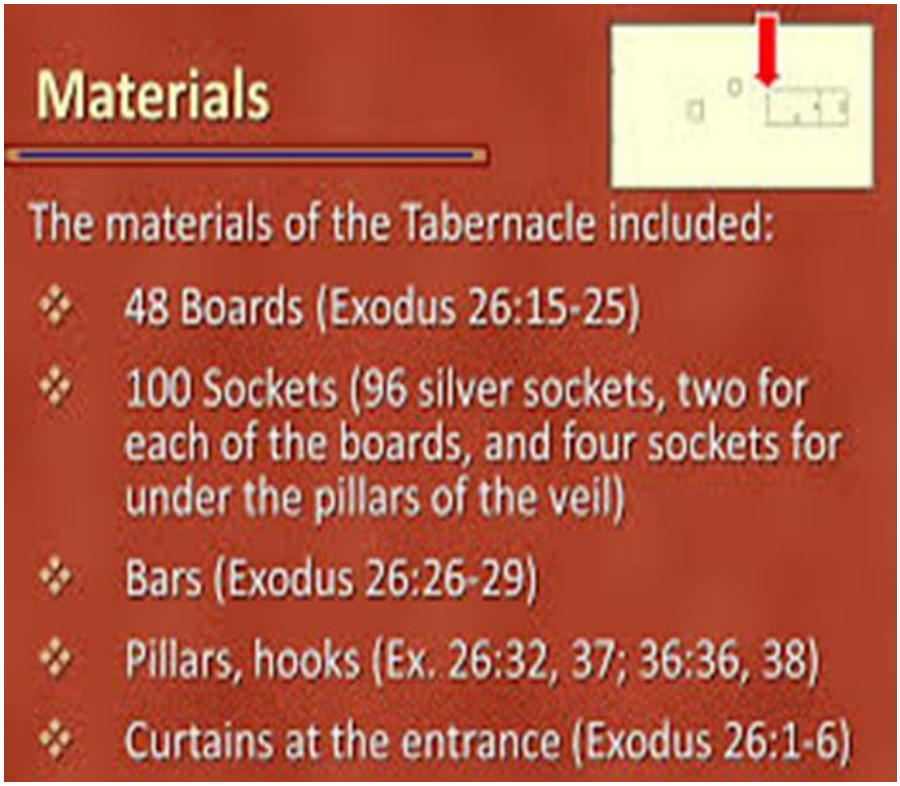
At first glance Dan might seem to be the smallest tribe, yet in the future it emerged as the greatest in numbers. A person might think that he or she is lacking in good deeds and Mitzvos presently, so how can I ever expect to grow in my Avodas Hashem. However, we must look at Dan's gem and begin to understand that things can definitely

change for the better. Even if a person has only 1 Mitzvah presently, this is by no means an indication of the future. The tribe of Dan teaches us the concept of hope as represented by the "leshem" gem.

Let us all try to trust in Hashem and perhaps change our narrow perceptions of the world.

Just like the "leshem" gem has the ability to change images, so to is it possible for our lives to be altered for the better. Perhapes we can begin with 1 Mitzvah and see how it multiplies to many more.

Parsha Pages



100 Sockets **שמות לח,כז: וְאֵת אַדְנֵי הַפָּרֹכֶת מְאַת אֲדָנִים** Correspondingly, says the **Ba'al haTurim**, they later instituted the recital of a hundred Berachos per day. This is most appropriate, since the sockets are called 'Adonim' (from the word 'Adon' - master), and what is the purpose of a Beracha if not to acknowledge that G-d is our master, in whichever facets that particular Beracha covers.

Other allusions from 100 include: **מְיֻסָּדִים עַל-אַדְנֵי- שר השרים ה,טו** פָּז the word **על** has a Gematria of 100 as if to read, "set into 100 sockets (and plated with) finest gold.

100 amos high walls of the Bais haMikdash.

"Bearly" recognisable Written by Rabbi Daniel Leeman



'Shemos', the second of the five books of the Torah, is 'the book of exile and redemption'. In the book of Shemos though, we read not only of the exile and redemption, but also of the giving of the Torah, entering the land of Israel and also all of the lengthy details of the transportation and building of, and finally the service in the Tabernacle. Accordingly, it is pointed out, that even though we might have been physically redeemed from Egypt, the spiritual redemption was incomplete until the Children of Israel returned not only to their homeland but also to the level of their forefathers (upon whom the Divine presence dwelled).

And so, just like the very first verse of 'the book of exile and redemption' deals with the exile, so too the book continues until the complete, spiritual redemption has taken place. (Excuse me for being pedantic, but…) Why then do we not conclude with the verse "the honour of G-d filled the Tabernacle"? Instead, we include the final few verses reiterating how the clouds of glory would ascend above the Tabernacle during the day and how a pillar of fire would take its place at night to the eyes of the Children of Israel throughout their journeys?

R' Shimshon Dovid Pinkus, of blessed memory, was not exactly one to dress into fancy dress on Purim. But, he related, one year, he indeed dressed up… as a bear. When his young son caught sight of a

bear in his house, he became scared; so, he ran towards his father-bear and, pulling on his leg called out for help "Daddy! Daddy!"

Night represents the dark times, our exiles, when it is harder to recognise our Father in Heaven. Day represents the redemption when His presence is as clear as day. Perhaps the book of exile and redemption concludes with the presence of the honour of G-d by day and night throughout the journeys of the Children of Israel alluding to G-d's presence throughout our exiles. When we recognise our Father in Heaven from amidst our dark exile, only then will we be finally redeemed… may it happen speedily in our days – and nights!

The Torah Gadol and the Cat



Rav Reuven Reich once related that decades ago, a young boy who liked to take pictures of the holy Tzadikim, came to the house of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlit"a**. He went into the Rav's home and took a rare picture of Rav Chaim feeding a cat who came looking for food.

After the photo was taken by the young man, Rav Chaim asked him to stop taking pictures, but the young man continued to take more pictures. In response, Rav Chaim got upset and said, "That's rude. I'm asking you to stop." Hearing Rav Chaim get upset at him, the boy panicked, and he opened his camera and exposed all the film, which ruined all the pictures.

Twenty-five years passed since then, and this young man was Bentched to raise a family. Before one of his sons was about to become a Bar Mitzvah, he came to visit Rav Chaim Kanievsky with the Bar Mitzvah boy to get a Brachah.

When he entered to see Rav Chaim, the Rav took one look at him and immediately said, "I've been searching for you for 25 years. You are the boy who took a picture of me feeding the cat, and I wanted to ask forgiveness for getting angry with you."

The young man was so surprised that Rav Chaim had recognized him after so much time had passed and how much different he looked from so long ago, and he of course forgave Rav Chaim with a full heart.

Rav Reuven Reich commented about how special the fear of Aveirah is of such a great Tzadik, that it had been on his mind for so long to clear the record and get forgiveness for something that had happened 25 Years earlier.



A Swimming Tip for Life By Rabbi Avraham Birnbaum

During the 1960's, when Reb Avraham was a yeshiva student, he learned at the Vizhnitzer Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. Young Avraham had been orphaned at an early age, and his not having a father weighed heavily on him. As a result, he was a sensitive boy and often felt very homesick. Also, he found the yeshiva lacking in cleanliness and he didn't like the food and he became depressed as a result. **The Vizhnitzer Rebbe at the time, Rabbi Chaim Meir Hager**, author of Imrei Chaim, noticed that the boy was discomforted and unhappy.

He took the boy under his wing and suggested that perhaps a little vacation from yeshiva would be a good idea.

The Imrei Chaim arranged for Avraham to travel to Netanya, where he would spend a few days in the seaside town and visit the separate beach there [secluded, with separate half-day shifts for women and men]. Avraham went to the beach and walked around on the sand, but didn't enter the water. Others at the beach were swimming, but Avraham hung back and just watched wistfully. It so happened that the **Gerer Rebbe, Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Alter**, known as the **Pnei Menachem**, was also at the beach. At that time, he was not rebbe, but rather rosh yeshiva of Yeshiva Sefas Emet, the flagship yeshiva of Ger in Jerusalem, a position that he was appointed to in 1957 and held for 35 years before assuming the mantle of leadership of Ger in 1992.

He noticed the somewhat forlorn-looking yeshiva boy and went over to greet him. During the conversation, he asked Avraham why he wasn't going into the water like everyone else. Avraham answered truthfully, "I am an orphan. My father passed away when I was young before he was able to teach me how to swim. I am afraid to go into the water because I cannot swim." The Pnei Menachem smiled and said, "Don't worry! I will teach you how to swim."

The Rosh Yeshiva then waded into the sea together with the orphaned boy and taught him how to swim. Once Avraham got the hang of it and he had sufficiently mastered the art of swimming, the Pnei Menachem felt that he could be left on his own. However, before returning to dry land, he gave Avraham one last piece of advice - six words that Reb Avraham says made such an impact on him that it has remained vividly etched in his mind for the fifty years since it was given. The Pnei Menachem said, "Just remember one thing: ***'Zolstu shtendig halten der kop aroif.' -- 'Always hold your head up…'"***

A Refined Soul By Rabbi David Sutton



The following story was told over by Rav BenSion Felman, who was very close to the **Chazon Ish (Rabbi Avraham Y. Karelitz, zt"l**). When he was still single, he had a grandmother that lived in his house, and she wasn't well. The grandchildren set up a rotation system to visit her.

For some reason, the grandmother had a special place in her heart for this boy and she asked him to come more often than the others in the rotation - twice a week, instead of once every two weeks. The boy was learning in Yeshiva at the time, and wasn't sure if he should give up his learning time to visit his grandmother.

As he often took walks with the Chazon Ish, he decided to ask him what to do. The Chazon Ish listened very carefully, and asked some questions to get some details about why she wanted him specifically, what was special about him, etc.

Once he got the full picture, the Chazon Ish told him that he should spend as much time with his grandmother as she wanted.

"But what about Talmud Torah," the boy asked.

The Chazon Ish replied, "Not only are you fulfilling the mitzvah of chesed and bikur holim, you are also fulfilling the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah."

This was even harder for the boy to understand. How could he be learning if he was visiting his grandmother?

The Chazon Ish said, "Torah is a spiritual, high and lofty concept. We want the Torah to connect to us, yet we are physical beings. How can the spiritual Torah connect to a physical being?"

The Chazon Ish explained that, "The Torah only connects to a refined soul." In order to merit that the Torah becomes part of you, you need a refined soul. That is the receptacle for the Torah. And that is how you connect to the Torah. How does one acquire this refined soul?

It happens with chessed, by giving into others, and middot Tovot. When a person gives up of himself for others, as in this case when he was asked to give up his learning in order to visit his grandmother, that creates refinement of the soul, and that will cause the Torah to connect.

He said that it doesn't mean that you have to close your Gemarah to go looking for opportunities, but when an opportunity does come, you have to take advantage of it. "Now that you have this opportunity, you should realize that every second you spend with your grandmother, give her medicine and involve yourself with her, you are creating refinement in your soul and that will cause the kedusha of the Torah to better connect to you. This is not just a fulfillment of the Mitzvah of hesed, but it is also fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah."

What a powerful lesson for all of us who want to be great learners, and yet sometimes feel that when we visit somebody, we are missing out on our learning. That is not the case. If anything, we are enhancing it. Have a wonderful day.

A Wise Man would say:

"Life - and especially marriage - is not about finding the right person but creating the right relationship. It's not how we care in the beginning, but how much we care till the very end."

Why Do Some Point at the Uplifted Torah? By Yehuda Shurpin



Either at the beginning or conclusion of the Torah reading (depending on whether you follow the Sephardic or Ashkenazic custom), someone lifts the opened Torah scroll and slowly turns to his right and left in order to show the script to the entire congregation. This is known as hagbaah.

The congregation meanwhile tries its best to make out some of the writing, and recites the verse *Vezot haTorah* ("And this is the Torah which Moses set before the children of Israel ..") as well as other verses, depending on the custom.

The Askenazic minhag is to bow to the sefer Torah. (Mishna Berurah) Additionally, some point to the Torah with their finger while reciting the verses. Some use the index finger, while others use their pinky finger to point, which many believe is a Sephardic custom.

What are the origins and reasons behind this custom? As we will see, most of the sources give explanations for using the index finger. The use of the pinky finger seems to be a relatively new phenomenon.

Earliest Mention—Expression of Love

The earliest mention of this custom seems to be the responsum from Rabbi Mordechai Krispin (b. circa 1730), who served as rabbi of the island of Rhodes. He finds support and justification for the custom from the Midrash, which states that, unlike with pointing to an image of a king of flesh and blood—which is considered insolent and is punishable by death—when the children come to the *beis*

Hamidrash and point at G-d's Name, G-d considers the act of the child "elevating himself over G-d" an expression of love.

He concludes that people rely on this Midrash to point at the Torah during *hagbaah*.

Rabbi Chaim Palachi (1788–1868) explains that the reason some point specifically with the index finger is based on a series of five-word statements in Psalms 19 in praise of the Torah, starting with "[The] Torah [of the] L-rd [is] perfect, restoring [the] soul . . ."

In each one of these statements, the Name of G-d is the second word. Since the entire Torah itself is considered "the Name of G-d," it is appropriate to use the second finger—which corresponds to G-d's Name—when we point to the Torah. He adds that this is also the reason why, during the marriage ceremony, there is a custom to place the ring on the bride's index finger (not the "ring finger"), as this finger corresponds to G-d's Name).

Some explain that the reason for pointing may be connected to the Talmud's statement that when the verse says *zeh* ("this"), it indicates something so visible that one can point to it with his finger. Thus, when we say "This is the Torah" we point with our fingers.



So where does the pinky finger come in?

The earliest source that mentions pointing with the pinky is the Torah anthology *Me'am Lo'ez*. This would seem to be an even earlier source than the responsum of Rabbi Mordechai Krispin mentioned above, since the *Me'am Lo'ez* was authored by Rabbi Yaakov Culi (d. 1732). Unfortunately, however, Rabbi Culi passed away before he was able to finish his work. The section in Devorim that mentions the custom to point at the Torah with the pinky seems to have been added much later by Rabbi Shmuel Kroizer (1921–1997).

This not only means that it is a relatively recent source, but also that, despite the conception that this is a Sephardic custom, the earliest source for pointing with the pinky is recorded by an Ashkenazic rabbi.

Despite this, several contemporary explanations have been offered as to why some use the pinky to point.

The Hebrew word for "the pinky," *hazeret* (**הזרת**), has the numerical value of 613 (if you include the word as a whole as part of the count). Thus, pointing with the pinky indicates the Torah, which has 613 mitzvahs.

Some explain that the smallest finger is used to demonstrate that the Torah is only acquired through humility.

Each of the five fingers is associated with one of the five senses, and the pinky is associated with the sense of hearing. Thus, some explain that the pointing of the finger is meant to reflect the Jews' statement *Na'aseh v'nishma,* "We will do and hear," at the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. With this statement, we declared that we would follow the Torah even before we necessarily understood everything.

Respect

Alternatively, some explain that since pointing with the index finger may not be seen as respectful, the pinky is used instead.

Some conjecture that the custom of pointing may be traced to Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the Arizal, who would approach the Torah so that he could actually read the letters, which, he said, draws down a "great spiritual light."

Thus, pointing at the Torah may simply be a way to visually focus on the words.

Alternatively, some hypothesize that the custom of pointing came from the practice of reaching out to kiss the Torah scroll as it made

its way to the reading podium. Not everyone was close enough to actually touch the Torah, and some would just stick out their hand and then kiss it as a way of "kissing the Torah."

Pointing during *hagbah* would thus align with the Sephardic custom to do *hagbah* right when the Torah scroll reaches the podium and before the Torah is actually read.

In the Time of the Redemption

As you can see, pointing at the Torah is not a universal custom and its origins aren't entirely clear.

Nevertheless, we do find in the Talmud (as some who discuss this custom point out), that there will be a time when the righteous will point:

Ulla of the city of Bira'a quoted Rabbi Elazar: In the future, G-d will arrange a dance of the righteous, and He will be sitting among them in the Garden of Eden, and each and every one of them will point to G-d with his finger, as it is stated: "And it shall be said on that day: Behold, this is our G-d, for whom we waited, that He might save us. This is the L-rd; for whom we waited. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

May it be speedily in our days!

Working on our Middos

Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l, would frequently say about Shidduchim, when someone would ask him what they should be looking for. He said, "There is only one prescription, one recipe for success. It's not enough to look for the best person out there to marry. It's important **to try** to be the best person. No matter what you really are, or who you really are, you should always **try** to be the best!"

Rabbi YY Jacobson – Coffee = Life



Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev asked, "when did it become such a Jewish thing to start the day with a cup of coffee"? The Berdichever said as follows, a day is about to begin, so a Yid fills up a cup of coffee. So, what do you have in a cup of coffee? You have hot water and you have cold milk. You have bitter coffee beans and you have sweet sugar.

The day usually has moments when we feel like we're in hot water or in a space of coldness. Some bitter moments like coffee beans , and some sweet moments like sugar. And together we make a coffee, and we make a bracha. **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹקינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בִּדְבָרוֹ - *"Blessed are You Hashem, the King of the world, Shehakol, - everything, niheyeh b'devaro, comes into existence through His energy".***

From sugar cane, from coffee beans, from a cow that was milked, and we make from them a coffee, which in Yiddish is called ***kave***, which means hope! Like we say in the Pasuk - **קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה' *"Hope unto Hashem, strengthen yourself and He will fortify your heart, and hope unto Hashem"***

That's how you start off your morning. Now whether you drink coffee or not is irrelevant for this message. His point was that he was teaching people how you have to start your morning.

"One who desire the attention of others has not yet found himself." ~~ Rav Shlomo Wolbe

Breaking The Plate at The Tana'im



Why is it that the mothers are the ones to break the plate? Can't anyone just break the plate?

Are there any sources that explain the reasons that it is specifically the mothers ?

Nitei Gavriel - Shiduchim V'Tanaim - page 360 - 32:4 actually brings a few different Minhagim.

1 - The mothers break the plate

2 - The fathers break the plate

3 - The Chassan and the two fathers break one plate and the Kallah and the two mothers break a second plate.

He does not give any reason as to why those that do it in any particular fashion, do it just so. I do agree that most people that I am aware of the two mothers are the ones doing it.

He mentions in the name of the Shefa Chaim that the reason dishes are broken by the Tenaim and the wedding based on Braishis 30:23 where Rachel said "Osaf Elokim Es Cherposi" the Medrash in Braishis Rabbah 73:5 explains that so long a woman does not have a child there is no one to blame for anything that broke. Once a lady has a child she can always say the kid did it. Therefore we break them to show that from this Shidduch will come many children and she will have whom to blame for the broken things in the home. End of citation.

Perhaps based on this reason traditionally the mothers are the ones that break it, since it is indicating something specific for the woman.

Nit'e Gavriel: Shiduchim Us'naim has a whole chapter devoted to the breaking of the receptacle. Selected excerpts:

1. We break a receptacle immediately after reading the *t'naim* (deal)…

2. The custom is to break a… receptacle of earthenware because of the mourning for Jerusalem.…

3. Some say the breaking of the receptacle is a sign that the match is made…. However: …the main reason we have the custom of breaking a receptacle is to raise a memorial to the destruction at a time of joy…

… After reading the Tana'im one breaks a vessel - קדרה- in order to do a Zecher Lechurban, *but one should use a damaged vessel for this*. And under the Chuppa the Chosson breaks a glass utensil, and this can be an undamaged cup.

Note that he does not mention anything about who should break the plate. Also, he doesn't specify that it must be a plate.

Kavanah

One morning, a banker davened *shacharis* very quickly. **The Chofetz Chaim** told him that he shouldn't go to work that day.

"Why not?"

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "It is written in halachah that, 'one shouldn't skip over the words [of *Pesukei Dezimrah*] and one shouldn't swallow the words. He should say the words like someone who is counting money' (*Darkei Moshe* 51).

I saw how quickly you davened *shacharis* this morning. If you are going to count money in this manner, you're better off remaining home!"

See The Goodness – Rabbi Yaakov Harari

The gemarah ברכות ס' ע''ב says **חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שמברך על הטובה - *One is obligated to recite a blessing for the bad just as for the good.***

Obviously, we do not make the same bracha for good things and bad things. On good things, we say **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹקינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַטּוֹב וְהַמֵּיטִיב.** On bad things, we say **בָּרוּךְ דַּיַּן הָאֱמֶת.** But we have to bless each type with the same simcha and happiness.

In order to bring this message out, the gemarah brings a story of Rabbi Akiva who was travelling. He came upon a village looking for a place to sleep. Nobody wanted to take him in and help him.



So, he decided to sleep rough in the woods in the forest. He had a donkey, a rooster and a candle. During the night, the wind blows out the candle. His donkey and rooster get killed. Anything that could go wrong did go wrong. He was left all alone with nothing.

Subsequently, robbers came that night and plundered and pillaged the village. Rabbi Akiva was saved because of his misfortunes.[He was outside the village, they would have seen his light and heard his animals.] When all these misfortunes happened to him, he said," **כָּל דְּעָבִיד רַחְמָנָא - לְטַב עָבִיד** everything that Hashem does is for the good."

It is true that ultimately, all these bad things that happened to Rabbi Akiva saved his life. But where is the good in this difficult situation? Wouldn't he rather that he wasn't put into this dangerous situation in the first place?

The Maharal MiPrague says something very deep. He says that actually, Rabbi Akiva himself was supposed to be captured and his life was supposed to be in peril. What The Riboino Shel Olam did was to extinguish his candle in place of his neshama. The donkey was in place of his body. The rooster was in place of his ruach-spirit. So these happenings weren't just serving a good purpose, but they were good in themselves.

Sometimes we go through difficult situations in life. We have to realise, that although from our perspective, they may appear to be bad, but that Hakodosh Baruch Hu is actually causing good things to take place.

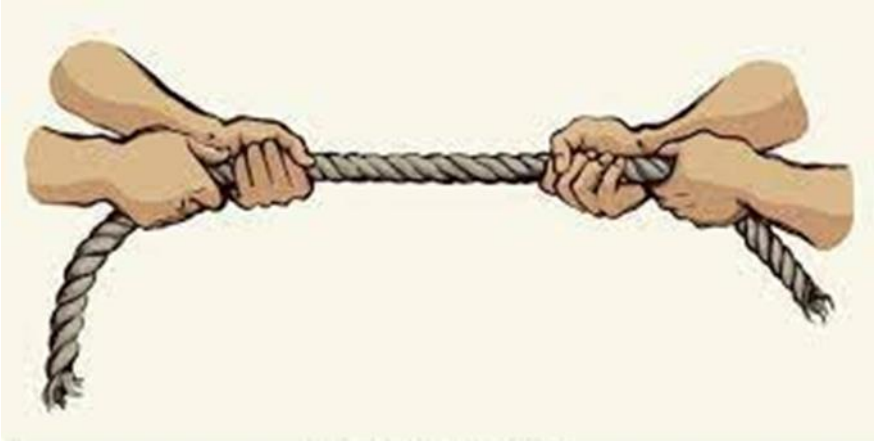
This is why we have to bentch Hashem, both for the good that we see and for the bad, both with happiness. Because even the bad is b'chesed.

As Dovid Hamelech says לְדָוִד ***[Tehilim 101:1]*** אם חסד אשירה מִזְמוֹר חֶסֶד־וּמִשְׁפָּט אָשִׁירָה לְךָ. ***If it is good, I will sing- if it is Mishpat, I will sing. Because Hashem has only one way of dealing with us- chessed!***

"Your past should make you a better person, not a bitter one. It's a place to learn from; not to live in."

"The word חשך – darkness, has the same letters as שכך - to forget. The biggest darkness in life is when we forget that Hashem is in control." ~ R' Uri Lati.

Rabbi Yechiel Spero – Let Go of The Rope



Somebody once came to **The Imrei Noam** and told him that there was a terrible machlokos going on in his community. The Imrei Noam told him something brilliant. He said, when there is a tug of war, and two people are pulling, who is holding up the other side? The fellow tugging at the opposite end.

He said, "let go of the rope and see what happens." It takes two to tango! If you do not respond when people bother you or hurt you, and you shake it off and let it go, if you are flexible, if you are רך כקנה ***-soft like a reed,*** then you can bend, and storms tornados and hurricanes can come, but they can't break you.

But, when you are a stubborn stalk, that refuses to move, then when the winds and storms come, they snap you in half. ***Let go of the rope and see what happens!***

Revach L'Neshama – Suspicious Accountants

In the beginning of Parshas Pekudei, the Pasuk gives an accounting of how much was donated for the Mishkan and what it was used for. Interestingly, it lists how much gold, silver and copper were donated but only gives an accounting of what was made with the silver and copper. Why does the pasuk not tell us exactly what was done with the gold, the same way it accounts for the silver and copper?

