TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry





לעילוי נשמת



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וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - "***You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your Elokim, for the good Land that He gave you.***" (8:10)

The Gemara (Berachot 50a) says: "From the way a person words his blessings, one can tell if he is a scholar or a boor. If he says (in the zimun, 'Uv'tuvo / In His goodness, we have lived,' he is a scholar. If he says, 'U'mi'tuvo / From His goodness, we have lived,' he is a boor."

R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005) explains: If one says, "In His goodness, we have lived,' he demonstrates his understanding that we are surrounded at all times by Hashem's goodness. But, if one says, "From His goodness, we have lived," he implies that Hashem sits aloofly in the Heavens and sends some goodness down to us, which is not true. (Da'at Shlomo: Shavuot p.497)

"When things don't go as planned, it's Hashem teaching us the invaluable lesson that He is the one in charge, and the purpose of life is to recognize that Hashem runs the world. ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

וְלִמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ

"You (plural) shall teach them to your (plural) children to discuss them, while you (singular) sit in your home, while you (singular) walk on the way, when you (singular) retire and when you (singular) arise." (11:19)

Why does the Torah change plural to singular in the middle of the verse?

R' Yitzchak Menachem Weinberg shlita (Tolner Rebbe in Yerushalayim) explains: The Torah is teaching that successful parenting requires a person to work on himself. "You" (singular) means "You alone!" Do not rely on the merits of distinguished ancestors. Do not think that your behavior when you are alone, when no one sees you, does not matter.

If a person serves Hashem even when he sits alone at home, when he walks alone on the way, when he retires to bed alone and when he arises alone, then he can teach his children. (*Chamin B'Motzai Shabbat: Devarim* p.82)

From the Haftarah . . .

הֲתִשְׁכַּח אִשָּׁה עוּלָהּ מֵרַחֵם בֶּן־בִּטְנָהּ גַּם־אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחְנָה וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אֶשְׁכָּחֵךְ - ***"Can a woman forget her nursling, withdraw from feeling compassion for the child of her womb? Even were these to forget, I will not forget you." (Yeshayah 49:15)***

Midrash Yalkut Shimoni on this verse records a conversation between the Jewish People and Hashem. The Jewish People said, "Hashem, since You never forget, perhaps You will never forget the sin of the Golden Calf."

Hashem replied, "I will forget that!" The Jewish People said, "If You are capable of forgetting, perhaps You will forget the events at Har Sinai." Hashem answered, "I will not forget! In reality, I never

forget, but for the good of the Jewish People, I act as if I have forgotten." [Until here from the Midrash]

R' Yerachmiel Shulman z"l Hy"d (Menahel Ruchani of the Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva in Pinsk, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) observes: Human nature is to forget the good others do and to remember only the bad. Even one hurt caused by another person can make someone forget a thousand kindnesses. - Hashem's way, however, is the opposite: He "remembers" the good event–the Giving of the Torah–and "forgets" the bad event–the making of the Golden Calf–even though the good event occurred earlier than the bad one.

R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l (Rambam; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes that the Torah calls upon us to emulate this–for example (Devarim 23:8), "You shall not despise an Egyptian, for you were a sojourner in his land." Although the Egyptians enslaved our ancestors, they first took them in in their time of need (during the famine), and we must remember that. (*Peninei Ha'shlaimut: Sha'ar Ha'savlanut* 1:7)

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - "***You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your Elokim, for the good Land that He gave you***." (8:10)

The gemara (Berachot 45a) states that three men who have eaten together should begin their bentching with special introductory phrases that one person does not recite when he has eaten alone (or with a second person). One of these phrases is, "Let us bless He of Whose we have eaten." If ten have eaten together, they modify this phrase and recite, "Let us bless Elokenu (i.e., our Elokim) of Whose we have eaten."

Why was the Divine Name "Elokim" chosen as opposed to some other Name? - **R' Natan Shapira of Horodna z"l** (died 1577) offers the following insights:

The halachah is that G-d's Name is to be mentioned in this part of bentching only if ten males over thirteen years old have eaten together. Ten men form a "kahal"/"congregation," and the gematria of "kahal" is 135. This is also the gematria of "Elokenu" in the form of gematria where each letter is substituted for the letter next to it, as follows:

aleph -> bet = 2
lamed -> mem = 40
heh -> vav = 6
yud -> kaf = 20
nun -> samech = 60
vav -> zayin = 7

(2+40+6+20+60+7=135.)

The requirement that each of the ten men have attained the age of 13 also is alluded to in this Divine Name. The root of "Elokenu" is "Elokim." If each letter of that Name is spelled out (for example, "aleph" = "aleph, lamed, feh"; "lamed" = "lamed, mem, dalet"), the word will have 13 letters in all.

The combined gematria of those 13 letters is 295, which is the gematria of the words: retzeh/desire, tzarah/trouble, and tzohar/light. We thus pray that even though eating often brings trouble/tzarah, Hashem should desire/retzeh our bentching and brings us "light"/tzohar.

Also, this Name alludes to the fact that a group that has eaten together is obligated to share Torah thoughts at their meal. The gematria of "Elokim" is 86, which can be represented by the letters peh-vav. The letters which correspond to those two letters if one begins at the end of the aleph-bet and counts back are the two very same letters: vav-peh. If one takes the "hidden" gematria of the letters peh-vav-vav-peh, the result is 22. This is calculated as follows:

"Peh" is spelled peh-heh. The "hidden" part is the heh, which equals 5.

"Vav" is spelled vav-vav. The hidden part is the vav, which equals 6.

This alludes to the 22 letters of the aleph-bet which are the building blocks of the whole Torah.

Finally, the Name "Elokim" alludes to G-d's attribute of Strict Justice. By using that Name in our bentching, we remind ourselves that, were G-d to measure us using that attribute, we would not be deserving of the food which we have just eaten. (Seder Birkat Hamazon Im Peirush R' Natan Shapira Me'Horodna)



וַיְעַנְּךָ וַיַּרְעִבֶךָ וַיַּאֲכִלְךָ אֶת־הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעֲךָ כִּי לֹא עַל־הַלֶּחֶם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל־כָּל־מוֹצָא פִי־ה' יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם - "***He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you the mahn that you did not know, nor did your forefathers know, in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live, rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of G-d does man live***" (8:3)

As related in Parashat Beshalach, Hashem did not feed Bnei Yisrael the mahn until they cried for food. - **R' Dr. Avraham J. Twerski** explains that had Hashem anticipated all of the Jewish People's needs — for example, had He provided the mahn before they were hungry — they would never have developed trust in Him.

This, writes R' Twerski, is an important principle in parenting as well. If parents anticipate all of their child's needs and provide for them before the child has had an opportunity to identify those needs, the child may never learn that his needs will be met. - A child must be allowed to feel his needs. When the parents respond in a way that meets those needs, then the child learns to trust his parents.



וְיָדַעְתָּ עִם־לְבָבֶךָ כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר יְיַסֵּר אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ מְיַסְּרֶךָּ - ***"You should know in your heart that just as a father will chastise his son, so Hashem, your G-d, chastises you."*** (8:5)



R' Itamar Schwartz shlita (Yerushalayim) observes that many people have difficulty serving Hashem with the feeling known as "**יראת העונש**" / "fear of punishment," because they find that attitude depressing and would prefer to think of Hashem as a loving G-d.

Our verse teaches, however, that these two feelings are one and the same. Why does a father chastise his son? Because he loves him. When one takes this view, R' Schwartz writes, **יראת העונש** becomes inspirational, not debilitating. (B'Ivavi Mishkan Evneh)

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם־לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ - ***"Now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your Elokim, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem . . ." (10:12)***

Our Sages ask: Is fearing Hashem so easy that the Torah can say, "What does Hashem ask of you? Only to fear Him!"?

R' Chaim of Volozhin z"l (Belarus; 1749-1821) answers: In any event, we fear many things, usually unpleasant things. Apparently, to be fearful is easy for us. But if we could train ourselves to direct our tendency of fear toward fearing something good– i.e. Hashem– we would be saved from all our other fears. (Ruach Chaim 4:22)

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - "***You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your Elokim, for the good Land that He gave you.***" (8:10)



This verse is the source of the mitzvah of Birkat Ha'mazon ("bentching"). We say in that blessing, הַזָּן אֶת־הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים - "***He sustains the entire world in His Goodness, with grace, kindness and mercy.***"

R' Shlomo Amar shlita (Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel) asks: We understand the reference to "kindness and mercy," but how does "grace" fit in? Food is not given to beautify oneself with!

He explains: Some people receive their food in a way or a condition that would repulse the typical person. True, they may eat and be satisfied, but there is still a level of discomfort.

When we say, "He sustains the entire world in His Goodness, with grace," we are thanking Him for our table, tablecloth, plate, etc. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'yamim Yamimah p.156)

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ (8:10)

R' Yitzchak Arieli z"l (1896-1974) writes: Many wonder why, in the second blessing of Birkat Ha'mazon, we mention the gift of the Land before we mention the Exodus, seemingly out of chronological order.

The answer is that the Land was promised to us before we were enslaved in Egypt, as it is Hashem's practice to "create the cure before the plague." Indeed, the fact that He promised us the Land was our guarantee that the redemption would indeed come.



פֶּן־תִּרְבֶּה עָלֶיךָ חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה – *'Lest the beasts of the field increase against you.'* (7:22)

Rashi comments that Moshe Rabbeinu was well aware that a Jew's righteousness protects him from wild beasts. One who is close with Hashem has nothing to fear from wild animals. Moshe was also very much aware that, realistically, the Jews would eventually fall short of this sublime level of virtue.

The Talmud (Shabbos 151b) states that a wild beast has no jurisdiction over (cannot harm) a person until that individual appears (to the wild beast) to be just another animal. (When a person taints his Tzelem Elokim, Divine Image, due to a lack of righteousness, then the wild beast sees before him nothing more than another creature.)

In one of his more famous insights, the **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh** (in his commentary to Sefer Bereishis) applies this concept to the scenario in which Reuven was going to save Yosef HaTzaddik. The brothers believed that Yosef deserved to be executed for his crimes against them. Reuven "saved him from their hands" by persuading them to throw him into a pit which was filled with scorpions and snakes. - "How is this called saving?" asks the Ohr HaChaim.

He explains that human beings are blessed with bechirah, freedom of choice, and are thus able to kill someone – even if the person has not been designated by Heaven to warrant the death penalty. In other words, if the brothers had taken Yosef's life, it would still not be an indication that he deserved execution. If, however, Yosef were to be killed by wild animals, it would be proof that he deserved

this punishment, because an animal has no bechirah. [We must add that an animal will not kill a man as long as the man manifests to the animal that he is different than the animal; he is a human being. If an animal kills a human, it is because the human being has lost it; he is viewed by the animal as another animal – albeit in a different form.

Yosef was not killed by the animals because he was a tzaddik; thus, he would not be harmed. He would not have fared so well had he not been thrown into the pit.]

There is a well-known story that accompanies this dvar Torah. When the Ohr HaChaim moved back to his birthplace, Sale, Morocco, he became a goldsmith, earning his living by making gold threads that were woven into material for garments. Obviously, his clientele was comprised of wealthy individuals who did not spar over price. - His custom was to work until he had earned enough to live. Once he covered his month's expenses, he closed up his shop and reverted to his Torah learning.

Understandably, when the ruler of the kingdom required a gold-braided garment "yesterday," there was no room for refusal – unless one was the Ohr HaChaim. This was the case when the governor of Sale was marrying off his daughter. His entire royal family purchased expensive clothing and sent them to the Ohr HaChaim to weave gold threads into the material.

The Ohr HaChaim thanked the governor for thinking of him, but, nonetheless, demurred from accepting the job. Apparently, the following month's expenses were already covered, and he would work no more that month.

The governor had little tolerance for obstinacy – especially if it came from a Jew – and he very sternly intimated to the Ohr HaChaim that "no" was an unacceptable response. The Ohr HaChaim stood his ground and said "no" would have to be acceptable, since he was not giving up his Torah learning for money. The governor considered the

refusal of the Ohr HaChaim to be a personal insult, and he took steps to avenge his humiliation.



The governor kept lions in a cage in his palace. These were ferocious beasts who were present for the governor's pleasure. It goes without saying that one who has such ferocious animals as pets is obviously a cruel person. The governor fit this description. He proved it when he instructed his keeper to starve the lions. He then dispatched his guards to bring the Ohr HaChaim to the palace in order to throw him to the lions. He would, once and for all, teach this obstinate Jew that one does not say "no" to the governor.

The Ohr HaChaim was flung into the lion's den, where he proceeded to sit down among the lions and recite Tehillim. The starving lions sat around him, ignoring their hunger and the "food" that was before them.

The Ohr HaChaim had written that a wild animal kills a human being only if Heaven had sentenced the human being to die. No such decree had been issued against the Ohr HaChaim. The governor now had the fear of G-d course through him. He realized that before him sat a very holy man. - He removed the Ohr HaChaim from the cage, begged his forgiveness and allowed him to return to his Torah study.

"The greatest kindness we can do for someone is to bring them closer to Hashem." ~ Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman.

וְלִמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ
'***You shall teach your children to discuss them***.' (11:19)

The Sifri underscores the words, **לְדַבֵּר בָּם**, "to discuss them." From the moment that one's child is able to speak, his father should teach him, **תּוֹרָה צִוָּה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב**, "*The Torah which Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov*." - A child's first words should be Torah. His speech should be Torah-oriented. He learns this from his father. - How?

It should be the manner in which his father speaks. *Aviv melamdo*, "His father teaches him," says Sifri. How does a father teach a young child who has just begun to speak? He does this by example.

When the child sees his father learning Torah, when what the child hears are words of Torah, he will pick it up, because he will see that this is what is important. When we value something, our children will also value it. When something means very little to us, it will not mean much to our children. The father, who, after a difficult day at work, comes home, eats dinner, and then goes out to learn with a chavrusa or attend a shiur (even if he falls asleep during the shiur) is teaching his child a memorable lesson: Torah is important to me – as it should also be to you. It is my life – as so it should be yours. It is what I value most – as so should you.

This is the meaning of **לְדַבֵּר בָּם** – to discuss them. Torah should be our means of communication.

The following story is well-known, and a number of lessons may be derived from it. In the past, I have focused upon hakoras hatov, a son's appreciation of his parent's sacrifice. In context of the above, I think we should underscore the value the parents placed on Torah study.

Now for the story… **Horav Yaakov David Wilovsky, zl**, was also known by an acronym of his name, **Ridvaz**. Born in Lithuania, he lived in Chicago for a short while, and he finally lived out his years in

Tzfas. One day, a Jew walked into the shul in Tzfas and noticed the Ridvaz bent over, crying bitterly.



"Rebbe, what is wrong?" the man asked.

"Nothing is wrong," answered the Ridvaz, "Today is my father's yahrzeit, and I become very emotional thinking about him."

The man was taken aback. The Ridvaz was no longer a young man. His father must have passed away over fifty years ago. Could the esteemed Rav still shed such bitter tears for his father after more than half a century?

"I was crying," began the Ridvaz, "because I recalled the deep love that my father had for Torah. "When I was six years old, my father hired a rebbe to tutor me. He was an excellent rebbe, and the learning was going well. The problem was that my parents were extremely poor, and the few pennies that they had saved to pay for my tutoring was gone. My father did not know how he could continue paying the rebbe. The thought that I would have to stop learning was crushing. On the other hand, the rebbe also had a family to feed. He could not tutor me for free when other options for earning money were available. My father knew this, and, as a result, was distraught [imagine the things that we worry about today].

"That night, my father was sitting in shul, contemplating his next move. As he sat there, he overheard a wealthy man "lament" the fact that he was building a home for his son-in-law and he could not find bricks to build the chimney.

When my father heard this, he went over to the man and said, 'I can provide you with bricks for your chimney.' The man was excited and

promised to reimburse my father a large sum of money for these bricks.

"Now, my father was not in the brick business. He came home and shared his idea with my mother – who agreed with him whole-heartedly. Together, they dismantled the chimney of our modest home and brought the bricks to the wealthy man. They received payment, and they immediately proceeded to the home of my rebbe to pay his back wages and wages for the next six months!

"I vividly remember that winter. It was a bitter, cold winter, with heavy snow and freezing winds. My entire family froze that winter. Without a chimney, we could not light a fire. My whole family suffered, but my father and mother felt that their decision to use the bricks, so that I could learn, was justified. [The fact that his siblings did not seem to complain is obviously a tribute to them.] In fact, throughout the bitter cold, an inner joy was felt in the home, a warm glow from the knowledge that this sacrifice was for Torah.

"I sit here today, and I weep, thinking what my father gave me for my learning." A son remembers his father's – indeed his whole family's – sacrifice. The appreciation is incredible. His expression of gratitude was his becoming a gadol baTorah, a giant of Torah. Each brick contributed to his greatness.

I think what we miss is how much his parents valued Torah. How many of us are willing to sacrifice for our children's learning? How many are prepared to forgo a luxury, or even a necessity, so that our sons will be able to grow in Torah? We seem to "find" the funds for vacations but fall short of supporting our sons' Torah learning. Furthermore, the Ridvaz was so moved by his parent's devotion, their abiding love for Torah, that he understood the value of Torah. - Can we say the same for ourselves? Are we imparting such a message to our children?

וָאֶתְפַּלֵּל אֶל ה' – 'I prayed to Hashem.' (9:26)

The effect of prayer can never be overstated. We have no idea of its power: to alter a decree; to incur favor; to demonstrate our love for the Almighty in recognizing that it is all in His hands and that, without His constant will, we are nothing. We think of prayer as requesting something positive. After all, why would anyone ask for something bad to occur? - The following story is a wake-up call, but it is the punch line that really delivers an inspirational message.

A distinguished *rav*/motivational speaker was dispatched to speak to a group of irreligious Jews in a settlement in southern *Eretz Yisrael*. Following his speech, an elderly couple approached him with a strange request: "Rabbi, could you please pray for us – that we die?" they asked. - We can only imagine how the rabbi must have felt to hear such a request. "I have never been asked to do something so unusual. You must have a good reason for such a request," he responded.

"Let us tell you our story. We grew up in Communist Russia. Finally, we were able to immigrate to the Holy Land. Life was difficult; acclimating was hard; financially we were challenged every step of the way. Nonetheless, we had one blessing, one comfort, a double gift from G-d: our two daughters, both of whom were a great source of pleasure and satisfaction. One daughter is a graduate student at the Technion in Haifa; the other one lives in Los Angeles. Both are successful and are on the road to even greater achievement.

We recently saved up some money and purchased tickets to visit our daughter in Los Angeles. We spent a month visiting, touring, spending time with our daughter. It was absolutely wonderful. On the last day of the trip, our daughter accompanied us to the airport, where she broke to us her tragic news: '*Ima*, *Abba*, I have a request of you. Please erase my number from your phone book. I have decided that I want to move on with my life, acculturate myself, and sever my relationship with the past. As long as I am connected with you, I am still in the old country. I want to live!'

"Understandably, our twelve-hour return trip was filled with grief, and we wept the entire way home. We comforted ourselves, however, that we still had one other daughter. We traveled to Haifa to share our unfortunate news with our other daughter – who shocked us with a similar request. She felt that we are backwards and, if she were to remain connected with us, she could never become a part of the 'now' scene. - Rabbi, it is now one full year that we have had nothing to do with either of our daughters. Our lives are worthless. This is why we want to die."

If there has ever been a sad story – this is it. The *rav* listened, looked at them with caring eyes and asked, "Rather than have me pray that you die, why do you not pray to G-d that He open your daughters' hearts? Why do you not pray for them?" he asked.

"Rabbi, we are over seventy years old, and never once have we prayed to G-d. We have no clue how to pray to Him," the parents replied.

"My friends," the *rav* began, "can you imagine the feelings of a Father Who has waited over seventy years for His children to speak to Him? You have been sitting by the phone for a <u>year</u> – <u>everyday</u> – *waiting*, *hoping* that perhaps your daughters might call. Your Heavenly Father has been waiting for <u>you</u> for over <u>seventy years</u>! Call Him, talk to Him, cry to Him! Use any language that is comfortable – but call!"



כַּאֲשֶׁר יְיַסֵּר אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ מְיַסְּרֶךָּ – *'Just as a father will chastise his son, so Hashem, Your G-d, chastises you*. (8:5)

Hashem's discipline is likened to that of a loving father who is compelled to impose order in the life of his child. Discipline is a form of instruction which is vital and critical to a child's development.

The following are excerpts from a series of lectures given by the venerable Mashgiach of Beth Medrash Gavohah, **Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Zt'l**:

The Torah unequivocally forbids berating or embarrassing anyone, regardless of his wrongdoing. *Chavalah*, hitting, and *onaah*, persecution, are specifically prohibited. Just because someone is guilty of committing a sin does not give us license to humiliate or hit him. - Concerning chinuch, education, we find that these prohibitions are lifted. The Talmud Makkos 8a teaches that not only does a father have the right to strike his son, but he actually has an obligation to inflict corporeal punishment.



How this obligation is executed is a very controversial question. Children are entitled to the same protections in the Torah as are applied to other people. Nonetheless, the father who is carrying out the mitzvah of chinuch is exempt from the prohibitions of chavalah and onaah. - This certainly does not entitle any insecure (and, quite possibly, deranged) father to strike or humiliate his child. Only in the pursuit of the mitzvah of chinuch may a parent do those otherwise prohibited acts of chavalah or onaah, with halachic dispensation.

Here, the Mashgiach is very firm. Before a parent thinks he is permitted to strike or humiliate his child, he must be absolutely sure, with complete objectivity, that he is carrying out the mitzvah of chinuch. If he is uncertain, and he acts out of anger or frustration (perhaps with a little guilt added in), he has no right whatsoever to take out the resentment he harbors in his heart for anything or anyone – on his child. - To harm a child in any way, for any other reason than the fulfillment of the mitzvah of chinuch, is pure abuse!

To cause any form of pain to a child, he must know without question that he has no other motivation than chinuch. (If he is in any way unsure of his motives, he must refrain – as if this were a questionable piece of meat.)

Furthermore, besides the prohibitions involved, harming a child without justification only causes the child to hate the parents and everything for which they stand. The child will feel abused and resentful, often blemished for life.

The Mashgiach concludes with two questions that a parent must ask himself before subjecting his child to harsh measures: One, is this completely for the benefit of the child? Two, is there a gentler way that this can be achieved, thereby causing the child less stress and less pain?

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - "***You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your Elokim, for the good Land that He gave you.***" (8:10)



When a person eats or drinks, he prefaces his eating with a blessing and, upon completion, he once again offers his blessing. - What if a person has no desire to eat, he is just not hungry, or he does not particularly care for the food that is being served? One would think that he has no obligation to eat. One does not eat just to avail himself the opportunity to recite a blessing – or should he eat just for the blessing?

The following episode should enlighten us: **The Bobover Rebbe, Horav Shlomo, zl**, related that, when he was a young lad of about

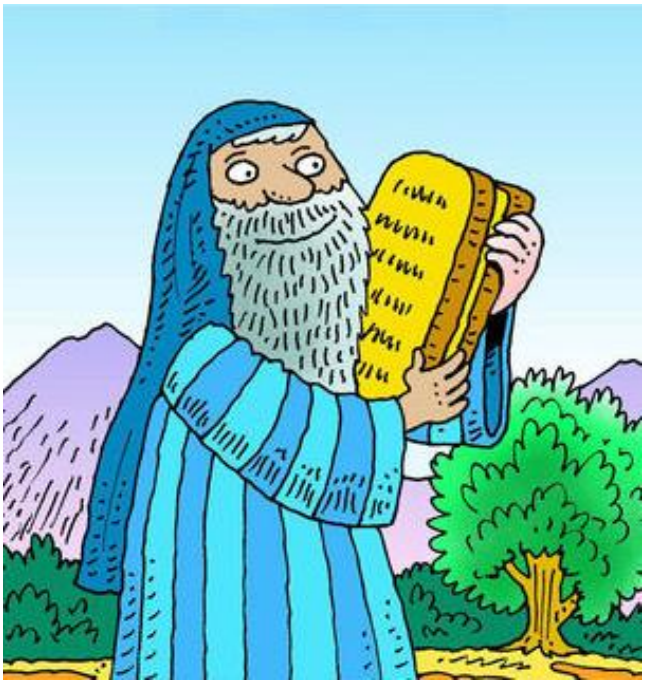
eight years old, his mother put a dish of cabbage in front of him. He had no desire to eat cabbage, and he refused to eat it. All of his mother's pleas and incentives did not change his mind. He was not eating cabbage.

When his father, the saintly **Kedushas Tzion, Horav Ben Tzion, zl**, heard of the incident, he spoke to his son in a very caring, but firm, manner, "My son, let us attempt to calculate the amount of grain, vegetable and fruit that grows throughout the world. How much is left for human consumption? Most is either in parts of the world where man rarely treads or has been destroyed prematurely as a result of climate change. Heavy rain, snowstorms, strong winds, all tend to have an adverse effect on growing vegetation. Thus, many do not reach full maturity. Most that do achieve this "milestone" are sold to gentiles who will not recite a blessing over them. Additionally, sadly, not all Jews recite a blessing when partaking of Hashem's gift. Thus, if a fruit or vegetable finally makes it to the table of an observant Jew – how can such a Jew refuse to recite a blessing over it? - Excuses will not support him when he stands before the Heavenly Tribunal to explain why – after Hashem availed him of His gift –he refused to do his part by blessing and eating."

This is a powerful lesson concerning the attitude one should manifest regarding the gifts we receive from Hashem, which we often take for granted. Furthermore, it offers some practical advice concerning how a parent should reprove a child: no putdown; no voice raising; simple logic and explaining. When parents make a child feel mature, he has already won half the battle.

"Jewish wealth is not houses and gold. The everlasting Jewish wealth is: Being Jews who keep Torah and Mitzvot, and bringing into the world children and grandchildren who keep Torah and Mitzvot." ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe.

וָאֶתְפֹּשׂ בִּשְׁנֵי הַלֻּחֹת וָאַשְׁלִכֵם מֵעַל שְׁתֵּי יָדָי וָאֲשַׁבְּרֵם לְעֵינֵיכֶם - '***I took hold of both of the Tablets, and I cast them from my hands, and I broke them before your eyes***.' (9:17)



A powerful lesson can be derived from this pasuk, which describes Moshe Rabbeinu's act of shattering of the Luchos not simply as a negative act or an act of weakness, but rather, as a forceful, compelling, even positive act.

Horav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zl, comments that, were it not for the Torah's unembellished description, one might harbor the thought that Moshe was so overcome with shock in seeing the Golden Calf that he dropped the Luchos. Perhaps another scenario would be that they were too heavy. - Moshe's strength came from the People. Their merit infused him. Once they fell off their spiritual perch, Moshe no longer had the ability to hold the extremely heavy Luchos, and they dropped from his hands.

The pasuk conveys an entirely different message. Moshe's act of breaking the Luchos was deliberate. With deep circumspection and forethought, Moshe assumed responsibility for the Luchos and decided that the nation did not deserve them. So he acted accordingly by shattering them. He was not weak; he was not indecisive. He was acting with great decisiveness when he broke the Luchos. - He was not giving these Tablets to a nation that reveled with a molten idol. Furthermore, Moshe's decision was far from popular. Chazal teach that the Seventy Elders attempted to prevent Moshe from breaking the Luchos. His own brother, Aharon HaKohen, also tried unsuccessfully to convince him to rethink his decision and not break the Luchos.

Moshe's mind was made up. He knew what had to be done, and he was determined to do it. It was his duty as leader to break the Luchos.

Sometimes leadership calls for the leader to put a stop to something – not to give it a chance, because it will be a blemished achievement; it will mean short-selling a product, settling for mediocrity when only a superior, untainted product will suffice.

The closing pesukim of the Torah laud Moshe for breaking the Luchos. **וּלְכֹל֙ הַיָּ֣ד הַחֲזָקָ֔ה וּלְכֹ֖ל הַמּוֹרָ֑א אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֗ה מֹשֶׁה֙ לְעֵינֵ֣י כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל**, "*And for all the mighty hand… that Moshe did, before the eyes of all Yisrael*" (Devarim 34:12).

Rashi explains "the mighty hand" as a reference to the courage and determination manifest by Moshe when he broke the Luchos. It was no accident; it was duty at its most sublime implementation.

Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, explains why Moshe took it upon himself to break the Luchos "before the eyes of all Yisrael," an act which was arguably his greatest act as leader of the Jewish People.

Moshe realized that presenting the Luchos which had engraved upon them the enjoinment, "You shall not have any other gods," to a nation that was in the midst of celebrating around a molten calf/idol would be their undoing. If Moshe were to give the Luchos to Klal Yisrael at that moment, they would immediately be held accountable for idol worship; thus, they would be deserving of execution.

By breaking the Luchos, Moshe saved the nation from punishment. Our leader went out of his way to break the Luchos, rather than conceal them for a later date when the nation would be deserving, because he sought the shock-effect. Shattering the Luchos would jar the people into humility and submission. The shock would shake them up and "shatter" their false sense of security and invincibility. - Thinking that they could withstand and even triumph over the forces of evil with which the evil-inclination challenged them was fool- hardy. No human is spiritually invincible. Everyone has a

spiritual Achilles heel which makes him conquerable. "Pride goes before the fall" is the expression that has accompanied so many haughty people to the dung heap of history.

The Rosh Yeshivah offers a strategy for fighting pride. When one is aware of the nadir of sinfulness and depravity to which misplaced pride can lead, he thinks twice before falling victim to his own shortsightedness. Second, one only has to think of the valuable treasures he will lose as a result of capitulating to his base desires.

The Jews lost the precious Luchos. Others have lost their families, the respect of their friends and community. - Everyone has that one precious commodity which supersedes everything. We must never lose sight of it.

נָתַן ה' אֵלַי אֶת־שְׁנֵי לֻחֹת הָאֲבָנִים - "***And Hashem gave me the two tablets of stone***." (9:11)



The word "**לוּחֹת**" tablets, is usually written with a "vav" to designate the plural. Rashi explains that the word luchos is written here without a "vav," in the singular. Yet, it is vocalized in the plural, by design. This indicates that while there were two luchos, they had equal significance as if they had been one.

Horav David Feinstein, Shlita, adds that the word "shnei," two, also indicates that the two luchos were really one, reflected by the apparent redundancy of the word. Obviously, the word luchos, which is the plural form, implies two luchos, since, as Chazal teach us, a plural noun written by itself,

without a modifying number, means two, which is the minimum possible. Thus, the added "shnei," also teaches us about the Luchos.

In the Yerushalmi Sheklaim, 6:1, Chazal cite an opinion that all Ten Commandments were written on each of the two luchos. Horav Feinstein suggests an important lesson to be derived from here. One cannot fulfill the first five commandments, which address man's relationship with Hashem, unless he also fulfills the second set of five commandments, which concern human relationships. Hence, one tablet focuses upon the first five commandments and lists the others as an explanation for them, while the reverse is true on the other side.

There is an unbreakable relationship between the two tablets. One must fulfill all Ten Commandments or forfeit the possibility of fulfilling any of them.



וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - "***You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your G-d, for the good Land that He gave you.***" (8:10)

The words **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ**, "You will eat and you will be satisfied," are mentioned twice in this Parsha: in the above pasuk, and later in (11:15). There is one difference, however, the above pasuk has an added word: **וּבֵרַכְתָּ**, "and you will bless [Hashem]." In the second pasuk, the words **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ** are followed in the next pasuk by, **הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן־יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם**, "Beware for yourselves, lest your heart be seduced and you will turn astray."

Wherein lay the difference between the two phrases? Why is the second one followed with, "beware," while the first concludes, "you will bless"?

Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita, quotes Rashi on the second pasuk, **הִשָּׁמְרוּ**, "beware" – "One does not rebel against Hashem, unless he is first satisfied." This means that the more one is successful, the

greater his good fortune, the stronger the possibility of backlash. It is the successful person who can lose his faith as his good fortune goes to his head. He is capable of declaring, **כֹּחִי וְעֹצֶם יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת־הַחַיִל הַזֶּה**, "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth" (Devarim 8:17). - I did it all by myself. Nobody helped me. I am a self-made man.

Such a person denies Divine Providence. He does not perceive Hashem's input. The arrogance goes to his head, as he blatantly – without fear – rebels against Hashem.

It is this attitude that the Torah is expressing and what **הִשָּׁמְרוּ**, "beware," is referring to is often the result of **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ**.

How does one prevent such dire consequences? What safeguards can we put into place to prevent success from going to our heads? The answer to this question is provided by the Torah: **וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ**, "Bless Hashem." When one realizes and acknowledges that whatever success he enjoys is all the result of the Almighty, then it will not go to his head. One becomes haughty only if he thinks and begins to believe that he is it, that he has wrought all of his achievement. One who attributes good fortune to the Source of all success blesses Hashem for His gift and continues to grow with it. - The nisayon, challenge, of **וְרָם לְבָבֶךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ**, "And your heart will become haughty, and you will forget Hashem" (Ibid. 8:14), is not exclusive to material success.

Rav Weinberger emphasizes that it is a hurdle even with regard to spiritual achievement. It can go to one's head.

The story is told that the **Kotzker Rebbe, zl**, once observed a chasid of his walking down the street on Shabbos following an inspiring day of learning, wearing his shtreimel, chassidic hat, on a tilt. - The Rebbe remarked, "I am afraid that if you were to learn two more blatt, folios of Talmud, you would walk down the street with your head uncovered!"

The Rebbe was alluding to the idea that even spiritual satisfaction taken the wrong way can indicate an inner spiritual emptiness.

One who achieves spiritual ascendency should immediately use his accomplishment as a steppingstone for reaching greater heights. Indeed, one should never be "satisfied" with spiritual fulfillment.



הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן־יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם
"***But take heed to yourselves that your heart does not open itself to enticement and you turn aside and you serve other gods***." (11:16)

Rashi comments that once one "turns away" from Torah, the natural sequence of events is "you will worship strange gods." Once one leaves the Torah path, he will eventually turn to idols.

This is perplexing! We know that the yetzer hora, evil inclination, works in a specific manner. First, it lures one to turning away slightly by performing a simple act of indiscretion. This goes on for a while as the yetzer hora slowly increases its hold upon the person until it ultimately brings him down completely. - Worshiping idols is the last step, the final act of iniquity which is the result of careful digression. Why, then, is the sin of leaving the Torah so different? Why does leaving the Torah path directly stimulate idol worship?

Rav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, cites his rebbe, **the Chofetz Chaim**, who elucidates this matter with an analogy. If two people or two nations battle each other and one emerges the victor, the victory is still not ultimately assured. It is always conceivable that the one who was defeated will recoup and triumph in a second campaign.

The only time that victory is secure is when the vanquisher relieves his captive of his weapons. Now that he no longer has his armament, his defeat is confirmed.

Likewise, in the battle against the yetzer hora. Even if the yetzer hora has succeeded in enticing a person to sin, his "success" may be

short lived. After all, the sinner may perform teshuvah and deny the yetzer hora success. When the yetzer hora lures one away from Torah study, however, a critical occurrence has now taken place. The individual no longer has the weapons with which to ward off sin. He literally has nothing with which to fight.

This is consistent with Chazal's dictum in the Talmud Kiddushin 30b, **בָּרָאתִי יֵצֶר הָרָע וּבָרָאתִי לוֹ תּוֹרָה תַּבְלִין** - "I created for him a yetzer hora, I (also) created for him the Torah as a seasoning to balance and/or counteract the effect of the evil inclination." - As long as one studies Torah, hope remains for teshuvah. Once the Torah has been rejected, we are no longer assured of his triumph.

Horav Wasserman claims that this is the rationale behind Chazal's intense response to the sin of bitul Torah, non- learning, wasting time allocated to Torah study. Murder, infidelity and idol-worship are capital sins. Yet, Hashem will overlook them if one is repentant. These sins are the climax of invidiousness. There is still hope, however, for return. Bitul Torah is not only deplorable; it is dangerous for one's spiritual/physical well-being.

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - "***You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your G-d, for the good Land that He gave you.***" (8:10)

This pasuk implies that Bircas Ha'mazon is not merely a formal offering of gratitude for the meal which we have eaten. Rather, it proclaims our acknowledgment that Hashem is the source of all things. Indeed, we even submit our thanks to Hashem for providing us with our land.

This seems enigmatic. Imagine being invited to someone's home for dinner and, after the meal, thanking the host for the use of his furniture and home during the course of the meal. This expression

of gratitude is undoubtedly excessive. Why, then, is it necessary to specifically mention the land during Bircas Ha'Mazon?

Horav B.Z. Baruk, z.l., offers the following analogy in response. A person who was hunger stricken and thirsty is walking in the desert, completely exposed to the elements. Suddenly, a plane lands as if from nowhere. A beautifully furnished home complete with a table laden with various delicacies ready for his consumption appears before him.

Obviously, in such a situation, the individual's gratitude would extend beyond a simple acknowledgment of the delicious meal. He would indicate his appreciation for everything. Similarly, we should acknowledge that every meal we enjoy is a brand-new creation, resulting from Hashem's beneficence.

We have fallen victim to the sin of complacency by taking everything for granted. Regretfully, we reflect upon Hashem's favors only when we are denied them. Increasing our awareness would neutralize this apathetic attitude.







What is one supposed to think when he cries out to Hashem and Hashem doesn't answer?

We are supposed to think that Hashem wants you to cry out even more. And suppose you cried out even more – let's say a man is on his deathbed. He's an old man, he's 119 years old. Look, he can't expect to live much more. But he cries out anyway on his deathbed, he wants to live. And finally he passes away. Did he waste his time? No! He achieved maybe in his last minutes more than he did all of his life. Because he's thinking about Hashem.

Here's an old man who's crying out on his deathbed. He says "Hashem heal me". "Oh that's so silly!" you say. The bystanders think it's ridiculous. How long do you want to hang around here? 119 years is not enough? And the answer is, it's not enough. He wants to live a thousand years. Why shouldn't he? He had a grandfather, Mesushelach who lived almost a thousand years, so why shouldn't he?

So he's crying out; he's allowed to cry out. And don't say that he didn't accomplish what he wanted. He did accomplish! The crying out is the purpose of the deathbed – so that he should cry out to Hashem and become more aware of Him. That's the biggest achievement there is. So nobody should ever be frustrated in crying out, because you are achieving. You are gaining more awareness of Hashem.



What does one do if he lives in an area where there is no contact with his rebbi?

First of all, there may be somebody in that area who could become a *rebbi* of his. Secondly, what business does he have living in such an area? It's important to live in a good neighborhood. When you live in a certain neighborhood it becomes part of your personality. You can't help it. – *You're attracted, you're drawn after your environment.*

If the environment is a pop culture environment, and there are movies all around and people with TVs all around, you can't escape the influence. Although you can try to some extent, but you can't escape it.

And therefore a person if he's wise, he should listen to what the *Chachomim* say: *shachen tov!* (Avos 2:9). A good neighbor is very important! And a good neighborhood is very important. It's extremely important to find a place where you'll be influenced by the people around you.

"Knowing where an act of chesed will lead is impossible. One cannot possibly trace its progress through the world as it spreads goodness through the many lives intertwined in the fabric of humanity. No one can see what Hashem sees as the effects of one kind act mount higher and higher. - No one, therefore, can imagine the immeasurable reward he earns for his act of kindness. A person can only know that the good he has done is no doubt far greater than the good he thinks he has done." ~ Chofetz Chaim.

Saved by His Tzitzis – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



This is Meir Itan. Meir is a 20-year-old floor contractor who lives in Jerusalem. For some reason, Meir has always felt a close affinity for the mitzvah of Tzitzis. There were times in his life when he didn't wear a yarmulke, but he always wore his Tzitzis, it was not negotiable.



So much so, that when Oct 7th happened, and there was a big awakening amongst the non-religious soldiers to wear Tzitzis, he was instrumental in purchasing and handing out Tzitzis to them.

Fast forward almost a year later. Meir is fitting a wooden floor. In his hand he is holding a hand-held circular saw -without a safety guard shield. At some point, Meir leans over to get a better angle. He feels a blow to his chest. Initially, he had no idea what happened, but it turned out that the blade jerked back, and cut into Meir's chest deeply.

Meir was rushed to the hospital. The doctors were able to determine that the blade had cut very deeply but had stopped literally millimetres from cutting through the vital organs. They were able to fix Meir up, and after a short recovery, he went home.

Eventually, Meir went to retrieve his tools from the site that he was working on. When he saw the circular saw that he was working with, he couldn't believe the sight that met his eyes. He froze on the spot.



The sight that met him was as in this actual picture. The blade had cut right through his T-shirt, but his Tzitzis had become entangled into the machine and had caused the spinning blade to stop! – Just in time!

Meir's commitment and attachment to the mitzvah of Tzitzis and his dedication towards spreading it to other people, perhaps created a merit for Meir, so that when he was in a difficult situation, his Tzitzis came to rescue his life.

What's Your Currency – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



What is the most valuable commodity in the penal (prison) system in the USA?.... Postage stamps!

You see, postage stamps are the only connection to the outside world. You can write a letter to family, to a friend, or to your attorney. – Postage stamps are king, and because

of that, stamps are the main currency (besides chocolate bars and cigarettes). The more postage stamps you have, the more things are available to you… Food, services, experiences, etc. And therefore, within the American prison system, there is a hierarchy. There are those prisoners who are wealthy, they have many stamps. There are those prisoners classed as middle class, and there are the poor who have no stamps at all.

There was a prisoner called Carlos who had been in the prison system for decades. Slowly but surely, he rose through the hierarchy, to eventually become the wealthiest postage stamp owner in the entire prison! He had stacks of postal stamps. And because of that, he got more food. He had people doing things for him. – He was king!

And then finally, totally out of the blue, he gets called to the prison warden's office. The warden told him, "I have good news for you – your case has been reviewed and your sentence has been commuted, and you are free to go – get your stuff and good luck."

Carlos runs back to his cell to retrieve his belongings especially his pile of postage stamps. At least when he re-enters the outside world, he will be coming as a wealthy person.

He goes to a coffee shop to buy a real coffee. The cashier says, "That will be $3.50 please." He tries to pay with his stamps, and says to the cashier, "This stamp is worth $3 and this one $5."

The cashier says, "Sir, that's a postage stamp. You can put it on an envelope and post a letter with it, but it has no other value then the face value of 25¢, and you certainly can't buy a coffee with it. They're not worth anything, they're valueless as a currency. I'm sorry, but we don't accept postage stamps here." -- He was shattered and broken.

My friends, we are not that much different than Carlos. Because, what is the commodity/currency in this world? – Money! Green, silver, gold, diamonds, platinum. That's the currency, and we work an

entire lifetime, under the shackles of Olam Hazeh to amass as much as possible. And we hope that one day, when we go to Olam Habah we will have that fortune to spend there.

But when we get to Olam Habah, we realize that all the currency that we thought was worth a fortune in this world – is actually worthless in the world to come.

Holiday Chizuk from Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

Rabboisai, we're in the middle of bein hazemanim – the holiday period. The holidays afford us a very valuable and important time. Time to spend with the family, time to do things that elude us during the rest of the year.

Perhaps the bein hazemanim period is an opportunity to prepare for Elul. It gives us an opportunity to stop and think, to take stock and work out where and how we can improve ourselves. Normally our lives are a whirlwind of just rushing around, and often we're not able to think about our seder hayom and our avodah, in order that we can improve and do things better.

As such, the bein hazemanim gives us the opportunity to enjoy ourselves, to daven more slowly, and reflect on what we are doing in our lives, and to elevate ourselves spiritually.

The pasuk says **וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם־לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ** – '***And now, O Israel, what does Hashem, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to worship Hashem, with all your heart and with all your soul***.' (10:12)

וְעַתָּה with an Ayin means NOW. And chazal tell us that **אין ועתה אלא תשובה**. This is because the main things that holds a person back from doing **תשובה** is not that we feel that there isn't anything that we need to improve on, but it is all too often - 'procrastination.' Yes, we have a plan to change and do things better – but not NOW! Not YET,

We're not quite ready. And this takes away the whole opportunity for self-improvement. Whenever there is a plan to do it at a later stage,- it won't happen. The Yetzer horah allows us to want to have plans to do things differently – but not just yet! This is where the idea of "I will spend more time learning when I retire!" comes from. It won't happen! It's all about what we are going to do at a later stage.

This is what **וְעַתָּה֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל** means – doing **תשובה** NOW! From today our conduct should be different. Whether in regards to learning, avodah, chesed, in the way we speak or what we look at – it must be **וְעַתָּה֙** - what we do NOW!

The Pasuk continues with - **מָ֚ה ה' אֱלֹקֶ֔יךָ שֹׁאֵ֖ל מֵעִמָּ֑ךְ**. The word **מָה** implies something trivial, but we know that **יִרְאָה** is not trivial. And the Gemarah in Menachos 53b darshans **תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר חייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום שנאמר (דברים י, יב) ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך - אל תקרי מה אלא מאה** - Rabbi Meir interprets the verse as though it said one hundred [**מאה**], rather than **מה**.

Rashi explains the gemara that it means the 100 brachos that a person davens on a daily basis. And collectively this brings a person to Yiras Shamayim.

So perhaps, one of the inyanim where we can look to improve ourselves is to say brachas with feeling, understanding what we are saying with more kavana. We should say them in a more meaningful way and on a deeper level. They should be said aloud and consciously. We should hear the brachos that we say and allow others to hear them so that they can respond Amein.

The inyan of Birchas Hamazon is such a powerful bracha specifically. We should make the extra chizuk in bentching inside from a bentcher, and never baal peh. **Rav Shach Zt'l** often brought people yeshuos regularly with this advice. It is well known that bentching inside is so much more meaningful, especially when we think about what the words mean.

If you think about all the brachos mentioned at the end of **הַטּוֹב לְחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרֶוַח הַצָּלָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּרָכָה וִישׁוּעָה, נֶחָמָה, -- וְהַמֵּטִיב פַּרְנָסָה וְכַלְכָּלָה, וְרַחֲמִים, וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם, וְכָל־טוֹב** – these are all yeshuos and benefits a person can have when a person bentches as he is supposed to.

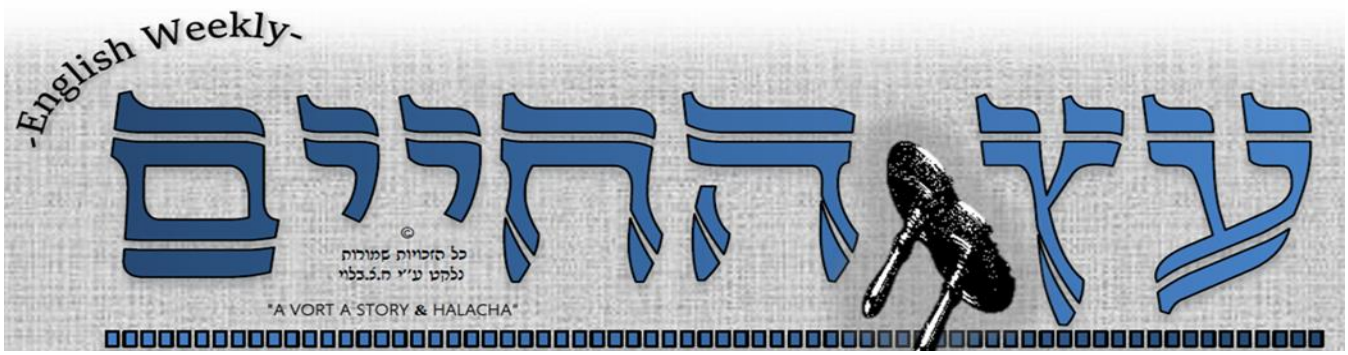
The Chinuch says that Hashem desires to dish out brachos. And the channel of bringing bracho into the world is brought about by the way we daven and make brachos, when we bentch properly out aloud with kavana. This brings about a great simcha to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, as it unlocks and opens the gates of shefa and bracha to the world.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Avraham Grodzinsky ZT"L (1884-1944) was the Mashgiach Ruchani (spiritual supervisor) of the Slabodka Yeshiva in Lithuania after **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ZT"L** (the Alter of Slabodka) moved half of the Yeshiva to Chevron in Israel. Rav Grodzinsky was the personification of the Middah of Emes.

While still a student in the Yeshiva of Slabodka, Rav Grodzinsky worked for two years on the Middah exemplified by Shammai the great Tanna, "Havei Mekabel Kol Adam B'saiver Panim Yafos – greet everyone with a smile." - More specifically, he wanted to ensure that the smile that he greeted others with, reflected a genuine happiness to meet them. If it didn't, that would be a lack of Emes – something that Rav Grodzinsky sought to avoid at all costs, even if being completely genuine took him two full years to perfect.

"The very fires that consume us are the fires that will give rise to the rebirth of the Jewish people." ~ R' Elchonon Wasserman.



About 70 years ago, the Yidden of **ארץ ישראל** were pouring out their hearts in fervent prayer and **תהילים** around the clock. The Arabs were infiltrating and the fear was overwhelming.



During this time the **Brisker Rov** said as follows: In the beginning **פרעה** always asked **משה** to please daven. What happened in the end? **פרעה** saw that there was relief and he remained stubborn – **ויראה פרעה כי היתה רווחה והכבד את ליבו**. -The Brisker Rov continued and said: The same will be in our situation. There is no doubt that the **תפילות** and **תהילים** of **כלל ישראל** will break through and **הקב"ה** will save us in that **זכות**. However, there are people who threw off the yoke of heaven (**פורקי עול**) and after the yeshua they will not credit the thousands of **תפילות**, rather they will claim **כוחי ועוצם ידי** - It was because of their tanks and well-trained soldiers that they won this war! **וכך הוה**

We ourselves can fall into the exact same trap. What happens? In a difficult situation we daven our hearts out that we should see a yeshua. (**בנים, שידוך, חברותה, פרנסה, רפואה**) We daven and daven and then things work out. The natural way of people is, that we forget why the yeshua came in the first place.

Our job is "Vzacharta" – Remember that we are nothing but a worm and everything we have is all from Hashem. And yes, if your wife did not make lunch - it is from Hashem too!

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ ח:י

" מקובל אני מרבותי שכל הזהיר בבהמ"ז, מזונותיו מצוין לו בכבוד כל ימיו" - *"I have a Kabala from my teachers, that anyone who is careful with regard to Birchas Hamazon will have his sustenance found to him in an honorable way, all his days". ~* ספר החינוך ת"ל

Harav Elya Lopian זצוק"ל said as follows: "Many people, in respect to the eating part of the meal, find all the time in the world to eat, to schmooze and so on. Whereas after sitting by the table for a half an hour they look at the time and suddenly realize they need to hurry someplace, and therefore they bentch speedily. - Not **ח"ו** that these people do not want to bentch properly, just since now it "suddenly" got late and they are in a massive rush, so the *bentching* part of the meal becomes the "Korbon".

Harav Moshe Ahron Stern said, "My Rebbe, Reb Elya, after telling this to us, gave us an **עצה** of what to do to *avoid* this problem.

Whenever it comes to our benching, we should set for ourselves an amount of time (for example 2-3 minutes) that it takes us to bench properly. If it will take us shorter we should give ourselves a "knass" and sit still in our place (sort of like a goilum) without talking to anyone, as if we are still in the middle of benching, until we reach that amount of time we set for ourselves.

Reb Elya explained to us that eventually over time we will see that we will start to bentch properly because we will realize that if we have to sit there anyway, we may as well use that time to bench a little slower and with more *Kavana – to think about the meaning of the words.*

"When we face adversity, Hashem's love and support are unwavering. – He walks with us through the storms, guiding us towards brighter days." ~ Rabbi Avraham J Twerski.

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

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם־לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ – (10:12)

Sefer **Maharam Brisk** says a nice *remez* on this oft-quoted *posuk*. He writes that there are 45 days from **ט״ו באב** until **ראש השנה** (this *parsha* coincides with that timetable). Thus, says the *posuk*, "**מה**" has the numerical value of 45.

What does *Hashem* want from us in this 45-day period? - "**לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ה'**" - to work on our **יראת שמים**. And as the *posuk* continues, to go in His ways, love Him and serve Him with all your heart and soul.

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER

A Good Kind of Fear - Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

In our Parsha, we encounter the famous words, "*Mah Hashem Elokecha sho'el me'imach*—What does Hashem ask of you?" And the answer is, "Ki im l'yirah et Hashem," meaning "Only to fear Hashem." Here, we come across a profound teaching from the great R' Chanina, who says that everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven itself (*Berachos* 33b).

This raises an intriguing question. How can it be? What is this novel interpretation that R' Chanina is offering us? Would we assume that Hashem could make us automatically fear Him, that we would all walk around with great Yiras Shamayim? Of course not. If that were the case, there would be no challenge, no nisayon, no avodah for us to engage in. - So, what does it mean? The great **Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l** explains with a powerful analogy:

Imagine a person standing alone in a very scary place, a place he would never venture into under normal circumstances. However, if someone offered him $10,000 to cross that land, he might decide to

go for it, driven by the need for the money. Is he still afraid? Certainly. But because of the $10,000, he pushes through his fear and proceeds, even though his heart is pounding.

However, as **Rav Shach** explains, when it comes to Yirat Shamayim, there are no such limits. It's not a matter of money or external incentives. Yirat Shamayim is something we must work on throughout our lives. It's an avodah, a lifelong service to Hashem. Each person must cultivate this fear of Heaven, understanding that with every sin, the consequence is already created at the time of the sin. Therefore, we must do teshuvah (repentance) quickly to avert the harsh consequences. We must be extremely careful throughout our lives to stay on the right path, to do the right things, and to be kind to everyone. We must be mindful of our obligations bein adam l'Makom and bein adam l'chaveiro.

Two great tzadikim, **Rav Mendel of Rimanov and Rav Yisrael of Apt** (the Apter Rav) once wanted to learn from the great tzaddik, the **Chozeh of Lublin**. When they arrived in Lublin, they dressed in white garments as a sign of purity and humility. However, some locals were not pleased with their arrival, and they were suspected of being spies, and as such, thrown into prison. The next morning, the two tzaddikim appeared before the judge. When asked why they were there, they explained that they were working on their Yirat Shamayim and had come to learn from the ways of the Chozeh of Lublin.

The judge, seeing them dressed in white, asked why they were dressed that way. In response, they asked the judge, "Why are you dressed in black?" The judge, infuriated, demanded, "Do you understand before whom you are standing?"

Rav Mendel of Rimanov calmly replied, "We understand exactly who we are standing before—the Creator of the world—and that is why we are not afraid of anything you are saying."

At that moment, Rav Mendel of Rimanov removed his shtreimel (traditional fur hat), revealing his full countenance, and the judge, seeing the holy aura of the tzaddik, grew pale and quickly dismissed the case, pleading with them to leave.

Yirat Shamayim is a lifelong journey and a fundamental aspect of our relationship with Hashem. But its dividends are worth everything, because they bring Hashem into our life in the most palpable of ways. And not only that, but the rewards of such closeness to Hashem last for an eternity.

Indiscernible Change - Mr. Charlie Harary

Great people have this amazing ability to see even the smallest things and change their lives. One of the greatest stories is the story of Rabbi Akiva. He was an unlearned shepherd, walking in the fields one day, when he saw a brook. At the end of the brook, there was water that was dripping down onto a rock. Rabbi Akiva stopped, if you can picture the scene, walked closer, and saw this incredible sight: water dripping, drip, drip, onto a rock. And when he looked down at the rock, he saw that the rock had a hole. Somehow, this water was able to bore a hole in the rock.

He made his calculation: if water, which is soft, can penetrate a rock, which is hard, then Torah, which is like iron, can penetrate his heart, which is soft (*Avos D'Rebbe Nosson* 6:2). That moment, that scene, that lesson, led him to start learning and to become one of the greatest Tzaddikim in the history of Klal Yisrael.

Rabbi Noach Weinberg zt"l once spoke about this and observed the following. What was it that made Rabbi Akiva so inspired? Was it just the hole? Actually, it wasn't. It was much deeper. The reason why the hole came to be was because it was a drip. There was no water that came in a torrent on the rock; it wasn't the force and the power of water that created the hole. It was the consistent drip

that allowed, one after the other, a slow erosion of the rock. It may have been the millionth drop that made the hole, but the first drop also made a difference—you just couldn't see it. There was no one drop that made the hole; it was every drop.

Rabbi Akiva realized, "I've got such a long way to go. In my middle age, I don't even know the Aleph-Beis. How am I ever going to become a successful person in Torah? But wait, even if I don't see any results, that first Aleph will actually make a difference. I can see now, through this story, that every single drop, whether my eye can discern it or not, is actually changing my life. And so, every day has meaning and every moment is valuable. So let me get started now, and let it go wherever it goes."

We all want to be great in life. But you know what happens many times? We start down the journey, and do one, two, five, six, ten, twenty days, and we don't see a difference because we're waiting for the dramatic moment. But Rabbi Akiva saw that day, and knew that it's never how change works. Change isn't discernible to the eye when you look closely. It's only when you look from afar.

We must believe that every drop of goodness, every drop that we're doing for Hashem is actually making us a different, greater person, whether we can see the change or not. Because we believe, at the end of the day, that if we're continuously, every day, doing that thing, we'll wake up one morning and see that the change we've made in our lives is beyond our imagination.



"The word Bitachon* (בטחון) *is a derivative of the word Betach* (בטח) – *Certainty. -- Not only do we believe that Hashem is able to provide, rescue and grant success, but we are absolutely certain that Hashem will do just that, to the point that we are free from anxiety." ~ Sefer Chovos Halevavos.





וְשַׂמְתֶּם אֶת דְּבָרַי אֵלֶּה עַל לְבַבְכֶם. . . - '***And you shall place these words of Mine <u>on</u> your heart...***' (11:18)

Surely if we are being instructed to fully accept the words of Hashem, as the verse suggests, then it should have stated "*in* your heart," why then is it written "*on* your heart"?

The answer, said the **Kotzker Rebbe**, is that while we must fulfil all of the commandments to the best of our ability at all times, there may be some areas and obligations where we struggle; and in these areas which we are not yet ready to accept upon ourselves — where we are not able to place the mitzvah "in" our hearts — we must at least place them "on" our hearts so that when the time is right, they will be easily accessible to us, and they can just sink in.

In fact, this principle is famous to the Kotzker Rebbe who said the following remarkable statement: "If you want to be a tzaddik, then you're a tzaddik... and even if you just *want to want to* be a tzaddik, then you're also a tzaddik!"

Perhaps we can suggest that this powerful quote follows the same principle as we mentioned above. Sometimes we are not ready to take on higher levels of religiousness. Sometimes the circumstances we find ourselves in prevent us from even wanting to grow in such a way. However, the Kotzker Rebbe is teaching us that even in those times when we feel that we are not ready for this level of growth and we cannot place it *in* our hearts, we should at least not reject the concept of growing in the future; we should at least want to want to grow in such a way by placing them *on* our hearts — for a future point in our lives, with the ultimate hope that our strive for growth will one day enable us to reach the level of greatness that we cannot even imagine.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Tremendous Tunes



With all those zemiros that we sing on Shabbos, what do we accomplish?

The word zemiros means to prune as in *lo sizmor*. As a gardener prunes his trees, thereby removing the inferior branches for the purpose of improving the fruit-bearing ability of the superior ones, so too our emotional, joyous recitation of the zemiros is designed to remove the impure barriers separating us and Hashem and liberate the soul from the weekday to its Shabbos dimension.

Now let's listen to the amazing words of **R' Yaakov Emden**:

"***The words of Shabbos zemiros are culled from pesukim of Tanach, Halachos, Shas, Zohar and Midrashim which pertain to Shabbos. One who says them brings good to the world. Hashem attaches Himself to him and listens to his voice. He is pleased and sustains the world so that it doesn't become destroyed***."

Dancing for the Duo

It is a great mitzvah to gladden the hearts of a chosson and kallah. **R' Yehuda Bar Ilai** would interrupt his learning to gladden a kallah by dancing before her with a myrtle branch.

In a similar vein, **R' Shmuel Bar Rav Yitzchak** would dance at a wedding while juggling three myrtle branches. When he passed away a pillar of fire in the shape of a myrtle branch separated him from everyone else, according him great honor. This was a heavenly affirmation of the great mitzvah he performed.

R' Pam once approached the music band at a wedding and told them to have the intent that they are making the chosson and kallah happy (simchas chosson v'kallah) so that this way they will get a mitzvah.

The custom of the **Tolner Rebbe, R' Yochanan Twersky** (1906–1998), was to do cartwheels/flips at different times. One of these times was at a wedding to gladden the chosson and kallah.





R' Naftali Amsterdam and his second wife were both in their 70s when they got married. At their wedding, **R' Itzele Peteberger** (1837–1907) danced on a tabletop and sang songs and rhymes all in fulfillment of the mitzvah of gladdening a chosson and kallah. When questioned as to whether so much rejoicing was necessary, he retorted, "In the halacha which states that one should rejoice with a chosson and kallah, no mention is made of the age of the couple!"

יהודים = בטחון

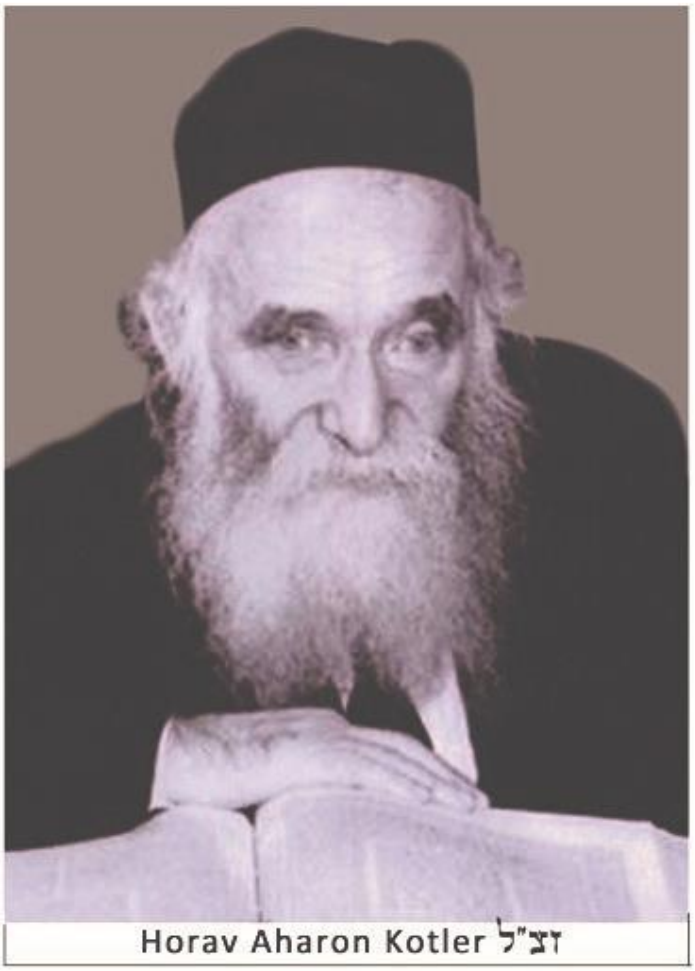
"Yehudim – Jews, shares the same numerical value as the word (בטחון) Bitachon [Trust in Hashem] (75).- Indeed, a Jew lives, and is defined by their Bitachon." ~The Ben Ish Chai.

Splendid Quote with Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"We must learn to appreciate even the details." **- וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶרֶץ הָרִים וּבְקָעֹת לִמְטַר הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתֶּה־מָּיִם**

When Hashem tells the Jews that He will be giving them Eretz Yisrael (Devarim 11:11), He describes the difference between Eretz Yisrael and the land of Mitzrayim.

In Mitzrayim, one must water the land by going around on foot, as opposed to in Eretz Yisroel where the rain does it all. Why is this important for Hashem to tell them? - To teach us to pay attention to all details when we get something and appreciate every one of them.



Horav Aharon Kotler זצ"ל

Horav Aharon Kotler זצ"ל used to eat the Shabbos seudos with the bochurim in the yeshiva.

One Friday, the cook of the yeshiva decided she would cut Rav Aharon's portion of chicken into pieces so that he would be able to have more time to speak in learning at the seudah.

After she cut the chicken, the pieces looked very small, so she added more to the plate. When they brought the chicken to Rav Aharon, he ate the exact amount that he usually ate and left over the extra portion.

