TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry





לעילוי נשמת



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מטות

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



The Three Weeks



R' Yechezkel Sarna z"l (1890-1969; Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva in Yerushalayim) lists thirty items/areas to which one should pay particular attention during the period of the "Three Weeks," each with a source in the Book of Eichah, the text of the Tisha B'Av Kinnot, or the Talmud. They include:

1. Loving and appreciating the Torah, and studying it "Li'shmah," i.e., because Hashem derives pleasure, so-to-speak, from our Torah study (see Nedarim 81a and the commentary of Rabbeinu Nissim there).

2. Loving other people and distancing oneself from sin'at chinam / baseless hatred (see Yoma 9b). Also, avoiding fanning the flames of sin'at chinam. R' Sarna notes that if one would reflect even briefly on why he hates the person toward whom his sin'at chinam is directed, he would immediately change his attitude since, by

definition, he would find that he has no reason to hate the other person. The real reason there is sin'at chinam is that some people derive excitement from fanning the flames of such hatred.

3. Loving Eretz Yisrael, appreciating its value, and appreciating the value of the Bet Hamikdash. (R' Sarna writes that this is a recurring theme in the Kinnot and in the teachings of our Sages.)

4. Believing and recognizing that Hashem loves the Jewish People in all generations and at all times, whether it is a time of destruction or reconstruction, downfall or elevation. Any suffering we experience is a punishment for our sins, not a sign that Hashem has abandoned us. To the contrary, Hashem so-to-speak suffers with us (see Gittin 56b, describing how the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies appeared to bleed when Titus stabbed it). (These also are recurring themes in the Kinnot.)

5. Belief in, and recognition of, the eternity of the Jewish People.

6. Maintaining one's Bitachon / trust in Hashem even in difficult times (a recurring theme in Eichah).

7. Crying out to Hashem with a feeling of Bitachon [not hopelessness].

8. Distancing oneself from cruelty and other bad traits.

9. Know and publicizing that everything that happens to us is from the "hand" of Hashem, and from no other cause. If there appear to be other causes, they are all directly or indirectly brought about by Hashem. This includes every detail of the "Churban" / destruction, even those that appear to be isolated events. There are no coincidences and no "laws of nature" at play; rather, the whole, and each of the details, was a fulfillment of the warnings and curses contained in the Torah in Parashat Bechukotai and Parashat Ki Tavo. [Ed. note: From the context, R' Sarna appears to be referring here to the Holocaust.] (Daliot Yechezkel III p.266)

נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחַר תֵּאָסֵף אֶל־עַמֶּיךָ - ***"Take vengeance for Bnei Yisrael against the Midianites; afterward you will be gathered unto your people." (31:2)***

R' Yitzchak Arieli z"l (1896-1974; Mashgiach Ruchani of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and author of the Talmud commentary Enayim La'mishpat) writes: Knowing that he would die after this war, Moshe easily could have delayed, rationalizing that Bnei Yisrael grow so much every day that he is their leader. However, to Moshe, no rationalization could supersede Hashem's command. Thus, as we read in verse 3, Moshe actually encouraged Bnei Yisrael to hurry out to war. (Midrash Ariel)



וַיִּקְצֹף מֹשֶׁה עַל פְּקוּדֵי הֶחָיִל - "***Moshe was angry with the commanders of the army*** . . ." (31:14)

R' Simcha Zissel Ziv z"l (the "Alter of Kelm"; died 1898) developed a strategy to never lose his temper. He had a special jacket that he had set aside to wear when he was angry. He said, "When I feel anger coming on, I know that I have to get my special jacket. But, by the time I do, I am no longer angry." (Quoted in Ve'karata La'Shabbat Oneg)

"We have nothing but the moment at hand – the past is gone and the future is not here yet. Therefore, when we squander the moment at hand, we squander life itself. Any time we use anything for other than our purpose in life is wasted." ~ The Garden of Wisdom by R' Shalom Arush

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה לַצָּבָא אֹתָם וְאֶת־פִּינְחָס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן לַצָּבָא וּכְלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַחֲצֹצְרוֹת הַתְּרוּעָה בְּיָדוֹ - ***"Moshe sent them . . . and Pinchas . . . and the sacred vessels."*** (31:6)

The gemara explains that the "sacred vessels" included the Aron Hakodesh. Inside the Aron were the remnants of the luchot that Moshe broke.