The Tzeidah LaDerech answers that the purpose of the accountings was because Klal Yisroel accused Moshe of pocketing some of the

donations. This was only so by the silver and copper. However, by the gold they had no reason to accused Moshe since the amount of gold (29 Kikar) donated was not physically sufficient to cover all that needed to be made out of gold. It was a miracle for that amount to suffice. They therefore had no thoughts that Moshe could have also taken some for himself. There simply was not enough to go around. Only by the silver and copper did these accusations arise, therefore there is a more detailed accounting by them.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Yehonoson Eibshitz - The Mishkan Testifies To Moshe's Honesty

אֵ֚לֶּה פְּקוּדֵ֣י הַמִּשְׁכָּ֔ן מִשְׁכַּ֖ן הָעֵדֻ֑ת (Pikudei 38:21). The Mishkan is referred to as the Mishkan HaEidus, that stands as testimony, but the Torah doesn't explain what it is a testimony to.

Rav Yehonoson Eibshitz explains that the Torah gives an accounting of all the precious materials of the Mishkan. How do we know that Moshe didn't keep something for himself?

The Medrash says that each of the Shevatim wanted the Bais HaKidash to be built in their portion of Eretz Yisrael. Hashem told them they were Ganavin, as they were all guilty in kidnapping Yosef. As such, the Bais HaMikdash cannot be built in the territory of a Ganav.

We often find that the Mishkan is called after the name of Moshe Rabbeinu. This is the ultimate proof that Moshe had clean hands and was not guilty of the slightest trace of theft. The Mishkan is the Mishkan HaEidus, "Asher Pukad Al Pi Moshe," that Moshe's accounting was completely transparent, and the money was all used properly.

Revach L'Neshama - Accounting For Silver But Not For Gold

The Ibn Ezra asks, when the torah counts the total amount of the silver it tells us exactly what each amount was used for and it tallies up the full sum. However, when it comes to the gold the torah tells us the total amount but doesn't provide a breakdown of what it was used for. Why not?

The Iturei Torah brings from the Tiferes Yehonoson that the silver was donated through the collection of the Machtzis HaShekel which each member of Klal Yisroel had to give. Among them there were bound to be suspicious people that would suspect that some of the funds were used improperly. Therefore, in order avoid conflict the torah gives a detailed breakdown of how the silver was used. However the gold was given only by the few truly generous ones. These good hearted people did not need an exact accounting of where their donations went.

Revach L'Neshama - Bnei Yisroel Learns To Follow Instructions

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה ***"Like Hashem Commanded Moshe"***. In Parshas Pekudei we find, after each item that Betzalel made it says, he made it exactly the way "Hashem commanded Moshe". Why was it necessary for the Torah to repeat this so many times?

The Bais HaLevi answers, the aveira of the Egel was that Klal Yisroel decided to make something to serve as a "go between" -between Hashem and Bnei Yisroel. Although their motives may have been L'Shem Shamayim, they sinned by not asking Hashem if he agreed to this way of serving him. Their Cheit was not doing "like Hashem had commanded".

Since the purpose of the Mishkan was to be Mechaper for the Egel, they had to make the Mishkan in total compliance with Hashem's command in order for the kapara to be acceptable. Therefore, the pasuk tells us after each step of its completion, that it was done exactly the way "Hashem commanded Moshe".



Revach L'Neshama - When Will Hashem Return Our Mashkon?

Rashi says in (38:21) that the Mishkan is called so because it is a "Mashkon"; a security guarantee for Hashem that we will keep the mitzvos. When we failed to keep it Hashem takes his Mashkon and destroyed the two Batei Mikdash.

The question is that the halacha clearly states that even when a creditor takes away the Mashkon he must return it for the debtor to use when he needs it. The classic example is that his work tools must be returned by day so he can earn a living. Why doesn't Hashem return to us the Bais HaMikdash? Our Merciful Father is surely charitable beyond the Torah's requirements.

Rav Yosef Chaim Kupshitz Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef said that the Mashkon is only returned if it is something that is essential for us to have in order to function properly. The fact that Hashem does not return it, is a sign that we don't consider the Bais HaMikdash critical to our lives. If we did Hashem would be obligated to return it.

May we all be zocheh to greet Pnei Moshiach Tzidkeinu, rejoice in the Binyan Bais HaMikdash, and witness the Hashroas HaShechina amongst us once again.



Vedibarta Bam

***"אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדת" "These are the accounts of the Mishkan, [the] Mishkan of Testimony."* (38:21)**

QUESTION: Rashi says in the name of the *Midrash* that the word *"Mishkan"* is repeated twice as a hint to the *Beit Hamikdash,* which was taken as a pledge *("mashkon")* in the two destructions for the sins of the Jewish people."

How does the word *"Mishkan"* — "Tabernacle" — hint at the *Beit Hamikdash?*

ANSWER: The first *Beit Hamikdash* stood for a total of 410 years and the second *Beit Hamikdash* lasted 420 years. The word "**משכן**" has the numerical value of 410 and the word "**המשכן**" has the numerical value of 415. If we add five to the numerical value for the five letters of the word, we have 420. (**רבינו בחיי**)

The *Gemara (Yoma* 21b) relates that in the second *Mikdash* there were five things missing which were in the first *Beit Hamikdash.* Therefore, the Torah's allusion to the second *Beit Hamikdash* (**המשכן**) has the numerical value of only 415. (**חתם סופר**)

Vedibarta Bam

"משכן העדת" *"The tabernacle of testimony."* (38:21)

QUESTION: Why is the *Mishkan* called, *"Mishkan Ha'eidut"* ?

ANSWER: From the time the *Mishkan* was built in the dessert until the construction of the first *Beit Hamikdash* by King Shlomo there elapsed a period of 479 years. The word **העדת** has the numerical equivalent of 479. This alludes to the fact that for 479 years the *Mishkan* served as a testimony to Hashem's dwelling among the Jewish people. (**רבינו בחיי**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ויעשו את בגדי הקדש אשר לאהרן כאשר צוה ה' את משה"
***"And they made the holy garments for Aharon, as G-d had commanded Moshe."* (39:1)**

QUESTION: Why was it necessary to stress "as G-d had commanded Moshe"?

ANSWER: The words "as G-d had commanded Moshe" are repeated 18 times in this *parshah*. Eighteen is equal to "*chai*" (**חי**) — "life." The Torah informs us that throughout his entire life, Moshe continuously strove to do as G-d commanded him. (**עי' בעל הטורים**)

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"אלה פקודי המשכן" ***"These are the accounts of the Mishkan..."* (38:21)**

QUESTION: The Torah is careful not to repeat a word or write an extra letter. Hence, the *parshiot* of *Vayakheil* and *Pekudei* which are a repetition of *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh* should have been omitted?

ANSWER: The Torah discusses at great length the episodes that took place when Eliezer goes to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak. When he meets with her family, the entire story is repeated. Rashi explains, "The ordinary conversation of the servants of the Patriarchs is more pleasing before Hashem than the Torah of the sons. Therefore, the section of Eliezer is repeated in the Torah, whereas many important principles of the law were given only by hinting." (See *Bereishit* 24:42, Rashi.)

The gravest sin ever committed by the Jewish people was the making and worshipping of the golden calf. It incited the wrath

of Hashem to the extent that He considered, G-d forbid, annihilating the entire people.

The *Mishkan* is referred to as the *Mishkan* of Testimony (**משכן העדות**) because it serves as a testimony that Hashem forgave the sin of the golden calf (see *Vayikra* 9:23, Rashi). Consequently, since the *Mishkan* accomplished forgiveness for His beloved people, He enjoys talking about it repeatedly.

(**לקוטי שיחות חט״ז**)

Vedibarta Bam

"אלה פקודי...בכל מסעיהם" ***"These are the accounts...Throughout all their journeys"*** **(38:21, 40:38)**

QUESTION: The number of *pesukim* and a word which adds up to that number is written at the end of every *Parshah* of the Torah. The word is supposed to serve as a *siman* (**סימן**) — a mnemonic for the number of *pesukim*. Why is this omitted at the end of *Parshat Pekudei?*

ANSWER: The reason *may be* due to the fact that in *Parshat Pekudei* there are 92 pesukim and the words "**בלי כל**" have the numerical value of 92. Possibly, in a early print of the *Chumash,* a typesetter who was a mediocre scholar noticed that it was written at the end of the *parshah* "**צ״ב, בלי כל סימן**". Erroneously, he understood it to mean "92, without any *siman,"* and therefore he omitted it.

"Nowhere does the Torah say, "Invite your guest to pray"; but it does tell us to offer him food, drink and a bed." ~~ The Chofetz Chaim

Vedibarta Bam

"ויקח ויתן את העדות אל הארן" ***"He took and he put the Tablets into the Ark."*** **(40:20)**

QUESTION: The word "*Vayikach*" — "he took" — seems extra; it should have just said, "He put the tablets into the Ark"?

ANSWER: When Moshe received the Tablets the *Mishkan* was not built yet. Moshe made an Ark of wood in which he placed the Tablets and stored it in his tent *(Devarim* 10:1). When the *Mishkan* was constructed, Betzalel made an Ark of gold to house the Tablets. Therefore, the Torah tells us that "*Vayikach*" — Moshe took out the Tablets from the temporary wooden Ark and "*vayitein*" — he put them into the permanent Ark of gold. (**רמב"ן**)

Vedibarta Bam

ותכל כל עבדת משכן אהל מועד ויעשו בני ישראל ככל אשר צוה ה' את משה ***"All the work of the Mishkan was completed and the Jewish people did according to all that G-d commanded Moshe."*** **(39:32)**

QUESTION: Why is it necessary to emphasize that the Jews did "according to all" that Hashem commanded Moshe? Who would dare to do otherwise?

ANSWER: According to *halachah,* **הָעוֹסֵק בְּמִצְוָה פָּטוּר מִן הַמִּצְוָה** — when one is involved in performing a *mitzvah,* he is exempt from doing other *mitzvot (Succah* 25a). When the Jews were preoccupied with the building of the *Mishkan,* there were many *mitzvot* that they did not fulfil. The *pasuk* tells us that once the work on the *Mishkan* was completed, the *B'nei Yisrael* resumed performing *all* the *mitzvot* of the Torah, which Hashem had commanded through Moshe. (**אמרי שפר**)

Parshah Thoughts -Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



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

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

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

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Yissochar Frand once related a story about the ***Chofetz Chaim, zt"l***, and how he strived to be honest and truthful in everything he did. When the *Chofetz Chaim* applied for a passport so that he could travel from Poland to *Eretz Yisroel*, he had to specify his profession on the application. Technically, although the *Chofetz Chaim* was a *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshivah*, he had never gotten *Semichah*, Rabbinic ordination.

He had written the *Sefer Chofetz Chaim*, he had written the *Mishnah Brurah*, he was one of the leading *Halachic* authorities of the generation at the time— but he had no official *Semichah*.

Although no one would have questioned that 'Rabbi' was his profession, the *Chofetz Chaim* refused to write it on the application. He felt that it wasn't true, as he was not officially a Rabbi.

He decided to telegraph **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, *zt"l***, and requested *Semichah* from him on the basis of the *Halachic* works he had written, and Rav Chaim Ozer telegraphed him back a letter of *Semichah*. Only then did the *Chofetz Chaim* write that he was a 'Rabbi' on his application.

Rabbi Frand said, "Can you imagine, the author of the *Mishnah Brurah* and the person who was accepted as the leading *Halachic* authority around the world, was asked to state his profession, and he wouldn't answer that he was a Rabbi?

The *Chofetz Chaim* would not allow even a shade of falsehood for himself, no matter how minor the detail might be!"

L'Maaseh



One year, the Manchester *Rosh Yeshivah*, **Rav Yehudah Zev Segal, *zt"l***, travelled to America to spend Pesach with his children. It was Rav Segal's *Minhag* to only eat *Matzos* that were baked under his personal supervision. Along with his suitcases, Rav Segal brought a few boxes of *Matzos* with him to the airport.

As he stood on line to check in his luggage, another traveller approached him and said, "Rabbi, I see that you have quite a bit of baggage. I'm a seasoned traveller and I can tell you that your things are going to be very much over the weight limits, and it's going to cost you a lot of money to take everything with you. Take my advice. Put those boxes on the side somewhere. No one will take them. When

you get to the counter, just show the clerk your suitcases, and later, when you board the plane, take your boxes with you. I assure you that no one will bother you, and you will save a lot of money."

Rav Segal looked at the man as if he had not heard him correctly. He said, "I don't understand. Are you suggesting that I try to trick the airline personnel? How can a person do such a thing? It's dishonest!" Rav Segal dismissed the man's suggestion and presented all of his bags and packages when his turn came to check in. The man was right that they surpassed the weight limit, and they told Rav Segal that to take all his boxes it would cost fifty British pounds (approximately 70 dollars) in baggage fees.

As he withdrew the money from his wallet to pay, Rav Segal happily remarked, "Another *Hidur* to beautify the *Mitzvah* of *Matzah*! There is more than one way to beautify a *Mitzvah*!"

Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(מ:לג) ויתן את מסך שער החצר ויכל משה את המלאכה '***...and he placed the screen of the gate of the Courtyard, and Moshe completed the work.***' (40:33)

The final words of the completion of the *Mishkan* are **מסך שער החצר** '***...and he placed the screen of the gate of the Courtyard***', immediately followed by **ויכל משה את המלאכה**, '***and Moshe completed the work***', indicating that all work was done.

The *Midrash Lekach Tov* states that the *Mishkan* was named after Moshe because whoever completes something, that item is named after him, as we always follow after the completion. Moshe also set his seal in the completion by adding his name to the first letters of the final three words of the completion: **מַסך שַער הַחצר** . (*Chaim Shel Torah* quoting *Sifsei Kohen al HaTorah*)

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



When the ***Chasam Sofer*** was a young man, he went to the city of Mainz to learn Torah while he boarded in someone's home. Also staying in the same house was a soldier named Paull de Montfort, who arranged for the *Chasam Sofer* to teach him how to speak German.

The soldier liked the *Chasam Sofer* because of his brilliance and good character traits and came to respect the Jewish people. Although the *Chasam Sofer* didn't mind teaching the soldier German, he felt bad that he had to take time away from his learning to give him lessons.

Many years passed and eventually persecution broke out, and a number of Jews in Pressburg were arrested, along with the *Chasam Sofer*— their *Rav*. Out of hatred, the police wanted to kill the *Chasam Sofer* because he was the leader of the generation.

When the *Chasam Sofer* entered the court, the judge recognized the great rabbi as his old friend— the young man who taught him German! He took one look at the *Chasam Sofer* and said he could go free. The saintly *rav* learned an important lesson from this event— that many times we do not understand why Hashem has things happen to us, but only at a later time do we sometimes see that it was all groundwork for a good cause!

V'halachtah B'drachav - The Ways of Hashem



The *Tzaddik*, **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev**, once dressed as a poor person and looked for a place to sleep at night. A rich person he asked refused to let this "beggar" stay at his house. Rav Levi Yitzchok found a poor *Melamed*, a teacher, and asked him to please host him, and the *Melamed* warmly agreed.

Years later when Rav Levi Yitzchok returned to this city as a famous, holy *Tzaddik*, he once again needed a home to stay in. The same rich man approached Rav Levi Yitzchok and insisted that he stay with him, but Rav Levi Yitzchok said, "What was the difference between Avraham and Lot? After all, they both opened their homes to guests. The difference was that Avraham saw his guests as idol worshipers, yet he opened his home to them anyway. Lot saw his guests as angels, and it's not so big a deal to open one's home to angels."

Rav Levi Yitzchok told him that a few years prior he visited as a beggar, but the rich man would not let the Rav stay in his home. Rav Levi Yitzchok turned down the invitation of the wealthy man and honoured the poor *Melamed* by staying with him instead.

"Having Bitachon requires us to have faith not only in Hashem's ability to provide for us, but in His ability to guide us towards our ultimate destiny." – Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler

Parshah Thoughts -Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



כִּי עֲנַן ה' עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל־בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־מַסְעֵיהֶם ***The clouds of Hashem were over the Mishkan for all to see, during the day as clouds and at night as fire, in all of their travels*** (40:38).

Rav Alexander Zusha Friedman (*Avnei Eizel in Ma'ayana Shel Torah*) suggests that this message is not limited to the travels of the *Mishkan*. In our lives, whether we are experiencing times of success, which feel as bright as the day, or times that feel like the darkest nights, we should realize that *Hashem* is always there for us and with us.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PEKUDEI



A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l - How to Avoid Talking Too Much

QUESTION: Is there an antidote against talking too much?

ANSWER: It depends where and when. If it's at work, so before you enter your place of work stop on the threshold and say, "Look here Chaim, how long will you shoot your mouth off? People ridicule you, they dislike you.

"I am only going to say what's absolutely necessary for politeness or for utility. So before I open my mouth I will ask myself two questions: Is it polite to say it? And is it something of utility, useful to say?"

It says, pi'huh pos'cha be'chochma v'soras chesed al le'shona, this wise woman in Mishlei opened her mouth only when there was wisdom, that's utility or Toras Chesed which is kindliness. So to say to somebody "good morning" or something like that, good. If it's useful, somebody needs a word to help him out in something, that's all.

Otherwise put a padlock on your lips. So these are the two criteria, is it chesed or chochma? Of course the highest chochma is Torah, but even any chochma, it's useful to open your mouth. So pi'huh pos'cha be'chochma v'soras chesed al le'shona, these two criteria: Is it useful? And is it something that's kindly? Otherwise, don't say it.

And that's the secret of being happily married; if you'll open your mouth only for kindliness or utility, you'll be happier in your married life and you'll live longer, and you'll be zoche to olam habah.

The Baal Shem Tov And the Power of a Song By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The Baal Shem Tov (Besht for short, originator of Chassidic Judaism some 350 years ago) once came to a certain town for a visit. All of the Jews in the area, young and old, turned out to greet him with joy and escorted him to the inn where he stayed.

It wasn't the first time he had visited here and previously he stayed in the inn of a Jew where he received the hundreds of people that came to seek his advice and blessings.

But this time when he arrived at the inn the owner intercepted him in the street and begged him not to enter.

"I fear for your life! Listen, you can hear them! A gang of drunken hooligans took over the place A real bunch of murderers, over twenty of them and they are looking for trouble. This is no place for the holy Baal Shem Tov! Please, there is another inn in town and the owner is a good friend of mine, I hate to do it but please I'll take you there."

But the Besht just smiled, assured him it would be all right and motioned for his followers to accompany him. He opened the door and the previously muffled noise blasted out loud and clear.

He took one step inside. When the ruffians saw the holy man standing in the door they froze in silence and in that moment the Besht motioned to a Jew standing behind him who was holding the hand of his small son, to step into the room and stand the boy on a nearby table. The man did so and the 'gang' looked on in interest.



"Now, Moshele" Said the Besht to the child, "sing something happy for our friends. Something that will make them dance."

The ruffians looked at one another, then at one who was obviously their leader who winked back at them as if to say 'what have we got to lose, let's see what happens' and the boy began to sing a lively Chassidic melody.

He had a beautifully clear voice, lively and full of pure happiness. The leader of the gang listened for a second then closed his eyes in drunken stupor and began to move his bowed head from side to side in rapture, a wide smile covering his face. After a minute he opened his eyes wildly, threw his head and arms back, opened his mouth wide and, as though he just found a hidden treasure, let out a scream of joy and began to dance. Spinning and leaping like a man

possessed to the music, jumping, sweating and pointing at the boy yelling, "You are Moshke and I am Ivan!! You are Moshke and I am Ivan!" while his friends whistled and clapped their hands in glee.

After a half-hour the Besht told the boy to stop. The leader, drenched in sweat and out of breath took a deep swig from a nearby bottle, approached the boy, took both of his hands in his own and said "you are Moshke and I am Ivan!! Thank you!!" All his men were smiling and laughing good heartedly.

The Baal Shem Tov miraculously had made peace. The Besht had his bags taken to his room, then walked to the nearby Synagogue followed by all the people, and the entire episode with the gentiles was forgotten.

Twenty years passed and the boy grew up. He married, settled down, had many children and went into business, becoming a wealthy cloth merchant and traveling the world. His home was open to the poor and many Yeshivas owed their existence to his generosity while he considered the charity he gave to be the secret of his success.

One time he was travelling on a lonely forest road in his carriage on the way to a big business deal. His work was fraught with danger; travel was always a risky business. But on the other hand, that was why people were willing to pay handsome prices for his wares and he firmly believed that his charity and good deeds would protect him. They always had.

It was an uneventful ride at first and after an hour he was already feeling safe, he had two strong, fresh horses and his driver was the best. Then suddenly the carriage stopped. He opened the door to see what had happened. A log had fallen across the road; he and the driver would have to move it. He got out and removed his coat.

Suddenly several frightening looking men armed with swords and knives popped out from behind trees and rocks all around them; it was a robbery!

Seconds later Moshe and his driver were lying on the ground bound and gagged. All their belongings had been confiscated and their carriage was being ransacked for money.

At first he was shaking with fear but then he regained his composure. "If now is the time for me to die" he said to himself, "then this is what G-d wants. So I should be happy. And if G-d wants to do a miracle, I should also be happy. And if He me to somehow get out of this by my own wits, then being sad and afraid certainly won't help. So in any case I have to be happy!" - And he began to sing a lively song.

One of the robbers yelled out at him, "Hey, shut up! What do you think, this a party?" Another scoffed over his shoulder "Hey, if he wants to sing his last song, well why not!" and the others laughed.

Then, suddenly, a third robber ran over to Moshe pulled out his knife and bent over him. He was like an animal. He smelled of whisky. 'This is my angel of death' Moshe thought to himself.

"Moshke! Moshke!!" the robber almost whispered. "You are Moshke and I am Ivan. Right?? Right Moshke?!" He removed the gag from Moshe's mouth and cut the ropes that bound him and continued as his eyes filled with tears.

"Sing Moshke, Sing!!! I know your song! You are Moshke. Right?" He was yelling now. "I know that song!"

He was almost crying. "That song you sang in the inn twenty years ago was...there was never...I can never forget it. It was the happiest moment of my life. That music made me crazy! For twenty years I have been crazy! I am Ivan!! Do you hear Moshke!!"

Now Moshe was standing up and rubbing his wrists where the ropes had been. "Release the driver!" Ivan yelled out "and give them back everything; the carriage, the horses, their money… everything!" He even tried to give Moshe bags of money and jewels as a present, but Moshe refused.

"Listen Moshe" Ivan said when everything had been given back. "Come here." He motioned that Moshe should follow him into the woods.

When they were far from the others he said, "Listen, Moshe. It is a miracle that you are here. Something is driving me mad. Do you hear? I can't understand why that song of yours back then made me so crazy. It did something to me. I can't explain it. I felt like my soul was going to explode; like crying and laughing at once. I've never been the same. I must understand it. What was so special about that song? I must know!"

The only thing Moshe could think to say was to ask the Baal Shem Tov. "The Besht also helps gentiles, surely he'll help you." And so it was. One week later they met at the entrance of Besht's synagogue in Mezibuz.

Ivan the robber felt completely out of place here and if it wasn't for that song, he would have left in an instant but there was no turning back now. They entered the Besht's room and before Ivan had a chance to open his mouth the Besht spoke.

"Since that day in the inn twenty years ago I have been waiting for you. "Ivan is not your name" the Besht continued. "It is Avraham…. You are a Jew. Yes, a Jew. And your father used to sing that song. "Your parents, Chaim Lev and Sara Sterna, were killed by Ukrainians in a Pogrom some fifty years ago when you were three years old. You escaped by running into the woods and lost your memory when you fell and hit your head on a rock. But you were discovered by an old gentile peasant and his wife who nursed you to health and raised you as their son.

"With your restless, intelligent soul, powerful body and lack of education it was inevitable that you turned to crime and succeeded. But now the time has come for you to return to the G-d of your fathers. Do not worry, Avraham, It is never too late; especially because all your sins were done due to 'temporary' insanity.

Ivan-Avraham began weeping, his body began to shake and bitter tears of repentance ran down his cheeks.

"Good!" said the Besht. "Cry. It's good to cry over sins. But you must never forget to be happy. A lack of happiness brought you to be a criminal and happiness brought you back. Remember, Avraham, you are a Jew! You can serve the Creator. But it must be with joy.