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

ורגלך לא בצקה זה ארבעים שנה (8:4)

לא בצקה - לא נפחה כבצק כדרך הולכי יחף שרגליהם נפוחות (רש"י)

In his commentary on Parshas Eikev, Rashi writes that one of the miracles the Jewish people experienced in the wilderness is that their feed did not swell during their travels as is customary for those who walk barefoot. How can this be reconciled with an explicit pasuk in Parshas Ki Savo that says that their shoes miraculously did not wear out during their travels through the desert, clearly indicating that they wore shoes and did not walk barefoot?

The Rogatchover Gaon resolves the apparent contradiction by suggesting that when the Jews left Egypt and entered the desert, they were indeed wearing shoes. However, after the sins of the golden calf and the spies, they were in **נידוי**– excommunication – until the end of their sojourn in the desert. A person who has been excommunicated observes certain signs of mourning, including the removal of his shoes.

In Parshas Eikev Moshe was speaking to the collective nation, who had to wander without shoes during this period, so he emphasized the miracle of their bare feet not swelling as they did so. The later verse in Parshas Ki Savo is addressed to the Levites, who remained righteous and did not take part in the sins of the golden calf and spies and were not punished with excommunication. They were permitted to continue wearing their shoes throughout their sojourn in the wilderness, so to them Moshe mentioned the miracle of their shoes not wearing out while walking through the hot desert for so many years.

"The path to true humility begins with one ignoring insults or wrongdoings that were done to him." ~ R Moshe Feinstein



Manna From Heaven - Rabbi Frand on the Parashah

המאכלך מן במדבר ...ולמען נסתך – 'The One Who feeds you manna in the desert ... in order to test you.' (8:16)

Everyone knows that life is a test. We struggle to make a living, to raise our children, to build up our communities. Nothing comes easy, and our test is to deal with the hardships and frustrations in the best way possible.

But what if our livelihood were served up to us on a silver platter? How wonderful that would be! No more worries about how to pay for the children's tuition or the new roof. - What if everything we needed came to us like manna from heaven?

The commentators wonder what kind of test this is. What could be better than having everything you need delivered to your doorstep every day? This is a test? This is a blessing!

Would we consider this a test? Hardly. We would consider it a blessing. The Torah, however, seems to say otherwise.

Rashi explains that Hashem was referring to the laws that govern the manna. One could not store away any manna for the next day. One had to collect a double portion on Friday etc.- This was the test. Would the Jews observe the laws of the manna scrupulously?

Yes, there is a great test in "bread raining down from heaven." Affluence without effort is a dangerous thing. It comes with a great amount of leisure time and freedom of action.

What do we do with that leisure time and that freedom of action? Do we use our leisure time and freedom of action to taste the forbidden? - This is the great test of the manna.

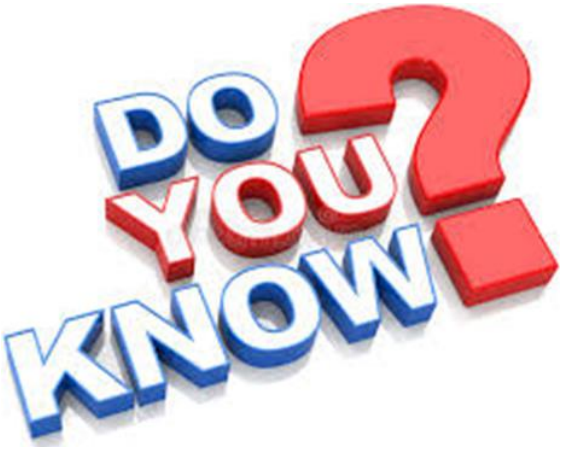
The Maggid of Mezritch said that when people face troubles, sickness or mortal danger, R'l, they all become religious. They all come to *shul*. They pray fervently. They say *Tehillim* with tears streaming down their cheeks. They give charity generously. But when things are going well, when they are going wonderfully, do they give much thought to the Almighty? - This is the test of the manna.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל



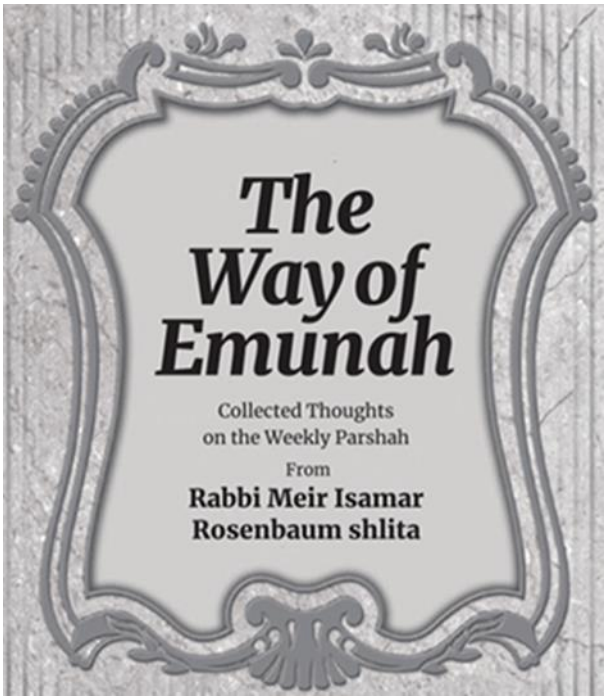
The 2nd paragraph of *Sh'ma* is in this week's parsha. **You probably know** that a person should make a commitment to keep mitzvos (*mekabel ol mitzvos*) when he says the 2nd paragraph of *Sh'ma* (Mishna Brachos 2:2).

But did you know that when a person makes a commitment - a serious, unconditional resolve - to do mitzvos, Hashem gives him new, extra strength to fulfill those mitzvos?!

Parsha Pearls

וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק - '*...and you should attach yourself to Him*...' (10:20)

Rav Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk *zt"l* in his sefer *Meshech Chochma* (Eikev, 10:20) explains that the mitzva of *d'veikus* (being attached to Hashem) is fulfilled when a person recognizes that Hashem is constantly concerned for his wellbeing and is continually taking care of him.



וַיְעַנְּךָ וַיַּרְעִבֶךָ וַיַּאֲכִלְךָ אֶת־הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעֲךָ כִּי לֹא עַל־הַלֶּחֶם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל־כָּל־מוֹצָא פִּי־ה' יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם - '***And He afflicted you and let you go hungry, and he fed you with mann… that man does not live by bread alone, but rather by, whatever comes forth from the mouth of Hashem a man lives***.' (8:3)

- **One Doesn't Live to Eat or Work**

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l explains that sone people's entire lives revolve around going to work. And they only go to work in order to earn a livelihood so that they have bread to eat. And they only eat so that they have energy to go to work. And so it goes, around and around. Their entire lives revolve around working and eating.



Regarding such people, Dovid Hamelech said (Tehillim 12:9): "Wicked men circle around as they walk." A wicked man's life revolves solely around his own physical needs. Thus, the pasuk means that "man should not live on bread alone." A person's life should not revolve around eating. Rather, a person should live to fulfil the will of Hashem, to learn Torah and keep mitzvos.

Similarly, the Gemara (Beitzah 16A) says: "How foolish are the Babylonians who eat bread with bread." - Sefer Bais Shmuel Acharon (Parshas Shemini) explains that they ate bread in order to have the energy to eat more bread. Their lives revolved around eating rather than on any higher purpose.

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ - '***And you will eat and you will be satiated and you will bless Hashem, your G-d, in the good land***…' (8:10)

- **The Only Mitzvah at Night**

A man once told the **Magid of Mezheritch zy"a** that he suffered great nisyonos every night and he could not overpower his urges.

The Magid told him to wash for bread every night so that he could recite Birchas Hamazon, as this is the only mitzvas asei d'ohraysa that one can do at night, and it would serve to protect him.

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם־לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ - '***And now, Yisroel, what does Hashem your G-d ask of you? Only to fear Hashem your G-d***…' (10:12)

- **Asking for Yiras Shomayim**

The Gemara (Brachos 33B) learns from this pasuk that "everything is in the hands of Shomayim except for yiras Shomayim."

The Kotzker Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Ohel Torah) explains this Gemara by saying that if someone asks Hashem to give him any earthly thing, He may give it and He may not. It is "in the hands of Shomayim" to decide if the request will be fulfilled. However, if one davens for yiras Shomayim, there is no doubt that it will be given to him.

"We want to live because there is always more to achieve. Every moment in this world is an opportunity to secure everlasting life in Olam Habo. – Every deed, even the smallest mitzva, holds the power of eternity; It's forever and ever." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

21 Av – The Yahrzeit of Rav Aharon of Belz Zy"a



- **The House Filled With Light**

Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy"a was married for 12 years before his son, Rav Aharon zy"a, was born in the year 5640. When he was born, the entire house filled up with light, and his grandfather, Rav Yehoshua of Belz zy"a, declared, "He will be very great and no one will be able to comprehend his greatness."

- **The Image of the Magid of Chernobyl**

Elder chasidim who saw him in his youth testified that he looked just like his ancestor, Rav Aharon of Chernobyl zy"a. His father also said the same thing.

He once was speaking about the Magid of Chernobyl when his son walked into the room and he said, "This is the spitting image of Rav Aharon Charnobyler!"

- **He Saw his Grandfather's Hands Burning**

His father related that when he was three-years-old, they were at the Pesach Seder of his grandfather, Rav Yehoshua of Belz zy"a, when the young Rav Aharon said to him, "Tatte, Zaidy's hand is burning!"

Rav Yehoshua asked Rav Yissochor Dov, "What did the boy say?"

When he told him what Rav Aharon had said, Rav Yehoshua was amazed. He took the boy on his lap, placed his hand on his head, and blessed him.

- **He Saw Eliyahu Hanavi**

His uncle, Rav Yechiel of Krilovitz zt"l (son-in-law of Rav Yehoshua of Belz zy"a) related that he was present once at the Pesach Seder when, during the recitation of Shefoch Chamascha, the young Rav Aharon turned to his grandfather and said, "Zaidy, do you see that man!"

His grandfather silenced him and said, "You don't have to say everything that you see!"

- **Protection from Hashem**

When Rav Aharon was a child, his mother would make him chicken liver to eat for lunch every day in cheder. One day, he was on his way to cheder, with his lunch in his bag, when the Rebbitzen realized that there was a shailoh on the chicken. She ran to her husband to tell him to send a message to their son not to eat the liver, as even though the p'sak was that the chicken was kosher, it may not be "glatt". - Rav Yissochor Dov calmed her by saying that there was no need to send the message.

When the child came home at the end of the day, his mother saw that the liver remained uneaten in his bag. When she asked him why he didn't eat that day, he replied that he wasn't hungry.

Hashem was clearly protecting him even at a young age!

- **The Holiness of a Sefer Torah**

When he was a child, a fire broke out in the bais medrash of his grandfather, Rav Yehoshua of Belz. Everyone ran to try to save the Sifrei Torah, and there was a lot of confusion. With all this going on, everyone was surprised to see Rav Yehoshua coming out of the burning building while carrying his young grandson, Ahrele, in his hands.

He told them, "I also saved a Sefer Torah from the fire!"

- **Shemiras Einayim**

Towards the end of his life, when he was living in Eretz Yisroel, he once looked out his window and happened to see the form of a woman outside. His face immediately turned white, and he began to tremble. He said to himself, "That's what happens when you look out the window!" He said this numerous times as his entire body shook.

The shamash tried to comfort him by telling him that the woman he saw was the Rebbitzen. However, even after he ascertained that it definitely was her, he said one more time with emotion, "That's what happens when you look out the window!"

- **His Father's Blessing**

He once accompanied his father to the vacation town of Marienbad. His father, Rav Yissochor Dov, came home a few days before him, while he stayed for a while longer at his father's request.

When Rav Yissochor Dov arrived back in Belz, Rav Aharon's son, R' Moshele hy"d, came to greet him. Rav Yissochor Dov said to him, "Why didn't you ask how your father is doing? Everyone says that your father is greater than your father's father!"

- **Accepting the Leadership**

When he accepted the role of Rebbe, he said, "My father zt"l said that he had three reasons to accept to be a Rebbe. 1. When Rav Uri of Strelisk zy"a was nifter, his sons did not want to take over, and they died very young as a result. 2. Because he knew that this was the will of his father. 3. Because he knew that the Belzer chasidim would not go to any other Rebbe.

"I also have these three reasons, as well as numerous other reasons to accept the position of leadership."

- **Defending Every Jew**

The Skverer Rebbe zy"a said: "There are other tzadikim who defend Klal Yisroel, but the Belzer Rebbe does it better than all of them.

The difference between him and them is that they say their defence out loud for specific Jews, but in their hearts, they know that they aren't saying the truth. They are like a lawyer who knows that his client is guilty but still defends him as well as he can.

The Belzer Rebbe, however, really feels that every Jew is good and innocent. He really believes that every Jew has good intentions and didn't mean to do bad."

- **Answering a Jew Like a Rambam**

He once told a Rov, "If you are learning a difficult Rambam, what do you do? You work hard to find an explanation. So too, if you know of a 'difficult Jew', you should work hard to find an explanation for his actions."

- **Defending the Doctor**

Rav Aharon suffered from eye problems and even had eye surgery before the war. Because of this, he would be examined every week by an eye doctor who would test his eye pressure. After the examination, Rav Aharon would show his respect for the doctor by sitting him down by his table and conversing with him for a short time. He would then pay him for the visit.

One winter, the doctor went on vacation in Switzerland for several weeks. When he got back, Rav Aharon asked how his vacation was, and the doctor, who was a simple Jew, told him that when he had been in the city of Basil, he had made sure to go to the "synagogue".

Before he left, he said that since Pesach was next week, he would not be coming, and he would return the week afterwards. After the doctor left, Rav Aharon said to his shamash, "The doctor is a good man! Even when he was in Switzerland, he went to 'the synagogue.' And why doesn't he want to come on Pesach? Probably because he knows that I will offer him some food but he doesn't 'mish' (eat in anyone else's house on Pesach). Even though our custom is to mish, he doesn't want to change his custom." Thus, he made the doctor

into a tzadik who made sure to daven in a shul and was strict with chumros on Pesach.

- **Mussar and Tochacha**

The middah of defending every Jew was evident even when he had to give mussar and tochacha.

On Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5697, he began his drasha before Kriyas Hatorah by saying: "It is very difficult for me to give mussar to anyone, but the Chasam Sofer said that since a Rov takes a salary from his congregation, he must say mussar when it is needed, just like a shamash of a shul must announce the times of the tefillos."

He continued, "Every Jew has an assumption of innocence. One can assume that no one means to sin, but people sometimes don't realize they are doing something wrong. Therefore, I must tell you as follows…

- **Gentle Rebuke**

He once said that his father taught him how to rebuke a Jew. It should not be done with sticks or with harsh words. Rather, it should be done gently.

- **The Yeitzer Hara Forgot About Him**

The Shinover Rov zy"a was once walking in the vacation city of Marienbad with the Rov of Unsdorf zy"a when they saw Rav Aharon, who was then 19-years-old, walking towards them. The Shinover Rov said, "Who is this young man? It seems like the yeitzer hara completely forgot about him!"

- **Never Refusing a Jew**

There was a Belzer chasid named R' Dovid Blum who was known as a big ba'al tzedakah. Every time he came to Belz, he would distribute large sums of money to all of the poor people of the town. One time, as his carriage made its way to Belz, he threw coins to the children,

and once he got there, he had no money for a "pidyon", so he asked the gabbai to lend him some money.

Rav Aharon asked him, "Why did you give away all of your money without even leaving one prutah in your wallet for the pidyon?"

He answered, "I cannot refuse a Jew!" The Rebbe repeated those words several times and then said, "A Yid who cannot refuse a Yid will always have a good life!"

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



וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם לְיִרְאָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ

And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of **you**? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to worship Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, (Devarim 10:12)

The verse says, "What does Hashem want from *you*"— in the singular. Since this verse is addressing the entire Jewish People, why would "you" not be written in plural?

The Nesivos Shalom answers this question based on the Arizal who explains that from the time of creation there have never been two people exactly the same. Accordingly, no two people have ever had the exact same purpose in life. One person's potential, strengths, weaknesses and challenges will always be different from anyone else's. Accordingly, his journey to greatness will be different than anyone else's. As such, explains the Nesivos Shalom, the verse can only say "you" in the singular because this question is unique to every individual.

We, therefore, must recognize that Hashem is asking this of us: Do

I fear Him enough? Do I walk in His ways how I should? These are not questions for the Jewish People as a whole, but for us as individuals. Therefore, as we begin Elul, we must look at ourselves as an individual— not compared to anyone around us — and realize that Hashem is asking *us* these questions.

May we merit to be able to answer confidently and truthfully in the way that is expected of us.

Vacation – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



All of you who are heading out on vacation or contemplating going on vacation, here is something fascinating that the **Chofetz Chaim** says in regards to this matter: The Chofetz Chaim asks a simple question – We say in davening everyday **וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ**. The gemara wonders why the word **לְבָבְךָ** is spelled with two **ב**'s ? Does a person have two hearts? It should be spelled **לבך** -your heart.

The gemarah says that it is spelled with two **ב**'s because yes, a person does have two hearts – the yetzer Tov and the yetzer HaRa. A person should love Hashem with his positive good inclination, and also with his evil inclination.

Everybody asks, 'I can understand why you should show love to Hashem with your Yetzer Tov, positive inclination, but to show love to Hashem with your Yetzer Hara, how is that possible, it sounds strange?'



The Chofetz Chaim says that sometimes a person needs a vacation. Sometimes, a person needs a breather – a break. They need something to break up the monotony and give them a chance to recharge their batteries. They may look at it and say, "For sure it's my Yetzer Hara. He wants to distract me from my focus in life, and he's just going to totally sidetrack me."

Says the Chofetz Chaim, "No – In that situation, if you think that it's your Yetzer Hora, - listen to him, because sometimes in life, if you just need a little bit of time for R&R, to recharge your batteries and take a moment to reflect on Cheshbon Hanefesh, to spend time talking to your spouse and kids etc. to reset your priorities in life, or maybe just to decompress.

Says the Chofetz Chaim, if you think that it's your Yetzer Hara – It's not; but even if you think it is, - embrace it.

So, to those of you who are going on vacation, embrace it, and use it to show love to Hashem in any way possible.

"To build Emunah, we must pray for everything, no matter how small. This reminds us that everything comes from Hashem, and we rely on Him for every breath, every moment of our lives." ~ Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

"Everything you ever had, everything you have now, and everything you will ever have, comes only from Hashem." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

כִּי תֹאמַר בִּלְבָבְךָ רַבִּים הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִמֶּנִּי אֵיכָה אוּכַל לְהוֹרִישָׁם

"***Perhaps you will say to yourselves, 'These nations are more numerous than us; how will we be able to drive them out?' Do not fear them... Do not stand in dread of them, for Hashem, your G-d is in your midst; a great and awesome G-d.***" (7:17-21)

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman quotes the Shelah HaKadosh who understands these verses as a cause and effect. - When the enemy nations are more numerous than us, when victory would defy all logical explanation, our only hope is to rely on Hashem entirely. It is precisely then that we are told, "Do not fear them."

The faith and trust we place in Hashem during these uncertain times will ensure our success in battle.

וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק- '...***and you should attach yourself to Him***...' (10:20)

Rav Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk zt"l in his sefer Meshech Chochma (Eikev, 10:20) explains that the mitzva of d'veikus is fulfilled when a person recognizes that Hashem is constantly concerned for his wellbeing and is continually taking care of him.

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From our Sages

לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם- *'You shall not be afraid of them.' (7:18)*

When you understand that the nations are more numerous than you, and that you, with your own power, cannot defeat them, but are totally dependent on G-d's help, then you need not fear them. But if you begin to believe that you can defeat them on your own, then you indeed have great cause for fear. (**Maasei Hashem**)

אַל־תֹּאמַר בִּלְבָבְךָ בְּצִדְקָתִי הֱבִיאַנִי - 'Speak not in your heart ... "Because of my righteousness"' *(9:4)*

Better a sinful person who knows that he has sinned, than a righteous person who knows that he is righteous. ("**The Seer of Lublin," Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz**)

Machzikei Hadass, Manchester Community weekly news-sheet written by Elozor Reich continued

Shechita (continued)

Naturally, the offer from Chief Rabbi Brodie was taken up and early in November 1954 delegations from both the Board and MH (the latter consisting of the late Dr Rottenberg, J Halpern and P Harris and, happily still with us, C J Heilpern and L D Brunner) met at the Chief Rabbi's residence in St Johns Wood. He listened carefully to both parties and said that he would give his considered views in writing.

Since Rabbi Brodie's response (dated 30 November 1954) was of considerable significance, the key section is quoted below.

".....In the light of this and speaking likewise both as Chief Rabbi and in my capacity of Chairman of the Rabbinical Commission, I solemnly ask that the Machzikei Hadass congregation desist from its expressed intention [i.e. declare unilateral independence]. It would in my view be disastrous if the Agreements of 1933 and 1936 be invalidated. On the other hand, I have to record that I was impressed by the viewpoints advanced by the representatives of the Machzikei Hadass and also by the undertakings of ... the Shechita Board to meet the requests of the M.H. as far as possible.... confirmed in a letter by its President, Councillor Samuel Davies. - It is that the Shechitah Board arrange for a special Pen to be installed for the use of the MH and that the entire salaries of the Shochet and sealer who serve the MH will be paid by the Shechitah Board....."

The MH Executive felt that the reply did not cover all the points which had been agreed at the meeting and the correspondence continued.

During the early months of 1955 there were several meetings with the Board and further exchanges with Rabbi Brodie. It became increasingly evident that a satisfactory agreement was unlikely. During that period the MH took several important steps.

1) It acquired premises in Market Place, 438 Bury New Rd at a cost of £950 for use as a Kehilla-owned butcher shop, forming "MH Butchers Ltd" for that purpose. It also entered into negotiations with Reb C.Y Klein, then in Bournemouth, to come to Manchester in order to act as manager and partner in this new venture profits.

2) It rented premises in the nearby Rigby St for use as a poultry slaughter-house.

3) It made arrangements with the Dublin Shechitah Board, (headed by Rabbi Jakobowitz, later UK Chief Rabbi, and Dayan Alony, son of Manchester's Rabbi Dubov) to slaughter cattle and sheep via an Irish wholesaler. The Shechitah in Eire was, of course, totally independent of the UK Rabbinical Commission and, as mentioned earlier, our Shochet, R' Chaim Katz, had established connections there.

Matters came to a head in September (1955). Despite a strong letter from the Chief Rabbi, which both cajoled and threatened, the MH began its own independent Shechita in Dublin, planned separate Manchester Shechita at Mode Wheel (away from the main Manchester abattoir, then situated in Water Street) and also opened its new shop in Market Place.

When the new shop opened, it was still hoped that Mr Halberstadt (until then the sole MH butcher) would stay with the MH. After much discussion and correspondence he decided that his future was best assured with the Board. Later that same month he relinquished

his MH licence and accepted Shechita Board supervision. In the heat of the schism, circulars and press statements were uttered by all three sides and a writ was issued and withdrawn. It might be added that, despite his differences with the MH Executive, Mr Halberstadt resolutely kept up his paid membership of the Kehilla.

The Shechitah Board, very unhappy with the actions of the MH, responded quickly. They attempted to cancel the slaughter licence of the MH Shochet, R' Chaim Katz. It was not clear whether they had the legal authority to do so, but they went on to get the backing of the Rabbinical Commission. R' Chaim wrote a long and heartfelt letter to that body protesting at the insult to his competence and integrity. Furthermore, he pointed out that several Shochetim employed by the Board were his pupils.

In addition, a letter (dated 29 Sep '55) arrived from the Chief Rabbi's Brodie's secretary, Michael Wallach, which included the following:

"....The Chief Rabbi has made it repeatedly clear that he would consider it disastrous if the present situation [meaning a truly independent Shechita] was allowed to continue....." He went on to invite delegations from both sides to meet once again at his residence within the next few weeks.

Since some readers will know little about Rabbi Brodie, it is only right to mention a few of his many admirable qualities. He was fair-minded, a 'Rodef Sholem' and evinced great respect for Talmidei Chachomim. If he made use of the dignity of his Office, it was either to enhance Yiddishkeit or lessen communal strife; in person he was always modest and approachable.

Before the meeting in London meeting took place, the MH called an EGM of its members. Extravagant tales and exaggerations were circulating and the Executive took the opportunity to outline the background to the dispute and describe in detail the events of the previous few weeks. These included the fact that R' Chaim Katz had

been expelled from the abattoir by the Market Police on 'Information received'.

As mentioned last week, Chief Rabbi Brodie summoned the Shechitah Board and MH delegates for another meeting. He had been prepared to travel to Manchester, but in the event it was fixed for 18 October '55 in London.

The Shechitah Board was represented by Messrs Moshe Rosentraugh, Samuel Davies, Zalman Jaffe and Harris Halpern, and the MH by H Reich, T Grosskopf, J Halpern, P Harris and L D Brunner. (It is remarkable that apart from Mr Davies, all the Board delegates had been, in earlier years, members of the MH Executive.)

After discussions lasting seven hours, provisional agreement was reached on all major points. The written protocol, with ten clauses, included an arbitration arrangement for three Rabbonim (one appointed by each side and one by Rabbi Brodie) to settle any differences in interpretation. Unfortunately, this provisional settlement was stillborn. (Although the details were supposed to remain confidential, they quickly became common knowledge.)

The first attack came from the local Kosher Butchers Association. This body controlled the supply of animals for Shechita. Seeing a threat to their price cartel, they issued a statement which included several allegations regarding the MH. The MH responded with its own statement, answering the points raised and pointing out the motives behind the stance of the Association. More importantly, a full Delegates' meeting of the Shechitah Board resulted in their repudiation of the terms agreed under Rabbi Brodie's chairmanship.

A letter to the MH from the Clerk to the Board reads, in part, "....I wish formally to inform you that after a two-day debate the Delegates of the Board overwhelmingly defeated the Honorary Officers' recommendation to approve the provisional agreement..... At a meeting of the Executive Committee this week...desire was

expressed for a further meeting with you for....re-establishing communal amity. "

This last suggestion of another Executive meeting was treated with scepticism. It was felt that any agreement reached with their Honorary Officers might again be rejected by the Delegates. - The Chief Rabbi was kept fully informed of developments and early in December yet another letter arrived from his secretary:

" ..... The Chief Rabbi has come to the conclusion...to summon the Shechitah Board and the Machzikei Hadass to appear before him and for him to give a decision....he would.....even be prepared to travel to Manchester. ..... essential that the representatives of both sides should have full authority from their respective bodies to submit to a decision given by the Chief Rabbi....."

[I was unable to continue this series due to pressure from those who felt uncomfortable.]



In the Judean hills in the Judean desert just outside Jerusalem, there was a unit of Israeli soldiers that went deep into the desert to chase the whole chevra that was making trouble. Somehow, two soldiers got separated from the rest of their unit. They got lost among the sand dunes on top of a sand mountain.

In the summer, the temperature can reach 140-150 degrees. They were exposed, lost, and literally dying of thirst and cooking to death. They had finished their remaining water, and they started to get

sick with fever and begin to hallucinate. They are lying there hoping that someone from their unit will find them and rescue them.

One of them is beginning to fall asleep. His friend crawls to the edge





of the sand dune, and he looks down, and there is a miracle. – There is a lake at the bottom of the mountain! – "Chaim, get up, Hashem made a miracle, were saved, we have water! There is a lake in the middle of the desert for us!"

Chaim says, "What are you talking about? You're just imagining it, it's only a mirage. Don't fall for it, don't believe it, it's not water, it's sand."

"No Chaim, it's really there, we have to go down. Hashem made a miracle."

And Chaim is thinking to himself, 'If we go down to the bottom of the sand dune, we'll never make it back up, and we'll never be rescued. How am I going to stop my friend from going down to certain death?'

So, this brilliant Israeli soldier tells his friend, "Okay, okay, I will come with you, but before we go down, please take another look at the lake. Today it is very sunny and there are no clouds in the sky, and the sun is beating down. Look at the water and tell me if you see the reflection of the sun and the blue sky in the water. Because if it's really water, the water reflects."

So, the other soldier takes another look down, and says, "Chaim – somethings wrong! I don't see the sun. I don't see the blue sky – I just see the water!"



"Chaim, I'm telling you that it's not water, it's only a mirage. Water reflects, sand doesn't."

He looks again this time more closely, and he confirms that this lake of water does not have any reflection.

He says, "Of course it has no reflection – it's not water, it's sand!"

And he keeps his friend up on the top of the sand dune. An hour later, a helicopter found them and rescued them.

***

I was fascinated by the way Chaim was so smart, and I learned an important lesson from his story:

Any decision that you have to make, and you're not sure if it's the correct one, think about what you're about to do, and say, "Do I see the reflection of Hashem in what I'm about to do?" – If you don't see G-d in your decision, - It's only sand! It's Satan! It's evil. If it's not what Hashem wants – it's wrong!

"Our deeds are the medicine by which the world heals itself. It's not size or quantity that matters. Just one small, good deed and everything could fall in place. - Which deed will that be?

It could be any one of them. Whatever you can do, do it believing that this is the one to tip the scales. ~Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)



◣ Always And Forever - Reb Yitzchak of Vorka

כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת - "*All the commandment which I shall command you today, you shall keep them to perform*..." (8:1)

This verse means today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, always, everywhere, in every place, and in every corner.

◣ Always And Forever - Reb Yitzchak of Vorka

וּבְקָרְךָ וְצֹאנְךָ יִרְבְּיֻן וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבֶּה־לָּךְ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־לְךָ יִרְבֶּה. וְרָם לְבָבֶךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ - "*Your cattle and sheep will increase, and you will amass much silver and gold. Everything you have will increase; beware lest your heart becomes haughty, and you forget your G-d*..." (8:13-14)

An abundance of money is like having too much blood. Too much blood is detrimental, especially if something impure should enter the bloodstream. With too much money, something impure may also get mixed in, such as fraud, theft, or cheating. The remedy for too much blood is bloodletting.

For the overabundance of money, the same remedy is required, such as giving to a needy cause. - Without a remedy, "your heart will become haughty, and you will forget Hashem, your G-d."

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

The Empty Plot



Going to a *shiva* visit, one hopes to bring some comfort and *chizuk* to the *aveilim*, and one sometimes also hears aspects of the *niftar's* life which one didn't know about, even if one was a close friend.

When I heard that Reb Yossi Poznanski, a local Mancunian, was niftar and was being taken to Gateshead for *kevurah*, I was intrigued as to the circumstances. At the *shiva* one of his brothers said that the request by the *niftar,* to be buried in Gateshead was only made within hours of his passing. This request was somewhat of a surprise to the close family, but as arrangements were being made for the *levayah*, the following story emerged.

Around 35 years ago, a 16-year-old boy from Gateshead who was on vacation in Manchester for a few days drowned in a swimming accident. That boy was Nosson Zvi Rakow, the son of the Rav Bezalel Rakow, zt"l, the Rov of Gateshead. He was buried in the Hazlerigg Beis Olam - Newcastle Jewish cemetery, in the section used by the Gateshead *kehillah.*

Years later, during Rav Rakow's final illness (2003), he made a request of the *kehillah.* He and his Rebbitzen had planned to be buried in Eretz Yisroel, and when they had both passed away, they wanted Nosson Zvi to be reinterred in Eretz Yisroel alongside them.

The community had every intention of fulfilling their Rav's wish, but it seemed impossible. The logistics were very complicated, and it was quite expensive. The months ticked by, and nothing was done. Nobody seemed to know where to get started.

Just a few years ago, not long after the *Rebbitzen's pertirah* in 2020, there was a funeral at the Newcastle cemetery, and for no apparent reason, Nosson Tvi Rakow's *matzeivah* suddenly toppled over. One of the visitors was trapped under the stone, and they had to call Hatzalah to extricate him.

"Maybe," someone suggested, "this is a sign that we need to try to do what the Rav asked."

The Gateshead *kehillah* resolved to do whatever was necessary to keep their promise. The campaign was spearheaded by Yossi Poznanski, who had been a classmate of Nosson Tvi's. Through his tireless efforts and the generosity of the community and everyone who had known the Rakows, they managed to raise the money they needed.

Just before the COVID pandemic, the *meis* was disinterred, flown to Eretz Yisroel and buried besides his parents on Har Ha'menuchois. It was a bittersweet victory.

Since then, the *kever* in Newcastle lay empty.

The *Dayan Ha'emes* works in ways that we do not understand; He works in ways that we do not understand. Yossi Poznanski was lying in bed in his final days, and as he became weaker, his thoughts turned to the scenario that no one wants to contemplate – his death.

"I want to be buried next to my parents," he said. He was adamant on this point. Once his siblings were no longer around, Yossi still wanted his parents' *kevarim* to receive visitors, and if he were buried there, that was more likely to happen. - There was just one hitch in this plan. Yossi's parents were buried in Newcastle, in the old section of the cemetery, where there were no more plots available.

Except one.

Two places down from Yossi Poznanski's parents there was an empty plot, formerly the resting place of Nosson Tzi Rakow. The Rakow family had held onto it, hesitant to relinquish the plot. The old section of the cemetery was greatly revered; places there were not to be given up for just anyone.

But if anyone deserved the spot, it was Yossi – the man who had been the driving force behind Nosson Tzi's reburial, investing so much of his precious time and energy in caring for his deceased childhood friend. Of course, the Rakows acceded to his request.

Three weeks ago, Yossi Poznanski z"l was brought to *kever Yisroel* in the old section of the Newcastle cemetery, near his parents. He was laid to rest in the one remaining plot, the one that he himself had made available. In fulfilling Rav Rakow's dying request, he had created the means to fulfil his own.

The *mitzvos* that we do when someone is *niftar – taharah,* burial, organising the funeral and the *shivah* house – are known as *chesed shel emes* for a simple reason: we do them without expecting anything in return. They are the truest, most sincere form of kindness. After all, the dead cannot repay our efforts. - **but Hashem can.**

A Rov who heard this story at the shiva house commented, "it's a mitzvah to publicise this story."

ויהי זיכרו ברוך

Good Shabbos.

"We should feel deeply grateful to hashem for his countless acts of kindness, many of which are beyond our ability to comprehend, reflecting the infinite care of our creator." ~ Sefer Pele Yoetz.

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Keep on Fighting!



This week's Parsha begins, **וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן** – "***If you will listen to Hashem with your heel.***"

This sounds very strange. It's possible to be attentive and to listen with one's ears but how can someone listen with his heel? What precisely does this mean? This is also the only Parsha that is named for a part of the body. What is the special significance of the heel?

My father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita explained based on the **Chidushei Harim** that anatomically the heel is the endpoint, the lowest and furthest part of the human body. The heel is also a contradiction in terms. The heel is the thickest and hardest part of the entire body. It has the most connective tissue. Yet proportionally the heel has more nerve endings than any other part of the body – it's the most sensitive part of the body.

How does this relate to us and why does Hashem tell us to listen with our heel?

The Chidushei Harim says that the heel represents us – the generation of Jews that will live at the times right before Moshiach. The heel represents the generation that is at the bottom – the most distant and removed from Sinai. The generation that is the most surrounded by temptation and corruption. It's this generation, the "heel" generation that despite all odds will listen to Hashem, stay away from immorality and indecency, and instead cling tenaciously

and persistently to Hashem. They will be the ones who will make the greatest impact. They will bring Moshiach! This generation is the generation we are living in right now! We are at the brink of Moshiach – he's around the corner!

It's hard to stay strong but we must remember that we Jews are the heel. We may feel thickened and hardened. We may feel that it's almost impossible to feel the spirituality. But like the heel, we are the most sensitive – the most sensitive to holiness. It is us who will bring Moshiach if we despite all odds listen to Hashem with our heel and keep His commandments, even though it's hard. We will be the ones to bring Moshiach! We have so many temptations but so many opportunities! Let's bring Moshiach.

In 1941, **Rav Mendele Vishover** was lying on his deathbed. His nephew, **Rav Yidele Horowitz of Dzhikov**, was visiting him in the hospital when the doctor entered the room and asked the Vishover how he was feeling. The Rebbe looked up and responded, " Thank G-d I am feeling fine. The pain has subsided."

When Rav Yidele heard this, he breathed a sigh of relief. The doctor, however, gasped and his face turned pale. Rav Yidele looked at the doctor in concern. "What's wrong? Isn't this good news? The Rabbi doesn't have pain anymore! Quietly, the doctor explained to Rav Yodel that the disease is still there, and it didn't gone away. As long as the body is fighting the disease, it's going to hurt. The pain one feels is from his body fighting. However, if there is no more pain that means that the body has given up. A few hours later the Vishover sadly passed away.

The lesson of the story is as follows: We must realize that temptation is normal. At times we may fall. We are human. However, as long as we meet our challenges, and it's painful, we know that we are alive and fighting. Falling does not signify weakness – it signifies strength. When we fall, the pain we endure is a sign of life. It means that we care and that we are fighting. It means that we are striving

to do what is good and that we haven't given up. It means that we possess holiness and greatness. Even if we fall, we have to get up. Even though we are the generation of the heel, living in this world full of temptation and desire, let's not give up. Let's stay strong. Let's persevere and continue fighting. This way we will win and bring Moshiach!

Being Jewish n' Joyful

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁכֹחַ תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ וְהָלַכְתָּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים

In this week's Parsha the Torah commands us not to follow other gods and that Hashem is One (Devarim 8:19). The Medrash says that the word וְהָיָה refers to joy. What joy could there possibly be in forgetting Hashem?

The Kotzker Rebbe says a phenomenal thought: This verse can be understood by dividing these words differently. If you forget to be in a state of joy, that is you forget the vehaya which refers to joy, this will cause you to forget Hashem. If someone lacks joy, he will find it difficult to appreciate Hashem. Joy is one of the forty-eight ways to acquire the Torah. Lack of joy leads to many faults and difficulties. When in a state of joy, you have a greater appreciation for Hashem and all that He has given you (**Rav Zelig Pliskin shlita**).

Rav Avrohom Pam zt"l famously used to say, "***The city of happiness is in the state of mind***"! We must be Jewish and Joyful! We must be in love with the one above! Happiness in life is achieved when there is growth. When one develops as a person in his relationship with Hashem, with others, and with himself, one feels a deep sense of fulfillment.

On the other hand, when one remains stagnant and does not experience growth in any significant way, unhappiness often sets in. Keep on growing. Keep on striving to become the greatest you can be. We must work on being a Jew and proud – heeding to all that

Hashem commands us. We must be happy! At times this is extremely hard and may seem like a daunting task but by working on it is quite possible to overcome this challenge.

There is a story about one who overcame his hardships and served Hashem with his whole heart and soul: Near **Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l's** home there lived two families that kept Shabbos with *mesiras nefeh* . The men of those families were fired every Monday morning, because they refused to go to work on Shabbos, and their families were starving. (In that time most businesses and factories operated on Shabbos and those who didn't go to work on Shabbos were fired from their job and it was extremely hard to find a new one).

One of those families raised children who grew up and kept mitzvos, while the children of the other family tragically all abandoned Judaism. The father whose children catastrophically left the path of Torah, poured out his heart to Rav Moshe: "How did this happen to me? I kept Shabbos with tremendous sacrifice, just like my neighbor. Why did all of the other man's children come out fine and observant, while mine didn't?"

Rav Moshe answered: "Your neighbor came home happy every Friday and said, 'Children, Baruch Hashem this Shabbos, we will be *moser nefesh*! We will make an incredible sacrifice! Let's make Kiddush and thank Hashem for the sacrifice that we are offering on his behalf."

Rav Moshe continued, "Even though it was incredibly hard for the other man's family, the children felt a tremendous thrill – they fully recognized the enormous privilege that it is to keep Shabbos. They knew it was worthwhile to keep Shabbos, even when it entailed self-sacrifice. You, on the other hand, went home broken, sighing with bent shoulders, and said 'Who knows what will happen to us? I'll lose my job again because of Shabbos – we will have no money; we will have no food…'

Your children thought and understood that Shabbos was the cause of your problems, and they wondered, 'Who needs Shabbos? Our

poor father was raised to keep Shabbos. But why should we suffer as he does?' The children stopped keeping mitzvahs preferring the so-called easy life over the struggle to keep Torah and mitzvos.

We must have a love and special joy for Yiddishkeit, instilling this thought into children at a young age. We must be *Jewish and Joyful* following and embracing Hashem's Torah and Mitzvos!

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Blessing That Led to Blessing

The coronavirus pandemic brought a number of challenges to the doorsteps of families all over the world, many related to parnassah. It's hard enough to earn a livelihood, but when COVID-19 struck, the struggle became even harder. Here is one story recently published in the United States that took place during this period, followed by some simple advice that will help a person overcome similar crises. The story is told by the person to whom it happened.

Before it all happened, I earned an income as a violin player, either playing with a symphony or solo, and I brought home a respectable income to provide for my family. But with the onset of Covid-19, people could no longer make large weddings, fundraising dinners were canceled, and I was left without work.

Day by day our savings dwindled and our worries increased. Then I remembered hearing about a certain segulah for parnassah: saying Birkas Hamazon from inside a bentcher with kavanah. I decided to take on this practice and felt in my heart that this was an auspicious time and that it would open new doors to providing for my family. Of course, I thought it would take time to see any results, but it happened sooner than I could have imagined.

During this period, the mayor of New York decided to close all the shuls. We followed the example of our brothers in Eretz Yisrael, and people on the same street davened "together" from their own

porches or yards, or by standing at their open front door. I lived in an area where several houses were in close proximity to each other, so we organized a small minyan, making sure to comply with the Health Department's protocols.

On Shabbos, the members of our shul used to eat seudah shlishis together, and we wanted to continue the tradition. It was decided that everyone would eat the seudah at home, and then we would gather in one person's backyard, eat a kezayis of bread, sing zemiros, and bentch together over a cup of wine.

It was the first Shabbos after I had decided to be more conscientious about saying Birkas Hamazon inside. Everyone else had finished bentching, but I was taking my time, saying the words slowly and with concentration. Since we had exactly enough men to form a minyan, everyone else had to wait for me to finish bentching to daven Ma'ariv. When we finished davening, one of the men came over to me and told me how impressed he was at the way I bentched.

I explained to him how this came about, how my parnassah had been affected by the pandemic, and how I'd decided to take on this segulah to be scrupulous about bentching inside with kavanah, hoping I would merit a yeshuah as a result.

After I told him about my resolution, I noticed a gleam in his eyes. "This is amazing!" he said. "I just thought of a great idea that will help you. Let me go home and make Havdalah, and then I'll call you and tell you the details."

I went home, my thoughts whirling and my heart swelling with hope, and I sent a little prayer to Heaven with a request for siyata d'Shmaya that my neighbor's idea would work out.

About an hour later, the phone rang. It was my neighbor, who said enthusiastically, "Your segulah worked! Listen, I work in a nursing home and assisted living facility. Recently, the owner of the facility, an ehrliche and caring Yid, was lamenting about how lonely the

residents are, unable to receive visitors for fear of contracting the virus. When I heard what you do, I decided to suggest to him that he make use of your talents and hire you to play for the elderly residents and cheer them up. "As soon as I finished making Havdalah, I called him, and he liked the idea. He would like to hire you to play in his facilities-he owns three- and have you go from room to room and play your violin for them. He'll compensate you well."

It's been several weeks since I started my new job. Not only am I able to earn an income, but the work is so fulfilling. When I see the residents of the nursing homes light up and tell me I've "brought them back to life," it fills me with joy. I get to do what I love while earning merit for the world of eternity.

Yesterday, the nursing-home owner told me that even when things return to normal (let's hope it's very soon!), he'll want me to continue playing for him on a regular basis.

All because of the segulah I resolved to take on, and I recommend it to everyone. It's a tried-and-true segulah that has proven itself for generations, as the Or Zarua himself attests, having received this tradition from his own rebbeim.

A Wedding in Baltimore

The drive from Monsey to Baltimore takes about three or four hours, but the route is quick and flat, with plenty of rest stops along the way if needed, so the drive is fairly comfortable. One can stop and fill the car with

gas, pick up some groceries, or eat a meal at a fast-food restaurant. Some rest stops even have public parks nearby where one can stroll and the kids can play.

Dovid, who lives with his family in Monsey, left at close to noon for the drive to Baltimore. It was a familiar drive for Dovid, who has relatives living in Baltimore's thriving frum community, and he

frequently visits there with his wife and kids. This time they were going to Baltimore to attend a cousin's chasunah.

They left in plenty of time to arrive before the chuppah and stay for a long while before they had to drive back to Monsey.

They they'd already been driving more than two and half hours when Waze informed them that they had another hour and forty minutes to go. The traffic was heavy, and he decided to pull into the next rest stop to refresh themselves and grab a bite before the second leg of their journey.

From the trunk they pulled out a backpack prepared for exactly this occasion, filled with sandwiches and bottles of water. One of the children volunteered to find a sink where they could wash netilas yadayim. But it was getting late, and Dovid suggested that after they washed and said hamotzi, they should eat their sandwiches in the car and bentch on the way.

They washed, ate a kezayis of bread, and then piled back into the car. Several minutes later, when everyone had finished eating and they were ready to bentch, they realized they had forgotten to bring a siddur or bentchers with them.

Dovid told them to search the car because he was very scrupulous about bentching only from a siddur or bentcher. But this time there seemed they had no choice; there was no bentcher to be found. Dovid and his family had resolved to only bentch from a bentcher for a while now. Could it be that now they'd be forced to break this resolution?

One of the children piped up and said that he remembered learning that when a person finds himself in a place without access to a siddur or bentcher, it's proper for him to write out all the words of Birkas Hamazon and then bentch by reading the words he just wrote down.

Dovid stopped on the shoulder, got some pens and paper from the glove compartment, and the older children happily volunteered to

write down Birkas Hamazon. Each one took a different brachah. Within a few minutes they had Birkas Hamazon written out in full.

By the time everyone had finished bentching, they could see Baltimore on the horizon, and the whole family smiled in satisfaction. It wasn't every day one had the opportunity to make a sacrifice for such an important mitzvah.

Dovid pushed the car to the speed limit. Everyone was excited about their imminent arrival, even though the time the chuppah was called for had come and gone.

Suddenly there was a loud bang, accompanied by a thump and the sound of shattering glass.

It took a few seconds to absorb that they'd been involved in a serious car accident. Dovid and his wife turned around in horror but were relieved to see that everyone was all right. They managed to get themselves untangled from their seat belts, and out of the car, and only when standing on the side of the road, did they allow themselves to look around and realized the truly wondrous miracle they had just experienced.

Five cars had been involved in the pileup-the two cars in front of them and the two cars behind them. Their car should have absorbed the brunt of the crash, but incredulously, none of their car's passengers were injured.

And if that weren't astounding enough, the four other cars were totaled, while their car, though somewhat dented, could still be driven. While they were standing there in wonder, Hatzolah arrived and rescued at least ten people from the four other cars involved in the accident, each injured to varying degrees. Two of them were transported immediately to the hospital in critical condition. There was nothing for Dovid and his family to do but stand there and say mizmor l'sodah together for their miraculous yeshuah.

It was obvious to them that they'd merited this open miracle in the merit of their efforts just a few minutes before to ensure that they kept to their practice of bentching inside with kavanah. Later, when they had recovered from the trauma they had experienced, Dovid recalled the explicit guarantee of the Ateres Zekeinim (Orach Chaim 185:1) in the name of the earlier sages:

"Anyone who says Birkas Hamazon with kavanah, neither ire nor rage or fury will have dominion over him."

Disposable Income

It was a hot summer afternoon. Nachum was sitting in his air-conditioned office in a Manhattan skyscraper. He was doing some paperwork that didn't require much concentration, and while his hands kept busy, his mind roamed in sublime realms.

Nachum was an upstanding Jew, and he tried to make the most of every moment. As long as his mind was free to focus on other things than work, he would listen to shiurim and divrei Torah. Kol HaLashon and similar services made thousands of wonderful shiurim available, and Nachum took advantage of this to grow in his avodas Hashem.

The month of Elul was coming to an end, and the speaker Nachum chose that day inspired his listeners to take on a resolution for the forth-coming new year.

"It's enough if you take on a small kabbalah, something you will be able to stick with without getting lax about it through summer and winter, Shabbos and weekday.

"It doesn't have to be something big or dramatic," the speaker said. Such a resolution could change a person at his essence and strengthen his relationship with his Creator."

Nachum listened, and the words penetrated the recesses of his heart. He turned off the shiur and started to think.

What small kabbalah can I take on that I will definitely be able to keep? he asked himself. No sooner did he think it than he remembered another talk he had heard a while ago about the amazing virtue of bentching with kavanah using a bentcher, something that would bring a person abundant parnassah.

Nachum decided that this would be a most fitting kabbalah for the approaching Yamim Nora'im. From that moment onward, Nachum was scrupulous to wash for bread and afterward to bentch slowly with kavanah, only from a bentcher or siddur. It was a kabbalah that wasn't too difficult to take on, and he felt that in the merit of this practice, he would see blessing in his work.

Several years later, Nachum found himself in dire financial straits. His expenses had grown and surpassed his earnings. He needed an influx of income-and quickly. He called a friend, a man of means, and told him about his predicament.

"I have to tell you", his friend said, "it's providential that you called me today. I was just offered a rare business opportunity: I have the chance to purchase a thriving medical equipment company for a great price. I thought I'd have to turn it down because I don't have time to deal with everything involved in handling the deal. It seems to me that you're just the right man to fill in the missing piece of the puzzle. I'm prepared to invest half the amount of the purchase price. You put together the second half, and I'll give you the job of managing the company, along with a generous salary, of course."

Nachum was quite familiar with the field of medical equipment and realized that this opportunity had been handed to him on a silver platter from Heaven. He quickly managed to borrow the funds to cover his half of the deal, and within a few days he had become a full partner in the company. He became the company's CEO and started to earn a respectable income.

He felt that Hashem had taken care of him just when he needed it in the merit of his diligence in reciting Birkas Hamazon from a

bentcher with kavanah. He was so successful that eventually he offered to buy out his partner and become full owner of the company.

Another six months passed.

One sunny day he received an email that gave him a shock. It was from the manager of a large factory in China that manufactured medical equipment.

The email read: The million boxes of disposable gloves that you ordered are ready. Please transfer the payment immediately so that the shipment can be delivered as soon as possible.

Nachum rubbed his eyes as if he couldn't believe what he was reading. "A million boxes?" he muttered. "Didn't I order a hundred thousand?" He immediately wrote back to the factory manager that there had been an error, and he had ordered only a hundred thousand boxes. But the Chinese wholesaler sent him the order form on which it said, very clearly, that they had requested a million boxes of gloves.

Nachum found himself shaking. It was true. It had been his error. He had mistakenly added an extra zero to the order. What would he do with a million boxes of disposable gloves? And how would he pay for them? Nachum started soliciting loans and managed to pay the immense sum. But now he was left to deal with the merchandise.

I won't bore you with the many disappointments that Nachum encountered trying to offload the gloves. Even when he reduced the price to below wholesale, he couldn't find a buyer. The debts weighed on him, aside from the fee he was paying just to warehouse the gloves.

Meanwhile, he strengthened his commitment to bentching inside with kavanah. Since he needed an immediate yeshuah, he decided to add to his kabbalah and start washing even for dinner so that he could say Birkas Hamazon another time daily.

A couple months later, in the winter of 2020, rumors started of a mysterious virus that originated in China. Nachum, busy with his personal problems, didn't pay the rumors much attention, thinking they had nothing to do with him. Then the rumors became fact, and the world was dealing with a pandemic. The World Health Organization initiated the thinking that the virus primarily spread through touch.

Among the protocols was the requirement for every individual to wear a face mask and gloves, with steps to control the spread of the virus. Suddenly, overnight, the disposable gloves that only a few weeks before he'd been begging everyone to take off his hands for a laughable price became a precious commodity. Now they were calling and begging him for them. China had stopped manufacturing goods due to the pandemic, and there was a shortage of disposable gloves.

Nachum's phone didn't stop ringing. Retailers from all over the world begged him to sell them boxes and had his choice of high bidders. He ended up selling the gloves for ten times the price he had paid for them. He turned into a millionaire overnight!

"I saw firsthand," Nachum concludes, "how my extra efforts in saying Birkas Hamazon with kavanah brought me enormous blessings. Even when I was crumbling under the burden of debt because of the terrible mistake I made when I placed that order, it became clear to me that it wasn't a mistake at all but a vehicle for bringing me immense wealth."

"Shabbos is not a pause from the week; it is the pinnacle of the week. - The days leading up to Shabbos are like steps ascending to the throne of the King." ~ Rabbi Yehuda Halevi (1080-1141).

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Thoughts for the Holiday period

The **שולחן ערוך** says **אורח חיים הלכות קריאת שמע סימן עא סעיף ה**

החופר קבר למת פטור – ***'If someone is digging a grave for a מת, he is פטור from saying Shema.'*** This is because of the concept of **העוסק במצוה פטור מן המצוה**.

The **משנה ברורה** says something amazing: **פטור - אפילו בשעת נוחו מעט שגם אז נקרא עדיין עוסק במצוה שעי"ז יתחזק כוחו לחזור ולחפור** – Even if he takes a small break, it is still considered as though he is being **עוסק במצוה** and is therefore exempt from **קריאת שמע**, because the resting is part of the Mitzvoh.

The implication is that if a person goes away on holiday in order to recharge the batteries, so that they can learn and keep a life of Torah & Mitzvos, then the very holidaying itself is a Mitzvah.

A young mother once asked **Rav Scheinberg** a question: Her children were very young, and they were waking up very early in the morning. She was busy all day from 5 am in the morning. By the time she had sorted them all out, she reckoned that from 11am – 11.15 she had time for a short break before she had to move on to the next part of the day.

How should she utilize these 15 minutes? Should she daven or say Tehillim?

Rav Scheinberg told her to put her feet up and have a cup of coffee and relax! Because that is what you need to become the best mother that you can be.

The Rambam in **הלכה ג הלכות דעות פרק ג** iterates this point:

A person who lives a healthy lifestyle with his sole intention that his entire body and limbs be healthy and strong, that he can live a Torah life. **הַמְהַלֵּךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ זוֹ כָּל יָמָיו עוֹבֵד אֶת ה' תָּמִיד** - For it is impossible to understand and become knowledgeable in the wisdoms when one is starving or sick, or when one of his limbs pains him.

Thus, whoever lives a healthy lifestyle, everyday he will be serving Hashem constantly. Even when he sleeps, if he retires with the intention that his mind and body rest, lest he take ill and be unable to serve Hashem because he is sick, then his sleep is service to the Omnipresent, blessed be He.

Any downtime is considered as serving Hashem - **וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יִהְיוּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם - (משנה אבות ב יב)**



- **The Good Life**

When the Am Yisroel finally passed over the Yarden into Eretz Canaan, we can't imagine how great was their happiness at the sight of such a beautiful land. Especially for a nation that had been traveling in the desert wilderness it was an enthralling sight: "Hashem your G-d is bringing you to a good land … a land of wheat, barley, grape, fig and pomegranate; a land of oil-olives and honey-dates (Eikev 8:7-8). They had just entered into the most delightful country in the world.

Imagine you would read the literature of a travel agency that's describing the attractions of a certain country: "Enjoy the shade of the beautiful palm trees and delightful beaches while basking in the

perfect weather," and whatever else it is that they write there. Of course, it's all garbage; everything is exaggerated so that you'll be fooled into parting with your hard-earned money. When you get there you find that they have the biggest mosquitoes and the ugliest bed bugs too.

But let's imagine for a moment that the description is true – you must know that whatever you'll find in that place, it still wouldn't equal the virtues of Eretz Yisroel when the Am Yisroel entered in the days of Yehoshua.

- **Milk And Honey**

You must understand what Eretz Yisroel was! Don't judge by what you see today even in the most cultivated place – that's nothing compared to what it was in the days of old. The dates and figs were so large and luscious and bursting with honey that wherever you walked, you had to be careful not to step into pools of date and fig honey. And the land was crisscrossed with grazing flocks whose udders were dripping milk — there weren't enough hands to milk them — and the overflowing milk mingled with the pools of honey everywhere. It was literally a land flowing with milk and honey.

It was a remarkable thing that lasted for many years! Even in the latter days, long after the *churban* of the second Beis Hamikdash this was still a phenomenon in Eretz Yisroel (Kesubos 111b). But when they first came to the land, when it was at its best, it was unimaginable. It was truly the *Eretz Chemdah,* the land of delight.

And that's what Hashem told the Am Yisroel as they were about to enter into the land: **... וּבָאתֶם וִירִשְׁתֶּם אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה אֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבָשׁ** – *You will come now and inherit the land that you are passing into … a land flowing with milk and honey* (ibid.11: 8—9).

- **The Fly In The Ointment**

But then, right away, Hashem added one thing – He explained that there's one difference between Eretz Yisroel and other lands: **כִּי**

הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בָא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ – *But this land where you're coming to inherit now,* **לֹא כְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** – *it's not like Eretz Mitzrayim;* **לְמָטַר הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתֶּה מָּיִם** – *because here you're going to drink water from the rain of the heaven.*

What is He saying? That Eretz Yisroel is different from other lands. You know, in Mitzrayim they didn't need rain. The Nile river flowed all year round and it was distributed by irrigation canals to all the rest of the country – all the water you wanted you had. In Bavel too, they didn't need rain; *al naharos Bavel sham yashavnu.* They had the Tigris and the Euphrates, great rivers that supplied their abundance all year round.

But Eretz Yisroel didn't have that. There were some rivers, but it wasn't nearly enough; they needed rain from heaven in order to survive. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu made sure they knew that as soon as they came into the land. "Eretz Yisroel is going to be different than Egypt," He said to them, "Here you won't have the luxury of an abundant river – instead you'll be dependent on the unpredictable rain of the heavens."

- **Amazon in Eretz Yisroel**

Now, that's a big *kasheh.* Hakodosh Boruch Hu planned Eretz Yisroel for our people after all, so why didn't He supply a huge river with an abundance of water? It's not like we think that it was an accident; that it just turned out that there's no big river in Eretz Yisroel. Oh no! It was the Hand of Hashem that created the Amazon, the Mississippi, the Nile and the Euphrates. Hashem made those rivers; He decided where to place them and He could have done the same thing in Eretz Yisroel. He could have made it that the Yarden flowed from a tremendous drainage basin and it would have been a powerhouse like the Nile. Why not?

And the answer is right there in the words of Hashem: "I'm intentionally making it that way; **לְמָטַר הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתֶּה מָּיִם** – *You'll drink from the rain of Shomayim.*" It means you'll have to raise your eyes

to the Heavens and beg for rain. Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted us always to be reminded of *shomayim*, of the necessity to raise our eyes to Him.

- **Benefit of Poverty**

Farmers, you know, are always looking up at the sky. They need rain and that's one of the things that can't be supplied by the government; you can't order clouds from Washington. Sometimes they have artesian wells or irrigation ditches, but in most cases the farmer turns his eyes up to the clouds, "Will it rain?"

And as he looks out and sees a cloud coming, it's not always the kind of cloud he wanted. A cloud of locusts are coming. Ooh! All the months of hard work in the fields might go to feed the locusts! And so the wise farmer is always looking higher than the clouds. He falls down on his knees and he entreats Hakodosh Boruch Hu for help. The farmer thinks more about Hashem than a city worker because he is subject to forces that are in most cases beyond his control (See Kiddushin 82a).

And that's why there was no great river in Eretz Yisroel – Hakodosh Boruch Hu created the features of the land for the perfection of the people that would dwell there and a huge river would be too much of a test because they'd forget about Hashem. And that's why Eretz Yisroel with all of its *maalos*, all of the benefits it had, it also had this disadvantage. Even the most delightful land, the *eretz chemda tovah u'rechava* was measured out with an exactitude in order to benefit the Am Yisroel.

"The Jewish people are an eternal flame. You can try to smother it, but it will always reignite. Faith is our oxygen, and as long as we hold onto it, we will never be extinguished." ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821)



Torah and Tefillah From the Heart

In Parashas Eikev, the verse states (Devarim 11:13), "And if you listen attentively to My mitzvos that I am commanding you today .. to serve Hashem, your G-d with all your hearts...." **The Sifri** gives two applications for service with all of our hearts: tefillah and Torah study.

Tefillah is understandable a service of the heart, as we are expected to put feeling into our prayers. However, Torah study would appear to be a service of the mind. How can Torah be a service of the heart as well?

The Slonimer Rebbe explains that we certainly learn Torah with our minds, but the process should not stop there. Torah should bring us closer to Hashem. The Sifri states (in Rashi, Devarim 6:6), "How does one [come to] love Hashem? Through Torah!" Torah study is not merely mental gymnastics. Poring over a subject using all of our mental faculties introduces Hashem's will to both our minds and our hearts.

Many people make the mistake of putting a lot of effort into Torah, but almost none into perfecting their tefillah. Others, though perhaps not as many, make tefillah the focus of their service to Hashem, but do not devote much time to growth in Torah. Neither way is the proper one. When we devote the proper efforts to both Torah and tefillah, each strengthens the other.

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, Rosh Yeshivas Mir, was known for his efforts always to daven in yeshivah. Even when he was out of Yerushalayim for a few days, he often traveled back to the yeshivah

just to daven there, returning to his out-of-town location right after davening. This was in spite of his precarious health.

Still, Rav Nosson Tzvi was never famous for his davening. He is most known for the tremendous devotion that he applied to his learning and that of his students. A story is told of a long trip that he once made to the branch of Mir Yeshivah located in Brachfeld. He was so exhausted that, though he tried to speak for a while, he found that he was unable to give the shiur. In a shaky hand, he wrote on a piece of paper: Nissiti. Selichah. (I tried. I'm sorry.)

Rav Nosson Tzvi put his heart and soul into both his davening and his learning. We can learn from him never to compromise our learning for the sake of our davening, nor our davening for the sake of our learning.

May we be *zocheh* to serve Hashem with all our hearts, in both Torah and tefillah!

Rabbi Shlomo Landau – The Compassion cost?!?!

I'm not sure if any of you have had this experience, but I have noticed as of recent, that there are certain high-level individuals who are impossible to get a hold of. You call them, you text them, you try to get hold of their secretary, you e-mail them – and they are not responsive. I'm sure it's not malicious, they're probably just too busy to acknowledge every single person who calls them.

But what is somewhat surprising is the fact that those same individuals before they became high-level, were extremely accessible. And it's frustrating if you are trying to get through to them.

A few months ago, I was sitting with my grandfather [Mr David Rothschild of Zurich] and I asked him, "How come in Birchas Hamozon after **וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם** we ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu… **הוּא יְיַטִיב לָנוּ... לְחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים** - '***He will reward us with favor,***

kindness, and compassion'. And then we continue and say **וְרַחֲמִים**, **וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם** – '***compassion, life, peace***.'

We have already asked for compassion, why are we asking for **רַחֲמִים** again?

My grandfather gave me a great answer.

He said, "The first compassion (**רַחֲמִים**) is asking Hashem for mercy. But between the two **רַחֲמִים**'s we also ask Hashem for **פַּרְנָסָה וְכַלְכָּלָה** (maintenance and sustenance). Once a person receives these blessings, they need to daven in a much stronger way, so that they should continue to be a compassionate person! – Hence we repeat **וְרַחֲמִים**."

It doesn't matter where in life you find yourself. You need to have compassion, and make sure that you're available to every single Jewish person.

Birchas HaMazon



Rav Eliyahu Lopian (1872-1970) explained the verse at the end of Birchas HaMazon [bentching]. The pasuk says, "Dorshei HaShem lo yachseru kol tov" ["Those who seek out Hashem, will not lack any good."] The pasuk does not say that those who seek out Hashem, in fact, 'have' everything, only that they will not be 'lacking'.

This is the greatest blessing that a person can receive. If a person feels that he has what he needs, he will be happy. If, however, he only feels that he has "a lot," he will always want more than he has.

Rav Lopian gave the following example. A person once took a visitor to his home into the bathroom and opened up the medicine cabinet. The medicine cabinet was full of prescription drugs. He proudly boasted about the value of the contents of the medicine cabinet. "Look, I have thousands of dollars' worth of valuables here."

The other person looked incredulously at his host and thought to himself, "Big deal. I have a medicine cabinet and all I have inside of it is aspirin!"

Who is happier in this example – the person who has thousands of dollars' worth of medicine, or the person who does not need the medicine?



The Silent Witness

'And you shall write them on the doorposts of your homes and your gates.' *(Devarim 11:20)*

The Mezuzah stands like a sentinel at the door. We pass it whenever we enter or leave the room. What are we to think as we look upon the mezuzah? What are we to contemplate when we see the letter shin on the case and are reminded of the holy scrolls within?