R' Yissachar Dov Rokeach z"l (died 1927; the "Belzer Rebbe") asks: Why would they take a reminder of the sin of the Golden Calf to the battlefront. Should we not fear that it will "testify" against them before the Heavenly Court?

He answers: Just the opposite – the broken luchot are a reminder that no matter how low the Jewish people fall, Hashem remains willing to accept their repentance and take them back. (Sefer Maharid)

לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה - ***"He shall not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do."*** *(30:3)*

R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin z"l (1817-1898; rabbi of Brisk, Poland; later in Yerushalayim) was once present at a hesped / eulogy for one his students. Following the hesped, a "Kail Malai" was recited, and the assembled crowd dispersed.

R' Diskin then approached the gabbai and handed him a coin. He said, "I am giving this coin to charity in memory of the deceased on behalf of everyone who was present today." He explained: When the gabbai recites a Kail Malai, he often says the phrase, "in the merit that the entire congregation promises to give charity on behalf of the elevation of the soul (of the departed)." I, said R' Diskin, am afraid that people will forget to fulfill this vow that was made on their behalf, so I am acting as their representative. (Quoted in Ve'karata La'Shabbat Oneg)

נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים - "***Take the vengeance of Bnei Yisrael against the Midianites*** . . ." (31:2)

R' Samson Raphael Hirsch z"l (1808-1888; Germany) writes: "Nekamah" shares a root with "kam" / "stood up." The purpose this war was not revenge, throwing down the enemy. Rather, it was raising-up the downtrodden, the re- establishing of rights which have been trodden underfoot. (Commentary on the Torah)



וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה לִבְנֵי־גָד וְלִבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלַחֲצִי שֵׁבֶט מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן־יוֹסֵף אֶת־מַמְלְכֻת סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת־מַמְלֶכֶת עוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן הָאָרֶץ לְעָרֶיהָ בִּגְבֻלֹת עָרֵי הָאָרֶץ סָבִיב
So Moshe gave to them – to Bnei Gad, and Bnei Reuven, and half the tribe of Menashe ben Yosef – the Kingdom of Sichon… And the Kingdom of Og. (32:33)



The lands which were inhabited by the kingdoms of Sichon and Og were very fertile. Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven were two tribes which had large herds of sheep and cattle. The fertile grazing land would be a boon for them. They, therefore, approached Moshe Rabbeinu and requested to lay claim to the eastern portion of the Jordan, Eivar ha'Yardein, for themselves and their families. They were granted their wish, and

the two tribes, with the added complement of half the tribe of Menashe, were allowed to remain on Eivar haYardein.

The question is obvious: Where did the tribe of Menashe enter into the picture? The discussion was about Reuven and Gad – not Menashe.

The Netziv, zl, explains that Moshe was concerned for the spiritual health of the two tribes who remained separated from the rest of the nation. Their involvement in agricultural commerce would certainly occupy much of their time, hence not allow for the necessary exposure to spirituality which is required to maintain a spiritual status quo. - The members of the tribe of Menashe, who were strongly committed bnei Torah, would inspire their brethren.

This teaches us the significance of maintaining one's residence in a Torah-friendly community, one which is replete with individuals who devote themselves-- and inspire others-- to maintain a strong relationship with the Torah.

We wonder why Shevet Menashe, which had among its ranks some profound Torah scholars, was selected to be the tribe that remained on Eivar ha'Yardein-- and not Shevet Yissachar, whose vocation it was to study and disseminate Torah.

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, cites Chazal who teach that because the Shevatim, tribes/brothers, caused Yaakov Avinu to rend his garment in mourning over the news that Yosef had been killed, they, too, were compelled to tear their garments when they were accused of stealing Yosef's goblet. Two hundred and fifty years later, the tribes were separated and one tribe was "torn" in half – Shevet Menashe. Why?