The Besht turned to Moshe, "sing the joyous song you sang back then!" Moshe began singing and the Besht motioned for him to take Avraham's arm and dance with him. He yelled out; "Moshe! sing! Faster! Avraham, dance!! Until finally Avraham was crying and laughing at once; like when he heard the song twenty years ago.

The Besht had miraculously returned another Jewish soul.

The Love of a Tzaddik for Even a Wayward Jew By Rabbi Shimon Finkelman

In the 1920's, a secularist leader in Eretz Yisroel, who was known for his outspoken criticism of the Torah community, suddenly became critically ill. He was brought to the British Missionary Hospital in Jerusalem which, as its name indicates, was owned and operated by Christian missionaries. The hospital was open only to Jews, for its real purpose was not to heal the sick but to introduce Jews to gentile beliefs. Near every bed was a copy of the "New Testament" and the walls of each room were decorated with religious proclamations. Jerusalem's rabbinate had issued a strict ban against even setting foot into the Missionary Hospital.

After being in the hospital for four weeks, the secularist's condition had deteriorated to the point where doctors declared that there was no hope for recovery.

The man's family realized that the only ones who could help them at that point were the doctors at Shaarei Zedek Hospital. Shaarei

Zedek had been founded by Jerusalem's Torah community; its staff, headed by the legendary Dr. Moshe Wallach, was known to be the best in the country. The family feared, however, that the patient would not be granted admittance into Shaarei Zedek, since he had ignored the rabbinate's ban and was known as a forceful opponent of the Torah community.



The family concluded that their only hope was to speak to the city's revered Rav, **Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, who was known for his kindness and love toward every Jew. Someone was chosen to represent the family, and he went to R' Yosef Chaim's humble home in the Old City.

As the man made his way through the streets of Jerusalem, a terrific thunderstorm struck. Wet and shivering, the man entered the Rav's home and found him deeply immersed in study. The visitor apologized and related the entire story.

R' Yosef Chaim promptly closed the sefer before him, donned his coat and prepared to leave for the hospital. Outside the thunderstorm was still raging, so the visitor blocked the door, refusing to allow the Rav to go out in such treacherous weather. "I only asked for a letter, not that the Rav should go out in the storm," he said. To this, R' Yosef Chaim replied, "When a Jewish life is in danger, a letter is not enough. I must personally attend to fulfilling this great mitzvah.

As the visitor later related: "Still speaking, the Rav dashed out of the room and in a moment, he was up the steps. Young as I was, I had trouble keeping up with this seventy-five-year-old man. No sooner had we set out than the rain became torrential. I advised the

Rav to wait until it let up a bit. In response, he only quickened his pace, exclaiming, 'Can a few drops of rain deter a person who is going to save a Jewish life?'

"I breathlessly followed the Rav until we reached the Jaffa Gate. There we boarded a carriage and ordered the driver to get us to the hospital as quickly as possible. The Rav drew his worn Tehillim from his pocket; I sat transfixed by the glow on his face as he quietly prayed."

As soon as they arrived at the hospital, R' Yosef Chaim wasted no time in arranging for the patient's immediate admittance. Two weeks later the man was released from the hospital having fully recovered. Knowing how agitated the man became whenever the Torah community came under discussion, his friends decided not to tell him of R' Yosef Chaim's involvement in his case.

During a speech at a groundbreaking ceremony one year later, this secularist declared, "We will build the land in our own way and with our own strength. We will build this land by waging a fight to the death against the black arm of Rabbi Sonnenfeld and his cronies!"

Seated in the audience was the messenger who had come to R'Yosef Chaim on that stormy day to seek his help on the man's behalf. Upon hearing the man's terrible remarks, he jumped up and shouted, "How dare you! Have a little respect for the saintly rabbi to whom you owe your very life!" The messenger then made his way to the podium and spoke at length about the efforts of R' Yosef Chaim to save the speaker's life.

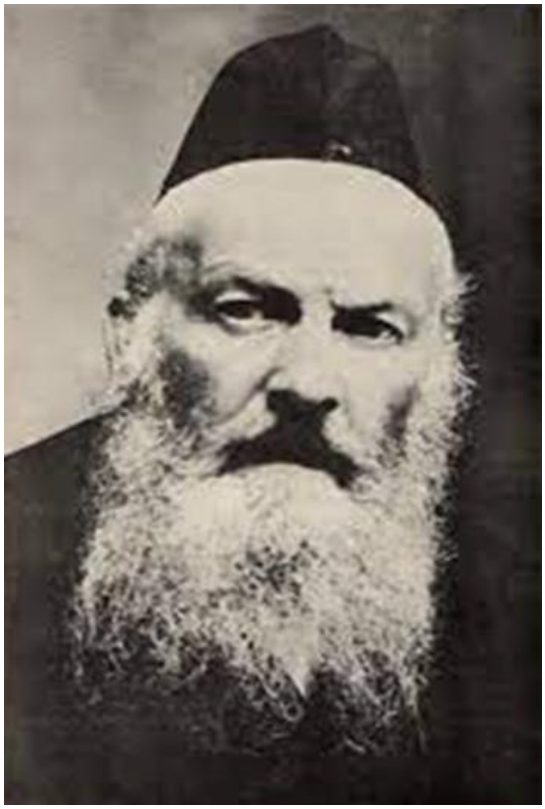
"I don't speak because I have the authority to speak; I speak because I don't have the authority to remain silent." – One of the Ziknei Yerushalayim.

Lacking Luck



One meaning in the word **מזל** is to be in the right place at the right time and say the right thing. This is hinted to in the word **מזל**, as it is an acronym for **מקום, זמן, לשון** ("place, time, speech"). Many successes are because one was in the right place at the right time and had the fortitude to say the right things.

A **שלימזל**, *shlimazel* ("an unlucky person"), is a person who just doesn't have **מזל**. This is portrayed in that word as it is a contraction of **שלא מזל**.



Peninim On The Torah

Throughout the generations, our Torah giants were prepared to give up their learning and spiritual advancement in order to better the lot of their people. ***Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl***, gave up time from his *shiurim*, lessons, to travel to England and America to fundraise for his *yeshivah*. He could have sent someone else, but he was acutely aware that no one would do it like he would. His *yeshivah* was his life. His training of his students was paramount. If they had nothing to eat, however, they could not learn.

Horav Yechezkel Abramsky, zl, would often quote the ***Chafetz Chaim's*** take on the words, *b'chol me'odecha*; as "with all of your resources" (*Devarim* 6:5). The *Chafetz Chaim* translated the word *me'odecha*, as "with all that you consider *me'od*," which means exceedingly. Nothing is as important to the Jew as *limud haTorah*, the study of Torah. Thus, he said, if someone truly loves Hashem, he will give up what is most important to him – his learning, his spiritual advancement, in order to fulfil Hashem's mandate. Helping another Jew is an essential aspect of serving Hashem. One who serves Hashem, but ignores the plight of his fellow, is not really serving Hashem.



The one Torah giant most identified with devoting his life and energy to the needs of his brothers and sisters – even at the expense of his own *ruchniyos* – was ***Horav Aryeh Levin, zl***, known by his *nom de plume*, **the *Tzaddik* of Yerushalayim**. His utter dedication and willingness to give of himself, to sacrifice himself in his love for all Jews and Jewry, were legendary.

As his biographer observes, he was simply referred to as "*Reb* Aryeh," because no adjectives were required to know to whom one was referring. He ministered to those living in restricted environments, i.e., prisoners, lepers who were contagious, despite the personal danger involved. He encouraged and gave hope to the unfortunate, the downtrodden, the needy – materially, physically and emotionally. He loved them all with his all-encompassing heart. He showed that just as one can be a *gaon*, brilliant towering ability in Torah (which he certainly was), one can also be a *gaon* in *chesed*. He was the patriarch of the most distinguished families in Yerushalayim.

When his *neshamah* left its mortal abode, thousands of Jews from *all* walks of life paid respect to him: from the greatest *Roshei Yeshivah* and *rabbanim*, to the leaders of the Israeli State; the officers of the defence forces; and the throngs of *hamon am*, the average Jew, whose lives he touched in some manner.

Rav Aryeh preached that sacrifice is not limited to the relinquishing of one's physical self, energy, effort, time money and property, but includes the readiness to sacrifice one's spirit, one's soul. *Rav* Aryeh said that he derived this lesson from a story that took place concerning two pious brothers, disciples of the ***Gaon, zl, m'Vilna***, named *Rav* Moshe and *Rav* Yitzchak.

Rav Moshe spent the entire year travelling all over, teaching the children in rural areas where schools were a luxury. He barely eked out a livelihood from the paltry payments he received. He would return for the primary *Yomim Tovim*, Festivals, to share the material "bounty" that he earned with his family.

In earlier generations, the custom was to select one specific *mitzvah* and devote oneself to executing it to the fullest letter of the law. *Rav* Moshe had chosen *tzitzis*. As a result, he refused to walk four *amos*, cubits (six feet), not wearing his *tzitzis*. He adhered to this self-imposed obligation religiously.

Once, early in *Nissan*, as *Pesach* quickly approached, he hired a wagon driver to take him home. With his few belongings and his small bag of earnings, they set out for Vilna. Along the way, *Reb* Moshe asked to stop so that he could *daven Minchah*. He stood near a large boulder to the side of the road. He did not notice that one of his *tzitzis* had become entangled in a crevice of the stone and tore.

He was stuck, since his *tzitzis* were no longer kosher. He asked the wagon driver to go to the nearest Jewish home or town and either borrow or purchase a pair of *tzitzis* for him. The man agreed for the exorbitant price of the contents of Reb Moshe's money pouch. What could he do?

He gave up all of his *Pesach* funds for a pair of *tzitzis*. This would not have been so bad had the wagon driver kept his end of the deal. He did not, as he took the money and disappeared.

Reb Moshe stood in place for twenty-four hours until someone came by and brought him a pair of *tzitzis*.

So ends part one of the story. Part two begins with *Rav* Yitzchak, the saintly brother who spent the entire day and a good part of the night engrossed in Torah study, becoming gravely ill.

A few days into his illness, the doctor despaired for his life and directed the family to summon the *Chevra Kaddisha*, Jewish Burial Society. It was time. They also called *Rav* Moshe to be at his brother's side. *Rav* Moshe came without delay.

When he entered the room in which his brother lay comatose, he asked everyone to leave. He removed his *tallis katan* and laid it upon his brother's motionless body. He cried up to Hashem: "*Ribono Shel Olam*! There is one *mitzvah* to which I have adhered with all my strength. That is the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. I hereby give all of my reward that I will receive in *Olam Habba*, to my brother, so that he will recover from his current illness."

Rav Moshe prayed passionately amid profuse weeping, so that his brother would emerge from the imminent crisis. Hashem listened, and not only was *Rav* Yitzchak cured, but he lived fifteen more years.

After *Rav* Aryeh related the story, he concluded with his summary: "This incident taught me that a Jew must be prepared to give up his spiritual ascendance and reward to help his brother. Physical well-being, life and wealth are important fundamentals to relinquish on behalf of one's fellow. To give up the spiritual reward which one has earned and the opportunity for spiritual growth, however, is true self-sacrifice."

The Spice Of Torah By Ahron Yosef Shalom

There is a well-known story about **Hacham Ben-Tzion Abba Shaul Zt"L** (1924-1998) about his extensive humility. One example of this was regarding the question of wearing Rashi and Rabbenu Tam tefillin simultaneously (as was his custom based on the Ben Ish Chai, Shana Rishona, Parashat VaYerah, Siman 21).

When Hacham BenTzion would be at a function for Yeshivat Porat Yosef, and the Rishon LeTzion, **Hacham Ovadya Yosef Zt"L** would be there as well, Hacham Ben-Tzion would not wear both Rashi and Rebbenu Tam tefillin simultaneously, as was his usual custom. When asked why, he would respond that he cannot go against the Psak of Hacham Ovadia, who ruled that one should wear first Rashi tefillin, and then switch to Rebbenu Tam (before Ashrei and Uva LeTzion, in order to answer the kedusha of Uva LeTzion while wearing the Tefiilin of Rabbenu Tam, Orach Hayim,Siman 34, Se'eef Kattan 7).

Hacham Ben-Tzion would go against his own custom so as to not oppose his former classmate, study partner and friend.



There is a story about the friendship of these two Sephardic Torah Giants. They would commute to their yeshiva from the Bukharim neighbourhood of Yerushalayim. Hacham Ovadya's mother would give him 2 coins to take the bus to and from the yeshiva each day. Instead of taking the bus, he would meet Hacham Ben-Tzion and walk together to yeshiva and review their studies from the previous day. Hacham Ovadya would then use his two coins to pay the fare for himself and Hacham Ben-Tzion to take the bus home.

The Upper Hand By Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi



A boy once went into a grocery store with his father. After shopping, the store owner offered some lollipops to the boy. He took a jar of lollipops from the counter and gave the jar to the boy. However, the boy was reluctant to help himself to a lolly. And he would not put his hand inside the jar. Eventually, the father lost patience and put his own hand inside the jar to take some candies.

As they were walking home, the father asked his son, "I don't understand why you didn't take a lollipop? The man offered some to you, and I let you. Why didn't you put your hand in the jar and take some?"

The son turns to his father and tells him," Abba, I know that your hand is much bigger than mine. So I can get many more candies when you stick your hand in the jar!"

Hashem's hand is much larger than our hand. Our Father- Hakadosh Baruch Hu the most powerful and influential, Abba Shebashamayim's hand, is a lot bigger than ours. Hashem is unlimited. Let Hashem put His hand in the Jar. Let Hashem run your life. Don't try to put your hand in the jar. Don't try to control everything that you do.

Follow the Shulchan Aruch. Follow the Torah. Follow the halachos. Trust Hashem with what the outcome will be. Don't put your hand in the jar that's not yours. Let Hashem's hand take control. You will then have a lot more bracha, because Hashem is unlimited and is The King of The World.

Let Hashem hand you the perfect life through Torah.

Rav Avigdor Miller on Depression and Sleep



QUESTION: What should somebody do when he is annoyed by depression and sadness and doesn't know what the reason is?

ANSWER: I want to tell you one thing I do know from experience. Many times, boys in the yeshiva cause an upset in their nervous system because of a lack of sleep. In the dormitories you can't go to sleep early. Even if he gets into bed, somebody comes in at 1 o'clock and doesn't let him sleep.

I once told a man about this problem, and he went and took his boy out and put him in a separate room. He was a wealthy man and he paid money to the dormitory for a separate room, so his son should be able to sleep.

It's very important to sleep. I myself know two cases of boys who didn't go to sleep on time and they went insane, *nit eingedacht*. Yes, it happened. They ruined their lives.

Also, married women who have babies, they must take care of their sleep. Without sleeping sufficiently your nervous system is upset.

Now, once a person gets into a depression it's not so easy to get out of it. And therefore, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So, try with all your efforts not to upset your system and get your sleep every night.

Now some people say, "Well, I'm a *porush*. I want to be a *masmid*." We'll, I'll tell you what the Chofetz Chaim said. Once the Chofetz Chaim came into the yeshiva in Radin at night, and he saw boys learning late so he said to them "*Gei shlufen. Morgen is oich a tug*." He told the boys to go to sleep. "You can learn tomorrow," he said.

And that's the sensible way. That's saving the lives of people by advising them, "Learn by day and sleep at night."

Now, sometimes there are other factors, but one of the most general factors that I know from my experience, is this one of not sleeping sufficiently.

Emunoh In Our Lives

Mr Keller was an elderly man who had recently moved to **ארץ ישראל** from Argentina. He didn't have a formal Jewish education in Argentina but had received a **קיצור שולחן ערוך** at his **בר מצוה** and was tremendously connected to the **ספר**, learning it from cover to cover over 50 times during his lifetime! Unfortunately, he passed away from Covid-19 and due to the large amounts of **לוייות** that day, his **לויה** only began at 1am. The **מנהג** in **ירושלים** is that children don't go with the **נפטר** to the **בית הקברות** and the family realised there would only be 9 people at the **קבורה**.

Suddenly, an elderly gentleman appeared out of the darkness whom the family didn't recognise and said that he would go to the **קבורה**, claiming he was a relative. The family were confused, especially as it was during the height of the pandemic and this elderly man was up and about at 1am!

After the **קבורה**, a family member drove the man back and asked him his name. He replied, ***'Ganzfreid'***. He dropped him off and called up the son of Mr Keller and told him who the man was. Mr Keller paled and asked him to find the man, but he had vanished.

Mr Keller said that the **קיצור שולחן ערוך** was written by **Rav Shlomo Ganzfreid זצ"ל**, and he was sure that he had appeared as a **מלאך** to accompany his father on his final journey…

Mitzvot 24/7 By Rabbi Uri Lati

We all know the famous story with the **Chofetz Chaim**. He once came to a pharmacist. He says to him, I am envious of your Olam Habah. I am envious of your Gan Eden. He says, why? You are the gadol hador. Why are you envious of me?

The Chofetz Chaim says, because you are doing mitzvos all day long. He asks, how am I doing mitzvos all day? Because all day you are preparing medicines and giving them out. You are saving peoples lives. You are keeping them healthy.

This means, that sometimes when we are not doing mitzvos, we are also doing mitzvos. There is a concept called - **בכל דרכיך דעהו.** Everything that you are doing, try to include Hashem in it. You are walking in the street. Is it a mitzva to walk in the street? No, there is no such mitzva. However, if you walk in the street, and you have the machshava that the walking or driving in the car is for the sake of doing a mitzva, and you are including Hashem in everything that you do, then you get a mitzva for that. Because you are taking the materialistic, and you elevate it. This is what Hashem wants at the end of the day. - ***With the right mindset, you can do mitzvos all day!***

Penninim on The Torah

Horav Ovadiah Yosef, zl, was a *talmid chacham* without peer, whose *daas* and human decency paralleled his level of erudition. The stories which abound about his sensitivity to people, the respect he gave to everyone, regardless of status in life, are legendary. I found one story that I feel is especially inspiring.

During the last twenty years of his life, the *Chacham* lived in a large apartment in Har Nof together with his son, his daughter-in-law and their family. He had a massive *sefarim* library which included over 40,000 *sefarim*. His *Rebbetzin* once remarked that no new volume

made its way onto a shelf until after he had learned through it from cover to cover.

Furthermore, he did not just peruse the volume; he annotated and added his own commentary to almost every volume that he learned. He would point out areas in which the author had missed some point, noting where else this topic was discussed.

The bookshelves were all over the house, even in the hallways. Indeed, the *Chacham's* criterion for selecting an apartment was the height of the ceilings, which would allow him more space to store his precious *sefarim*. [40,000 *sefarim!*]

During his early days in the apartment in which he lived, as he aged and the number of *mispallelim*, worshippers, increased, the *kehillah* moved his *Bais HaKnesses*, *shul*, to an apartment on a different floor. When asked why he did not make it easier on himself and keep the *shul* where he lived and studied all day (less walking meant less pain), he replied, "First of all, some notes have recently gone 'missing' from my desk. Some of the people who join us in prayer do not realise that each note is precious to me. (They think that they can take it as a souvenir.) More importantly, however, when I write comments on the margin of a *sefer*, I am writing this for myself. It is not for public consumption. At times, these comments may be viewed as derogatory to the author, when, in fact, no offence was intended.

The author of a treatise told me that a friend of his was *davening* in my apartment and noticed his *sefer* on the shelf. He took it down and perused it. He noted that I had written a comment that might be misconstrued as a criticism of his *sefer*. The author was hurt and came to speak to me about it.

"It is worthwhile for me to leave my home for every *tefillah*, rather than take a chance of slighting the feelings of an author." This should provide the reader with a perspective on the meaning of *daas*.

Unanswered Prayers By R' Elazar Meisels



Davening has a certain value. Learning has a certain value. Everybody has got a handle on it. I can go to this shul. I can go to that shul. I can do it here. I can do it there. I can do it sitting. I can do it standing. I can do it holding a cup of coffee. I can do it with an Ashkenaz siddur. I can do it with a Sefard siddur. I Can do it with no siddur. I can do it off my phone. I can do it off by heart. It doesn't matter. I am getting it done. I am ticking the boxes.

What you are saying is that whatever the minimum value of that davening is, that's the value that it will have. Then you might ask yourself, "I don't know what happened. I davened, but Hashem is not giving me any positive responses."

Well, if what you are sending Him , are budget tefilos that can be picked up at the Dollar store, then you are not going to get a great response. However, if you treat your tefilo like it is something special and has value, then it will have greater impact and value.

If it is important to you, then you won't just roll in five minutes late. You will roll in fifteen minutes early. If davening is important to you, you would come on time and you would stay to the end. Nobody ever leaves very important meeting early.

Your tefilos will then receive a different response from The Riboino Shel Olam. - **Treat your prayers with value and they will be valuable.**

Strength and Energy – Rabbi Moshe Malka



Open The Code of Jewish Law - The Shulchan Aruch and look at the first halacha. **יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו** - ***One should strengthen himself like a lion to get up in the morning to serve his Creator.***

The question is why do we start with this particular halacha that begins with the morning? We know that most things in Judaism start in the evening? **ויהי ערב ויהי בקר**

Comes the **Arizal** and tells us a secret. How is your day going to be? It all depends on how you wake up. If you wake up in the morning, and you conquer the evil inclination to go back to sleep, then you have a better chance of performing at a higher level.



The reason is because, stastistics tell us that when two people are wrestling, whoever gets the first punch in, has control. The body is the physical- the yetzer hara. The mind, the soul is the - yetzer tov. They meet for the first time when you open your eyes upon awakening. What does the yetzer hara tell you to do? "Press the snooze button. Go back to sleep" He has given you the first punch and has got you head locked for the rest of the day. You are not in control.

But if **יתגבר כארי** – as soon as the alarm rings, you jump up straight away, and are ready to go, you will have tremendous energy to face the day and serve The Creator.

Rabbi Mansel once told us, " How do you expect to get up like a lion, if you go to sleep like a ***chamor***! (donkey)" This is why the Code of Jewish Law starts with how to wake up in the morning.

What Should We Think About When We Bow In Prayer?



In the Shemoneh Esrei, when you say the words, your head should not automatically bow down without thinking. That is a waste. Bowing down is avodas (service of) Hashem, and so you should thank Hashem for the tongue that He gave you, the tongue with which you can speak and eat.

If a person bows down just once with this thought in mind, he has lived for a purpose. - Ohr Avigdor Shaar Habechinah

Torah Compilations with Yossi

Shalom, of course means peace, hello and goodbye. But what's the fourth meaning? Shalom is also one of the names of Hashem. So central and crucial is the concept of peace in our tradition, that it is embodied within the very essence of the existence of the Almighty.

In parashat Pekudei, the Torah describes the great celebration that took place when we dedicated the new Mishkan, and the altar within it, in the wilderness. For the Haftorah, we have a matching passage from the Prophets, in the first book of Kings, which describes King Solomon's celebration when he dedicated the first temple. At that time, Solomon reflected on the fact that his great father King David

had wanted desperately to build the temple. In fact, David saw this as his ultimate mission in life – and yet, he was denied this privilege! But why?

In the first book of Chronicles we are told that Hashem said to David **כי איש מלחמות אתה ודמים שפכת**- for you are a man of war and you have shed blood". Now of course, the purpose of all the wars that David fought and led our people into, was in order to preserve life, to protect us from our enemies who sought to destroy us. He engaged in wars through which he hearkened to the word of Hashem, to defend our people. Nonetheless, since he had blood on his hands, he was not the ideal person to build the house of Hashem.

Instead, his son Shlomo, coming from the route **שלום**- meaning peace, was the ideal king to do it. Indeed, throughout his reign, King Solomon did not fight a single battle. We can now understand why in parashat Yitro Hashem tells us that for the purpose of a stone altar, we may not use hewn stones. And the reason is **כי חרבך הנפת עליה ותחללה** , because for that purpose you would have had to use knives or swords which can be implements of war and therefore you would be defiling that altar.

That is why Shalom is the concluding word, it's the bottom line of all of our most important prayers. It's the last word of our Kaddish, it's the last word of our **ברכת המזון.** It's the last word of **ברכת כהנים**- the priestly blessings. It is the last word of the Amidah. In **פרקי אבות**- The Ethics of the Fathers, Hillel taught that we should be the disciples of Aaron the High Priest, to be **אוהב שלום ורודף שלום**- to love peace and pursue peace always. Therefore the Gemarah in tractate Brachot tells us that it is so important, that every single morning in our prayers, we should praise Hashem who is **עושה שלום ובורא את הכל**- He makes peace and He creates everything', indicating that nothing is of any value unless there is peace.