The Rambam, at the end of his presentation of the laws of mezuzah, tells us to think about the eternal nature of the Almighty. This will inspire us to awaken from our slumber and come to the realization that nothing in this world is permanent other than the Almighty, His Torah.

Why does the mezuzah remind us of these concepts? - Perhaps it is because the mezuzah is a silent witness to the ebb and flow of history and human events. Think about the mezuzah of an old shul or

some other venerable edifice. It has been hanging there for decades if not centuries. It has seen infants brought into the shul to be circumcised, and it has seen these same people grown old brought into the shul to be eulogized and buried. It has seen generations come and go. It has seen empires rise and fall. It has seen the birth of ideologies and their demise.

In the last century alone, our hypothetical mezuzah would have seen humanism, capitalism, materialism, existentialism, each embraced as life philosophies and then discredited. It would have seen the rise of the Soviet Union and Communism and their ignominious collapse. It would have seen the creation of the Third Reich, the Thousand-Year Reich, its perpetration of the Holocaust against the Jewish people and its ultimate defeat and destruction. It would have seen the birth of Israel and its growth to maturity.

When the railroads were introduced in the 19th century, people thought the new technology was so perfect that it would never change. The railroad companies sold corporate bonds for centuries in advance. And where are they all today? On the scrap heap, along with their rusting trains.

Human beings are always seeking immortality. This invention, this idea, this building, this book, this one will capture that elusive immortality, this one will stand the test of time, this is one for the ages, this one will make me immortal. But it doesn't work.

The Torah tells us (Bamidbar 32:42), "And Novach went and captured Kenas and its suburbs, and he named it (lah) Novach in his name." According to the rules of Hebrew grammar, the word lah should end with a mappik heh, a mark of emphasis, but it doesn't. It ends with a weak heh. The Midrash tells us that the weak heh lets us know that the city did not last. It was eventually destroyed.

Why does the Torah consider it important to let us know this information? It is meant to teach us the futility of immortalization. Novach wanted to immortalize himself by creating something

permanent – an entire city, no less! – and crowning it with his own name. But he failed. The city was destroyed, and his name would be forgotten if it were not mentioned in the Torah.

Everything constantly changes. Nothing is permanent. Only the Almighty and His Torah are permanent. The mezuzah can bear witness.



This morning after davening, a third grade rebbi shared with me something that is so incredible:

He has a custom that at the end of every school year, he sits down with a stack of blank cards, and he writes each of his pupils a note. In that note, he expresses how much value they brought to the class. He tries to write something true unique and authentic about each boy. He gives it to each child to take home.

Last night he got a phone call from a mother of a 7th grader (4 years later). She was cleaning out her son's room and she found at the top of a draw in his night table – this card. On the back of it he had written… '*Always remember this – Never forget this*!'

This child was in 7th grade, and it was still his most precious item. Someone had seen value in him and had shared that with him.

My friends, we live in a world where it is so easy to make someone feel good. It's so easy to give a compliment. It's so easy to say something nice. You can transform another person's day, or even their life. Let's make other people feel valued. If we do this, the world around us will become a much better place.

SHABBOS STORIES – Cause and Effect – How Our Words Impact Others by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



As I walked down the street one morning, deep in thought, I looked up momentarily to get my bearings. As I did, I saw a neighbor approaching from the opposite direction. His head was bent toward the ground, and he seemed troubled and withdrawn, as I greeted him with a warm "Good morning." He glanced at me but didn't reply. I felt I had to add something more, so I brightly said, "How's your avodat hakodesh – holy work?"

His head snapped up briefly, in shock, as if I had said something wrong. He then quickly lowered his eyes back down and silently walked past me.

Perturbed that I had perhaps unintentionally offended the man, I thought to myself that if only one could more often remember to follow the dictum of our Sages, **סיג לחכמה שתיקה** – silence is a protective fence for wisdom." But, I sadly concluded, the words had already been spoken out loud. The program of the day that ensued became exceedingly hectic and eventually the morning encounter slipped my mind.

When I returned home late that evening I got the message that the man I had met in the morning had called and would be trying to reach me again. I speculated that he had been so upset by my remark that he had found it necessary to pursue the matter with a call.

When we finally spoke, the man launched into a personal narrative. He told me that he was a fundraiser for a Jewish communal organization and the past year had not been very

productive. In fact, the funds he had raised were less than his salary, and he just didn't feel it was proper to be rewarded. He had been on his way to hand in his resignation.

As he walked by me that morning, feeling sorry for himself, his self-esteem was in the dumps, and feeling quite miserable, my question had blown him away. He couldn't believe that somebody actually framed his work in the realm of *avodat hakodesh*. He didn't think anybody cared what he did for a living. Like a bolt of lightning my words struck him to the core, and he wondered if I was a heavenly messenger — a sign from heaven.

Suddenly, he felt revitalized and reenergized, and he decided to give his assignment another go. Actually, his day turned out to be a very successful one. In that one day he raised more money than he had the entire year. He had called just to let me know the beneficial effect of my casual greeting.
You can never gauge the consequences of your words.

So That My Soul May Bless You



Reb Yitzchok Shlomo Ungar, the Rav of Chug Chasam Sofer in Bnei Brak zt"l related:

Maran Reb Aharon of Belz zt"l once visited the **Pressburger Rav zt"l** in Yerushalayim. Before Maran Reb Aharon departed, he asked the Pressburger Rav to bentch him.

This request shook the Pressburger Rav and he could not proceed to bentch Maran Reb Aharon. Reb Aharon insisted, and the Pressburger Rav started verbalizing some brachos. Maran Reb Aharon said: "I did not mean

this." He took the hands of the Pressburger Rav in his hands and placed them on his head, asking the Pressburger Rav to bless him with the bracha of the blessing of the Kohanim.

The Pressburger Rav started crying and proceeded to bentch Maran and then bid him farewell.

Sometime later, Reb Yitzchok Shloime escorted the Pressburger Rav to the Yeshivas Chayei Olam in Yerushalayim. A group of homeless people sat nearby begging for tzedakah - charity. The Pressburger Rav approached one of the beggars and handed him a coin. The beggar thanked him profusely, and to everyone's amazement, the Pressburger Rav asked the beggar to bentch him.

The beggar started mumbling, but the Pressburger Rav said: "This is not what I meant. Place your hands on my head and bentch me with the blessing of the Kohanim". The beggar proceeded to do so and bentched the Rav.

The Pressburger Rav told Reb Yitzchok Shloime: "If I am worthy to bentch the Belzer Rav, then the beggar can bentch me!"

The Controversial Handshake by Yoni Schwartz

Rav Aharon of Belz, ZT"L, had a custom: whenever shaking hands with someone under Bar Mitzvah, he'd put a cloth over his hand. Once, as many chassidim were approaching him, a young child dressed up in a hat and jacket to fool the Rav into thinking he was over Bar Mitzvah.

The gabbai, realized the boy's ploy, and publicly embarrassed him, screaming, "Sheigetz! Get out of here!"

Shaken up by the gabbai's horrific behavior, Rav Aharon told him to apologize to the boy and ask for forgiveness. The gabbai did so, but when he returned, the Rav was still too agitated by the gabbai's

horrific sin, so he called back the boy to make amends himself.

Upon returning, the boy received a wholehearted blessing from the holy Rav. However, the Rav still felt he hadn't done enough, so he instructed the boy to write a note with a request from Hashem that he would pray for to be granted. As the boy was leaving, the Rav was still too disturbed about how someone could publicly embarrass another person so brazenly and said, "Just because I observe certain stringencies and don't give my hand to a child who is under Bar Mitzvah doesn't mean it's right that the boy should be publicly shamed."

He called the boy back one last time, and in front of everybody, removed the cloth from his hand, shook the boy's hand, and gave him many more wholehearted blessings. Then the Rav was calmed.

A Letter to Hashem

In the city of Mir, there lived a girl by the name of Chiyenna, whose dream was to marry a ben Torah. However, she was finding the task rather challenging. At a young age, she'd been orphaned from her father, and her family had no breadwinner. They made do with a very meager income, which certainly complicated her prospects at marrying a ben Torah.

The years went by, and no shidduch seemed to work out. One night, while everyone else was asleep, she sat beside the table and wrote a heart-to-heart letter to Hashem, enumerating her pain and what she was requesting of Him.

But once she finished writing it, what was she going to do with it? How would she send a letter to Hashem? She decided that she would wait for a windy day, hike up to the closest mountain, and send it into the air in the hope that it would get to Hashem.

When the right day came, she made her way to the mountain, took her letter, released her grip of it, and watched it float through the air until it was out of sight. She was content to believe that Hashem had received her letter, and she climbed back down to await its results.

Lo and behold, the letter ended up falling in the path of a yeshiva bachur, just the type of chosson the girl had been hoping for! He picked up the letter and saw it addressed to "Avi She'ba'Shamayim." He was flabbergasted.

"Avi She'ba'Shamayim?" he thought. Who is writing this, and what do they need? He certainly wasn't Avi She'ba'Shamayim, but his curiosity got the better of him, and he opened it. After reading it, he ran to his rosh yeshiva, Reb Elya Baruch Kamahi, and asked, "I've found a letter addressed to Avi She'ba'Shamayim, and it's a request for a shidduch with a ben Torah. Is this a message that I should consider marrying this girl?"

The rosh yeshiva suggested that he first meet the girl to see with whom he's dealing with. Upon meeting, this bachur, Yitzchok Yechiel, saw how they shared the same Torah values and that they were compatible. Reb Kamahi suggested that he marry her.

Reb Yitzchok Yechiel Davidowitz, eventually became the rav in the Karelitz. Not only that, but they were zocheh to astonishing offspring, including being the honorable grandparents of the Feinstein dynasty. Who hasn't benefited from one of the thousands of earthshattering p'sakim that Reb Moshe Feinstein enlightened us to?

Reb Yitzchok Yechiel and Reb. Chiyenna (Horowitz) gave birth to Reb. Faye Gittel, the mother of Reb Moshe. Such a lady who was determined to take a learning boy, and turned to Hashem without despair, was zocheh to such well-deserved offspring.

Glimpses of Greatness by Rabbi Yaakov Moskowitz



In Bnei Brak, a visitor once came to see **Reb Aharon Leib Shteinman *zt"l*** after not having been in his house for over thirty years. After looking around, he remarked, "Everything here still looks the same, Rebbe." Reb Aharon Leib let out a brief smile. "It's not the house that's supposed to be updated and renovated; it's the people who live in the house who are really supposed to change."

Reb Aharon Leib lived a life of remarkable growth, always seeking knowledge. Those close to him recall how he would often be hunched over his *sefarim*, rarely returning to his room to sleep. Instead, he would doze off at his *shtender* for a few hours each night before resuming his studies. His dedication to Torah ultimately led him to publish his renowned work, *Ayelet HaShachar*, which comprises seventeen volumes on Shas and five volumes on Chumash.

Yet, a few years before his passing, when his son attempted to arrange for him to learn in a quiet apartment away from distractions, Reb Aharon Leib politely declined. "If I do that," he explained, "where will I get my *yissurim* from? People come to me at all hours of the night for advice and blessings. I need those challenges."

It was well known that Reb Aharon Leib possessed a warm and caring heart, and his empathy was profound. This is why so many people lined up outside his house for counsel, where he would greet each individual personally. His sensitivity was so deep that most days, after meeting with everyone, he would sit with his eyes closed for about five to ten minutes, deep in thought and mumbling words of prayer.

At one time, his grandson asked him, "Saba, are you preparing for Rosh Hashanah? Are you learning Kabbalah? What are you doing?" He replied, "After I hear so many stories, I can't help but feel for everyone's pain and spend a few minutes davening for each individual."

Reb Aharon Leib was always seeking ways to help others. Despite his own personal poverty, he would discreetly put money in envelopes and deliver them to those in need. After Rebbetzin Steinman passed away, several grandchildren would come and sing *zemiros* with Reb Aharon Leib to brighten up his meals. After seven years, Reb Aharon Leib told them they had to stop.

When asked why, he explained that their neighbor upstairs had passed away recently and there was a widow living there. He expressed concern about how she would feel hearing the beautiful *zemiros* coming from their apartment, reminding her of the joyous Shabbat meals she once shared with her husband. It was only after they learned that her grandchildren were also coming to sing *zemiros* with her that he agreed they could resume.

Hakaras Hatov – By Rabbi Shlomo Landau

Rav Shach Zt'l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovitch would always make a point that during the last week of zman, he would come to the yeshiva and give an inspirational shmooze to the bachurim, so that they could lock in all they had learnt and accomplished, and to ensure that they would maximise and utilise the bein hazemanim properly.

Near the end of Rav Shach's life, it was the last few days of zeman, and he had not yet been to yeshivah to give his customary shmooze. A Maggid shiur from the yeshiva ketana went to Rav Shach's apartment and said to him, "We really miss your end of zeman shmooze that you normally give every single year. It gives us all so much chizuk and inspiration."

Rav Shach sighed and said, "I will tell you the truth – I want to do it, but I simply do not have the physical strength to get myself to the yeshiva to give the shmooze."

The fellow said, "Ok Rosh Yeshiva – I understand."

Rav Shach said, "I give you a beracha that the bachurim should lock in all the inspiration of the zeman, and they should have a great bein hazemanim."

As the fellow is leaving the apartment, all of a sudden, Rav Shach calls him back and he says, "I've changed my mind, I'm coming to give the shmooze."

"But you don't have the koach."

"You're right, I don't have the strength, but you are one of the baalei tefilla who davens on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. And for years I have come for davening and get inspiration from your beautiful tefillos. – I have a chiyuv of hakaros hatov. I have an obligation to show my gratitude to you. If you want the shmooze, I can't say no."

Rav Shach shlepped himself to Ponovitch yeshiva and he gave the end of zeman shmooze!

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

In the town of Brisk, there was once a big protest against chillul Shabbos, but they held it without a permit. The authorities came and arrested the Rosh Hakahal. He was put into jail on Shabbos.

All the others ran home. The Rosh Hakahal sat in his cell all by himself without having wine or challos for Shabbos. He was feeling very distraught and broken. – It was very unpleasant. Shabbos all alone!

Two hours later, somebody else was brought in. – Who? – The **Maharil Diskin** – the Rav of Brisk! The police had also arrested him.

"Wow" thought the Rosh Hakahal – "It was all worth it. What does it matter if I'm here without family or food- I can spend a whole Shabbos with the Rav of Brisk! – At least I have the Rav!"

In every hardship, there is no reason to despair, because Hashem is also there. And if Hashem is with you, there is always reason for joy!

When They Were Young

AWAKENING THE GENIUS

RABBI YOSEF SHALOM ELYASHIV
הרב יוסף שלום אלישיב זצ"ל





Yosef Shalom grew up during a tense time in Yerushalayim. It was before the founding of the State of Israel, and the country was ruled by the British. While Jews were allowed to visit the Kosel, they were not allowed to bring holy objects there. Blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah was certainly forbidden.

Some of the young boys in Yosef Shalom's shul were not happy with this situation and wanted to take action. On Rosh Hashanah, after davening was over, one of them planned on sneaking a shofar into the Kosel area and blowing it there. Even though the plan was really dangerous and he would be arrested if caught, the boy still intended to go ahead with it.

Yet not all his friends agreed with his idea. The boys continued to debate the plan. They were standing right outside the shul where Yosef Shalom was sitting and learning. He heard both sides and really wanted to join the discussion. He didn't want to miss out. But he knew he should be learning and not wasting time. So he told himself, "You can go. Just learn for ten more minutes and then go."

After ten minutes passed, he told himself again, "You can go. Just learn for ten more minutes and then go."

One ten-minute time period led to another, and he kept pushing off going out to join the conversation. Eventually, he became more and more involved in the learning and no longer wanted to join.

Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv

Yosef Shalom Elyashiv was born in 1910, in Shavel, Lithuania. He was the only child of R' Avraham and Rebbetzin Chaya Musha Elyashiv. His mother was the daughter of the famous *mekubal*, R' Shlomo Elyashiv, known as the Leshem (after the *sefer* he wrote).

In 1924, the Elyashiv family moved to Yerushalayim. Yosef Shalom learned in the Yeshivas Etz Chaim in Yerushalayim. He spent the rest of his life in Yerushalayim. In 1934, at the age of twenty-four, Yosef Shalom married Sheina Chaya, the daughter of R' Aryeh Levin, who was known as the *tzaddik* of Yerushalayim.

In 1948, he was appointed a *dayan* on the Beis Din of Yerushalayim. Throughout his life he learned with *hasmadah* and was an expert in halachah. His reputation as a leading halachic authority grew. He became known as the *posek hador*, the *posek* of the generation, until his *petirah* in 2012.

Out Of Our Comfort Zone by Rabbi Shlomo Landau

Yaldei Teheran: To Torah Jews who are intimately familiar with Jewish History, these two words often elicit a groan or a sigh. Yaldei Teheran refers to 1,428 children who survived the Holocaust. More than half of them were under the age of 14 and many were from religious homes.

Sadly, the Jewish Agency, which had shouldered the responsibility to transport them to Eretz Yisrael, tried everything within its power to pry them away from religious observance and eventually to place them in secular kibbutzim.

When the religious community learned of the plan, an uproar ensued. Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog demanded that the orphans be placed in religious communities, and ultimately the Jewish Agency was forced to accede to a partial concession.

Which brings us to our story. Through the political workings of Agudas Yisrael, a large group of these orphans was due to arrive at Batei Avos, the orphanage that the **Ponevezher Rav** had established in Bnei Brak. The group was due to arrive on a Sunday, and on Shabbos, the Ponevezher Rav paid a visit to the Beit HaKnesset HaGadol in Bnei Brak.

The Rav ascended the bimah and told the congregants that on the next day, a large group of yesomim would be arriving at Batei Avos. He also shared that he had no bedding for these children, and then appealed to the mispallelim to contribute linen, pillows, and blankets so that these children could feel comfortable and at home. He urged the tzibbur that if they slept with two pillows, they should part with one, and that if they had an extra blanket, they should share it.

He then concluded that he would be at the Beit HaKnesset HaGadol after Maariv and that he would not be sleeping in a bed until he had collected all that was needed. He shared that he could not even entertain the thought of sleeping on linen with the comforts of a

pillow and blanket while these yesomim did not have the comfort that they so desperately needed.

Needless to say, the tzibbur responded generously and filled the Beit HaKnesset HaGadol with more than enough bedding for the Yaldei Teheran.

The next day, the yesomim received a warm and very comfortable welcome and were able to begin the first day of the rest of their lives in comfort.

The Weekly Vort – Rav Elya Dushnitzer



◣ In a modest, sparsely furnished home on the quiet streets of Petach Tikvah, lived a man who possessed one of the purest hearts of his generation. R' Elya Dushnitzer was a ***mashgiach***, a ***tzaddik***, and a ***baal emunah*** of rare calibre. His influence shaped towering figures like the Chazon Ish, who declared, "*What I know of Yiras Shamayim, I learned from R' Elya,*" and R' Sholom Schwadron, who often referred to his rebbi, R' Elya, with awe-filled reverence, sprinkling his droshos with stories of "R' Elya." His brilliant mind and sterling *middos* made him a natural leader, but R' Elya ran from *kavod* his entire life. When he served as *mashgiach* in the Lomza Yeshiva, his gentle guidance shaped generations of *bnei Torah*.

◣ R' Elya was born in 1877 in the town of Dushnitsa, near Lomza in Poland, into a home steeped in *yiras Shomayim* and simple, uncompromising *emunah*. His father, R' Binyomin, was a quiet *oved*

Hashem, a G-d-fearing man whose life revolved around Torah and *avodah*. Though not widely known, R' Binyomin was a person of genuine spiritual substance, and his unwavering dedication to honesty, humility, and trust in Hashem left a deep imprint on his young son. R' Elya would later recall the quiet *kedusha* of his home, where every detail of daily life was guided by *Halachah* and infused with *emunah peshutah*. His mother played a crucial role in shaping his character—imbuing him with warmth, a deep sense of responsibility, and a heart finely attuned to the needs of others.

◣ From a young age, R' Elya exhibited a burning thirst for Torah and a natural refinement of character. He was sent to learn in the famed *yeshiva* of Lomza, where his diligence and depth quickly set him apart. It was there that the foundations of his greatness began to take shape. Later, seeking even greater spiritual growth, he joined the yeshiva in Novardok, under the leadership of the legendary *Baal Mussar*, R' Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, the Alter of Novardok. There, R' Elya absorbed the fiery *bitachon*, intense personal scrutiny, and fearless commitment to truth that defined the Novardok school of *mussar*. The deep lessons he learned from the Alter became embedded in his very being, forming the spiritual backbone of the quiet giant he would become.

◣ Eventually, he moved to Eretz Yisrael, settling in Petach Tikvah. There he lived in near poverty, with a home that was often emptier than his own pockets. But what the house lacked in furniture, it overflowed with Torah and *chessed*.

◣ R' Elya's *yiras Shomayim* and *emunah* were palpable. He would say, "*Yiras Shomayim iz nit kein shrek—es iz a leben!*" — "Fear of Heaven is not fear—it's a way of life!" He would emphasize that true *yiras Shomayim* is not about trembling or dread, but about living with a constant awareness of Hashem's presence in every action. He himself lived with this consciousness, and encouraged others to see it not as a burden, but as a privilege—a path to clarity, inner peace,

and deep joy. About *emunah*, he would say, "*Az men lebt mit emunah, iz doh kein tzitteren*" — "When one lives with *emunah*, there is no trembling." This wasn't just a phrase for him; it was the way he lived. Even when he had very little, R' Elya remained calm and composed, never flustered or anxious. When asked how he managed to stay so serene despite financial pressures, he would point to this very principle: genuine *emunah* dispels fear.

◣ In the early 1940s, R' Elya sought to sell an orchard he owned near Tel Aviv. One day, an American expressed serious interest, and R' Elya agreed to show him the property. But during the journey, it became clear the man had no intention of living in Eretz Yisroel and would be managing the orchard from abroad. Immediately, R' Elya began discouraging him. "Reb Yid," he said gently, "the Gemara says, *hamekabel sacharim v'eino omed aleihem, mevatzer mamono* — if someone hires workers but doesn't supervise them, he's throwing his money away." But the man was undeterred, so R' Elya began listing every flaw he could think of — poor soil, unreliable workers, pest issues, constant upkeep. Still, the man remained eager. When they reached the orchard, R' Elya insisted on walking him through every part, saying, "Hearing isn't the same as seeing." Even then, the buyer persisted. But then R' Elya noticed him taking pills from a small bottle. The man admitted he had a heart condition. That was the end of it. With gentle firmness, R' Elya said, "No. I cannot sell it to you. It will bring you too much aggravation. I'm afraid for your health. Please — don't buy it." No amount of pleading changed his mind, and the man returned to America — orchardless.

Soon after, another buyer came. Again, R' Elya listed every disadvantage, and again, the orchard remained unsold. At this point, he turned to his *talmid*, R' Sholom Schwadron. "Reb Sholom," he said, "my orchard still hasn't been sold." R' Sholom, knowing his rebbi's honesty, wasn't surprised. "Please," R' Elya continued, "go to the rebbi in the cheder and ask him to have the children *daven* that it be sold." R' Sholom delivered the message. Days passed. No buyers.

Concerned, R' Elya turned to R' Sholom again. "Please remind the rebbi. Perhaps he forgot." "How does the Rebbi know he forgot?" asked R' Sholom. R' Elya replied simply, "Because the orchard hasn't yet been sold."

R' Sholom went back to the *melamed*, who turned pale. "Oy," he cried, "I forgot to tell the boys to *daven*! Oy, how could I forget?!" Though cheder had ended for the day, the rebbi ran back, gathered the children, and tearfully asked them to *daven* for R' Elya's orchard to be sold. The very next week, a new buyer arrived — and this time, the orchard was sold.

◣ One *talmid*, visiting R' Elya shortly before Shabbos, noticed there was no furniture — not even a table or chairs. R' Elya explained with a smile: "They're all doing *mitzvos*. A neighbor needed a bed. Someone else needed chairs for a *simchah*. *Boruch Hashem*, my furniture is busy with good deeds." When the *talmid* hesitated, wondering aloud where R' Elya would sit or sleep, R' Elya pointed to the floor and said, "Hashem made it soft enough for me."

◣ One Erev Shabbos, a woman knocked at R' Elya's door. She was a widow, desperate and embarrassed. "I have no food for my children," she whispered, trying to hide her tears. Without hesitation, R' Elya handed her his entire Shabbos meal — fish, *challos*, wine, and all. "I already ate," he told her, though his Shabbos had not even begun. A few hours later, as *hadlokas neiros* approached, someone came to R' Elya's home with a delivery — a full Shabbos meal from a donor who had thought of him at the last moment. R' Elya turned to a *talmid* and said softly, *"You see? Hashem always has His shluchim. I only need to trust."*

◣ R' Sholom Schwadron recalled many times seeing his rebbi crying during *Shemoneh Esrei*. Once, overcome with emotion, he asked: "Rebbi, what brings the tears each day?" R' Elya answered: "Every day I ask Hashem, 'Bring us back to Yerushalayim.' But what if I

didn't mean it yesterday? What if I was too distracted, too cold? What if I — not others — am delaying the *Geulah*?"

◣ Another *talmid* told of a time a delivery man arrived at R' Elya's home carrying sacks of coal. The man struggled up the steps, red-faced and panting. R' Elya — frail and old — rushed to help him, grabbing one of the sacks. The man protested, "Reb Yid, please! You're elderly!" R' Elya replied, "Why should you carry it alone while I do nothing?" The vendor only later discovered he had been assisted by one of the greatest *tzaddikim* in the city.

◣ When discussing the proper attitude toward children's *chinuch*, R' Elya would say: "*Kinderlach zaynen tzarte neshamas. Men darf zei shainen mit di zun, nit brennen mit a fayer.*" "*Children are delicate souls. You must shine on them with sunlight, not burn them with fire.*" This showed his gentle approach and belief in positive reinforcement over criticism.

◣ *A bochur* in Lomza used to come late to davening regularly. Most mashgichim would have reprimanded him. R' Elya? He simply said one morning after davening: "*I missed seeing you in your place today. I hope everything's alright.*" That one gentle comment changed the boy's life. He never came late again.

◣ R' Elya would say: "*Torah iz nit nor in seforim, es iz in di menshen*" – *Torah isn't only found in books—it's found in people.* R' Elya valued the Torah that comes from living examples. He'd point out how one can learn more from watching a true *yerei Shomayim* daven or interact with others than from hours of study, if one's eyes are open.

◣ The Chazon Ish was known for his uncompromising standards. Yet he spoke about R' Elya with open reverence. "If people understood who R' Elya is," the Chazon Ish once said, "they'd travel just to sit outside his door and listen to him breathe." And R' Sholom Schwadron, the famed Maggid of Yerushalayim, never stopped quoting his rebbi — telling stories of his humility, his *chessed*, and

his radiant *emunah*. His voice would quiver when he said his name. "R' Elya…," he'd begin, and then the room would grow still.

◣ R' Elya left behind no written works. But he left behind living *seforim* — in his *talmidim*, in the widows and orphans who saw Hashem's kindness through his hands.

The yahrzeit of R' Elya ben R' Binyomin HaKohein Dushnitzer zt"l is on 22 Av (1949). May his merit protect us.

Kabbalah Red String Bracelets: Are They Jewish?

Evil Eye Jewelry and Kabbalah Bracelets By Yehuda Shurpin



Some people wear red strings around their wrists to ward off an *ayin hara* (evil eye). Does this have a source in Judaism?

There are indeed Jewish sources for the concept of an *ayin hara* (evil eye). However, one would be hard-pressed to find a reputable Jewish source (kabbalistic or otherwise) for wearing a red string as a means of warding off the evil eye.

The Color Red

Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira of Munkács, known as the Minchat Elazar (b. 1868), records a custom to carry a red cloth or similar red item to ward off *ayin hara*. He explains that different colors represent different Divine attributes, and red represents *gevurah* (stringency and judgment), which is sometimes linked with negative spiritual energy. Thus, by having the red item, one can overcome an *ayin hara*, beating evil at its own game. [Note that he makes no mention of bracelets or strings, and there's good reason for that.]

Pagan Ways

There are certain foreign, superstitious practices that, although not idol worship in the strict sense, are nevertheless forbidden due to their pagan origins. These are referred to as *darkei Amori* ("the ways of the Amorites"). In a list of such practices found in the Tosefta (an extra-Mishnaic work), "tying a red string on one's finger," is listed. This implies that wearing a red string falls under the rubric of a forbidden pagan practice.

Now, there are some who explain that despite the Tosefta, the red string is not a violation of *darkei Amori*. Others, however, maintain that it is indeed problematic.

It is said that the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, was once asked about this in a private audience. He was initially hesitant to express his view on the red string bracelets but then cautioned against them due to the issue of *darkei Amori*.

Red or Blue?

On the topic of which colors can ward off the evil eye, I would venture to say that blue, or more specifically *techelet* (indigo), is a much better candidate. The Zohar states that if someone looks at you with an evil eye, look at something the color of *techelet* and the evil eye will have no power over you.

This is perhaps connected to the Talmudic teaching that *techelet* resembles the sea, which reflects the sky, which is reminiscent of G-d's "throne."

The True Remedy

When discussing spiritual remedies or charms, even those with an authentic source, the Rebbe would caution that not all people or situations are the same. Since these charms require very specific intention and know-how, it is unlikely for even the legitimate ones to have a serious effect.

With regard to charmers and soothsayers, the Torah enjoins us to "be wholehearted with the L-rd, your G-d."

Ultimately, connecting to Hashem through meditating on His greatness, learning His Torah and adding in mitzvahs is the "true and tried remedy." - There is no reason to fear an evil eye or try any of these other means of protection.



Holiday Chizuk from Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

Parshas Eikev is a very yesoidosdike parsha, including the inyan of "**קבלת עול מלכות שמים**" and the connection of a Yid to The Ribboino Shel Olam.

Famously, the pasuk says: **וְעַתָּה֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל מָ֚ה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ֔ שֹׁאֵ֖ל מֵעִמָּ֑ךְ כִּ֣י אִם־ לְיִרְאָ֣ה אֶת־ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ֗ לָלֶ֤כֶת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו֙ וּלְאַהֲבָ֣ה אֹת֔וֹ וְלַעֲבֹ֖ד אֶת־ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ֑ בְּכָל־ לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁ֥ךָ** – '***And now, O Israel, what does Hashem, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to worship Hashem, with all your heart and with all your soul***.' (10:12)

The Gemara Megillah 25a says that 'The fact that Hashem asks man to fear Him indicates that it is in man's ability to do so. The Gemarah infers from this that that fear of Heaven is a minor matter, as the verse is formulated as though Hashem is not asking anything significant. Can it in fact be maintained that fear of Heaven is a minor matter?' - Is it really that simple?

The end of the next pasuk really puts things into perspective into what the Torah is trying to say. - **לִשְׁמֹ֣ר אֶת־מִצְוֹת ה' וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתָ֖יו אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָנֹכִ֤י מְצַוְּךָ֙ הַיּ֔וֹם - לְטֹ֖וב לָֽךְ** – '*to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, which I command you this day - **for your good**.'*

When Hashem asks you for **יִרְאָה**, the pasuk finishes off with the words **לְטֹ֖וב לָֽךְ**. Ultimately, it's for our benefit and for our good. Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't ask us for things for Himself. But for

us to do them for our own ultimate gain. We will be rewarded and enhance us as better people, as Rashi says - **אֶלָּא לטוב לך שֶׁתִּתְקַבְּלוּ שָׂכָר**

The Ribboino Shel Olam should help us to be "**מקדש שם שמים**" during the holiday period. We should be zoche to **התקרבות** to The Ribboino Shel Olam. We should recognise the gadlus of Hashem of his creations. We should connect to Hashem and Im Yirtze Hahem, we will receive His chessed and rachamim.

Everybody should have a wonderful time and get back together again greeting our chaveirim and yedidim – happily and healthily. – Kol Tuv – Good Shabbos.

In this **פרשה** there are 111 pesukim - **סימן אי״ק סימן יעל״א**

Both mnemonics mean wild goats. - Perhaps the intent is that just as wild animals depend on Hashem for their food, so the Sedra teaches us that whether in the wilderness or in the Land, Israel would rely on Hashem for its very existence. (**Rabbi Dovid Feinstein**)

והיה עקב תשמעון

The word **והיה** is **שמחה** – happiness.

The word **עקב** is the **עקבתה דמשיח**

The word **תשמעון** is you will keep the **מצוות**

That means The Aibershter is very happy if at the **עקבתה דמשיח** when we are waiting for Moshiach to come, and we keep all the **מצוות** - **השם** will send us the **משיח** .

"To love a Jew is to see the greatness within him, even when it is hidden." ~ Rav Hutner.

Head Count



On the tefillin shel rosh there are two shins (שׁ). One shin has three prongs, while the other has four. Together, they form a total of seven. When these two shins are viewed side by side, they also spell the word שֵׁשׁ, meaning six. Seven combined with six gives us thirteen.

The symbolism deepens further. The gematria of the letter shin is 300, so the two shins together equal 600. When we now add the thirteen, the total comes to 613, which is the number of mitzvos we have.

This is far from coincidental. At the age of thirteen, a Jewish boy becomes a bar mitzvah and is obligated in all 613 mitzvos of the Torah. The tefillin worn upon the head serve as a visible declaration of that reality: a binding of the mind and identity to the full corpus of Torah and mitzvos. Through these subtle yet powerful symbols, the tefillin silently proclaim a lifelong covenant and responsibility.

From Our Sages

וְרָם לְבָבֶךָ ***Then your heart will be lifted up*** (Deut. 8:14)

Humility is not enumerated among the Torah's 613 commandments; if being humble were considered a mitzva, many Jews would rush to observe it in the most beautiful manner possible, with the end result of being proud in just how humble they are! (***The Baal Shem Tov***)



The **חורבן** was caused by **שנאת חנם** - consequently, the word **חורבן** is composed of the same letters that spell **חברון**, a place of connection to Hashem. This is shown in the word **חברון**, as it is rooted in **חיבור**; to connect. We must see others as a **חבר**; friend and connect to them- **חיבור**.

To combat **שנאת חנם**, we must have **אהבת חנם**. In fact, Ahron- the Kohen Gadol- who died on Rosh Chodesh Av which is the period of when the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, was an **אוהב שלום ורודף שלום** *loving and pursuing peace*. This is what we need for the Beis Hamikdash- **אהבת חנם**.

The great **R' Shlomo Wolbe**- author of Alei Shor- had a son that veered off the path of Judaism. After this happened, R' Wolbe's daughter got engaged. When the Chosson came for Shabbos, he was in for a shock. In middle of the Seuda the doorbell rang! Then the door opened where everyone present- including the Kollel and students of R' Wolbe's Yeshiva- heard in a loud voice: "Good Shabbos." It was the son that left the ways of Torah who arrived in his car dressed in his weekday clothes without a Kippa, holding in one hand his car keys and in the other a pack of cigarettes!

The people were aghast! Although R' Wolbe was well aware that his son knew that it was a special meal for the Chosson, he didn't get angry rather he arose from his seat with a smile and embraced him with open arms saying "Good Shabbos! It's so great that you came to join us! We were worried that we wouldn't have the honour of you joining this special meal with our new Chosson." He sat his son next to him at the table praising him before the entire family. After the meal, when everyone left, R' Wolbe hugged his son tightly thanking him for joining the family Simcha.

His son then left and approached his car. However, from the love and acceptance showered upon him by his father, he was just unable to turn the engine on, desecrating Shabbos. He then left the keys in his parents' house. Then he walked to his own house.

This was all because of the warmth and love he received from his father. From that night on, he decided to change his ways. This son later became a respected Rosh Yeshiva. Many years later, he was asked what made him return to the ways of Torah? He replied, "The special and authentic love I received from my father on that Shabbos, despite the brazen Shabbos desecration."

In this week's Parsha we have the Mitzva of Birchas Hamazon- ואכלת ושבעת וברכת



A Jew who lived on Malachi Street in Yerushalayim once heard his neighbour reciting Birchas Hamazon with tremendous Kavana like he never heard before. Upon questioning him about this, he said when he was approaching the age of 13, his Rebbe in Europe took the class to **R' Meir Shapiro**, the Rosh Yeshiva of Chachmei Lublin. He quoted to the class the Sefer Hachinuch that says one who is careful in Bentching will always have sustenance **בכבוד**. He was so inspired by this that he took upon himself to Bentch with Kavana.

A few months later he was taken to the concentration camps where he had to pass through two selections to survive. The first was to

be a certain height. Although he wasn't tall enough, he was able to make it seem as though he was. The second test was to tell them a profession he was skilled in, that could help the Nazis. Being that he was very young he didn't have one. However, the man adjacent to him suggested that he be his assistant as a cook. As it turned out he passed both selections. Now that he worked as an assistant to the cook, he had access to plenty of food and was therefore well fed.

This was a fulfilment of the words of the Sefer Hachinuch as he Bentched with Kavana and thus had plenty of what to eat. Hence, even many years after the holocaust he still kept this up.

Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation

Our Hearts Are Broken

One thing we know is that when we Yidden care about each other, that is a primary way to create protection for Klal Yisrael.

Imagine if we were to get into the habit of saying the following 6-word tefilah once a day or several times a day:

שומר ישראל שמר שארית ישראל

"HASHEM, PLEASE WATCH OVER KLAL YISRAEL"

This idea is strongly endorsed by **Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky**.

◣ ***"The world is a very narrow bridge, and the main thing is not to be afraid at all".***

◣ ***"If you believe you can damage, believe you can fix."***

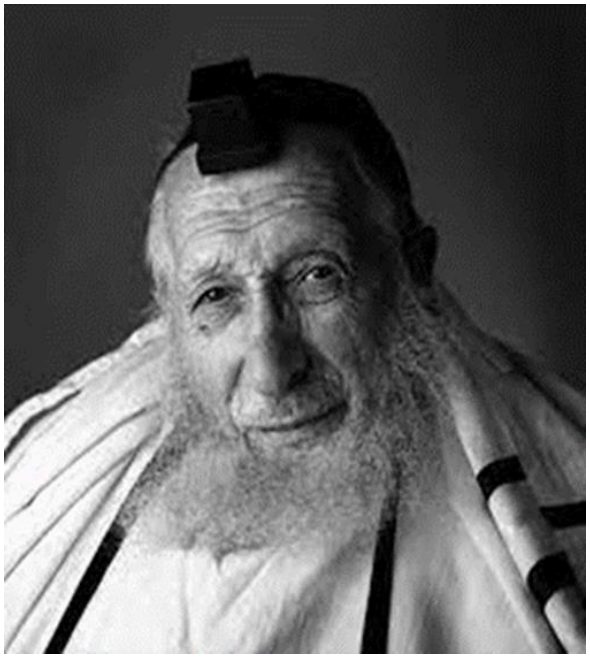
◣ ***"It is a great mitzvah to be happy always".***

~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם 11:13



Once, after **R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg zt"l**, Rosh Yeshivah of Torah Ohr, returned from one of his numerous trips abroad, he was asked, "How was the trip?" - The Rosh Yeshivah smiled deeply and responded, "This time it was an excellent flight! It was comfortable and without any interruptions!" When asked why this flight turned out to be better than usual, R' Scheinberg replied that as he boarded the plane, he was told that there was no seat available in the movie -free section. The airline apologized to the rabbi but at the moment, there was nothing for them to do.

In the end, R' Scheinberg had no choice but to sit in a place he had not planned on. Suddenly, the video system in that section broke down. Nobody's system was working. A technician was called but hard as he tried, he could not get the system to work. All those seated in that section were upset and went to look for other seats, leaving the Rosh Yeshivah to enjoy a quiet seating area, without any passengers (or movies) around him to disturb him.

The Gemara (Yoma 39a) states: "*If a person will sanctify himself down in this world, he is sanctified from Above.*" The lesson is that if you will listen to Hashem's instructions and follow in His ways, He in turn will listen to your prayers. The more a person will make himself holy by following the Torah and mitzvos, the more Heaven will add holiness onto him.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

הַמַּאֲכִלְךָ מָן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן עַנֹּתְךָ וּלְמַעַן נַסֹּתֶךָ לְהֵיטִבְךָ בְּאַחֲרִיתֶךָ: 8:16 ***Who fed you with manna in the desert, which your forefathers did not know, in order to afflict you and in order to test you, to benefit you in your end.***



Life is a test. We struggle to make a living, to raise our children and to build our communities and schools. Our test is to deal with the hardship and frustrations in the very best way possible.

But what if our livelihood was served up to us on a silver platter like the mann was? No more worries about tuition and parnassa! Would that be a test? Absolutely not! We would consider it a beracha!

And yet the Torah seems to say otherwise: Hashem gave us the mann, " **לְמַעַן עַנֹּתְךָ** " - Not to "bless us" but to "test us!" In Parshas Beshalach, Rashi explains that the "test" of the mann was that it could not be stored and used at a later date. Each day it fell and each day it needed to be consumed. On Friday, a double portion fell for Shabbos. This was the test; not to be able to save food.

The Seforno here explains that the test was to see if the Jewish people would follow the Torah even when they didn't have to worry about their livelihood. In truth, it is really a test to have bread and parnassa raining down on you. When affluence comes without our own effort, it gives us a great amount of leisure time and freedom. Do we waste this leisure time? or do we spend it wisely learning Torah and doing chessed? We are all aware of the test of poverty. However, affluence puts a tremendous responsibility on a person and

is a difficult test for many Yidden. Some people have so much food that they don't know what to do with it. Others have bare cupboards.

Unfortunately, today we don't have the holy mann and therefore we must bring ruchnius into our meals by speaking Torah, especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov. We must sing zemiros, say Divrei Torah and recite Birchas Hamazon in order to elevate our food, as well as our families, to great spiritual levels.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

מֵרֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה

The Torah in Parshas Eikev enumerates the many virtues of Eretz Yisroel - although the greatest attribute of all is that this holy land is the primary focus of the Ribono Shel Olam from the beginning of the year until the end of year. The obvious question is asked here: Why, when referring to the beginning of the year, is it written הַשָּׁנָה whereas, the end of year is just referred to as אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה without the special letter "heh"?



My machshava here is based on a famous vort of the **Satmar Rebbe zt"l**. Since Parshas Eikev is always lained immediately before Chodesh Elul, it helps to serve as a wake-up call to all Jews, that the time for improving our ways is just around the corner! Every year, before Rosh Hashana, we get excited about the opportunity given to us to work on and correct any spiritual flaws or wrongdoings, convincing ourselves that this will be THE year -הַשָּׁנָה - that we will attain perfection and purity. We become filled with enthusiasm, positive that we will soon

be better people in the coming year! However, as the year draws to a close, we usually feel disappointed as we realize that once again, we didn't accomplish what we set out to do this year. The year that we anticipated would be full of self-improvement turned into just another ordinary year...from רֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה it became אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה - the end of another typical year.

After Tisha B'av and Shabbos Nachamu we can homiletically translate the following words from the Kedusha of Mussaf **הן גאלתי אתכם אחרית כראשית**. Hashem is hinting to us that the Geulah can only come when **אחרית כראשית** - when the end of our year will be like the beginning, replete with the fulfilled goals that we intended to accomplish.

May the coming year be "HA-SHANAH", a year of gezunt, parnassa, nachas, menuchas hanefesh and menuchas haguf as we greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu, **במהרה בימנו אמן!**

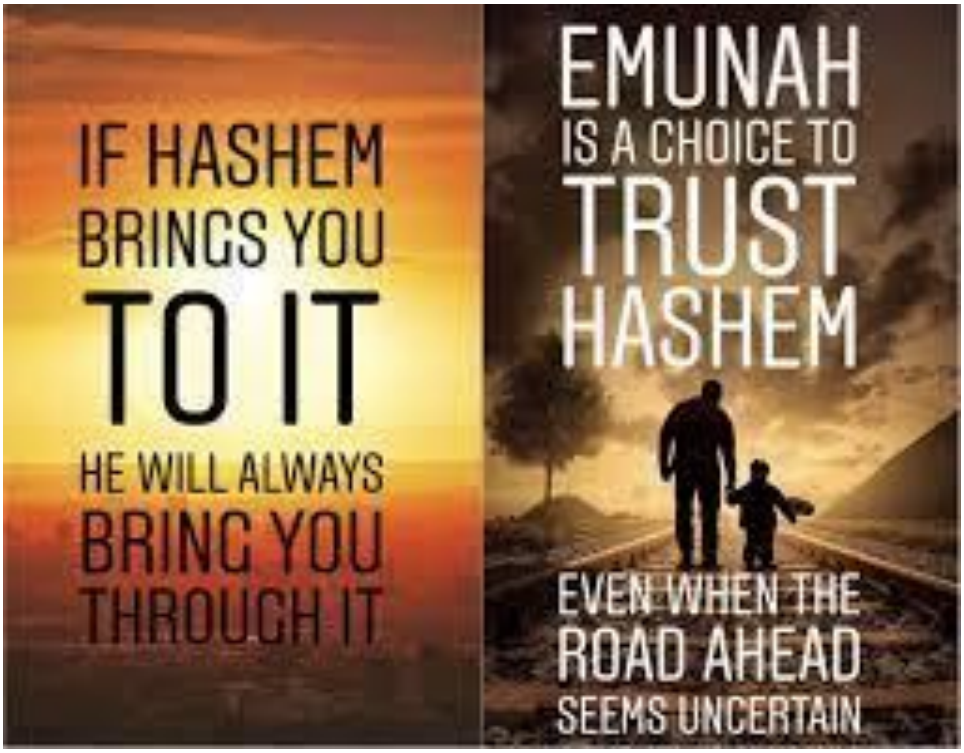
Torah Tavlin

אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָנֶיהָ בַרְזֶל וּמֵהָרָרֶיהָ תַּחְצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת 8:9 ***A land whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains you will hew copper.***

Chacham Rabbeinu Chayim Yosef Dovid Azulai zt"l (Chida) says. The first letters of "אֲבָנֶיהָ בַרְזֶל וּמֵהָרָרֶיהָ תַּחְצֹב " spell out "**אבות**". The stones - the foundation of the Land - are "**בַּרְזֶל**" - **B**ilhaa, **R**ochel, **Z**ilpah and **L**eah - the four Matriarchs. "**הרים**" - the mountains refer to the Patriarchs- Avos. In the merit of our holy Forefathers and mothers, the Jewish people will control "**נחשת**" - a reference to the snake (**נחש**) embodied by Esav and the oppressors of Klal Yisroel.

"Stop being afraid of what can go wrong and start being positive about what can go right."

Marrying Off a Daughter



It was a very stressful time for the parents because they were tight on funds and needed money to make the wedding. One of the married children, seeing that his parents were under so much stress, suggested that the family go away, for Shabbos, take a little break and rejuvenate themselves. This was a few weeks before the wedding. The parents went away for Shabbos with their unmarried children.

That Motzei Shabbos, the place had been ransacked! Vandals had broken in and taken everything! All the cheques the father had received from his customers that week in his store were gone. All of the jewellery and wedding supplies for the bride, gone. The parents had borrowed thousands of Shekalim to make the wedding, and this too was stolen.

The son called a few of his siblings and told them what happened. One son called his parents who were on their way home and broke the news slowly. "There was a robbery in the house, but Boruch Hashem, everyone is okay," he said, as gently as he could. The father asked, "Was the money for the wedding taken?" He paused for a moment before replying, "Yes." The father asked about all the valuables, and when he heard that everything was stolen, he could not continue driving. His emotions got to him, and he had to pull over to the side of the ride just to get his bearings. They knew their

father was strong and he would be able to deal with it eventually. They were more concerned and worried about how their mother would react when she saw her house in such disarray.

A short while later, the family came home. They entered the house and looked around. The furniture was overturned, seforim and books were strewn all over, papers were piled up in disarray, and the closet shelves were systematically ransacked. The married children feared the worst - but they were in for quite a surprise. As her family stood around her, hoping to encourage her, their mother stood quietly and looked around. Then, she turned her head up and spoke in a heartrending voice: "Ribono Shel Olam, my Father in Heaven, only You know how much sorrow I have over this, but I believe b'emunah sheleimah, it was only You who did this. It was only because of Your abundant mercy and kindness that this happened. Robbers don't have the ability to steal. You control everything. Even though I cannot possibly see how this is good, I'm going to trust You and I'm always going to believe in You."

Suddenly, she opened up her arms and declared, "Hashem, please, in the merit of my Emunah, help my two children who have not yet given birth and need children themselves!" She had one daughter married for over five years without children, and another married for close to nine years without having given birth - the doctors had already given up hope for her. And then she added, "And my son who is divorced - let him find the right zivug! Please Hashem, in the merit of my Emunah!"

Unfortunately, the money and valuables were never recovered. A few weeks later, their daughter got married and the whole family was there to celebrate the modest simcha. Within the next twelve months, all three of her requests were granted - she was blessed with two beautiful grandchildren, and she brought her divorced son to the chupah!

Brocho V'Hatzlocho

The art of blessing another Jew has been elevated, in this day and age, to a new level by **HaGaon R' Chaim Kanievsky Z'tl**.

In order to save time and enable hundreds of Yidden on a daily basis to benefit from his blessings, R' Chaim has taken to shortening the language of his benediction. For many years, he would shake a petitioner's hand and say, "Bracha V'Hatzlacha." (Blessing and success). Lately, though, he has outdone himself. Now, as the line passes by, R' Chaim utters a short "BUHA" (the acronym for **ברכה והצלחה**) and moves on to the next person!



A number of years ago, **R' Yankel Galinsky ZT"L** came to R' Chaim and asked for a bracha. R' Chaim shook his hand and gave his customary "BUHA" - to which R' Yankel smilingly replied, "OOHVAA." The people standing around were perplexed, as was R' Chaim himself. "What is 'OOHVAA'?" asked R' Chaim, eyebrows raised. "What is 'BUHA'?" R' Yankel asked in response. R' Chaim looked hard at R' Yankel and said, "'BUHA' is 'Bracha V'hatzlacha.' R' Yankel smiled and replied, "And 'OOHVAA' is 'Amen V'Amen' (**אמן ואמן**)!"

To truly love someone, you don't need to understand them fully or agree with them fully – you just need to be there for them fully. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Reb Shayele of Kerestir (1851-1925).

בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים 7:14 ***You shall be blessed above all peoples***

A young man was working as a waiter in an upscale East-Side restaurant. He would see food being thrown out every night, and then he would see all the homeless people starving in the street on his way home. He asked his boss if he could take the food out to the homeless people at night. The boss said it was fine.

The young waiter began taking the food and doling it out to the appreciative homeless people in their shanties. Except for one ragged and filthy woman, who always ran away when he came by and refused to eat. He finally cornered her and asked why she refused to eat. "I don't eat from no Jews," was her gruff reply. The young man laughed and said, "Jew? My name is Andy McCormick! No Jewish blood here!" But the woman refused to listen. "No, you're Jewish. There's no doubt! Only a Jew will do something like this!"



Later that night, the man came home and told his mom the story. Instantly, she turned white! "What's wrong, Mom?" he asked concerned. She sighed and explained, "I never told you this, but your father and I are Jewish. After the war, we changed our name to McCormick, so we wouldn't be known as Jews!" Today, this man is an observant Jew living in Israel.

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

Torah Tavlin

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ׃



Prior to his passing, **R' Moshe Ivyer zt"l** assembled members of his community and attempted to inspire them concerning the significance of Birchas Hamazon. "I assure you," he told them, "that whoever recites Birchas Hamazon from a written text, his house will not sustain the damages of fire."

This was stated during a time in history when every blaze carried the potential to burn down an entire city. Everyone in the community heeded the Rav's advice, except for one man who simply refused to bentch from a written text. It was not convenient, he said. The Jewish community was spared the effects of a conflagration as a result of their adherence to R' Moshe's admonition.

One night, a fire broke out in a non-Jewish home right near the home of the non-complying Jew. The wife woke her husband in a panic. Their home was in the line of the fire. What were they to do? Suddenly, the wife told her husband, "Quickly, run to the cemetery and pray at the grave of R' Moshe Ivyer. Ask mechillah, forgiveness, for disregarding his warning and ask him to intercede on our behalf." The man might have been obstinate, but he was not a total fool. He ran to the cemetery and begged forgiveness for his insolence. He promised to never again separate himself from the community and always bentch from a written text.

The man returned home to find that all the gentile homes were burnt down, while his home was standing, unscathed, because the fire had been put out - at his doorstep.

Some may think that Birchas Hamazon is a chore. Some will not wash and eat bread so as not to have to bentch. In truth, though, these special blessings are not what we do for Hashem, but rather, what He does for us.

Sefer Seder Hayom writes that when we bentch with concentration on each word, and say it "inside" (from a written text), it causes a person and his entire family who learns and follows suit, to be blessed. "**המברך יתברך**" - the blesser is blessed.

Torah Tavlin- The Mitzvah to Say Birchas Hamazon. וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה׳ אֱלֹקיךָ (8:10)

The Aruch Hashulchan writes that when one recites Birchas Hamazon after a meal, he should wear a head covering that covers most of his head (Magen Avraham) like a hat. He quotes from other sources that one should wear a "Beged Elyon" (outer garment) although he says that he is unsure of the source of this minhag.

There was once a religious businessman who was close to the family of **R' Chaim Kanievsky Ztl**. He once came to R' Chaim to inquire about the need to wear a hat and jacket by bentching. Is this a minhag or an actual requirement, he wanted to know?

The businessman phrased his question as follows: "Rebbi, the problem is that often I am required to attend 'working dinners' where I sit with high-powered businessman to discuss and hammer out the details of large deals and transactions. Many times, this is conducted in restaurants and even though of course they are Glatt Kosher establishments, in such a setting it might look strange if I'm the only person at the table wearing a hat and jacket."



R' Chaim shook his head. Not only must you not tread leniently on this mitzvah, you must always make sure to wear an extra covering on your head (to cover the entire head) and an outer garment on your body when you bentch. This is the halacha (See Gemara Berachos 51a, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 44:6).

"Not only that," said R' Chaim, "doing so is a segulah for riches. Believe me, you will surely not lose out if you are careful to properly keep this fine practice."

The man was scrupulous from that day forward. A number of weeks went by, and the businessman found himself involved in a huge real estate deal, worth tens of millions of shekel. Many days were devoted to the deal and one final meeting with the lead broker was necessary to close it. They agreed to talk over dinner in a fancy kosher restaurant, even though the broker was not religious. The restaurant was good enough even for his standards and he agreed to meet there.

During the meal, the two men discussed various aspects of the deal and were close to finalizing. They were just 5 million shekel apart - a small sum in the total scheme of this large and heavily involved real estate transaction. But neither man would budge. Each insisted that the money was coming to him and the back-and-forth exchange was at first congenial. After some time, it began to become heated. No amount of logical argumentation could sway the other. Each brought facts and figures to the table proving why the money really should go to him and they seemed to be at a real impasse. The religious businessman thought the matter over and realized that this deal was too big to lose over a few million shekel. He waited until they had

finished eating and he told himself that right after bentching, he would give in to the other man's demands and take the deal as is.

He excused himself and stood up to wash mayim acharonim and get his hat and jacket for bentching, just as he was told to do by R' Chaim. It was clear that giving in was the only way to rescue the deal from falling apart and as he walked back to the table with his hat and jacket on, he told himself that it was all for the best.

He approached his table and before he could even sit down, the other man suddenly jumped out of his seat, stuck out his hand and announced, "Okay, you win! We will do it your way. I will yield to your demands and let you keep the five million shekel. The most important thing is that we finalize this now and get the deal done!"

The surprised businessman shook the other's hand and sat down to bentch. When he was finished, he turned to his competitor and asked inquisitively, "So tell me, what caused you to change your mind. You were so adamant all throughout the meal that you were right, and then all of a sudden, you changed your mind. What happened?"

"What do you mean?" said the non-religious man. "When you got up and put on your hat and jacket, I realized that as a man of principle, you were prepared to allow the deal to blow up and walk away if you didn't get what you want. I said to myself, for the five million shekel, it's not worth losing out on such a big deal - so I gave in!"

Birkas Hamazon

Reb Elyah Lopian zt'l said that he doesn't understand why there is a long break in yeshivos from after Shacharis until first seder begins. - He said, "All you need is five minutes to eat some bread and fifteen minutes to bentch!"

R' Gamliel Rabinowitz Shlit'a (Tiv HaEmunah) would say: -



Yaakov Avinu came down to Egypt with an entourage of seventy souls. However, after undergoing and surviving the immense suffering of slavery, Klal Yisroel left Egypt numbering six-hundred thousand men over the age of twenty, besides all the women and children.

In a little over two hundred years, the nation blossomed in the midst of intense suffering. The tremendous lesson to be learned from these events is that no matter what terrible situation a person may find himself in, he can always search and discern the chessed of Hashem that is with him as well."

וָאֶתְפֹּשׂ בִּשְׁנֵי הַלֻּחֹת וָאַשְׁלִכֵם מֵעַל שְׁתֵּי יָדָי וָאֲשַׁבְּרֵם לְעֵינֵיכֶם׃ 9:17

Once there was a great artist who decided he was going to paint his greatest masterpiece. He journeyed with a companion up a mountain and began painting an exquisite landscape. After several days, the painting was complete. He then began to view his work from different angles to see what improvements could be made.

He started walking backwards, admiring his work. He continued to pace from side to side, focusing only on his work, until eventually he came within a few feet of the edge of the mountain cliff.

His companion realized the danger he was in and called to him to stop moving, but he paid no notice. When he was only seconds away from falling off the cliff and certain death, his friend shouted to him to stop, but again the artist was too engrossed in his work to pay attention.

Finally, the friend picked up a knife and ran to the picture and slashed it, destroying the masterpiece in one fell swoop. "What are you doing?" the artist cried out, in disbelief. "Look behind you and you'll see why I did it," replied his friend. When the artist looked behind him, he realized that destroying his work was the only way his life was spared.

Hashem told Moshe that the Jewish People were sinning with the Golden Calf and that He was prepared to destroy them immediately. Moshe recognized the need for drastic action and without a second thought, he threw down the Luchos and halted the outrage. It was just what was needed to bring the nation back from the brink!



Chacham Rabbeinu Chayim ibn Attar ZT"L (Ohr HaChayim Hakadosh) would say: וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן - Chazal say that the expression וְהָיָה implies joy. Bnei Yisroel enjoyed miraculous, divine protection over the course of their forty years in the wilderness; the Clouds of Glory encircled them, the pillar of fire guided their path continuously, Moshe led the way, the mann provided them with food and the well with water. Nevertheless, they were bereft of joy, as one cannot rejoice so long as he has yet to reach his final destination, no matter how glorious the trip may be.

This serves as a critical lesson for us, that we must look forward to the complete redemption along whose road we currently find ourselves, as the posuk states, 'When Hashem restores the restoration of Zion, we will have been like dreamers. Only then will our mouths be filled with laughter, and our tongues with joy!'

The Rizhiner

From all over Europe, thousands of Yidden would come to visit the holy Rebbe of Rizhin, **R' Yisroel Friedman zt"l**.



For a young boy named Pesach, an orphan who had been taken in by the Rebbe's family, it was an amazing sight of which he never tired of observing. Each and every day, so many people with so many kinds of troubles, would come to the Rebbe in the hopes of receiving a blessing for a better future. "The Rizhiner is a Tzaddik," he was told. "All these people come to him for a blessing and when he gives it, he can see what will happen to them many years from now."

Well, little Pesach was curious and one day built up the nerve to ask the Rebbe for a beracha. "What will be in my future?" asked the boy innocently. The Rizhiner looked at him and said, "My son, a time will come when you will go away. You will study medicine and become a doctor. Then you will go to the Holy Land and help many people and save many lives."

Pesach burst into tears. "Don't be upset that you must leave," the Rizhiner said. "My thoughts will always be with you." And so it was that the boy grew up and became a doctor, taking the family name Friedman, after his beloved Rebbe. He settled in the town of Tzefas in the Galilee.

One day a regal carriage stopped in front of his home, and an important looking man stepped out. "I am looking for Dr. Friedman," he announced. When Dr. Friedman came to the door he was told, "The Princess of Prussia is visiting the Holy Land and she is extremely ill.

One minute she is burning with fever, the next moment she is shivering with cold. You must come at once. Her father, the Kaiser, is anxious about her health."

Dr. Friedman hurried to the princess' bedside. He examined her and diagnosed malaria. "Take this medicine for three days. If we are fortunate, the disease has been caught in time for a cure." Three days later the princess' fever broke, and she began the long road to recovery.

After three weeks Dr. Friedman was summoned again. "The Princess will be resuming her trip. Her next destination is Jerusalem, however she still feels weak and has asked that you accompany her."

Dr. Friedman replied, "Your Highness, how can I fulfil your request? As a Jew I must pray three times a day with ten men and eat only kosher food. The trip to Jerusalem is a long one."

The Kaiser replied, "Spare no expense. Bring along ten men and whatever food you need. Just come." Dr. Friedman joined the travelling party for the long, arduous journey. He was provided with anything he required. Kosher food was obtained, and he was permitted to organize a minyan, at any time he pleased.

The Kaiser was extremely satisfied with the Jewish doctor and told him he was in his debt. Many months passed and no more was heard from the princess or her father. The Land of Israel was beset with problems - the safety of their children. The Turkish government, which then ruled the Holy Land, was demanding that young Jewish men serve in its army. Not only was it impossible to observe the Torah in the army, but it was also highly dangerous. The only alternative was prison.

One day, a telegram arrived for Dr. Friedman from the Kaiser of Prussia. The brief cable stated that by the grace of His Royal Highness, and for the act of saving the Princess' life, Dr. Pesach Friedman is duly appointed the Prussian Consular General for the

Galilee region, with full authority to issue passports, visas, and any other such papers to citizens of Prussia.

Dr. Friedman was silent for a long while, as he read the telegram. The words of his mentor, the holy Rizhiner played over in his mind: "You will go the Holy Land. There you will help many people and save many lives." And then, it came to him. He organized Jewish leaders from all over the Land and told them, "I have the answer to our troubles. By this document, I have been given the right to issue passports to citizens of Prussia.

Do you realize what this means? No longer will the Turks have power over us. If any young men are threatened, let them come to me and I will issue them a Prussian passport. That will save them! With these papers they will become citizens of Prussia and will not have to serve in the Turkish army!" And so, the words of R' Yisroel of Rizhin came true over and over again!



וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ 8:10

Shimon was an eleven-year-old boy learning in a Polish cheder, when **R' Meir Shapiro ZT"L, the Lubliner Rav**, came to test the boys and speak to them in learning.

The children exceeded his expectations, and the Rav told the children that as a prize for doing so well he was going to share with them a secret for life.

He quoted the following words from the **Be'er Hativ** in the name of **the Chinuch**: ***"Whoever is careful to recite Birchas Hamazon with kavana, word for word (from a bentcher), is assured he will never worry about where his next meal will come from for his needs will be taken care of with respect and generosity all the days of his life."***



The words entered Shimon's heart and he decided, right then and there, to accept upon himself to always bentch with kavana (concentration). It wasn't easy. After lunch, while other children ran out to play, he stayed longer, taking his time, saying each word carefully, wasting most of recess but never relenting on his kabalah.

When the Second World War broke out, Shimon was still a boy. Amidst the havoc of war, he was separated from his entire family, undergoing misery and loneliness in Nazi concentration camps. Fortunately, he was chosen to work in the camp kitchen, as an assistant to the cook and this made Shimon constantly aware that the blessing of R' Meir was already being fulfilled. There was no shortage of food in the kitchen, and he never had to worry about going hungry. He made sure that after eating bread, he would recite every word of bentching loud and clear and if he saw that circumstances would not allow him to bentch properly - he wouldn't eat!

One day, a high-ranking Nazi officer walked into the warm kitchen and noticed Shimon working there. Instantly, he became furious and started screaming, "How can it be that a Jewish boy is healthy and well-fed in this camp?" He told Shimon to walk outside immediately and handed him a small hammer. Pointing to the frozen earth he told him to dig a bunker two meters deep to protect Nazi officers from the Russian bombs. It was obviously an impossible request and they both knew it. But none of that mattered. "Upon completion you may return to the kitchen," said the sadistic animal and stormed away.

The implications were obvious. Shimon was never meant to return to the safety and warmth of the camp kitchen. With the small hammer in hand, Shimon raised his eyes Heavenward. "Hashem," he said, "I am keeping my part of the deal, and I was promised that I will be taken care of all the days of my life. I am still a child! Is this called my whole life?"