Chazal inform us that the messenger that Yosef sent to search for his goblet in the brothers' grain sacks was none other than Menashe. Thus, the one who indirectly caused the brothers to rend their garments was Menashe. Thus, two and a half centuries later, his

tribe was split – half on the western bank of the Jordan and half on the eastern bank.

We have no understanding of G-d's ways, because we are limited by the temporal nature of time. Our tenure in this world is temporary and filled with questions – questions that are answered decades and even centuries later. Our inability to connect the dots, to put everything into perspective, hampers us from seeing life in its true perspective. No one is ignored. Everyone receives his due – both positive and negative. It might take time, but it will invariably occur – often when we least expect, or understand, it.

The Chafetz Chaim would cite two unrelated episodes which demonstrate this idea. There will always be a payback. It might take some time, and it might arrive when one least expects it, but it is guaranteed to come.

The first story concerns a poor widow who lived in Radin. It was winter, and she had run out of rent money. She begged the landlord not to evict her in the cold of winter. Could he please wait for the spring when the weather was not as harsh?

The man was obstinate. She would have to go. He was embarrassed to leave her belongings in the street. Instead, he removed the windows from the apartment, exposing the woman to the elements, thereby forcing her to seek shelter elsewhere. The poor widow went into the street, shocked by the man's cruel insensitivity, broken and weeping bitterly over her own miserable plight.

When word concerning the incident reached the Chafetz Chaim, he commented, "Such an episode evokes Heavenly anger. It will not go by unrequited."

Years passed, in fact sixty-seven years went by, during which the landlord lived a very good, peaceful life. He was healthy and prosperous, not a care in the world. Everyone had forgotten about that terrible incident – everyone but Hashem. One day, the landlord

went for a walk and was bitten by a rabid dog. He became ill with rabies and suffered greatly until his painful death. Everyone took pity on him; everyone felt his pain.

The only one who remembered what had taken place sixty-seven years earlier was the Chafetz Chaim. - He noted, "One must have a Torah perspective on life and view everything that occurs through the prism of Torah." Everything that takes place is part of one long continuum. What seems shocking to us today might not be so earth shattering if we would know the "rest of the story."

Another incident occurred in Aishishuk, during the Cantonist decree, when young Jewish youths were forcibly grabbed and conscripted for a minimum of twenty-five years into the Czar's army. Word reached the leaders of the Jewish community that they would have to supply a certain number of young men for the army. There was no room for negotiation. If the community did not supply them willingly, the boys would be taken by force, and everyone would pay.

The soldiers went around indiscriminately picking up Jewish boys. Among those was the son of the town's butcher – a burly man who would stop at nothing to achieve his objectives. When the butcher heard that his son had been taken, he went into a frenzy. He went to the barracks where the boys were being held captive. The wailing that he heard was heart rending. He proceeded to the commanding officer and asked, "How much do you want so that my son may leave? Name your price and you will have it."

The officer looked at the hysterical father and said, "You do not seem to understand. There is a certain number of boys which I must provide for the army. If that number is missing – no amount of money can make up for the loss."

The officer was intimating that he really did not care who took the butcher's son's place, but someone – not money – must replace the boy. The butcher performed a dastardly sin. Late at night, he entered the bais hamedrash and found one boy who was a masmid,

diligent student, studying alone in the back of the study hall. The butcher snuck up on him, grabbed him and brought him to the army barracks, together with a gift of one hundred rubles for the officer – all of this in lieu of the butcher's son. - The son went free, replaced by the poor yeshivah student.

The Chafetz Chaim was studying in Aishishuk at the time and became aware of the tragic incident. The entire community was in an uproar. How could the butcher get away with committing such an outrageously cruel act?

Time, however, was on the butcher's side, as people began to forget. Soon, he was "yesterday's" tragedy, yesterday's news. The Chafetz Chaim, however, did not forget. He patiently waited to see how Hashem would deal with the butcher's requital.



The butcher took his son into the business, and he soon became his father's right-hand man. One day, the butcher gave his son a bag of money with which to purchase calves from a nearby town. The road to this town took the son through an area notorious for various insects – many of which carried dangerous germs. - The son was bitten by a mosquito carrying the deadly black plague.