It is therefore so suitable that 'Shalom' is one of the names of the Almighty. When I greet you and I say **שלום עליכם**, I am not just

saying may peace be upon you, I am also saying may Hashem be with you. Of course, on Shabbat we want peace in our homes, and we want the spirit of Hashem to be with us. As a result, the blessing that we give is Shabbat Shalom.



On Shabbat there is a stronger bond with Hashem so let's please join together to pray with all our hearts, for the current situation in Eastern Europe as well as for the recovery of all the sick, our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, for peace and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet Shabbat.

Conclusion of Sefer Shemos

כִּי עֲנַן ה' עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל־בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־מַסְעֵיהֶם

The last verse in Exodus speaks about the "cloud of the L-rd that was upon the Sanctuary by day, and the fire that was on it by night."

Day represents the times when the Jewish people flourish; night represents the darkest hours of Jewish history.

The Torah assures us that throughout all our travels, regardless of whether or not the sun is shining, G-d's clouds and heavenly fire protect us and assure our safety and survival. (Our Sages)

Middos



Once, a simple wagon driver came to the **Chofetz Chaim**, and he was upset that his horse had died, as he had now lost his entire way of making a livelihood. The man was dependent on the horse pulling his wagon, so that he could earn a living. The townspeople took pity on the wagon driver, and with money taken from Tzedakah, they purchased a donkey to pull the man's wagon for him to once again be able to earn a living.

However, the wagon driver was extremely embarrassed and ashamed to take any money from Tzedakah. He was concerned that everyone would know that he originally had a horse, and now he had a donkey purchased with Tzedakah funds. He said that based on the Gemara in Pesachim (113a), he would prefer to do any kind of labour rather than take money from Tzedakah, and this was the dilemma he presented to the Chofetz Chaim.

The Chofetz Chaim told him that he would explain the truth of the matter. When the horse was healthy, and he pulled the wagon from city to city, there would be times that the horse would graze from a field that they were passing, and this was stealing, as they had no right to graze from someone else's field. That is why the horse died.

The Chofetz Chaim emphasized how great the sin of stealing was, even if taken in small amounts of grass. The Chofetz Chaim advised the man to take the donkey and to be careful about stealing in the future.

The man took the words of the Chofetz Chaim to heart, and as he was contemplating them, he remembered that not too long before, someone had stolen the Chofetz Chaim's winter coat. The man wondered how it could possibly be, that the Chofetz Chaim would ever steal anything, that his own coat would be stolen to make up for the Aveirah of stealing.

The Chofetz Chaim softly answered that he was not innocent of the Aveirah of stealing. Part of the income of the Chofetz Chaim came from selling Seforim, and if the Sefer was not in perfect condition, if there was a drop of ink that was missing, or part of a page was missing, and the Chofetz Chaim would sell it at full price, this would constitute a form of stealing.

The Chofetz Chaim would try to check each Sefer he sold, to make sure that it was in perfect condition for sale. There are some copies that he has sold which has the word 'Mogah' (corrected), handwritten in them. This was the custom of the Chofetz Chaim, to check each Sefer before selling it. Even with all this, he explained, it was still possible that some Seforim were sold at full price, but they were not in perfect condition, and this was why, he said, that his coat was stolen!

Mussar

It is well-known that the **חפץ חיים** would often have conversations with himself. The **חפץ חיים** had a special room in Yeshivas Radin, in which he would learn **מוסר** .

One day as the **חפץ חיים** was in his special room, the Gaon **Rav Naftoli Trop** and another person stood outside the door to listen in on the **חפץ חיים**. They over-heard him saying, "The Levaya for Yisroel Meir is now!" Then in a loud voice he said, "Yisroel Meir it is time for your fahrher. Brachos! Shabbos!" The **חפץ חיים** started saying the

גמרא 's. Then he got stuck on a piece and he started shouting at himself, "Why don't you know it!"

Rav Naftoli couldn't handle hearing anymore and he walked away. The other person stayed and related that later on the **חפץ חיים** shouted, "No Yisroel Meir! You are not dead! You are alive! Go learn! You can still accomplish!"

The same applies to us. We are alive and therefore, there is no reason for a person to lose hope. Every person can start to accomplish as much as they can. The rest that they cannot do, they will not be held accountable for.

A Penetrating analysis of the Haftorah by Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Hoffman

וַתִּשְׁלַם כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה בֵּית ה' וַיָּבֵא שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת־קָדְשֵׁי דָוִד אָבִיו מלכים א ז-נא



The Haftorah discusses the construction of the Bais Hamikdash, which was a grand edifice primarily meant to function as a physical home for Hashem and a place of spirituality where anyone can come to reconnect to Him.

Chazal say that Hashem did not allow Dovid Hamelech to build the Bais Hamikdash and Shlomo, his son, was given that privilege instead. But why, indeed, was Dovid barred from participating in the actual construction and instead had to settle with assisting in the preparations instead?

R' Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz zt"l (Sichos Mussar) explains that while Chazal enumerate the many reasons why Dovid did not merit to build the Bais Hamikdash, they all seem to stem from one basic point. The Bais Hamikdash, with all its immense spirituality, served as a "shutter before (Klal Yisroel's) enemies" - meant to keep foreign influences out of the hearts and minds of the Bnei Yisroel. As such, it was supremely important for its construction to be built by someone with a pure mind so that he would be able to infuse the building with a sense of purity purely for the sake of Hashem.

Although Dovid was indeed on a high level of spirituality, he nevertheless ruled during a time of constant wars which oftentimes requires a leader to focus his attention solely on that. This made it almost impossible for Dovid to focus his undivided attention to building the Bais Hamikdash purely for the sake of heaven and Shlomo - whose name signifies his reign of peace - was instead tasked with the construction.

Nothing Can Hold Us Back



Once the Rebbe, **Reb Zusia of Anipoli**, was trudging down a country road. He passed a wagon with its wheels mired in the mud. "Help me push the wagon out," the driver called to Reb Zusia.

Reb Zusia realized that he was weak and frail and could not be of much assistance. "I would like to help you," he told the wagon driver, "but I can't."

"You can," replied the wagon driver, "but you don't want to."

Reb Zusia understood this as a lesson. Too often, we feel mired down, unable to generate positive energy, stuck where we are without the strength to go forward.

That feeling is an illusion. No matter what our spiritual level, we always have the potential for growth and advancement. Every person has a soul, which is an actual part of G-d, and just like there is nothing that can hold G-d back, there is nothing that can hold us back. We just have to have the desire to go forward.

Rav Avigdor Miller On Wartime Lessons



QUESTION: What should be our reaction when we hear about wars and other upheavals that are happening in other parts of the world?

ANSWER: When you see trouble among, let's say, in Africa, in the Congo, and they are massacring entire tribes or massacring each other, or if you hear that the brown peoples in Vietnam are trying to destroy each other, or in Korea, North Korea and South Korea they're warring with each other, or in China, the nationalists and the communists are fighting against each other, all these phenomena shouldn't be lost upon us.

And one of the purposes is to make us think, "Suppose we lived there; can you imagine what suffering we would undergo." It's a very great suffering to live in Vietnam. People are constantly in terror, in commotion. Their lives are ruined. And how many of them have been destroyed? How many have been maimed, orphaned, widowed? How many are refugees? They're afraid to sleep at night.

If we can live in peace, if we can get up in the morning after a good night's sleep – you know what it means to sleep in peace? We don't even think twice about it. Maybe some people are worried, so you check to see that the doors are locked at night, the windows are closed. Very good. But then you go to sleep in peace. Do you know what a luxury it is to go to sleep in peace? To be able to put your head on your pillow without any fear and to fall asleep peacefully is a very great bracha.

We're not afraid that somebody will shoot machine guns through our window or burn down the house. We're not afraid that all of a sudden at night, there'll be an invasion. When you go to sleep in America, you know that nobody is going to wake you up. Nobody will bother you. You're sleeping in peace.



Sleeping peacefully is a precious commodity. So tonight, when you say **השכבנו** think about that. **השכבנו ה' אלקינו לשלום** – let us lie down in peace. Appreciate that! If you just came here to learn that it's worthwhile. **השכבנו ה' אלקינו לשלום** – we should be able to sleep in peace. It's a big bracha!

Now this is such a precious commodity that we have to pay for it. And the minimum payment is gratitude to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. That should be our minimum reaction to the news of upheavals in the world.

בעסער אַ פּאַטש פֿון אַ חכם אייַדער אַ קוש פֿון אַ נאַר ***Better a slap from a sage than a kiss from a fool.***

The Circle by Rabbi Yitzchok Landa - Highlights from the Midrash



Moshe Rabbeinu overheard people complaining that he looked "fat," meaning they were accusing him of taking for himself some of the precious things donated for the Mishkan. People were saying, "When a cook stirs the pot, some of it sticks to his fingers!"

Moshe then gave an accounting of every drop of silver used to make the Mishkan (Yalkut Shimoni). Why did he not give an accounting of the gold?

1. He was only worried about the silver, because he forgot what some of the silver was used for! Then he remembered that it had been used for the hooks on the amudim. (Zohar, Tzror Hamor)

2. How did the people know how much was donated in the first place? A bas kol announced the amount of silver that had been donated. Once it said that, it also said that Moshe was trustworthy, and no one complained anymore. (Zohar)

3. The gold was donated by the highly respectable people who did not suspect Moshe of stealing anything. Only the lowly people, who donated silver at best, suspected him. The amount of gold that was given was not even enough to cover the kerashim. The gold grew on its own, like fruits of a tree. Since that was a clear miracle, there was no possibility that there was anything left over to steal.

4. The gold was all wrapped around boards and wood and could not be weighed to check how much was present in the completed Mishkan. The silver was freestanding and could be checked. (Ramban, Yefas To'ar)

A Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן. .
***These are the accountings of the Mishkan.* (38:21)**

Although the Torah is recounting how the collected funds were allocated to the Mishkan, Rav Moshe understands that the Torah is revealing a strong personal message for us. Namely, just like an assessment was warranted to ensure that funds received for the Mishkan went to the appropriate place, so too, *we* must constantly ask ourselves whether we are using the gifts we have received appropriately. Are we using our time, money, skills, and talents for the purpose they were given to us?

We can only do this if we can appreciate two key factors. First, we need to acknowledge that Hashem has given each of us specific abilities, strengths, and an attainable mission to come close to Him through the fulfilment of our unique potential for greatness. Second, we need to be constantly assessing whether we are using our gifts in the right way. Just like someone running a business is assessing his effectiveness, to ensure that he is constantly growing, so too, we must make regular times to assess whether we are growing and using our resources to their maximum.

The Jewish People possess a wealth of talent, energy, motivation, and care. If we can assess our combined talents and utilize our strengths, we will no doubt soon witness a new accounting, the accounting for the Beis HaMikdash, *bezras Hashem*.

Try Your Best – Rabbi Yaakov Rachimi



What was the Mishkan? The Mishkan was the house of Hashem. Hashem is everywhere in the world. We all know the famous song – "Hashem is here, Hashem is there, Hashem is truly everywhere. Up, up, down, down, right, left, and all around. Here, there and everywhere, that's where He can be found."

Hashem wanted us to build Him a Mishkan-house. But no matter how big the house will be, it will not be large enough. Says the **Yalkut Shimoini** a tremendous lesson. Moishe rabeinu told Hashem, " I should build a house for you? You're G-d. No matter how big it is, or how much gold it has in it, it is not enough. You are the creator of the world. You are unlimited. How is it even possible for me to build something big enough, when You are everywhere in the world?"



The Midrash answers that Hashem said to Moshe, "All I ask from you, is to do your part. Just do what you can. If you can build the Mishkan a certain size, then that is good enough for Me.

What a tremendous lesson for life. All Hashem wants from us is to do our best effort. Life is about serving Hashem with your efforts. The accomplishment of Judaism is the effort, not necessarily the result.

The Chofetz Chaim brings a mashul of a wealthy man who wanted to marry off his daughter. One guy who wasn't a good match decided to date the girl. However, it didn't work out and the girl did not want to marry the guy. Eventually, the girl finds her bashert and they get married.

The wedding was a very grand affair. The kallah is sitting next to her chassan having photographs. The first guy that she broke off with, comes to the wedding and bombs himself into all the photos. He is not even part of the family.

The kallah's father screams at him," What are you doing here. What connection do you have to this whole wedding?"

He answers," Listen, although it didn't work out and I didn't get married to your daughter, I wanted to, I tried to."

The father replies, "Trying? Trying here doesn't work. She didn't want you. She is already married to my son-in-law. Please stop photobombing and leave the wedding immediately."

Says the Chofetz Chaim, when it comes to things in this world, everything is about trying. Trying harder, doesn't mean that you will become wealthier. So too in school. You don't get an "A" for effort. You get the top grade if you actually wrote the work that deserves an "A". But when it comes to Judaism, it is the total opposite. You get an "A" for effort and not for the result. You get an "A" for actually trying to do a mitzvah. The accomplishment is all in the trying. Hashem only wants us to try their best.

Every single one of us is capable of accomplishing a lot.

"Three things soften a man's heart: a pleasant melody, a pleasant scene, and a fragrant odour." Talmud, Berakot 57b

Even the Rasha By R' Eliyahu Maksumov

A **רשע** - Oh, he's the wicked guy, he's far from Hashem.



Just take a look at the word **רשע** – These are the Roshei Teivos of **ריבונו של עולם**. Even the greatest rasha – as evil as he may be, has a relationship and connection to Hashem. There is no such thing as a person being too distant from Hashem.

Hashem says, "I am still close to you, no matter how far away you are. I am right here, just waiting for you to return to bond with Me."

We must never underestimate that however wicked a person is, Hashem still has hope – we should also retain hope that others and most importantly ourselves, that no matter how low we have sunk, we still have a piece of Hashem inside of us! Hashem still loves us, and cares about us. He still wants us and is awaiting our return.





L'Maaseh



When **Rav Aryeh Levin, zt"l**, was a young man, he learned in the Yeshivah in Slutzk under the great Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, zt"l**. At that time, life was extremely difficult for European Jewry, and the Yeshivah Bochrim tended to suffer the most.

In order to help them, a program was started where the Bochrim were sent to different homes in the community to eat their daily meals, even though, in many cases, there wasn't even enough food for the families themselves. In this way, the Yeshivah Bochrim learned Torah with purity, despite the deprivation, and the greatness of Torah learning during that period produced some of the greatest Roshei Yeshivos and Tzadikim in recent history.

Many years later, when Rav Aryeh had grown and married, he became a neighbour of Rav Isser Zalman in Yerushalayim. As Rav Isser Zalman talked with Rav Aryeh about his time in the Yeshivah in Slutsk, he innocently asked, "And where did you have your lodgings?" Rav Aryeh replied, "I was quite comfortable. I had a bench in the one of the local Shuls as my regular place to sleep." Rav Isser Zalman was not very pleased

with this answer. He inquired, "And where did you eat?"

Rav Aryeh smiled. He said, "I had very good accommodations. On Sundays I went to one family, on Tuesdays I went to another family,

and on Thursdays, I went to a different family," naming the three families in Slutzk that helped provide for him.

Rav Isser Zalman looked surprised. "But what about the other days?" Rav Aryeh replied, "Baruch Hashem, I managed very well."

Rav Isser Zalman realized that as a young student, there were days that Rav Aryeh had gone without eating. Rav Isser Zalman was overcome with distress and pain. "Please forgive me for my lack of awareness," he said with true emotion.

Rav Aryeh was taken aback at his Rosh Yeshivah's reaction and assured him that he had neither suffered nor felt any neglect. He said that he had no memories of being deprived, and he calmed his Rosh Yeshivah as best he could. Late that night,

Rebbetzin Meltzer came knocking at Rav Aryeh Levine's door. Rav Aryeh and his family were surprised to see the distinguished Rebbetzin there so late at night.

"Please come at once," she requested urgently of Rav Aryeh. "My husband, the Rosh Yeshivah must see you." Rav Isser Zalman was not able to sleep. Rav Aryeh found his Rebbi sitting up, with tears running down his cheeks. He said, "What will I answer on my day of judgment, when they ask me how it was that I never knew that Rav Aryeh Levine slept on a bench with no proper bed, that he did not have enough food to eat, and he learned Torah in hardship and suffering? What will I answer when they ask me why I did nothing to help him?"

He continued to cry until finally, Rav Aryeh was able to reassure him that he wholeheartedly did not mind the situation he had in Yeshivah, and in fact, he was happy and thankful that he was able to learn under such conditions, as that had made him become exactly who he was now!

Tipping the Scales of Justice From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



The phone rang in Ben Meed's office; A restrained, sorrowful voice asked to speak to the president of WAGRO (Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization). "Speaking," responded Mr. Meed. The gentleman's voice continued: "My father, Mr. Abraham Bachner, asked me to call you. The name won't mean anything to you; you didn't know him. My father just passed away. During one of my last visits to the hospital, he requested of me that when his time came you would attend his funeral.

"You see, Mr. Meed, my father attended all the annual Warsaw ghetto memorial services, the ones that your organization sponsors. It was his wish that you attend his memorial service. My father was a Holocaust survivor." He gave Meed the place and time of the funeral.

Just as Ben Meed entered the funeral chapel, he met Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld of Young Israel of Kew Garden Hills, who addressed him, "I didn't know you knew the deceased,"

"I didn't," answered Meed, and told Rabbi Schonfeld about the telephone conversation with Bachner's son. The rabbi responded, "Ben, I am really grateful that you came. You don't know how meaningful it is to all of us who knew Abraham."

The casket was brought in, covered in black with a Hebrew inscription saying - "He makes death to vanish in life eternal." Rabbi Schonfeld began to officiate.

"As you know, it is prohibited, according to *Halacha* (law), to deliver a eulogy on a holiday and we are in the midst of Hanukah. Instead, I will share with you a conversation I had with Abraham Bachner during one of my visits to the hospital.

"'Rabbi,' he said to me, 'I have been a member of your congregation for the past thirty years. I tried to be an honest, observant Jew. I attended services regularly on Shabbat and weekdays, no matter what the weather. I know that my time is up and I will soon be summoned before the heavenly court. I want to be buried not in *tachrichim*, as required by Jewish law, but rather in my concentration-camp uniform, the one I wore in Auschwitz, the one in which I was liberated.'

"I could not understand his strange request and asked for an explanation. Abe said to me, 'You see, Rabbi, when I reach the seat of justice on high, the heavenly prosecutors probably will have a list of grievances against me upon which they will base my guilty verdict.

"'But, when they place my transgressions on one side of the scales of the heavenly court, I will place on the other side my concentration-camp uniform. The hunger, the fear, the humiliation I suffered each minute for years while I was a *katzernik* (inmate) will surely tip the scales of justice in my favour. I hope, Rabbi, that you understand. I must be buried in my uniform. It is my defence case, my *melitz yosher* (righteous intercessor).'"

At the conclusion of the services, as the casket was being taken out of the chapel, Ben Meed walked over to Rabbi Schonfeld and asked him, "And what was your decision, Rabbi?" "The concentration-camp uniform is there with him, in the coffin," responded Rabbi Schonfeld.

When the thirty-seventh commemoration of the uprising of the Ghetto Warsaw took place on May 3, 1981, Ben Meed told the story of about Abraham Bachner's last request.

"Here on earth, there was no doubt that the scales tipped in favour of Abraham Bachner when he stood before the heavenly court. For there is nothing more holy in this world than a broken Jewish heart in a concentration-camp uniform."

Reb Yoel Rotenstien On The Parsha

ובצלאל בן אורי בן חור למטה יהודה עשה את כל אשר צוה ה' את משה – ***"And Betzalel, the son of Uri, the son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehudah, did everything as Hashem had commanded Moshe."*** 38:22

Question: Hashem commanded Moshe to make the Mishkan. He explained all the details to him. Then Moshe commanded Betzalel to carry out the construction. It was Moshe, not Hashem, who related the details to Betzalel. Why does the pasuk not indicate what really happened by saying, "Betzalel did everything that Moshe commanded him"?

Answer: The gemara (Yerushalmi, Peah 15) says that Betzalel did not hear all the details from Moshe, yet he completed the work exactly as Hashem wanted. How was this possible? If he never heard the exact instructions, how could he perform the work correctly?



The Torah Temimah explains that the secret is Siyatta di'Shemaya. When a person sets out to do a mitzvah he has a certain intention. If he only intends to fulfil the minimal requirements, then he will learn only the basic halachas, spending little time, effort, and thought on the mitzvah. At the other end of the spectrum is the person who wants to fulfil Hashem's will to the best of his abilities. He will try to learn as much about the mitzvah as he can. As hard as he tries, though, he may still find himself falling short. After all, who can possibly know all the details and kavanos of even the simplest mitzvah?

Hashem understands this. He sees that this person set out to perform a mitzvah only l'sheim Shamayim. If he carries out the mitzvah to the best of his abilities, though he may be lacking some information he will receive Siyatta di'Shemaya, and end up doing the mitzvah exactly as Hashem wanted. That is the meaning of the pasuk, Betzalel…did everything as Hashem had commanded Moshe.

Though Betzalel did not hear the instructions from Hashem, he made everything exactly as Hashem wanted. How? Due to the Siyatta di'Shemaya he received because his intentions were to do the job perfectly, solely l'sheim Shamayim. When a person wants so much to please Hashem, his reward is that he reaches perfection in his avodah.

Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro-Coins that Changed the World

The year was 1951 on a Friday afternoon when my father, **HaRav Mordechai Shapiro zt"l**, was in Tel Aviv, walking on a wide boulevard, Allenby Street. He saw across the street a green wooden kiosk, and he was intrigued by the person who was working behind the desk. He appeared to be an elderly Jew and gave the impression that he was constantly learning Torah. He never stopped learning from a book in his hands or what was placed in front of him, as he swayed back and forth. If someone came over to buy something, he asked the person what he wanted, gave him the item and took the money, but never stopped learning. My father was inspired by this sight and thought about walking over to him. Eventually, he did.

As he began making his way over, right then, another young man made it to the elderly storeowner and asked for a pack of cigarettes. The elderly man hesitated not one bit and looked at his watch. It was 12:15 p.m. "I'm sorry," the owner said, "but it's passed chatzos (midday) and I don't sell cigarettes after then." That was his policy. He was concerned that if he'd sell the cigarettes close to Shabbos, his customers might smoke and thereby break Shabbos.

As soon as my father saw this, he realized that this elderly Jew was someone unique. He went over to him, asked for his name, and was told – Yankel Ochsencro. He then asked my father for his name, and my father told him, adding that he was from America. "America?" said Yankel. "Many years ago, I knew a young boy by the name of Arkale Svisletzer, and I heard that he went to America. Have you heard of him? What became of him?"

Immediately, my father knew. This was none other than the great **Rav Aharon Kotler**. My father began describing the remarkable effects Rav Aharon had already had on American Jewry. "How do you know him?" asked my father. "What made you ask me about him?" The man went on to explain.



"Decades ago, I was a butcher in Minsk and I wasn't able to learn exactly as much as I wanted to because I was busy in the butcher shop. I made up that for every kilo of meat that I sell, I would put a small coin in a jar, a coin that always seems inconsequential. And over the years, I had sold thousands upon thousands of kilos of meat, and therefore I had accumulated thousands upon thousands of coins. They were in a number of jars, and I placed them in a wagon. And then I brought it through the streets to the local cheder, to the school where all the Jewish boys would study. I told the head of the cheder, 'Here are thousands of coins. With this, I'd like you to send a couple of students to study at the great yeshiva of Slabodka.' And one of the two boys that went was Arkale Svisletzer."

My father stared at this elderly Jew, who was in part responsible for what became of the great Rav Aharon Kotler. His coins added up, little by little, and look how it affected the world.

Many years later, one of the other great, leading figures in America, **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l**, went to visit my parents in Miami, Florida. On this particular visit, my father recounted this story about Arkale Svisletzer to Rav Yaakov. "Yes, yes," said Rav Yaakov, "that's exactly how the story goes. And I know … because I was the other boy!" - Rav Aharon and Rav Yaakov. World Jewry was changed because of Yankel Ochsencro and the coins he gave.

We too must believe that the small handful of actions we do can accomplish just the same – effect world Jewry. Forever.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

The last Pasuk in this week's sedra right before **חזק** is very striking to me. **כִּי עֲנַן ה' עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל־בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־מַסְעֵיהֶם**

We know that there are many Yidden, nebech that are in Ukraine running and attempting to flee for their lives. I know 110 people that ran from Uman and managed to get to Hungary. But there are still Yidden fleeing from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Maldova and many other places.

Look at this last Pasuk. This is the hope that each and everyone of us must have for all these Yidden, nebech nebach nebach, that have to run and are so afraid for their safety.