Suddenly, a truck full of German soldiers drove by. When they saw a Jewish boy standing on the frozen ground, trying to dig with a hammer, they burst into raucous laughter. Furthering his embarrassment, the Germans began pelting the young boy with whatever was at hand. There were bottles and cigarette butts, but also potatoes, cucumbers and other produce. This went on for a quite a bit.

When the truck finally moved away, Shimon realized that he was standing in the midst of a pile of vegetables! He had asked for food, and here it was! But he wasn't out of the woods yet. He needed to dig an impossible hole and if he couldn't finish the bunker before the Nazi officer returned, all these vegetables would be useless to him!

But this prayer, too, was quickly answered. Out of nowhere, another truck drove by - this one carrying non-Jewish Polish soldiers. They saw piles of vegetables and asked Shimon if they can have some. With a sudden stroke of inspiration, Shimon responded, "Well, if you dig me a bunker right here, two meters deep, I will let you take all the food!" Without Shimon even lifting a finger, the men jumped out of their truck and with their shovels and picks, set to work. Before long, the hole was completed, and Shimon was more than happy to give them the entire stock of his valuable produce.

Soon the Nazi officer returned. He stood there shocked, unable to fathom how a child had managed to dig such a precise bunker, through frozen earth, with just a hammer for digging! He looked at Shimon with a venomous gaze and declared, "I always knew you Jews

have someone watching over you." Then he ordered Shimon back to the kitchen!

With the help of Hashem, Shimon survived the war, promising himself in those dark days, that he would always make sure to bentch with kavanah – thanking the One Above for providing him with food in such a generous fashion. And he kept this kabbalah his entire life. In Jerusalem, where he lived, he was well-known for his special affinity and zehirus for the mitzvah of Birchas Hamazon.

Two Kidneys and a Kallah – In the Merit of One Amen

This story was related by **Rabbi Yoel Gold, shlita**, a Rav in Los Angeles, who heard the story from who it happened to, Reb Freddy Betesh: One day, he began to feel unwell, and with each passing day, his condition grew worse. First it was erratic headaches, and then he began vomiting frequently. Within a short time, he'd lost nearly 30 pounds.

At this point, he told his mother what was going on, and she quickly bought a ticket and boarded a flight. When she arrived, one look at her son was enough to realize that something was seriously wrong. She quickly took him to the hospital. In the emergency room, Freddy underwent comprehensive testing. Freddy was suffering from acute kidney failure. His kidneys had stopped working and he would need dialysis to take over their function.

Freddy went from being a young, healthy bachur to a sick young man whose life depended on the dialysis machines. After an initial course of dialysis, Freddy returned to America, and was immediately placed on a waiting list for a kidney transplant. This list is about 100,000 people long. Based on the national average, he would have to wait about eight years for his turn to come. But Freddy knew that dialysis patients didn't usually live longer than five years – and that he needed a miracle to survive.



Freddy liked to read, and when he got hold of a book that was published at that time, entitled Just One Word – Amen!, he read it from beginning to end. The book speaks about the power of tefillah and of answering amen, and it introduced Freddy to the concept of a brachos party.

He showed the book to his mother, and she liked the idea, and believed that perhaps in the merit of this mitzvah they would merit a yeshuah. She decided to organize such an event as a merit for Freddy's recovery.

The next day, Freddy's mother attended the weekly shiur in a shul in their area. When the Rav finished the shiur, she spoke to the other women there and related that her son was unwell, and she wanted to make a brachos party in his merit. Within a short time, Freddy's mother and the young volunteer organized a lavish amen seudah. One hundred and twenty women participated, and each one, at her turn, made a brachah on a food, and the rest answered amen. The party took place on Wednesday, and three days later, during the Shabbos seudah, the phone suddenly rang. Freddy relates: "We were sitting at the Shabbos morning seudah and suddenly we heard the phone ring. The answering machine picked up and we heard the following message: "This is the Montifiore Kidney Transplant Centre, and you, Frederick Betesh, have just won the lottery. Congratulations! We have a one-out of-10 million perfect matching kidney for you. Please call us back as soon as possible."

Due to the pikuach nefesh involved, Freddy picked up the phone. The secretary told him that a short time earlier, a person with a matching kidney had died in an accident in Texas. Freddy needed to

get to the hospital immediately. "You've been put at the top of the waiting list, because the DNA of this kidney matched your kidney almost perfectly – or as the doctors said: 'a six-antigen match.' "I didn't just say you won the lottery," the secretary added, "because the chances of a full match with all six antigens is one in ten million – the same as hitting all six numbers in the Powerball lottery."

Eight days later, Freddy was out of the hospital, with a new kidney and on the road to a new life. His health was restored, and he became the energetic, vibrant young man he had been beforehand.

In an act of gratitude, Freddy's mother called the girl who had helped her organize the amen seudah and told her about their wondrous yeshuah. As they chatted pleasantly, she had an idea… When she hung up the phone, she contacted the girl's family and suggested her son as a shidduch for her.

Three months later, they were engaged. Ten years passed, during which time Freddy and his wife adopted the mitzvah of amen as an integral part of their family life. This beautiful story could have ended here and left the readers with the impression of the power of amen. But Hashgachah ordained a no less remarkable continuation.

Ten years after the transplant, Freddy began to feel unwell again. Red lights flashed in his brain, and he immediately went for testing. He found out that his fears were well founded, and his implanted kidney had stopped working. The doctors explained that a kidney that is harvested from a deceased person usually has a "shelf life" of ten years – which he had received to the maximum. So, Freddy found himself hospitalized again for dialysis. Again, he was put on the lengthy waiting list…

The Betesh family continued to strengthen itself in the mitzvah of answering amen, and in their emunah in Hashem. And the yeshuah once again arrived: It was on a particularly difficult night, after an exhausting day of treatment, and Freddy and his wife felt on the verge of despair. Moshe, Freddy's young brother, who had grown

stronger in his observance thanks to his brother. His voice was choked with tears as he informed them that just a few minutes earlier, he had received a positive result.

"I couldn't watch you suffer so much," Moshe explained. "I thought to myself: you gave me real life, the life of Torah and mitzvos; hasn't the time come for me to pay you back with life?! So, I secretly took tests for compatibility to donate a kidney to you, and the doctors were stunned: my kidney is a match for you - with six antigens! You know that that means," Moshe concluded. A short time later the surgery took place. Moshe's kidney was removed and implanted into his older brother's body – giving him back his life…

Freddy concludes his remarkable story: "The chances of getting a kidney that has a six-antigen compatibility twice, and while doing so to find my zivug – are virtually nil. And to think that it is all in the merit of one word – amen – is simply unbelievable!

The effect that these many amens generated Above apparently caused all the brachos to be channelled to us and on our behalf.

"You should make a significant effort to listen to brachos and answer amen. You will merit a small moment of genuine and pure connection to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and it's likely that tremendous miracles will be bestowed upon you and will help you obtain all the gifts and brachos that you are so waiting for.

◣ ***"Accept the truth from whatever source it comes".***

◣ ***"The risk of a wrong decision is preferable to the terror of indecision".***

◣ ***"Teach thy tongue to say, 'I do not know,' and thou shalt progress".***

~ Rambam.

Following In the Ways Of Hashem

"Just as He is merciful, so must we be merciful. Just as He performs acts of kindness, so must we act with kindness." There was a young couple who were not blessed with children for quite a number of years, ר"ל. The community in which they lived was sympathetic and tried to help them out. There were even people who helped pay for their fertility treatments. However, year after year went by and resignation followed by hints of depression had begun to set in. The childless couple was not observant in mitzvos and had never been to the Holy Land. A religious friend suggested that they visit Israel and he even offered to arrange for them to receive blessings from well-known "righteous men" who lived there.



The couple accepted the offer and scheduled their trip. The religious friend called his son who lived in Jerusalem and asked him to escort them. The son, Shai Shechter, agreed immediately and got right down to it. His first call was to his Rosh Yeshivah in the Mir, **R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel, ZT"L**, asking him for help. "Rebbe," he asked, "may I come over this Motzei Shabbos, with a childless couple, for berachos?" The Rosh Yeshivah said of course.

The couple arrived in Israel on Thursday and Shai met them in Jerusalem. That evening, he accompanied them to a noted Rav who only spoke Yiddish. Shai acted as an interpreter between the Rav and the couple. The Rav listened to their tale of woe, took their names, and vowed to daven for them. Meanwhile, someone whispered in the Rav's ear that the couple is not shomer mitzvos. The elderly Rav did not like this fact and became somewhat

agitated. When the couple looked at Shai for an explanation, all he said was, "I'm not sure what he's saying .... but maybe we should go."

On Motzei Shabbos, Shai met up with the couple and took them to R' Nosson Tzvi's apartment. Immediately noting that the wife was dressed inappropriately, Rebbetzin Finkel was nevertheless warm and friendly to her, and made the couple feel at ease in her home. Rebbetzin Finkel said to the woman, "You know, I'm very respectful of my husband. When I go in to speak with him, I wear a shawl. When we go in, I have one for you too." The woman smiled and nodded her assent. A minute later, they entered R' Nosson Tzvi's study.

To their surprise, they found the Rosh Yeshivah crying. Shai was unsure what to do and started speaking. "Rebbe, this is the couple that I spoke with you about. They're here to ...." The Rosh Yeshivah interrupted him. "Shai, be quiet," he said in fluent English. "Stop and think about the difficult ordeal that this couple has to deal with. Hoping and praying for years that Hashem will bless them with a child." Thereupon, Rebbetzin Finkel started crying. Following suit, the couple started crying. Shai was dumfounded and the only one with a dry eye in the room.

When everyone finally stopped crying, R' Nosson Tzvi asked for their names, and vowed to daven for them. He spoke to them for a little while longer and set their minds at ease. The couple hung onto his every word.

As they got up to leave, the husband spoke. "Rabbi Finkel," he said with great emotion, "my wife and I are so happy that we met you and your Rebbetzin. You are so kind, and we're grateful for your blessings. But when Shai took us to this other great rabbi, he seemed to get angry after we spoke to him. We don't know what to make of that."

R' Nosson Tzvi reacted emphatically. "I know that rabbi, and he's a very, very holy man. He is so close to Hashem. After he heard what you're going through, he no doubt began shouting, "Master of the

World! Help this couple with a child! They're going through so much and look to You for an answer. Give them what they want since they so deserve it!"

The husband smiled as if to say he now understood. As they walked out, the Rosh Yeshivah told Shai that one can "bend" the truth for the sake of Sholom Bayis.

R' Nosson Tzvi never lost touch with his sensitivity to anyone's problems. The American couple went home with a real belief that the Tzaddik's blessing will come true in the near future.



וּקְשַׁרְתָּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יֶדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם 11:18

The mitzvah of Tefillin is one that has been handed down from father to son, from generation to generation. It is an "ois" a sign from Heaven, that Hashem chose us as his nation and we look to him - our Father in Heaven - to protect and sustain us throughout our long and bitter exile. Tefillin is the mark of a Jew.

It is told that the saintly **R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"L** once saw a simple Jew drop his Tefillin. The man gently lifted them up and lovingly kissed them. The Berditchever raised his hands up to heaven and exclaimed, "Ribono shel Olam, the Jewish people are Your Tefillin. You have dropped them and let them lie on the ground for more than two thousand years, trampled by their enemies. Why do You not pick them up?

The following story is told about the power of a pair of Tefillin. An Israeli young man from a fine religious family, drifted away from his familial upbringing, and became lax in his mitzvah observance. No amount of pleading and cajoling could make the teenager see the light of truth, and he felt the need to experience life on his own. He enlisted in the Israeli army and served his time with a great deal of courage and honour; albeit with a total lack of religious observance. His father would speak to him on a regular basis and implore him to

keep at least some of the commandments, but the soldier had no interest. His mind was not on religion and so after serving three years in the Israeli army, he decided that it was time to travel the world and experience the freedom he so desperately craved.

He packed his bags and kissed his family goodbye. At the airport his father handed him his Tefillin bag and told him that even though it's been years since he last put on his Tefillin, he should start putting them on every day and this will be his protection. "Son, promise me that you will put on these Tefillin once a day," the father said with tears brimming in his eyes.



The son, moved by his father's entreaties, promised his dad that no matter where he'll be, he will put on the Tefillin every day. It was two weeks before the son finally called his family to let them know that he was fine.

In the course of the conversation, his father asked if he puts on the Tefillin like he promised, and the son assured his father that it is the first thing he does every morning upon waking up. The son continued with his travelling and from time to time called his family. In every phone conversation the father asked his son if he puts on Tefillin and the son would always answer the same words every time, "Yes, father. Of course, I put on the Tefillin every single morning."

Three months went by and the travel money was dwindling. The son began to panic and in desperation, called his father asking him to send more money. The father's response was he wanted to know if the son was putting on Tefillin. The son was not amused. He needed

money and his father would not give him a straight answer. The next time he called and requested money, his father once again inquired if he put on the Tefillin. The son became angry at his father for asking the same question every time. "I need money and all you ask me about is Tefillin!" the boy screamed and hung up the phone.

Having no money left and thus no place to go, the son returned to Israel, blaming his father for cutting his world experience short. On the trip from the airport, he acted distant and refused to talk to his father altogether.

A day after his return to Israel, his father calmly asked his son if he put on Tefillin, and the son yelled at his father that he puts it on every day and to stop asking him the same question all the time.

The father asked his son to give him the Tefillin bag and the son angrily handed it to him. The father's hand was shaking as he opened his son's Tefillin bag and suddenly he pulled a bundle of money out of the bag.

The father shook his head sadly and told his son, "If you would have put on the Tefillin as you said you did, you would have found the $5,000 I sent you for additional travel expenses ...."

Since that day the son attends daily morning prayer and puts on his Tefillin. He hasn't missed a minyan since!

"The Torah was not given to us to make us comfortable. It was given to challenge us, to shake us out of our complacency, and to demand that we become better. The Halacha is not a set of mechanical rules; it is a spiritual discipline that transforms the ordinary into the holy. The goal is not simply to know the law, but to live it, to let it reshape our instincts and our character until we become a Kiddush Hashem in every action." ~ Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

"'Who led you through the great and terrible desert, with serpents and scorpions and thirst, where there was no water.' 8:15 הַמּוֹלִיכְךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא נָחָשׁ שָׂרָף וְעַקְרָב וְצִמָּאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין מָיִם

Rabbi Aharon Zakai Shlita (Torat HaParasha) would say:



Since 'thirst' (צִמָּאוֹן) and 'no water' (אֵין מָיִם) signify the same thing, why are they both said? When a person is thirsty and there is water nearby, he can rest easy, and his thirst will slightly diminish. Yet when he is thirsty and there is no water nearby, his thirst will increase, and he will suffer even more.

In the desert, Klal Yisroel thirsted for water. However, they were also thirsty because they realized 'there no water.' Hence the posuk stresses both of these aspects."

8:10 וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ

The Gemara (Berachos 35b) says: "Whoever benefits from this world without making a blessing is an acquaintance of Yeravam ben Nevat, who corrupted Israel and led the m away from Hashem." Why do we compare such a person to Yeravam ben Nevat rather than anyone else?

R' Mordechai Rabinowitz ZT"L (Ner Lamaor) answers in remarkable fashion. The sin of Yeravam was the golden calf (Egel) that he made, a sin similar to the one committed by Israel with the original golden calf. Yeravam ben Nevat believed, not that there is no G-d, but that He keeps to Himself up in the heavens, while the Earth is given over to mankind to run without any Heavenly interference. Through this belief he came to idol worship. However, Chazal ask a question: The

posuk says, "To Hashem is the Earth and its fullness", but later, another posuk says, "The heavens are to Hashem, but the Earth He has given to man. Well, which is it? Is the earth Hashem's or has He given it to man?



The gemara answers that the first posuk speaks about the state of life before one makes a blessing. At that point, the earth is all Hashem's property. The second posuk, on the other hand, speaks about the state of things after one makes a blessing. Then, the Earth is considered legitimate for man to enjoy. It follows that one who believes that he doesn't need to make a blessing before eating is of the opinion that the world is given over to man, and Hashem should remain only in the heavens and not interfere with our business.

This, says the Ner Lamaor, is the sin of Yeravam ben Nevat! In his eyes, the Heavens belong to Hashem as long as He doesn't bother me, since He has given the Earth to man. That is why one who benefits from the world without making a blessing is called a friend of Yeravam ben Nevat.

Love is not the cause of giving - giving is the cause of love. When a person gives to another, he binds himself to him, until the other becomes part of him. ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (Michtav MeEliyahu, Vol. I – Kuntres HaChesed)

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ 8:10

R' Elazar Menachem Mann Shach ZT"L once advised someone to take upon himself a small mitzvah as a tikkun. "When you say Birkas Hamazon, recite it from a siddur," said R' Shach.



The man was surprised. "For what purpose?" he asked. R' Shach told him the following story. **The Brisker Rav ZT"L** once needed to go to Switzerland for his health, where the pure mountain air would help him. The doctor instructed him to walk on a certain path each morning, where he would breathe the air to improve his condition. After a while, the doctor checked the Rav and found that there was no improvement in his condition. He soon learned that the Rav had wanted to get back to his learning each morning, so he rushed the walk so as not to waste any time. However, this left him with not enough time for the clear mountain air to have a positive effect on his health.

The doctor was smart. He advised the Rav to take a Sefer with him and study it on the way. And so he did. The Brisker Rav took a sefer and walked slowly, absorbing the air along the way. In no time, the Rav's condition improved. "So too," R' Shach concluded, "if you bentch from a siddur, your whole path will be slower and not rushed. The 'air' will be clearer and you will absorb its blessing."

We say in bentching: "Who nourishes and sustains all and benefits all." When recited properly, Birkas Hamazon is meant to be a segulah for parnassah in particular. - Once we understand where everything comes from, may we merit only blessings from Hashem.

Parsha Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport

(8:4) ורגלך לא בצקה זה ארבעים שנה Your clothing did not wear out upon you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

In mentioning that the shoes of the Jewish people miraculously didn't wear out during their sojourn in the wilderness, the Torah states explicitly (29:4) that they wore shoes during their travels through the desert.

How can this be resolved with Rashi's comment on our verse that the feet of the Jews miraculously didn't swell during their travels in the desert as is customary for those who walk barefoot?



The Rogatchover Gaon resolves the apparent contradiction by suggesting that when the Jewish people exited Egypt and entered the wilderness, they were indeed wearing shoes. However, after the sins of the golden calf and the spies, they were legally considered in **נידוי**– excommunication – until the end of their 40-year sojourn in the desert. Somebody who has been excommunicated must observe certain signs of mourning, including the removal of his shoes.

The earlier verse is addressed to the Jewish people, who were forced to wander without shoes for this period and emphasizes the miracle that their bare feet didn't swell during this time. Our verse is addressed to the Levites, who remained righteous and didn't take part in these sins and weren't punished with excommunication. They were allowed to wear their shoes during their sojourn in the wilderness, and our verse refers to the miracle that their shoes didn't wear out while wandering through the hot desert for so many years.

8:19 וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁכֹחַ תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ וְהָלַכְתָּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים

We have a general rule that the word **ויהי** denotes pain and anguish, whereas the word **והיה** infers happiness and joy. If so, then how can we possibly reconcile the words of the posuk: **וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁכֹחַ תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ** - ***"And it will be that if you forget Hashem, your G-d, and go after foreign gods and worship them .... you will surely perish."*** Where is the simcha in that connotation?



R' Boruch'l of Mezhibuz ZT"L explains based on the words of the gemara (Megilah 12a), that the reason why Hashem sought to destroy Klal Yisroel at the time of Mordechai and Esther was because the people took part and thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the feast of Achashverosh. It wasn't just that they were forced to be there; they were happy to partake and mingle with the heathens. Thus, it was a result of their joy in sinning that the decree was issued against them.

The meaning of the posuk is: It's one thing if a Jew is forced to sin as a result of the terrible oppression that non-Jews force upon him. But if he will forget Hashem - **וְהָיָה** - happily and willingly, then he will have crossed the line and gone too far. At that point, Hashem will destroy him and he will perish.

"הדיבור הוא הכוח הגדול שניתן לאדם לתקן או לקלקל." - ***"Speech is the great power given to a person, with which he can repair or destroy. No other faculty shapes a person's world as swiftly as his words." ~ Chofetz Chaim — Shmiras HaLashon, Sha'ar HaTevunah ch. 6.***

R' Meir Shushter Shlit'a of Aish Hatorah, was at the Kosel Hamaravi and noticed a young man wearing a paper kipa staring wordlessly at the wall with an awed expression. He approached and asked the young man if he was interested in learning more about Judaism and not just looking at a 2,000-year-old wall. The young man answered "Sure, why not?"



R' Meir realized that this young man was unusually bright. For the next six months, R' Meir took this young man under his wing and began studying with him, first the basics and gradually, as his genius mind absorbed rapidly, they moved up to studying Chumash, Mishna and even Gemara. What had first began as a Friday night dinner, turned into a six month intensive course in Torah study.

After six months, though, the young man came to R' Meir and informed him that he had decided to return back to his native London. R' Meir protested and told him that he thought he was doing so well, that he was well on his way to becoming a true Torah Jew.

At that point, the young man dropped a bombshell on him. "Well, you see," he began hesitantly, "I'm not even Jewish! I came here six months ago as part of my clerical course in religion, to try to learn and understand more about other faiths, but in fact, I'm studying to become a Christian priest myself."

R' Meir was understandably stunned. Not Jewish? A Christian? A priest? How could this be? How could he have been so far off with this man? Could it be that he simply wasted six months of his life learning Torah with a non-Jew? He was crestfallen and shaken to the core. But of course, Hashem's master plan takes into account every contingency.

About a half year later, an English youth walked into the halls of Yeshivah Aish Hatorah and asked for Rabbi Shuster. "You don't know me," he began, "But I heard that you're the person I should talk to." Obviously non-religious, R' Meir wondered who this man was and what he wanted from him. After being so badly burned just a short time ago, he was not taking any chances.

The Englishman said, "Well, you see, it's like this. I am presently taking a course in Philosophy in my university back in London. A few weeks ago, as my professor was delivering another boring lecture in Freudian philosophy, I was filled with question after question which I needed to discuss with him. After his lecture, I asked him what was on my mind, and predictably, he had no answers for me.

Finally, he told me that there is a brilliant young man who comes by the university from time to time who he thinks I should speak to. "So I did just that and when I found this young man - a Catholic priest in training no less - I began talking to him in matters of philosophy. After a short while, he stopped me in mid-sentence and asked me, 'Are you Jewish?' Taken aback, I answered that in fact I was Jewish by birth. He then told me, 'From the depth of your queries I figured as much. Listen, if you truly want to understand the truth of your convictions, than I'm not the right person for you to talk to. For you to find your truth, you must go to Jerusalem, to a Yeshivah called Aish Hatorah and speak to a rabbi named Meir Shuster. He can probably help you and answer all your questions.'

Well, rabbi, I travelled to Jerusalem and here I am!" R' Meir was stunned. Six months of studying with a non-Jewish priest had indeed served its purpose. This young Englishman, and amazingly five others who were likewise directed to Rabbi Shuster by an anonymous Catholic priest in London, all became Baalei Teshuva and religious Torah Jews.

A young chasid once came to R' Yechezkel of Kuzmir ZT"L with a kvittel in hand. The Rebbe had just sat down to eat his morning breakfast and the young man stood by respectfully observing as he ate. First, the Rebbe took a spoonful and pronounced a loud beracha, **שהכל נהיה בדברו**. Then, he continued eating and when he was finished, he made a beracha acharona, to which all those present responded with a hearty Amen.



At that point, the chasid approached R' Yechezkel, kvittel in hand, and laid it on the table in front of the Rebbe. R' Yechezkel looked up at the young man and began shaking his head. "You are not like your father," he intoned balefully. "You are like vinegar mixed inside a barrel of wine!"

Totally mystified by the Rebbe's words, the young chasid did not know how to respond. The Rebbe explained: "Your father once came to me, under very similar circumstances, with a kvittel in his hand. I was just sitting down to eat my morning meal, just as today, and I recited a loud beracha **שהכל נהיה בדברו**. Immediately, your father raced out of the room, forgetting all about his kvittel. "I asked him about this later and he replied, 'When I heard the Rebbe say **שהכל נהיה בדברו**, I realized that there was nothing more for me to request. Because **שהכל נהיה** - everything will be taken care of - '**בדברו** ' - by the word of Hashem, and it was not my place to ask for more!'

Everything a person experiences is meant to bring him closer to Hashem. ~ Beis HaLevi.

8:10 וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ



One who eats and does not make a blessing thanking Hashem for the food, is comparable to an animal. Not only that, writes **R' Yaakov Abuchatzera ZT"L**, but even one who eats like an animal will have a very hard time making a berachah like a Jew. Indeed, one must remember Hashem even when he eats, ensuring to speak words of Torah at the table and sense that he is eating at the sacred table of Hashem. Only in this manner can he recite a berachah with the proper concentration and sense of closeness to Hashem.

This is alluded to here in our posuk: - ***"You will eat, be satiated and bless Hashem your G-d."***

The name of Hashem - **"אֱלֹקיךָ"** - - has the same letters and gematria of 66, as the word **"אכילה"** - "Eating".

Thus, when reading this posuk, it can be read in another light: "You will eat, be satiated and bless Hashem (while you are) eating", indicating that if Hashem is before you even as you eat, then you may recite a berachah. However, when one eats like an animal, he is not placing Hashem before him and as a result cannot make a true blessing. Thus, the Torah continues, "Be careful lest you forget Hashem, your G-d"

"All of a person's life depends on his mouth. The tongue can raise him to great heights or bring him to the lowest depths." ~ Vilna Gaon.

Hashgocho Protis



Sometimes, a person has the ability to look back at events, and he is able to see how the Hand of Hashem guides everything.

In the summer of 2001, a Jewish businessman from America went to Eretz Yisroel for business meetings. Prior to attending one of these meetings, he went to a restaurant on King George Street to get something to eat. He was annoyed to see that there was a long line of customers waiting ahead of him.

As he waited, he kept impatiently glancing at his watch. The man in front of him turned around and said, "You seem to be in a hurry. I am not in any rush today. Why don't you switch places with me? It does not bother me to wait another five minutes." The man was surprised that someone would do this, but he happily and thankfully accepted the offer. He soon got his order, quickly ate, and left the restaurant.

He walked only about 200 feet, when he heard a loud explosion, and he turned around to see the Sbarro Restaurant, where he had been moments earlier, engulfed in flames. It took a few moments for the sight to register in his mind, and even more so, that the Jew who had changed places with him was probably a victim, and he had taken his place! He realized that he should have still been eating at that moment, but someone let him go before them in line. He immediately ran into the wrecked building and searched through the rubble, looking for the kind person that saved his life.

It took the American businessman two days of searching and visiting all the hospitals, until he finally found him. He lay in a hospital bed seriously injured, accompanied by his adult son. The businessman

said to the son, "Your father saved my life!" and he told him about how his father had changed places with him. With tears in his eyes, the man took out his business card and gave it to the son. He said, "I run a business in America, and I have to return to the states now. This is my number. If there is anything I can do whatsoever to help your family, please let me know. Your father gave me my life, and I would like to help you in any way that I can."

Three weeks later, the businessman received a call from that man's son. Apparently, his father's injuries required surgery that was beyond what could be provided for him in Eretz Yisroel. He needed a specific surgery which was performed proficiently in Boston, and the son asked if the businessman could help them. Without hesitating, the man got to work, and within a few hours it was all arranged, from start to finish. Surgery was scheduled for mid-September, and he would meet them at Kennedy Airport when they landed to be with them for the entire process.

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the American businessman left his office on the 101st floor of the Twin Towers at 8:00 in the morning. At 8:31, the first plane that took down the Twin Towers struck the 93rd floor. It became clear that the Jew from Israel had been involved in saving this man's life twice. It is not always apparent, but Hashem is guiding all the events in our lives, and if we focus our eyes well enough, we can see the Hand of Hashem 'pulling all the strings'!

"Happiness is not dependent on how much you have, but on how much you appreciate what you have. A person can have everything and be miserable, and another can have very little and be full of joy. It is all a matter of perspective. The secret to a happy life is not to add more, but to subtract the desire for more." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן- ילקוט האזובי 7:12

The last letters of these words spell **הבן** – "to tell us that the Torah is passed down from a father to his son.

The Posuk is also telling us that Klal Yisroel will receive reward in the Zechus that they were Mekabel upon themselves the Aseres Hadibros, which has 172 words, the Gematria of the word, " **עקב** "

V'Chol Maaminim

(יא יז) ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר and He will close off the heavens, and there will be no rain

The Rebbe Harav Moshe Eliyakim Beriyah of Kozhnitz related: In the days of the holy Baal Shem Tov, there was a severe drought. The tzaddikim decreed a fast day and cried out in tefillah to Hashem, but they were not answered.



One day, the Baal Shem Tov noticed that one of the simple townsfolk was reciting Krias Shema. When this person reached the passuk " **ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר**" (11:17), he suddenly burst into tears and cried from the depths of his heart. After the davening, the Baal Shem Tov asked him, "My son, what did you have in mind when you said this passuk with such emotion?" "I davened to Hashem, 'Riboono Shel Olam, please, with Your compassion, 'va'atzar' – squeeze the heavens' until 'lo yihiyeh matar' there should be no rains left inside them, because it will all come down

to us…" Within the hour, rains began to fall, and the Baal Shem Tov revealed to his talmidim that this pure tefillah is what had brought the yeshuah, because HaKadosh Baruch Hu especially loves the tefillos that are said with heartfelt kavanah and deep concentration.

A Short Vort- The Ultimate Giver (Benjie Fine)

וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ כִּי הוּא הַנֹּתֵן לְךָ כֹּחַ לַעֲשׂוֹת חָיִל ***"Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d; that it was He Who gave you strength to be successful."*** (8:18)



R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad z"l, the 'Ben Ish Chai', writes: This verse teaches us a fundamental concept, i.e. that all that a person receives from this world comes to him from Hashem Himself. It does not come to man through his own strength or handiwork.

However, man's nature is to attribute his success to his own hard work. Therefore, Hashem has given us three mitzvot that remind us that we are not in control of our own physical well-being. Fulfilling these mitzvot helps us recognize that Hashem is the One Who gives us the tools to succeed in life, that everything is His, and that we are always receiving from Him.

One of these is the mitzvah of **S**hemittah, letting the land lie fallow every seventh year. One who fulfils this mitzvah acknowledges that the land is not his and that everything belongs to Hashem. Another

such mitzvah is **B**erachot, reciting blessings before eating. By doing so, one acknowledges that everything belongs to Hashem. A third such mitzvah is the prohibition on **R**ibit/interest and the commandment to give free loans to one's brethren. One who observes this acknowledges that all the money that he has belongs to Him as well.

The initials of these 3 mitzvot spell "BASAR"/"flesh." This reminds us that (in the words of Tehilim 136:25),

נֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל־בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ ***"He gives nourishment to all flesh."*** and we are fully dependant on Hashem.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings- Birchas HaMazon

The Torah says, וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹקיךָ (8:10) the mitzvah to say birchas hamazon.

The Magid of Mezritz zy'a taught his followers to be extremely careful with birchas hamazon, even more than with Shemonah Esrei. He explained, "Tefillah is derabanan, but birchas hamazon is from the Torah."

Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zy'a taught that saying birchas hamazon with kavanah and from a text (like from a siddur) is mesugal for having children and grandchildren who fear Hashem and are talmidei chachamim. Birchas HaMazon is also mesugal for parnassah. The Chinuch writes, "I learned from my teachers…that whoever is careful with birchas hamazon will have parnassah bekavod his entire life"

"A little light dispels a great deal of darkness." — Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (The Alter Rebbe)

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings- Hakaras HaTov



One of the tzaddikim who excelled in hakaras hatov was **Rebbe Ahron of Belz zy'a**. No one ever did him a favour and didn't receive a favour in return. Reb Eliezer Landau z'l helped the Belzer Rebbe escape the Holocaust. Later, Reb Eliezer Landau himself was stuck by a border wanting to flee, but he didn't know how. Reb Amram Gestetner zt'l (the father of Reb Nosson Gestetner of Bnei Brak zt'l) came over to him and asked him, "Are you Eliezer Landau?" "Yes." "Do you want to cross the border?" "I do, but how do you know?" "I saw the Belzer Rebbe in my dream last night. He told me to help you cross the border." The Belzer Rebbe showed hakaras hatov and repaid the kindness.

הטוב כי לא כלו רחמיך והמרחם כי לא תמו חסדיך -Eichah

The Beneficent One, for Your compassions were never exhausted; and the Compassionate One for Your kindnesses never ended.

Few people have both: compassion; and the wherewithal to provide for those for whom they care. Some are compassionate but lack the funds or ability to help. Others have no shortage of material assets but lack the emotion to empathise with the needs of those whom they could help – if they would feel like it.

Hashem's compassion is never exhausted, and His ability to bestow kindness has no parameters.



Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, explains that a father, regardless of his extraordinary love and compassion for his child, will eventually age and have physical limitations placed on his ability to provide. As a result, he must settle for lesser goals concerning his children. It is not that he does not want, he is simply not able.

Hashem neither ages, nor does He have any limitations whatsoever. He is always there for His children, and for this we thank Him.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע״ה]

Tamuz is a month entirely dominated with **דין** , strict judgement, whereas the month of Av is divided as it is half **דין** and half **רחמים** , mercy.

In contrast to the second half where **רחמים** is aroused. The reason: it was on the 15th of Av when those destined to die in the desert for the sin of the Meraglim finished dying.

The Kedushas Levi shows us an allusion to this idea in the word **אב** as it is an acronym for **ארור, ברוך** , cursed and blessed, since it is a month that is divided from Rosh Chodesh Av until **ט״ו באב**.

"Words that come from the heart enter the heart."~ Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto ("Ramchal")

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

Birchas HaMazon

This week's *parashah* discusses the mitzvah of *birchas hamazon*, as it states (8:10),**ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך**, ***"You will eat, be satiated, and bless Hashem your G-d."***



The Magid of Mezritz *zy'a* said that we should be more cautious about saying *birchas hamazon* with *kavanah* than *Shemonah Esrei* with *kavanah*, because *Shemonah Esrei* is *derabanan*. In contrast, *birchas hamazon* is a mitzvah from the Torah! When it comes to *birchas hamazon*, people become lax. They mumble the words and say them without *kavanah*…even though it is a mitzvah from the Torah.

Birchas hamazon has many *segulos*. Some of them include:

1) Good Children

Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zy'a* taught that saying *birchas hamazon* from a siddur (or *bencher*) with *kavanah* is *mesugal* for having children and grandchildren who fear Hashem and are *talmidei chachamim*.

2) Parnassah

The Chinuch (*Mitzvah* 430) writes, "I learned from my teachers…that whoever is careful with *birchas hamazon* will earn an honourable *parnassah* his entire life."

3) Protection

The Be'er Heitev writes (in the name of the Ba'ch) that there are no ף's in *birchas hamazon*, because the ף represents שצף קצף חרון אף (wrath and punishment) and whoever is careful with *birchas hamazon* will be protected from wrath and punishment.

4) Protection in the Grave

Shach al HaTorah (a student of the Arizal) says that whoever is cautious to say *birchas hamazon* with *kavanah* will not be eaten by worms and insects in his grave. The *blessings* of *birchas hamazon* will counter the curse of the worms.

Torah MiTzion on Ekev - Rabbi Ben Zion Sobel

וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates" (Devarim 11:20).



There are many amazing stories about people being saved from harm by the power of the mezuzah which watches over the house and protects it. Here is another one; recorded in Tuvecha Yabiu by **Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita**.

Dr. Orlin is the head of the blood banks in the Ma'ayinei Hayeshua hospital in Bnei Brak and HaSharon Hospital in Petach Tikvah. He used to live in California and has lots of friends there, some religious Jews and some non. A few years ago, he decided to visit his old habitat and wanted to bring presents to three senior doctors who were his very

close friends. What could be a more apropos present to bring from Israel, he thought, than a mezuzah written meticulously? He spent a lot of money to purchase three very kosher mezuzahs in beautiful silver cases.

Upon arriving in CA, the first item on his long list of things to do was to deliver the three gifts. All three doctors had no mezuzahs on their homes, yet they reacted differently. The first scorned at the religious item and refused to accept it; saying that he had no use for presents of this sort. The second accepted the gift, and thanked his friend warmly, but politely refused to affix it to his doorpost. The third doctor received the gift appreciatively, kissed it affectionately, and immediately placed it upon his doorpost while reciting the proper blessing.

Two weeks later, California was hit by the strongest hurricane to hit the West Coast in the history of the USA. Entire neighborhoods were destroyed, and thousands of people were left with no roof over their heads.

And then, the most amazing thing happened. The three doctors live right next to each other; with not that much space between their houses. Yet, the doctor who refused to accept the mezuzah lost his house completely. His beautiful villa was totally destroyed. The second doctor's house sustained some major damage but nothing near the extent of the first one. The third doctor's home was miraculously unscarred.

The rescue teams that arrived could not believe their eyes. It was as if the winds had just passed over this house after seriously damaging the other ones. And all because of one little mezuzah.

"The reward for a mitzvah is the mitzvah itself." ~ Rabbi Akiva (Pirkei Avos 4:2)

Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* writes:

"My teacher, **the Arizal**, told me that attaining *ruach hakodesh* is dependent on how much *kavanah* one has when one says *brachos* on food. When *brachos* are said with *kavanah* they destroy the *kelipos* (impurities that are in the food), which makes the food pure to receive holiness. Reb Chaim Vital adds, "A person must be extremely careful with **ברכת נהנין** because the person… becomes holy from these *brachos*, as it says **ותורתך בתוך מעי** - "***your Torah is in my stomach, and a divine spirit comes to the person.***"

Reb Hillel Kolemaia *zt'l* was once visiting **Rebbe Avraham Yaakov of Sadigura *zt'l***. When Reb Hillel Kolemaia was about to leave, the Sadigura Rebbe said to him, "Reb Hillel, you are renowned for your inspirational *mussar drashos*. Please tell me some *mussar*." Reb Hillel replied, "I see that the Rebbe doesn't give *mussar* to his chassidim, and that isn't correct. Why don't you give them *mussar*?" The Rebbe replied, "I teach my chassidim to eat properly – as a Yid should. If they will follow this lesson, everything else will fall into place. They don't need any other *mussar* other than that."

Rabbi Peysach Krohn - Project Mesorah

8:18 וְזָכַרְתָּ֞ אֶת־יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹקיךָ֗ כִּ֤י ה֨וּא֙ הַנֹּתֵ֣ן לְךָ֔ כֹּ֖חַ לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת חָ֑יִל

But you must remember the L-rd your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth

Rav Schwab brings the Targum on **כִּ֤י ה֨וּא֙ הַנֹּתֵ֣ן לְךָ֔ כֹּ֖חַ** that Hashem gave you the idea of how to make wealth. When a person is doing business or making money, or successful in their profession, it is only because Hashem gave you the idea and made it possible.

This is how we have to understand it. It is not **כֹּחִ֥י וְעֹ֖צֶם יָדִ֑י** 8:17, but all down to Hashem. At the end of time, we will be asked , " Did you do business with Emunah?" I.e. Were you honest in business?

But you could say it means, "Did you do it with Emunah, belief that everything comes from Hashem and that He puts the ideas into our minds?"

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

The Torah tells us וְזָכַרְתָּ֣ אֶת־ה׳ אֱלֹקיךָ֮ כִּ֣י ה֣וּא הַנֹּתֵ֣ן לְךָ֔ כֹּ֖חַ לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת חָ֑יִל 8:18 ***But you must remember the L-rd your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth***





We very often forget all that Hashem does for us. When we require something, or are in need, we know who to turn to. We will davven, we will storm the heavens. And when we are answered, our attitude takes a very different course. We no longer attribute our success to the source of all goodness. We are very quick to take credit for our own success. It was our own strength, our own ability.

What happened? Why did we fail to recognise that Hashem gives us and brings us success in every one of our acheivments?

Rav Brevda Zt'l was once by **the Chazon Ish**. He asked the Chazon Ish a few questions. Before he left, he told him, " Rebbe, last night I had a dream that I was walking through the dark streets of Yerushalayim ir hakodesh. It was pitch black as there was a power cut and there was no lighting. I was very scared, as I am an older man and was alone. I was aware that on the route that I was taking

there is a very slippy slope. If I would step on this, I would definately slip and fall and injure myself. There was no-one around, who knows what could have happened.

I had a feeling that told me to stop right where I was. I stopped and felt around, and there it was. I said wow!, Hashem, look what you have done for me."

He told the Chazon Ish the next morning, that when he woke up, that he felt that he would be a different person. He thought that he would get up and say Modeh Ani and davven with a much improved kavanah for the gratitude in saving him from a dangerous fall.

Why after such a miracle, did I not wake up as a different person, with a new outlook for the goodness of the Riboino Shel Olam? What happened to my enthusiasm and excitement?

The Chazon Ish closed his eyes for a few moments, and said, "I want to tell you a yesod in avodas Hashem."

There is a special yetzer hora that comes about following a miracle. The goal of this yetzer hora, is to weaken the emotional enthusiasm that arises as a result of the miracle. It is there to undermine and destroy whatever spirituality that you may have been stimulated with. And you are the victim of this yetzer hora.

This is an incredible idea. We are living in times where we see daily miracles. We see boruch Hashem that people are healthy and have recovered from illness. The many shidduchim that are coming about and getting married in difficult times. There are so many things to be grateful for. But, we sometimes fail to recognise and appreciate Hashem's compassion and goodness.

It says in the pasuk, **ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך**, ***"You will eat, be satiated, and bless Hashem your G-d." (8:10)***

We must thank Hashem for everything that we get. Think about a simple cup of coffee. The coffee beans are grown (for example) in Brazil. Somebody has to plant the tree. Somebody has to take care

of that tree, untill the beans reach maturity. The workers harvest the beans, then they are roasted, ground and packaged. They are shipped over. Somebody has to go to the port to pick them up and deliver them to a warehouse. They are then distributed to various shops. We buy them from the store. Before it even gets into your cup (that was made by someone in China) and we boil the kettle (made in Taiwan), the coffee has gone through many stages just so that you can have a cup of coffee. Do we appreciate all this?

Raboisai, take a moment to think about all the things that The Riboino Shel Olam does for us all day every day in our lives. It will change your life!

Have a wonderful gevaldig Shabbos!

Jewish Education Program - Take the Elevator Up!



הַמַּאֲכִלְךָ מָן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן עַנֹּתְךָ וּלְמַעַן נַסֹּתֶךָ לְהֵיטִבְךָ בְּאַחֲרִיתֶךָ

"[Hashem] Who feeds you manna in the wilderness … in order to afflict you and in order to test you, to do good for you in your end."(Devarim 8:16)

In the 1960 Olympics, the U.S. hockey team won the gold medal. In the next four Olympics, the Soviets won the gold medal each time. During that time, their record was 27 wins, 1 loss and 1 tie. They outscored their opponents 175-44.

In the 1980 Olympics, in Lake Placid New York, in one of the most dramatic upsets in Olympic history, the underdog U.S. hockey team, made up of only college players, defeated the Soviet team, made up

of professional athletes. This event was known as "The Miracle on Ice".

The 1980 U.S. hockey team was probably the best-conditioned U.S. Olympic hockey team of all time. This was the result of countless hours of skating exercises in preparation for Lake Placid. Their coach, Herb Brooks, had prepared them by working them excessively hard. In one game, months before the Olympics, the U.S. team played poorly. After the game, as the team was headed to the locker room, Herb sent the players back on the ice. He made them skate from one end of the ice to the other, again and again, until the players were ready to fall from exhaustion.

Due to the excessively hard work and affliction that they were put through, the U.S. hockey team eventually succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

Herb Brooks used to say, ***"Let me start with issuing you a challenge: Be better than you are. Set a goal that seems unattainable, and when you reach that goal, set another one even higher."***

Herb Brooks "tested" his players by giving them what seemed to be insurmountable challenges. When they "passed" those challenges, they were given more "tests", with more difficult challenges. They passed those as well.

What the U.S. hockey team went through, is the story of life. This week's parsha tells us that Hashem provided the miraculous food, the manna, to <u>afflict</u> us and to <u>test</u> us. Hashem providing us free food in the desert, was a blessing. Why is it considered an affliction and a test?

Rashi (Shmos 4:16) says that the Jews were being tested to see if they would follow the laws that were given with the manna. Would they be careful not to leave over any manna for the next day? Would they refrain from gathering any on Shabbos? The **Ohr**

HaChaim Hakadosh in this parsha, as well as the **Sforno** in Devarim (8:16) say that the test was to see if the Jews would follow Hashem's will when they had so much free time since they did not have to spend time growing or preparing food. Would they use their leisure time to learn Torah and perform mitzvos? What was the affliction?

The **Sforno** (Devarim 8:16) says that learning Torah and doing mitzvos, while having an empty cupboard and not knowing where your food will come from tomorrow, is very challenging. The pasuk concludes that **this affliction and test were beneficial, "in order to do good for you in your end"**.

The **Chofetz Chaim zt"l** , quoting the **Zohar**, says that the word *nisayon*, test, has a double meaning. When we pass the test that Hashem has given us, it also elevates us. Passing Hashem's test helps us bring our inner abilities to fruition, thus elevating us to a higher level. Serving Hashem with afflictions raises us to greater heights. The **Midrash Rabba** (Braishis) says that Hashem first tests us before raising us to greatness. The **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l continues that any pain or affliction one undergoes for the sake of Hashem, elevates him in Olam Haba. Furthermore, when we serve Hashem in difficult times, our deeds are inscribed in Heaven, forever. It is considered as if we did chesed with Hashem!

Hashem gives all of us challenges in life. Passing these challenges, elevates us. Serving Hashem in times of great challenges is memorialized forever in Heaven. Hashem considers it as if we are doing chesed for Him.

The idea of perfection is not to be flawless and never stumble, but to struggle and overcome. Even the falls themselves are part of a person's construction. ~ Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (Pachad Yitzchak, Igros u'Kesavim, letter 128)

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Thank You Hashem for Making Me Get Thirsty!

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה עֹבֵר הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לָבֹא לָרֶשֶׁת גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים וַעֲצֻמִים מִמֶּךָּ עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצֻרֹת בַּשָּׁמָיִם עַם־גָּדוֹל וָרָם

"Hear, O Israel! You are about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and more populous than you: great cities with walls sky-high a people great and tall…." (Devorim 9:1-2)

Talya was distressed by her son's exceptionally huge ears. Although she was not religious, she sent him to a religious school where the boys had long peyos. She wanted him to grow peyos to hide his ears. Talya's need to cover her son's ears led to his living a Torah-lifestyle and raising a family who serve Hashem. (Rabbi D.Ashear, Living Emunah for Children, vol. 2)

Moshe told the Jewish People that they were about to enter the Land of Israel. They would have to dispossess many powerful nations whose cities were protected by strong and immense walls. According to the laws of nature, this conquest was impossible!

Rabbi Moshe Sofer was the Chief Rabbi of Pressburg in the early 1800's. He was known as the **Chasam Sofer**. He states that the Land of Israel was designated for the Jewish People from the very beginning of time since the Creation of the World. Other nations were permitted to live there temporarily until the Jews were ready to possess it.

If so, the **Chasam Sofer** questions why Hashem allowed these nations to build such fortified cities, that were impossible to conquer? Why did Hashem permit such strong and powerful nations to inhabit Eretz Yisroel rather than weak ones whom the Jews could have easily conquered?

The **Chasam Sofer** says that the answer to this question can be found in the **Midrash Rabba** on this pasuk. The Midrash says that

before you drink water to quench your thirst, you say the blessing … *Shehakol nihiye bidvaro;* that everything should be according to the words of Hashem. Rabbi Tarfon says that before drinking you say the blessing … *Borei nefashos rabbos vechesronan…;* Blessed be You, Hashem, our G-D, King of the Universe, Who creates many living things with their **deficiencies**…. Hashem is exceptionally kind to His creations, enabling them to quench their thirst.



Why is this such a kindness from Hashem? Hashem is the One who created us with a **need** to be thirsty. Why didn't Hashem create us in a more "perfect" manner so that we would not become thirsty in the first place? Why then are we considering it an act of kindness that Hashem allows us to quench our thirst if He was the One who created us to become thirsty?

The **Chasam Sofer** says that the answer to both questions is inferred in the Midrash. **Hashem created us as people who get thirsty to enable us to appreciate how much we need Hashem**. Once we appreciate how much we need Hashem, we will come to appreciate **all** that Hashem does for us. Then we will thank Hashem and become closer to Him. This is the reason for our creation, to come close to Hashem through learning Torah and performing mitzvos. Thus, creating us with needs is actually a great kindness of Hashem.

This explains why entering Eretz Yisroel was such a formidable challenge. It was to help us realize that our success in conquering

such powerful foes was **only** due to Hashem's aid. It was to help us appreciate Hashem's kindness. (based on the Chasam Sofer in his sefer Torah Moshe and elaborated on in Sefer Yalkut Lekech Tov).

Creating us with deficiencies and needs is one of Hashem's greatest kindnesses to us!

It brings us closer to Hashem as we realize how much we need Hashem and how much Hashem does for us.



Some years ago, when my wife and I were living in Israel, we bought our apartment from a fellow who (at the risk of severe understatement) was anti-religious. Given this background, a passing comment he made at our deal's closing seemed rather odd. He assured us that **all the Mezuzot in the house were completely kosher.** Noting my quizzical look, he then told my wife and I the following story:

Many years prior, his daughter had been born with a serious heart defect. After being told at the hospital that she didn't have long to live, he wandered the streets of Jerusalem in a daze. Finally, he came across an old Yemenite man and poured out his heart to him. The Yemenite advised him to buy Mezuzot and put them on his doorposts immediately.

Desperate for anything that could help his daughter, he ran to a religious neighbourhood, asked where the nearest scribe lived, and bought several Mezuzot. After putting them up, he returned to the hospital where he was greeted with great news. Lo and behold, **a miracle had occurred:** His daughter's heart defect had disappeared!

When he finished telling us his story, the man then made a comment I will never forget. "You see" he said, "the Mezuzot are kosher. And if my daughter should ever **decide to become religious,** I can't stand in her way - because she belongs to G-d. But if my son ever tries to become religious ... I'll kill him!"

The Yemenite man's advice to put up Mezuzot, as strange as it may sound, is actually in line with Jewish tradition. In this week's Parsha, the verse dealing with the Mezuzah is **juxtaposed** with a verse promising long life to one's children (see Deut. 11:20-21). Both these verses are written on the parchment of the Mezuzah, and many commentators therefore explain that **Mezuzot help to protect children's health.**

But it is not children alone who benefit from the Mezuzah's presence. Written on the outside of each parchment is **the name of God, *"Sha-dai."*** Among other things, this divine appellation is an abbreviation for the words *"Shomer D'latei Yisrael"* - **"Guardian of the Gates of Israel."** The Mezuzah, so to speak, guards the doors of a Jewish home.

Other sources see a different meaning to the Mezuzah. The Alshich notes that the Mezuzah is placed even upon the doors of rooms **inside the house.** Oftentimes, how a person appears in public is a far cry from how he acts in private. The Mezuzah therefore reminds us of the sanctity of the Jewish home.

Maimonides presents what is perhaps the most widely accepted understanding of Mezuzah. He explains that oftentimes people get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of making a living, that they lose their "God consciousness." The Mezuzah, however, provides a wonderful solution to this problem.

The Mezuzah contains **a declaration of our Love of G-d** and our commitment to observe His mitzvot. As we pass through the door and **kiss the Mezuzah,** we focus on G-d's inspirational "instructions for living," posted on the wall.

Says Maimonides: The Mezuzah is a constant reminder "that nothing endures forever; nothing is eternal but knowledge of the Almighty. Upon reminding himself of this fact, a person will return to a proper consciousness and walk in a proper path."



Challenging questions for the Shabbat table.

1. The first verse in this parsha mentions ekev, literally a "heel." Where in the Torah is a heel first mentioned?

In parshas Bereishis, the snake is cursed that man will step on his head, while the snake will attack the man's heel (Gen 3:15).

2. Which two insects are mentioned in this parsha?

Hashem promises to send hornets to drive out any remaining enemies from the Land of Israel (Deut. 7:20). Hashem protected the Jews from scorpions during their 40 years in the desert (Deut. 8:15).

3. In what context is the "the finger of G-d" mentioned in this parsha? Where else in the Torah is the "finger of G-d" mentioned?

This parsha states that the two tablets were written "with the finger of G-d" (Deut. 9:10). In parshas Va'eira, the plague of lice is described by the Egyptian magicians as a product of "the finger of G-d" (Exodus 8:15).

4. In this parsha, what is described as being ground into dust? What else in the Torah is ground up? (2 answers)

The Golden Calf is described as being ground into dust (Deut. 9:21). Elsewhere, the manna that fell in the desert was ground before being baked (Numbers 11:8), and certain types of grain offerings (Mincha) were crumbled into pieces (Leviticus 2:6, 6:14).

5. Which set of seven items appears in a single verse in this parsha, and nowhere else in the Torah.

In Deut. 8:8, the seven species of the Land of Israel appear together: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.

6. What three forms of rain are mentioned in this parsha?

In the second paragraph of the Shema, three forms of rain are mentioned: timely rain, early rain, and late rain (Deut. 11:14).

7. In this parsha, which "2 sets of 2" appear in the same verse?

Moshe states that he threw down two tablets from his two hands (Deut. 9:17).

8. In this parsha, which two "quick actions" are mentioned in the same verse?

When the Jews fashioned the Golden Calf, turning "quickly" from the proper path, Hashem tells Moshe that he should "quickly" descend the mountain (Deut. 9:12).

9. Which two sons of Yaakov are mentioned in this parsha?

This parsha mentions the names of Reuven (11:6) and Levi

10. In what two contexts are "garments" mentioned in this parsha?

(1) Moshe commands the Jews to remember the miracles that Hashem did in the desert, including how their garments did not wear out (Deut. 8:4). (2) The Torah describes Hashem as One who provides for a convert/stranger by giving him bread and garments (Deut. 10:18).

Rabbi Parkoff's Chizuk Letter - I Used To Eat Kosher – No More!

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

But everyone knows that computers aren't fool proof and many Jewish patients never made it onto the list. So on my rounds through the wards, I would look at the names posted on the doors of the rooms, looking for those that were likely to be Jewish. One day I passed by a room and perused the names listed. My attention was immediately drawn to one name in particular. It was the family name of a most illustrious talmid chacham of pre-World War I Europe, one of the Gedolei Hador.

I knocked and was beckoned inside. The patient, an elderly Jewish man, sat on his bed. "Good morning," I said as I introduced myself as the chaplain of the hospital. "I couldn't help but wonder about your family name. Are you by any chance related to Rabbi So-and-so?" "What! So you knew my great grandfather?!" "I know my beard is grey, but I'm not that old. However, I have studied from his works, and he was really a very great scholar."



On his tray were the hospital utensils and the remains of his breakfast. I looked at the tray and his eyes caught my stare. "Rabbi, I guess you're wondering about my breakfast. Well, to tell you the truth. I used to keep kosher. But no more! I used

to keep Shabbos… but no more! I used to daven and lay tefillin… NO MORE!"

I looked at him and with a pained voiced I answered, "You must have suffered a terrible tragedy." For a moment he was silent and looked down, seemingly lost in his thoughts. "I had a son. He was twenty years old when he got sick. My wife and I stayed by his bedside the whole week. Friday afternoon we bid him goodbye and hurried home so my wife could light Shabbos candles before sunset.

Right before she lit, we got the phone call. Since then I have had nothing to do with Yiddishkeit." I looked at him and, after a moment of silence, said, "So you're angry at G-d." "You bet I am!" was his reply. He continued talking about this for about ten minutes and I empathized with his pain. I was struggling within myself, searching for an answer. I prayed silently to the Ribono Shel Olam for help.

Then I got an idea. "What was your profession?" "Me? Why, I was a justice of the Supreme Court of the Borough of Queens. I sat on the bench for over twenty years. And do you know, that in all of that time the Federal Supreme Court only repealed two of my cases. That says a lot. I researched all my cases, and my ruling was overturned only twice." He did not realize it, but he had just played into my hands.

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

That is the law. The law is often cold. It is harsh. It is difficult to accept. It often hurts and is painful. But that is the law!

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

"You lost a son. It was a very great tragedy. You have suffered overwhelming grief. But you were a justice of the Supreme Court. You understand. That is the law." He stared at me for a moment, and then dropped his head. He repeated over and over again, "That is the law. That is the law."

He raised his head. "You know, Rabbi, no one ever explained it to me that way. That is the law. I must accept it. Because that is the law." He looked at me and asked, ***"Do you think I can get kosher food in this hospital?"***

"Know that a person must cross a very, very narrow bridge in life. The main rule is not to be afraid at all. The whole world is a very narrow bridge, but the main thing is not to be afraid. Do not be discouraged by your failures. Even if you fall a thousand times, get up a thousand and one times. The essence of serving God is not to be overwhelmed by the enormity of the task, but to take one small, genuine step forward each day. A little bit of light pushes away a great deal of darkness." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

Rabbi Yossi Goldberg - Close to Hashem

אֶת־ה׳ אֱלֹקֶיךָ תִּירָא אֹתוֹ תַּעֲבֹד וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק You should fear Hashem your G-d, serve Him and cleave to him

"Dveikus" can sound like a seemingly scary word. Many people mistakenly think that only very holy and great people can become close to Hashem; not so the ordinary Yid.

The Sefer Darchey Mussar points out how wrong this attitude is. After all, it's a Mitzvah in the Torah that is applicable to every single Yid - **וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק**

How then can we fulfil this Mitzvah? **The Darchey Mussar** quotes Chazal who explain that the way to come close to Hashem is by learning from His Middos. Just like Hashem is Merciful so too we should be Merciful etc. When a Yid is inspired in this way - to behave in the ways of Hashem - he reaches right down into the depths of his Neshama and draws closer to Hashem.

The Alter of Kelm once commented on the famous words of the Gemara - **רבי עקיבא אומר: ׳ואהבת לרעך כמוך׳ זה כלל גדול בתורה** Rabbi Akiva said, ***"You should love your friend like you love yourself, this is a big rule of the Torah."***

The reason why this Possuk is so fundamental, explained the Alter, is because only someone who is sensitive to others and who behaves with refined Middos is able to keep all the Mitzvos of the Torah properly. So, by working on our Middos we are able to keep the Mitzvos of the Torah better. It's no surprise therefore that through this we will become closer to Hashem.

When **Harav Aaron Shechter** of America was sitting Shiva for his wife, the following story was told over. Two Talmidim of Rav Shechter once came to his house to learn with him. It was wintertime and the weather outside was really bad; it was pouring non-stop with rain.

When they arrived at the door of the house, his Rebbetzen greeted them warmly. Concerned she asked them, "Don't you have a pair of gloshes?" (Plastic covers that protect footwear from rain.)

One Talmid admitted he didn't have and the other mumbled that he had left them behind in Yeshiva. "Please tell me each of you - your exact shoe size," she asked them. They obliged and informed her of their shoe sizes, wondering why she really wanted to know. When they had finished talking, they went inside and learnt with Harav Shechter and quickly forgot about the conversation. They finished learning and they got ready to leave. The Rebbetzen was waiting for them at the door with two pairs of gloshes that fitted exactly to their shoe sizes. Gratefully they accepted them from her and went on their way.



They assumed that she had found their sizes in an old box of shoes upstairs that originally belonged to her husband or something. Only later, they found out, she had done much more than that for them. She had left the house, scraped the ice off her car and then she had driven to a shoe shop. She carefully chose their sizes, purchased the gloshes and then brought them back to her house to give to them.

That's true caring. Authentic Middos. After all, וּבוֹ תִדְבָּק - it's just another Mitzva in the Torah!

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

I Also Want to Be a Heavyweight Lifter!



וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם

"This shall be the reward when you listen to these mitzvos". (Devarim 7:12)

According to Rashi, Hashem promises bountiful blessings if we fulfil the "minor" mitzvos- Those mitzvos that we consider unimportant-the ones we "trample on".

Vasily Alekseyev was the Soviet super heavyweight lifter who reigned as the so-called world's strongest man in the 1970s. He **gradually** lifted more and more until he lifted a world-record 1,323 pounds!

Ben Azzai said (*Pirkei Avos* 4:2) a person should run to do a "minor" mitzvah. There are various explanations what that means. **Rabbeinu Yonah explains**, when you perform a mitzvah you become conditioned to obey Hashem's will. It is just like weightlifting. After doing one "minor" mitzvah which seems unimportant or is very easy to perform, you are then able to do another mitzvah which is slightly more difficult than the first one. When you do three "easy" mitzvos it becomes habit-forming. Then you will do mitzvos even if they are more difficult for you to do.

Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi said (Pirkei Avos 2:1) to be as careful in performing a "minor" mitzvah as you are in performing a "major" mitzvah because you don't know the reward for mitzvos. Maybe the

mitzvah that you feel is insignificant is the one that Hashem values the most.

There is a parable about a king who asked workers to plant an orchard for him. He said that he would pay a different amount for each type of tree – but he didn't specify the amounts. Had he told them which tree he would pay the most for, that is the only tree that they would have planted. This way the king had a beautiful orchard with all types of trees. Similarly, the Torah doesn't specify the specific reward for mitzvos. If it would, we would only do the more "valuable" ones. Then we would be lacking in total perfection, which requires us to do all the mitzvos.

Rav Yisroel Salanter explained that for some mitzvos the Yetzer Hara doesn't fight against us as strongly as he does for others. These mitzvos are easier to do. If we fail to fulfil these "easy" ones, we are held more accountable.

The Maharal explained that even for a mitzvah which you don't think will result in much reward, the reward is very great.

The giant, Og, once did a specific good deed for selfish reasons. He informed Avraham that his nephew Lot was captured. Even though he had an ulterior motive for doing so, Og received abundant longevity.

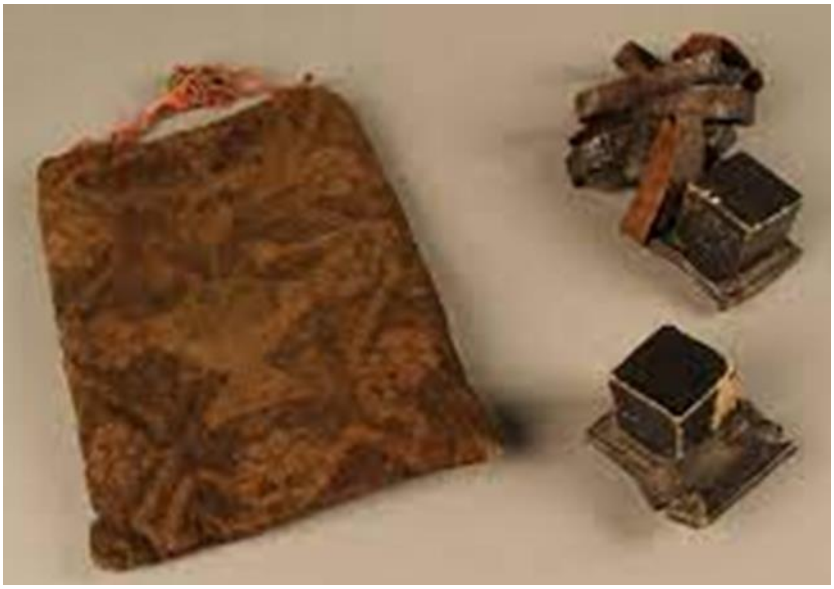
Our matriarch Rivkah performed an act of kindness – giving water to tired travellers and their camels. The way in which she did this mitzvah was so special that it elevated this mundane action, making her worthy of becoming the mother of the Jewish People.

We were created to perform mitzvos. Performing mitzvos helps our souls feel good. The Yetzer Hara is always trying to prevent us from doing them. We should take advantage and not ignore the "minor" mitzvos that come our way. It is very easy to respond amen to a bracha or to a kaddish. It is easy to say a bracha before eating. It is generally easy to lend or share a small item to/with a friend. It is

easy to wear tzitzis. There are many other easy mitzvos which we can do.

When we "grab" the "minor/easy" mitzvos, we get tremendous reward! We also become conditioned to obey Hashem's will and it becomes easier for us to do the "more challenging" mitzvos.