As the trip went on, the son became more and more ill. He purchased the calves and proceeded to return home. By the time he entered the city limits of Aishishuk, his entire body was covered with painful black blisters which were already oozing blood. Finally, unable to continue on, the young man died a painful, gruesome death in the middle of the street.

The Chevra Kaddisha, Burial Society, was summoned, but when they saw the condition of the deceased, they said, "We are unable to come in contact with the corpse. It would make us susceptible to the

vicious infection which killed him. The butcher was called and told that his son was lying dead in the street, with no one even to move him. The father was relegated to performing the gruesome ritual all by himself, as he picked up the corpse, prepared the grave and personally buried his son.

The entire town felt the pain of the father who so tragically lost his son. The Chafetz Chaim, however, remembered. Hashem had not forgotten what the butcher had done to the poor yeshivah bachur. It was payback time.



אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה' אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אִסָּר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה – '***If a man will take a vow to Hashem or swear an oath to establish a prohibition upon himself, he shall not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do***.' (30:3)

Rashi teaches that vows and oaths apply only when one seeks to render prohibitive that which is permitted. One cannot, however, utilize oaths and vows to permit that which is forbidden.

Horav Meir Shapiro, zl, was an individual known by many titles, one of which was Lubliner Rav. He followed a long line of distinguished rabbonim, one of whom was the famous **Maharshal** who preceded him by four centuries. The Maharshal was a formidable gadol, a talmid chacham, Torah scholar without peer, and a Kabbalist of great renown.

The following story was often related by Rav Meir Shapiro. He had discovered it in the pinkas, ledger, of the Chevra Kadisha, Jewish Burial Society of Lublin: The Maharshal had a student whose wife had passed away. The husband was overwrought from the tragedy and just could not overcome the deep depression that enveloped him. His distinguished Rebbe called for him and asked for an explanation. At first, the young man demurred from divulging the reason for his melancholy. Finally, the student gave in and informed the Maharshal

of his vow. Apparently, when his wife was ill, he had given her his word that he would never remarry. His Rebbe countered that such an oath has no validity, since it is contrary to the Torah. One is to marry and procreate. It was, therefore, not only permissible for him to remarry, but it was actually incumbent upon him to do so.

The student listened to the Maharshal and remarried. A short time later, the city went into a frenzy when, one morning, the young man who had followed his Rebbe's instructions – died!

When the Maharshal was informed of this turn of events, he immediately summoned the members of the Chevra Kadisha to his house. He instructed them to prepare the body in the usual manner: taharah, purification, and tachrichim, shrouds; when they were prepared to bury him, they were to notify the Maharshal. The Chevra Kadisha did so.

The Maharshal arrived at the burial site and wrote the following note, which was placed alongside the deceased: "Shalom Aleichem, Peace unto you, Heavenly Tribunal. I (the Maharshal) ruled in accordance with the laws of the Torah to permit this man to marry again. I decree upon 'You' with the powers (granted me by the) of the Torah that You should return my student to me." - The Maharshal affixed his name to the paper, placed it into the hand of the deceased, and insisted that the grave be left uncovered. After lowering the body, they all left the cemetery. The grave was left uncovered.

One hour later, the young man arose from his grave, dressed in shrouds, and proceeded to walk through the streets as if nothing had ever happened!

When the "deceased" entered his home, his wife ran out in shock. The next day, the Maharshal summoned his "reincarnated" student to appear before him in street clothes. When the student entered the yeshivah, the other students became visibly frightened.

Employing the power vested in him through the Torah, the Maharshal immediately decreed that the angel in charge of '*shikchah*', forgetting, should prevail and use his powers over the city of Lublin, so that everyone would forget what had taken place.

The young man raised a beautiful family, meriting to see generations of proud Jewish children devoted to Torah and mitzvos.

לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה - "***He shall not profane his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do***." (30:3)

Horav Mendel, z.l., m'Kosov rendered this pasuk homiletically: Hashem will fulfill the blessing of the person who guards his mouth, who does not make his words chullin, mundane. In other words: if one sanctifies his speech, if he does not waste his words and everything that he says is of a holy nature, Hashem will make it His priority to fulfill this individual's blessings.