Rav Moishe Shterbuch said that every single Yid should say two kapitlech Tehilim at every tefillah - **קל** and **קמב**. We should undertake this for their sake. And let us hope that this last Pasuk which is takka **חזק** will give them strength, and Hashem will light the way for all those people, so that they can get out safely.

"Never has a Jew sinned with a full heart." – Harav Zusha of Anapolli

The Magical Ring By Rabbi David Bibi

Rabbi Asher Abittan z'sl, would often tell us the story of a king, a jeweler and a special ring. **The Ben Ish Chai** brings the parable as well. I was curious if there was a source to this story which has grown more elaborate over the years undoubtedly by jewelers hoping to sell rings. The latest versions make Solomon the king in the story and the great sage, sadik and warrior, Benayahu Ben Yehoyada as his advisor. I will retell as posted, but keep in mind, this story is completely one of fiction, though it still offers a wonderful lesson.

Long ago there lived a man named Benaiah, the captain of King Solomon's palace guards, and also the king's good friend. Benaiah was a noble man, with a handsome face and a beautiful soul. Some say he was among the 36 men of his generation chosen to exist so that the world might continue.

Benaiah served his king well, but one day King Solomon was passing through a courtyard and happened to overhear his soldiers gossiping. His heart sank when he heard Benaiah boast, "No task is too difficult for someone like me. I can accomplish anything."

The king went to his chambers and there he thought about pride. "Pride can harm a man," he thought. "I must give my captain a task that is impossible. Only in this way will he understand that he is but a man."

That evening he called Benaiah to appear before him. "I have a job for you, my friend," said the king.

"Whatever you ask," Benaiah said. "Your wish is my command."

"I want to own a magical ring," said the king.

"As you wish," Benaiah said. "Describe the ring for me so that I may find it."

King Solomon smiled. "All I can tell you is this: If a person is happy and puts this ring on his finger, he will become instantly sad. But a

sad man who places this ring upon his finger will become happy." Of course, the king understood that there was no such ring, but he knew his friend would never rest until he found it. "I shall find it for you," Benaiah said.

"And you will surely succeed," said the king, "for I know you can accomplish anything." Benaiah set out for the marketplace, where one by one he visited the jewelers of Jerusalem. "I am looking for a magical ring that makes a happy person sad and a sad person happy," he told each merchant.



Each one shook his head. "Never heard of such a ring," each said, and by sunset, Benaiah realized he would have to travel far to fulfill his king's desire.

That evening he prepared a caravan, and at dawn he set out to find the trader who possessed the magical ring. Benaiah and his men traveled for days and met many traders along their way, but each time he asked where he might find the magical ring that altered moods, he heard the same response: "I've never heard of such a treasure."

Benaiah visited the seaports, and there he met captains from every foreign land. Once again he asked where he might find this ring of wonders.

"Never heard of such a ring," each captain said.

Benaiah travelled on, but after many weeks his heart began to feel heavy. Perhaps he would fail to fulfill his king's desire. He could not bear the thought.

Still, he had no more ideas about where to look for the treasure, and so he returned to Jerusalem. He decided he would look one last time in the local marketplace, and as he was visiting the jewelers, he happened past a young man he had never before seen. The young man

wore ragged clothes and sat upon the ground, and before him was a threadbare carpet laden with simple bracelets and rings.

"Surely this lad won't have the magical ring," Benaiah thought, but he decided he must at least look. He bent down and said, "I am looking for a ring that makes a sad person happy and a happy person sad. Have you ever heard of such a treasure?"

The boy's eyes lit up, and he reached into his pocket and handed a single gold band to Benaiah. "This is a ring my grandfather gave me long ago," said the boy. "He inscribed it. Read what he has written."

Benaiah shrugged. Such a plain ring could not be magical. Still, he reached out and held the ring in his palm. He turned it over, and when he read the words inscribed, his heavy heart lifted. "This is it!" he cried.

Benaiah fulfilled one lad's dream as he handed over all the silver and gold coins he carried in exchange for the ring. "Your grandfather was a wise man, indeed," he told the young man. And then, the ring in hand, he returned to the palace. When Benaiah appeared before King Solomon, he bowed low, and at the sight of his good friend, the king felt suddenly sad. He did not wish to humiliate such a friend.

"Ah, poor man," Solomon said softly, "the task I gave you was impossible, but you have tried your best ..."

But before he could finish his sentence, Benaiah held out the ring. "I have found it!" he exclaimed.

King Solomon could not believe his ears, but he reached out and took the ring. The moment he read the inscription, his smile vanished, and when he looked out at the grand things surrounding him, he felt so sad that tears welled in his eyes.

"What has happened?" the king's guards whispered.

King Solomon passed them the ring. "Read the inscription," he said, and soon the whole court understood.

"Gam zeh ya'avor -- this too shall pass," were the words the boy's grandfather had written inside the ring. King Solomon now realized that all his treasures would one day turn to dust, and those who felt sad realized that one day their sadness would leave them and they might feel happiness again.

The king reached for Benaiah's hand. "Forgive me, friend," he said. "From this day on you shall wear my jewels, and I will wear the magical ring."

For King Solomon was wise, and he understood those words would keep him forever balanced.

זכרו תורת משה

לע"נ ר' משה בן החבר צבי ור' משה יצחק בן ר' אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל

The perfect Chizuk for the Shabbos Table

Each Their Own!



Different urban locations address the issue of mass transportation in different ways. Some utilize trains, some boats, but many rely on buses.

Bus companies figure out the different routes needed to adequately service their locations. Some buses will only go within the city itself, while others will travel to other cities. Some routes will transport many people at a time, while others can be relatively empty, and this can fluctuate depending on the time of day, the day of the week, the time of year, etc. After finishing their route, the bus drivers return the money that they received from the passengers to the office.

One day, Josh, a CityBus driver, brought in a large sum of money at the end of his day. He was sure that his manager would be pleased with what he was bringing in, and maybe would even give him a significant raise. However, upon seeing the unusual amount, his manager started questioning him. "Why is there more money than usual? Was there an event that took place in that city? What has changed?"

Josh explained, "I generally come back with little money, as my route doesn't get so many passengers. I saw that other drivers who drive to different parts of the city get more passengers and bring back more, so I also decided to drive to different parts of the city and serve more riders. And I see I was right! Look how much more I brought in for the company!"

Hearing this, the boss told Josh that he was fired. "You were given a particular route that must be followed. Your job is not to bring in the most money; your job is to follow your route and serve the people who specifically need that route." (Be'er Hachaim, Purim, p. 269).

This mashal brings out an important point. Each driver has his own specific route that he must keep to. This route may bring in less income than others, and one may feel therefore that he isn't contributing as much as others. But the company doesn't require every driver to bring in the same amount; all they need is that every job gets done. The revenue isn't what matters; what's relevant is that each driver does his route.

The same is true in serving Hashem. We all are sent to do different routes; some of our routes bring in great income, whereas others bring in less. But we must remember that our job is to do our route and not to imitate others.

"You don't know how much Hashem values you!" YOUR TALENTS

The Best You Can! The mashgiach, **Rav Don Segal**, relayed a story that he heard:

A few years after his chasunah, Shmuel* was beginning to be blessed with a large family, and after asking daas Torah, he went out to work. However, being in the working world left him empty and broken. So, he went to seek advice from the great **Steipler Gaon**.

The Steipler responded, "You're making a big mistake. You don't know how much Hashem values you. In this world, the people who are great lamdanim and the like… are the people that look like they'll have it great; but in the Next World, know, that one's 'grade' isn't determined that way. What matters in the Next World is - if one did the amount that he was able to do. And so, as long as you do what you're able to, then you're going to get the most magnificent Gan Eiden!" (Noam Hashem, p. 51)

How does one determine his route? This we can learn how from the coming story: Once, **Reb Meir Shapiro** was asked to represent the Jewish community in the Polish Parliament. Reb Meir Shapiro sent a letter to his Rebbe, **Rebbe Yisrael of Tchortkov**, whether he should accept this position.

The Rebbe replied in a letter: "I will tell you my opinion: A person can determine his life's assignment and the service that Hashem wants from him based on the talents Hashem endowed him with. Hashem granted you a sharp mind, the acuity to delve into Torah, to draw out beautiful diamonds, and to teach students. You have already established many outstanding students. If you accept this government position, it will take away from your avodas ha'kodesh. On the other hand, with this political role, you will be able to do a lot of good for the Jewish community.

"Therefore, my advice is: Don't do any hishtadlus toward attaining this government position. But if the Agudah committee asks you to take on the position, accept it."

The common denominator from these stories are: Everyone has their own special characteristics that they can serve Hashem with, and by using them properly, they will fulfil the purpose of our creation. The

unique characteristics that are found by your friend aren't necessarily the unique characteristics that you have. You must find the uniqueness that YOU have, and in there you'll give Hashem the greatest nachas.

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר פֻּקַּד עַל־פִּי מֹשֶׁה 38:21

The parsha begins with a descriptive record of the total amounts of gold, silver and copper that were given for the construction of the Mishkan.

The Rabeinu Bechayai writes that hidden in the words of this first Pasuk in our parsha, we can find a hint to:

1. The amount of years beginning from Moshe's construction of the Mishkan – until the building of the first Beis Hamikdash…
2. The number of years that the first Beis Hamikdash stood…
3. And the number of years that the 2nd Beis Hamikdash stood.

הָעֵדֻת is the gematria of 479. There are exactly 479 years from the construction of the Mishkan until the building of the 1st Beis Hamikdash;

The Pasuk tells us that there were 480 years from Yetzeas Mitzrayim until the 1st Beis Hamikdash. (Melachim Aleph 6:81)

In our parsha (40:17) the Torah tells us that the Mishkan was constructed in the beginning of the 2nd year after Yetzias Mitzrayim…

According to the above calculation, we must deduct 1 year from the 480-year period mentioned in Sefer Melachim, since the Mishkan was constructed a full year after Yetzias Mitzrayim. – This leaves us with our number – 479!

And now the 1st Beis Hamikdash:

The Gemara tells in in Mesechta Yumah 9a that the 1st Beis Hamikdash stood for 410 years. מִשְׁכַּן אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן– is the gematria of 410!

And finally, the 2nd Beis Hamikdash:

The same Gemara there in Yuma also says that the 2nd Beis Hamikdash stood for 420 years - אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן. הַמִּשְׁכָּן is gematria 415 plus the 5 letters that make up this word = 420!

The Chasam Sofer Zt'l brings this Rabeinu Bechaya, but is bothered by the following question: Why is the final hint to the years of the 2nd Beis Hamikdash only gematria 415 – Five numbers short, so that we have to rely on adding the 5 letters of the word הַמִּשְׁכָּן to make up the correct gematria of 420?

What is the Torah hinting to us with the missing 5 numbers in reference to the 2nd Beis Hamikdash?

The Chasam Sofer explains, based on the Gemara in Mesechta Yuma 21b. The Pasuk says in Chagai 1:8 as follows: וְאֶרְצֶה־בּוֹ וְאֶכָּבְדָה Hashem said regarding the 2nd Beis Hamikdash – '***I will be pleased with it, and I will be honoured***…'

Why is the word וְאֶכָּבְדָ missing a ה at the end of the word?

So, the gemara explains, that the Pasuk is alluding to the 5 things (the numerical value of ה) that were missing in the 2nd Beis Hamikdash…

1. The Aron together with the cover and the Cherubim.
2. The fire from Shamayim.
3. The Shechina
4. Ruach HaKodesh
5. The Urim V'Tumim.

This explains why the word הַמִּשְׁכָּן in our Pasuk only equals 415 – missing 5 to complete the number 420!

Chizuk In Our Lives



A man by the name of Shimon approached **Rav Yaakov Galinsky זצ"ל** and told him that he had been diagnosed with an illness. He had been recommended to fly to the USA for treatment and asked Rav Yaakov for his opinion. Rav Yaakov advised him to go, and gave him a **ברכה** for a **רפואה שלימה**.

A few weeks later Rav Yaakov saw Shimon and enquired as to why he hadn't yet travelled to America. Shimon responded that he was still researching whether that particular hospital and surgeon were the best options for the operation.

Rav Yaakov asked him, 'Have you researched the pilot flying you there to see if he is competent?'

Shimon answered, 'No, I'm not worried about that. If the pilot were to be negligent, he would be risking his own life too, so I place my trust in him. But the surgeon could be incompetent, and it wouldn't affect his health whatsoever!'

Rav Yaakov responded, 'My friend, listen to what you just said. The **נביא** says, **בכל צרתם לו צר**, which means that when **כלל ישראל** are suffering, the **שכינה** is also **כביכול** in pain. **ה'** is your pilot. If you are going through a difficult time, **ה'** is right there with you, feeling your pain and worry, and you can therefore be assured that He will 'fly your plane' in the best way possible.

"Trusting in Hashem means recognizing that He is always working behind the scenes on our behalf." – Rabbi Morderchai Gifter

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בִּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ *and they made Aaron's holy garments* 39:1



The Ramban refers to the Bigdei Kehunah as **בגדי מלכות** - 'Kingly clothing.' And indeed, they were. The garments of the Kohen Gadol were magnificent and extremely regal. In fact, the Gemara tells us in Mesechta Megilah 12a that Achashverosh actually chose to wear these very vestments at the feast he prepared for the Yidden!

He felt more regal wearing the **בגדי כהונה** than he did wearing his own royal garments… But the **דורשי רשומות** points out something interesting: The Sof Teivos in our Pasuk… **וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בִּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ** spell out **ושתי**- Vashti!

Later on in Perek 40:13 it says: **בִּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָשַׁחְתָּ אֹתוֹ** – this is also Sof Teivos of **ושתי**.

And back in parshas Tetzaveh 28:5-6 the Pasukim say: **הַשֵּׁנִי וְאֶת־ הַשֵּׁשׁ וְעָשׂוּ** - yet again the Sof Teivos of **ושתי**.

What is the Vashti connection? **The Medrash Rabbah** (Esther 3:9) says that **ושתי** was killed because **she too** dressed in the **בגדי כהונה**!!

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

וְאֶת־הָאֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע הַמֵּאוֹת וַחֲמִשָּׁה וְשִׁבְעִים עָשָׂה וָוִים לָעַמּוּדִים וְצִפָּה רָאשֵׁיהֶם וְחִשַּׁק אֹתָם *'And out of the one thousand seven hundred and seventy five [shekels] he made hooks for the pillars, and he covered their tops and banded them.'* 38:28

The Zohar teaches us, that after Moshe Rabeinu calculated the 100 pieces of silver which were used for the sockets, he forgot about what had been done with the remaining 1,775!

Moshe became very distressed, and he feard that the people would suspect him of keeping them for himself…

It was then that Hashem reminded him, that they had been used for the hooks for the pillars - **וָוֵי֙ם לָֽעַמּוּדִ֔ים**.

The Remah in Shulchan Aruch (10:273) rules that the correct format of a Sefer Torah, should be written with almost every Amud- every column, beginning with the letter **ו**. (Most Sifrei Torah written nowadays appear this way.)

We know that the 600,000 letters in the Sefer Torah represent the 600,000 Yidden who received the Torah at Har Sinai. The donations of the B'nei Yisrael for the Mishkan also symbolized the letters of the Sefer Torah.

We contributed from our hearts. We are represented in the holy pure letters of the Aleph Beis. So were our donations.

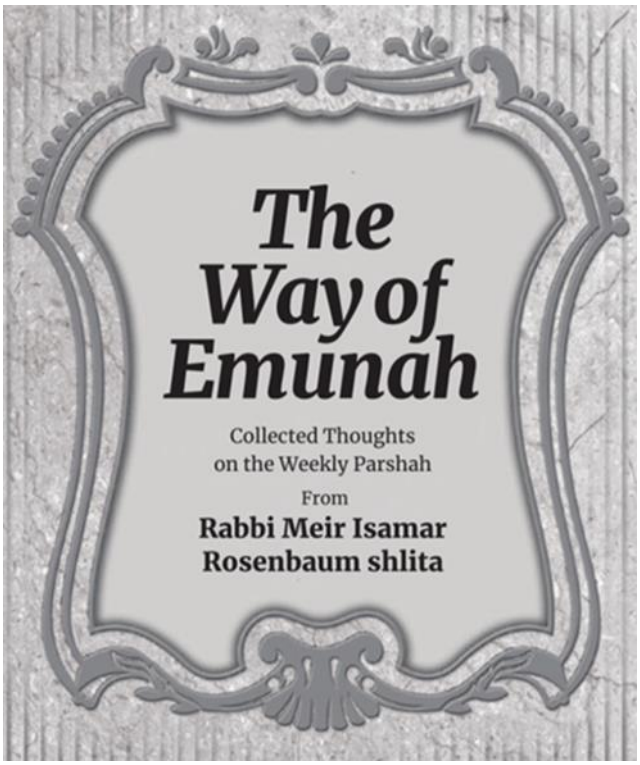
The following 27 letters appear in every Sefer Torah and make up the entire Aleph Beis – which represents Klal Yisrael.

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ך ל מ ם נ ן ס ע פ ף צ ץ ק ר ש ת - These all add up to the gematria of 1,775! This is the exact number of leftover shekalim in our Pasuk! And the incredible hint to the letters of a Sefer Torah, is in our Pasuk- **וְאֶת־הָאֶ֔לֶף וּשְׁבַ֥ע הַמֵּא֖וֹת וְחָמְשָׁ֣ה וְשִׁבְעִ֑ים** – which is also gematria of 1,775!

And as the Remah writes -- 'You shall write Sifrei Torah , every column shall begin with a **ו**. – just as is written in our Pasuk - **עשה שי למורא [ווים לעמודים]**

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Chaim Shmulevits once said, "A successful person is not always happy, but a happy person is always successful!"



How Did Moshe Rabenu Become Wealthy?

The Medrash Tanchuma (Pekudei 7) states that Moshe knew that he might be suspected of taking things for himself, so he began to make an accounting of everything donated to the Mishkan. This is the meaning of the words: אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן - "***These are the numbers of the Mishkan***." He gave a reckoning for every single thing – the gold, silver and copper.

Sefer Chazon Yeshaya asks how anyone could suspect Moshe Rabenu, the great leader of the nation, of taking money for himself?

He goes on to explain the source of the suspicion by saying that Moshe was very wealthy. However, the people never saw him engage in any business. Therefore, they began to suspect him and wondered where his riches came from, and some of them concluded that he must have taken some of the money meant for the Mishkan.

What they didn't know was that his wealth actually came from the leftover pieces of the luchos, as is stated in the Gemara (Nedarim 38A). After he gave them an exact accounting for everything donated to the Mishkan, he revealed to them how he became rich, and they no longer had any reason to suspect him.

Thus, after it says that Moshe counted the numbers of the Mishkan, it says that it was a "Mishkan of testimony". This is because the luchos are called "eidus", testimony, as is stated in Rashi (Shemos 25:16). The pasuk is saying that it was now clear that Moshe's wealth came from the luchos, and not from the Mishkan.

וַיְהִי מְאַת כִּכַּר הַכֶּסֶף לָצֶקֶת אֶת אַדְנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת אַדְנֵי הַפָּרֹכֶת מְאַת אֲדָנִים לִמְאַת הַכִּכָּר כִּכָּר לָאָדֶן - ***One hundred kikar of the silver were used for casting the adanim of the Holy and the adanim of the Paroches; one hundred adanim out of one hundred kikar***… (38:27)

The Brachos Are The "Adanim" of The Holiness of Yisroel: **The Chidushei Harim** explains that the 100 adanim (sockets used to hold the beams) in the Mishkan correspond with the 100 brachos that a person is obligated to say every day (Menachos 43B).

What is the connection between the 100 brachos and the 100 adanim?

The answer is that just like the adanim hold up the Mishkan and allow it to remain standing, so too brachos are the foundation of Klal Yisroel's kedusha and the holiness of every Jew, and they allow us to stand strong in our Yiddishkeit.

This is hinted to by the fact that the word "adanim" is related to the word "adon", master, and when we make brachos, we testify that Hashem is the master of the world. Thus, the 100 brachos that we make every day are the "adanim" to hold up each of our personal Mishkans.

"When we understand the depth of Hashem's love for us, we can approach Him with complete trust and faith in His Goodness." – Rabbi Yisroel Salanter [Stories to Inspire]

Like a New Man:

Sefer Sifsei Tzadik (Parshas Zachor, Ois 8) writes that on Parshas Hachodesh a spark of new light comes to this world that makes it possible to start life over literally like a new man.

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

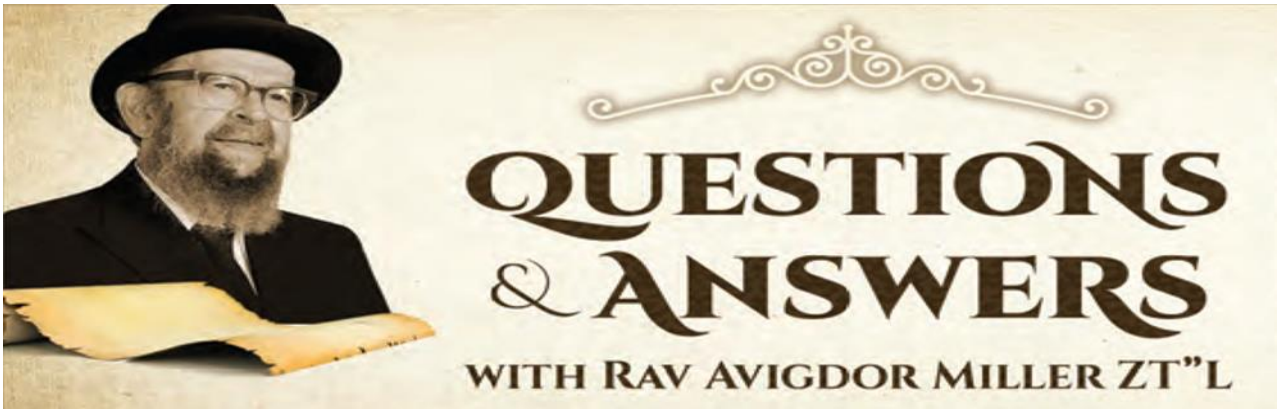
וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־מָסַךְ שַׁעַר הֶחָצֵר וַיְכַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמְּלָאכָה 'And he put up the screen at the entrance to the courtyard; and Moshe completed the work.' 40:33

The Medrash לקח טוב explains that by the Torah telling us here, וַיְכַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמְּלָאכָה - we learn that an accomplishment is credited to the one who **completes** it.

Many people were involved with the construction of the Mishkan. Yet in the end, the Torah gives Moshe Rabeinu the accolade, since he was the one who performed the finishing touches – by setting up the curtain of the gate of the courtyard.

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־מָסַךְ שַׁעַר הֶחָצֵר - The Roshe Teivos spell מֹשֶׁה!

And this is the reason that Moshe Rabeinu's name is hinted to in the very last act of the construction of the Mishkan. – It was indeed Moshe's credit!! [שפתי כהן]





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

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

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

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

Being Connected By Rabbi Sholom Ber Avtzon



The Ruzhiner Rebbe's 19th Century Palace in Sadigura

A Jew once came to the Heilige **Ruzhiner (Rabbi Yisroel Friedman**, 1796-1850. The tzaddik asked him if he came for a brocha? "No," was the reply.

"How is your family?" asked the tzaddik. - "Boruch Hashem we are all healthy," the man answered.

"And how is your livelihood?" inquired the tzaddik? - "Boruch Hashem," replied the person.

"Since Boruch Hashem everything is in order, may I ask, why did you come here?" - "I came because I want to become your chossid and be connected to you," the individual answered.

"May I know what prompted you to make this decision?" asked the Ruzhiner. - "With pleasure," the man said, and he began relating the following story.

As I mentioned I am Boruch Hashem quite successful and some years ago I hired a manager. After a short time, I realized that he is very talented and capable and I began giving him additional responsibilities. My business thrived and he ran the store, while I was able to learn almost the entire day. The only exception was that I would go to the fairs and buy the merchandise. But as the tzaddik knows, that takes a lot of time. In addition to the many days, I spend at the fair, there are a few weeks of traveling back and forth.

So, I was thinking that since I rely on my manager for everything else, I should rely on him for this responsibility as well. When I mentioned this to my friends, they all tried to convince me otherwise. They argued that although he is reliable and honest, the amount of money you will be giving him to purchase all the merchandise is more than his yearly salary! That may be too great of a temptation, and we fear that he may never return.

However, I knew in my heart that he is as honest as they come, and I followed my intuition.