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilber zt'l was a legendary leader of Russian Jewry for over three decades. He remained resolutely firm in his faith and practicing of Torah and mitzvos throughout his arduous years behind the Iron Curtain, even in the brutality of a Russian Labour Camp. His autobiography "To Remain a Jew" is his incredible account of how he remained faithful to G-d even under the most trying circumstances. It is an incredibly inspiring story of a true unassuming Torah hero. The following is just one anecdote from the many recorded in the book:



I managed to relay a message to my wife to buy the smallest pair of tefillin that she could buy in Kazan. In October my wife came to visit me in the camp with the children. Sarah, who was then four years old, was permitted to sit in my lap. The three guards did not take their eyes off us. I knew that one of Sarah's felt boots contained the tefillin for the arm, while the other contained the tefillin for the head. I sat her down on my knees, putting her legs directly above mine (I wore large felt boots). I held my girl and removed one of her boots. The tefillin fell from her boot into mine. I then maneuvered it under the sole of my foot. I repeated everything with the second shoe. Done! "

The visit came to an end and I was searched. They found nothing. The next task was to arrange a hiding place for my precious tefillin. I scouted the entire camp… finally I came across a barracks that housed a huge pile of torn up felt boots. There was a place – about 30-40 centimetres wide – that was closed off by a curtain. I said to myself, "Hashem prepared this barracks especially for the storage of my tefillin." I approached the head of this barracks and said, "Mikhail Ivanovich, I want to live in your barracks… It's your responsibility to wash the floors and bring six buckets of hot water in the morning and six of them in the evening. I'll take care of the buckets and I'll help you wash the floors. "We closed the deal…

Every morning I would put on my tefillin there, hiding them afterwards in my coat pockets. Later I would put my coat in a guarded storage area, where the prisoners kept their valuables… So at 5:30 AM I would take my coat, put on my tefillin, and daven, and then return my coat. What they thought of my comings and goings did not concern me. "As a result of this use for my coat, during the two years I was in the camp, I always worked outside wearing only my jacket, even during the harsh winters of Tataria, when the temperatures would fall to -5F to -30F. My ears and hands suffered terribly, but I never caught a cold. (However, after I left the camp I dressed very warmly – and caught pneumonia.)"

The Alter of Novardok says: A person who has not worked to correct his middos is like a blind man who has never seen the light. (Sparks of Mussar)

Even if one does not succeed in learning as he wishes, the effort itself is of immense value. No רגע of toil in Torah is ever lost. ~ The Steipler Gaon.

whY I Matter - Young Israel of Midwood

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ ***You will eat and you will be satiated, and you shall bless*** (8:10)

One of the Chasidim of **Rabbi Yitzchok of Vorke** was an extremely wealthy individual. Nevertheless, he lived extremely frugally, scrimping on food to the extent that he limited his intake to black bread with herring.

Once his Rebbe rebuked him: "A Jew whom the Almighty blessed with riches, must eat meat and drink a glass of wine every day." The other Chasidim were wondering why the Rebbe would reproof him concerning this matter. The Sage explained: "Really, I do not care that he eats only black bread and herring. However, if he himself behaves in such a manner, what will he already give to the destitute that come to him?" (Chiyuchah Shel Torah)



The Maggid of Mezritch once asked a wealthy man what he eats every day. "Bread and salt, Rebbe, like a poor man," was his reply. The Maggid rebuked him and told him to eat meat and drink wine every day as wealthy men were accustomed to do. Later, when the Maggid's disciples asked for an explanation, he said: "If a rich man eats meat and drinks wine every day, then he will realize that a poor person needs at least bread and salt. If, however, he eats bread and salt, he will think that his poor neighbour can make do with stones!" [Hamaayan]

וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ כִּי הוּא הַנֹּתֵן לְךָ כֹּחַ לַעֲשׂוֹת חָיִל "You shall remember Hashem, your Elokim --that it is He Who gives you strength to make wealth . . ." (8:18)

The Aramaic translation Onkelos renders this phrase: "He gives you the idea to acquire assets." **R' Itamar Schwartz** (Yerushalayim) writes: Imagine that a person buys a house and the house later doubles in value. Many people would pat themselves on the back for making such a wise investment.

"No!" says our verse, as explained by Onkelos. "You contributed nothing to your success. Not only did the money to buy the house come from G-d, even the very idea to buy the house came from G-d." (Blvavi Mishkan Evneh)

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory
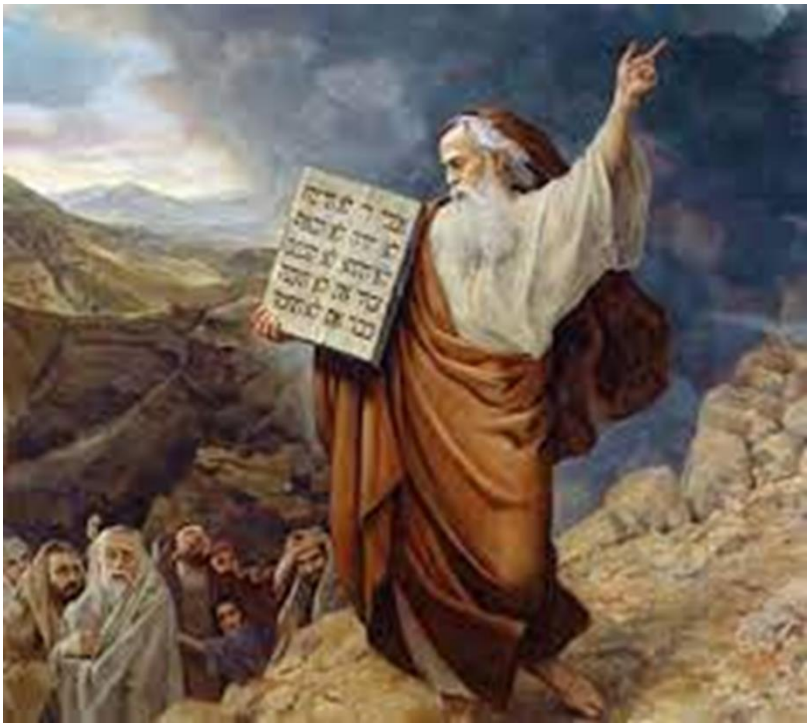
The Torah this week tells us that HaShem is constantly looking at Eretz Yisrael, **מֵרֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה** from the beginning of the year to the end. But what is He looking at?

The Ramban says that HaShem is looking to see what is needed, and to develop new decrees for Israel, sometimes good and sometimes bad, and this is a very deep secret. Why, if HaShem is concerned with providing the inhabitants of Israel with their needs, would He make a decree for bad?

It must be that "bad" decrees are really things that we need, providing us some benefit or growth. Keeping this in mind can make it easier to cope and remain positive in the face of challenges.

Letting Go - By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

In this week's sedra, Moshe talks about what was perhaps the most traumatic moment of his career. After spending 40 days and nights on the highest level of spiritual elevation, he returned from Mount Sinai to a scene that filled him with horror. At the foot of the mountain the Jews were revelling around a golden calf.



Naturally, Moshe was appalled. Here he was, holding the *luchos* , a G-d-given immortal gift, and he faced a nation plunged into an act of idolatry. He smashes the luchos.

But if we analyse the narrative there is an interesting word that Moshe inserts as he describes his actions on that day. "*I descended from the mountain and the two tablet were in my hands*.**וָאֶתְפֹּשׂ בִּשְׁנֵי הַלֻּחֹת וָאַשְׁלִכֵם מֵעַל שְׁתֵּי יָדָי וָאֲשַׁבְּרֵם לְעֵינֵיכֶם. *Then I saw and behold! You had sinned unto G-d; you made yourselves a molten calf. So I grasped the two luchos and I threw them from my two hands and smashed them in front of your eyes"*** (Deuteronomy 9:15-17).

Moshe was holding the tablets when descending the mountain. Why did he clutch them before throwing them from his hands? Weren't they already in his hands?

Shouldn't the verse tell us "*Then I saw and behold! You had sinned and you made yourselves a molten calf. So, I threw the tablets from my two hands and smashed them in front of your eyes.*" Why, and in what way did he grasp them?

A friend of mine told me a story about his great grandfather, a brilliant sage and revered tzadik. Whenever he saw one of his children commit an action that was harmful to their physical or spiritual well-being, he would stop them. But this sage knew that stopping a child is not enough. The youngster would need a punishment too, whether it be *potch* (Yiddish for slap), reprimand, lecture, or the withholding of privileges.

But when a potch or harsh rebuke was due, the rabbi would not give it immediately. He would jot the transgression down in a small notebook and at the end of the week he would approach the young offender. After giving the child a hug and embrace, he reminded the child of the incident and explained to the child that his actions were wrong.

"I should have punished you immediately when I saw you commit your act," he would say, "but honestly, I was angry then, and my punishment may have been one spurred by anger, not admonition. Now, however, that occurrence is in the past, and I am calm. Now I can mete out your punishment with a clear head. And you will know that it is given from love, not anger."

He then proceeded to punish the child in a way that fit the misdeed. Moshe was upset. But he did not want to throw the luchos down in rage. He therefore grabbed them and held them tight before hurling them. Moshe, in his narrative tells us that he seized the luchos before breaking them. He wanted to send a clear message to the revellers below. That the *mussar* that he was affording with this action was not born out of irrational behaviour or in anger.

Before smashing the luchos Moshe embraced them, just as a father hugging a child that he would soon admonish. Because Moshe wanted to tell us that before we let loose, we must hold tight.

The Special Aliyah by R. Binyomin Pruzansky



The gabbai's eyes moved rapidly across the familiar faces of the men packed into shul on this sunny Shabbos morning. Shloime Kaufman, the gabbai, had been going through this routine for the past twenty years, looking out over the congregation and glancing, face by face, at his many friends and neighbors — a world of warm-hearted people with whom he shared his life.

Choosing a few each week for aliyos was a job that came with its difficulties, but it also gave him the weekly opportunity to count these blessings. This secure, contented world in which he found himself was all the more precious because, by any law of logic or probability, it should never have come into existence.

The world Mr. Kaufman had known as a child and young man in Poland had been erased. It had collapsed all around him, snuffing out the lives of his loved ones. At the time, he had thought that surely the few survivors who managed to emerge from the rubble alive would be left with nothing — no yeshivos, no shuls, no gedolim to guide them.

And yet, here he was, the grandfather of a beautiful, Torah-observant family, the gabbai of a thriving shul, surrounded by friends and family. Better to relish the miracle of the present than think too much about the searing pain of the past.

Mr. Kaufman scanned the rows of men as the Torah was removed from the ark. His eyes rested upon an unfamiliar face, a man about his own age with a short grey beard. He hadn't seen him in shul

before. He surmised that he must be a guest. But there was something very familiar about this face. Suddenly, the man's features and expression jarred loose a powerful flash of recognition in Mr. Kaufman's mind.

It was Menachem Reiner, his closest childhood friend. It was Menachem, the boy with whom he had grown up in their small Polish shtetl, with whom he had attended yeshivah in Bialystock. It was Menachem, the young man to whom he had clung, and who had clung to him, as they began their cattle-car journey into the fearsome blackness of Auschwitz.

They had promised each other to stick together; they had given each other courage and hope. Bearing the numbers the Nazis had tattooed on their arms, they had found in each other the strength to hold onto their humanity and resist becoming only numbers. They had vowed to h elp each other survive, both in body and soul. And they did survive, Boruch Hashem.

But when the war ended, each went his own way, eager to begin anew. For sanity's sake, they each tucked the past away into a deep, locked box that would be opened only on rare occasions. Menachem had settled in Israel, and Shloime Kaufman had obtained a visa for America.

Consumed with creating a future and healing the wounds of the past, they had lost touch with each other. That was forty-two years ago. Now, with unbelieving eyes and trembling hands, Mr. Kaufman beheld the unmistakable face of his friend once again.

Shlomie decided in his mind: Menachem Reiner would get the sixth aliyah. As the Torah reading began, the gabbai felt as if his heart could not be contained in his chest. He wanted to leap across the rows of men and fall upon his friend in a mighty embrace. "This must be how Yosef felt when he finally saw his brother Binyamin," he thought to himself. "All these years!"

Nevertheless, he clamped a tight lid on his emotions and performed his duty, calling up each aliyah with the traditional chant of "Ya'amod" followed by the honoree's Hebrew name.

By the fifth aliyah, however, beads of sweat were sparkling on his forehead and tears were welling up in his eyes. He prayed that when the time came to call up number six, his voice would be able to break free of his tight throat.

There was no need to ask Menachem his name because he could never forget Menachem ben Yehoshua. For the first time, he began to wonder — how would Menachem react when they came face to face?

It was time to call him up, but Mr. Kaufman could not open his mouth. There were no words fit for this moment. All the suffering locked away in that figurative box was now out in the open, laid out before his eyes, and it was too much to bear.

The congregation began murmuring and looking toward Mr. Kaufman, fearing that the pale, trembling man was becoming ill. A deep cry rose up inside the gabbai, a cry to Hashem that contained in its broken sound all of His children's cries of anguish. Mr. Kaufman turned in the direction of his friend and at last found his voice.

"Yaamod, 57200148!" he called.

The baffled men in the shul did not understand what had happened. What was this number? What had become of Mr. Kaufman? But in the back of the room, one man understood completely. The number was Menachem's number, tattooed on his arm as a lifetime reminder of the darkest period of Jewish history, the epic tragedy of his people which he had witnessed with his own eyes.

The entire shul sat in stony silence as Menachem moved slowly toward the bimah. Finally, as they saw him approaching his long-lost brother, they understood the scene that was unfolding in front of them. Menachem needed no introduction. With tears coursing down his face, he cried out, "Shloimele! Shloimele! Is it really you?"

"Yes, Menachem, it's really me!" Mr. Kaufman answered, embracing his friend. They wept into each other's shoulders, rocking gently. "Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay," Mr. Kaufman breathed. Words were powerless to carry his chaotic emotions.

The entire shul sat spellbound, witnessing a moment that could have melted a heart made of iron. As these two men stood together, living witnesses to the Jewish people's miraculous survival, it seemed that the Heavens had opened up to declare, through them, that Hashem would never forsake His people. Am Yisrael Chai! The Jewish nation is alive, and Torah has been rebuilt in America . The Holocaust survivors who came to America planted the seeds, and it is up to us to reap the fruits of their labour and continue their legacy.

All Included - By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

In Parshas Eikev, Moshe Rabbeinu tells the Jews a fundamental command, ***וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם־לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת־ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ "And now, Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, demand of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d"*** (10:12).

All one has to do is fear Hashem and walk in His ways. Is that true? Is that really all Hashem asks of us? Shouldn't we also keep the rest of the Torah?

*A few decades ago, **Rav Moshe Feinstein** was informed about a man who, after staying in the city during the week, would take the latest bus to the Catskill Mountains on Friday, arriving very close to the beginning of Shabbos. Rav Moshe remarked to him that he should be careful to take an earlier bus. The man did not listen. The next week, the bus was delayed during the trip, and he was stranded in a motel along the way for the entire Shabbos.*

*A student of **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l** told him of this incident, and then remarked, "Rav Moshe performed a "mofeis" – a miracle!*

Rav Yaakov responded, "If so, than I too performed a miracle! Once, before shul, I went to visit an ill congregant in his home. He was a diabetic, and his bedside nurse was about to give him an insulin injection. I noticed that he was a "goses" and near death, and the halacha forbids touching a person in such a state. I did not allow the nurse to give the injection.

On the way back from shul, the man was comatose, and they were waiting for an ambulance to take him to the hospital. The doctor later informed the family that had the nurse given him the insulin, he would have died!"

My grandfather, **Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l** would quote **Rav Chaim Volozhiner**, the saintly student of the Gaon of Vilna, and founder of the famous "Volozhin Yeshiva," who answered this question. When a doctor takes blood from a patient, he can see much of what is going on in his or her body. He can tell if you have too much or too little cholesterol, platelets, blood sugar, and creatinine. Even some genetic diseases my show up as well. A blood test is a tube-size synopsis of a patient's entire body.

The same is with a person's neshama. Every person's neshama is a part of Hashem Himself. Hashem puts all of the components necessary to serve Him, into the neshama of every living being. Wisdom, willpower, good inclination, heart, and many more attributes are all built into our neshama. Sometimes, we may need to dig a little to find them, but they are there. A neshama is a miniature combination of all the components of the greatness of Hashem which man must utilize to serve Him.

One piece however, does not come in the package – Yiras Shomayim. That is something we have to work on our entire life. Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu tells the Jews, "What does Hashem your G-d want from you?" He already gave you everything else. You have to work to gain one more attribute, "Only to fear Hashem, your G-d."

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe continues his farewell address to the nation of Israel. He begins by saying "if" we will listen to the commandments, but he uses an unusual word: "Ekev". This is one way of saying "if" in Hebrew, but the term "im" is much more common. So why did Moshe choose ekev?



Ekev can also be translated as "heel". Thus, there are three beautiful lessons we can learn from this.

• First, we don't know the true value of any of the commandments, and we therefore shouldn't treat those we don't find important as unnecessary.

• Second, using the word ekev also tells us to take one step at a time. We'll only succeed with slow and steady growth.

• Third, when Moshe uses "ekev", he reminds us that we are walking in the heels of our ancestors. Encouraging us to keep our beautiful heritage alive just like our ancestors before us!

A person's greatness is not measured during times of elevation, but in how he stands during difficulty and trial— for there his true level is revealed. ~ Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz.

"The important part of Torah learning is the effort put into the learning. It's not the getting there — it's the going." ~ Reb Shlomo Freifeld.

Perpetual Care - By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky



Some things get special attention. The land of Israel Yisrael is one of them. The Torah tells us this week, that Eretz Israel is a land "that Hashem constantly watches, from the beginning of the year till the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:12). It is an amazing verse, one that declares the eyes of a very Personal G-d to be supervising even a seemingly inanimate object, His most beloved piece of real estate with constant concern. And though the commentaries discuss the special significance of this particular surveillance as opposed to everything in the world that is under Hashem's ever-present surveillance. But if everything is always under guard, what makes Israel so special?

In the early 1980s my grandfather **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky**, of blessed memory, suffered an angina attack, and his doctor strongly recommended that he undergo an angiogram, a difficult and sometimes dangerous procedure for a man that age. At the time my younger brother, Reb Zvi, was a student at the Ponovez Yeshiva in B'nai Braq. In addition to his own prayers on behalf of our grandfather, he immediately decided to approach his Rosh Yeshiva **HaGaon Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Shach** with a request to pray for Reb Yaakov's welfare.

In Jewish tradition, when you pray for the welfare of an individual, you identify the intended party by mentioning him or her together with his or her mother's name. Thus Moshe our teacher's name would be Moshe ben Yocheved (Moshe the son of Yocheved).

My brother knew he had to present Rav Shach with his grandfather's name, Yaakov, and the name of Reb Yaakov's mother. That was no

easy feat, my brother Zvi had no clue of her name. Moreover, at the time of the angina attack, Reb Yaakov was over 90 years old, and in excellent health. Zvi could not recall a time where he had mentioned our grandfather's name in the Mi-Shebairach for the sick. He simply was embarrassed to approach Rav Shach without Reb Yaakov's mother's name, so he went on a search expedition through B'nei Beraq attempting to contact people who would know the name of Reb Yaakov's mother.

Visiting at the homes of second cousins and other relatives, my brother inquired. No one knew. Finally, a nephew of Rav Yaakov who lived in B'nei Braq told my brother that Rav Yaakov's mother was named Etka.

Armed with the information and an update on my grandfather's condition, he approached the home of Rav Shach.

The elderly sage invited my brother into his sparsely furnished dining room and asked him to take a seat. The elderly Rosh Yeshiva sat by a wooden table that stood directly under a large bulb illuminating the tomes that lay opened in front of him. The Rosh Yeshiva looked up from the Talmudic passage he was contemplating and smiled toward my brother. He knew my brother and his lineage and asked him how he was feeling. Then he inquired about his grandfather, Reb Yaakov.

My brother turned white. "That is exactly why I came," he stammered. Immediately Rav Shach's face filled with consternation. My brother continued, "you see, my grandfather was not feeling well and must undergo a procedure. I came to inform the…"

Rav Shach jumped up from his chair and exclaimed: "we must say a special prayer for Reb Yaakov ben Etka !"

My brother stood opened-mouthed and could not contain himself. "Rebbe," he began meekly. "The last 12 hours I have been trying to find out my grandmother's name in order to present it to the Rosh

Yeshiva. Now I see that the Rosh Yeshiva knows the name of my great-grandmother. How is that?

Rav Shach explained. "Years ago your grandfather visited Eretz Yisrael. After meeting him I asked him for his mother's name. I could not imagine a Jewish world without a healthy Reb Yaakov, and there is not a single day that goes by that I do not say a special prayer for his welfare!"

Hashem teaches us a lesson in this parsha. Sometimes we think that the Land of Israel is on autopilot. The Torah tells us that it is not. His eyes are on it 365 days a year 24 hours a day. And though we all care for and love Eretz Yisrael, perhaps we too, must mimic that attitude. Because we should not be able to imagine a world without a stable and healthy Israel. And we must have it, like Hashem, in our hearts and minds constantly. Not only when during crisis when the storm clouds are brewing, but even from "the beginning of the year through the end." Even when the sun is shining down on it.

Moshe adjures the Jewish People to remember "all of the path upon which G-d guided you."

Why not just say, "Remember that path G-d took you on"? What does the word "all" come to add?

The Sforno suggests that we recall that HaShem took care of us in a supernatural way. Thus, "all" would include both natural aspects of the journey and supernatural ones. It could also be that we are to infer that the point of the journey was not simply to get somewhere, but that every step along the way was important and meaningful on its own. Every "misstep" and misfortune were necessary to get to the final destination as the people we were meant to be when getting there.

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"ויענך וירעבך ויאכלך את המן" *"He afflicted you and let you hunger, and He fed you the manna."* (8:3)



There is a *midrash peliah* — wondrous *Midrash* — that says, "From here we can learn that candles must be lit in honour of *Shabbat*." What connection is there between this *pasuk* and the obligation to light *Shabbat* candles?

While eating the manna, the Jew was able to imagine and enjoy any food. If one wanted a rare delicacy, the manna would assume this taste, and if one wanted a sumptuous dessert, one would taste that. Why, then, does the verse mention the manna in connection with affliction?

Although the taste of the manna varied according to one's desire, the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 74b) explains that "You cannot compare one who sees what he eats with one who does not see what he is eating. This is the reason that blind people glut themselves without becoming satisfied." Thus, while it is true that a person would experience any taste imaginable, since he did not actually see his food, he did not truly enjoy it.

Scripture instructs us, "You shall proclaim the *Shabbat 'oneg'* — 'a delight' " (Isaiah 58:13), and our sages (*Shabbat* 118b) explain that the way to experience delight is by eating delicious foods. Hence, if the home is not lit, regardless of the quality of the food, not only will one not enjoy the food, but, on the contrary, it will be an affliction.

Therefore, one is obligated to light candles to illuminate the *Shabbat* table, so that everyone sitting at the table will proclaim the *Shabbat* an "*oneg*" — "delight." (**חיד״א**)

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"ארץ חטה ושערה וגפן ותאנה ורמון ארץ זית שמן ודבש"
"A land of wheat, barley, grape, fig, and pomegranate; a land of oil-olives and date-honey." (8:8)



For the first five species with which the land is praised the *pasuk* mentions the fruits themselves while for the last two the fruits themselves are not mentioned (olives and dates), but the extracts — oil and honey. Why?

The *Gemara* (*Horiat* 13b) says that eating olives can cause one to forget Torah learned over a period of seventy years. The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 88a) relates that Ulah once came to Pumpedita and he was served a small basket of dates. He inquired, "How many of these can be purchased for one *zuz*"? They told him, "Three [small baskets or one large one] for one *zuz*."

In amazement he said, "A basketful of honey can be purchased for one *zuz*, and yet the Babylonians do not engage in Torah study (with the cost of living so low, surely they have plenty of time to study)?"

At night he became ill and said, "A basketful of poison can be purchased for one *zuz*, yet the Babylonians study Torah!"

From these two *Gemarot*, it is evident that olives and dates have a detrimental effect on one's Torah study. On the other hand, the *Gemara* (ibid.) says olive oil can help one remember the Torah which he learned over seventy years, and the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 83b) says that honey, "enlightens the eye of man."

Consequently, the Torah did not praise *Eretz Yisrael* with fruits (olives and dates) that interfere with learning, but with foods (oil and honey) that benefit man and enhance the study of Torah. (**יד דוד - ר' דוד ז"ל אופנהיים**)

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"פסל לך שני לוחת אבנים"
"Carve for yourself two stone Tablets." (10:1) From the word *"lecha"* — "for yourself" — which seems superfluous, the *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 38a) deduces that Moshe was permitted to keep the chips of the Tablets, which made him very wealthy. Why is it important to know how he became wealthy?

Many businesses have major expense accounts and also a petty cash fund for small expenditures. Careful watch over the small expenditures is crucial to the overall success of the business, and negligence regarding the petty cash fund can sometimes run the company into serious financial difficulties. The Tablets contained the Ten Commandments, which in reality represent the six hundred

and thirteen *mitzvot* of the Torah (see *Shemot* 24:12, Rashi). Among the *mitzvot* of the Torah there are those which people consider important, and others which they consider trivial. They compare some of the *mitzvot* to precious stones, and regard others as mere "chips," which are much less valuable. The chips of the Tablets are symbolic of often neglected *mitzvot*.

The *Gemara* is not merely telling us the source of Moshe's material affluence, but also describing his spiritual wealth, which, according to our sages, derived from his careful observance of every *mitzvah*, even those some people consider to be merely "chips."

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"ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שאל מעמך" ***"Now, O Israel, what does G-d, your G-d, ask of you."*** (10:12)



The word *"mah"* — "what" — seems to be superfluous. Instead of asking a question, "What does Hashem ask of you?" Moshe should have simply said, "Hashem asks of you the following...."

In the Hebrew *alef-beit*, there are twenty-two letters. Each letter can also be written out in full, for example, *alef* — **אלף**, *beit* — **בית**, *gimmel* — **גימל**. Thus, there is an external part of the letter (**א,ב,ג**) and a hidden internal part, reflected in the full spelling.

The way to write out in full a *mem* or *hey* is by adding the same letter i.e. **מ״ם, ה״ה** Thus each of these two letters are *tocho kebaro* — the inside is identical to the outside.

Among people there are some who are wicked on the inside but appear to be righteous on the outside. Moshe was not asking, but telling the Jews that "*mah*" — to be like the letters "*mah*" (**מ״ה**) i.e., true inside and outside, is what *Hashem Elokecha sho'eil mei'imach* — *G*-d, your *G*-d, asks of you. - (**ר׳ ברוך זצ״ל ממזבוז**)



Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

זְכֹר֙ לַעֲבָדֶ֔יךָ לְאַבְרָהָ֖ם לְיִצְחָ֑ק וּלְיַעֲקֹ֣ב אַל־תֵּ֗פֶן אֶל־ קְשִׁי֙ הָעָ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה וְאֶל־רִשְׁעוֹ֖ וְאֶל־חַטָּאתֹֽו׃ 9:27

Remember for the sake of Your servants, for Avraham, for Yitzchak, and for Yaakov; do not turn to the stubbornness of this people, and to its wickedness and to its sin. (9:27)

In the *sefer* ***Peninim Mi'shulchan HaGra*** it is pointed out that the third letter of the names of our holy forefathers— **רחק** , from אברהם, יצחק, יעקב — are the beginning letters of the three deficiencies mentioned in the *pasuk*, stubbornness, wickedness and sin— אל **ק**שי העם הזה ואל **ר**שעו ואל **ח**טאתו

Moshe *Rabbeinu* wanted to atone for these three flaws through the merit of the three forefathers. In the merit of אברהם , whose characteristic was **חסד**, kindness— it would atone for **רשע**, wickedness of the nation. In the merit of יצחק, whose characteristic was **דין** , justice— it would atone for its **חטא** , sin. And in the merit of יעקב, whose characteristic was **רחמים**, mercy— Hashem would mercifully forgive the **קשי**, stubbornness of the nation.

In the merit of all the good qualities of our forefathers, may Israel be atoned for all their imperfections. (***Chaim shel Torah***)

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



The story is told about the great ***Chazon Ish*, R' Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz, zt"l**, when he was a young child of only seven-years-old. One day when his family sat down to eat lunch together, the good smell coming from the kitchen made everyone feel hungry. After all, it wasn't every day that they were lucky enough to have meat for lunch.

The *Chazon Ish's* mother happily filled everyone's plate, *davening* that the food should give her husband and children strength to learn Torah. She passed the steaming plates of food to her family, and then sat down herself to start eating, giving a loving glance at everyone enjoying their meal.

She noticed though, that little Avraham Yeshaya'le wasn't eating! "Why haven't you eaten anything yet?" she asked her son. "Do you

not like how it tastes?" "No, *Imma*, certainly the food tastes very good, but I didn't get a fork." His mother quickly got up and brought back a fork for her child. When she reached him, she saw that she had also forgotten to serve him a plate of food!

When she returned to the kitchen, she couldn't help but smile. Her little *tzadik* didn't want to embarrass her by telling her that she forgot his lunch altogether! Instead, he waited until she realized it on her own. And even when she asked him, he said that he 'only' didn't get a fork.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos



Once there was a *chassid* who saw in a dream, a friend that had come to him from *Olam HaBa*. The *chassid* saw that his friend's face was green! He asked him: "Why is your face green?"

The friend answered him: "Because when I was in *shul* on Shabbos at night, I used to talk after *Shemoneh Esrei* when everyone was saying *vayechulu*, and also during *Kaddish*. As punishment for this, my face is now green."

We learn from this that we should take every part of *davening* very seriously. (*Mishnah Brurah* 56:1)

Rav Elazar Shach (1899–2001) On the Value of Time >

"A person who does not value his own time will never truly value the time of others."

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

In this week's *parshah*, the *pasuk* says, **וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ *"Now, Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d..."*** (10:12).

The *pasuk* begins with "*V'atah…*", *and now, what does Hashem ask of you?*. **The *Chafetz Chaim*** offers an amazing observation to the wording here. "*V'atah*", wasn't referring *just to the time* when Moshe spoke, but it means even **now**, and every other day as well! We have to be conscious of what Hashem would want us to do ***now***, and how He would want us to act, even today!

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ 8:10 ***You will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless Hashem, your G-d…***

At the end of the seventh chapter of *Mesichta Brachos* (51b) the *Gemara* rules that we are obligated to say *Birchas Ha'mazon* sitting down, and not while standing or walking.

The last *Tosafos* of the chapter explains that since *Birchas Ha'mazon* is a Biblical mitzvah, the *Chachamim* were stringent that it should be recited while sitting in contrast to other *brachos*.

Tosafos continues, quoting R' Moshe Albert that this is actually hinted at in this *posuk* by way of a contraction of the word **ושבעת** . When separated, the word becomes two words **שב עת** , *sit for a time*.

The *posuk* now reads: 'you will eat and sit for a time, and you will say (bless) *Birchas Ha'mazon*'. (*Parperaos LaTorah*)

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



The *Chofetz Chaim* used to travel from village to village selling his *seforim*. One time he stopped at an inn in Vilna, and noticed a heavyset Jewish man walking in. the man asked the waiter to bring him some roasted duck and good schnapps, and as soon as he was served, he ate ravenously, tearing the duck and devouring large pieces at a time, and gulping down the whiskey. He didn't bother making any *brachos* and it almost seemed to the *Chofetz Chaim* that the man was a wild animal devouring his catch.

After a short while, the *Chofetz Chaim* walked over to the man to say something to him, and the innkeeper, who was afraid that the man would hurt the *Chofetz Chaim*, ran over to intervene and said, "*Rebbe*, please just let him be! When he was just seven years old he was taken away from his family and was forced to serve in the army as a Cantonist for 25 years, and he forgot everything he ever learned. Is it surprising that he looks and acts the way he does?"

The *Chofetz Chaim* listened, but continued on his way over to him, walked right up and said, "I am amazed by you!" The big man turned to look at the elderly sage.

The *Chofetz Chaim* continued, "I hear that when you were a child, they took you away from your family and made you serve in the Czar's army for 25 years! You were not able to learn Torah and you were forced to suffer, and I'm sure that they tried to convert you to their religion. But you held strong! You remained a Jew!

If only I had the merits that you have! If only I had your portion in *Olam Haba*, because when you get to *Olam Haba*, you are no doubt going to be placed next to the greatest *Tzaddikim* of all time. Your self-sacrifice makes *our* observance of *mitzvos* pale in comparison. Your resilience in the face of the challenges you endured is greater than the self-sacrifice of Chananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah!"

The man listened to the holy words of the *Chofetz Chaim* and tears filled his eyes. He didn't even know who the *Chofetz Chaim* was, but his soul had been stirred like never before. Suddenly he began to sob bitterly. He kissed the hands of the *Chofetz Chaim* and held onto them as he continued to cry.

The *Chofetz Chaim* squeezed his hands and said, "If you would accept upon yourself to live the rest of your life as an observant Jew, there would be no one in the world who could match your righteousness!" The man agreed and followed the *Chofetz Chaim* back to his village, and before long was a complete *Ba'al Teshuvah*!

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

Rav Elazar Shach, *zt"l*, always kept the minutest detail of *Halachah*, even in abject poverty and dire circumstances. The *Shulchan Aruch* states that one must honour *Shabbos* with a clean shirt. And so, every Thursday night, Rav Shach would go up to the roof of the *Bais Medrash*, take off his only shirt, and wash it there.

Refusing to return downstairs with only his underclothing and *Tzitzis* on, he remained outside in the cold winter air until his shirt had dried enough for him to put it back on and return to the *Bais Medrash*!

"If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you."



L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

A few years ago, the great Mashgiach from Eretz Yisroel, **Rav Don Segal**, visited America and addressed a group of high school boys who were struggling with their Yiddishkeit. He spoke encouragingly to them, telling them that they each had the potential to become great in the world of Torah if they made the effort to do so.

To illustrate his point, he related a short story about **Rav Aharon Kotler.**

Years ago, on a visit to Eretz Yisroel, Rav Aharon gave shiurim in various locations around the country. One day, he went to a Kibbutz to give a shiur. Among those in the shiur was a young boy who lived on the Kibbutz. At one point, this boy raised his hand to ask Rav Aharon a question. Rav Aharon responded, "That is a very good question." Turning to the little boy, he asked, "Do you go to Yeshivah?" The young boy told him that he did not attend Yeshivah.

Rav Aharon Kotler said, "A boy who asks such good questions belongs in a Yeshivah!" Rav Aharon's words motivated this little boy to insist that his parents send him to Yeshivah to learn Torah. "Do you know who that young boy on the Kibbutz was?" Rav Segal asked the high school boys he was addressing.

"That boy was me! Rav Aharon saw that I had great potential, and the truth is, we all have great potential.

We just have to make the effort to tap into that potential, and then we can achieve great things in life!"

L'Maaseh



Two women once came to **Rav Archik, the Rav of Lomza**, with a *Din Torah*. They were neighbours who shared a clothesline, and now, they each claimed that an entire wash of laundry was her own. Rav Archik told them to leave the laundry with him, and he would announce his *Psak*, his *Halachic* decision the following morning.

After the women left, Rav Archik took some of his own clothing and mixed it with the bundle they had left. The next day, the two women came back to see him. Rav Archik called in one of

the women, and she looked at the basket of laundry and immediately picked out what was hers, and separated Rav Archik's items from it. She told him that those items were not hers. Rav Archik then asked her to step outside, and he then reshuffled his clothing into the pile of laundry, and called in the second woman. When she entered, she glanced at the laundry and said, "Rabbi, the laundry is mine!" The *Rav* asked her, "Is the entire pile yours?" and she stated with conviction, "This entire basket is mine!"

Rav Archik then told her what he had done, and that her dishonesty had been revealed. The woman was ashamed and apologized, and the city of Lomza was in disbelief over the practical wisdom of their *Rav*!

Where there's hope, there's life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again.

Middos

Rav Yaakov Galinsky, *zt"l*, once related that **Rav Sholom Schwadron, *zt"l*,** once asked his *Rebbe*, **Rav Eliyahu Lopian, *zt"l*,** "*Rebbe*, can you please give me a *Mussar Shiur*, a discourse on ethics?" Apparently, Rav Sholom felt the need for some form of inspiration, or *Chizuk* from his *Rebbe*. Rav Elya replied, "If you want to hear a *Shiur*, bring a *Shtender* over to me. We may as well do it properly."



Rav Sholom brought the *Shtender* over, and he sat down in a chair. He was the audience, and the *Rebbe* was the speaker. Rav Elya stood up and took hold of the *Shtender* with both hands, which was his usual way of standing when he taught. He said, "Rav Sholom, if I would have a beard as dark as yours (meaning, if I would be as young as you), I would know how to spend my time!" Rav Elya then sat down. This was his lesson!

Rav Galinsky said that Rav Elya was trying to emphasise to Rav Sholom that one should not waste his time. Tomorrow is not today, only today can be today. If we want to begin a new project or take on a new undertaking, we should do it *now*, not tomorrow. Rav Yaakov said that this idea applies to all of us as well!

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1910–1995) On Interpersonal Conduct > "Being a 'great man' in Torah is a high achievement, but being a Mensch (a person of fine character) is a prerequisite for everything else."

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה עֹבֵר הַיּוֹם אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן Hear Israel, today you cross the Jordan (9:1)



In this verse where Moshe is seemingly telling the Jewish People that they should expect to immediately cross over into Eretz Yisrael. However, the **Ohr Hachaim** explains that Moshe was really trying to hint to the Jewish People that they should pray for him to cross over with them. He explains Moshe's words as follows: **שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל** – ***"Listen Israel"*** - Moshe was encouraging them to pay attention careful to what he is about to say so that they would be able to understand his implication.

אַתָּה עֹבֵר– "You are crossing over" - But *I* am not crossing over. Moshe had been told by Hashem to stop praying that he should enter into Eretz Yisrael, but Moshe knew the power of *tefilla b'tzibbur, communal prayer* and was imploring the Jewish People to pray on his behalf. However, the Jewish People did not understand the full intention behind Moshe's words and failed to pray for him.

Many lessons can be learnt from the *Ohr Hachaim's* words, but perhaps one important message to take is that it is essential to be sensitive to other people's needs, and it is important to read between the lines and listen to what others are really trying to say. Whether it is a friend who is too embarrassed to admit that he

needs financial help, or a new mother who feels she is not coping, many times a serious cry for help will masquerade itself as a light conversation with a friend.

As Jews, we are referred to as the merciful nation; So much so, that the Gemora declares regarding "anyone who is compassionate on the creations, that one can be sure that they come from the seed of Avraham Avinu and whoever is not compassionate on the creations, one can be sure that he is not from the seed of Avraham Avinu".

Therefore, as Jews we have within us the natural ability to be compassionate to others – a gift that we must not let go to waste.



The Doctor's Unusual Dream by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

Doctor Lieberman was a bit of an anomaly. He was an expert physician, one of the best in the immense city of Vi'tebsk, and a wealthy man. But he was also a devoutly religious Jew; a rare combination in those days when many Jews were leaving Judaism for success and acceptance in the gentile world.

In fact, his high reputation as a doctor was almost overshadowed by the stories of his meticulous observance of the Torah commandments. Especially the Holy Shabbat.

He almost never treated patients on Shabbat. No matter how much money they offered. He would try to push them off till Saturday evening when the Sabbath ended.

Of course, on Shabbat he would treat patients that were clearly in mortal danger but even then, even if they lived far away, he would go by foot rather than use a wagon and a gentile servant would carry his things and write prescriptions on empty blanks that he had prepared before the Shabbat.

This was his custom and this is how it would have continued if it weren't for the dream.

One Shabbat morning after the Prayers and the meal he ate with his family he laid down for a few minutes rest and behold; a dream.

He dreamt that a bearded Jew that he had never seen appeared before him, smiled and said,

"Doctor, it's not right that on Shabbat you avoid visiting patients who live far away. After all, if a life is at stake, the Torah forbids us to delay."

The Doctor woke disoriented and thought to himself, "Strange dream! Wonder who that Jew was."

Suddenly there was a knock on the door. He groggily staggered to the door and opened it and there stood before him a middle-aged Jew who looked as though he had come a long way.

"Shabbat Shalom!" the doctor greeted him, opening the door wide, "Please, come in. Would you like something to drink? Can I help you? You look like you've come a long way. Please come in and sit down."

But the man didn't enter, "Doctor Lieberman?" the visitor said desperately, lines of worry crossing his face.

"Please help me. I just drove two hours on Shabbat to get here. Listen, It's my daughter. She's very sick. I need you to come urgently. I'll take you in my wagon."

The doctor showed him in, sat him down, gave him a glass of water and asked for details.

The man anxiously leaned forward and continued, "A few weeks ago she fell ill. We called a doctor and he gave some medicine that worked for a while but yesterday, Friday, things got worse. Doctor I'm worried. Please come with me and see what you can do. Here, see? My wagon and horses are right here in front of your house. It's urgent."

Normally Doctor Lieberman would have tried to put it off till after the Shabbat and even if he did go, it would be by foot.

Not only that but it didn't sound so serious. The girl had been sick for a while, and it could wait. Maybe her father was exaggerating or overly tense. After all, he wasn't a doctor.

But then he remembered the dream. He stood deep in thought for a few minutes and said, "Let's go!" as he grabbed his kit and told his wife that he was leaving.

Two hours later he was at the man's house and as soon as he saw the girl, he realized it was very serious. If it wasn't for that dream, he almost certainly would have been too late. He felt as though he was playing a part in some strange deja vu. It wasn't really him, or was it?

He immediately gave her an injection and waited by her bedside till the Shabbat was over to make sure it worked. When the sun set he prayed the evening prayer, made sure the family understood what treatments he prescribed and promised he would return the next day to see how she was doing. - Sure enough, the next day she was almost completely recovered.

Now his world was upside-down. How could a dream be more accurate than 'reality'? Up to yesterday he had been a practical, down-to-earth person but that dream made him wonder what was real.

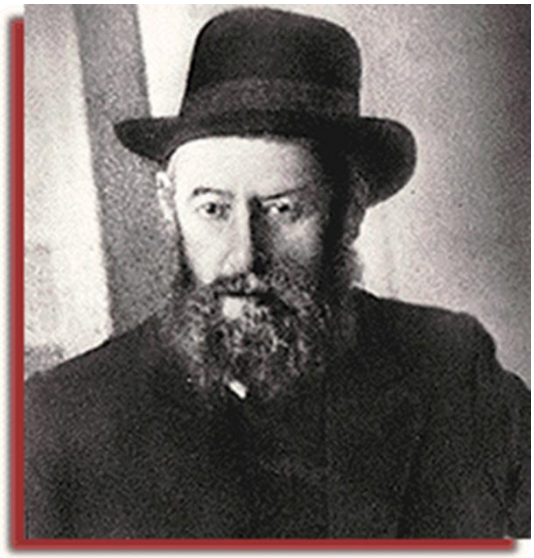
A few months later he got his answer. He was called to treat a sick man an hour's drive from his home in a town where it was known that a great mystic **Rebbe Shalom Dovber** (the Rebbe 'Rashab') lived. He could ask him his question.

In fact, after he successfully treated his patient and asked if anyone knew this Rebbe one those present offered to help. So a few hours later Doctor Lieberman, although he was not a Chassid at all, was standing before the Rebbe's office. He prepared himself to enter, straightened his tie and opened the door.

The Rebbe greeted him with a friendly smile. But the doctor took one look and almost stumbled over his feet. He couldn't take his eyes

off the Rebbe's holy face to the point that he wasn't looking where he was going.

He made it to the chair, sat heavily down and tried unsuccessfully to return the Rebbe's smile.



The Rebbe gave him time to come to himself. It wasn't the first time that people visiting him were overcome with emotion.

Finally, Dr. Lieberman began to speak and hesitatingly told the Rebbe about his dream and how it caused him to save a life and asked what it all meant.

"I understand," said the Rebbe when the doctor finished, "but is anything wrong?"

"Rebbe," The doctor said examining the Rebbe's face for some sign of acknowledgment. "I'm almost sure that the Rabbi that I saw in my dream was. You! Rebbe, how did you do it?! You entered my dream! You saved the life!!"

The Rebbe answered calmly. "I don't know anything about being in your dream but regarding the girl I certainly do know. Her father came to me with the story of her illness that Friday and I gave him your name. After all, you are a well-known doctor. But it was you that saved her life."

Suddenly Doctor Lieberman realized that the Rebbe had used all his mystical powers just to heal a girl he had never seen through a doctor he had never seen with no benefit to himself.

He realized that a Rebbe is complete self-sacrifice for every Jew. Beyond the boundaries of physical and even spiritual. And he inspires it in others as well!

A Short Message from Rabbi Noach Orlowek



I remember hearing from a friend of mine who teaches mountain climbing in Denver, Colorado a very important life principle. "It is not those who look towards the top of the mountain who succeed in making it there, but those who look at every little step they take along the way." Those who value every small step of progress they make, whether it be in Torah study or life in general, will eventually meet great success.

Rabbi Parkoff's Chizuk Letter – Eikev

The great *tzaddik* **Rebbe Zusha from Anipoli** was distinguished for his absolute bitachon. The Chassidim tell the following story about Rebbe Zusha. He and his talmidim used to sit and devote themselves to learning Torah with total dedication.

It once occurred that they had been sitting in the *Beis Midrash* for several days, learning and davening, but they had no food and were famished. The talmidim pressed the rebbe to go to a certain *Oshir* (wealthy individual) in town and beg him to have pity on the poor starving talmidim and give them some food. The *tzaddik* Rebbe Zusha agreed and went to the *Oshir's* house. He approached the door and put his hand on the handle. Then he went back to the *Beis Midrash*. The talmidim were shocked to hear his reasoning that by touching the door handle he had fulfilled his obligation of *hishtadlus*. He had not even knocked on the door and

the *Oshir* had no inkling at all that the *tzaddik* Rebbe Zusha was standing there in front of his house.





To their further shock, a short time later the *Oshir* came running into the *Beis Midrash* carrying baskets of food for the talmidim. The Chassidim saw clearly that because of the *tzaddik's* great and lofty *bitachon*, the little bit of *hishtadlus* of just touching the door handle was sufficient. (It seems that someone informed the Oshir that the great tzaddik Reb Zusha had been seen standing by his front door, but had refrained from knocking. The Oshir apparently was worried that perhaps he had in some way slighted the Rebbe and to make amends, he hurried to treat the entire Beis Midrash to a seudah.)

"Every single person is a world. And just as a world can be turned upside down by a single earthquake, so too can a person's entire life be transformed by a single act of goodness. Do not think that one mitzvah is insignificant. Perhaps that one mitzvah will be the one that tips the scales for you, for your community, and for the entire world. You have no idea of the power that lies in your hands. Act, and do not delay." ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

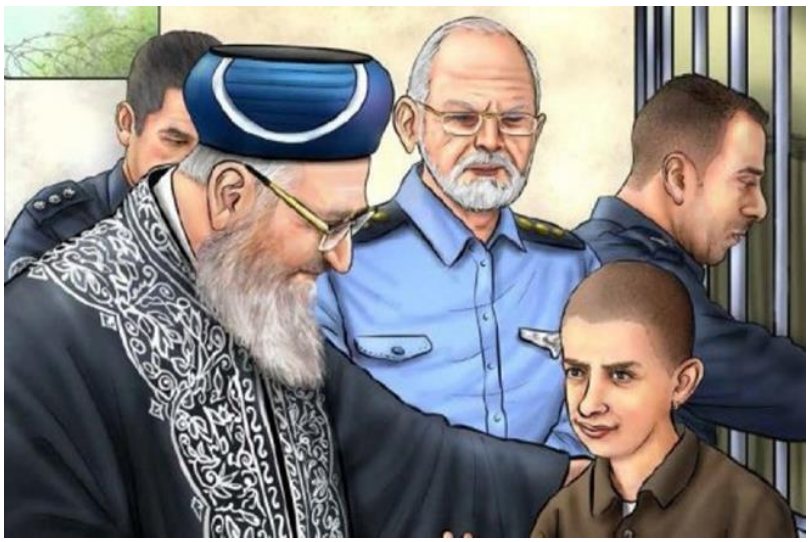


It says in this week's *parshah* (10:12) **וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם־לְיִרְאָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹקיךָ** "Now, Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d..."

Rav Chaim Volozhiner offers a beautiful thought on this. If a person fears Hashem he will not fear anything else. However, if he does not fear Hashem, he will be afraid of other things. Therefore, Rav Chaim explains, since either way a person will experience fear, he may as well use it properly, for fear of Hashem!

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS EIKEV

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu



You're All Invited to My House When You Get out of Here: Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu Told the Juveniles in the Delinquent Ward.

Once Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu was asked to visit a prison in Israel and speak to the prisoners. When approaching the prison the Rabbi spotted a bunch of teen agers in one of the fenced in areas. He asked the head warden, "Who

are these young men?" "These are juvenile delinquents in the youth ward of the prison", the head warden answered.

Rabbi Eliyahu said: "I'd like to meet them and speak to them". "Rabbi, it's not a good idea. These kids are very unruly and respect no one. They're liable to throw eggs and tomatoes at you. It would be a shame for them to treat you so rudely."

The rabbi ignored the suggestion of the head warden and was adamant: "I'm not leaving the prison today without talking to these young men! If they throw eggs and tomatoes at me I'll dry clean my rabbinical gown. I have something to tell them." He then turned to his assistant and said; "Go to the prison canteen and buy candy bars for these young men, quickly!"

The warden saw he wasn't talking the rabbi out of visiting the unruly youth and he went into their ward to tell them they would have a distinguished visitor... the Chief Rabbi of Israel! The youth started preparing a proper reception for him. They ran to the pantry and grabbed eggs and tomatoes and prepared to pelt the Rabbi when he arrived. The rabbi entered the ward surrounded by wardens who hoped to protect the Rabbi from getting pelted. The rabbi was received with a great ruckus and the youth held up their eggs and tomatoes menacingly and shouted and roared.

Rabbi Eliyahu was not perturbed. He looked at the young men with kind eyes. He scanned the youth and spotted who he felt was the ringleader; a 14 year old who seemed to be leading the rest of them. He turned to him and asked: "Please tell me as the group leader, when will it be quiet in here?" The young man haughtily announced: "In exactly 3 minutes!" Indeed 3 minutes later it was quiet after the boy waved his hands for silence.

The rabbi began speaking and encouraged the young men to come back on to the correct path. "Don't consider yourselves prisoner, consider yourselves young men who will get out and in the future will

establish perfectly normal and healthy families! Every one of you when he gets out of here is invited to come visit me!"

After Rabbi Eliyahu's words the young men who were just rowdy a few minutes before, stood politely in line to speak to the Rabbi, get his blessing and kiss his hand in reverence. Each one of them got one of the candy bars the rabbi told his assistant to buy for them.

Years passed and after Rabbi Eliyahu passed away a married Torah Student came to visit his home and told his family: "I was one of those delinquent youth and the words of the rabbi helped me change my ways!"

The Dirty and Beaten-Up Car that was Up for Sale



In Hollywood, Florida lived a couple Dr. and Mrs. Rosenblatt. Dr. Joe Rosenblatt was a top oncologist in the country, and one day, his wife, Lilly was driving on I-95. Two lanes away from her was a car for sale. It was a beaten-up pile of metal and the car was so dirty, that the owner wrote "For Sale, Call…" in the dirt.

She picked up her phone and called the number on the car. Dr. and Mrs. Rosenblatt had new cars and had no need for a car like that. She always said she never knew why she called, but she did.

The number picked up, and Lilly Rosenblatt said, "I'm driving two lanes away from you. Why are you selling your car?"

The man in the car could have responded in a number of ways to such a strange question. However, he started to cry and tell his story.

"My young wife and I are from South America, we got married only a few years ago. Everything seemed perfect. We just moved to Florida, and upon moving here, unfortunately my wife was diagnosed with a terrible illness.

"We don't have any insurance. But every doctor we visit tells us the same thing.'*The only oncologist who has a chance of saving your wife is Dr. Joe Rosenblatt.*' So we are selling our car to be able to afford to see him."

Lilly understood now why she was guided by Hashem to call. Calmly, she said, "Joe is my husband. Save your car, go pick up your wife. I will call him. Drive to Sylvester Center in the University of Miami and he will take her on as a patient, free of charge."

And as a messenger of Hashem, the One who is truly in control and running the world, Dr. Joe Rosenblatt saved the life of this young woman and made an amazing *kiddush Hashem*!

Just Four Days Left to Live



One day, a man who was very distraught came to the **Chazon Ish (Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz, zt"l)** for help and advice. He told the Chazon Ish that he was quite ill and that the doctors did not have any effective medication for him, and they had told the man that he had only four days left to live.

The Chazon Ish opened a Chumash to Parashas Bereishis, and turned to the first Pesukim of the Parshah. He said to the man, "Look what Hashem created on the first day," and the Chazon Ish began

to recite all the things which Hashem created on the first day of Creation.

"Look what Hashem created on the second day," and again the Chazon Ish read the Pesukim, and listed one by one the things which were created on the second day. He continued with the third day, and the fourth day. "If the Creator of the World was able to create so many things in four days, don't you believe that in four days He can create a medicine for you which will heal you completely? Four days is a very long time!"

The Chazon Ish encouraged the man not to give up hope, but rather, he should daven for himself and plead with Hashem that He heal him. He reminded the man that the Gates of Tefilah are never locked, especially before the Tefilah of a sick person— which is Tefilah at a time of Tzarah, distress.

The eyes of the man lit up at the words of the Chazon Ish and he began to daven fervently for himself, following the instructions of the Tzadik.

An unbelievable miracle occurred, and a new medicine was imported to Eretz Yisroel from America in the following days. This sick man was one of the first people that the medicine was tested on, and it proved to be successful to fight his illness. Within a short time, the man was healed completely! (Borchi Nafshi)



The One Dollar Din Torah



A Yeshivah Rebbe was faced with two boys fighting over a dollar. Each claimant seemed to have validity in his claim and yet it was unclear to whom the dollar should go, so he decided to take his students to the Torah giant of the generation.

Over the course of his illustrious and holy life, **Rav Moshe Feinstein, O"BM**, met with multitudes of people, providing them guidance and advice, as well as settling many cases of dispute.

One afternoon, Reb Moshe received three visitors, the two contending boys and their Rebbi. The boys presented their case before the greatest living legal authority of the generation. He heard each side with great care and questioned each with precision.

After a thorough review of the facts, Reb Moshe consulted his books for a conclusion. A clear, but difficult decision was arrived at. Reb Moshe decided in favour of one of the boys and awarded him the dollar.

Everyone was thrilled for having had the opportunity to spend time with such a great man. They had a sense that ultimate justice had been served but, even still, the fellow who lost his legal grip on the dollar he had claimed still felt the sting of the final judgment.

As they were leaving, in an act of superlative sensitivity and magnanimity, Reb Moshe reached into his pocket and gave the one who had lost the case a dollar from his own pocket. Everyone left with a dollar and a pocket full of lessons.

'Apologize to the Girl You Dated' By Rabbi Lazer Avtzon



Rabbi Shmuel Kaufman, zt"l telling over Tzadikim stories to children

Having grown up in Detroit, I flew there this week with my sister Dina Borenstein to comfort the family of veteran educator, **Rabbi Shmuel Kaufman *zt"l***, the beloved teacher in Yeshiva Beth Yehudah in Detroit.

Sitting there, I was given additional details to the incredible Yechidus he had with the Lubavitcher Rebbe resulting in the bracha to him and his wife to have children. I also heard another amazing story that is equally mind-blowing.

This story was originally printed in the Kfar Chabad magazine a while back, but some details were not verified.

Reb Shmuel came to Detroit as a single bochur to teach at Yeshiva Bais Yehudah, a Jewish day school consisting of two campuses at Southfield and Oak Park, Michigan. It serves boys and girls from pre-kindergarten to grade 12.

Thursday nights and Shabbosim, Reb Shmuel would spend at the home of my parents Rabbi Meir and Cheyena Avtzon. He remained close after he got married to his wife Risha and their return to Detroit.

After several years of being married and not being blessed with children, my father suggested that they travel together to New York and see the Rebbe for a bracha.

Initially, he refused, but after visiting all the other Gedolim of the time and still no yeshua, Reb Shmuel finally relented and came with my father to 770 Eastern Parkway.

After detailing his situation and asking the Rebbe for a bracha, the Rebbe turned to him and asked whether he ever unintentionally hurt a girl's feelings to the point she might have a 'kpaida' (grudge) against him.

Reb Shmuel answered, "No, to the best of my recollection."

The Rebbe then asked again, "Is it possible you dated a girl and led her to believe you were interested in her and then broke up without asking Mechila (forgiveness)?"

Again, he said he does not recall.

My father, who was present at the Yechidus, intervened at that point. "If the Rebbe is asking you twice, you should think hard and remember, because there has to be something!"

After further thought, Reb Shmuel remembered being on a date and loaning the girl a sweater to warm her from the cold. He later decided it was not meant to be and merely informed the Shadchan that it was over.

The Rebbe replied, "You must ask Mechila with a full heart."

"How do I even find her?"

The Rebbe replied, "If you really try, you will see how easy it is."

The Rebbe then blessed him and said, "Once you ask Mechila and she truly forgives you, you will be blessed with children."

"And what if she doesn't want to forgive me"? he asked.

The Rebbe replied, tell her that if she forgives you with a full heart, she will soon find her bashert (her own match).

The Yechidus then turned to another subject with the Rebbe asking him what he does and learning that he is a teacher.

The Rebbe asked, "Do you tell stories of Tzadikim?" and he replied that he does not because he considers it Bitul Torah.

The Rebbe answered, "telling stories of Tzadikim is in itself Torah! Tell stories!"

##########

After leaving Yechidus, he searched and searched and ultimately found the phone number of a brother of the girl. He called and spoke to the brother and asked if there was any way for him to get in touch with his sister.

"Why would you want to speak to her now after all these years and after breaking her heart?" he answered.

Unbeknownst to Reb Shmuel, the girl had felt strongly that by his loaning of the sweater during the date that he really liked her. She was so grief-stricken from being left cold-turkey that she bore a tremendous resentment towards him.

Her brother then said, "She's actually here visiting me now but she doesn't want to talk to you!"

Reb Shmuel begged and said, "I just came from Yechidus with the Lubavitcher Rebbe and was told that the reason my wife and I were still not blessed with children is because I hurt your sister and must ask Mechila. Trust me, I had no idea and am terribly sorry."

A meeting was arranged, the girl initially did not agree to forgive him. When he told her that the Rebbe said that if she forgives him it will open the doors of blessing for her as well, she agreed and said I forgive you with a full heart.

Some 3 months later, my mother called Reb Shmuel at 6:00 AM and wakes him to share the great news that the girl he had dated was now engaged to be married.

One month later, his wife became pregnant with their eldest son Yona. Over the years, they were blessed with another six children.

But even more amazing than this story is the fact that Rabbi Kaufman is remembered as a devoted and beloved teacher and the one who inspired thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of students to live lives of Yiras Shamayim.

What was his secret ingredient? Stories.

Throughout his career in chinuch, Reb Shmuel told stories like you never heard. When he told a story, you felt you were there witnessing and a part of it. He brought to life the characters, the setting and the pure faith they exuded.

The Rebbe told him to tell stories and assured him that not only is it not Bitul Torah, but that it's Torah itself. From that day onward, he never ceased to tell stories.

A Threefold Brachah By Tzvi Yaakovson

While I was the convalescent home at the Ramada hotel for mothers after having given birth, Mrs. Batya Zlotnick, the dedicated supervisor, showed me a group of three beautiful triplets whose loud cries filled the air in the nursery, and explained the story behind their birth.

The triplets' father approached Rav Yeshayahu Epstein, the loyal right-hand man of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**, and said, "I would like to receive a special brachah from Rav Chaim – not just something stam, such as the word 'buha' [an abbreviation for 'brachah vehatzlachah'] that Rav Chaim has been using over the past couple of years."

Rav Yeshaya smiled and said, "Rav Chaim's 'buha' is not 'stam.'"

The yungerman waited in line, and when his turn arrived, he requested a brachah for children. Rav Chaim smiled his aristocratic smile and said, "Buha, buha, buha." And so it was that the couple was blessed with triplets.

Worst Day Ever? By Chanie Gorkin

Today was the absolute worst day ever
And don't try to convince me that
There's something good in every day
Because, when you take a closer look,
This world is a pretty evil place.
Even if
Some goodness does shine through once in a while
Satisfaction and happiness don't last.
And it's not true that
It's all in the mind and heart
Because
True happiness can be attained
Only if one's surroundings are good
It's not true that good exists
I'm sure you can agree that
The reality
Creates
My attitude
It's all beyond my control
And you'll never in a million years hear me say
Today was a very good day

Now read it from bottom to top, the other way, and see what I really feel about my day.

The Power of Prayer When All Else Seems Hopeless By Rabbi Reuven Semah

In the book *Barchi Nafshi* **Rabbi Y. Zilberstein** tells this powerful story of prayer. In the summer of 2007, after 15 years of marriage, a childless *B'nei Brak* couple decided to get divorced. Shortly after the divorce, they learned that they were expecting a child. It would have been easily rectifiable through remarriage, since they had no conflict, if the man hadn't been a *Kohen*. He is prohibited from marrying a divorcee!

Shattered, the *Kohen* went to **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**. The Rabbi said he didn't see any solution, and advised him to consult his father-in-law, **Rav Elyashiv zt"l**. Rav Elyashiv heard the pitiful tale and was visibly moved. He told the *Kohen* there is no way for a *Kohen* to remarry his former wife. "The thing I can tell you is to go to the *Kotel* and pray."

He went straight to the *Kotel* and prayed his heart out to Hashem, crying uncontrollably. Suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. A Rabbi inquired what was the problem. He poured out his heart.

The Rabbi asked him, "Do you have a father?" The puzzled *Kohen* answered that he is in an old age home in the States. He is very old and doesn't really communicate.

"If you ask me, travel to America and tell your father the whole story," the stranger told him and walked away. - The *Kohen* decided that since Rav Elyashiv told him to go to the *Kotel* and he met this stranger there, he would go.

After the long trip to his father's nursing home, they told him he hadn't spoken for months. With tears in his eyes, he told his father his troubles. Suddenly, with tremendous effort, the father spoke! He said, he never told him this, but he wasn't his biological son, and the son is not a *Kohen* at all!

A Life Worth Living by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

When he learned that an elderly widow in his community had suffered a crippling paralysis, **Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin**, the Rav of Brisk and later Jerusalem, arranged for a woman to come each day to wash her. With the approach of a holiday, he fulfilled the special mitzvah of bringing joy to a widow by visiting her to offer best wishes for the Yom Tov.

After profusely thanking him for his kindness she asked the saintly rabbi, who was famed for the effectiveness of his blessings, to bless her with long life. She saw from the strange look on his face that he was surprised that she did not request a blessing for a recovery from her condition.

"I accept the Heavenly decree regarding my paralysis," she explained, "and I am content to endure my suffering in this world rather than in the World to Come. But as long as I live and am able to say a blessing each day after that lady washes my body, I feel life is worth living as long as possible despite the pain."

A Short Message from Rabbi Paysach Krohn

What in fact is the etymology of the word "shidduch"? **The Ran** in his commentary to Meseches Shabbos (5b in dapei HaRif), cites the verse in Shoftim (3:11), **"ותשקט הארץ ארבעים שנה"** – "And the land was quiet for forty years."

Targum Yonasan ben Uziel renders the word **ותשקט** as **"ושדוכת"**- a word similar to **שידוכים** (shidduchim). The Ran explains that the word shidduchim relates to the word **ותשקט**, peace and tranquillity, for that is what a woman finds after she gets married. She experiences serenity and contentment with her husband and enjoys a blissful marriage.

The Chessed that Came Back By Yisrael Nathan

Chessed : (definition) An act of loving kindness done without any expectation of remuneration

Don't think that the really great stories are the one's that are written by the world's greatest writers. The really great stories are the stories that really happened to real people and they are really and absolutely true. The following is one of the many really great stories. Great because it's really true!

America had finally entered World War I. Troops poured into Europe to put an end to the war. The war was in it's final stages. American troops were dispatched throughout Germany. The year was 1917.



A lone Jewish soldier from Duluth, Minnesota, Alex Lurye, found himself in a small German town called Seldes. It was Friday night. Being far away from home was lonely. The young Jewish soldier had some time on his hands. Feeling out of place, he decided to see what the local Jewish population was like.