It is told that **Horav Yisrael Abuchatzeira, z.l., the Baba Sali**, went to Ashdod in 1966 together with his father-in-law, **Horav David Yehudiaf, z.l.**, to visit a venerable sage. The Baba Sali encouraged his father-in-law to ask the sage for a blessing, which he did.

When they left, the Baba Sali told Rav David, "Did you notice that man's hands, his skin, his eyes, his teeth? Judging by this person's physical appearance, you would never believe that he is one hundred and thirteen years old!

It happened that one hundred years ago, **Horav Yaakov Abuchatzeira, z.l.**, asked this sage, who had then just become bar-mitzvah, to complete a minyan, which he did. The Rav then blessed him that he should be healthy and live to 120 years old. You see that the Rav's blessing was fulfilled." This is the meaning of "according to whatever will come from his mouth, He will do."





The Rav told us tonight that the Jewish communities in the times of the Beis Ha'mikdash were communities of kedusha. You said that there were many tzadikim who counted every word that came out of their mouths. Were the women of ancient Yerushalayim really better than the women of today? Did they really speak less than the frum women of today?

Absolutely. No question about it. If there is a society in which people are striving for perfection, a society in which the men are counting their words, do you think that only the men are counting their words?! -Their wives counted their words. Their daughters counted their words. Their mothers counted their words. Everybody became better. - You should know that, when men are good, the women are also good. There's no such thing as men having *shleimus* without their wives. *Shleimus* is contagious. All good *midos* are contagious.

So you be sure to do your part in making your home a *beis ha'mikdash* and be sure to lead yourself *bi'derech ha'torah* and *bi'derech ha'kedusha* and it will be contagious. And therefore, you must know, that whatever good things *chazal* tell us about the men, you can be sure that the women and girls in the Jewish homes shared in all the good qualities of ancient times.



Is there an obligation for Jews to delve into nature in order to see Hakodosh Boruch Hu or is it enough to learn Torah?

It's an obligation. The Chovos Halevovos says it's an obligation – but not because this study is the basis for his emunah. A Jew has already inherited the national attitudes of emunah; the whole Jewish nation has inherited these attitudes — that's our history, that's our tradition. But anything which fortifies, which strengthens, a man's mind should be utilized. It's an obligation. It's the same chiyuv you have to learn Chovos Halevovos and Mesillas Yesharim; that's also an obligation.

You'll say, why do I need these wonderful seforim if I learn gemara? The answer is, whatever makes you stronger in your emunah is a mitzvah, a chov. And therefore when a person sees these things in nature, when he sees these phenomena that fortify him – the dandelion and the leaf and the clouds and everything – all the things that show wisdom and purposefulness, all the phenomena of this world that show a whole world is full of plan and purpose, certainly it's a responsibility upon him to do that.

R' Moshe Meir Weiss writes that Rav Shach who lived to 102 attributed his longevity to always bentching inside 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

There was once a wise Yid who had to undergo an operation. Prior to the operation, the surgeon requested that the patient sign a waiver stating that if anything went wrong, the surgeon would not be responsible.

The patient said, "I will sign the waiver, but on one condition – that you also sign that if it is successful, you won't take the credit either!"

Let us bear this in mind. Nothing is to our credit. The nature of a human being is that if he succeeds, he believes that it is the result of his own efforts. And if someone wrongs him in some way, he's quick to find fault with the other person. – But in reality, everything is from Hashem!

You Have a Full Staff of Servants - Rabbi Shlomo Landau



In certain Jewish communities where manpower is very cheap, the wealthier Jews have a whole staff of servants. From the chef that cooks, to the people that wash the dishes, to those that do the laundry. The people that clean the home, the people that drive their cars for them, the security detail. - A whole host of servants that serve them.

In one particular home, there was a young and very wealthy family, which literally had dozens of people working for them. One day the

father had to go on a business trip. He's standing in front of the house with his luggage awaiting his chauffeur to come and pick him up.

His little 6-year-old son is there to see him off. He says to his father, "Papa, what's going to happen when you travel? None of the servants are coming with you? The butler won't be there, and the guy that shines your shoes won't be there. No-one will be there to assist you; how will you manage?"