The trip normally takes between three and four weeks, but when five weeks passed and he didn't return, my friends began telling me, "We warned you and you brought this misfortune upon yourself!"

The store ran out of merchandise, and I didn't have the money to purchase new items and replenish the shelves. Very quickly I went from being wealthy to a poor person.

Yet in my heart I felt that something happened to him, as he definitely is as honest as can be.

Last week the manager came to me in a dream. He informed me that on the way to the fair he began feeling ill. Knowing that he has a relative nearby, he went to his town to recuperate. However, as the

days passed, he realized that his end is coming near, so he thought on how can he return the money to me.

After some thought he decided to give it to the Rov of that town and request of him to return it. I gave the Rov your name and your other information, but evidently, he didn't try very hard to find you.

One day a malach began pulling people out from Gehenim, and I too was pulled out. I asked the malach what was happening and he replied, "Today is Yud Tes Kislev, the Yahrzeit of **the Maggid of Mezeritch**. On such an auspicious day it was decided that all those who are connected to him are to enter Gan Eden and can continue their connection with him."

I said to the malach, "I am thrilled that you are taking me out but I have no connection with the Maggid; I never met him."

"That is true," responded the malach, "However before you were born your mother went to him for a brocha, and as a result of his brocha you were born. That is your connection.

However, when I arrived at the gates of Gan Eden they didn't allow me to enter. They said, while you didn't do anything intentional against your employer, yet nevertheless because of you his life was turned upside down.

I argued that I didn't want to die, you decreed it, so why am I being punished because of your decision?!

The heavenly court convened, and they gave me permission to inform you of how you can obtain your money.

Before he left I asked him, "Can you please inform me which tzaddik I should become connected to?"

He said, the only thing I am allowed to say is that whatever the tzaddik of Ruzhin says makes a tremendous impression in heaven.

"Rebbe, now you know why I desire to become connected to you."

Had You in Mind By R' Paysach Krohn

Many years ago, the **Bobover Rebbe** went to visit Crown Heights. **Harav Ezariah Zisha Follman, zt"l**, who was marbitz Torah ... as menahel of Yeshivas Eitz Chaim of Bobov unfortunately did not have children, and the day after Purim, maybe the Rebbe would be in a good mood, and give him a special blessing that he should have children. – But the Rebbe didn't say anything!

So, as the Rebbe was leaving, Rabbi Follman said, "Rebbe, I was hoping that you would give me a bracha that I should have children?"

The Rebbe said, "But I gave you a beracha."

"You did?"

He said, "Yes, I had something to drink, and then afterwards, I said **בּוֹרֵא נְפָשׁוֹת** – meaning, lives should be created! And I had you and your wife in mind!"

"Oh, thank you so much."

Rabbi Horwitz, who was the gabbai of the Rebbe, overheard this, and said to the Rebbe, "Rebbe my wife and I are also childless – what about me?"

The Rebbe said, "I had you in mind too."

He said, "You did?"

Yes, I said, "**בּוֹרֵא נְפָשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת** – meaning, there should be a lot! The **רַבּוֹת** includes you and your wife!"

That year, Rabbi Follman had a little girl, and Rabbi Horwitz had a little boy. And 18 years later, they married each other!

Don't compare yourself to others. Be like the sun and the moon and shine when it's your time.

Reb Yoel R. On The Parsha

כִּי עֲנַן ה' עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן... בְּכָל־מַסְעֵיהֶם "For the cloud of Hashem was on the Mishkan …in all their travels."

The Torah reminds us that the cloud of Hashem's presence rested on the Mishkan . When the cloud rested on the Mishkan , they would camp, and when the cloud rose, then the Yidden would travel.

If the cloud of Hashem only covered the Mishkan when they were camping and not when they were traveling, why does the pasuk say that it was with them throughout their travels?

Rashi explains that ***in all their travels*** means that at any stage of the journey the cloud would rest where they were to encamp. Also, since they traveled from the place of encampment, therefore the place of their encampment is also referred to as their travels.

Another reason the encampment was called a journey is as follows. Even when Yidden enjoy calm and peace and it seems that we have finally come to a place where we can settle down, we must know that we are still on our journey. Our ultimate home and permanent residence is only in Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch explains that Rashi is learning from our pasuk that there is no pause in the service of Hashem. Rest is not a goal in and of itself; it is a rest to regain our strength to serve Hashem. The encampment is a rest for the coming journey.

Therefore, the encampment is also called part of the journey. The Yid, as he rests, continues to progress and travel from one level to the next.

"You don't need to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

Thank You

As a student in the Mirrer Yeshiva, **R' Shimon Schwab** had occasion to borrow money from his mentor, **R' Chatzkel Levenstein**. When he arrived at the Mashgiach's office to pick up the money, Shimon began to say 'Thank You.'

R' Chatzkel stopped him. "You may not thank me for a loan," he said. "It is ribis devorim and it is forbidden to take or pay interest on a loan. You may also not thank me when you return the money."

Upon his return, young Shimon brought the money to the Mashgiach's office, silently put the money on the table and turned to leave.

"Kafui Tov! Ingrate!" roared R' Chatzkel. "How can it be that you show no gratitude for the loan?!"

Stunned, the boy stammered, "B-but the Mashgiach told me I was not allowed to thank him."

"True," said the sage, "but you can show gratitude without saying a word. Though you can't say 'Thank You', it should be visible on your face that you are fighting back the urge to do so."

L'Maaseh…

Once, a student of the great **R' Boruch Ber Leibowitz** came to **Rav Moshe Feinstein** with a complicated question of halacha. As soon as he finished asking, R' Moshe answered him without hesitation.

The man was taken aback as to how someone could answer such a complicated question without giving it any thought, and he began to yell at and berate R' Moshe for having the temerity and confidence to answer so quickly.

"My rebbe," he explained, "would hear the question, analyze it, go through the sugya of the gemara, and deliberate before issuing any ruling!"

In his humility and pursuit of the truth, R' Moshe explained calmly: "R' Boruch Ber's way was to contemplate and deliberate, because that's the way the Ribono shel Olam created him, and Hashem made me in a different way, that it is my derech and my job to answer in this fashion."

R' Moshe understood, and tried to impart on this man, that Hashem made each person with different qualities, made up differently so that we should each fulfil our own unique role.



לְמַטֵּה יְהוּדָה... לְמַטֵּה־דָן Of the tribe of Yehudah… of the tribe of Dan (38:22-23) Why were just these two tribes specifically chosen for the work of the Mishkan?



Because they were both compared to lions. It is written by Yehudah (Bereishis 49:9), **גור אריה יהודה** - '***Yehuda is a lion cub***', which is a great sign. It is written by Dan (Devorim 33:22) **דן גור אריה** , '***Dan is a lion cub***'. HaKadosh Baruch Hu is called a lion as it says (Amus 3:8), **אריה שאג – מי לא ייירא**, '***A lion has roared, who will not fear?***! [The intent is HaKadosh Baruch Hu].

The Bais HaMikdash is called a lion as it says (Yeshaya 29:1), **אריא-הוי ל אריא-ל קרית חנה דוד** - 'Oh, Ariel, Ariel, city where Dovid camped [referring to the Bais HaMikdash].

This is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu was saying, "Let the two tribes that are compared to lions build the Bais HaMikdash, which is called a lion, for My Name, which is called a lion." (**Midrash HaGadol – Otzer HaMedrashim**)

The Siddur Speaks

We say in Birchas HaShachar from the first Mishnah in Masechta Pei'ah, that there are various acts of Chesed, which are things whose fruits one enjoys in this world and the main reward for them is reserved for Olam Haba, but that learning Torah is the equal to all of them together.

Rav Aryeh Levin, zt"l, explains what this is coming to teach. When one bakes a cake, he puts in a few eggs, some baking powder, sugar, oil, etc. That is all good, but if one forgets to add the flour, it is impossible to bake that cake, even if he used only the best of the other ingredients. A cake needs flour, otherwise it is not a cake.

Rav Aryeh said that it is the same thing here. The Mishnah first lists doing acts of kindness, like visiting the sick, helping a couple to get married, accompanying one who has passed away at a Levayah, and making peace between others. These are all great things and fine ways of acting, however, "learning Torah is the equal of them all."

One needs to accompany his Mitzvah performance with learning Torah as well, and if he doesn't learn Torah but only performs the Mitzvah, it is like baking a cake without the flour!

"Words and hearts should be handled with care for words when spoken and hearts when broken are the hardest things to repair."

Chizuk From Our Chachomim

כ״ט אדר , marks the *Yohrzeit* of **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky זצ״ל**. He was born in 1891 on the Lithuanian estate of his grandfather Reb Shmuel Hirsch who was a wealthy flourmill owner and timber merchant. Shortly after Yaakov's birth, Reb Shmuel Hirsch lost his fortune due to new decrees imposed by the Russian Czar, and the family moved to nearby Dolhinov.

This turned out to be a providential move as it enabled young Yaakov to imbue a love for **תורה** which was prevalent in that small village.

In his youth he spent several years learning in Minsk, where he became a childhood friend of Aharon Pines, renowned later on in life as **Rav Aharon Kotler זצ״ל**. At the age of 15, he moved to Slabodka to learn in **ישיבת כנסת ישראל** under the tutelage of the **Alter**, and subsequently learnt in the **ישיבות** of Slutz, Krinik and Maltsch.

During World War 1, he took refuge in Lomza, learning under **Rav Yechiel Michel Gordon**. After the war he moved to Kremenchug, where he married Ita Ettel Heller, daughter of the Slabodka **משגיח** , **Rav Dov Tzvi**. He went on to learn for a few years in the Slabodka **כולל** and in 1926 was appointed **רב** in Zitiviyan.

In 1937, he emigrated to America and accepted the position as **רב** in Seattle and subsequently in Toronto where he stayed for seven years, before becoming a **מגיד שיעור** in **מתיבתא תורה ודעת** in Brooklyn, New York.

Known as the **חכימא דיהודאי** (wise one amongst the *Yieden*), he served on the **מועצת גדולי התורה** in the USA, and after Rav Aharon Kotler's passing, Rav Yaakov along with **Rav Moshe Feinstein** were the **מנהיגי הדור** for American **חרדי** Jewry.

Rav Yaakov invested tremendous **כוחות** in **חינוך** , including for immigrants from the Soviet Union and was heavily involved with **תורה ומסורה**, the national **חינוך** body in the USA.

Rav Yaakov was known for his tremendous love and his warm smile for all *Yieden* he would encounter. One time, when sitting in a doctor's waiting room, he noticed a young non-observant boy sitting there and started playing ball with him!

He explained to his attendant, 'This young boy is currently too far removed from *Yiddishkeit* for anything I say to have an effect on him. At least let him have a positive memory from an encounter with a religious Rabbi!'

In 1967, he retired as **ראש ישיבה** in **תורה ודעת** and moved to Monsey, where he focused on writing and publishing his *seforim* **אמת ליעקב**, on **ש״ס**, **תורה** and **הלכה**.

He was **נפטר** in 1986 and requested to be buried in Brooklyn, so that his family would not have to travel when wanting to visit his **קבר**. **יהי זכרו ברוך**

Rabbi Paysach Krohn - *A* Millionaire Because of You

I want to share something remarkable that has never left me.

Many years ago, I went with my son and daughter-in-law to one of the wisest men of the generation, **Rav Shlomo Wolbe *zt"l***. I asked him a question I am often asked myself: "Rebbe, when I speak to parents about *chinuch*, what is the single most important message I should give them?"

Rav Wolbe answered with characteristic simplicity and brilliance: "There are two things every child must receive: Time and love."

My son, then just beginning his own parenting journey, pressed further. "Rebbe, how much time? How much do our children need?"

Rav Wolbe smiled and gave a timeless answer: "As much as they need."

He was right. In today's world you simply cannot attend every wedding, every bar mitzvah, every bas mitzvah, every *upsherin*,

every event. Baruch Hashem, Klal Yisrael has grown so beautifully that you could be out every single night of the week. But if you still have children at home, you do not belong everywhere else.

Your first responsibility is home. Your first obligation is your children.

People ask me all the time, "Rabbi, how do you travel all over the world? Edmonton, Antwerp, Manchester, Chile, Australia?" And the answer is simple: my children are married. You'd have to be out of your mind to travel like that when there are little ones at home.

I will tell you something surprising: If you don't show up at the wedding, the couple will still get married! But your child won't wait for your time.

If we are not present, children will look for validation somewhere else. They will seek connection from friends, from the street, from their phones—because they feel no connection at home. The world is full of distractions, and if we are too busy for our children, someone else will be glad to claim their attention.

When my children were young, each one had a weekly half-hour of undivided time. No interruptions. No phones. Just the two of us. Today it's harder; cell phones run our lives. As R' Matisyahu Salomon once quipped, "I don't know how anyone with a smartphone can say the morning blessing, '*She'lo Asani Aved*—Who has not made be a slave.' Such a person is a slave!"

Walk down any street and watch couples taking a walk. He is on his phone. She is on hers. They might as well be miles apart.

But a child, for thirty minutes a week, gets a parent with full attention. If they want to go bowling, we went bowling. If they wanted pizza, we bought pizza. If they wanted to learn Tanach, we learned Tanach. It was their time.

Do you know what happens when you do this? You learn everything about your child.

Their friends. Their teachers. Their favorite colors. Their dreams. And your relationship becomes real.

As yourself. When was the last time you had a real conversation with your child or grandchild? Not a quick check-in, not a reminder, not a correction; an actual conversation longer than three minutes. This is where connection happens. This is how children feel loved.

I once heard a heartbreaking story from the marriage counselor and psychologist, Dr. Meir Wikler.

A couple divorced, and the custody arrangement was that the children stayed with their mother during the week and with their father for Shabbos. One Tuesday night, the mother was putting her young son to sleep when he suddenly burst into tears.

"I want to go to Daddy." "What do you mean? You'll see Daddy on Shabbos." "No! I want Daddy now!" She couldn't calm him, so she called her ex-husband. He came immediately, took the boy home, put him into bed, and the boy began crying again.

"I want Mommy!" "But you just asked for me! That's why I came!" "No, I want Mommy!"

He couldn't calm him either. So he brought the boy back to his mother. And as the father turned to leave, the boy stood at the door sobbing, "Daddy, don't go. Please stay. Please stay tonight." The father couldn't stay. He left, and the boy cried himself to sleep.

The next morning the mother called Dr. Wikler. After describing the whole ordeal, she asked:

"Do you think my son needs therapy?" Dr. Wikler answered: "Your son doesn't need therapy.

Your son needs parents."

Children don't need perfection. They don't need brilliance. They don't need expensive toys or elaborate vacations. They need parents who present, attentive and loving.

When my daughter was engaged, we had many honest conversations. I once said to her, "Faige, I used to criticize you a lot. Didn't it bother you?" She answered with such clarity that I will never forget it. "Tatty, do you know how many times a week you told me you were a millionaire because I was your daughter? I believed you. And I knew you meant it." That is the power of love that is spoken and shown consistently.

Do you ever go over to your child and say: "I am the richest person in the world —not because of money, but because Hashem gave me you."

Say it. And mean it. One sincere hug given with that message can bind a child to you for life.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

Volume 12, Issue 24 Vayakhel-Pekudei 5783

Parsha Pearls

וַיַּ֤רְא מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָ֔ה וְהִנֵּ֥ה עָשׂ֖וּ אֹתָ֑הּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר צִוָּ֔ה ה' כֵּ֥ן עָשׂ֖וּ וַיְבָ֥רֶךְ אֹתָ֖ם מֹשֶׁ֔ה "***Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! They had done it as Hashem had commanded, so had they done. And Moshe blessed them.***" - 39:43

What blessing did Moshe give them? Rashi answers this question: "Moshe said to them, "May it be His will that the Shechinah should rest in the work of your hands."

Tifferes Shlomo points out that before giving to Bnei Yisroel this special blessing he "**looked**" at the contributions of Am Yisroel. The blessing came as a result from that look.

Because Moshe looked at their contributions with an **עין טובה**, it created a room for the Shechina to rest there.

The lesson is for us as well. Our **עין טובה** builds a place for the Shechina in this world.



Hagon HaRav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg (1910-2012), one of the Gedolei & Poskei HaDor, Niftar at the age of 101. Rabbi Scheinberg was the founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Ore, and also served as the rav of the Kiryas Mattersdorf neighborhood of Yerushalayim. Despite his old age, Rav Scheinberg would travel to the United States with great Mesiras Nefesh to fund-raise for his Yeshiva – even at the age of 100.

Rabbi Scheinberg was born in 1910 in Ostrov, Poland, the second son of Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Scheinberg and Yuspa (Yosefa) Tamback. At age 9 the Rav Scheinberg moved with his family into a small apartment on the Lower East Side. After briefly attending public school, he enrolled in the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School (RJJ), where he studied until age 14. At that time, Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman, who influenced promising young Jewish men in New York City to advance in their Torah learning, encouraged him to transfer to Rabbi Yehuda Levenberg's Beis Medrash LeRabbonim yeshiva in New Haven, Connecticut. Rav Herman also decided that the youth would make a good husband for his third daughter, Bessie, who was then only 12 years old. By the time Rav Scheinberg left the yeshiva at the age of sixteen and a half, he was regarded as a masmid and had already made a siyum on Shas.

At age 17 Rav Scheinberg progressed to Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. There he learned under Rabbis Shlomo Polachek (known as the "Meitcheter Ilui"), Rav Moshe Soloveichik, and Rav Shimon Shkop. His Chavrusas included Rav Avigdor Miller, Rav Moshe Bick, Rav Mordechai Gifter, and Rav Nosson Meir Wachtfogel, future Gedolei Yisroel of American Torah Jewry.

When Rav Scheinberg was 19, Rav Herman suggested the Shidduch with his 17-year-old daughter and the Scheinbergs agreed. Hagon HaRav Boruch Ber Leibowitz ZATZAL, who was a guest at the Herman home at that time, wrote out the tenaim. With the encouragement of his father-in-law, Rabbi Scheinberg and his new wife spent their first five years of marriage in the town of Mir, Belarus (then Poland). They lived next-door to the yeshiva, where he immersed himself in learning while his wife coped with the impoverished lifestyle. There was no running water, the only source of heat was an oven in the center of their apartment, and the unpaved streets were always muddy. Bessie, however, encouraged her husband to grow in learning, and he developed a reputation as one of the yeshiva's biggest masmidim. While in Europe, Rabbi Scheinberg also learned at the Kaminetz yeshiva and received semicha from Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz.

In 1935 the Scheinbergs returned to America. Soon after his return, he was offered the position of mashgiach ruchani of the Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in Queens founded by Rabbi Dovid Leibowitz. He served in that position for 25 years, until leaving to open his own yeshiva, Torah Ore. With the help and encouragement of his brother, Rabbi Shmuel Scheinberg, and his son-in-law, Rabbi Chaim Dov Altusky, Rav Scheinberg opened the Torah Ore yeshiva in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn in 1960. The yeshiva opened with six students and grew steadily, enrolling many local Sephardi boys who were attracted by Scheinberg's Torah knowledge and warmth.

The Scheinbergs treated their students as their own children, raising money to marry them off and even pay their dentist bills.

In 1963 Bessie's sister Ruchoma visited their father in Israel and toured a planned Charedi housing development in northern Jerusalem called Kiryat Mattersdorf, which was being developed by the Mattersdorfer Rebbe, who was Ruchoma's neighbour in New York. Though Rabbi Scheinberg was skeptical about relocating his family and his American yeshiva to Israel, he made a pilot trip to tour the development and decided that it could work.

Rabbi Scheinberg was famous for wearing many layers of Tzitzis. In the past he would wear about 150 pairs, but recently, due to his fragile health, he only wore about 70 pairs. Although there is much speculation as to why he did this, it does not appear that anyone knows the reason.



Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891-1986). Born on 21 Adar, in Dolhinov, he left for Minsk at the age of 11. Among his friends there were the future Rav Reuven Grozovsky, and the young R' Aaron Kotler. Shortly after Pesach in 1905, Reb Yaakov and Reb Aaron traveled to Slobodka to learn under the supervision of the Alter of Slobodka. Reb Yaakov also learned in Slutzk. During World War I he took refuge in Lomza in the yeshiva of Reb Yechiel Michel Gordon. In 1945, after a brief stint as a Rov in Toronto, he accepted the request of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz that he take up the position of rosh yeshiva in Mesivta Torah Vodaas, a position he kept till his retirement to Monsey.

His chidushim were printed in his seforim Emes LeYaakov, on Torah and on Shas. As he requested, he was buried in Brooklyn, since he pointed out that most of his family live in America and would not always be able to travel to his kever in Eretz Yisrael. From this, his last request we learn yet another chapter of his feelings for others.

Vizhnitzer Rebbe of Monsey, Harav Mordechai Hager zt'l (1922-2018).



The great Rebbe and *tzaddik* Harav Mordechai Hager was born in Grosswardein Romania, on 18th Tammuz, 5682 (July 14, 1922) to his father the Imrei Chaim, the Admor Maran Harav Chaim Meir Hager, *zy"a*, and his wife Margalit, daughter of Harav Zev Twersky, the Admor of Rachmastrivka, *zy"a*. As a child he was very close to his grandfather, the Saba Kadisha "Ahavas Yisrael" of Vizhnitz, *zy"a*. In 5702, he went to learn for a *zman* by the Admor Harav Yoel of Satmar, *zy"a*, and then for two years by Harav Yosef Greenwald of Pupa, *zy"a*. Throughout his life, he would consider these two to be his primary *rebbeim*. In 5704, as the world closed in on Hungarian Jewry, Reb Mordechai was able to escape across the border to Bucharest, Romania, where stayed for the duration of the war. Every year, Reb Mordechai would celebrate the 34th day of the Omer, the day on which he made his escape. In 5705, he married Feige Malka, daughter of Harav Yaakov Yosef, the Admor of Skver, *zy"a*. Tragically, she was *niftar*, childless, just one year later. The following year, he married her younger sister, Sima Mirel, with whom he had 14 children. Reb Mordechai, his wife, and

her family then traveled to the United States, where he began serving as *Rav* of the Vizhnitzer Chassidim in America – first in Boro Park, and then in Williamsburg. In 5724, no longer wishing to live in a crowded city, and he moved to Monsey.

After his father was *niftar* in 5732, both Reb Mordechai and his brother were crowned as Rebbes of Vizhnitz: His brother Rav Moshe Yehoshua Hager as the Admor in Israel, and he as Rebbe of Vizhnitz in the U.S. In his last years, he had taken sick and couldn't read. Since he did not want to stop learning Torah, he asked that recorded *shiurim* be brought to him. From among those that were brought to him, he chose to listen to the Gemara lectures delivered by HaRav HaGaon Chaim Shmerler, *shlita*. Reb Mordechai wrote in his will that all his sons should be crowned as Rebbes, each one in a different city around the world.



Hagaon Harav Elya Svei zt"l (1924-2009) Known for his brilliance in Torah, Rav Elya led numerous battles to protect our treasured *mesorah* and to protest those who wished to compromise our way of life and adherence to Torah living. His acumen and genius was legendary. Rav Elya was the *rosh hamedabrim* in the Torah world for years, in addition to being a venerated *rosh yeshiva* whose *shiurim* were famous for their clarity and depth.

He was one of the primary *talmidim* of Rav Aharon Kotler *zt"l*. In the mid-1950s R' Elya joined *ybl"c* Maran Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky *shlit"a* in leading the Philadelphia Yeshiva. Rabbi Svei was a son-in-law of Rabbi Avraham Kalmanovitz, the founder of the Brooklyn

branch of the Mir Yeshiva, and was a brother-in-law of Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum. His advice was sought after by leading *Roshei Yeshiva*. He was the leading force behind the establishment of Sinai Academy in Brooklyn, a middle school and high school catering to the children of primarily non-observant Russian Jewish immigrants. Rav Elya was also a member of the Moeztes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisroel of America.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



The Pele Yoetz (**ויהי נעם**) writes, "Before every good deed… you must say the pasuk **ויהי נועם ה' אלקינו עלינו ומעשה ידינו ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה כוננהו**, "*May the pleasantness of Hashem our G-d be upon us, and the work of our hands establish for us, and the work of our hands establish it.*" (Tehillim 90:17)

He explains: Each mitzvah has profound ideas, purpose, and kavanos, and we don't know them. Nevertheless, when we perform the mitzvos even in their simplest form, they will achieve all these secrets, but it would be far better to know the *kavanos*. Therefore, we request with the **ויהי נועם** that Hashem should consider in heaven as if we intended all the proper thoughts.

Pele Yoetz adds, "This pasuk, itself, has many divine secrets, with every letter and with every word, and it would be proper to say **ויהי נעם** on the saying of the **ויהי נעם** ".