Entering the local village synagogue must have created a stir. An American soldier in uniform! The Americans fought the Germans in bitter combat. The lone soldier felt out of place. He was greeted by a kind German Jew by the name of Herr Rosenau who made him feel at home in the synagogue.

After the services, Herr Rosenau invited the serviceman to his house for kiddush and the traditional Friday night meal.

Seeing the beauty of a traditional Shabbat together with the warmth and kindness of this German-Jewish family made a deep impression on this young soldier. He was a stranger, a foreigner, even an enemy Yet because he was Jewish, he was invited to another Jew's home, given a delicious warm kosher home cooked meal, complete with wine and the traditional Shabbat songs. Herr Rosenau's family, together with his teenage daughter, gave the soldier the feeling that he was not alone, certainly not an enemy, even in such a far and distant land.

The soldier was never able to come back again to see this kind family again. However, the warm impression that he had received, the experience of the Shabbat in a warm and caring Jewish home did not leave him. It meant so much to this young soldier that when he finally returned to Duluth, Minnesota, his home town, he took time out to sit down and write a letter to the German Jew who had touched his life with such kindness. This was is 1917. For some unknown reason, although Herr Rosenau received the letter it was never answered. It was placed in a desk drawer and there it rested for twenty-one years.

Time moves on. Ruth, the teenage daughter of the German Jew, has grown up and married a German Jew by the name of Eugene Wienberg. She now has three small children. The oldest is a boy of eleven. The time is a bad time for the German Jews. The year is 1938. The dreaded Adolf Hitler has taken hold upon Germany and anti-Jewish proclamations are being contrived and enforced on a continually regular basis.

Herr Rosenau is now a grandfather. He is bothered about the dark and dismal future for himself and his fellow Jews in Germany. He doesn't pay attention to his eleven-year-old grandson, Sigbert, as he is rummaging through his desk looking for something of interest.

Suddenly a foreign postage stamp catches his eye. He pulls out the envelope with the postage stamp from America. "Grandfather, can I have this?"

Twenty-one years have past since he received the letter. "Yes, take it," the grandfather replies. After years of giving, an old forgotten envelope makes his grandson happy. He takes it home to his mother. "Look, look what grandfather has given me!"

The mother and her husband, Herr Wienberg eye the envelope with curiosity. The letter is still inside. They remove the letter and read it. It is the thank you letter from the American service man, from twenty-one years ago.

The mother remembers the young man. "Let's write to him! Maybe he will remember us and sponsor us, enabling us to immigrate to America" (It must be remembered that the U.S.A. did not let refugees come to its shores freely. However, if someone would sponsor you, then there was a chance.)

Looking on the envelope, they saw that there was no return address only the name, Alex Lurye, and the city and state, Duluth, Minnesota. "We have no future in Germany, we must get out before this mad man, Hitler, begins to do worse things to the Jews".

So they wrote a letter addressed only as follows: Alex Lurye Duluth, Minnesota

What can you do? Can you send a letter to a person in a large city without a street address and expect it to be delivered? Of course not. You would have to be foolish to think that it would get to its destination. But sometimes it works out. In this case, Alex Luyre had become a wealthy businessman who was well known in Duluth, a town of over a hundred thousand people. The postmaster delivered the letter.

When Alex received it, after a lapse of twenty-one years, he quickly sent a return letter acknowledging his receipt of their letter and

pledging to help bring the Wienberg family to Duluth. Alex kept his promise. The entire Wienberg family was brought over in that year and arrived in May of 1938. Shortly thereafter, the Rosenau family came over to America.

In Duluth, the Wienberg family began working hard to make life bearable through the depression era. Sometimes two jobs were necessary for both the father and mother in order to make it through the week. Yet in Duluth as in Seldes, Germany, the family made sure that the Shabbat would be joyously honoured.

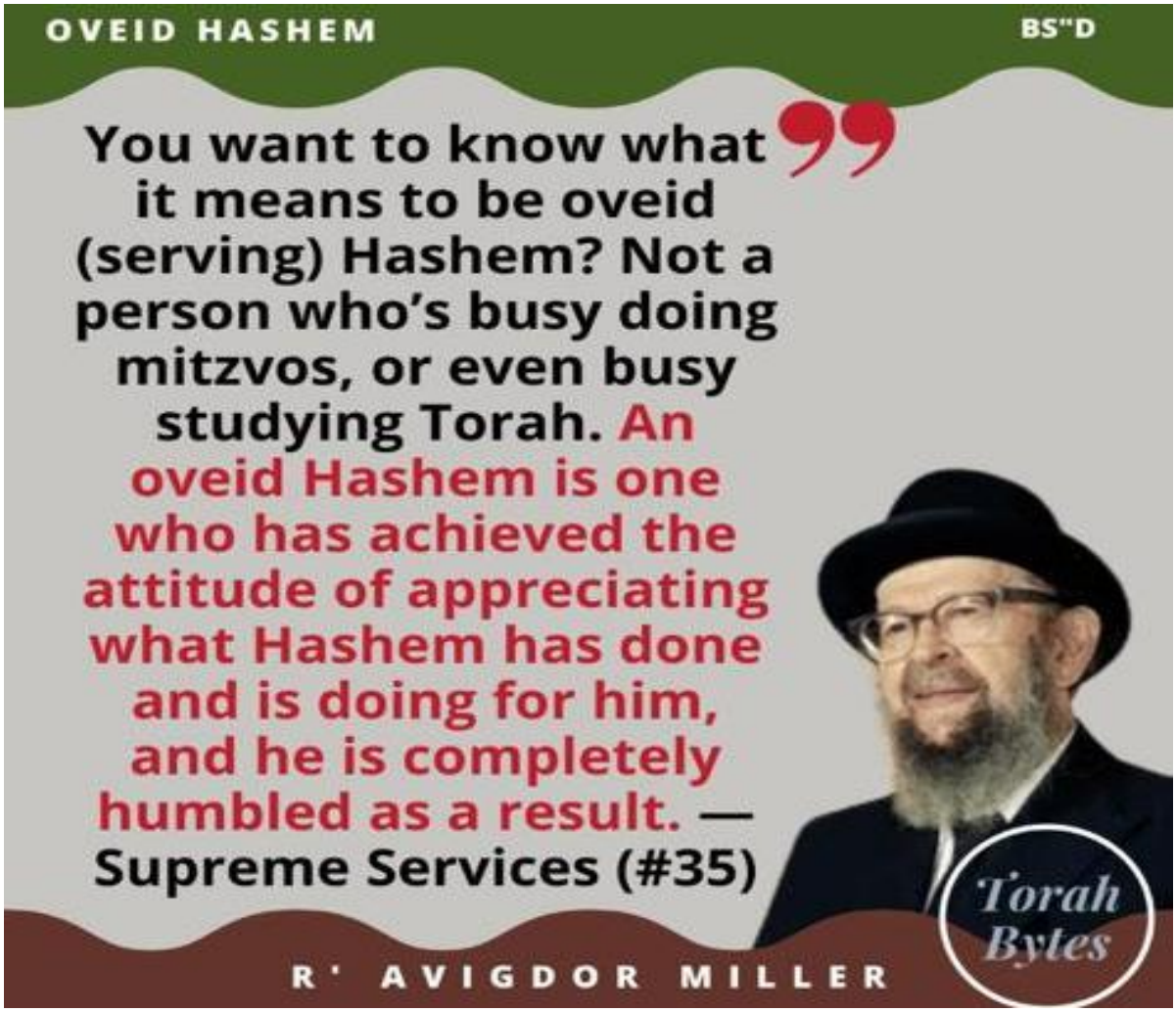
The rest of the family was quickly brought over to the states. Unfortunately, the horrible World War II swiftly came. The rest of German Jewry was destroyed.

Yet the kindness that Herr Rosenau had given to a stranger twenty-one years earlier had come full circle. Because of their kindness, without any thought of personal gain, Herr Rosenau and his family were spared from the horrible fate of their fellow German Jews. The chessed that they had so warmly given to others without desiring a payment in return had come back to them with dividends. The entire family was saved.

Today that family has sprouted and grown. A family blessed with many children and grandchildren and great-grand-children (Bli Iyin Hara). All have taken upon themselves always to honour the Shabbat.

Doing chessed is the Jewish way. Helping another Jew, without trying to receive a thing in return. Pure and unadulterated kindness. It's for you and for me.

"Most people worry about their own material needs and other people's spiritual state. It should be the opposite: worry about your own spiritual state and other people's material needs." ~ Rav Yisrael Salanter.



Etz Hachaim – R' C T Blau



The Sefer **קול דממה נשמע** brings a story of **מסירת נפש** for **שבת** that happened during the wicked Russian regime. This incident happened with a 9-year-old girl named Basya Berg and she was forced to go to school on **שבת** because if her father did not send her to school, he would be arrested and she would be sent to a governor's orphanage and then she would be completely disconnected from yiddeshkeit.

The problem is that in school they had to write, and to write is an **איסור דאורייתא** so by the first Shabbos they had to sharpen their

pencil and they did not have fancy sharpeners, so she "accidently" cut her finger so she shouldn't have to write.

Her finger healed, but in anticipation of the next Shabbos, she walked to school during the week in the Russian snow without boots or socks, so she got sick and was unable to go to school that Shabbos. A 9-year-old girl!!

נפלאות הבורא - Hashems Amazing World -The Grasshopper Mouse



The southern grasshopper mouse has an interesting taste for scorpions. This little creature from the south-western USA attacks and eats bark scorpions—a group of large arachnids, whose stings are incredibly painful and often fatal. When humans get stung, they say the pain's like having a cigarette stubbed out on your skin, followed by hours of throbbing pain.

The toxins should easily be powerful enough to kill a small rodent. But the grasshopper mouse doesn't care. It viciously attacks and eats bark scorpions. When it gets stung—and it gets stung a lot—it barely seems to notice. The reason for this is that Hashem has created the mouse with the ability to be immune to the venom of the scorpion so that it can enjoy its diet of scorpions. Hashem many times designs an animal to eat another in order to control its numbers.

Imagine if there were too many scorpions around, it would be harmful to humans and animals alike. Many times, scientists have

tried to remove certain "pests" for certain habitats only to later find that the interference caused more harm than good!

So how did the Creator design this mouse? The mouse is armed with a protein that stops its nerves from firing whenever it recognizes the toxins in a bark scorpion's venom. This doesn't just stop the venom from triggering intense pain; it means that the scorpion's venom actually prevents pain! The southern grasshopper mouse turns a scorpion's sting from a painful killer into a painkiller. The mouse is using the scorpion's strength against it!

Vechol Maaminim - A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim - Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

They Are All Miracles - Nothing Is Nature!



Throughout life, we often encounter events that, when we experience them, we remark something to the effect of "what a miracle!" Subconsciously, this description is reserved only for things that we are surprised at, things that we did not expect. But the truth is, that if would pause the race of our routines for a moment, and think about it, we would need to be emitting this cry every single moment.

We are familiar with the words of the Ramban (Shemos 13): "From the great and famous miracles, a person admits to the hidden miracles, which are the fundamental of the entire Torah. As a person does not have a share in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu until we believe, with all our words and our happenings, that they are all miracles, and there is no nature, or way of the world."

A prominent example of those 'hidden miracles,' is the wondrous and coordinated function of the systems in our body. Just delving into this briefly should cause us to marvel every single second. In order to merit to thank Hashem properly for this, Chazal instituted a special brachah –Asher Yatzar. In a few short words, this brachah encapsulates the magnitude of this miracle.

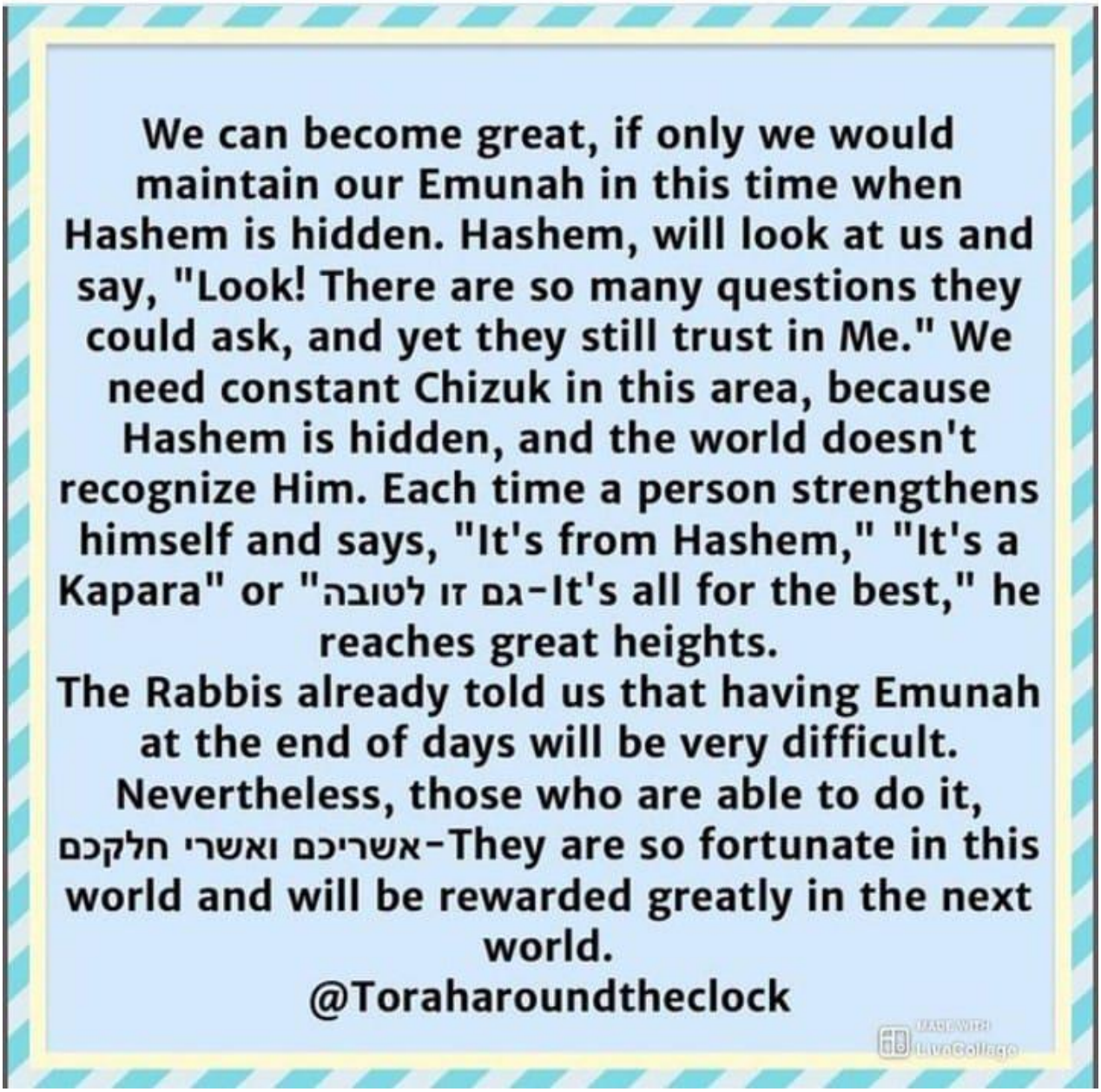


This brachah is one of gratitude, but it also contains within it a tremendous request, directed at the Kisei Hakavod: "Galuy veyadua lifnie Kisei Kevodecha, it is known before Your Throne, Hashem, that if one of them opens or one of them is closed, it would be impossible to exist and to stand in front of you." When we look Heavenwards and declare, 'Ribbono shel Olam! We cannot manage on our own, even for one second – "for Your salvation I await!" – then there is no greater plea for mercy than this!

We have been taught that being strict about reciting the brachah of Asher Yatzar with kavanah is a segulah for healing. For that reason, I prefer to call it the brachah of 'Rofei Kol Basar.'

Let us take heart that if the segulah of this brachah is so great, how much more so is answering amen after it so special, as we know, "the one who answers amen is greater than the mevarech."

If we take upon ourselves to be strict about reciting this brachah with the requisite seriousness, and we will be careful to answer amen after it, we will certainly merit an abundance of blessing and good from now and forever. Amen.



Hashem Open my Lips

Rav Yonason Eibschitz explains why we say '*Hashem sefosai tiftach* – Hashem open my lips' right before *shemona esrei*.

He explains that when man stands before the Master of the Universe, one's vocal cords should freeze in paralysis, out of fear. We therefore offer a special prayer that Hashem should grant us the fortitude to open our lips in prayer. ~ **Praying with Fire**

The Protector

In Czarist Russia, a man had to visit the capital city but was afraid. The rampant anti-Semitism was even harsher in large cities and he feared for his life. Though he would wear a hat and would not appear overtly Jewish, he feared that he would be beaten or worse. He went to his Rebbe and asked for protection. "Hashem is with His children at all times, you need not be afraid," said the Rabbi.

"But, Rebbe," pleaded the man, "I need extra protection, you must help me." The sage said nothing but rose and went into his private study, returning with a small velvet pouch. From it, he pulled a small, burnished gold disc, which looked like a small shield. "Carry this with you and remember that Hashem is your protector."



The man was overjoyed and carefully put the pouch into his pocket. His trip to the capital was not only safe, but the extra confidence he had made it more successful than he had imagined.

Upon his return, he thanked the Rebbe for the shield. "This worked so well," said the traveller, "where did you acquire it?" "It was Hashem who protected you, my child," said the Rebbe. "As for this," he said, reattaching the disc to the front of his pocket watch, "I bought it from Mendel the watchmaker." [From Migdal Ohr - Chukas - R. J. Gewirtz]

A Wise Man would say: "Try not to become a man of success. Rather, become a man of value."

The Siddur Speaks



Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, would always strive to Daven with Kavanah. He once said that for him, a successful day was a day when he was able to say the Brachah of Avos in all three Tefilos of Shemoneh Esrei with Kavanah.

One time, Rav Mottel, Rav Shlomo Zalman's son, noticed that Rav Shlomo Zalman was reciting the Brachah of Nodeh Lecha a second time during Bentching.

After he finished Bentching, Rav Mottel asked his father what the reason for this was.

Rav Shlomo Zalman explained that Nodeh Lecha is about thanking Hashem, and he had said it without Kavanah. He explained, "Thanking Hashem without true focus isn't thanking Hashem at all!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

In the neighbourhood of the **Steipler Gaon**, an old widow lived all alone. One day, she fell down and broke her leg. She was now alone and incapacitated. One of her neighbours, whose husband happened to be a close student of the Steipler, took her into her home and cared for her physical and emotional needs.

When the Steipler heard of this woman's selfless act of giving, he remarked, "Now we can send people to her to ask her for a Brachah. Her Brachos will certainly be fulfilled because of the Chessed she performed with this widow!"

Stories from the Life of Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l

The Safari



One day, Rav Shimshon had just exited Bnei Brak toward Ofakim when he was suddenly struck by a brilliant thought that illuminated a complex *sugya* in *Maseches Kesubos*.

Anxious to crystallize his train of thought before he lost it, he desperately scanned the highway for a place to stop, yet where, exactly, could he pull over on the busy Geha Highway?

This episode might have been buried alongside countless others attesting to Rav Shimshon's greatness in Torah, *avodah* and *yiras Shamayim*, yet *Hashem* apparently wanted to teach his children and followers a lesson in *ahavas Torah* and the compelling obligation to toil in it even "*b'lectecha baderech*, on the way…"

Several weeks or even months passed before one of Rav Shimshon's sons accompanied him in the car on a short ride. Sticking his hand into the glove compartment in search of an item, he was surprised to find a one-day ticket to the Ramat Gan Safari.

His father? At the safari? The boy was puzzled, yet he assumed that his father had accompanied a broken-hearted Jew on a day trip, or that one of hundreds of hitchhikers who joined Rav Shimshon in the car had dropped it. Still, his curiosity was piqued, and he asked his father about it.

"Oh, that?" Rav Shimshon chuckled. "It wasn't a *chesed*. One day, I bought myself a ticket to the safari."

"You?" His son ogled him in disbelief. "You went to the safari?!"

"I did, but not to see the animals…" Rav Shimshon confessed, recalling the day that he'd passed the junction on the way out of Bnei Brak and been struck by a thought that clarified an entire *sugya*.

Driving down the congested highway in search of somewhere to stop and collect his thoughts in peace, he hadn't found anywhere suitable, but determined that he wouldn't continue home and risk losing this priceless train of thought.

Several long moments passed before he spied the tall gated entranceway to the Ramat Gan Safari. On a whim, he turned the steering wheel toward the zoo, deciding that it was an ideal location as any to analyze his epiphany and re-evaluate the entire *sugya* in *Kesubos* based on it.

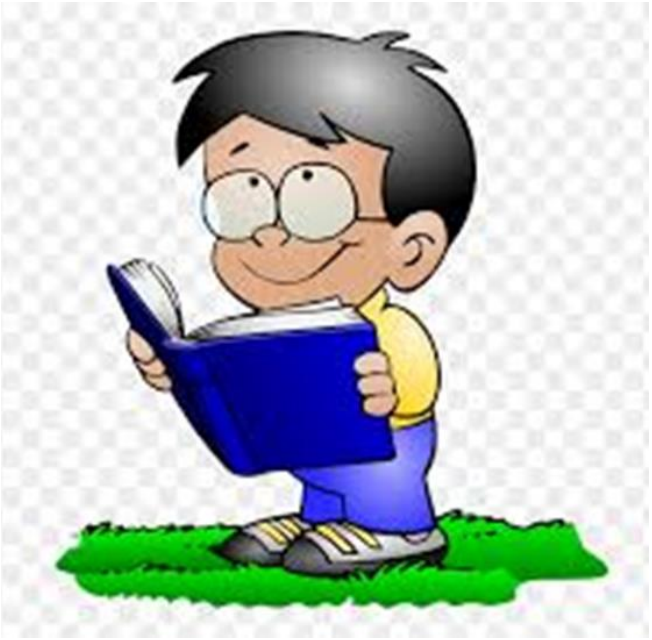
Thus determined, he drove to the reception booth, doled out the cost of a ticket, and found a quiet, peaceful spot to sit at the far edge of the park under a group of eucalyptus trees. He spent the next two hours meticulously arranging his thoughts and crystallizing his understanding of the thorny *sugya*.

Who knows? Perhaps *Hashem* planted the thought of building this safari in central Ramat Gan in the mind of its creators just so, one day, Rav Shimshon Pincus would find himself a haven — not to gaze upon the miracles of creations, but to create them…

"I did not go to the Maggid of Mezeritch to learn Torah from him, but to see how he ties his shoelaces." ~ Rabbi Yitzchak of Anipoli (a disciple of the Maggid)

True learning is not just in the words a teacher says, but in the sanctity of their everyday actions.

Learning Wherever We Go



"We must take the *beis midrash* with us wherever we go!" he once declared in a *shmuess*. Indeed, Rav Shimshon Pincus was the paragon of a Jew who carried the *beis midrash* on his shoulders, in his car, and even in his briefcase. *Chavrusos* and *talmidim* from assorted eras in his life unanimously attest to his outstanding ability to focus on a single thought in Torah without distraction, whether he was in a *beis midrash* facing a *shtender* or not. Whether traveling on a plane or sitting in the comfort of his house, he would get caught up in Torah thoughts and spent many an hour in silence examining it from every angle.

He was often so deeply engrossed in his thoughts that when someone approached him with a question or remark, he would literally shake himself awake to return to reality.

When a *talmid chacham* with whom he was acquainted once griped about the long, boring hours wasted on transatlantic flights, Rav Shimshon replied, bewildered, "What do you mean? My best hours are those ten hours when I can just learn uninterrupted, either from a *sefer* or reflecting on the *sugya*!"

On another occasion, Rav Shimshon was once compelled to wait a very long time in line to submit documents to the municipality. An *avreich* standing right near him was clearly impatient and exasperated. When the man expressed his deep annoyance aloud to Rav Shimshon, the latter replied, "What's the problem? Whatever you do in the *beis midrash*, you can do here just the same…"

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein zt"l - Keep Dancing

Thank G-d, I have five daughters. At the wedding of my youngest, we held what is called in Yiddish a "Mezinka," a traditional process which honors the parents who have just married off their last child. Circle dances are formed around the parents, who are raised up and presented flowers. It's a beautiful little tradition.

Four weeks before the wedding, I tripped as I was walking out of *shul* and fell. And then I heard a pop. Laying on the floor, I immediately knew I had broken my foot. And sure enough, I was right.

"Rabbi," said the doctor, it's broken. That's for sure. But I'll tell you, if you had to break a bone, it's the best one to break." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry at that joke. "I have a wedding in four weeks," I said. "I need to walk to the *chuppa*."

The doctor wasn't too optimistic about that. "It takes at least six to eight weeks to heal. You're going to need to wear a plaster-cast." But I knew that wouldn't work. I was marrying off my youngest daughter, and I had to walk her down. So the doctor let up just a bit. "Alright, come here the morning of the wedding, I'll take an x-ray and let you know if I can take it off then."

I took extra care for the next four weeks to allow my foot to heal as best as it could. I really wanted to dance and be there fully for my daughter and son-in-law.

Four weeks later, there was one thing I know: my foot was still hurting. The doctor took the x-ray and then returned with the news. "It's starting to heal, but it's still broken." But, despite everything, I remain firm to my position. "I cannot wear the plaster-cast." So the doctor advised me of a solution.

"For two hours before the wedding, soak your foot in an ice pale. Then stretch out your shoe and carefully place your foot inside. If you do that, you should be fine walking down to the *chuppa*. But, let

me be clear, you should put the plaster-cast back on during the dancing. If you don't and someone steps on your shoe, the pain could be so excruciating that you'll pass out. Don't risk it."



Agreeing to the doctor's instruction, I followed through and walked my daughter down to the *chuppa*.

After the *chuppa* came to a close, I took a seat and began preparing my cast to put it back on. But then my wheels started turning. All that we'll have are pictures of me dancing in a cast! What about this? I'll dance with my son-in-law and his father as soon as they come out, they'll get a few pictures of me together with the family, and that'll be it. Everything will work out. I was sold on the idea.

Some time later, my son-in-law came running out and began dancing with his father, as his friends swarmed around him. I myself then got up and waddled my way through the crowd to the centre, where my son-in-law was heartfully jumping up and out.

Not one minute had gone by when I felt a noise. It wasn't the dropping of a glass or the blaring of the music. Someone had stepped on my foot. While I didn't faint, I certainly saw the Big Dipper and Little Dipper. Every star in heaven appeared before my eyes. I had never felt such pain in my life. But I didn't know what to say, as I didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. So instead of screaming out in pain, I raised my voice, belting out the song everyone was singing at the top of my lungs. And then I sat down.

I was in such excruciating pain. Not only was my foot throbbing, but so was my heart, missing out on all the joy being experienced by

those dancing and rejoicing with the *chassan* and *kallah*. But then I had another passing thought.

"Look," I said to myself. "I probably just broke it again and I'm in such pain anyway. I might as well dance the night away. I'm just going to make believe as if nothing happened. If I have to wait another eight weeks, alright! It's the wedding of my last daughter, and I don't have another wedding I'll need to be dancing like this in eight weeks. So let it start healing again tomorrow!"

I ended up dancing at that wedding like never before.

The following Friday, I was on my way to my daughter's *sheva berachos*, when suddenly I remembered something. A girl I was very close to and I consider like my daughter had called me a few weeks back and mentioned that she bought a new dress, and was scheduled to have her hair, makeup and nails done. She wanted me to pay for it. No problem. I did and she was set, ready to go for my daughter's wedding.

But I never saw her. She wasn't there. I called her right away. "Chani, were you at the wedding?" There was a moment of dull silence. "No, I'm sorry, I couldn't come," she said, her voice drably trailing off. As she responded, I could tell that something was off. "Are you not feeling well?" "I haven't called you Rabbi, but for the past two weeks, I've been in a very bad depression. I haven't gotten out of my bed. I want to die." I paused, taking in her words, knowing that she didn't speak them lightly.

"Chani, can I tell you something?" "What?" she called out, her voice cracking, as if she was closeted up in a musky, dark room. "At my daughter's wedding, my foot was broken, but I still wanted to dance. And then someone stepped on it and I felt pain I had never experienced before. I had every reason to decline dancing. I had a good excuse.

"But when you know it's your last wedding, you get up and dance. When it's your last daughter and your last chance, no matter how much it hurts, you will be there.

"Chani, every day when you wake up, it's your last day. It's your *mezinka.* You don't know if tomorrow will come around. None of us do. And while you have every right and every reason to remain in bed and not be part of the dancing, when you know that today could be your last day, you give it everything you got. You get out of bed, pick your chin up and make the most of it."

None of know what tomorrow will bring. All we have is today. We must make it count. - So keep dancing.

L'Maaseh

People sometimes meet others in a place like a hospital, and they develop a close relationship that would never have happened otherwise. This is what happened when a Talmid Chacham from Bnei Brak, Reb Shmuel and his wife, found themselves in Beilinson Hospital's ICU together with a secular couple from Kiryat Ono. Both of them were there with very sick children, R"L. The secular Jew and his wife, in their moment of suffering, held many conversations with the Talmid Chacham, who explained Judaism's attitude to suffering.

"Hashem is fully in control of this world, and it is only His Will that determines who will live and who will not," Reb Shmuel said. "We know that Hashem will do the right thing for us, whatever it is." He also spoke to him about the power of Torah, the beauty of the Mitzvos, and a Torah way of life.

After one long conversation in the middle of the night on the importance of Yeshivos, the secular father asked Reb Shmuel, "Are Yeshivah students learning now, at such a late hour? If you can show me ten Bochurim learning Gemara at this hour, I will become

religious!" It was two o'clock in the morning, and although Reb Shmuel wasn't certain, he decided to take up the challenge.



The two left the hospital, and ten minutes later they were in the Ponovezh Yeshivah in Bnei Brak, where Reb Shmuel had studied when he was younger. They opened the door of the Bais Medrash, and saw 50 young men engrossed in a lively learning session! The secular Jew couldn't believe his eyes. When they left the Bais Medrash, he said, "OK. I'm becoming religious!"

Shortly after returning to the hospital, not to the surprise of Reb Shmuel, their children reached a turning point in their illnesses, and they rapidly began to recover. Within 48 hours, to the astonishment of the doctors, they were able to return home!

Novardok

A Belzer Chassid told me a story about how tens of thousands of Galician *Yidden* were killed by the Nazis *Y'mach Sh'mam*. However, a large group was sent to Siberia.

He remembered how as the Trans-Siberian train made a stop, a *Novardoker* entered the train and started screaming:

כָּל מַאי דְּעָבֵיד רַחְמָנָא לְטַב עָבֵיד Everything "The Lover" [meaning Hashem] does, is for the good.

He went from section to section of the train, encouraging everyone that going to Siberia is actually good.

At the end of the war, they saw the truth of his words. All those "fortunate" ones who **didn't** go to Siberia, ended up perishing by the Germans. And all those "unlucky" passengers on the train to Siberia, ended up surviving.

Bitachon Weekly – R' Yehuda Mandel - Sensitive



R' Ahron Kotler Zt'l once spoke in public before American Baalei Battim, and he mentioned the concept of "learning Torah all your life like the Ziknei Yerushalayim".

A prominent person heckled him, and wisecracked: "Rabbi, so why don't you go to Yerushalayim?"

R' Ahron responded: "I am in America since that is where most of Klal Yisroel is".

A Truly Happy Person Isn't Sensitive When I heard this story [directly from a Talmid of R' Ahron] I asked him: Wasn't R' Ahron

upset over such chutzpa? He answered that R' Ahron was simply in a different world, and he felt no pain of embarrassment.



A Gabbai of the **Kapitchnitzer Rebbe** told me that the Rebbe was totally not a sensitive person.

Even when the Nazis Y'mach Sh'mam forced him to be M'vazeh himself by cleaning the streets of Vienna, all he said was:

"What a Zechus it is to clean Hashem's beautiful world!"

The Rebbe's main "Peckel" in life was: How can I thank Hashem properly after so much never-ending goodness going on in my life?

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

One of **Rabbi Avigdor Miller's** grandsons came over to him with a half a glass of water. He asked the famous question: "Zaide, is this glass half full or half empty?"



Rabbi Miller answered only the way he could. "The glass is neither half full, nor half empty. This glass is totally full. It is filled with half a glass of water and half a glass of air. Hashem has given you a full glass. The air is even more important than the water. A person can exist for a few days without water, but a person can't exist for even a few minutes without air." So when you look at the glass half full of water, you miss recognising that

there is air in the rest of the glass which is essential for our immediate existence.

It says in Pirkei Avos Perek 5:19, that a person should have an **עַיִן טוֹבָה** – be like Avrohom Avinu and look at things in a positive light. The fact that there is air there, is positive and even more important than the water. Sometime, what we don't have, is even more important than what we do have.

What we do or don't have is only because Hashem wants it that way. But it is always a full glass.

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser – Did You Thank Him Yet?



A person should be so excited to daven *shemona esray*, just to be able to fathom the depths of the things that we are asking of Hashem. Do we realise how many things that we have to thank Hashem for?

The moment I get up, I thank Hashem for everything. Hashem gave me back my koach. I am able to learn in this world. I am able to work in this world. Hashem gave me a brain that operates well, and I can understand things. Hashem healed my flesh. Hashem gave to me on a hot summer's day a fan or air conditioning. In the winter when it is freezing cold, I can go inside where it is warm. Thank The Boirey Olam. If Hashem wants it to be cold, it will be cold. If Hashem wants it to be hot, it will be hot. Hashem has rachmanos on us and gives us a beautiful climate. He gives us everything that we need.

That is what we must thank Hashem for.

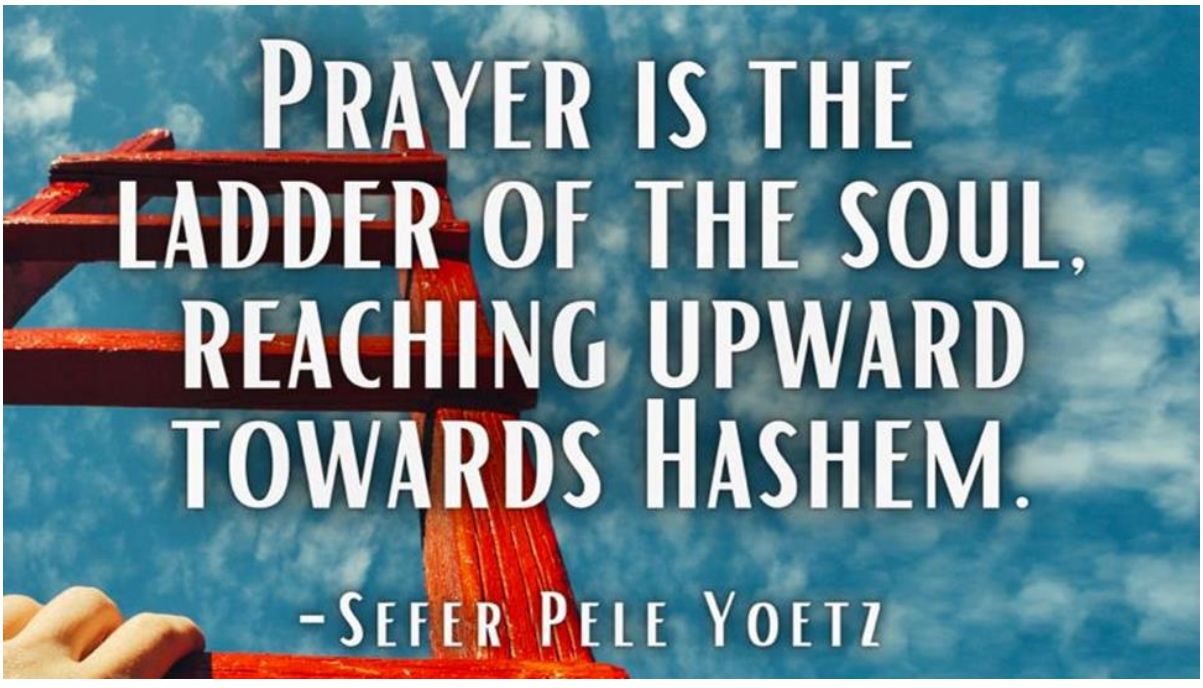
The fact that we have food to eat - **וכל החיים יודוך סלה** . I thank You for all the foods that we eat on Shabbos. I thank You for the pizza on Motzai Shabbos. I thank You for everything.

A person must realise how much we have to thank Hashem for, and that He is the source of all brochos.

You have a shirt to wear? You have a coat to wear? You have shoes to wear?

Rabbi Avigdor Miller Zt'l, when he learnt in Europe, it was well known that he always used to keep his outdoor coat on indoors. Why? Because his trousers had many holes in them. There were patches upon patches, and he was embarrassed. He decided that for **כבוד הבריות** it would be better to wear his overcoat at all times to hide his trousers.

Does anyone have to hide their trousers or dress today? No. We must constantly thank The Boirey Olam for every single thing that we have in life. Then we will have every brocho that there is under the sun. Our thanks to Hashem should be consistent and never ending.



Maasei Emunim - Amen Without a Stammer

"Abb-b-b-aaa I w-w-w-ant t-t-o g-ggo t-to shul…" Little Yosse'le barely got out the sentence, and when he was able to, he lowered his eyes in shame, and was out of breath with exertion.

Reb Elyakim looked at his son's tired face, and his heart clenched at the sight. His dear Yosse'le, the gifted child, who before reaching the age of three made people marvel at his clear, fluent speech, and who had not stopped talking, could hardly get even a short sentence out of his mouth coherently.

Yosse'le, the clever and talented child, who his parents and teachers loved, who did so well in his studies and was so well-liked by his friends. There had never been any problems, learning or social. Yosse'le had been a model child until now, a child who brought so much nachas. But now, it had all turned around. The fact that speaking was such an effort for him had made him slow down, and the melamed, who had praised his student until now, had to sadly report that Yosse'le's participation in lessons had declined drastically.

With no prior warning, his life was transformed. One fine day, for no apparent reason, Yosse'le began to stammer. Instead of his endless flow of words, all he could emit were broken syllables and sentence fragments. At first, his parents were very busy trying to find out the reason for the stutter. They took him to specialists in the field of emotional health, who checked if the reason was tension from the monthly test in cheder, or perhaps the side effect of the flu that he had recently contracted. When they didn't find anything, they told the worried parents that it was surely a passing phase. But even after months passed, the stutter continued, affecting Yosse'le's daily schedule and sending his self-confidence crashing to the floor… At this point, his parents began to worry, wonder and daven.

One day, Reb Elyakim found himself making his way to the famous address of **Harav Chaim Kanievsky, zy"a**. There, huddling with many other people waiting on the stairs to holy house, he put his thoughts in order. As he did, he murmured fervent words of Tehillim, in a plea for success for his young son.



He came to Rav Chaim's home after dedicating tremendous efforts in his son and his condition. He consulted with anyone who may have been able to help. He asked for the opinion of specialists, sought out the advice of medical askanim, contacted the best doctors, and at the same time, reached out to the senior mechanchim with lots of experience. They advised him to do this, that and the other.

For the first time, he heard about medical treatments whose names he could not pronounce – some conventional, some alternative. He was constantly turning over names in his mind of various therapists, some more successful than others.

Now, he was waiting to receive decisive advice from Harav Kanievsky. He wanted to make sure that the decision he was making for his son's treatment would be the right one to put him on the path to recovery, with siyata diShmaya.

After a long wait, it was his turn. He found himself facing Rav Chaim's attentive eyes. With a tremor of emotion, he began to describe his son's situation. Then he presented the question, detailing his deliberations and describing the gnawing worry that accompanies any type of treatment. Reb Chaim thought for a bit, and

then replied a typically terse yet pointed answer: "Be makpid about answering amen." Elyakim was very surprised; this was not at all what he had expected.

"And what about the doctor?" he asked, abashed.

"Be makpid to answer amen," Rav Chaim repeated and then added, "You are a talmid chacham, be involved in this matter of answering amen, learn the sugya and write a halachic clarification on the subject."

The father asked no more. He quickly turned around and left the house, with silent submission. He walked to the beis medrash. He piled many seforim onto the table and delved into the sugya of amen in Maseches Pesachim, and then checked the same sugya in Maseches Brachos. Rishonim, Acharonim, responsa seforim were opened in front of him; he sat with great concentration and wrote his chiddushim down… One chapter, then another, one brick on another.

The Torah essay came together, developed, and expanded. After weeks of toil, he had a completed work. The conclusions of the halachah were clear and organized, according to the Rishonim, and the words were as clear as the day they had been given at Sinai.

On the day that he finished writing, as Rav Chaim had instructed, he returned home. Suddenly, Yosse'le addressed him with the question: "Abba, what are you learning?"

The innocent question emerged with a clear voice, no fragments and no harsh breathing. It made Reb Eliyakim cry out with excitement: "Yosse'le! Say that again! What did you ask?" "I asked what you are learning," the boy said simply, and without waiting for an answer, turned to go play with his siblings in the other room.

That question was just the opening in the surprising and blessed change that ensued. The harsh stutter disappeared without a trace. Yosse'le began to speak normally, in clear, articulate sentences, without the trace of the stammer.

Reb Eliyahu and his wife held a seudas hoda'ah at which they recited Nishmas with gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. They also decided to publicize their story, to inform everyone of the tremendous virtue of answering amen and engaging in the halachos of amen, for a yeshuah at any time of distress.

They are gratified to be able to serve as a conduit through which to convey their sincerest appreciation to HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Working on our Middos - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

Rav Shalom Schwadron, zt"l, would Daven in a certain Shul in Shaarei Chesed. He once heard an elderly fellow enthusiastically reading a volume of Gemara. However, saw that the man didn't understand even a little bit of what he was reading. In a friendly way, Rav Shalom said, "It doesn't sound like you understand the Gemara you are reading." The man replied, "You're right. I don't understand anything that I'm reading." Rav Shalom asked, "Then why are you sitting here and reading with such enthusiasm?"



The man explained, "A person who is a patriotic citizen might want to know the names of the country's generals. That person might not know a thing about military strategy, but he still feels good about learning the names of the generals who lead the army. That is how I feel about knowing the names of the great Sages of the Gemara.

I want to be familiar with the names of Rava and Abaye, of Rav Pappa and Rav Huna, of Rav Meir and Rebbi Yehudah. Even though I don't

understand what they are saying, I feel privileged to know their names!"

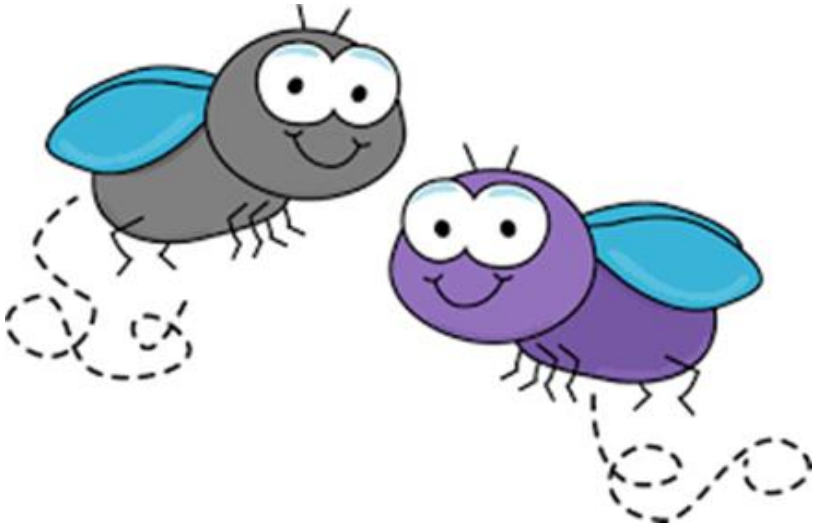
Rav Shalom later commented about the virtues of this individual. He said, "That man didn't think, 'I can't understand what I am reading, so why should I bother?' Instead, he was happy to recognize his level, and he said, 'I am a person who loves to read the Gemara, even if just to know the names of all the scholars who are quoted there!'"

Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin



The hot, sultry days of summer are especially felt in the Israeli city of Bnei Brak. Years ago, before there was air conditioning, in the middle of an especially oppressive day of heat, the bochurim in Ponovezh Yeshiva were having a difficult time concentrating on their learning due to the heat. The students were disappointed with themselves for not being able to study as well as usual. One bochur suggested to his friend that they walk over to the home of the **Chazon Ish, ZT"L**, to see how he was handling the heat.

They entered the Chazon Ish's home and were stunned at the scene they witnessed. The Chazon Ish sat at his makeshift table, which due to his abject poverty, consisted of a slab of wood on top of wooden milk crates, surrounded by open seforim. The heat in the room was unbearable. Additionally, as Bnei Brak at that time was surrounded by orchards, there were flies buzzing all around the room. Yet, the Chazon Ish was engrossed in his learning as usual and didn't even notice the guests.



One bachur insisted on asking the Chazon Ish how he was able to learn under such conditions. He stood and waited to be noticed. After a half hour, the Chazon Ish looked up and saw he had visitors. The bochur asked the Chazon Ish how he was able to learn with so many flies buzzing around the room. The Chazon Ish put on his glasses, and answered, "I don't see anything".

When asked how he could learn when it was so very hot, the Chazon Ish became puzzled and asked in wonderment "It's hot today? It's hot today?" It seemed that the Chazon Ish was wondering what they wanted from him; he was simply sitting and learning and did not notice the heat and the flies. When he noticed the bewilderment of the boys, he explained: "The heat and the flies only exist until one gets engrossed into his learning; once one is involved there aren't any flies nor heat…one doesn't notice anything other than the learning"!

No Such Thing as Defeat

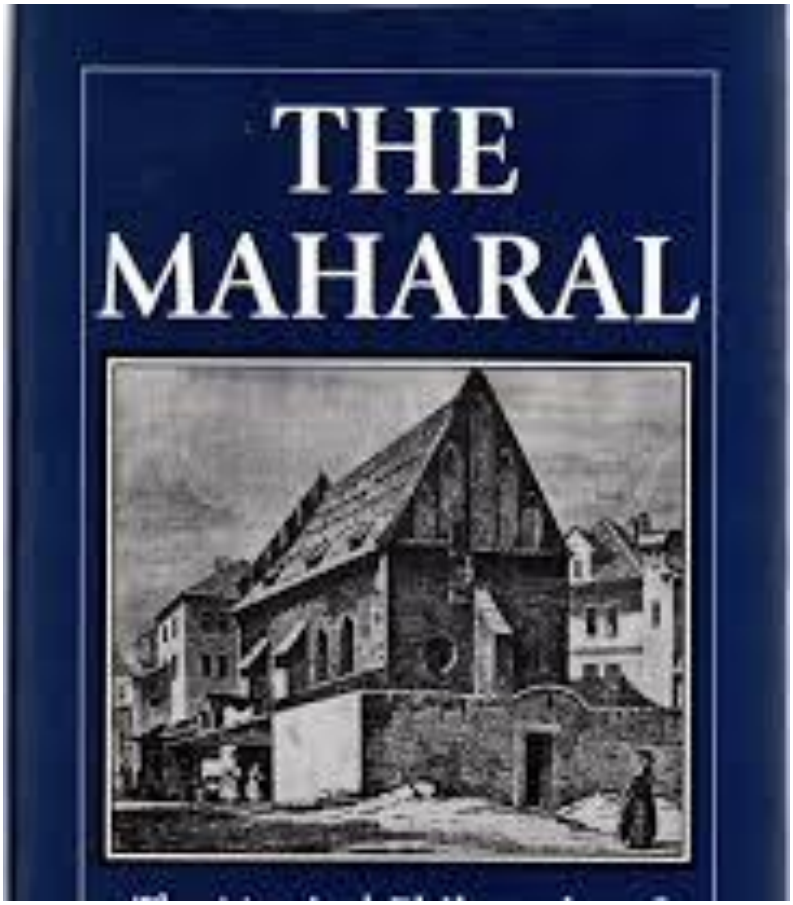
There's no such thing as defeat.

There's always another chance. To believe in defeat is to believe that there is something, a certain point in time that did not come from Above.

Know that Hashem doesn't have failures. If things appear to worsen, it is only as part of them getting better. We fall down only in order to bounce back even higher. ~ **R' Tzvi Freeman**

The Maharal's Shidduch - *Rabbi Naftali Weinberger*

To those who express concern that they will not have the funds for their children's weddings, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky Zt'l** often related the following story that contains a number of valuable lessons.



The Maharal of Prague, Rav Yehuda Loewy (1526-1609), became engaged at age 15 to Perel, the daughter of Rav Shmuel Reich from the city of Worms. Following the engagement, the Maharal went to learn in the Maharshal's yeshivah in Premislau with the intention of returning for his wedding when he would turn 18.

During that period, his future father-in-law lost his fortune and could no longer provide the support that he had promised the couple. In fact, he became completely indigent and they could barely obtain their most basic necessities.

Thus, it was impossible for them to marry unless the chassan, Rav Yehudah, would leave learning and go out to work. Rav Shmuel and his daughter knew that Rav Yehudah was destined to become a great gaon and marbitz Torah, but to achieve that, he would need to dedicate himself to limud haTorah without financial worries. Father and daughter wrote Rav Yehudah a letter explaining the situation and stating that in light of the turn of events, they would fully understand if he broke the shidduch.

The Maharal did not break the shidduch and the engagement continued for more than ten years. However, throughout that period, there was no change in the financial status of the kallah's father. During that time, the kallah opened a small bakery from which she hoped to at least support her aging parents.

One day, a soldier on horseback arrived at her store and, without a word, began stacking loaves of bread onto his horse. The soldier was about to leave without paying when Perel started to cry, saying that she very badly needed the income from the store.

The soldier replied that he was starving and hadn't eaten properly for days. He handed Perel a garment and said, "I am giving this to you as security. If I do not return within twenty-four hours to pay for the bread, the garment is yours to keep."

The soldier did not return. Perel began to examine the garment and saw that there were items sewn into the fabric. She opened the seams and was astounded to see many coins whose total value was a small fortune. A message was sent to the Maharal and the wedding soon took place. The Maharal was 32 and Perel was 28 at the time of the wedding.

אהבת ישראל

At the very first Agudah Convention, **HaRav Chaim Oizer**, who was the Gadol Hador, suddenly stood up in full stature when a certain Rebbe walked into the room. Someone asked Rav Chaim Oizer why he stood up for that specific Rebbe.

Rav Chaim Oizer explained, "There are many who learn a lot of Masechtos in **שס** , but there is one **מסכת** that this Rebbe excels in which deserves **כבוד** - **'מסכת אהבת ישראל'** , this masechta is a tremendous achievement and this is why I bestowed such great honour on that Rebbe"

Horav Isser Zalman Meltzer זצ"ל became engaged to Rebbitzen Baila Hinda. After the engagement, Rav Isser Zalman was diagnosed with a terrible lung disease and the doctor said he would not get better.

The kallah's family pressured her to break the shidduch. She asked the doctor how much longer Rav Isser Zalman had to live. The doctor answered that he most probably would live for one more year.



Horav Isser Zalman Meltzer זצ"ל



Horav Yisroel Mayer Kagan זצ"ל
Chofetz Chaim

She said to her family that it is worth it to her to live with the tzaddik for even one year.

The family continued to pressure her to break the engagement, so she decided to go to the **Chofetz Chaim** and ask daas torah what to do.

The Chofetz Chaim told her that even someone who is not healthy can still live a long life. After she heard that, she decided to marry him no matter how long he would live.

Rav Isser Zalman and his Rebbitzen lived happily married for more than sixty years!

A Siddur that is falling apart belongs to someone that isn't.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid

A gitten erev Shabbos Kodesh. There is a fascinating idea in how to interpret the Pasuk that we are so familiar with in this week's sedra.



Parshas Eikev has within it the source of Birchas Hamazon. The Pasuk 8:10 says, וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ . The gemarah in Berachos, tells us that this is the source of bentching birchas hamazon. When you eat and you are satisfied, you then bentch and thank The Riboino Shel Olam for giving you the incredible food that you have just eaten.

The Vishnitzer Rebbe ZY'A brings a totally different idea in the understanding of these words.

He says that instead of reading it as וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ , rather you should read it – אָכַלְתָּ – ***you ate***, וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ . In other words, the way to get pure undiluted satisfaction, is by thanking The Riboino Shel Olam. The real bracha comes from the satiation of being able to thank The Reboino Shel Olam and appreciate that which we have, and everything that He has given us.

I want to wish everyone an incredible, beautiful, uplifting and kedushdike Shabbos kodesh!

"Stop being afraid of what could go wrong, and start being excited about what could go right."

The Silent Witness, by Rav Yissochor Frand

וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ 11:20 ***And you shall write them on the doorposts of your homes and your gates.***



The Mezuzah stands like a sentinel at the door, we pass it whenever we enter or leave the room. What are we to think as we look upon the Mezuzah? What are we to contemplate when we see the letter shin on the case and are reminded of the holy scrolls within?

The Rambam, at the end of his presentation of the laws of Mezuzah, tells us to think about the eternal nature of the Almighty. This will inspire us to awaken from our slumber and come to the realization that nothing in this world is permanent other than the Almighty, His Torah.

Why does the Mezuzah remind us of these concepts?

Perhaps it is because the Mezuzah is a silent witness to the ebb and flow of history and human events. Think about the Mezuzah of an old shul or some other venerable edifice. It has been hanging there for decades if not centuries. It has seen infants brought into the shul to be circumcised, and it has seen these same people grown old brought into the shul to be eulogized and buried. It has seen generations come and go. It has seen empires rise and fall. It has seen the birth of ideologies and their demise.

In the last century alone, our hypothetical Mezuzah would have seen humanism, capitalism, materialism, existentialism, each embraced as life philosophies and then discredited. It would have seen the rise of the Soviet Union and Communism and their ignominious collapse. It would have seen the creation of the Third Reich, the Thousand-

Year Reich, its perpetration of the Holocaust against the Jewish people and its ultimate defeat and destruction. It would have seen the birth of Israel and it growth to maturity.

When the railroads were introduced in the 19th century, people thought the new technology was so perfect that it would never change. The railroad companies sold corporate bonds for centuries in advance. And where are they all today? On the scrap heap, along with their rusting trains.

Human beings are always seeking immortality. This invention, this idea, this building, this book, this one will capture that elusive immortality, this one will stand the test of time, this is one for the ages, this one will make me immortal. But it doesn't work.

The Torah tells us (Bamidbar 32:42), "And Novach went and captured Kenas and its suburbs, and he named it (lah) Novach in his name." According to the rules of Hebrew grammar, the word lah should end with a mappik heh, a mark of emphasis, but it doesn't. It ends with a weak heh. The Midrash tells us that the weak heh lets us know that the city did not last. It was eventually destroyed.

Why does the Torah consider it important to let us know this information? It is meant to teach us the futility of immortalization. Novach wanted to immortalize himself by creating something permanent – an entire city, no less! – and crowning it with his own name. But he failed. The city was destroyed, and his name would be forgotten if it were not mentioned in the Torah.

Everything constantly changes. Nothing is permanent. Only the Almighty and His Torah are permanent. The Mezuzah can bear witness.

"The judgments of the Torah do not bring vengeance to the world, but rather bring mercy, kindness, and peace". ~ Rambam

Yeshiva World News - HaRav Moshe Shternbuch's Segulah To Avoid Tragedies

HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shternbuch spoke about the many tragedies in Eretz Yisrael in recent weeks over Bein Hazemanim in the course of his weekly shiur last week.

"At a difficult time like this during a multitude of tragedies, Hashem Yishmor, we must daven to Hakadosh Baruch Hu from the depths of our heart," the Posek HaDor said. "As is known, tefillos create malitzei yosher for a person and they drive away the mikatrigim [accusers]. And if we don't have the melachim, the malitzei yosher, to advocate good for us, then chas v'shalom, there are destructive melachim who seek to punish us. But if we daven with kavanah, we're zocheh to melachim, malitzei yosher, who protect us from all evil harm."



HaRav Shternbuch then spoke about the second nekudah in avoiding tragedies. "It should be known that if we forget to incorporate emunah and bitachon into our life on a day-to-day basis, we make ourselves vulnerable to great danger, that Hakadosh Baruch could abandon us like the does of the field and bring many calamities upon us, Hashem Yishmor."

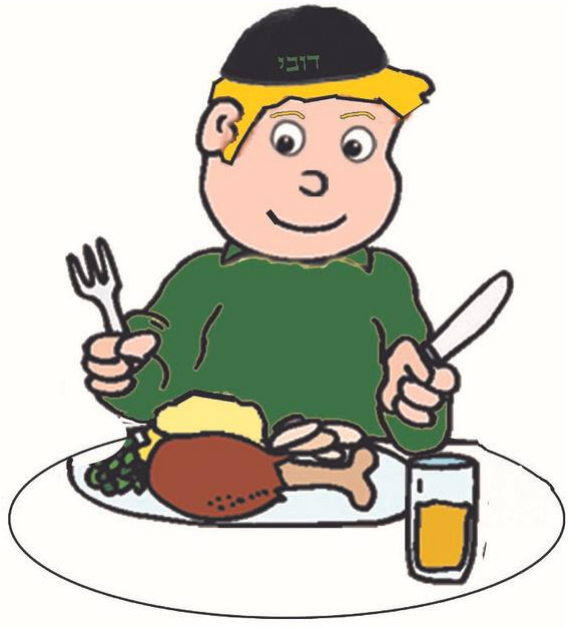
"For this is a klal of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's hanhagah, that in accordance with how much we lift our eyes to Him [depend on Him], He is mashpiah on us an abundance of protection. It's according to what's written in Tehillim: **'יהי חסדך ה' עלינו כאשר ייחלנו לך.'** On the other hand, if we forget to depend and trust in Him, then we are

thrown to the hanhagah of nature, which is paved with disasters, Hashem should protect us."

"And therefore, I instruct those who asked about this [the recent tragedies] that a tested and simple segulah to prevent tragedies and disasters is to trust in Hakadosh Baruch Hu and incorporate emunah and bitachon into everyday life, and thank and praise Hakadosh Baruch Hu for all His chasadim to us. This is the best way to transform the din to goodness."

"Everyone, and especially bnei hayeshivos, should be mechazeik as much as they can in limmud haTorah, for every hour of limmud with effort and simcha is like a protective wall against evil, rachmana litzlan. And the women should be mechazik in gidrei hatznius and kedushah. Through this, Hashem Yisbarach will help us that we'll be zohech to hear only good news, yeshuos and nechamos."

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick



The פָּסוּק 8:10 says וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ - ***You will eat, be satisfied and bless Hashem.***

In Mishlei,13:25 Shlomo ha-Melech writes: צַדִּיק אֹכֵל לְשֹׂבַע נַפְשׁוֹ וּבֶטֶן רְשָׁעִים תֶּחְסָר ***"The tzaddik eats to fill his soul while the wicked man is lacking."***

The Vilna Gaon זצ"ל explains that a tzaddik eats only what he needs in order not to be hungry. A wicked man just keeps eating and eating that his stomach doesn't even have enough room for everything that he wants to eat. **[ספר טללי אורות]**

Horav Aharon Kotler זצ"ל used to eat the Shabbos seudos with the bochurim in the yeshiva. One Friday, the cook of the yeshiva decided she would cut Rav Aharon's portion of chicken into pieces so that he

would be able to have more time to speak in learning at the seudah. After she cut the chicken, the pieces looked very small, so she added more to the plate.

When they brought the chicken to Rav Aharon, he ate the exact amount that he usually ate and left over the extra portion!

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

In one place, Moshe tells us that he went up to the mountain for forty days and nights and didn't eat. That sounds like eating is bad. Then we are told, we shouldn't eat and get satisfied, then forget Hashem. Again, sounds like eating is bad. If so, why give us a special mitzvah to eat, be satisfied, and bless Hashem? (aka Benching.)

It is precisely to tell us that physical things aren't inherently "bad," but can be used that way. The goal is to use them to feed our souls and serve G-d. That's when they become not just good, but divine!

Torah Tavlin - Yiras Shamayim

R' Mordechai Banet zt"l (Techeiles Mordechai) says a great vort: "**ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה'**' - A Jew is commanded to follow in the ways of Hashem with respect to all the middos: 'Just as He is kind, so must you be kind; just as He is gracious, so must you be gracious; just as He is merciful, so must you be merciful.'

However, this is impossible with the midda of Yirah - fear, since there is no such thing as fear by the Almighty. Thus, only here is the question asked: What does Hashem want from you? You cannot simply answer that you wish to follow Hashem - for in this midda you must figure out for yourself how to fear Hashem!



Reward



Sometimes we think abiding by Torah and mitzvos is bad for us because it limits us and prevents us from enjoying life to its fullest extent, but it isn't so. In so many ways, life is better, even in this world when we keep the Torah.

Reb Avraham Mordechai Malach Shlita told the following story:

A dove was born without wings. She was jealous of her friends and family who spent their days flying high in the sky while she stayed behind alone in her nest or wobbling along on the street.

At night-time, the birds would return to their nests and discuss the wonderful rivers and mountains they saw as they flew in the sky, and this made the handicapped dove even more broken-hearted. She prayed and cried to Hashem, and Hashem answered her tefillos.

One morning, she awoke with full-grown wings at her side. The problem was that she didn't know that the protrusions on her body were wings. So, she continued hopping along on the ground, unaware she could fly. And now, it was even harder because she had two heavy loads on either side. She was more upset than before.

A bas kol called out and said, "Don't feel bad. You aren't carrying a heavy load. Open your arms wide, and you will see that you can fly."

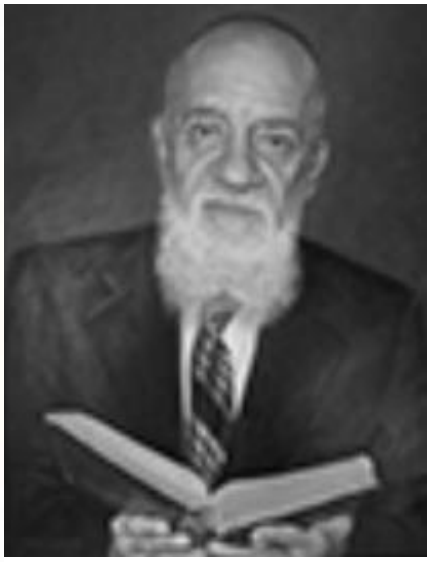
This story reminds us that the heavy load of Torah and mitzvos are our wings. They aren't cumbersome. The heaviness is making our life

very sweet. Our lives will be far more pleasurable, even in this world, because of the "heavy loads" we carry.

Keep all the mitzvos, embrace them, and you will fly to very high levels.

The Vision of a Chacham





Chacham Baruch Ben-Haim and Chacham Yaakov Kassin of blessed memories

There was once a man who was praying in Shaare Zion [a Sephardic synagogue in Brooklyn] and objected to the fact that somebody else, who was known to be far less than strictly Torah observant, received an *aliyah*. The man expressed his objection to *Chacham* Baruch Ben-Haim, who assured the man that this other fellow was allowed to receive an *aliyah*.

When the man continued to voice his disapproval, *Chacham* Baruch said, "Many years ago, there was a man here in this synagogue who was known not to be particularly observant, but *Chacham* Yaakov Kassin allowed him to receive an *aliyah*. Rather than rejecting him, *Chacham* Yaakov decided it was best to welcome the man with love and friendship."

Chacham Baruch continued, "That man was your father. You are observant today because your father was warmly welcomed and respected when he was not yet strictly religious."

Rabbi Shlome Zalman Hoff Shlita - שָׁלוֹם לָרָחוֹק וְלַקָּרוֹב

The Pasuk famously says - **וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ - *And now, Yisrael, what does the Hashem ask of you?* 10:12**

"Now, Yisrael, what… (**מה**)" – Read it as '100' **מאה**. This refers to 100 blessings. From here R. Meir derived: A person must recite 100 blessings every day. (Yalkut Shimoni 855)

The gemara in Menachos says that **מָה is מאה** – A hundred brachos, which brings yira and ahava. It is an entranceway in which we can find so much devaikos to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The words **לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת־ ה' אֱלֹקיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ** appear to be so daunting. Such an overwhelming type of expectation.

If a person is makpid in not only saying the 100 brachos, but actually thinking about what the words mean, that itself is a gateway to bringing us to yira and ahava. This is a tremendous chizuk.

The Ramban brings a *morodike* pshat in what **מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ** means. The Riboino Shel Olam is not asking you to do anything for His sake – it is all for our sake, our benefit, our zechus!