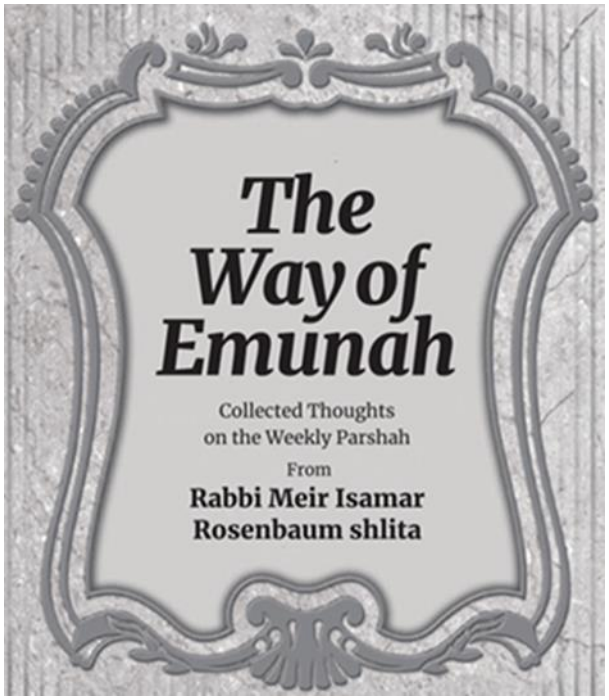
The father smiles and points to his wallet inside of his jacket, and says, "Don't worry, this wallet is the key to everything. I'm going to stay in the fanciest of hotels, where there will be a whole staff available to wait on me. I'm going to eat in the most exclusive restaurants, where there will be chefs and waiters to serve me. I will have a chauffeur – don't worry about it, wherever I go, I take my staff with me. – This little thing in my pocket brings me whatever I need."

Says the **Chofetz Chaim**, in the times of the Beis Hamikdash, when a person required it, he could bring a *korban*. A *Todah* to thank Hashem. A *Chattos* when they sinned. – That's what helped us function and survive.

But nowadays, we say, "Ribboino Shel Olam, what's going to be, we don't have any of those *korbanos* anymore, we're going to be alone?"

Hashem says, "Don't worry about it, you have something in your pocket – a siddur, your tefillos will be in place of the *korbanos*."

When we daven to Hashem, it's as if we brought a korban. – So we can really take our full staff with us everywhere that we go.



וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ - *'Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Yisroel, saying: This is the thing Hashem has commanded.'* (30:2)

● **Accepting Hashem's Ways With Love**

Rav Avrohom Dov of Chmelnik zy"a (quoted in Sefer Eretz Hachaim) explains that the word "matos" (tribes) can also mean to fall to the bottom. Accordingly, the pasuk can be understood to be saying that if a Jew begins to fall and experiences a financial downturn, he should not, chas v'shalom, get angry at Hashem. Rather, he should say that "this is the thing that Hashem commanded." This is what Hashem wants and he must accept it with love. - One must bless Hashem for the bad just like he blesses Him for the good and accept His will with joy.

Rav Avrohom Dov concludes: "If one does this, I guarantee that he will experience success."

"A great Rabbi once said that if one doesn't know their flaws, that is indeed not a good thing, but oy va voy if he doesn't know his strengths and talents, because without being armed with this knowledge he will never be able to do his mission in this world." R' Zechariah Wallerstein

"The richest person is not the one that has the most, but the one that needs the least."

אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה' לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה – '***When a person makes a promise or a vow… he should not break his word. Whatever comes out of his mouth he should do***.' (30:3)

● The Words of the Vilna Gaon Were Fulfilled

It is related the Vilna Gaon zt"l once felt a severe pain in his throat. His family members immediately sent for a doctor, who checked the Gaon and said that he had a wart on his throat that was full of pus. The doctor advised that the Gaon needed to have surgery performed immediately to remove the throat. If he didn't, he might choke!

Living in the city was a woman who was known to be able to cure diseases. She would go to a sick person and utter some words, and the person would be healed. Someone told the Gaon about this woman and he agreed to have her called to him.

When she arrived, the Gaon asked her what it was that she said when she treated the sick. In response, the woman related that her husband had died at a very young age, leaving her as a widow with several young children and no source of livelihood. She quickly used up her savings and had no food for her children.