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn



Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky once said that if somebody says **ברכת אֲשֶׁר יָצַר** with kavonoh, right afterwards they can ask Hashem for anything that their friend may need- Whether it's for a yeshuah, parnossoh, refuah or anything else.

So, what's so special about **ברכת אֲשֶׁר יָצַר** that it enables us to get those tefillos answered?

I believe that if you look at the words, which mention our total reliance that we have on hakadosh Baruch Hu – The digestive system, the circulatory system, the bodily functions that we take for granted. All those things show the greatness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and our reliance upon Him.

The Vilna Gaon says that Asher Yatzar is the only bracha in which we say ' **גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כִסֵּא כְבוֹדֶךָ** ' – To show that even from the highest place of kedusha, Hashem takes care of our mundane matters.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky says, "when you show Hashem that you appreciate this, and you rely on Him, in that zechus, you can request anything that you need for your friend, and your tefillos will be answered."

I think that this is what we should do every time you say 'Asher Yatzar'.

Guard One's Health

Since it is a Torah mitzvah to guard one's health, it is very important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. We should eat food that is beneficial to our overall health, being mindful of the quality of the food we eat, and of the quantity. Too much of a good thing can be detrimental to our well-being. We need to walk each day. We also need a sufficient amount of sleep to maintain our health.

Encouraging people to maintain a healthy lifestyle is a mitzvah. Encouraging people to eat healthful food is a mitzvah. Encouraging people to walk each day is a mitzvah. Encouraging people to get sufficient sleep is a mitzvah.

My father's teacher, the **Chofetz Chaim**, would personally extinguish the lamps in his yeshiva at night so his students would get enough sleep.

Rabbi Avigdor Miller walked for an hour each day and encouraged others to do the same. ~ **Rav Zelig Pliskin**.



אהבת ה' ויראת ה'

The Pele Yoetz writes: A person can inspire himself to develop the proper mindset of love and fear of Hashem by taking a moment to focus on all the pleasure he receives from worldly matters and similar things.

For example, when one eats or drinks something that pleases his palate, or when he allows his soul to delight in abundance with leisurely walks or by listening to pleasant music or if he is blessed with a significant monetary gain, which bring inspiration and joy – one should take this to heart…

'If I desire this certain matter so much, something that is fleeting and temporary, worthless and empty, pleasures that live for one

night and disappear on the next – how much more so must I love my Creator, who is the source of all desires and pleasures of this world!'

One should then remove his thoughts from the connection he feels to worldly pleasures and cling instead to love his Master.

And the same opportunity presents itself when one experiences fear and anxiety for some reason. He should take this to heart, and say to himself, 'Why do I fear this matter – something as fleeting as a breath? – It would be better if it is Hashem that I fear!'

He should immediately change his focus and substitute bad for good.

He will be rewarded handsomely for this and will find it to be the means for his ultimate redemption.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Hakohen zt"l

Once a Chassid from a neighboring town came to his Rebbe, Rabbi Zvi Hersh of Riminov, and begged him to somehow intercede so that his father-in-law would die.

"What!" exclaimed the Rebbe, "What are you talking about."

"Well, my father-in-law is very old, he is already over 100," explained the Chassid, "he has to be watched over all the time. He can't really do much for himself, and he is miserable most of the time. He doesn't learn and doesn't pray any more. He has had enough of life already, but he just keeps hanging on day after day, week after week, year after year."

The Riminover didn't really know what to say, but he reasoned that a Jew who lived to such an age must have some kind of merit. He commanded the Chassid to bring in the old man to speak with him. The Chassid protested saying that his father-in-law was too old and too feeble, but the Rebbe wouldn't relent. "Bring him in anyway as I have requested," he ordered.

So, they picked up the old man, put him in a wagon and brought him to Riminov. They carried him in on a bed and placed him in front of the Rebbe. Reb Hersh began to ask him questions. He soon found out that the old man was a simple but ignorant Jew. He had been a wagon driver all of his life. He recited the prayers in the morning, but his real interest was to get to breakfast. He went to Shul on Shabbos, but the chulent (chamin) served at the end was his main reason.

The Riminover peppered him with more questions to find out if the old Jew could remember any reason that might account for his many years. Maybe there was some special Mitzvah he did once or some experience, maybe he met a Tzaddik, a special holy Jew, on some noteworthy occasion that could have helped him to merit a long life.

The old Jew recalled that once some Torah scholars had asked him to take them for Shabbos to a town a half a day's journey away called Lizensk. "They pleaded with me, he reminisced, "but I didn't want to go. I told them that I like Shabbos at home with my bed and my cholent. But they promised me a good wage and the same food that I would eat at home. I finally agreed and we set off. We got there not long before Shabbos and they set me up in a nice hotel."

"Right after the Shabbos night davening, they showed up with a great meal, everything just the way I like it. They came back a while later and asked me if I wanted to go with them to some kind of gathering, but I told them that I didn't come for that kind of thing, and they should let me sleep. So, being decent guys, they did."

"In the morning after the Shachris, they again brought me a good meal with a cholent even better than what I would have gotten at home. So I ate my fill and went down for a Shabbos nap. When I got woke up, it was already close to dark and nobody was around. I waited awhile, but none of my passengers showed their faces. So, I went to look for them. I came to the Shul and I heard. the loudest singing and saw dancing you can't imagine. I was sure that they were all drunk.

"I peeked inside and saw empty bottles everywhere, and these guys were singing and dancing like anything. When I went in, I saw they were all dancing around in a circle and one of them there in the middle. He must have been the chief drunkard or something because he was tall, his face was red like fire and he was dancing with his eyes closed and they were all singing and dancing around him."

At this point the Riminover stopped the old man, exclaiming that now he understood everything. The tall man in the middle with a face red like fire was none other the **Rebbe R' Elimelech of Lizensk**. He explained that it is well known that whoever even just caught a glimpse of Reb Elimelech's face would not be able to leave the world until he had done Teshuva.

So, the Rebbe turned towards the old man and started to explain to him in a gentle fatherly way how Hashem created the world, and how everything in it was put there for our benefit. He described the beauty of the creation, how every aspect of it is perfect, existing together in total harmony. Then he began to explain the nature of the Jewish soul. He described how every Jew is like one soul we are only separated by the physical bodies that we bear. Later, Hashem gave us the Torah and Mitzvos, specific instruction for serving Him and understanding His will.

The old Jew sat and listened but didn't utter a sound. So, the Rebbe continued. He began to describe how we were given the Shabbos to further bring ourselves closer to Him. We welcome the Shabbos, and the Divine Presence comes to us, and so to speak, sits at our table together with us, sharing our food and our company. . At this point the old Jew turned his head and stared dreamily out the window. A moment passed and he let out a deep sigh. The Riminover (who was a Kohen) quickly left the room. The old Jew heaved one more sigh of remorseful repentance and left this world - for the world to come.

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Accompanied By Angels - The Music of Shabbos by Yaakov Shwekey and Yisroel Besser

צֵאתְכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם - *'May your departure be to peace, O angels of peace'.*

Moments earlier, we welcomed the malachim to our home, the angels that accompanied us home from shul, as we are taught (Shabbos 119b): A person is escorted home from the beis haknesses by two malachim, one good and one evil. When he comes home and finds the candles burning, the table set, and the beds made, the good malach declares, "May it be G-d's will that the next Shabbos be the same," and the evil angel is forced to reluctantly answer "Amen."

If the good malach has given us his blessing, why are we so quick to send these angels on their way, bidding them farewell when we have just welcomed them?



There are those who omit this passage for that very reason (see Shaarei Teshuvah, Orach Chaim 32: 262), but in many homes, it is included. - **R' Shimshon Pincus** offers a beautiful explanation of why that might be.

At the high point of the year, Yom Kippur, the holiest man in the nation, the Kohen Gadol, enters the most exalted space in the world, the Kodesh HaKodashim. During those moments, he is alone. So alone, that on the pasuk, '*And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement.*' (Vayikra 16:17), the Talmud Yerushalmi says that even a malach may

not enter along with him. - At this moment of perfect union — the holiest Jew representing his people, encountering the Shechinah — there is no place or need for an angel.

So too, says R' Pincus, Kabbalas Shabbos is meant to be a moment of yichud, a Yid greeting the Queen, the Shechinah. Coming from the six days of the week, he needs a boost, the angels allowing him to enter this holy realm — but now, he is home, about to make Kiddush. In a moment, he will sanctify all of creation. Now, he gently turns to those angels and says, "Thank you for helping me reach this point, but now, I must be alone."

Now, he is exalted, entering an exalted space at an exalted moment. Now, no angel need accompany him and no angel can approach him, for he — the Yid at his Shabbos table, his personal Kodesh kodashim — is sanctified above all.

Those first moments after a father enters the house on Leil Shabbos are so crucial. The children might be hungry or tired, but there is such a spiritual opportunity here, potential to create something that is not just holy, but lasting.

The memories and emotions of Leil Shabbos remain etched in the neshamah of a child even when he has grown up and is leading his own Shabbos table. I know this, because I saw my father, R' Menachem Shwekey, who worked hard all week, come into the house on Friday night and instantly electrify the atmosphere. He understood that the attitude makes all the difference, and because he conveyed the feeling that this experience was important, it became important to us, and we wanted to be part of it.

Each week, he would remind us of our family's minhag of actually not reciting the passage of tzeischem l'shalom at the end of Shalom Aleichem because we want the malachim to stay with us.

When a father says that with conviction — we don't want the malachim to leave us, we want them right here! — then the child

feels that the malachim are a reality and he is suddenly much more aware of them. - We would join hands and circle the table, singing the traditional Sephardic chant for Shalom Aleichem, welcoming angels… but not letting them depart!

The Brilliance of the Chofetz Chaim



A silent newsreel that was discovered in 2015 stirred great excitement in the Jewish world, as it contained the only known video footage of the saintly Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1839-1933), arriving for the first Knessiah Gedolah in Vienna in 1923. - It is notable that this convention launched the Daf Yomi movement proposed by Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin. Never would this vital but revolutionary initiative have gained its universal acceptance without the Chofetz Chaim's support.

Before the Knessiah Gedolah officially convened, Rabbi Shapiro approached the Chofetz Chaim and requested that he be the one to suggest the idea of Daf Yomi to the assembly. Rabbi Shapiro, being

very young, felt that if the proposal came from him, it would lack the authority necessary to be accepted.

The Chofetz Chaim insisted that Rabbi Shapiro be the one to present it but requested of him — inexplicably — that he wait twenty minutes before entering the grand auditorium. When the room was full to capacity, Rabbi Shapiro entered the hall. The Chofetz Chaim stood up from his seat in honor of the young rav. In deference to the Chofetz Chaim, the entire assemblage stood up, according Rabbi Shapiro the highest esteem. Thus, when he addressed the Knessiah, the audience received his groundbreaking concept with respect, all due to the Chofetz Chaim's influence and genius.

Torah Views And News

Daf Yomi Launched, Uniting Worldwide Jewry Through Daily Talmud Study

In 1923, Agudath Israel held its first Knessiah Gedolah (Great Assembly) in Vienna, Austria, with the purpose of discussing the grave and weighty problems that faced Torah Jewry throughout the Diaspora.

Some six hundred distinguished delegates were in attendance, including such Torah luminaries as the Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933) and the Imrei Emes of Ger (1866-1948). It was at this convention that Rabbi Meir Shapiro (1887-1933), the future founder of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, initiated a novel concept for an ambitious learning program. He encouraged Jews throughout the world to study the same *daf* of the Talmud each day, completing the entire Talmud in about seven and a half years. This would unite Torah Jewry through Torah study.

Rabbi Shapiro's idea was received with great enthusiasm by those in attendance, and Rosh Hashanah of 5684, Jews from all over the world commenced the Talmud study with Tractate *Berachos*; this

movement has become more and more popular with each new cycle of the Talmud.

Masses of Jews have embraced Gemara through this holy initiative, bringing sanctity and meaning to their lives.



Droplets



Mid-1940s, in the shadow of the concentration camps:

During one of the darkest points of the war, a young eleven-year-old boy noticed clusters of people lying on the barracks floor. Deprived of all nutrition — physical, emotional, and spiritual — they no longer had the strength to move. They simply lay there, mouths half-open, waiting for something. Anything.

He, too, was starving. But watching others sink even deeper into such unbearable suffering pained him more than his own hunger.

He had no idea how to get them what they needed. There was no water, no cups, no vessels — nothing. But something inside him pushed, almost demanded, that he try. These were his fellow *Yidden*. He didn't know the "how," but he knew he could not stand by.

Stepping just outside the camp's boundary into the thin strip of nearby forest, he spotted it — a tiny puddle of rainwater. A treasure.

Hidden beneath his prisoner's uniform, he kept a small pair of *tzitzis* tucked close to him. He gently lifted them out and dipped the fringes into the puddle, letting the threads absorb every bit of moisture they could hold. – Then he ran back.

One by one, he approached each collapsed inmate and squeezed out a drop — and if they were lucky, two — into their waiting mouths. He repeated the journey again and again, back and forth, until every person received several precious droplets of life.

A few who received this scant "hydration" even managed, weakly, to sit up. Others' eyes flickered with a spark of renewed strength.

But, as he later explained, more than the physical nourishment was the knowledge that someone — someone with nothing himself — still cared enough to risk everything for them. The awareness that they were not alone, that another *neshamah* was going all out for their wellbeing, gave them something far more potent than water: emotional and spiritual sustenance.

"I will never forget that moment," he later said. "Not because of the exertion, and not because of the danger. What stayed with me was the miracle I saw with my own eyes — how a few drops of water, carried on the threads of a simple pair of *tzitzis*, could lift souls that were moments from surrender. In a place designed to crush every last spark of hope, those droplets ignited something the Nazis could never extinguish."

"It wasn't the water that revived them," he said quietly. "Water alone could never have restored starved bodies. It was the *chessed*. It was the certainty that someone still cared — that a fellow *Yid* was willing to give all he had, even when 'all he had' was a single drop."



Their Manmade Sefer Torah

Growing up, Ariel was no different from his siblings. But as he grew older, the challenges began to grow with him. Before he realized what was happening, not only was he not achieving what others seemed to achieve with ease, but even his closest friends slowly began drifting away from him. Outwardly, he performed just like everyone else. Inwardly, though, he carried a heavy sense of inadequacy and rejection.

His siblings all followed the same path, entering prestigious *yeshivos* with confidence and success. While Ariel tried the same route, the results never mirrored theirs. That contrast shattered him. When the Corona pandemic hit, Ariel felt tempted to step out of the *yeshivah* world altogether.

While most *bochurim* worldwide tried to make the best of the lockdown, Ariel found himself searching for something — anything — that would validate his worth. He eventually found a job that required dedicated, reliable workers, and that was exactly what he was. He threw himself into the work, followed every guideline scrupulously, and quickly became their most outstanding employee.

For a while, it felt like this was where he belonged…until one ordinary afternoon changed everything.

Standing in line at the register, Ariel hardly noticed the store owner approaching. With just a few simple words, the man changed his entire trajectory:

"Your face is shining. It's your Torah that's holding up the world — and I want a part in that. Take three items free of charge, and on whatever else you'd like, I'll give you ten percent off."

Ariel was stunned. *He* was holding up the world? He wasn't even learning during that *tekufah*. Yet, the owner's sincerity struck a deep place inside him. Those words ignited something. A spark. A memory of who he was, and who he still could be.

He made a quiet promise: When the *yeshivah* reopened, he would not remain in the workforce. He would return. - And he did.

But this time, something had shifted. For the first time, Ariel didn't sit down with the usual cloud of negativity. Instead, he had an awareness — however small — that he had worth. That he mattered.

And those around him noticed. Friends who had previously overlooked him now approached him warmly. His learning improved. His confidence grew. Within weeks, he found himself with a circle of *chavrusos*, learning all *sedarim* — something he hadn't experienced in over two years. - All because of a few words from a store owner who saw the *neshamah* beneath the surface.

Two months later, Ariel felt compelled to share with the store owner just how deeply those words had affected him — how they hadn't merely encouraged him but had *changed* his life.

Before returning to *yeshivah*, he set out early, determined to hand-deliver a heartfelt letter of gratitude. But when he arrived, his heart sank.



A sign hung on the storefront window announcing that the store would be closed for the week. At first, Ariel assumed it must be for a family *shivah* — perhaps a relative of the owner had passed away. But as he leaned closer and read the notice more carefully, his breath froze. It wasn't a relative who had passed away. It was the store owner himself.

Ariel was crushed. He had wanted so desperately to express appreciation — to let the owner know the lasting impact of his kindness.

With the new *z'man* starting that day, and strict rules that no latecomers would be admitted, Ariel had no choice but to return with the letter still in his pocket, his mission painfully unfinished.

When the Mashgiach welcomed him back, Ariel gathered the courage to share what had happened. Moved by the story, the Mashgiach took the letter and promised to personally deliver it to the owner's family. When he did, the reaction was overwhelming.

The family knew nothing of the encounter. Nothing of the owner's act of kindness. Nothing of the ripple effect his words had created.

With tears streaming down her cheeks, the store owner's wife revealed something astonishing. Over the past few days, she had been contemplating commissioning a *Sefer Torah* as an *illuy neshamah* for her late husband. But now, holding Ariel's letter, she said:

"Now I see that during his lifetime, he already wrote one for me. This is our only nechamah, knowing this boy was uplifted, how his life was touched — all because of my dear husband."

A single moment. A single compliment. A single spark of recognition. Sometimes, that is all it takes to rewrite another person's destiny.

The store owner thought he was giving Ariel a small gift. In truth, he wrote an entire *Sefer Torah* — not with ink, but with the indelible strokes of kindness, dignity, and the ability to see the hidden brilliance in another *neshamah*. - Because Torah isn't only written on parchment. Sometimes, it is engraved in a heart.

Physicians Deadly Contest



At the glittering court of Sultan Saladin of Egypt, harmony reigned when **R' Moshe ben Maimon zt"l,** the **Rambam**, was appointed personal physician to the sultan. The courtiers admired the decision, for the Rambam's reputation as both a Jewish scholar and medical healer had spread far and wide. Ever since the Rambam had arrived in the old city of Cairo, his fame had grown swiftly. To the Jews he was the greatest Talmudic scholar of the age; to the non-Jews he was the greatest physician of the age, a healer whose knowledge of medicine seemed boundless.

Rich and poor alike sought his care, and the Rambam treated the needy without charge, regardless of faith. Yet not everyone rejoiced. Hakim, the Muslim physician who had previously held the honored post, now found himself relegated to second place. This wounded Hakim's pride. The more the Rambam's name spread, the more Hakim felt forgotten. Jealousy hardened into hatred. He began to scheme, determined to discredit his rival and perhaps even destroy him. Until finally, he approached Sultan Saladin with grave words. - "Your Majesty," he said, "I have uncovered a plot against your life. The one behind it is none other than the Rambam."

The sultan paled. Could it be true? He trusted the Rambam deeply, both as physician and friend. "If you can prove this accusation," Saladin declared, "I will have the Rambam beheaded. But if you cannot, then it is your own head that will fall."

Hakim bowed. "I can prove it. Among physicians it is known that a deadly poison can be rendered harmless by a stronger poison. Let us both prepare the strongest poison we can. I will drink the Rambam's poison, followed by my own, and remain unharmed. But when the Rambam drinks mine and then his own, he will perish. Thus, Your Majesty will know the truth."

The next day the sultan summoned both physicians. "Last night I dreamed that one of you plots to poison me. I cannot ignore such a vision. Prepare for me a medicine that can make any poison harmless. Tomorrow you will bring your mixtures, divide them, and each of you will drink the other's potion followed by your own."

Hakim smiled with satisfaction. The Rambam, however, suspected trickery. Why would Hakim risk such a test unless he had devised some cunning plan?

That evening, after tending to his many patients, the Rambam lay awake. Suddenly the answer dawned on him. He knew how to outwit his rival. The following morning, he rose early and prepared a simple solution of sweet water mixed with red wine, harmless, yet convincing in appearance. He rode to the palace calmly. Hakim was already there, eager for the contest.

At the sultan's signal, each physician poured half of his mixture into a separate bottle and exchanged them. "Your turn first, Hakim," said the sultan. Hakim wasted no time. He swallowed the Rambam's mixture, then his own. He stood tall, smiling broadly.

"Now you, Rambam," said the sultan. The Rambam drank Hakim's mixture slowly, then his own. He too remained steady.

For a tense moment silence filled the chamber. Then Hakim cried out in agony. He collapsed, convulsing violently, and within minutes lay dead. The sultan turned to the Rambam. "I am glad you are unharmed. I never doubted your skill. As for that wretch, I am glad you killed him."

The Rambam bowed. "Your Majesty, I did not kill him. He brought about his own death."

Saladin looked puzzled. "I don't understand," the sultan said. "I saw what you did."

The Rambam spoke calmly. "Hakim knew I could prepare a stronger poison than he. His plan was to take a slow poison beforehand, then

bring a harmless solution here. By drinking what he thought would be my antidote, he hoped to cure himself. Then he would drink his own harmless mixture and remain well. Meanwhile, I would drink his harmless solution, then my own strong poison, and perish. But suspecting this trickery, I too prepared only a harmless mixture. Thus when Hakim drank mine, it did not cure the slow poison he had taken earlier. He then drank his own harmless solution, and the poison within him did its work."

The sultan burst out laughing. "It is clear as daylight! Not only are you the greatest physician, but you are also the wisest of men. From now on you shall be my adviser as well as my physician." And so the Rambam's wisdom saved his life and secured his place at the heart of Saladin's court. His reputation grew even greater, not only as healer of bodies but as a *Torah* Sage and scholar whose foresight and integrity triumphed over envy and deceit.

Open Miracle



Immediately after Eretz Yisroel's declaration of independence in 1948, the fledging state of barely a half a million citizens was attacked by seven Arab armies - against all odds they won the battle. Everyone agreed that this was an open miracle. Some "groups" claimed that this miracle proved the divine sanction of a Jewish state. Other groups claimed that it was an act of the Satan that they merited being victorious.

Reb Shlomo Lorincz went with the question to the **Brisker Rov**.

The Brisker Rov told him as follows: It is impossible and even forbidden to say that miracles happened for people who do not

believe in Hashem. They are not worthy of miracles. On the other hand, one cannot say that it was an act of the Satan, because the Satan is nothing more than an Angel that can only act as Hashem's emissary. - The Brisker Rov said that the miracles were performed for the small remnant of Yidden who learn Torah and keep the mitzvos so they will be able to keep the Torah alive in Klal Yisroel and pass it on to the future generations…



וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה - (39:33)

Hashem told Moshe that he should set up the Mishkan. Rashi says that Moshe questioned Hashem. Moshe wondered how it could be possible for a human being to set up the Mishkan? Hashem responded that Moshe should put his hands on the boards of the Mishkan and it would appear as if he set it up by himself. In reality, Hashem was going to set it up.

Rav Avrohom Pam zt"l (Messages From Rav Pam by Rabbi Sholom Smith) learns a beautiful and important lesson from this Rashi. A person must ALWAYS try. Sometimes one feels that a certain undertaking is impossible. And he may have good reasons as to why it seems impossible. Because of that feeling, one might not even try.

We see from this that we must always try! We must start the process and often Hashem will help us succeed even though we had thought that it was impossible.

Many worthy organizations and Torah institutions are in existence because someone tried to do the "impossible"! A great example of this is the story of Pharoah's daughter. She heard the sound of baby Moshe who was floating in a basket in the Nile River, far from her. Yet she put in an impossible effort! She stretched out her hand.

Hashem did the rest and miraculously extended her hand temporarily so that it reached Moshe's basket.

Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam zt"l, The Klausenberger Rebbe, went through the horrors of the Holocaust, losing his wife and all of his 11 children. Afterwards, he went to Eretz Yisroel where he established the religious neighborhood of Kiryat Sanz. He also established an orphanage and a hospital, as well as schools and yeshivos in Israel as well as in the United States.

He once approached someone to ask for financial help for one of his projects. The man responded, "I am sorry, but I just can't."

The Rebbe told the man that when he was the Rav in the city of Klausenberg, he thought that he couldn't carry his own tallis and tefillin. His attendant carried it for him. However, during the Holocaust, the Nazis forced him to carry 50 kilo bags of cement up and down a hill for 15 hours a day without being given food or water.

The Rebbe said, "Oy, did I find out what I was really capable of. One should never say, 'I just can't do it'. A person has no idea what he is really capable of doing. During the war, I used all that hidden strength for the Nazis. Now, I am using that same hidden strength that I discovered to build worlds."