Rabbi Shlome Zalman Hoff Shlita

There is something in this week's parsha that we can all be mechazek. **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ** 8:10 – The **מצוה דאורייתא** of Birchas Hamazon. This is a very choshuv Mitzva Gedola.

The Chinuch goes to great lengths into the meaning of Birchas Hamazon. **Rav Shach Zt'l** used to often tell people to bentch from a bentcher or siddur. He used to smile and say, "Perhaps it takes a little bit longer, but there are enormous brachos and segulas as the reward. – all 15 of them!" (**הוּא הֵיטִיב, הוּא מֵיטִיב, הוּא יֵיטִיב לָנוּ, הוּא גְמָלָנוּ, הוּא גּוֹמְלֵנוּ, הוּא יִגְמְלֵנוּ לָעַד, לְחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרֶוַח הַצָּלָה וְהַצְלָחָה, בְּרָכָה וִישׁוּעָה, נֶחָמָה פַּרְנָסָה וְכַלְכָּלָה וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם, וְכָל טוֹב; וּמִכָּל טוּב לְעוֹלָם אַל יְחַסְּרֵנוּ**)

I would like to publicly ask of everyone to be mechazek to say Birchas Hamazon and Al Hamichya from inside a bentcher or siddur. The rewards for this **מצוה דאורייתא** are tremendous! And then, The Riboino Shel Olam will be proud of us for generations forever! **הָרַחֲמָן הוּא יִמְלוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. הָרַחֲמָן הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ. הָרַחֲמָן הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר דּוֹרִים, וְיִתְפָּאַר בָּנוּ לָעַד וּלְנֵצַח נְצָחִים, וְיִתְהַדַּר בָּנוּ לָעַד וּלְעוֹלְמֵי עוֹלָמִים**

Rabbi Shlome Zalman Hoff Shlita

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם וּלְעָבְדוֹ בְּכָל־לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם

The Ohr Hachaim says that **וְהָיָה** is a lashon simcha. The greatest simcha is in keeping the mitzvos. And also the carrying out of the mitzvos with simcha yields the greatest rewards.

What does it mean **אִם־שָׁמֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ**? Why the double lashon- to surely listen?

Rashi, the gemarah in Brachos, the Ohr Hachaim and many others say a very important yesoid in avoidas Hashem. - When **שָׁמֹעַ**, a person listens a little bit, that leads to more and more. It is not possible for a person to jump straight into big madreigos in hasmada, avoda or chesed, middos tovos etc.

The Gemara in Berachos famously says that in gashmiyus an empty cup can be fully filled, whereas a full cup cannot be filled.

In ruchniyus, it is *pukt fakert*. If it is empty, you can't put anything inside, but the fuller it is, the more you can add to it. If you listen a little bit, you will be able to listen more and more.

It is very important for us to understand our avoda especially during Elul, is that we need to take the first step, and that will lead us to growing in leaps and bounds. A little bit we can all do, and that will feed upon itself. A **שָׁמֹעַ** will lead to **תִּשְׁמְעוּ**.

Simchah



We've seen that we must remember that all the good comes from Hashem, and we should praise Hashem for everything we have. The big question is, how does one remember this.

The answer is through *simchah*. As the **Chozeh of Lublin zt'l** writes, "If you want the Shechinah to reside with you, make it your business always to be happy."

Avos d'Reb Nosson (34:49) states, "There are ten expressions of joy:**עליצה , תפארת, חדוה, עליזה, צהלה, דיצה, רינה, גילה, שמחה, ששון**
Each expression represents another type of joy.

Reb Shimshon Pinkus *zt'l* wonders why we have so many expressions for *simchah*. No other language has so many words that describe joy.

But then again, *l'havdil*, people say that Eskimos have many words for snow, different words for different types of snow. While in lashon hakadesh, there are only three words for snow: **שלג כפור קרח.** This is because when something is a significant part of your life, you describe it in many ways.

Reb Shimshon Pinkus explains that there are ten expressions for joy because joy plays a major role in our lives.

Rav Eliyahu Lopian (1876–1970) On Internalizing Knowledge > "The longest journey a person will ever take is the twelve inches from his head to his heart."

The Way of Emuna – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

The Words Should Enter The Entire Body Until The Heel

וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם - ***And it will be, because you will heed these ordinances and guard them and do them..*** 7:12

Sefer Reshimos Devarim relates that when the **Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch zy"a** was a child, he once came home from cheder and was asked by his grandfather, the **Baal Hatanya zy"a**, "What did you learn today?" The boy answered, "We learned Parshas Toldos."

The Baal Hatanya asked him, "What does the pasuk mean when it says (Bereishis 26:5): "Eikev Avrohom shama b'koli (Because Avrohom listened to My voice)?" The child answered that it means that Avrohom Avinu heard Hashem's commands even with the heel of his feet! (The word "eikev" can mean either "because" or "heel".)



The Baal Hatanya enjoyed this answer very much. He said that this is also the explanation of the pasuk: "Vehaya eikev tishme'un." The entire body, down to the heel of the foot, must hear and understand the mitzvas and do them.

Sefer Siach Zekeinim quotes one of the elder chasidim of Spinka as relating the following: "I sat many times at the shalosh seudos tish of the **Chakal Yitzchok of Spinka zy"a** and heard him speaking to himself before he began saying his divrei Torah.

One time, on Parshas Eikev, I heard him say: 'Isaac, do you know what 'eikev tishme'un' means? We have to hear the words so well that they go into our entire bodies, from the head to the heel!'"

Hashem Guards the Reward So That It Shouldn't Get Lost

וְשָׁמַר ה' אֱלֹקיךָ לְךָ אֶת־הַבְּרִית וְאֶת־הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לַאֲבֹתֶיךָ

The pasuk continues to say that if we keep the mitzvos: "Hashem will guard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers."

The Shidlovitze Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Aron Edus) asks what it means when it says that Hashem will "guard" the bris and the chesed. He answers that the pasuk is teaching us that Hashem does not act the way people do. When a person pays a worker, he pays him for the job he did. After he pays, he doesn't care what the worker does with the money. He has fulfilled his obligation and it makes no difference to him if the worker holds onto the money or loses it.

However, when Hashem rewards those who keep His commandments, He continues to watch over them and makes sure that the reward does not get lost through bad business deals or in any other way.

Thus, the pasuk says that Hashem "guards" the bris and the chesed. He watches the reward He gives us to make sure that we don't lose it.

Benefitting From The Blessings of Non-Jews In This World

וַאֲהֵבְךָ וּבֵרַכְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ וּבֵרַךְ פְּרִי־בִטְנְךָ וּפְרִי־אַדְמָתֶךָ... בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים..

And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your soil…You shall be blessed from all nations. (7:13-14)

The Medrash (Devarim Rabbah 3:4) states: "Everything a Jew eats in this world is through the power of the blessings that the wicked Bilaam blessed us. But the blessings that the Avos blessed us with are protected for the future, as is stated: 'Hashem will guard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.'"

Rav Shlomo Kluger zy"a explains the reason we eat as a result of the blessings of Bilaam, and not from the blessing of the Avos, as follows; The holy Avos had no interest in earthly matters. The pleasures of this world did not tempt them at all. Therefore, they did not want to bless Klal Yisroel with worldly success. They didn't want to give us brachos to obtain things in Olam Hazeh, which they considered worthless. Instead, they blessed us with Olam Haba, which was what they valued. Bilaam, however, only placed importance on Olam Hazeh. He only cared about the pleasures of this world. Therefore, his brachos to Klal Yisroel were all about success in this world, while the Avos's brachos are stored away for the next world. This is stated in the pasuk: "He will love you, bless you and multiply you." This means that we will enjoy the goodness of this world.

We may ask how we will be able to enjoy the blessings of this world if the Avos only blessed us for Olam Haba. The answer is: "You shall be blessed from **all** nations." We will receive blessings for Olam Hazeh from the nations of the world.



לְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יָצָאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד־בֹּאֲכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה מַמְרִים הֱיִיתֶם עִם־ה׳ ***From the day that you went out of the land of Egypt, until you came to this place, you have been rebelling with Hashem***. (9:7)

Sefer Mei Hashiloach asks why it says that we rebelled "with" Hashem, rather than "against" Hashem. He answers that when it says that Klal Yisroel rebelled, it sounds very harsh. In truth, however, it is a defence of Klal Yisroel. It is saying that even when we rebelled, we still were "with Hashem." We still remained connected to him.

As an aside, it is related that a convention of Rabbanim once was held in Warsaw. **Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin zy"a** spoke at this gathering. He quoted a statement and stated that its source is a Gemara.

The Rogatchover Gaon zt"l, who was known for his amazing breadth of erudition, responded that this statement is not found anywhere in Chazal. Rav Tzadok replied, 'You are correct that it is not a Gemara. But these words were said by my rebbi, **the Meir Hashiloach of Izjbtize zy"a**. And any devar Torah that the rebbe said is on the level of something said by a Tanna."

A Person Creates Angels With The Breath of His Mouth That Defend Him On The Day of Judgment

The Magid of Trisk zy"a heard from his grandfather, the **Meohr Einyaim zy"a**, who heard from the **Baal Shem Tov zy"a** the following words that were told to him by his rebbi, **Achiyah Hashiloni**, who was amongst those who left Mitzrayim and was also the rebbi of **Eliyahu Hanavi** and a frequent presence on the house of **Dovid Hamelech**:

From the day of the 15th of Av until Rosh Hashanaha, there are numerous times when a person blesses his friend with the words "Kesiva V'chasima Tovah." Each time one does so, an angel is created that defends him and speaks well of him.

For example, if someone blesses 100 people, he creates 100 defending angels. When Rosh Hashanah arrives, when every man is judged, this person will have many angels defending him in Shomayim.

I too bless all of my readers and all of Klal Yisroel with a bracha of "Kesiva V'chasima Tovah." If you all answer "Amen", you will also get a portion in the bracha and will also merit many defending angels on the Day of Judgment who will speak well of you before Hashem.

The month of Elul is a month of hope. No matter how far we veered off track, Hashem always wants us back.

A Walking Miracle By Arele Karnevsky From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

When I was a baby, my family discovered that my legs were bow-legged (curved). My mother took me to a specialist. He said not to worry, for I would eventually grow out of it.

I didn't.

My mother was very concerned about my medical situation. She brought me to the Hospital for Joint Diseases to see what they could do for me. They told my mother that I would have to wear braces on my legs to straighten them. We kept visiting the hospital for regular check-ups.

Once, my mother asked the specialist how long he thought I would need to wear braces. The doctor estimated that I would need them for at least a year. He suggested that I come back in three weeks, when X-rays would be taken of the leg to determine how much longer I would need the braces.

A Chance to Meet the Lubavitcher Rebbe

As it turned out, the day of my scheduled X-ray appointment was the day of my brother's birthday. It was customary that the Sunday before one's birthday, one would pass before the Lubavitcher Rebbe to receive a blessing and dollar from him. My mother, my older brother and I all went before the Rebbe for dollars the Sunday before my brother's birthday and my appointment.

My mother introduced the two of us to the Rebbe and told him in Yiddish that my brother's birthday was that Thursday. The Rebbe handed my older brother two dollars, instructing him to give it to charity on the day of his birthday.

Then it was my turn to pass before the Rebbe. After that it was my mother's turn. She thought about saying something to the Rebbe about the X-rays that were to be taken on Thursday, but was too

overwhelmed in the presence of the Rebbe to say anything. She decided to say nothing, instead asking my father to write a letter to the Rebbe. When her turn came the Rebbe handed her a dollar and she started to leave. But then the Rebbe handed her another dollar saying, "This is for Thursday!"

My father gave in a letter with a request for the Rebbe's blessing before Thursday's appointment.

Later, my parents received a phone call from the Rebbe's secretary. He told them that the Rebbe instructed them to check their tefilin and mezuzot and to report back to the Rebbe what the sofer had found.

Used a Different Sofer to Inspect the Mezuzot and Tefilin





My father immediately removed all the mezuzot from the doorposts and took them and his tefilin to the sofer, this time a different sofer than the one he usually used.

The sofer checked both the tefilin and the mezuzot and found three mistakes: two mistakes in the mezuzot and one in the tefilin. All the mistakes were found in the legs of each of the problematic letters.

One had a hole in the foot of the letter and the ink was coming through the other side of the parchment. This indicated that the mezuzah was invalid from the moment it was originally written. It was now as obvious to us as a ringing bell that the Rebbe's advice

to check tefilin and *mezuzot* was divinely inspired. - The other two letters were found to have cracks in them.

The invalid mezuzot were replaced, in fact, my grandmother went out and bought ten of the best quality mezuzot from Israel as a gift for the family.

That Thursday I went to the hospital. My entire family was very excited about what might happen. Even my father, who was not always able to accompany me to my regular hospital check-ups, came along to see what miracles lay in store.

The doctors took me into the X-ray room and took the required X-rays of my legs. The doctor soon came out of the room completely shocked, his eyes wide in disbelief.

"How long has your son been wearing these leg-braces?" he asked.

"Oh, about a few months," my parents answered.

"I looked at your son's previous X-rays. They show your son's legs to be curved. For some inexplicable reason, the new X-rays show his legs to be totally straight, just perfect! Usually a case such as your son's would need surgery or possible years of wearing these leg-braces. Your son is completely healed."

The leg-braces are still in my house. They are there to remind my family and me of the great miracle. I am forever grateful to the Rebbe for his blessing.

"Man is a ba'al bechirah. If a person tells you, 'The Omnipresent has no wisdom,' do not believe him. If he tells you, 'The Omnipresent has no power,' do not believe him. If he tells you, 'The Omnipresent has no compassion,' do not believe him. But if he tells you, 'Man has no free will,' do not believe him." ~ Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (the Chofetz Chaim).

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld – Weekly Halacha Shiur

In this week's Parsha we have the Mitzva of Birchas Hamazon- **ואכלת ושבעת וברכת**

Rabbi Chaim Kanievski Zt'l brought down a maaseh, that at one time, he was visiting the home of the **Chazon Ish Zt'l** which he did many times for many years.

He said that somebody was in the middle of bentching, and somebody wated to tell him something. The guy motioned to him to wait! "Uhm, uhm!"



Afterwards,the Chazon Ish said to him, "I don't understand, if you were in the middle of Shemoneh Esrai would you dream of doing what you just did?"

Birchas Hamazon is a Deoraissa! Who would in dare do such a thing? In fact The Rambam brings down from the Shulchan Aruch, (Gemara Megilla) that a person is yotze in any language used to bentch. However it is more desirable to bentch in Lashon Hakodesh.

So according to halacha, a person should actually say the words out aloud so that he can hear what he is saying, instead of just mouthing the words quietly. If he mouthed them and didn't hear the actual words, he would still be yoitze.

And remember that Chazal and the Reshonim say Birchas Hamazon is a segulah that is tried and teste for parnassah.

We must do our hishtadlus and ask the Reboino Shel Olam to give us bracha in our lives. Have a wonderful day!

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld – Weekly Halacha Shiur



The Yaavetz says that there are certain mitzvas that have a certain mazel that people are *mekayeim b'simcha*. And there are certain mitzvas that simply do not have this mazel.

Says the Yaavetz that there are many people who are mekayeim "**וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ**" - they eat, and they are satisfied, but they are lacking the **וּבֵרַכְתָּ** with the correct kavana and simcha.

In sefer Chassidim, it says that a man was *niftar* very early, and he came back in a dream to one of his friends and said that for 12 months he was judged for not having said the brachas of Birchas Hamazon with kavana!

So what's it all about? Is bentching something that we have to do after eating bread?

The Chinuch & the Rokeach say that if a person wants bracha in their life, it comes through bentching.

How does this work? They explain, that The Reboino Shel Olam wants to give so much bracha and goodness to everyone, but how do we funnel and receive this goodness for ourselves in particular?

Through **ברכת המזון**. Because when we recognise that which Hashem gives us, Then Hashem will respond by giving us even more! ***Have a wonderful day!***

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein zt"l - How Do You View G-d?



I once sat down with my Rebbe, **R' Gamliel Rabinowitz *shlita***, and was very disturbed. "Something is really bothering me," I said. He looked at me with caring eyes and asked me to discuss what was weighing me down.

"A lot of kids are coming to me today, some religious, some not, some boys, some girls, and they are troubled with the way they understand Hashem. The truth is, once they describe how they view God, it bothers me too. 'Rabbi Wallerstein,' they say, 'I don't want to believe in a G-d that is busy making people suffer in this world and burning people in *Gehinnom* (purgatory). Every time someone messes up, He gets punished. What kind of G-d is that?"

"The questions coming from these boys and girls are sincere. 'My teachers have told me that if I do this or that, I'll get punished with *kares*! I'll be spiritually cut off from the Jewish people, die young and have my children die when I'm alive! If my hair is a bit too long, when I die, Hashem will punish me that worms will craw through my hair! Or if I'm not careful with what I look at, an angel will break my eye sockets in my grave!'

"Rebbe, this is crazy!" these students tell me. "This is Hashem? What do I tell these boys and girls? We are described as being loved by Hashem, but if this is the way *Yiddishkeit* is and how Hashem runs the world, no one wants to be a part of it! That's not a loving God if the minute you step out of line, you're finished!'" I felt sincerely stuck with this dilemma. The truth, as I knew, is that there is reward and punishment. There is Gan Eden and Gehinnom. I knew I couldn't lie to anyone, but I didn't know how to understand it all.

R' Gamliel sat quietly for a few minutes, mulling over what I just said. And then he sat up and told me the following.

"You're one hundred percent right. If Hashem punishes us, then He is angry, vengeful and evil. But *kares, Gehinnom* and other pain is not a punishment. It's a consequence." As he said this, I wasn't jumping out of my seat. I couldn't help but think to myself, "Because it's a consequence, now I'm happy? That makes it better?" "Let me tell you a *mashal*," he continued.

"A man was on his way to a five-star, luxurious wedding at a hotel accompanied by a friend. But, to his dismay, he was having terrible stomach pains and cramps, and before he knew it, he had completely made a mess of himself. His perfect suit was completely ruined. Now filthy and reeking, he knew there was no chance for him to enter the wedding hall. He smelled and looked way too bad, and there was no chance anyone would go near him.

"Without delay, his friend turned the car around and headed straight back home. He helped his friend peel off the disgusting layers of clothing and hop into a hot shower, where he scrubbed him down from head to toe. Afterwards, he put on a new suit and tie, and dabbed himself with some fresh deodorant. He was now ready to head back out and join the wedding.

"Now, would you say that this man's friend who helped clean him was mean, vengeful and angry? Not at all. You'd admire his care and willingness to help his friend, no matter what. Hashem is just the same," explained R' Gamliel. "Our soul emanates from G-d. It's a part of Him which He places into a body for a lifetime. When it's time for the soul to return and become part of Hashem again, able to now bask in the Divine light and delight of G-d Himself, something must be done first. You can't walk into a wedding hall all dirty, and so, you need to take a shower, clean yourself up and put on a fresh suit.

"When you come up to Heaven and stand before Hashem, you may not be filthy with physical mud and dirt, but you may have spiritual

dirt which needs to be cleaned off. Therefore, Hashem says, 'Take him to be cleaned up for eleven months and get rid of all the dirt and grime, so he can come into the wedding hall of Gan Eden for eternity.' G-d is not saying this out of anger or meting our punishments.

The Zohar tells us that when Hashem created the physical world, He imbued into its DNA the principle of consequence. When plants and trees do not receive the right amounts of rain and sunlight, they wither and die. The world runs based on this operating system.

The same is true of a human being's interaction with the world. If a person sticks his hand into a fire, the consequence is that his skin will get burned. Similarly, if he submerges himself underwater for an extended period, he will die. Likewise, if you take a glass cup and drop it to the floor, it will break. When the cup falls to the floor and smashes into bits and pieces, is the floor angry at the glass? Not at all. It's not a punishment, but a direct outcome and result of the preceding action. A miracle, to this effect, is when G-d changes the course of consequence and natural order in the world.

The same, says the Zohar, applies to the spiritual world. The spiritual and physical world are mirrors of one another and share the same operating principles. Just as the glass breaks when it falls to the floor, even though the floor is not upset at the glass, when a person sins, there is a consequence.

Think about it from the perspective of physics. The most basic and first principle of physics is that every action has a reaction. Every action has a consequence. This is true in both the physical and spiritual realms. When a person violates Shabbos, the spiritual consequence is rectified and remedied through the outlined ways mentioned in the Torah. The minute those procedures are completed, the sin is forgiven and fixed. You become cleansed.

Hashem wrote a physics book in the form of the Torah for the soul and told us that every action has a reaction. And alongside this, out

of His love and desire for us to receive ultimate eternal goodness, He delineated ways for us to clean ourselves up to enter the wedding of Gan Eden.

"Explain to everyone," said R' Gamliel to me, "that if you view G-d as giving out punishments, then yes, it is unfair and harsh. However, if you know that you are on your way to a wedding and now you are dirty, you will certainly want to run back home and clean yourself up or head to a one-hour cleaners and have your suit, shirt and tie washed. Will you be angry at the cleaners for washing your clothing? No, you want them to do it!

"In order to be near Hashem and the angels in Heaven, we need to be fresh and clean. And that is why He made processes to clean us up."



Once I heard this, it started making much more sense. But then I threw my rebbe a curveball.

"I'm still unsure about one thing," I said. "I don't understand the analogy. If I'm in the middle of a wedding and someone walks in and reeks, I would go over to him and give him something to eat, even without having him wash up. It might be unpleasant, but I'd still do it. I don't think I'd make him shower. So why must Hashem cleanse us by giving us our consequences? Why can't we remain the way we are, stained with our sins? If Hashem really loves us, He'd still allow us to be in Gan Eden, even though we smell!"

"Zechariah, you got the whole story wrong!" R' Gamliel replied. "The story is not about a poor man showing up at the party and then you let him sit there. The *mashal* is about the groom who is on his way to

his own wedding and he dirtied himself! There's no way he'd walk down the *chuppa* and stand next to his bride! Of course, you'd delay the wedding, get the groom upstairs and have him clean himself up. The person who is dirty is not a guest; it's you! You are the groom and God is the bride! There's no way you can come before Hashem all soiled.

"And not only that," added R' Gamliel, "but in Kabbalah, it states but for every minute spent in Gehinnom, you spend five hundred minutes in Gan Eden. And moreover, there's a window between Gehinnom and Gan Eden that you can look through and see the eternal reward awaiting you."

Hashem just wants us to just get cleaned up, so we can move onto the wedding.

SEFAS TAMIM
FOUNDATION • Emphasizing Everyday Emes

Chizuk Inspiration



There was a married couple with children that had moved from the United States to Bnei Brak. The couple had converted to Torah Judaism while yet in America and had sought a more spiritual environment. Their daughter attended a Bais Yaakov in Bnei Brak and, unfortunately, was teased by some of the other girls in her school. As a result, she did not wish to return to school.

The parents were at wits' end - not knowing what to do. It was suggested that they go to **Rav Eliezer Menachem Man Shach zt"l** (1899-2001) for advice. After presenting the problem to Rav Shach, he requested that they bring their daughter to him.

Rav Shach asked the young girl. "Do you know who I am?" The girl responded, "Of course, you are Rav Shach!"

Rav Shach responded, "Yes, but I am also going to tell you something else." He continued, "Do you know that I too am a ger? And not only that, but many teachers in your Bais Yaakov are also geirim. There is nothing wrong with being a Ger – in fact, it is a very precious things and something of which to be very proud. So, if anyone ever says anything negative – smile to yourself and be very proud."

Rav Shach was widely known for his absolute devotion to emes. After the meeting with the young girl, someone who was present had asked Rav Shach as to how he could have left the young girl with the impression that he was actually a ger.

Rav Shach explained: "In order to remove tzaar, anguish from someone – it is permitted to lie. When Chazal tell us that for someone who is careful to be meticulous in only saying the emes - it is "**מֻתָּר לְשַׁנּוֹת מִפְּנֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם**" to promote peace and harmony it is permitted to "veer." This also includes trying to alleviate someone's tzaar – anguish. Nonetheless, it is still preferable, if possible, to use an expression that is still technically true – even if the person you are speaking to may interpret it differently.

It states in Parshas Aikev (Dvarim 10:19). **וַאֲהַבְתֶּם אֶת־הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים הֱיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם** ***'You must love the Ger for you were Geirim in Mitzrayim.'*** Technically, we are all Geirim (and/or descendants thereof)."

The young lady went back to school and adjusted quite well, having been inspired by Rav Shach zt"l.

We see from Rav Shach zt"l that Emes is like keeping Shabbos. We must meticulously observe every detail of the 39 malachos and the Rabbinic protections to Shabbos, but when there is a situation of pikuach nefesh – saving life - we must be quick to act.

By the same token, if we observe that a person's anguish can be relieved through "veering" we should do so. If, however, the "veering" could be minimized by technically making sure that it is still true, we should do so. Rav Shach's actions here are remarkably inspiring in keeping to this principle.

וּקְשַׁרְתָּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יֶדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם 11:18

Mazeltov to my son Eli on his Hachnosas Tefillin this morning….. Yeah! Eli is indeed 18!



Heading to yeshiva with his friends on Hoshana Rabah afternoon, his car began to smoke, and then- after the boys wisely decided to jump out and run away from the car… the car burst into flames. Everybody was Boruch Hashem ok, but whatever they had in the car was totally burnt to a cinder.

He spent YomTov back home, mourning the loss of his precious Tefillin that were in the trunk. The cops towed away the car and said that there was nothing left to salvage.



We convinced the scrapyard not to trash and crush the car until after YomTov. Maybe we would find some burnt scraps of his Tefillin that we could bury.

We got to the compound on Isru Chag, and were greeted with this…

We decided to pop the trunk and see what was left.





"I think that this is my bag. After opening a hole in the burnt top layer, we reached in and pulled out…





Amazingly, the Tefillin were in pristine (well Almost) condition. The Sofer checked them out and the batim and parshiyos were perfect!! We are so grateful for the nes b'soch nes! –

חַסְדֵי ה' כִּי לֹא תָמְנוּ

Of Grass and Trees by Harav Moshe Wolfson

צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר יִפְרָח כְּאֶרֶז בַּלְּבָנוֹן יִשְׂגֶּה *The righteous one flourishes like the palm; as a cedar in Lebanon he grows*. (Tehilim 92:13)

In a previous Pasuk, Dovid HaMelech likened the wicked to blades of grass - **בִּפְרֹחַ רְשָׁעִים כְּמֹו עֵשֶׂב** - Grass grows very quickly, almost as soon as it is planted, but when not watered adequately, it can quickly turn brown, then white and even wither away.

By contrast, it can take years for a date palm or cedar tree to fully develop, but once it has grown, it can remain strong and healthy for many years.

At times, the wicked achieve meteoric success, accomplishing their evil goals in a short time. Often, they fall just as quickly as they rose. – as was the case with Haman.



The tzaddik, by contrast, spends a lifetime on self-improvement, climbing the spiritual ladder carefully, one rung at a time. His hard-earned achievements are his forever, and even when he stumbles, he garners his inner strength to correct his mistake and can even surpass his previous level.

There is another message in the comparison between the withering grass and the strong date palm and cedar tree.

An incredible, indisputable fact of history is the fall of many mighty empires and the continued existence through the kindness of Hashem, of an often oppressed and persecuted Klal Yisrael. We are the mighty cedar tree that b'ezras Hashem, will continue to exist and flourish no matter what our enemies plot against us.

Posek HaDor To Rachmastrivka Rebbe: "This Is Why We Want Moshiach"

The Rachmastrivka Rebbe visited the Posek HaDor **HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shternbuch** last week to consult with him on various issues.

At the start of the visit, HaRav Shternbuch said to the Rebbe: "The whole world is familiar with your deeds." The Rebbe responded with his typical humility, "May HaKadosh Baruch Hu help us to do good."

The Rebbe asked HaRav Shternbuch about his relationship with the past Belzer Rebbe, **HaRav Aharon of Belz, z'tl**, and requested to hear about the Rebbe's minhagim. After HaRav Shternbuch spoke a bit about the Rebbe, z'tl, he added: "We're already mamash at the end of the Galus, very close to bias haMoshiach."



HaRav Shternbuch elaborated on a conversation he heard when visiting the **Brisker Rav, z'tl**, when someone said: "We're hoping that Moshiach will come and then it will be good for us."

"The Brisker Rav responded: 'How do you think it will be good for you? That you'll be able to eat good kugel? Don't you know that when Moshiach comes, we'll be terribly ashamed when we recognize the greatness of HaKadosh Baruch Hu and we'll be embarrassed that we abandoned Him until now.'"

HaRav Shternbuch added that there will be no difference between now and yimos haMoshiach except for **שעבוד מלכויות**. "The world will continue as usual after *bias haMoshiach* except for the fact that we won't have any worries, enabling us to learn Torah with more yishuv

hadaas and the gates of binah will open to help us understand and gain wisdom from Torah."

Following the conversation between the Posek HaDor and the Rebbe, which lasted about an hour, the two parted with warm brachos to each other.

Chessed With Words By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



Yoseph, a Baal Teshuvah who was studying in Kollel, had a somewhat strained relationship with his non-observant father. At a bris for Yoseph's son, the Mashgiach of the Yeshiva approached his father and said, "I just wanted to let you know that your son has a brilliant mind, and the work that he is doing in his study of Talmud and legal codes is equivalent and beyond post-doctoral work at the most prestigious university in the country.. And he named his son after your grandfather! Wow, you must be so proud of him."

Later, Yoseph approached the Mashgiach and said, "Rebbe, you have no idea of the impact of what you said to my father months ago. There has been a complete turn-around in our relationship, aside from kindling within him a strong desire and respect for Torah. Thank you so much."

Saying complimentary words, especially heartfelt ones, is one of the biggest chassadim that one can do for another person.

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l (1:5) writes that when a person says a few kind words to another, all he has invested are a few words, but the return on the investment is untold reward:

"Hashem provides for him with this act an abundant flow of bracha with His full and overflowing hand."

Chessed, and the love of it, forms the very blueprint of the world. Hashem is the essence of Chessed itself, and He created the world so that He can reward us for doing Mitzvos (Derech Hashem Chapter one). Thus, the Mitzvos involved in the performance of Chessed form a large part of the reason why Hashem created the world.

Performing Chessed gives our life meaning.

The Chofetz Chaim writes (Ahavas Chessed 2:1) that not only must one love Chessed but one must stick to this character trait and always go beyond the measure of what is required. He give the analogy of a parent. A loving parent gives more food and clothing than the child requires, so too must we do likewise in sticking to the Midah of Chessed.

The Alter of Slabodka writes that the notion of Olam Chessed Yibaneh tells us that just as Hashem built the world with Chessed, so too must we build the world with Chessed.

Everyone in the world needs Chessed. When we are born as babies, we require the chessed of others. When we become elderly and sick, we also need the Chessed of others. There is no other way. Chessed is necessary for the world to be built. Hashem built this into the nature of the world in order to show us the very necessity of Chessed.

There is another element in Chessed too. It is a natural tendency for people to become miserable and crabby as we age. Living a life committed to Chessed changes that – it stops us from declining in this respect. Thus, Chessed not only builds the world – it builds ourselves as well.

There are other benefits of Chessed too. The Chofetz Chaim writes (Ahavas Chessed 2:4) that when the performance of Chessed saves a person from difficulties in life. It also ensures that Hashem will continue to maintain His love. It also awakens the Divine Middah of Chessed above. The Gemorah in Bava Kamma (17a) also explains that

one's enemies fall away when one is committed to the performance of Chessed.

The Mitzvah of Chessed applies equally to men and to women. It should also be taught to one's children. There is no better way to inculcate this most precious of traits than by example and by performing the Chessed with family members.

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky zt"l was the Gadol HaDor in the early twentieth century. After he had passed away, his notes to himself were found. He had a note that stated he should always make sure to perform at least two chassadim per day.

The Chofetz Chaim (Ahavas Chessed 2:12) writes that one cannot allow one day to go by without having performed Chessed. He cites **Rav Chaim Vital** (a student of the **Arizal**) that one must spend time to consider every day to do Chessed and by doing so one achieves atonement for one's sins.

We must also look for opportunities for Chessed. Hashem in His tremendous love for us has created new mediums and technologies for us to be able to better perform Chessed.

Most people nowadays have a cell phone. The ability to store vast numbers and to call anyone no matter where we are are actually Divinely ordained developments for the purpose of our performing Chessed for others.

Chessed is such a remarkable Mitzvah, it is even greater than Charity, Tzedakah. How so? The Gemorah in Sukkah (49b) explains that it is greater than Tzedakah in three ways: Tzedaka is only with money – Chessed can be done with money or with one's physical body. Tzedakah can only be done for the poor. Chessed can be done for the poor and the wealthy. Tzedakah can only benefit the living. Chessed can benefit either the living or the dead.

The opportunities for Chessed are indeed quite numerous. To name just one: Say kind words to whomsoever we meet – even a smile is

effective. The Avos DeRav Nosson (Chapter 13) says that if one greets a person with a smile, it is as if he has given him all of the greatest gifts in the world.

Rav Henoch Leibowitz zt"l says that there is no spiritual limit to any Mitzvah that we perform. If we do a Chessed, any Chessed, with the right intentions and Kavannah – it can be equal to the greatest of Mitzvos.

When performing the Mitzvah of Gemilas Chassadim one should do so cheerfully and with a smile (Chofetz Chaim in his Sefer Ahavas Chessed Vol. II #23). This is predicated upon the same halacha in Shulchan Aruch regarding the giving of charity (Yore Deah 249:3). At the opposite extreme, it is stated in Avos D'Rav Nosson (13) that if one gives someone enormous gift but greets him with a sour expression, it is as if he has done nothing. The same would apply to the Mitzvah of Chessed.

There are two Mitzvos in the Torah that imbue an individual with their own unique feeling of joy – they are the love of Torah learning and the joy of a Chessed.

The Divine source for the origin of the joy we feel when we perform Chessed explains why Chessed can be so life-changing. It can save us from depression, it can save us from the crabbiness that comes with old age, and so much more.

We must also realize that encouraging others to perform Chessed is in and of itself the fulfilment of Chessed. It should therefore also be done cheerfully and with a smile.

"Believing in Hashem means recognizing that He is not only the creator of the world, but also actively involved in every moment of our lives." – Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra.

Our Path in Life has been Predetermined

"To attain the level of emuna that everything is for the best, we must learn that our path in life has been predetermined by Hashem.

We come to this world to perform a mission and to achieve a tikkun. The fact that every occurrence in our lives is the result of Divine Providence – Hashem's personal intervention and guidance – we can always be happy with our lot, whether things go smoothly or otherwise." **~ The Garden of Emuna**

The Chida and Smelling Snuff



"It is told of the holy Chida that he loved smelling snuff. Once, when visiting a certain town, he had left his snuff at his dinner host and wanted it in middle of the night. So, he trudged in the cold to his earlier host and awoke him to retrieve his snuff.

In the morning, he considered how he had allowed his base urges to rouse someone from his sleep and he regretted his actions. Despite how much he enjoyed his habit, he immediately accepted upon himself to never smell snuff again for this impulse had led him to momentarily be inconsiderate of others. He realized that his desires were too powerful and needed to be entirely eradicated." ~ **Rav Menachem Azolai**

"Don't worry about what others think. Worry about what you think of yourself." — Rabbi Noah Weinberg.

בס"ד

למודי משה

עקב - גליון קפ"ג

Bein Hazmanim in Halachah

One of the many wonderful things about being Jewish, is that every step of the way we are guided about how to conduct ourselves, and each and every special occasion has its own set of *halachos*. *Bein hazmanim* [summer vacation] is no different, and it comes with some unique *halachos*. This week I would like to take the opportunity to discuss some interesting *halachos* that come up primarily during *bein hazmanim*.

Berachah on the Sea



The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 228:1) rules, that upon seeing seas and rivers one should recite "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*", and upon seeing the Yam HaGadol [Mediterranean Sea], which is the sea one passes through to get to Eretz Yisroel and Mitzrayim one should recite "*oseh* Yam HaGadol". The *Mishnah Berurah* (*s.k.* 3) cites from *poskim* that the correct *nussach* [textual version] is "*she'osah es* HaYam HaGadol". However, earlier (*s.k* 2) the *Mishnah Berurah* brings, that many *Achronim* argue on the *Mechaber* and maintain that only on the Pacific Ocean which encompasses most of the world should one recite a special *berachah*. However, on all other rivers and seas one should recite "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*".

However, the *Biur Halachah* writes, if one recites "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*" on the Pacific Ocean, *bedieved* [post-facto] one fulfills

his duty. Similar to the *berachah* of *she'hakol* where if one my mistakes recites *she'hakol bedieved* he fulfills his duty. Moreover, even on wine, if one recites *ho'eitz* he fulfills his duty, certainly in our case as well if one recites "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*" by mistake, he fulfills his duty.

What *Berachah* to Make on the Mediterranean Sea

Most *poskim* take on, that on the Pacific Ocean one recites "*she'osah es* HaYam HaGadol", since the sea surrounds the entire world, whereas on the Mediterranean Sea one recites "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*". However, since there are those who maintain that one should recite "*she'osah es* HaYam HaGadol", on the Mediterranean Sea, the *Minchas Yitzchok* (1:110) and R' Shlomah Zalman Auerbach (*Halichos Shlomah,* Vol. 1, 23:29) write, that on the Mediterranean Sea one should recite "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*" and *toich k'dei dibbur* [within around three seconds] add "*she'osah es* HaYam HaGadol".

What About the Dead Sea?

Although the Dead Sea is one of the wonders of the world, it is unclear if it gets a *berachah* so one should not say "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*". The reason for this is because it is apparent from *Chazal* that the Dead Sea did not exist since Creation; rather, channels of water flowed to the area, resulting in the Dead Sea (see *Shevet HaLevi* 9:47).

What About the Kinneret?

On the Kinneret, one should say, "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*" (see *Halichos Shlomah* 23:27).

What if One See's Two Different Sea's

If one saw for example the Mediterranean Sea and made a *berachah* on it, and then within 30 days he saw yet another sea, i.e., he saw the Kinneret, **R' Shlomah Zalman** maintains he should make a *berachah* a second time (*Halichos Shlomah,* Vol. 1, 23:27).

Does One Make a *Berachah* if He Sees the Sea from Very Far Away or At Night?

The *berachah* of "*oseh ma'aseh bereishis*", was established for one who hasn't seen the sea for over 30 days. The *Shevet HaLevi* maintains that if one see's the sea from very far away, and it appears like nothing more than a blue cloud far away in the sky, it is not considered seeing. Only when one sees it from up close and sees the wonders of Hashem's creation properly should one make a *berachah.* Similarly, R' Shlomah Zalman maintains that if one sees the sea at night he shouldn't make a *berachah,* as at night one doesn't really see the *niflo'as haboreh* [wonders of Hashem's creation's] (see *Sefer V'Zois HaBerachah* pg. 154).

Tzitzis on a Towel

Although in Eretz Yisroel this is unlikely to happen, in other places it is. What's the halachah if one is by the Seaside and he starts to get cold and wraps himself in a towel, does the towel need *tzitzis*?

R' Zilberstein (*Alon Beis Dovid, Shoftim* 5737) was asked the above and he brought two *rayas* [proof] that the towel is exempt.

1) The *Shulchan Aruch* (10:10) rules, that a hat is exempt from *tzitzis* as its main purpose is to cover one's head, and **כסותך אמר רחמנא ולא כסות הראש** – "the Torah requires a garment that one wears on his body in *tzitzis,* not a garment one wears on his head". Similarly, a towel is designed to dry oneself and not to be a garment, therefore, if one uses it as such it is still exempt.

2) The *Rema* (10:12) describes a certain type of garment that they would wear in certain places, and he writes, that since it is not designed to be worn, with two corners at the front and two at the back, it is exempt from *tzitzis*. Similarly, a towel isn't designed to be worn with two corners at the front and two at the back, and therefore, will also be exempt from *tzitzis*.

Derech eretz kadmah laTorah

בַּעֲלֹתִי הָהָרָה לָקַחַת לוּחֹת הָאֲבָנִים לוּחֹת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת ה׳ עִמָּכֶם וָאֵשֵׁב בָּהָר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתִיתִי

"When I ascended the mountain to receive the Tablets of stone, the Tablets of the covenant that Hashem sealed with you, and I stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights; bread I did not eat, and water I did not drink." (Devorim 9:9)

The Medrash (*Tanchuma Beshalach* 10) points out that when Moshe remained on Har Sinai for forty days and nights without eating or drinking, he was displaying *mesirus nefesh* for Torah. On account of this self-sacrifice, Moshe merited that the Torah is referred to by his name: "*Toras Moshe avdi* — the Torah of Moshe, My servant" (Malachi 3:22). This would also fit with the directive in *Pirkei Avos* (6:4): "*Kach hi darkah shel Torah*: *Pas ba'melach tocheil u'mayim bamesurah tishteh* — This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure…" To acquire Torah, one must be ready to refrain from indulging in worldly pleasures.

Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi (*Birkas Mordechai, Eikev*) presents another angle with which to view the *mesirus nefesh* of Moshe. Why did Moshe have to go without any food while in Heaven? Even if *malachim* don't eat, couldn't Hashem have provided Moshe with some nourishment during his stay?

The answer is our version of: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." The *Yalkut Shimoni* (852; also *Bava Metzia* 86b) says that when you come to a city, you must follow its rules of etiquette. Since there is no eating or drinking in Heaven, when Moshe went there, he did what everyone else did. Before a diplomatic envoy takes up a new post, he undergoes thorough training from a protocol officer; local customs must be followed. It is common courtesy, or, as we say, *derech eretz*. When Moshe was in the Heavenly realm, he, as well, had to follow the local custom. It would have shown a lack of *derech eretz* to act human amid angels.

Rav Ezrachi contends that the *mesirus nefesh* of Moshe on behalf of Torah, which earned him a *kinyan*, an acquisition in Torah — to the extent that Toras Hashem is called Toras Moshe — is this commitment to *derech* eretz. For proper behaviour comes before Torah. In *Sha'arei Kedushah* (1:2), Rav Chaim Vital explains why the Torah includes so few *mitzvos* that involve improving one's *middos*. Because good *middos* must be there from the beginning. They are a prerequisite for absorbing and learning the Torah.

In his famous letter to his wife (*Iggeres HaGra*), the **Vilna Gaon** tells her to study *Pirkei Avos* and *Avos De'Rabbi Nassan* (which discuss proper *middos* and behavior), and to teach her children proper *derech eretz*, because: "*Derech eretz kadmah laTorah*." For Torah to be acquired, one must first acquire common courtesy and manners.

The Medrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 9:3) cites Rav Yishmael bar Rav Nachman, who taught that *derech eretz* preceded the Torah by twenty-six generations (ten from Adam to Noach, ten from Noach to Avraham, six from Avraham to Moshe), at which point Moshe went up to Shomayim to receive it. We learn this from the *pasuk* in *Bereishis* (3:24), "*Lishmor es derech Eitz HaChaim* — To guard the way to the Tree of Life." The word "*derech*" is an allusion to *derech eretz*, which precedes the phrase "*Eitz HaChaim*," an allusion to Torah. So yes, *derech eretz* preceded the Torah.

Rav Dessler (*Michtav Me'Eliyohu*, Vol. 4: *Hachanah LeTorah*) posits that one who doesn't appreciate the obligation to respect others lacks the attributes required for success in Torah. This is as it says in *Pirkei Avos* (3:21), "*Im ein derech eretz ein Torah* — If there is no *derech eretz*, there is no Torah." *Rabbeinu Yonah* (ad loc.) expounds: One must first improve his character traits so that the Torah can dwell within him. Torah cannot dwell within a person who is not a *ba'al middos*. And it is impossible to learn Torah first and to do *mitzvos* and acquire good *middos* afterward.

Before creating Adam, Hashem "consulted" the *malachim* on the matter, as it says (*Bereishis* 1:26), "*Na'aseh adam* — Let us make Man." The Medrash (*Bereishis Rabbah* 8:8) tells us that when Moshe wrote out the Torah and came up to this *pasuk*, he asked Hashem, "How can You write this? It makes it sound as if there are two Creators, which can give people an opening to deny Your Oneness." Hashem responded, "Those who want to err will err. However, I want people to learn proper *middos* and *derech eretz* — that a greater person asks permission of those beneath him." Hashem felt it worthwhile to take the chance of having people question Him and His Oneness, just to instil in us this lesson of *derech eretz*.

Rav Ezrachi concludes that included in Moshe's *mesirus nefesh* for Torah was *mesirus nefesh* for *derech eretz* and common decency. Yes, he was a model of self-sacrifice in terms of asceticism, but this was all in the service of *derech eretz*, which must be in place for Torah to follow.

"*Derech eretz kadmah laTorah*."

Coming Late for Davening

Rav Moshe Aharon Stern asked **Rav Shlomah Zalman Auerbach** a *halachic* question (on behalf of a student). If one arrives late for *davening*, and the *minyan* is near the culmination of *pesukei d'zimrah*, should he slowly recite only those parts of the service which the *Shulchan Aruch* deems necessary, or should he quickly zip through the entire *pesukei d'zimrah*?

Rav Shlomah Zalman wrung his hands and shook his head in dismay concerning what he had just heard. He tried unsuccessfully to justify the question. He simply could not understand how someone who spends his day engrossed in Torah could ask such a question. How could a *ben* Torah come late to *davening*?

The Efficacy of Tefillah

I conclude with an illuminating exposition from **Rav Yisroel Chortkover, zt"l** (*Nezer Yisroel*), concerning the efficacy of *tefillah*. I cite it because Klal Yisroel has so many requests, issues that keep people awake at night. *Tefillah* is the only pathway to Hashem. Perhaps the following will make us appreciate it more.

Chazal (*Devorim Rabbah* 88) teach, *Tefillah oseh mechtzah*, "Prayer achieves a half." This comment begs elucidation. Why should sincere *tefillah* only accomplish half of one's requests?

The Rebbe explains that *Chazal* are sharing a powerful hidden message. Hashem wants to help every Jew, to shower us all with His benevolence. Furthermore, He not only wants to do this, He is waiting for us, hoping for the opportunity to carry out His wishes. The problem is that we are not always worthy of His kindness, due to our shortcomings.

This is where *tefillah* enters into the picture. The purpose of *tefillah* is to repair, correct and rectify our half of the equation, to elevate ourselves to be deserving of His munificence that He is waiting to give us. The Ribbono Shel Olam is always ready and waiting. He wants to give.

Now, we must be ready and worthy of accepting His assistance. He is waiting for "our half." This is what is meant by *tefillah oseh mechtzah*. It is the "half" that makes it "whole." (Peninim)

"The greatest tragedy in life is not death. The greatest tragedy is the death of the spirit. You can be alive and have a dead soul. You can be dead and have a living soul. The goal is to keep the soul alive while the body lives." — Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe)

וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה 'And it will be, because you will heed these ordinances.'

Rashi famously comments on the words, "עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן ; אִם הַמִּצְוֹות קַלּוֹת שֶׁאָדָם דָּשׁ בַּעֲקֵבָיו תשמעון. *If you keep the Mitzvos that a person tramples with his heel*."

This refers to the seemingly trivial less important Mitzvos that we think are not really worth our time or effort. Only when we keep these Mitzvos as well, is it a sign of true dedication to the Mitzvos and to our Father above whose commandments we heed whether big or small.

The Sefas Emes further illuminates this saying that the Remach or 248 Mitzvos Aseh each correspond to one of our 248 limbs, doing these Mitzvos gives life to its corresponding limb in this world and the next.

In our body we have a head and heart which are surely very important above all the others. And just like the body has a heel, while although trivial, if it lacks strength, the entire body collapses, head, heart and all, similarly if we ignore the trivial Mitzvos, all our hard work and devotion on the big ones will be for naught as the entire structure will collapse.

Don't Deprive Your Eyes of Holiness

R' Moshe Meir Weiss writes that **Rav Shach** who lived to 102 attributed his longevity to always *bentching* with a *bentcher*. Another reason he suggests to always *bentch* with a *bentcher* is so "one's eyes should also have a part in this wonderful *mitzvah*. If one *bentches* by heart, the eyes aren't taking an active role, and thus miss out on the holiness acquired from the lofty activity."

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Happiness

We must train ourselves to always be happy. It states, **והיה אם שכח תשכח ה' אלקיך** "***And it will be, if you forget Hashem your G-d***." (8:19) - *Chazal* tell us that whenever it states **והיה**, it implies happiness.

The Ruzhiner *zt'l* explained, **והיה אם שכח תשכח ה' אלקיך**, you will forget Hashem. **שכח** also means common, frequent. The Ruzhiner explained that the *passuk* is hinting, if you will be happy frequently, Hashem will always be with you.

The Chozeh of Lublin teaches, "***Someone who desires that the Shechinah always be with him should always be happy***."

When one internalizes the lesson as above, he will always be happy because when one believes that everything is from Hashem and everything is for his good, he will be joyful in every situation.

When **Rebbe Yosef Meir of Machnovka zt'l** was six years old, he came to his grandfather, **Rebbe Yitzchak of Skver *zt'l***. His revered grandfather asked him, "What did you do today?"

The boy replied, "I heard that Eliyahu HaNavi was in the marketplace, so I went there to find him. I searched all over. I even climbed a high post, but I didn't see him. However, I did gain something. I watched the cattle merchants beat and bind the wild cattle, the ones trying hard to get away, while the tame, passive animals were left to pasture in peace.

I realized that in life, when going through hard times, it's better to accept life serenely than to fight back. Fighting back just makes life more miserable."

The Rebbe told him, "You didn't see Eliyahu HaNavi today, but I'm certain that Eliyahu HaNavi saw you because of your good thoughts."

Life is much more satisfying and tranquil when one trains himself to be happy with his portion. Another pathway to acquiring true joy is Emunah and bitachon.

Bentching

"**The Be'er Heiteiv** says (Siman 185) - **שכל מי שבירך בה''מ בכוונה אין שולט בו לא אף ולא קצף וכו' ומזונותיו מצוין לו בריוח ובכבוד כל ימיו** - 'Whoever says the blessings of bentching with proper concentration can be assured of having a livelihood of plenty and dignity all the days of his life.'

In today's financially stressed times, isn't it worth an investment of bentching a few minutes longer for such a monumental reward?" ~ **R' Moshe Meir Weiss shlit"a**

Getting Along with Others

Yet, another counsel for joy is to learn to get along with others. This will save you from much pain and hardships.

Reb Avraham Genachovsky zt'l once said to someone who recently became *rosh yeshiva*. "Do you know what the job of a rosh yeshiva is?

His job is to swallow nails and not let it be known to anyone that he swallowed them." And he gave him a brachah that he shouldn't need to swallow too many nails.

He meant to say that there will be hardships, people will give him a hard time, and he should accept and swallow the troubles. No one should know of his struggles, and he should be kind and pleasant to everyone.

He said this about being a rosh yeshiva, but the rule applies to every parent. There are things parents must swallow. Children aren't

perfect; they don't always behave as their parents want. Sometimes, parents should be mechanech, speak to them, etc. But often, the parents should just swallow and look the other way. It isn't solely about being a rosh yeshiva, teacher, or parent. The same lesson is needed for all relationships between people.

Neighbours can be difficult, family can be difficult. There are many nails that we need to swallow, but that is the best way.

Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* once stooped down to enter a taxi and commented, "***If you want to go anywhere in this world, you must bend your head***."

Baalei mussar tell the following parable: There was a deer whose antlers were constantly getting caught in the branches and the foliage. One day the deer decided it was time to remove all the branches. It began bucking the trees with its antlers and hind feet to clear the forest from all deterrents so it could run freely.

A wise animal stood by watching and said to the deer, "Even if you work your entire life, you won't succeed in knocking down all the trees. Instead, I advise you to cut off your antlers, and then you can run through the forest unimpeded.

The *nimshal* is, instead of trying to improve others, change yourself. Train yourself not to let things bother you. That is a better approach than trying to train others.

Eliyahu HaNavi *z'l* once said to **Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *z'l***: "When trying to place two planks side by side, and one of them has a knob jutting out, instead of cutting off the knob, make an indention in the other plank to make room for the knob."

This means don't try changing others, rather become a person with a heart that can accept other people's idiosyncrasies. Let the other person have his way, and you can run through life unhindered.

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Hope in the Morning

There's a beautiful insight often attributed to the great Chassidic masters—some even say in the name of **Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**—that sheds light on something as simple as a morning coffee.

In Yiddish, coffee is called *kaveh*. But think about what a coffee actually is. It's a blend of contrasts. The beans are bitter. The sugar is sweet. The water is hot. The milk is cold. Each element on its own tells a different story.

So too, throughout the course of a day, a person encounters all kinds of experiences. Some moments are sweet and uplifting. Others are bitter, difficult, even painful. Some feel warm, comforting, and alive. Others feel cold, distant, and confusing. Life is not one flavor; it is a mixture.

The greatness of a Jew is the ability to take all of these elements and bring them together. Not to deny the bitterness, not to ignore the cold, but to integrate it all into something whole. Into a *kaveh*.

And then, over that very mixture, we make a bracha: *shehakol nihyeh bidvaro*—everything comes into being through His word. The bitter, the sweet, the hot, the cold—it is all part of one unified reality, all flowing from Hashem.

That is also hinted in the word itself: *kaveh*—to hope, to turn toward Hashem. When a person gathers the pieces of their day, even the conflicting ones, and recognizes that they all come from one Source, that itself becomes an act of connection, of *emunah*.

I once heard a powerful reflection from someone at the Kotel. He said that on Rosh Chodesh, during Hallel, we say: "*Zeh hayom asa Hashem, nagilah venismechah bo*—This is the day Hashem has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

He realized that this is not just about special days. It is about every single day.

Zeh hayom—this day, exactly as it is. *Asa Hashem*—Hashem made it this way. *Nagilah venismechah bo*—find a way to rejoice within it.

Some days begin smoothly; others start off difficult. Some are filled with clarity and success; others feel like a struggle from beginning to end. But each one is crafted with intention.

The *avodah* is not to wait for the perfect day. It is to recognize the day we have, in all its complexity, and to respond to it with awareness, with gratitude, and with joy.

Like a cup of coffee, life is not meant to be one-dimensional. It is meant to be blended—and then blessed.



A while ago I was finishing up a whirlwind trip to a number of cities and I was flying my final leg home. It was a long flight and I was hoping I'd get a little bit of sleep. I get onto the plane, I find my seat, I make myself comfortable, but literally within five minutes a full family comes onto the plane and of course they sat around me, in front of me, next to me. It was a frum family, a **ספרדי** family.

On one hand I was like I need the sleep, I hope they don't disturb me. On the other hand, I was like it's great, I'm surrounded by other **יידן**. It was an uneventful flight, I did sleep a bit here and there, but the remarkable thing happened in the last half hour of the flight. The last half hour of the flight we hit severe turbulence.

The pilot immediately ordered the entire staff to sit down. He warned everybody not to open their seatbelts because it could be

catastrophic and he was right. The plane was thrown to and fro. A little boy sitting next to this Jewish mother suddenly starts having a shortness of breath.



He starts gasping and panting. It seemed like he had some type of respiratory issue and something all of a sudden came about. And I hear the mother talking to the father and she says he has to get up, he has to walk around so he could breathe easier. But they couldn't because the plane was literally flying back and forth and up and down.

And the boy's trying to breathe and the mother's becoming more and more desperate and she can't do anything for her child. And the child's literally trying as hard as to breathe and she's trying to calm him down and she's holding his hand and it was a real crisis. And all of a sudden the mother does something that touched me in such a deep way. She realized she can't do anything to help her child.

Is there a worse feeling for a parent than that? And suddenly she turns her eyes up and she says **שמע ישראל ה' אלוקינו ה' אחד רק אתה**. She said the **שמע**. She says only you **ה'**. As a parent I can't take care of my child, but **ה'** you're my father and you can take care of both of us.

And almost miraculously she finished her prayer, and it passed. The child breathed easy, he gave a deep breath and **ברוך ה'** everything was okay.

I was so moved by that moment. It wasn't a **רבנית**, it wasn't a devoutly frum looking woman, it was just a Jewish mother in a moment where she realized she didn't have control.

And what was her default? To turn upwards.

Every single Jewish mother has exactly the same opportunity. Sometimes we're faced with situations where it's just so much more than we can handle. But there is a solution. - We look upwards, **שמע ישראל ה'** it's only you. G-d willing the **ישועה**, the salvation follows.



One day the mom of this 14-year-old girl, we'll call her Daniella, her mom comes to her and says to her, "Sweetie, you're so good at organizing things, it's a G-d-given talent. This Sunday morning, what are you doing?"

She says, "I don't know, I was thinking about going out with my friends."

She goes, "Could you give me three hours, please?"

She goes, "What do you need?"

She goes, "I need someone to attack the basement. You give that basement three hours, it'll be a different world down there."

"I don't really know, I'm not so interested in doing that, I really want to go out with my friends."

"I'll motivate you."

"Okay, I'm listening."

She says, "The Dunkin' Donuts Baskin-Robbins ice cream shop just introduced their newest drink. It's called a Frappalappadappuccino. It's two and a half thousand calories of absolute paradise. It costs

$14.99. Honey, if you clean the basement, one of those babies could be yours."

Now the truth is the girl really wanted to do it anyways because she likes organizing, but if mom asks, it's a different narrative, right? So what does she do? She says, "Okay, Ma, I'll see on Sunday morning," never to commit obviously.

But Sunday morning she wakes up, she puts out her old sweatshirt, she puts on an old denim whatever, puts on her flip-flops, walks down to the basement and tells her mom, "I'll see you in a few." And for three hours, she organizes, she attacks, she packages, she discards, and by the time three hours is over, it's a different world down there.

You could see the floor. It's actually a space that could be habitable. She comes up after three and a half hours, she says, "Mom, I want to introduce you to our very new, all-new basement." And Ma comes downstairs and she nearly has a heart attack. She's so moved, she gives Daniella a big hug and a wet kiss, and she says to her, "Honey, you are so special.

Thank you so much, I don't even know how to thank you, but here's $14.99 for a Frappalappadappuccino." And Daniella's excited, she changes out of her sweatshirt, denim, flip-flops, puts on something respectable, walks down the block back to Baskin-Robbins Dunkin' Donuts dreaming about that two and a half, 3,000 calorie cup of bliss.

But as she's about to walk into the store, she puts her hand on the handle. It says on the handle, one of the handles a B and the other an R for Baskin-Robbins, and all of a sudden, right behind her, she hears a conversation. She turns around with her hand on the handle, and this is the conversation that she overhears.

It's like, "Mom?"

"Yes, honey?"

"Can I get some ice cream?"

Big sigh. - "Sorry, sweetie. Ever since Daddy passed away, it's been so difficult just to pay for the rent and put food on the table and keep it warm in the apartment, and there really isn't money for ice cream."

"But Mom, it's been 12 months since I tasted ice cream."

"Sweetie, one day I'm gonna buy you a whole tub of ice cream, but for now, well for now let's just get going, we got to be on our way."

And Daniella hears this conversation and it touches her. She runs over to the little kid and she says to him, "Honey, what's your favorite ice cream?"

He says, "Vanilla with sprinkles."

"What type of sprinkles?"

"Colorful ones."

"Mom," she says, "What's your favorite flavor of ice cream?"

And of course she says, "Mint chocolate chip."

She goes, "Guys, if you wait here for 90 seconds, I'm gonna make your dream come true." She runs into Baskin-Robbins, she cuts the whole line, she slaps $14.99 on the counter and she says, "This is an emergency.

I need a vanilla cone with colorful sprinkles. I need a mint chocolate chip ice cream cone and I need them now. It's an emergency, it's life or death." They quickly make it up. 90 seconds later she comes running out and they're still there.

She takes the vanilla cone with the colorful sprinkles, she hands it to the little kid, and he looks up at her and says, "For me?"

She goes, "Mom, I could take it?" - And she gives the mint chocolate chip to the mom and the little kid takes one bite out of it and he's in ice cream heaven and looks at her and says, "Mom, is she G-d?"

And the girl thinks for a minute and she says, "No, but I am His child." And then she turns around and she walks home. No Frappalappadappuccino, none of that paradise in a cup. She walks home with nothing.

I want to ask you a question. - Do you think that cup, drinking that entire glass of 2,933 calories would have brought her more happiness, or not having the ice cream brought her more happiness?

This incident in her life, this episode, she goes and she gives that cup, those ice cream to this mother and her child. No, I just say the story. And the moment she says the story, it'll fill her with happiness. When she sees the expression on her mother's face, more happiness, right? And then later on the bus, when a friend of hers says, "I saw you walking, what was going on?" and she shares it again.

And when she's a mom and she has her own six-year-old child and she shares this story, it brings her more happiness.

One of the ways that Hashem wired healthy, emotionally sound human beings is that when we give, it gives us happiness, which makes a lot of sense because each and every one of us has a little tiny spark inside of us that is a piece of G-d, it's called a **נשמה**, our soul, it's a **חֵלֶק אֱלוֹק מִמַּעַל**, it's a piece of G-d, and if Hashem created this world to give, then we are here in our own little world to push it forward as well.

"A person should always be careful about the feelings of others, even the feelings of a child. The smallest wound to a child's heart can leave a scar that lasts a lifetime." — Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe.



I want to share with you a stunning story about sensitivity and its far-reaching impact. You know if you've ever flown on United or El Al, there's a very strange phenomenon when it comes to meal service. Shortly after take-off, they go and they start distributing all the kosher meals or the special kosher mehadrin meals. Often it's a large percentage of the flight.

Those people get their meal almost immediately. After they finish serving the special meals, they serve everybody else. And there's almost like an inequality. Those people who ordered kosher finish their meal before the rest of the passengers even get their meal.

On one such flight, there was a frum Yid who ordered a special kosher meal. He gets it within the first twenty minutes of the flight. And he puts it on the tray table in front of him. And he doesn't touch it.

Next to him is a secular Jew, a chiloni, and he's watching this guy. And he wonders why he's not touching it, but he doesn't say anything to him. Finally, almost a half an hour later when they serve the rest of the passengers, the secular neighbor, the chiloni next to him, gets his meal and starts to eat it. Only at that point does his frum seatmate start to eat.

He's so curious, he turns to him and he says to him, "What just happened? Why'd you wait so long? Your meal's probably cold."

He says, "You know something? I'll tell you the truth. I felt a little bit uncomfortable. It wasn't sensitive that I should be eating my

meal and maybe even finishing it before you even have a chance to start yours."

The secular fellow was blown away by the sensitivity. In the greater secular world, who even thinks that way?

When he went back to Israel, he decided he needs to find out more about these people who order special kosher and have special sensitivity.

To make a long story short, that discovery process ultimately helped him find his way back to Torah u'mitzvos. – What a beautiful story.



Yanky had a particularly gruelling day at work, and as he drove home, he was imagining the clean home that he would walk into with the dinner simmering on the stove and his wife calm and tranquil, the kids playing in the playroom. He just needed that oasis of peace. But as he got closer to his house, in the front yard in a big mud puddle, he saw his three little kids playing. He couldn't believe it.

It's six o'clock at night. What are they doing outside in the mud? And as he walked up the front steps, there were three big bags of garbage, one of them leaking. He walks into the dining room, toys everywhere, no smell of supper, the dishes unwashed, laundry

overflowing on the living room couch. And he goes to find his wife, and she's upstairs in bed and she's taking a nap.

He doesn't wake her, when she wakes up, he goes, "What's going on here? What's happening?"

She smiles and she says, "You know when you come home from work every single day you ask me: 'So, what did you do today?' Well, today I didn't do it!"

You know, we need to appreciate what our wives do for us and what our husbands do for us, because if they didn't, imagine what life would look like!

Sensitivity to Others

The flickering lamp on **Rav Aharon Kotler's** desk illuminated a stack of unpaid bills. It was the mid-1950s, and the fledgling Lakewood Yeshiva was struggling. The Rosh Yeshiva sat with his head in his hands, not out of exhaustion, but out of a deep, heavy responsibility for the hundreds of students who relied on him for their bread and their Torah.

An assistant entered the room, his face bright with a potential solution. "Rebbe," he whispered, "I have the number for a wealthy philanthropist in Switzerland. He is known for his great heart. If we call him now, we might secure the funds to cover the dormitory costs for the entire month."

Rav Aharon's eyes sharpened. Every penny was a lifeline. He reached for the phone, his hand hovering over the receiver. Then, he paused.