In desperation, she went to the bais medrash in the middle of the night, opened the Aron Hakodesh, and began to cry out to Hashem. After bemoaning her plight and begging for mercy, she heard a Heavenly voice telling her to begin healing the sick with her words, and assuring her she would be able to make a living from doing so. She asked what words she should say, and the voice replied that she should asks for a cup of water and, after drinking, make the blessing of "Boreh Nefashos." This would heal the sick person!

The next day, she told those around her that she knew how to heal the sick. From then on, she was able to earn a good living.

When the Gaon heard her story, he began to laugh. He laughed so much that the wart on his throat burst, and all the pus flowed out, thus healing him completely.

A short time later, he related what had really occurred. He had been learning in the back of the bais medrash in the middle of the night when he heard the woman crying. Since she was disturbing him, his only option was to tell her something to calm her down so that he could continue his learning. Therefore, he was the one who told her to take on this occupation.

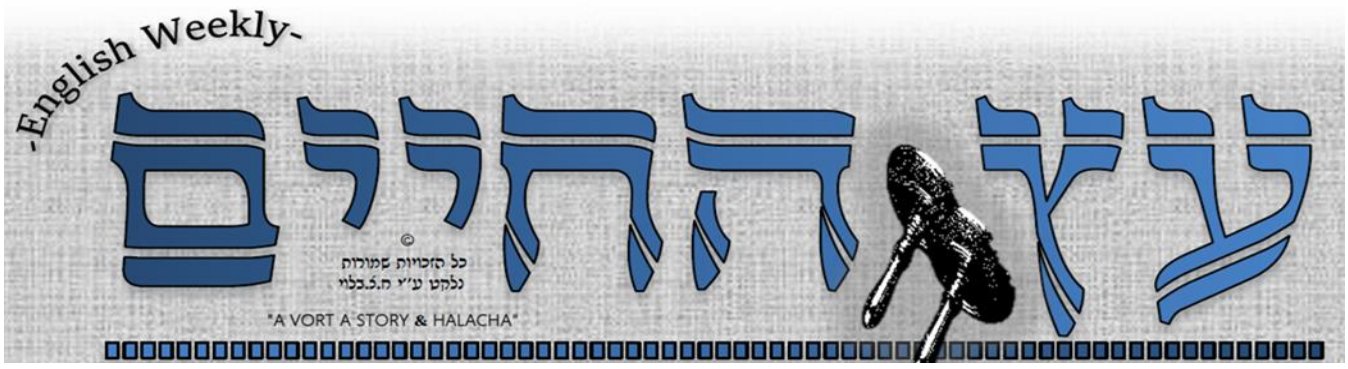
The Gaon concluded, "I told her this so that I could learn, but my words were fulfilled by Hashem!"





הוא היה אומר

R' Pinchos of Koritz *zt"l* would say: "Just like *Moshe Rabbeinu*, who employed his anger only when absolutely necessary to scare the *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* into submission, I, too, train myself each and every day to control my temper and keep it tucked away in my pocket, only retrieving it when it becomes absolutely necessary. - This way, I maintain control over it and not allow it to maintain control over me!"



Rebbitzen Shain Related The Following Story about her father **Rav Yakov Yosef Herman זצוק״ל**



"To us our old mahogany dining room table with its deep scratches and our ancient leather chairs with their worn-out upholstery, looked awful, but to Papa they were more precious than any fancy furniture. We couldn't understand why he was so attached to our worn-out dining-room set, and why he never agreed to change it for a new one. We used to wonder what was so special about our dilapidated furniture. Perhaps Papa was hiding his savings under the old upholstery?

One evening the secret was revealed. Papa returned from shul, and Mama excitedly greeted him with some good news: "Yankev Yosef, listen to this," she said. "My brother, Yisroel Isser, is giving us his dining-room set – a large table, six chairs and two armchairs. He decided to buy a new dining-room set, and we can have his old one. It's used, but in excellent condition. Isn't this wonderful? It's high time we got rid of our wornout furniture. Now we can have a good dining room set – free of charge."

Mama hoped Papa would be very glad to hear such good tiding. How surprised she was when he frowned for a moment.