We should never feel that any task is impossible. We should just try to do our best. Often Hashem will make our efforts succeed! What we had thought would be impossible, may well become a reality! Our efforts can make a difference in the lives of many people!

"Pekudei is the parsha of cheshbon. Just as Moshe accounted for every part of the Mishkan, a Jew must account for every gift Hashem gives him. When he sees each talent and moment as a deposit from Heaven, his life becomes a Mishkan."

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

General Yossel

Preparing for Pesach usually involves obtaining matzos for oneself, as well as for others, in order to be able to partake in the *Seder* and relate the story of the *Haggadah*. Sometimes, however, distributing matzos is only the beginning of the story.

There are certain people who stand out from the rest by their kindness and nobility that are felt by all who come in contact with them. They are part of Hashem's special army of tzaddikim.

If the members of this army were assigned ranks, Reb Yosef Tevel of Crown Heights, New York, would have been a general. A man so full of *simchah* that it flowed from him like a never-ending river, Reb Yossel was known for his sincere devotion to every Jew he met. One of his pet projects was visiting fellow Jews in prison. He organised numerous visits, bringing dozens of bachurim to prisons around the New York area to sing, dance, play music and spread good cheer. It was one of his special mitzvos.

Every prison welcomed him but one. - There was one particular prison whose chaplain wouldn't hear of a visit from Reb Yossel. When Reb Yossel attempted to speak with the chaplain, the chaplain informed him in no uncertain terms that there was absolutely no way he would be allowed into the prison. "Rabbi" Morris Katzman* had been ordained by the reform movement, and, as he informed Reb Yossel, he would never condone a visit by Reb Yossel or any of his boys. As many times as Reb Yossel called him to ask his permission to visit the prison, the chaplain stood his ground.

"Listen well, Rabbi Tevel," he told Reb Yossel. "Forget about it. I will never let you in! It's my prison and I don't want to see you there!"

As Pesach came near, Reb Yossel managed to distribute matzos in every prison on his route. The only challenge was at Katzman's prison, since the chaplain refused to allow him anywhere near the

place. They was only one recourse: to convince the man to change his mind.

Reb Yossel dialled Katzman's number.

"Tevel" said Morris Katzman, " what do you want? Whatever it is, you know that you're wasting your time, don't you?"

"Well, here's the thing," Reb Yossel said to the irate man on the other end of the line. " I have lots of matzos that I purchased for the inmates for Pesach, and I was wondering if you would perhaps allow me to pay them a personal visit to –" - That was as far as he got.

"Are you out of your mind," Katzman shouted. "Not a chance of a visit! You stay out of my prison!"

"But what about the matzos?" Reb Yossel asked, when the man paused for breath.

"Send them to my house with UPS," Katzman said.

A day or two later, the doorbell rang at the Katzman residence. Morris Katzman went to the door.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"Delivery."

The chaplain unlocked the door. His shock was total when he was greeted by a smiling Reb Yossel Tevel, standing on his threshold surrounded by cartons and cartons of matzah.

"Rabbi Katzman, I presume," Reb Yossel said. "A pleasure to finally meet you in person."

The shock turned to outrage. "Tevel," the rabbi yelled, "what are you doing here? I told you to send me the matzos with UPS, didn't I?"

"You certainly did," Reb Yossel agreed, "but these matzos are so delicate, so fragile, and you know how well protected they have to

be. Besides," he went on, "by coming to meet you this way, you get the chance to see for yourself that I'm not such a terrible person. Who knows, maybe you'll even decide to let me into your prison."

Reb Yossel smiled his special smile, the one that could soften the hardest rock, and somehow, some way, Morris Katzman found himself beginning to view this Orthodox rabbi through different eyes. He saw the genuine warmth and joy in the other's eyes, the love Reb Yossel had even for him, his staunch opponent, and he felt the first stirring of a thaw.

For the first time, the sworn reformist and the kindly chassid had a conversation. It was their first, but Reb Yossel had a feeling that it would not be the last.

A few weeks later, with Lag BaOmer fast approaching, Reb Yossel decided it was time to try again.

"Rabbi Katzman," said the Jew from Crown Heights, "this is Yosef Tevel. I have a question for you."

"You want to come visit the prison with some of your boys, right?" asked the reform rabbi.

"How did you guess?" Reb Yossel replied, the smile evident in his voice. "What do you say, Rabbi Katzman? Can I bring the boys to infuse some life into your prison."

Katzman took a few long seconds to reply. Finally, he spoke. "You just don't know the meaning of giving up, Rabbi Tevel," he said. "If it's that important to come dance in my prison on Lag BaOmer, fine. But don't bring too many guys along with you."

Reb Yossel had broken through. They weren't friends yet, but a grudging admiration was in the works.

Lag BaOmer arrived, and Reb Yossel rounded up the cavalry. He brought along a giant tape recorder to provide the music for the

dancing. The atmosphere in the prison was buoyant and light-hearted. The prisoners were swept into the mood. They danced with the bachurim, their everyday feelings of depression, boredom, and pain replaced by something much higher. Reb Yossel stood off to the side, taking it all in.

Suddenly, he glanced over at the other side of the hall. Someone else was watching the dancing. A certain someone who had never wanted them in his prison. Katzman was watching the boys, too.

Reb Yossel hesitated and then decided to make a move. It was time to take a chance, give things an opportunity to develop, and gain some momentum. He approached the Rabbi.

"Rabbi Katzman," he said, "I have an idea." - The other looked at him curiously.

"You've allowed us into your prison and you can see how much the prisoners are enjoying themselves. It's obviously beneficial for their morale and spirits. Now how about doing something for yourself as well?" Reb Yossel showed the rabbi the pair of tefillin that he was holding in his hand.

"Can I interest you in putting these on?" - The reform rabbi's eyes darkened dangerously.

"You have a nerve, Tevel! I let you into my prison, let you dance with my prisoners, but that's not enough for you. Now you want to make me put on tefillin as well!"

Reb Yossel sensed that Katzman was ready. He walked over to the chaplain, who was standing immobile after his outburst, and proceeded to pull up his sleeve. He then began wrapping the tefillin around his arm.

Morris Katzman shook his head. "Listen here," he said, "you want to teach me how to put on tefillin? I know how to put them on better than you! I was putting tefillin on before you were born!"

He removed the tefillin from Reb Yossel's hand and finished donning them himself. It was obvious that the reform rabbi was no stranger to a pair of tefillin. He wrapped them around his arm, slipped them over his head. Then he began reciting the Shema.

But he wasn't able to finish, because moments after he'd begun, he broke down in tears. Morris Katzman cried for many long minutes. When he removed the tefillin from his head, he cried out, his eyes looking Heavenward, "*Tatte, zayt mir moichel.*" (Tatte, forgive me!)

When the river of tears finally dried up, he invited Reb Yossel to take a seat and told him his story.

He'd been a little boy in Germany when the Nazis surged forth to take over the world. They degraded every Jew who dared walk the streets, until it became a terrifying experience just to be alive in those dark days.

He'd loved his zeidy more than anything in the world; loved him with his entire heart and soul. But he was forced to watch as the Nazis humiliated his beloved grandfather, the great and respected Rav, forcing the white-bearded old man to clean the streets, their jeering laughter a bitter poison coursing through the boy's soul as he watched. - He swore to take revenge on Hashem for what happened to his zeidy.

"I debated with myself for a long time," he told Reb Yossel, "on exactly how to avenge myself against Hashem. I decided I would leave His Torah behind."

Somehow, I survived the war, and when it was over, I immigrated to the United States, where I joined the reform movement. I would have nothing to do with Torah and mitzvos. I wouldn't give G-d the satisfaction."

"When I heard that you, Rabbi Tevel, a chassid of Chabad, wanted to bring yeshivah boys to my jail, it felt as if I'd downed a glass of

acid. So, I said no. But you persisted and kept needling away, never taking no for an answer. In the end, your charm won me over. You win, Rabbi Tevel, you win."

He was quiet for a little bit, and then said, "Maybe it's finally time for me to do teshuvah, to repent. I had my revenge, and it was bitter. I know that I was wrong all these years. Now I have to return. I only hope Hashem will forgive me."

Two weeks later, Reb Yossel received a phone call from Morris Katzman's son.

"Rabbi Tevel," he began, "Jason Katzman here. I wanted to let you know that my father passed away last night. For the last two weeks, all he could talk about was you – and the tefillin that you put on him. We, his children, realise the tremendous impact you had on him in the final days of his life. Therefore, it would mean the world to us if you would attend our father's funeral and say a few words."

At the levayah, Reb Yossel stood up and spoke to the crowd from his heart. "In his last weeks," he said, "his pintele Yid, his spark of Judaism, was reawakened. His tears were genuine, and his repentance extraordinary. His entire life underwent an incredible turnaround, and he returned to Hashem and His Torah with complete belief and trust.

Good Shabbos - Aaron Leitner

"The Mishkan was built from the generosity of the heart, and therefore its beauty was not in gold or silver but in the purity of the intentions behind it. The Rizhiner said that when the Torah lists every detail in Pekudei, it teaches that Hashem treasures every small act done with sincerity. Nothing is lost, nothing is overlooked — every thread becomes a dwelling place for the Shechinah."





Horav Yisroel Friedman Shlita - Letters Of Chizzuk During The Coronavirus Pandemic

רב ישראל פרידמן רב קלויז טשארטקוב מנשסתר

מכתב התחזקות

חודש ניסן תש"פ

Many people are wondering to themselves and worrying what type of Pesach will we be having this year, how will our Yom Tov be, whilst we are all confined to our houses without any visitors, and it is almost impossible to go out at all, and we are asking ourselves why is this Pesach different from all other years of Pesach.

However, when we examine the essence of Pesach, we will see that all the mitzvos which we perform during Pesach are mitzvos that we perform specifically at home, unlike the other Yomim Tovim where we perform the mitzvos of the Yom Tov out of the home. The special mitzvah of Rosh Hashona is Tekiyas Shofar which we hear in shul, Yom Kippur we spend the entire day in shul, returning home just to catch a bit of sleep, Succos we shake the Arba Minim in shul, and to fulfil mitzvas Succah we have to leave our houses in fulfilment of "leave your permanent abode and go into a temporary abode".

The exception to this is Pesach. When it comes to Pesach, there are no special mitzvos that are to be performed in shul, rather all the mitzvos of the Yom Tov are performed at home. Even the chiyuv min HaTorah to destroy chometz refers in principle to chometz in one's home as it is written **תשביתו שאור מבתיכם** (**חיי אדם כלל קיט ס' יח**) and someone who does not have a house cannot make a brocha on bedikas chometz (although he is still required to destroy any chometz in his possession). Similarly the mitzvah of eating matza

and drinking the 4 cups and all the other mitzvos of the Seder are all performed at home and not in shul.

We know that the name "Pesach" is derived from the possuk **שפסח ה' על בתי בני ישראל** that Hashem passed over all the Yiddishe Houses, and so it is written "**ואת בתי בני ישראל הציל**" and " **והיה הדם לאות על הבתים**" and the Yidden had to place some blood from the Korban Pesach on the doorpost of their houses to show that this is a Yiddishe house and they were also commanded **אל יצא איש מפתח ביתו עד בוקר** - not to leave their houses and they also had to eat the korban in one specific location -**בבית אחד יאכל לא תוציא מן הבית חוצה** - and they may not wander out of the house.

Rav S.R. Hirsh zt"l explains that from here we learn how the Torah establishes the centrality and the importance of the Jewish home as a vital part and foundation in Yiddishkeit. The Korban Pesach had to be eaten at home, and this was the avodah of Pesach, to establish the fact that Klall Yisroel is comprised of "homes" not merely people of various groups, and it is the home that makes Klall Yisroel.

The Meshech Chochmah points out a very important lesson which is very pertinent to all of us and is a chizuk in our present situation. Many people are very upset about the prospect of being unable to go to shul on Yom Tov and to miss out davening together the Yom Tov tefillos and the singing of Hallel etc. and the atmosphere of being in shul over Yom Tov.

We have to bear in mind the following insight of the Meshech Chochmah. In order for an offering to be considered a korban, it had to be offered on the **מזבח** in the **בית המקדש** but in Mitzrayim there was no **בית המקדש** or **משכן** and no **מזבח**, so how could their offering possibly be considered and have the status and kedusha of a Korban?

The gemara tells us that in Mitzrayim, their homes were the replacement of the mikdosh and the mizbaich. Explains the Meshech Chochma that the gemara does not mean to say that they sprinkled

the blood on the doorpost instead of the **מזבח**, rather the gemara is telling us that their very homes had the status and the kedusha of the **מקדש** and the **מזבח** and by sprinkling the blood on the door post it was the equivalent of sprinkling the blood on the **מזבח**.

This year we are all confined to our houses, and we are being taught that our avodah is to elevate our houses that they rise up to the level of a **מקדש מעט** so that when we daven at home it will have the same kedusha of davening in a shul. Chazal tell us that in the time of the Beis Hamikdosh the **מזבח** atones for a person, in golus a person's table atones for him. This year we have to elevate our homes and our tables that they should be worthy of being regarded as a **מקדש** and a **מזבח**.

If in previous years we might have thought that such lofty madreigos are beyond us, this year is indeed different. I once read a book from one of the Holocaust survivors. In it he describes how in the concentration camp they were marched out for forced labour on Shabbos, they had no siddurim, no sefer Torah, no kiddush and no challah, not even a kappel on their heads. Despite this, the Yidden would secretly whisper to each other "Remember it is Shabbos today" Don't forget it is Shabbos today" and quietly they would hum to themselves a niggun from Lecho Dodi or Koh Ribboin or one of the other zemiros.

This Yid finished off with the following observation. Although I was then unable to be a shomer Shabbos, it wasn't possible to keep Shabbos, but I was a **מקדש השבת**, I and all the other Yidden had and felt great pain we were forced to desecrate the holy Shabbos against our will. Today after the war, although I am able to keep Shabbos properly, I still wonder greatly if I am zoche to be a **מקדש השבת** like I was then!

This year we will all **אם ירצה ה'** be able to keep the halachos of Pesach, and we will all have disposed of our chometz and we will sit down to a seder with matza and the 4 cups etc, but this year our

seder will have a new and special dimension which we might never have experienced until now. When we rejoice with the Yom Tov and its mitzvos despite all the worries and the difficult and tragic situation we are all in, this is a true level of keeping the Torah Lishmoh. This year we will all be zoche to come to the level of **מקדש ישראל והזמנים** we will have sanctified ourselves, our homes and families!

In the days before Pesach, Yidden are busy cleaning and preparing their houses and when all is finally ready to greet the Yom Tov, we sit down at the seder and we make the following declaration - **השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל**. Explains the Chasam Sofer that Chazal have told us that when Moshiach comes, all the shuls are going to fly off to Eretz Yisroel, but what is going to happen to our houses, are we going to have to leave them behind?

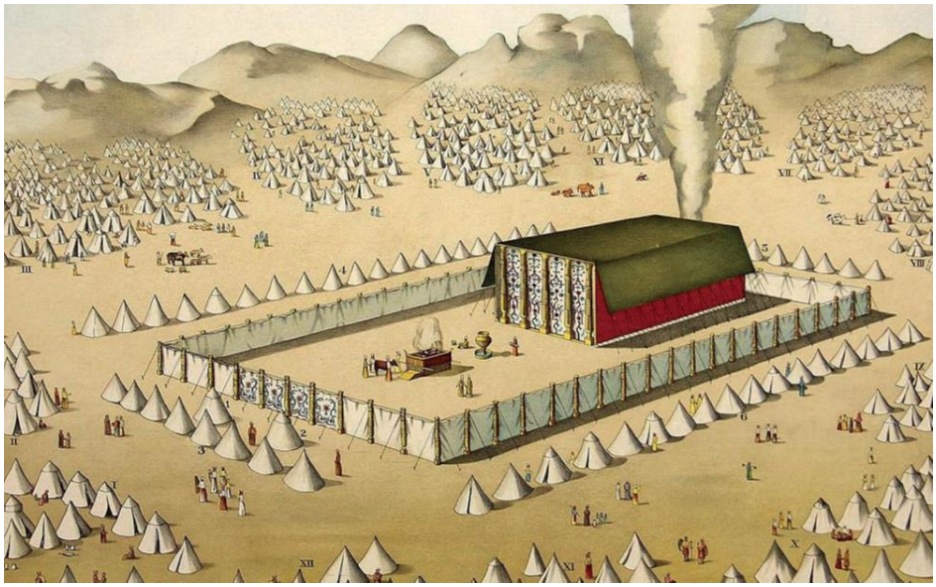
A Yid who has got rid of all his chometz and has prepared himself and his household "his house becomes sanctified with the kedusha of Eretz Yisroel and this is what we declare in the Hagaddoh **השתא הכא** although I am still here now in Golus, **לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל** the following year this house will be in Eretz Yisroel" because all our houses will be worthy of greeting Moshiach. May we all be zoche still this year to all be in Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh **וראו עינינו וישמח לבנו ותגל נפשנו בישועתך באמת בב"א**.

בברכת חג כשר ושמח

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן

Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler zt'l teaches חזק חזק - that if a person strengthens himself and begins anew, again and again, ונתחזק - he will be helped from Heaven. He will receive strength from Heaven to improve his ways. ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff



We know in Pashas Pekudei the Torah talks about reckoning, making the חֶשְׁבּוֹנוֹת of everything that was collected for the Mishkon.

The pasuk tells us about how much gold was collected. The Torah lists the amount of gold collected but does not detail its usage. For silver and copper, the Torah provides precise accounts of how each was allocated and used.

This distinction raises questions about the reason for this difference.

Interestingly, The Torah tells us how much gold was collected but doesn't find it necessary to tell us what it was used for. In the context of the silver and the nechoshes, the Torah tells us exactly how it was divided out and what exactly went for what use.- why doesn't the Torah tell us exactly what the gold was used for?

And I had a very interesting **טייטש** why that is. Why was it at all necessary for Moshe Rabbeinu to come and be מְפָרֵשׁ to explain in detail what all the parts of the collection was used for?

The Midrash Shemos Rabbah 51:6 says: **לפי שהיו ישראל מליזין אחר משה... אמרו: שמא נטל משה מן התרומה** - "Because כְּלַל יִשְׂרָאֵל were whispering behind Moshe… saying: perhaps Moshe took from the donations…" - Moshe therefore made a full accounting.

Chazal tells us that there were those לֵצָנִים amongst Kal Yisrael who made some remark or some kind of a chashash that maybe Moshe Rabbeinu had taken some of this collection for himself.

With what basis could some members of Klal Yisrael cast slanderous remarks, suspecting Moshe Rabbeinu of misappropriating funds? How does anybody come to make such a suspicion, creating such a vicious slander, such a malicious kind of a rumor?

These suspicions stemmed from: Moshe's sudden wealth, which according to the Gemara Nedarim 38a, came from the crafting of the second Luchos. **לֹא הֶעֱשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה אֶלָּא מִפְּסֹלְתָן שֶׁל לֻחוֹת** - Moshe became wealthy from the sapphire chips which were extremely valuable, that resulted when he carved the second Luchos. Until then, Moshe was known as a humble, non-wealthy leader.

In Pachad Yitzchak, Shavuos, Maamar 12, **Rav Hutner** discusses Moshe's sudden wealth, and how the public perceives a leader who suddenly becomes wealthy

עָשְׁרוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה נוֹלַד מִפְּסֹלֶת הַלֻּחוֹת... וְאַף שֶׁהָיָה קָדוֹשׁ — מַרְאֵה הַדָּבָר מְעוֹרֵר קִנְאָה וְלָשׁוֹן הָרָע. Moshe's wealth was holy, but the public perception of sudden wealth is always dangerous.

The detailed accounting in the Torah serves as Moshe's clarification, showing transparency in the use of collected materials.

[**Rav Moshe Feinstein** — Derash Moshe, Parshas Pekudei addresses the Midrash that people suspected Moshe of misusing funds and explains why the Torah devotes an entire parsha to accounting. - Moshe gave an accounting not because he needed to, but because leaders must avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

וְהִנֵּה מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ לֹא הָיָה צָרִיךְ לִתֵּן פִּרְוִט הַחֶשְׁבּוֹן... אֶלָּא שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה מְלַמֶּדֶת דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ לְמַנְהִיגֵי הַצִּבּוּר.]

Those who donated silver and copper (lesser amounts) tended to be more questioning and suspicious, demanding explanations. However, the donors of gold gave generously and wholeheartedly, and thus did not question the use of their contributions.

[**Rav Shimshon Pincus** in Tiferes Shimshon says that generosity removes suspicion. People who give with a full heart do not become

suspicious. People who give begrudgingly become suspicious. He applies this to the Mishkan: The gold was given with fiery enthusiasm נְדִיבֵי לֵב. The silver and copper were given by the masses, some reluctantly. Suspicion arises from inner stinginess, not from facts. - This suggests a broader spiritual principle: Those who give fully were not burdened by doubt or suspicion. The questioning spirit arises from those who gave less or begrudgingly.]

Even though Moshe Rabbeinu was the most trusted individual in Jewish history—directly appointed by Hashem—he still provided a detailed accounting of the gold, silver, and copper donated by the people. So because of that, Moshe Rabbeinu sought to settle the books and tell everybody exactly what was collected and how it was used.

The Torah's narrative encourages trust and generosity. It implies that wholehearted, sincere giving reflects pure faith and commitment. Skepticism often accompanies reluctance or partial commitment.

The struggle you're facing today is building the strength you'll need for tomorrow. When Hashem wanted to raise Dovid to kingship, He didn't send him a crown – He sent him Goliath. Before the greatness came the battle. Before the destiny came the development.

The challenges in your life are not meaningless obstacles; they are shaping you into the person you are meant to become. Trust the process – the preparation is part of the purpose. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838-1933).



אֵלֶּה פְקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת (לח/כא)

The **אור החיים הק'** asks: How come the **פרשה** does not start with a **ויו** [i.e. **וְאֵלֶּה**]?

The **אור החיים** answers: **חז"ל** tell us that **אלה** without a **ויו** teaches us that we are cutting off from the previous matter. The **פסוק** here is telling us that this counting is cut off and different from all other counting's that take place around the world. Normally, people waste their time counting their money and riches, but who knows how long it will stay with them. However, this counting [for a **מצוה**] is different. The results of this counting will last forever.

When the Bolsheviks came to power many yidden were thrown into jail. One of them was a **Reb Yakov Galintsky** Zt'l, who was then a **בחור**. With him in prison was another yid who was known to have been a multimillionaire. **ר' יעקב** said over the following: One day the formerly wealthy inmate said to me, 'there are two people who I can't forgive - not in this world and not in the world to come. They are the **Rov of Kovno** (the **דבר אברהם**) and the **Ponevezher Rov**.

They would come to my mansion collecting for their **ישיבה**, they would speak to me politely and calmly for help. Of course I would give them a handsome donation -but that was truly a drop in the ocean of what I really possessed. Why didn't they force me to give more? Look who has all my money now! The Bolsheviks have taken it all.'

Reb Yakov continued his tale, 'I asked him, what should they have done? To which he replied, "they should have put a gun to my neck and demanded that I give more! if not.....! -At least that way I could have at least had my wealth for me waiting in **עולם הבא**, but now I have nothing...!"'

תַּרְשִׁישׁ שֹׁהַם, וְיָשְׁפֵה (לט/יג)

The **משך חכמה** asks: Why is it that in **פרשת תצוה (כח/כ)** when the names of the stones for the **חושן** are listed the **פסוק** writes **וְיָשְׁפֵה, וְשֹׁהַם תַּרְשִׁישׁ** -the word **שֹׁהַם** is spelt with a **ויו** -and here it is spelt without a **ויו**?

The **משך חכמה** answers with a **ירושלמי** which explains: The reason we say **המוציא לחם** and not **מוציא** is since the word before is **מלך העולם**. If we would then say **מוציא** one of the **מ״מ**'s would get swallowed up. Says the **משך חכמה** in **פרשת תצוה**; when the **אידן** were being told how to make the **חושן** if **משה** would have said **תַּרְשִׁישׁ שֹׁהַם** people might not have heard both **שי״ן**'s and would have used something else. However, in this week's **סדרה**, which is just telling us what they used and no mistake can come out of it, the **פסוק** writes it simply. (**יגדיל תורה**)

R' Yitzchak Arieli ZT"L (author of Enayim L'mishpat) would say:

"So great was the Beis Hamikdash that in its own destruction, it protected the Jewish people from being destroyed. For Hashem poured out His wrath on sticks and stones, rather than on His people."


חזק חזק
ונתחזק!