He glanced at his watch, then toward the window where the American night was at its deepest. He began to calculate the time difference, murmuring the hours under his breath.

"It is nearly four in the morning in Switzerland," Rav Aharon said, pulling his hand back as if the phone had grown hot.

"But Rebbe," the assistant urged, "it is an emergency! Surely the donor would understand. He would be honoured to be woken for such a mitzvah."

Rav Aharon shook his head firmly. "It is not the donor I am worried about. This man has a young child. If the telephone rings in the hallway or the study, it may echo through the house. The child might wake up. They might be frightened or unable to fall back asleep, and the mother would have to suffer the exhaustion of a restless night."

The assistant stood in stunned silence. The Yeshiva was on the brink of a financial crisis, yet the man who carried the weight of the Torah world on his shoulders was unwilling to disturb the slumber of a single child thousands of miles away.

"To build Torah by causing pain to another, even a small child, is not the way," Rav Aharon concluded gently. He closed his ledger and returned to his Gemara, trusting that the Master of the World would find another way to provide—one that didn't require waking a sleeping household.



One Moment at the Kosel… Changed Everything by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer

A young bochur from Yerushalayim needed to raise money for his wedding. He flew to New York during the summer—but when he arrived, something felt wrong. Borough Park was empty. Flatbush was empty. The shuls had barely anyone there. Finally, someone told him: "Everyone went to the country."

"The country?" he asked.

"The mountains," they explained. "That's where everyone is."

"How do I get there?"

"Go to Shomrei Shabbos on 13th Avenue. Stand there long enough—you'll get a ride."

So he went.

Within minutes, a car pulled up. "Where are you going?"

"The country."

"Get in."

They drove out of the city.

After a while, the driver asked, "Where exactly in the country?"

"I don't know," the bochur admitted.

The driver laughed. "I'm going to Seward Park Village. Come with me."

They arrived—but it wasn't what he expected. Small homes. Simple place. He went into the shul and began collecting.

Someone stopped him. "You're in the wrong place. If you want to raise money, go to Woodland Estates."

"How do I get there?"

"Walk to the end of the road. Someone will pick you up."

So he walked. He waited. Ten minutes later, another car pulled up.

"Where are you going?"

"Woodland."

"Get in."

They drove and arrived at a completely different place—beautiful homes, a real country setting. But he still had nowhere to stay. As he walked, he met a father and son returning from the mikvah.

"Where are you from?"

"Yerushalayim."

"Where are you staying?"

"I don't know."

"Come with us," they said. "Our host has a house for guests."

They brought him in. The host welcomed him warmly. That Friday night, he sat at a large table with many guests, enjoying the warmth and atmosphere. A man sitting next to him asked, "How do you know the host?"

"I don't," he replied.

"You don't even know his name?"

When the name was told to him, the bochur suddenly sat up. He turned to the host. "Can I ask you something?"

"Of course."

"Do you ever go to Eretz Yisrael?"

"Yes."

"Do you go to the Kosel?"

"Of course."

"Do you remember seeing a man davening with incredible passion?"

The host paused. "Yes… I do remember." "I saw someone davening like I've never seen before. I spoke to him. I told him—if you ever need help, reach out to me."

The bochur looked at him. "That man was my father."

Silence filled the table.

"When I needed to come to America," the bochur continued, "I asked my father if we knew anyone. He said no—but then he remembered you. He remembered your name." "And now… after everything… I ended up here. At your table."

That Motzaei Shabbos, the host arranged a parlour meeting. They raised all the money the bochur needed for his wedding. The host even travelled to attend the chasunah.

A lifelong relationship was formed. All because of one moment at the Kosel— a moment that could have been ignored. But wasn't. Because sometimes, one opportunity— one small act— changes everything.



In this story told by Rav Eliezer Turk, we see that sometimes, not going to beis din settles a case perfectly:

In an apartment building in Brachfeld, building wide repairs and upgrades were underway. The contractor discovered that the wall between Aharon's* apartment and the one next door needed a 5,000-shekel repair, and it would fall outside the overall cost shared by the building's residents.

Aharon suggested to Yitzchak, his next-door neighbor, that they split the price of the repair, since it was a common wall.

"I'm not putting in one extra shekel," Yitzchak told him. "This work is costing me enough."

The two men discussed it further, but neither would give in an inch.

Aharon went to the *beis din* to make an appointment for the case to be heard. But as he began writing his name on the form, it felt all wrong. - "I'm going to be *mevater*," he decided.

He paid the contractor the 5,000 shekels for the wall repair, along with another 15,000 that he owed for the rest of the job. The contractor passed the 20,000-shekel check onto an Arab worker as wages.

Weeks passed, and Aharon noticed that the check hadn't cleared. He called the contractor.

"I'm no longer using this worker, but I'll call and ask the worker what happened to the check," the contractor said.

Incredibly, the worker related: "I took the check to the bank to cash it. I thought to myself, why not add another zero? Then I'll have 200,000 shekels instead of 20,000. But when I brought it to the teller, she asked, 'What's going on with this check?' She could tell I had changed it. I didn't want to get arrested for check fraud, so I left the check and ran!

You can keep your money!"

Aharon got to see it right in front of his eyes: when you give in, you win!



102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - How an Entire Family Merited Life

During vacation time, a family in Israel went on a trip to the North. They set out for a hike and picnic, parked in the parking lot near a stream, and headed on foot toward the stream. After a while, they noticed a shady corner. They sat down, put their food out on a wooden picnic table, washed for bread, and ate. When they were done, they wanted to bentch but discovered that they didn't have a bentcher. They had forgotten it in the glove compartment of the car.

"I know bentching by heart," one of the children said. "We don't need a bentcher."

"No, no!" his father said decisively. "There is no way we're going to bentch by heart. You have to bentch from a text. You have to read every word unhurriedly."

"And if we don't have a bentcher, what will we do?" asked the children.

"We'll go back to the car and get the bentcher," the father said. "And on the way, I'll tell you a story that will make the effort worthwhile. It's always good to hear a story."

And this is what he told them:

"It was around the time of Kristallnacht. The atmosphere in Germany was very bad and full of anti-Semitism. There was a talmid chacham at the time who lived in Hamburg with his wife and six children. One night, while eating supper with his family, they discussed the difficult situation in Germany — that it was not good, and that the Jews didn't feel safe at all. The man told his wife, 'I think it would be wise to leave Germany, and the sooner, the better.'

"Many Jews did not think as he did. They thought it was a passing phase, but it didn't pass. The anti-Semitism only grew, culminating in the destruction of European Jewry.

"They considered the possibility of moving to England. During their discussion, they heard strong knocks on the front door. Before they could open it, the door was kicked open with a heavy thud.

"A Nazi officer stormed in, along with two soldiers, shouting orders at them: 'Get out. Don't stay here. Jews, out!'

"The talmid chacham said in a firm voice, 'I'm not budging. I'm in the middle of eating. I'm a rabbi, and I need to say Grace After Meals. I'm not moving from here before I say Grace After Meals.'

"The Nazis did not expect such chutzpah from a Jew. They looked at their commander, and he said, 'Okay, say Grace.'

"In the meantime, the Nazis went through the house and wrecked it. His wife and their frightened children stood against the wall, shaking like leaves.

"Their father was completely detached from the entire commotion. With his hat and jacket, he sat in front of an open siddur on the table, bentching slowly, word by word, the way one would count money. He said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, thank You very much for the food. Thank You very much that the food is digested. Thank You very much that there is food,' and in that manner, he bentched and thanked Hashem.

"The commander was impatient, but he had already agreed to let the man bentch. After waiting five minutes and seeing that the man was still not done, the Nazi told his soldiers, 'Let's go to the next house. After that, we'll come back here.' They marched out and continued going from house to house, wreaking havoc in Jewish homes.

"Two or three minutes later, the father finished bentching. He looked at his wife and children and said to them, 'You have ten minutes. Everyone will run to their room and pack a bag with their most important belongings, and then we'll leave the house right away. We won't leave here alive tonight if we're not out in ten minutes.'

"They took clothing and some keepsakes and fled their house as fast as they could. They went to a village, where a goy hid them in his cellar. They got train tickets that day, but they could only get enough for seven people, which meant that they were short one.

"They didn't know what to do. They were supposed to take a train to Holland the next day, and from there a train to England. They tried to figure out what to do about the ticket they were missing. In the end, they decided to put their young daughter inside their suitcase when they reached the border, and Hashem would help.

"They hid the girl in their luggage, poking holes in it to make sure she had enough air, and that's how they crossed the border. It turned out that that was the last train that left for England. After that, the borders were closed, and they didn't allow citizens to leave Germany.

"They were spared. They reached England, with their daughter in the suitcase at the border crossings. They realized they were saved because of bentching."

Their father said, "The little girl who was in the suitcase was my mother — your grandmother! Your grandmother from London, who was particular to bentch from a bentcher her entire life. Why?

Because they understood that bentching causes a person to be saved, both physically and spiritually."

Birkas Hamazon is a segulah for abundant parnassah, and it also serves as a protective layer against misfortune. It's a Divine promise that one who bentches slowly and with kavanah from a bentcher will be saved from all tragedies that may happen.

In this vein, the Be'er Heiteiv says in Siman 185 in the name of the Rishonim that the letter **ף** does not appear in the entire bentching, to tell one who bentches with kavanah that **אף**, anger, and **קצף**, fury, won't have an effect on him, and he'll be saved from all troubles and distress.

The Siddur Speaks

The Chofetz Chaim would teach that Bentching includes all the Brachos that one could look for, and the reason is because one who understands the obligation to show gratitude and be thankful, deserves to be granted more and greater Brachos. One who takes everything in life for granted and does not demonstrate his appreciation, deserves nothing.

The Chofetz Chaim would often say, "People search all over for Segulos, and sources of merit to get Brachos from Hashem. However, all they have to do is say Birchas HaMazon, Bentching, from a Siddur, word for word. This will cause them to be protected from all troubles. - Bentching is a Mitzvah which guarantees Hashem's Brachos!"

The commentary Eliyahu Rabbah writes that every letter of the Hebrew alphabet is included in the words of Bentching, except for the letter 'Fey Sofis', the final fey. He explains the reason for this is that after every meal, when one Bentches out loud, clearly, and with joyful Kavanah, his words drive away the Malach Ra, the angel who carries out evil decrees. The last letter of this Malach's name

is Fey Sofis, as found in the words: Af (anger), Shetzef (slight anger), and Ketzef (wrath), which are words that represent varied degrees of rage. By not using that letter in Bentching, we are not allowing words that sound similar to his name to be said, and he will not be drawn close to us to cause harm, Chas V'Shalom. In fact, by Bentching carefully and with thought, the opposite happens and this Malach is driven far away!



מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך. למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם וכו' (יא-כ,כא)

Many of the old-time Yerushalmim remember and recount that soon after he made *Aliyah* to *Eretz Yisroel* ,the **Brisker Rav, R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin ZT"L** opened up a Yeshiva, Yeshivas Ohel Moshe, and an orphanage which still bears his name till this very day.

A short while after the orphanage officially opened its doors in the old *Givat Shaul* section of *Yerushalayim* ,R' Yehoshua Leib asked all the **סופרים** - *scribes* in the city to come speak with him. He then struck a deal with them that they would go out to each and every home and, one by one, check each *Mezuzah* that was hanging on the doorposts. He wanted to make sure there were no **מזוזות פסולות** *-unkosher Mezuzos* in the entire city and as an incentive to complete their holy work, the Rav agreed to pay each *sofer* for his time and effort from the budget of the newly founded orphanage. Naturally, the *sofrim* all agreed to this and immediately went about checking each home.

Not long afterwards, R' Yehoshua Leib was approached and asked about this unusual deal. Especially, since the orphanage had just opened, why was he willing to pay for the efforts and services of the *sofrim* from the meagre coffers of the orphanage?

R' Yehoshua Leib, in his infinite wisdom, and full of hope and trust, answered, "In truth, this extra expense that the orphanage took

upon itself, is really an investment for the future. We find in the Torah that immediately following the Parshah of Mezuzah, the Possuk states "**למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם**" - *In order that you increase your years and the years of your children.* The Torah is clearly guaranteeing us that by fulfilling the Mitzvah of Mezuzah properly, a person will increase his life span and the amount of years he lives in this world. This being so, by us ensuring that every Jewish home has a proper, kosher Mezuzah, we are able to increase the lives of the families inside, thereby decreasing the amount of children who become parentless. - The less orphans there are, the smaller our orphanage's budget becomes - so, in essence, this is a simple investment for the future!"



There was a **יוד** in **ירושלים עיר הקודש**. He was a **ותיקין יוד**. Every morning he stood up at the **ותיקין** and went to **דאוועז ותיקין**. He came home after the **נץ**, had a little breakfast, went to sleep and 9:00 he woke up and went to the work.

He had this **מנהג** every day at 9:00 in the morning, a few minutes before 9:00 when the bus, the school bus comes to pick up the children, he had his daily hug that he gave for all his children with a kiss, "**א גוט מארגן צדיק'ל, דו זאלסט מצליח זיין, דו זאלסט האבן א גוטן טאג אין חדר**".

One day he woke up late and he saw that he will not have the time because he had still a meeting, he still had to do a few things. So he just went into his car and went to the job. Can't be late for the

meeting, the boss said everybody has to come early tomorrow and **פונקט** the day he woke up late.

On his way going to the job he gets a phone call. Home. He gets this phone call and here it's his little boy on the phone, "**טאטי**, I'm soon going to the bus, where are you? I'm waiting for this hug, I'm waiting for the good morning."

"Yeah **שייפעלע**, I'm so sorry, today I cannot do it because I have the job and the meeting I must be in the job." "Okay, okay, bye." That's it, today won't be any hug.

But **ממש** a minute before the bus came, suddenly the boy sees **טאטי'ס** car is back. And **טאטי** went out, told him, "Listen, I couldn't stand this pain, the way you finished the phone call, here I have your hug. - **שייפעלע**, good morning, and you should have a lot of **הצלחה אין חדר**.

Years went by. It was by the last **שבע ברכות** of this boy. The **חתן** stood up and he said his little **דרוש'ל** and he thanked his parents for all the years of the **חינוך** and he says, "And if you want to ask me what is the moment that I remember from all the years?" and then he said this story of that morning when **טאטי** came back with his car and he gave me this hug and he told me good morning.

The father stood up after this **דרשה** and he started talking his **דרשה** and he said, "You know I'm thinking now as the **חתן** speaks and he's telling the story, I forgot the story already. You remind me, I remember that day. And here I'm thinking to myself, it's about 12 or 13 years passed since then.

This **חתן** remembers what I did for him. How many chances is that the boss still remembers that I came late that day to the work? Zero, he doesn't remember. So look, then, 13 years ago by that morning, what looked by me so **חשוב** then? What was in my first... I must be on time, I must be on time, I must be on time! And look

that's 13, 14 years later, is it still so **חשוב**? Nothing, nothing happened.

And the thing that I almost kicked it aside, eh big deal, so I won't give this hug for this boy, I won't tell him good morning, 14 years later look how he remembers it.

We sometimes don't make the right decision because we look for now. Look in the future, look what is really important. What is really important?"

Tefillah Reflections

Strength For What Is Important

When **R' Elyashiv** was very old, he would sometimes be so tired after hours of Torah study that he would fall asleep during meals, even while holding a spoon in his hand. Even so, when it came time to recite birkas hamazon, he would awaken as if a different man, and would recite it with a clear voice, slowly and pleasantly, with no sign of weakness.

What Does Abertzig Mean?

R'Elya Lopian once asked his students (who were Yiddish-speakers), "Does anyone know the meaning of the word "**Abertzig**"? Nobody did. He explained: When you say, "a ber, a tzig," it means, "a bear" and "a deer" (in Yiddish), but when you rush the words and say, "Abertzig" it is meaningless. So, too, when you say, "Baruch Hu uvaruch Shmo, it means "Blessed is He and blessed is His Name," but if you say, "Bachubarshmo," you have not said anything. If you say, "Hashem, Elokeichem - emes," it means "Hashem, your G-d - is true," but if you say, "Hashelchemes," it's like saying, "Abertzig."

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

A woman once made the long journey from her hometown in Romania to see and speak to the great *tzaddik*, **R' Meir of Premishlan ZT"L**. She was married for a number of years, she explained, and had not been blessed with children. She tearfully requested a *berachah* from R' Meir that she give birth to a child. R' Meir blessed her that *Hashem* should fulfill her wishes and she should be able to bear a child. The woman was satisfied and returned to her home.

Almost a year went by and R' Meir received a letter in an envelope that was filled with a substantial amount of money. The letter was from the woman's husband and in it he wrote that *Boruch Hashem* his wife gave birth to a healthy and beautiful child, thanks to the blessing of the great *tzaddik* of Premishlan. He was enclosing the money as a gift of gratitude to the *Rebbe* for all that he had done.

R' Meir read the letter, looked at the money, and was puzzled. He called in his sons and told them, "I don't understand. I received this letter but there seems to be a few mistakes in it. First of all, the titles that are written here calling me a *tzaddik* and the like, are totally wrong. Am I a *tzaddik*, or a "holy man" as he puts it? Of course not! Secondly, am I the one who allowed his wife to give birth to a child? I had nothing to do with it. It was all a blessing from *Hashem*. I must assume, therefore, that in truth, this man was not referring to me at all and as a result I must return the money to him."

His sons, however, who endured their father's lifestyle of poverty with grace and silence, did not see it this way. R' Meir and his family lived a life of extreme poverty and deprivation. Whatever money came into his hands during any given day, was given away to charity before the day was out. They began to argue that obviously *Hashem* has arranged for this money to come into their

family's hands, to allow them to buy food and other important basic necessities and R' Meir should not give back the money. Back and forth the arguments went until it was decided to go in front of a *Beis Din* of three and have them render a final verdict on the matter.

The judges on the panel heard the unusual case and after some deliberation, rendered their decision in favor of R' Meir's sons. The money should be used for the family's needs, they decreed, since the sender of the funds obviously feels that R' Meir is a holy and wise *tzaddik* and was giving the money to him as a show of respect and appreciation.

However, R' Meir was not fully convinced yet. "In all important issues, I seek the advice of my *rebbetzin*," claimed R' Meir, "and I cannot go through with this until I ask her advice."

The *rebbetzin* was called into the *Beis Din* and broached the question of should they keep the money or give it back.

She thought for a moment. "I don't understand you," she said to her husband. "As far as I know, you are always careful to avoid food that has even the slightest **שאלה** - Halachic question, on it. Why should this be any different?"

The money was returned that very same day!

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - All a Child Needs Is One Adult Who Believes in Him

A Yid who works with boys from good homes who have fallen into the clutches of "street culture" tells this story:

One of these *bachurim* was from a very good Yerushalmi family. He was considered the best of the best but was somehow connected with frivolous boys who taught him, among other things, to take things that didn't belong to him. Many people tried to talk to him, to encourage him and draw him close, but they all found out that there

was no one to talk to. The negative peer pressure was stronger than all their persuasions.

There was, however, one avreich in this bachur's community who said to himself, "I'm not giving up on him!" He would take him on trips and to activities, and tell him convincingly, "You must know, Yossi, that I believe in you and I have great expectations of you. I believe that you'll be able to go back to yeshivah. You are talented, you have great abilities! All you really need is to disconnect for some time from Yerushalayim and those negative friendships.

"I suggest you travel to London. You should go learn in the yeshivah of **Rav Elyakim Schlesinger**. Stay there for half a year, a year. You'll come back as a ben Torah, and you'll give nachas to Hashem, your parents, and yourself.

"Your whole future is before you, your life is sitting on the scales. Your future descendants are crying out to you: 'Where are you leading us? Where are you taking the generations coming after you?'

"Everything depends on the decisions that you make today. If you stay here, you are decreeing upon yourself to be lost to Yiddishkeit, but if you go to London, you and all of your future generations will be links in the beautiful chain of Am Yisrael!"

The avreich repeated this over and over, until the bachur softened and decided to take his advice and travel to London to disconnect from the negative relationships surrounding him. The avreich accompanied the bachur to the airport and said, "I'm going with you until they force me to stop! I'm going with you all the way to the passport checkpoint!"

When the two had to part, the avreich turned to the bachur and said, "Yossi, you should know that it's so hard for me to leave you now. I believe in you and expect great things from you! I know that you won't disappoint me or yourself, and I know that in half a year, you'll come back to Yerushalayim a new man."

They embraced, and the avreich said, "You know, I'm not going home from here. I'm going straight to the Kosel to say the whole sefer Tehillim and daven that you should have siyata d'Shmaya in your new-old way of life."

The two parted tearfully. The bachur boarded the plane and the avreich went to the Kosel and rent Shamayim with his tefillos for the success of his young protégé.

Around two weeks later, Rav Elyakim Schlesinger called the avreich and told him the following: "You're not going to believe what you're about to hear from me, but it's the entire truth. Every day, I look at the bachur you sent me and I see an entirely different character than the one you described to me. We're talking about a tzaddik who learns diligently, davens with real kavanah, and all of his actions are those of a true ben Torah.

"When I called the boy to the office and asked him how he is, he understood immediately why I had called him and spoke openly. 'I understand that the rosh yeshivah is confused by the difference in what he heard about me and what he actually sees. The truth is, everything the rosh yeshivah heard about me was absolutely true.

"'In Eretz Yisrael, I met up with some bad people, and I learned from them to steal and pickpocket. During the flight, a man whose appearance suggested that he was a well-to-do businessman sat next to me. With the "special" skills I learned on the streets, I felt a fat wallet inside the man's pocket.

"'I watched the man carefully as he ate and fell into a deep sleep. All that was left for me to do was to extend my hand and pull his fat wallet out of his pocket with skill and dexterity.

"'My hand moved as if by itself in the direction of the man's pocket, but suddenly, I heard an inner voice call out, "Yossi, no! Yossi, don't do that! There is someone in Yerushalayim who cares for you very much, who believes in you, and expects great things from you! In

Yerushalayim, there's an avreich who parted from you with a hug and went straight to the Kosel to say Tehillim and daven for your success! Don't break his heart; don't disappoint him!"'

"At that moment, I felt an inner shock and decided that I'm going to start a new page, and begin to serve Hashem with all my heart and soul."

I heard this story from the maggid, Rav Yaakov Shayish shlita, and there are two very important messages within it: Never give up on any Yid, and positive words have the potential to build up a person.

That Yid from Yerushalayim was zocheh to great reward because he brought a Yiddishe neshamah back to Hashem, and all the generations that will come from that bachur, and all the mitzvos they will do, stand by that Yid.

Another message from the story: All a child needs is one adult who believes in him!

Ephraim Leibowitz's Defender

At the outbreak of the First World War, as hostilities erupted between the Russian and German empires, a profound and perilous drama unfolded within the walls of the Radin Yeshivah in Poland. During this period of intense wartime paranoia, a certain Russian interloper grew desperate to manufacture a high-profile espionage case to advance his own career and show off his prowess to the authorities.

This operative cynically befriended the yeshivah students, embedding himself in their inner circle until he discovered a young man named Ephraim Leibowitz, a German citizen from birth. Sensing the perfect opportunity to construct a treason charge, the detective waited for a moment of distraction and covertly slipped a highly confidential, detailed blueprint of the strategic Kaunas Fortress directly into the unsuspecting bochur's pocket.

The trap was sprung with devastating speed. That very night, heavily armed Russian military personnel surrounded the yeshivah's dormitory, launched a chaotic raid, and discovered the planted military plans exactly where the operative had hidden them.

Ephraim was immediately arrested and placed in heavy chains under the gravest charges of wartime espionage. The fallout was catastrophic, instantly casting a dark cloud of suspicion over the entire yeshivah. The Russian authorities were led to believe that the Rosh Yeshivah, **the holy Chofetz Chaim zt"l**, and the entire hanhala, were operating a clandestine German spy ring right under their very noses.

As for Ephraim Leibowitz, facing a military tribunal during a time of total war, the young bochur stood on the precipice of execution, with the death penalty appearing to be an absolute certainty. In this hour of darkness, R' Yisroel Meir displayed extraordinary bravery, refusing to abandon the boy despite the immense danger. Understanding the difficulty of defending an accused German spy and how it could easily destroy his yeshivah and arouse serious suspicions of treason, the Tzaddik nevertheless devoted his entire heart and soul to saving the young talmid's life.

Recognizing the limitations of residing in Radin, the Chofetz Chaim personally traveled through the perilous wartime landscape to the imperial capital of St. Petersburg. His mission was to persuade a highly influential, world-renowned attorney to take up the defense, a monumental task given that practically every attorney in the empire had already refused to intervene in such a politically toxic and dangerous piece of business.

Through sheer persistence and devotion, he managed to secure the necessary legal representation, setting the stage for a historic courtroom showdown. When the high-stakes trial finally took place in 1917, a breathtaking scene unfolded inside the courtroom as the spiritual giants of the generation arrived to stand in the breach.

The saintly Chofetz Chaim, alongside his prominent son-in-law **R' Tzvi Levinson zt"l**, and his brilliant talmid, **R' Elchanan Wasserman zt"l**, bravely took the witness stand before the military judges. With absolute conviction, these towering rabbinic figures testified under oath that they were undeniably certain of Ephraim's complete innocence.

Their awe-inspiring presence and powerful testimony ultimately swayed the court away from the gallows; instead of the death penalty, the judges sentenced the young man to ten years of grueling hard labor. When the Chofetz Chaim was informed of the verdict, his reaction was profound. He first raised his eyes to heaven and with deep emotion thanked the Ribono shel Olam for delivering the boy from the clutches of the executioner.

When asked about the daunting ten-year prison sentence, the Tzaddik surprisingly laughed aloud. With a smile of pure faith, he openly mocked the hubris of the Czarist regime, exclaiming, "Such fools! How do the authorities know that they will last even ten months? Are they sure they will last even ten weeks?"

His words seemed radical to those frozen in fear of imperial power, but they were rooted in a deep perception of Divine justice. Indeed, the Chofetz Chaim's spiritual foresight proved flawless. Barely two months later, on the 22nd of Adar, the historic Russian Revolution erupted, swiftly toppling the centuries-old monarchy and deposing the Czar from his throne.

As the old regime crumbled into dust, the prison gates were thrown wide open, and the completely vindicated Ephraim Leibowitz walked out into the sunlight of freedom.

"The purpose of a person's life is to be a source of benefit to others." ~ Rav Moshe Feinstein.

הוא היה אומר

R' Avrohom Weinberg ZT"L of Slonim (Bais Avrohom) would say:

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

R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT"L (Lubavitcher Rebbe) would say:

"Someone once wrote a letter to me about a friend who was in need of advice and a blessing. I told him to tell his friend to write the letter himself, because when I read a letter I also read between the lines!"

R' Naftoli Tzvi Yehudah Berlin ZT"L (Netziv) would say:

"The definition of a masmid is not someone who learns until he collapses, but someone who learns when he is supposed to, davens when he is supposed to, eats when he is supposed to, and rests when he is supposed to!"

R' Eliyohu of Vilna ZT"L (Vilna Gaon) would say:

"The heart of a wise man is to his right, and the heart of a fool to his left" (קהלת י-ב). A wise man looks to the right side of a gemara - the portion that he has completed and reviews it constantly. A fool looks to the left - only counting how many pages remain!"

Precious Moments With Rav Chaim - Artscroll

Bris Kodesh



"What's the secret?" asks Rav Chaim's talmid, Rav Eliyahu Mann. "Why does the rav accept the many requests for him to be sandek, no matter where? It's a big mitzvah, but learning Torah is a greater mitzvah."

"One can learn while traveling," Rav Chaim answers. "It's true that it's not easy. My father-in-law, Rav Elyashiv, asked me the same question. I told him that it was what I saw my teachers do. The Chazon Ish never turned down anyone who asked him to be sandek. One time he went to Komemiyus, in the days when it was a hard trip on difficult roads. He spent six hours traveling.

"My father, the Steipler Gaon, always agreed to be sandek too. And you know what the Chasam Sofer says: One who davens for a long time will have a long life. If so, one who spends a long time davening isn't losing out any time. It's the opposite — he gets extra time. That's probably the case with every mitzvah: Those who do mitzvos live longer."

For over sixty years, Rav Chaim was often called to be sandek at brissim. That means that he was the sandek for more than fifty thousand babies. No other gadol in history spent as much time doing this mitzvah. He went wherever he was asked to go to be sandek, traveling all over Eretz Yisrael. "It's not bitul Torah," he says, when asked. "I learn as I travel."

Finishing Shas in a Day

Everyone was asleep on a Friday night in Cheshvan. Then, there were morning sounds — hands being washed, the swish of a jacket being put on. What happened? Who was up? Rav Chaim, twenty-five years old, was ready to go out.

"Why?"

"I'm going to daven Shacharis."

"It's the middle of the night!"

"Is it? I thought it was morning. I couldn't fall asleep again, so I thought it was already morning."

On Motza'ei Shabbos, they found out why he'd woken up and couldn't sleep. He woke up at the moment when his uncle, the Chazon Ish, passed away.

The fifteenth of Cheshvan is the Chazon Ish's yahrtzeit. He was Rav Chaim's teacher, so Rav Chaim feels he has to do something for him, especially since the Chazon Ish did not have children of his own. He asks each person in Kollel Chazon Ish to learn a number of pages of Gemara, so that the whole Shas will be learned for him.

"Daven"

When people have a problem, they go to Rav Chaim for a berachah. They ask him what they should do, or promise to do, so that Hashem will solve their problem. Usually, he tells them, "Daven." Dozens of times every day, he tells people who come with all sorts of troubles, "Daven."

"What does the Rav mean when he tells us to daven?" someone asks. "We daven three times a day. In davening, we ask Hashem — we plead with Him — to make things good for us. We beg Him to take away our sorrows and cancel evil decrees. Isn't that davening? Why does the Rav tell people who already daven, to daven?"

"When I tell people to daven, I don't mean the three times a day that every Jewish man must daven. We have no choice but to daven then. I'm telling them to add their own tefillos. They should pick up a Tehillim and ask Hashem for help, like a child asks his father to help him. That is what Hashem wants us to do. That's what I mean when I tell people to daven."



Waiting for Rav Chaim to Finish

Dozens of people crowd into Rav Chaim's room while he learns. As he learns, the envelope that marks his place moves down the page. People are moving about and pushing chairs. Sometimes food is placed on the table, and bottles of wine and cups. Rav Chaim doesn't notice any of it.

Time passes. The people in the room begin a siyum. They read aloud the last words of the masechta and say the hadran. Meanwhile, Rav Chaim is learning. The envelope moves down one line and then another. Wine is being passed around the room. People are drinking a l'chaim. Rav Chaim is learning. The people in the room begin to sing. Rav Chaim moves the envelope down the page as he learns. Another line, then another page... The room is filled with waiting people.

Then he's done! He lifts his eyes from the Gemara and looks around. He doesn't know what everyone is doing there.

His grandson Rav Yaakov Yisrael explains that they're making a siyum. Unbelievable, how he focuses on his learning!



R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi ZT''L would say:

"Whatever is forbidden is absolutely prohibited, but not all that is permissible is necessary."





The Screw That Didn't Fit - R' Don Jarashow

Not just don't steal, but be *ehrlich*, be *emesdik* in business. It means do things that when they seem slimy you stay away from that. And that's a very important message. We're young over here, but when we get older, when we have businesses or we work, whatever it is that we do, we always have to stay very far away from anything that might be *gneiva*, stealing.

We have to always be *ehrlich* and *emesdik*.

Reb Pesach Krohn says an incredible story. There was once a man whose name was *Reb Shlomo Malek*. And this goes back around 30 years ago, 1994, and he was working, he was trying to become a computer technician.

Working with computers, fixing computers, and he went to a company that you probably didn't hear of, it's called Toshiba. And that's a big, big computer company. And he was getting trained by them, and it was the last test. The last test was to take a laptop, take a computer, completely take the entire computer apart and then to put the entire computer back together to work perfectly.

In this classroom there many students, everyone with their own computer. And there was a special plastic container that when you took apart the computer you put all the pieces back into it and then you rebuild it. So it took many, many hours to take it apart and put it back together. And what happened was that it took five hours to take it apart and put it back together for all the other students.

Shlomo Malek was the only *Yid* in the entire class. And for some reason *Shlomo Malek* realized that in the container after he put everything back together, was a solitery screw!

Every last screw had to be put back into the computer. But he had a big issue, a big dilemma, that there was one screw that he could not find a place to put back into the computer.

And he was very worried because everyone else already finished and he felt so silly. He would feel so embarrassed if he was the only one that had to take apart the entire computer again and rebuild it to find the place for this one tiny little screw. But he said, this is the job, I have to take apart the entire thing and rebuild and make sure everything has a place. And if not I can't get the certificate. I'm not going to be able to pass the test.

And so while everyone else finished he was embarrassed. He took apart the entire computer all over again the second time and he rebuilt it.

But guess what happened. - The second time he rebuilt the computer he had the same problem again. There was no place for one screw. And at this point *Shlomo* was very embarrassed and the teacher said, okay everybody, it's time to hand in your computers. And everyone handed it in, all finished, but *Shlomo* didn't hand it in.

And the teacher said, can I please have quiet in the class? It seems that *Shlomo* couldn't figure it out. Everyone please turn your attention to *Shlomo*. And he got very nervous. He was very embarrassed, very scared what's going to happen.

He's not going to get the certification, he's not going to get a job. This was all a waste of money and time. He was very, he was very nervous. And the teacher said in public in front of all the other students, *Shlomo*, Mr. *Malek*, can I ask you a question?

Why are you the only one that doesn't have a built computer? Everyone else was able to do it, you had the training, you have the knowledge, why can't you build a computer?

And he said, well, you told us that we have to have a place for every last screw, every last one, and I couldn't find a place for this screw.

And his heart's pounding and he's nervous. And the teacher looked at the entire class and said, did anyone else have this issue? And they all looked and said, no. And now he was really embarrassed. He was the only one that couldn't figure it out.

And then the teacher went over to Mr. *Malek* and said, please raise your hand in front of the entire class. And he says, I want to recognize and publicly appreciate your honesty. He said, I just want to let you all know that there was an extra screw in every single one of your computers and you all lied. And *Shlomo Malek*... was the only one, the *Yid*, the Jew in the class that was able to be honest enough, that had what we call integrity.

And he made a huge *Kiddush Hashem* and he was very *matzliach* in this field. And he walked out instead of being nervous and embarrassed and ashamed, he was proud, he was successful and made a tremendous *Kiddush Hashem. W*hen he thought everyone else was looking and laughing, he was the one who was ultimately laughing at the end.

And that's how you really are *matzliach* when you want to make money in life, when you want to support your family, whatever it is, never forget that when you have an option to be truthful, you always stay *emestik*, and *Hashem* is going to take care.

May we all be *zocheh* when times are hard and we're not sure what to do and we're thinking we're going to be embarrassed. Whatever is *emestik* do that, and *Hashem* is going to take care of the rest and give you *hatzlacha* and *bracha*, and may we all see that and be *matzliach*. *Gut voch*.

"The difference between a smart person and a wise person is that a smart person knows what to say and a wise person knows whether or not to say it."

An Identical Condition From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

Mr. Segal stepped outside for his regular evening walk. Since he had left the hospital after his heart attack, this was his only daily physical exercise. On his way, he met an old friend, Rabbi Shlomo Greenwald, an elder Lubavitcher Chasid in Eretz Yisrael. They began to talk. Mr. Segal was very depressed by his medical situation, and did not believe he would ever really recover from it.



Rabbi Greenwald tried to cheer him up and give him hope, but to no avail. Seeing that his words were having no effect, Rabbi Greenwald recommended to Mr. Segal that he write a letter to the **[Lubavitcher] Rebbe**. Mr. Segal was an observant Jew, and had great respect for the Rebbe's greatness in Torah and his activities on behalf of Judaism and the Jewish people around the world. But writing to him about his health issues?

"Why should I write to the Rebbe all of a sudden", he asked. "when I was healthy and everything was fine I never wrote to him, and now when things aren't going well for me I should write to him all of a sudden? Anyway, how can the Rebbe actually help me with medical problems?"

Rabbi Greenwald tried to convince him, mentioning mutual friends and acquaintances that had been helped by the Rebbe's advice and Berachos, but Mr. Segal remained resolute in his refusal. Rabbi Greenwald then gave it on last try "what if I write to the Rebbe about your situation and ask for his blessing on your behalf?"

This offer Mr. Segal couldn't refuse. He agreed for Rabbi Greenwald to write to the Rebbe, but told him that he wishes to add a few

words of his own at the end of the letter. Rabbi Greenwald wrote the letter and gave it to Mr. Segal, who wrote these few words at the end: "Rebbe! My pains are unbearable! Please pray for me that I should die quickly and painlessly."

The letter was mailed overseas, and after three weeks a response from the Rebbe arrived. The Rebbe had handwritten under his 'plea' 3 words: "Bedikas mezuzos b'bayis" -- "Check the mezuzos at home."

The immediate impact of the Rebbe's answer was profound: "I went over to the mezuzah and removed the nail attaching it to the door. As I removed the nail, I felt as if a nail had been removed from my heart as well!" He gave the mezuzah to Rabbi Elimelech Kaplan, the Rav of Shikun Chabad in Lod, to check.

The Rav opened the mezuzah, examined it carefully, and looked up at Mr. Segal. The Rav again looked down at the mezuzah, and then looked up at Mr. Segal once more.

"My dear friend", he said, "you and your mezuzah suit each other perfectly: you both have the same illness, a severe heart condition".

Mr. Segal was confused; e thought the Rav was joking with him. How could a mezuzah have heart problems? The Rav showed him the mezuzah and explained: "See here, in the verse, is **ואהבת את ה' אלוקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאודך**

"The word **לבבך** (your heart) is completely erased."

The Rav immediately provided him with a new, kosher mezuza to replace the one on his front door, and more mezuzahs for the other doors in his house. Mr. Segal hurried home to put them up. When he woke up the next morning, he got dressed and told his wife that he's feeling well, and so he was going to shul for Shachris (Morning Prayers) and then off to work.

"What?" his wife exclaimed, "You have a serious heart condition! If you exert yourself like this, you'll find yourself back in the hospital. Who knows what will be then!"

The story of the unkosher mezuzah didn't convince his worried wife;, she insisted that her husband needed to go to a doctor for an immediate checkup, expecting that to disprove his claims. When the doctor saw a healthy-looking Mr. Segal enter his office, he was puzzled. This was a patient that usually showed up when he was experiencing serious problems.!

The doctor listened to Mr. Segal's story extraordinary story. He reacted with skepticism, and initially objected to doing scans that he thought were unnecessary. But after the couple begged him to do the scans so that they can achieve some clarity, he acceded. An hour later, the doctor received the results of the tests. He studied the papers in front of him, looked up at Mr. Segal, looked back down at the papers, and looked back at Mr. Segal disbelievingly.

The doctor's strange conduct reminded Mr. Segal of the way the Rav had looked at him and his mezuzah. The doctor then began to read out the results: "Your first tests three months ago showed that your situation was very severe. But today's tests show conclusively that your heart is now completely healthy. It's as if you have been born anew!"

Where the Battle Begins

וְזָכַרְתָּ֣ אֶת־ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ֮ כִּ֣י הוּא֒ הַנֹּתֵ֤ן לְךָ֙ כֹּ֣חַ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת חָ֑יִל לְמַ֙עַן֙ הָקִ֣ים אֶת־בְּרִית֔וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּ֖ע לַאֲבֹתֶ֑יךָ כַּיּ֖וֹם הַזֶּֽה – *'But you must remember the L-rd your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant which He swore to your forefathers, as it is this day'.*

The Yetzer Hara's first ploy is to cause a person to forget Hashem's kindness. ~ The Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh (Devarim 8:18)

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

וַיְעַנְּךָ וַיַּרְעִבֶךָ וַיַּאֲכִלְךָ אֶת־הַמָּן - "***He afflicted you and let you hunger, and then He fed you with the manna***." 8:3.

Rav Moshe Feinstein says a powerful, penetrating idea about a parsha we already learned. The Torah says: *"He afflicted you and made you hungry, and He fed you the manna...* שִׂמְלָתְךָ לֹא בָלְתָה מֵעָלֶיךָ וְרַגְלְךָ לֹא בָצֵקָה זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה - "***Your clothing did not wear out upon you, and your feet did not swell these forty years.***" 8:4

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains:

The people complained about the manna — they complained about food — **even before they were actually hungry**. They began to worry, to feel anxiety, to fear what **might** happen. They started complaining ***early***, before any real hunger existed.

Rav Moshe Feinstein says: If they had **not** complained, they would not have needed the miracle of the manna at all. Only because they complained did Hashem have to bring the manna.

What is the proof? Because *"Your clothing did not wear out"*. Why didn't their clothing wear out? Because **they never cried about it**. And *"Your feet did not swell"* — their shoes never caused problems. Why? Because **they never cried about that either**.

Food, however — they cried about it even before they were hungry. And because of that crying and worrying, they needed the miracle of the manna.

This shows the nature of a person who truly lives with Hashem, who trusts Hashem הַמַּאֲמִין לֹא יַחְפֹּז — meaning, he does not worry.

So what creates all the problems? Only the complaining, the crying, the anxiety, the fear, the grumbling. That is what creates the problem. The *complaining itself*.

The Klausenburger Rebbe zt'l (Shefa Chaim, Chumash Rashi, **תשמ״ב, בשלח**) teaches: "When a person is in a great *tzarah*, and he has a lot of distress, and he understands that he can't save himself... and no one can help him, then he will believe in Hashem alone to save him.

When a person reaches this conclusion... he will be saved. Without doing anything other than believing and trusting in Hashem, he will be saved. His emunah will help him more than tefillah. But if a person thinks he is able to save himself, he won't receive Hashem's hashgachah and salvation.

This is what Chazal mean when they say, **קשין מזונותיו של אדם כקריעת ים סוף**, *'Parnassah is as hard to attain as the splitting of the sea.'* This means when a person thinks that it is **מזונותיו**, *his* parnassah, which he attains on his own, then it will be difficult for him to attain it.

As **Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk zt'l** teaches, when one lacks bitachon, this holds back the parnassah from coming. However, when one believes that parnassah comes from Hashem, and all he has to do is a small deed of hishtadlus, then he will attain his parnassah easily and without toil."

Bench with Joy

Birchas Hamazon is precious to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When a person benches with joy, Hashem bestows His blessings with joy and a generous eye.

Therefore, never bench with sadness, only with joy.

~ The Zohar.

A Segulah for Future Generations

Benching from a siddur or bencher with heartfelt kavanah is a segulah to merit generations of children and grandchildren who are yirei Shamayim and talmidei chachamim. ~ R' Shlomke of Zvhil zt"l.

A Lifetime of Parnassah

I learned from my teachers… that whoever is careful with Birkat Hamazon will earn an honorable parnassah his entire life. ~ The Chinuch (Mitzvah 430).

Two Lasting Investments

There are two things one never regrets doing:

Learning Torah And remaining silent. ~ R' Noson Gestetner zt"l, in the name of the Chazon Ish zt"l.

The Answer Is Chesed

At a time when the middah of gevurah—hardship and suffering—reigns in the world, the only solution to be saved from troubles is by performing acts of loving-kindness. ~ The Chofetz Chaim, Ahavas Chesed, chapter 5.

The Wealth of Giving

No one ever became poor, nor did anything harmful happen, because of giving tzedakah. Giving tzedakah brings wealth. ~ Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 247.

Ten Ways To Get Rich - Rabbi Aryeh Kerzner



I'll admit I've never been a "segulah person." It's always seemed to me that blessings are earned the old-fashioned way — through steady avodas Hashem, hard work, and living as the Torah instructs — not by searching for shortcuts.

But whether we like it or not, we live in the age of segulos. They're everywhere. And as the saying goes, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." So I decided to jump on the bandwagon and offer my own collection of "get rich quick" strategies.

Before we begin, though, an important general disclaimer: Rav Aharon Leib Steinman ztz"l distinguished between two fundamentally different types of segulos.

The first involves enhancing an existing mitzvah. For example, the Mishnah Berurah (566:12) recommends giving tzedakah before Minchah on a fast day. This segulah is an elevation of an already established mitzvah by performing it at an especially auspicious time, rather than an introduction of a new idea. Such segulos deepen one's avodas Hashem and are firmly rooted in our mesorah. Segulos of this nature — those that strengthen or enhance an existing mitzvah — are certainly worthy of being embraced.

The second type of segulah, however, has no connection to an established mitzvah and does not reinforce any recognized Torah practice — for example, wearing a red string. Rav Steinman

With that in mind, I decided to compile a list of my top ten authentic segulos for becoming wealthy. Every one of them falls into Rav Steinman's first category, serving strengthen our mitzvah

observance and enrich our relation with Hashem. My hope is that each reader will find at least that resonates personally — one practical area of avodas Hashem to adopt and make his own.

1. Bentshing Carefully

The Sefer Hachinuch (mitzvah 430) cites a tradition from teachers that one who recites Bircas Hamazon carefully properly will never lack for a livelihood. The idea is that Bircas Hamazon is our sole Torah-level obligation to express gratitude for Hashem's sustaining us. By having proper concentration during bentshing and acknowledging that all nourishment comes from Hashem, a person demonstrates recognition that parmasanism is entirely in His hands. Chazal teach that such gratitude itself is a source of continued blessing.

2. Give Maaser Faithfully

The Gemara (Taanis 9a) famously declares, "Aser bishn shetis'asher" — give maaser so that you will become wealthy. Charity is not only a mitzvah; it is also one of the Torah's greatest segulos for prosperity.

Rav Shimon Schwab ztz"l beautifully advised that such practices should be approached with great caution, and explained this logic: When a person gives generously, he demonstrates that his concerns extend beyond himself. His "needs" now include supporting others and strengthening the community. Hashem, in turn, provides him with the broader resources needed to fulfill that expanded mission.

3. Honor Your Wife

Rava instructed the people of his city, "Honor your wives so that you will become wealthy" (*Bava Metzia* 59a). Rav Elimelech Biderman offers a striking explanation: After the first sin, Chavah was cursed that her husband would rule over her, while Adam was cursed with the burden of earning a livelihood through toil. When a husband honors his wife instead of asserting dominance over her, he

alleviates her curse. *Middah k'neged middah*, Hashem reciprocates by alleviating his curse as well, granting him greater blessing in his parnassah.

4. Say Parshas Hamahn

The Tur (*Orach Chayim* 1:5) recommends reciting Parshas Hamahn daily, and the *Perishah* cites the Yerushalmi that one who does so is assured a sufficient livelihood.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky *ztz"l* emphasized that the *segulah* lies not merely in reciting the words, but in internalizing their message: Just as the *mahn* fell directly from Heaven, so, too, every person's livelihood comes solely from Hashem. We are obligated to engage in *hishtadlus*, but our efforts do not produce our income. They merely fulfill our responsibility; the results are entirely in Hashem's hands.

5. Be Meticulous with Netilas Yadayim

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 158:9–10), based on the Gemara (*Shabbos* 62b), teaches that one who is careful with *netilas yadayim* — particularly by using a generous amount of water — merits wealth.

6. Learn Torah Before Beginning Your Day

The Chasam Sofer (*Derashos*, vol. 2, p. 279), based on Vayikra 23:14, writes that establishing a fixed time for Torah study immediately after davening, before eating or becoming involved in the day's affairs, grants blessing and success in earning a livelihood. This demonstrates that Hashem's affairs take precedence over one's personal affairs, which, in turn, unlocks Hashem's abundant showering of blessings upon one's personal endeavors.

7. Focus on "Posei'ach es Yadecha"

The *Seder HaYom* (*Seder Baruch She'amar* and *Birchos Hashachar*) writes that when reciting Ashrei, special concentration should be

given to the verse, "*Posei'ach es Yadecha u'masbia l'chol chai ratzon*," acknowledging that Hashem alone provides for every living being. He notes that the initials of the words *Posei'ach es Yadecha* (pei, alef, and yud) numerically equal 91, the combined value of the Divine Names Havayah (26) and Adnus (65). Reciting these words with sincerity serves as a conduit through which Hashem's blessing flows into one's livelihood via these Divine Names.

8. Let the Havdalah Wine Overflow

The Gemara (*Eiruvin* 65a) teaches that overflowing wine at Havdalah is a sign of blessing for the coming week's parnassah. The father of the Shelah Hakadosh interpreted this to mean the cup should being filled to overflowing before Havdalah. In contrast, the Rema (*Orach Chayim* 296:1) understood it to mean some wine should spill from the cup after one drinks from it. The widespread custom is to observe both practices.

9. Make Every Brachah Count

The *Sefer HaChaim* (*Sefer Selichah U'mechilah*) writes that one who recites brachos carefully — pronouncing every word clearly, deliberately, and audibly — merits wealth. Thoughtful blessings reflect an awareness that every benefit comes from Hashem, and they themselves become a source of further blessing.

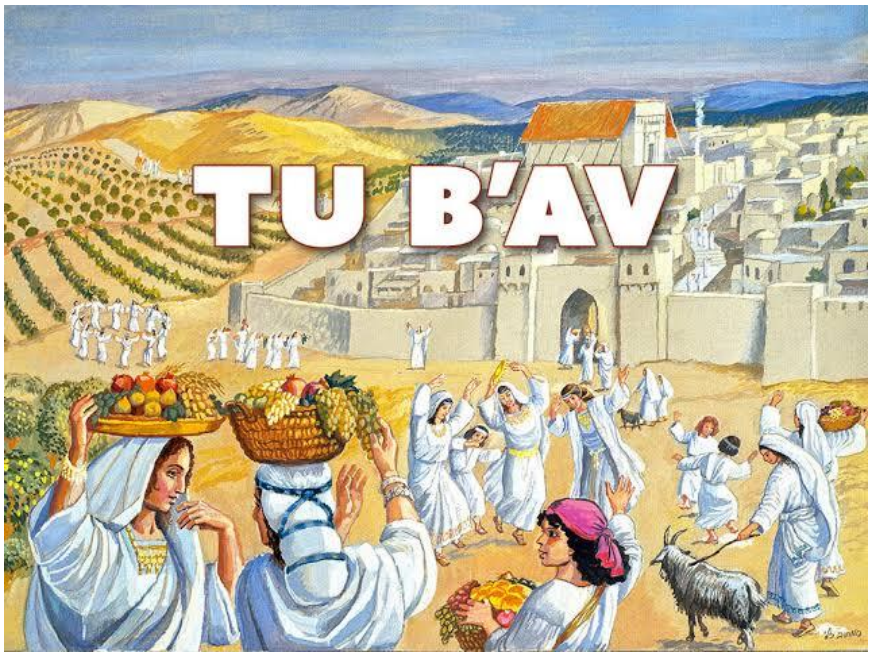
10. Conduct Business with Absolute Integrity

The Rambam (*Hilchos Sechirus* 13:7) writes that Yaakov Avinu merited extraordinary wealth because he was scrupulously honest in his work. As an employee, he never cut corners, never took advantage of his employer, and fulfilled his responsibilities with complete faithfulness. Integrity in business is not merely good ethics — it is a proven path to Hashem's blessing.

A common thread runs through all these *segulos*: None are magical formulas. Each is simply an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with Hashem, refine our character, or perform a

mitzvah more thoughtfully. The greatest *segulah*, or "secret" to blessing, is not in searching for hidden remedies, but in becoming the kind of person Hashem wants to bless. May we all merit abundant parnassah — not only to meet our own needs, but also to serve Hashem with peace of mind and generously support those around us.

Rabbi Aryeh Kerzner is the rav of Agudas Yisrael of Montreal and a noted *posek* and popular speaker. Many of his *shiurim* and speeches are available online. He is the author of the *sefer Halachah at Home*, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah.



The Meaning of Tu B'av By Rav Yisrael Meir Lau



Six events occurred on Tu B'Av, the 15th of Av, making it a festive day in the Jewish calendar.

The Mishnah tells us that: "No days were as festive for Israel as the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur." (Tractate Ta'anit) What is Tu B'Av, the 15th of the Hebrew month of Av? In which way is it equivalent to Yom Kippur?

Our Sages explain: Yom Kippur symbolizes Hashem's forgiving Israel for the sin of the Golden Calf in the desert, for it was on that day that He finally accepted Moshe's plea for forgiveness of the nation,

and on that same day Moshe came down from the mountain with the new set of tablets.

Just as Yom Kippur symbolizes the atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf, Tu B'Av signifies the atonement for the sin of the Spies, where ten came bearing such negative reports which reduced the entire nation to panic. As a result of that sin, it was decreed by Hashem that the nation would remain in the desert for 40 years, and that no person 20 or older would be allowed to enter Israel. On each Tisha B'Av of those 40 years, those who had reached the age of 60 that year died – 15,000 each Tisha B'Av. - This plague finally ended on Tu B'Av.

Six positive events occurred on Tu B'Av:

Event #1 **-** As noted above, the plague that had accompanied the Jews in the desert for 40 years ended. That last year, the last 15,000 people got ready to die. Hashem, in His mercy, decided not to have that last group die, considering all the troubles they had gone through. Now, when the ninth of Av approached, all the members of the group got ready to die, but nothing happened. They then decided that they might have been wrong about the date, so they waited another day, and another...

On the 15th of Av, when the full moon appeared, they realized definitely that the 9th of Av had come and gone, and that they were still alive. Then it was clear to them that Hashem's decree was over, and that He had finally forgiven the people for the sin of the Spies.

This is what was meant when our Sages said: "No days were as festive for Israel as the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur," for there is no greater joy than having one's sins forgiven – on Yom Kippur for the sin of the Golden Calf and on Tu B'Av for the sin of the spies. In the Book of Judges, Tu B'Av is referred to as a holiday (21:19).

In addition to this noteworthy event, five other events occurred on Tu B'Av:

Events #2 and 3 - Following the case of the daughters of Zelophehad (see Numbers, chapter 36), daughters who inherited from their father when there were no sons were forbidden to marry someone from a different tribe, so that land would not pass from one tribe to another. Generations later, after the story of the "Concubine of Giv'ah" (see Judges, chapters 19-21), the Children of Israel swore not to allow their daughters to marry anyone from the tribe of Benjamin. This posed a threat of annihilation to the tribe of Benjamin.

Each of these prohibitions were lifted on Tu B'Av. The people realized that if they kept to their prohibition, one of the 12 tribes might totally disappear. As to the oath that had been sworn, they pointed out that it only affected the generation that had taken the oath, and not subsequent generations.

The same was applied to the prohibition of heiresses marrying outside their own tribe: this rule was applied only to the generation that had conquered and divided up the land under Joshua, but not future generations. This was the first expression of the merging of all the tribes, and was a cause for rejoicing. In the Book of Judges it is referred to as "a festival to the Lord."

Over the generations, this day was described in Tractate Ta'anit as a day devoted to betrothals, so that new Jewish families would emerge.

Event #4 - After Jeroboam split off the kingdom of Israel with its ten tribes from the kingdom of Judea, he posted guards along all the roads leading to Jerusalem, to prevent his people from going up to the Holy City for the pilgrimage festivals, for he feared that such pilgrimages might undermine his authority. As a "substitute," he set up places of worship which were purely idolatrous, in Dan and Beth-el. Thus the division between the two kingdoms became a fait accompli and lasted for generations.

The last king of the kingdom of Israel, Hosea ben Elah, wished to heal the breach, and removed all the guards from the roads leading to Jerusalem, thus allowing his people to make the pilgrimage again. This act took place on Tu B'Av.

Event #5 - At the beginning of the Second Temple period, the Land of Israel lay almost totally waste, and the wood needed to burn the sacrifices and for the eternal flame that had to burn on the altar was almost impossible to obtain. Each year a number of brave people volunteered to bring the wood needed from afar – a trip which was dangerous in the extreme.

Now, not just every wood could be brought. Wood which was wormy was not permitted. And dampness and cold are ideal conditions for the breeding of worms in wood. As a result, all the wood that would be needed until the following summer had to be collected before the cold set in. The last day that wood was brought in for storage over the winter months was Tu B'Av, and it was a festive occasion each year when the quota needed was filled by that day.

Event #6 - Long after the event, the Romans finally permitted the bodies of those who had been killed in the defense of Betar (in the Bar Kochba revolt) to be buried. This was a double miracle, in that, first, the Romans finally gave permission for the burial, and, second, in spite of the long period of time that had elapsed, the bodies had not decomposed. The permission was granted on Tu B'Av.

In gratitude for this double miracle, the fourth and last blessing of the Grace After Meals was added, which thanks **הקב"ה** as "He Who is good and does good." "He is good" – in that the bodies had not decomposed, "and does good" – in that permission was given for the burial.

To this day, we celebrate Tu B'Av as a minor festival. We do not say Tahanun on that day, nor are eulogies rendered. By the same token, if a couple are getting married on that day (and, as we will see below,

it is the custom for the bride and groom to fast on their wedding day), neither fasts.

Beginning with Tu B'Av, we start preparing ourselves spiritually for the month of Elul, the prologue to the coming Days of Awe. The days begin to get shorter, the nights get longer. The weather, too, helps us to take spiritual stock: the hectic days of the harvest are over for the farmer, and the pace has slowed down considerably. Even on a physical level, the heat of the summer makes it hard to sit down and think things out, and now that the days and nights are cooler, it is easier to examine one's actions.

In earlier times, it was the custom already from Tu B'Av to use as one's greeting "May your inscription and seal be for good" (ketiva vahatima tova), the same blessing that we today use on Rosh Hashana. Those who work out the gematria values of different expressions found that phrase adds up to 928 – and so does the words for "15th of Av."

Short Stories Of The Week By Yoni Schwartz

Rav Shalom Eisen, ZT"L, a famous dayan in Yerushalayim, had been a talmid of **Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, ZT"L**, many years earlier. By that time, Rav Meltzer was very old, and it was hard for him to move around like he used to.

Rav Shalom Eisen came to his house to let him know that he was making a bar mitzvah for his son, and wanted to ask for a bracha. Knowing Rav Isser Zalman's condition, he concluded with the words, "Of course, we don't expect the Rosh Yeshiva to come. We just wanted to share the good news."

During the bar mitzvah, Rabbi Eisen heard somebody trudging up the steps. "Oh no," he thought. He looked into the stairwell of the apartment building to see Rav Issur Zalman slowly shuffling up the

stairs. He exclaimed, "Oy vey! The Rosh Yeshiva didn't have to shlep himself all the way here. It's too much!"

Rav Isser Zalman responded, "I'll tell you. You learned by me many years ago when you were a young boy. Now, you told me that you're making a bar mitzvah, and I realized how the years are flying. I'm getting old, and I must do teshuva. Then, I realized that I'm now thinking of doing teshuva because of you, and that's something for which I owe gratitude to you. That's why I had to come to the bar mitzvah."

In a similar vein, **Rav Chezkel Abramsky, ZT"L**, once stayed overnight at a hotel. Suddenly, late at night, he heard someone through the wall in the room next door thanking Hashem: "Thank You, Hashem, for my health. Thank You for my children. Thank You for the opportunity to learn Torah, for my wife, and for the ability to pay the bills. For everything that I have, thank You, Hashem."

The next morning, Rav Chezkel Abramsky was curious, so he asked the hotel clerk, "Could you tell me who was staying in room 10A?"

The clerk responded, "**The Chofetz Chaim!**"

Comment: In this week's parsha, Eikev, we come across a famous Pasuk (Devarim 8:17-18): "(If) you will say in your heart, 'My strength and the might of my hand achieved all this success for me,' you should remember Hashem, your G-d, because He is the One who gives you strength to succeed." The greatest threat to what holds us together as families and communities isn't hardship but success without gratitude.

The Torah's message has never been more relevant: we are weakest not during persecution but when we're too comfortable to show gratitude to the One Who gave us all we have.

Rabbi Shlome Hoff Shlita

Rabbosai, this week's Parshas Eikev finds many of us away on holiday — a real chesed for anyone able to take a break. It's also bein hazmanim, a time when people step out of their regular routine. These moments give us space for hisbonenus, to reflect on the foundations of avodas Hashem and consider where we can strengthen ourselves.

One of the major themes in Eikev is brachos. The pasuk **ואכלת ושבעת וברכת** teaches Birchas HaMazon, and Chazal derive from it a kal vachomer for all brachos ha'nehenin. Earlier, the pasuk **ארץ חיטה ושעורה... ארץ זית שמן ודבש** is famously used by the Gemara as a remez for which brachos apply to which foods. Eikev is full of reminders about brachos — something we do constantly, and therefore something we can always elevate.

How we say a bracha, whether we pause to think which bracha is appropriate, whether we sit, look inside the text, or simply add a bit more kavanah — these small improvements can transform the way we relate to Hashem's gifts.

The Chinuch, in the mitzvah of Birchas HaMazon, explains a profound idea. A bracha is not a "blessing" we give to Hashem — that's impossible. Rather, bracha means acknowledgment: **ברוך אתה השם** — everything comes from You. When a Jew recognizes that all shefa is from **הקדוש ברוך הוא**, that very recognition opens the channel for more shefa to flow. This is the foundation of all brachos.

A similar idea appears from **Rav Akiva Eiger**. On the pasuk **זבח תודה יכבדנני ושם דרך אראנו בישע אלקים**, he explains: one who offers todah, who acknowledges Hashem's kindness, "sets a path" — he creates the conduit through which future yeshuah can come. Gratitude for past good brings future good.

This helps explain the Gemara: **אסור לאדם ליהנות מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה, והנהנה בלא ברכה — גוזל הקדוש ברוך הוא וכנסת ישראל**. Rav Akiva

Eiger asks: we understand "גוזל HaKadosh Baruch Hu" — before the bracha, the food is Hashem's; after the bracha, it becomes yours. But why "גוזל Knesses Yisrael"?

He answers: because your bracha brings shefa to the world. When you acknowledge Hashem's goodness, you open the pipeline of blessing for Klal Yisrael. If you don't say the bracha, you block that flow. Your bracha affects everyone.

One can add a thought regarding Az Yashir. The Torah uses future tense — "אז ישיר". Rashi asks why, if they already sang?

Perhaps the hint is that those who sing shirah for past salvation merit to sing again in the future. Acknowledgment of good brings more good.

In short, Eikev teaches a powerful foundation: appreciating Hashem's kindness, recognizing His tov, and elevating our brachos with a bit more meaning and intention. Of course, we must be careful to avoid bracha levatalah — לא תשא שם ה׳ — but making our brachos more thoughtful is a precious avodah that draws down shefa.

May the Eibershter help us recognize His goodness, and through that recognition may He continue to send us bracha, shefa, hatzlacha, and yeshuah. Those on holiday should enjoy it safely, and may we all continue to see Hashem's kindness together, happily and healthily.

Kol tuv, a gut Shabbos.

There are moments in life when the holiest thing you can do is simply refusing to give up. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810)

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

א גוטן ערב שבת my dear friends of Project *Mesorah*. This is your friend, Rabbi Pesach Krohn, from New York, speaking to you *erev Shabbos Parshas Eikev*. In *Parshas Eikev* we have the very famous *posuk*: **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ**. 8:10

And that's a *mitzvas asei* of *benching*. It happens to be *mitzvas asei* number 180, ten times *chai*. And it occurred to me when you eat you're going to live, *chai*, and if you eat a lot and healthy, so you'll have ten times *chai*. So it's *mitzvas asei* number 180.

But **Rabbi Chatzkel Levenstein** said a great *vort*. He said **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ** - you should remember that it is not only a *mitzvas asei* because of *frumkeit* that you're doing it, but you have to have gratitude for the food that the *Eibershter* gave you. And I want to tell you what I think you should have in mind: **בְּחֵן, בְּחֶסֶד, וְרַחֲמִים**. *Chein* is grace, *chesed* is kindness, and *rachamim* is compassion.

There are three things you should think about when you *bench*. That's what I try to do. Think of the beauty of food, that's the *chein*, the grace. Some people love how a peach looks, or how a mango looks, or watermelon on a summer day, or cherries.

And other people, *chesed* is the taste. Some people love the taste of pizza, the taste of sushi. And *rachamim*, of course, is the nutritional value. So have those three things in mind.

And that's what Rabbi Chatzkel Levenstein says. *Benching* is not only a *mitzva d'oraisa* for *frumkeit* that you should do, but you should do it out of gratitude, *hakaras hatov* for the great food that *Hashem* gives you, *b'chein, b'chesed, u'v'rachamim*.

You should have a *freilichen Shabbos* and a *lichtige Shabbos*, and let's eat healthy and be grateful to *Hashem* for all the taste and the beauty of food and the nutritional value. - Have a great *Shabbos*.