"Aidel, I don't agree to it," he said determinedly.

Mama tried to persuade him. "But Yankev Yosef, it won't cost us a penny! I'm sure my brother will even pay for the delivery!"

She looked at Papa with pleading eyes and then looked at the worn-our furniture pitifully. However, Papa looked at it differently. He should his head and said, "It's not the money. You see, Aidel, our table and chairs are very precious. Think of all the great *talmidei chachamim* who have sat around this table of ours. Reb Boruch Ber Leibowitz sat here, Reb Leizer Yudel Finkel here, Reb Moshe Mordechai Epstein sat here. He walked around the table, touching each place with reverence. "Reb Avrohom Kalmanovitz sat here, Reb Reuven Grozovsky, here. How can we part with this holy treasure? What are new chairs and a new table worth compared to these?

No more words were needed. When Mama and the rest of us saw how Papa looked at the table with such love and respect, our scratched old mahogany table became an "antique" to be cherished forever.

Parsha Points to Ponder - by Ozer Alport

There is only one yahrtzeit that is explicitly mentioned in the Torah. Whose yahrtzeit is it, and what is the date?

The only yahrtzeit explicitly mentioned in the Torah is that of Aharon, whom the Torah records (33:38) died on the first day of the fifth month, which is the month of Av.

Rav Yisroel Reisman notes that this yahrtzeit is curiously not mentioned in Parshas Chukas when the Torah discusses Aharon's actual death, but rather in Parshas Masei. He suggests that this was done intentionally because Parshas Masei is traditionally read during the week in which Aharon's yahrtzeit falls out on the calendar.



In his elderly years, **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld זצ"ל** was advised by his doctor to take a walk out of the old city walls of **ירושלים** where the air was cleaner and purer. And so Rav Yosef Chaim would take a daily walk in the Christian Arab neighbourhoods of Talbieh and Katamon.

One day, as he was walking in Talbieh with his grandson, Rav Yosef Chaim pointed to many houses which were having foundations being poured in, and proclaimed, **בונה ירושלים ה'**. His grandson was confused, and asked, "But Zeide, these are Christian houses, not Jewish ones?!"

The elderly **גדול** answered, "The ones who destroyed **ירושלים** will have to help us rebuild it. You'll see, one day there will be *Yieden* living in these houses".

25 years later, when the State of Israel was established, its neighbouring Arab countries all declared war on the fledgling country. The residents of Talbieh and Katamon were advised by the Jordanians to leave their neighbourhoods and temporarily move to Jordan in order to help clear a path to conquer **ירושלים** , promising them that they would return after Israel was destroyed.

בחסדי ה', the neighbourhoods of Talbieh and Katamon were conquered by the Israelis, but unfortunately the old city of **ירושלים** was temporarily taken over by the Jordanians and the *Yieden* had to flee. They escaped and settled in the empty homes in Talbieh and Katamon, fulfilling the prophecy of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld a quarter century earlier, that one day *Yieden* would live in those homes! - May **ירושלים** be speedily rebuilt soon.

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר אֶלֶף חֲלוּצֵי צָבָא- *'A thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.' (31:5)*

Moshe wanted to demonstrate to them that it is not the number of troops or their arms that determines victory or defeat, but their worthiness. For Zimri had caused the death of 24,000 without a single sword or armament; while they, numbering only 12,000, would defeat the far more numerous Midianites, "and not a single one of them was lost" (Numbers 31:49), even though in ordinary wars there are casualties also on the victorious side. (**Me'am Loez**)

וַחֲצִי \| שֵׁבֶט \| מְנַשֶּׁה - *'And half the tribe of Manasseh.' (32:33)*

Because Manasseh caused the sons of Jacob to rend their clothes by hiding Joseph's goblet in Benjamin's sack (cf. Genesis 44:13), his tribe was rent in two, half receiving its portion in the lands east of the Jordan, and half on the west. (**Midrash Rabbah**)

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Binyomin Steinberg Z"L was a remarkable Torah educator who served as the Menahel (principal) of the Bais Yaakov in Baltimore for many decades. He was able to imbue in his students a remarkable dedication to life-long integrity and a love of Torah Judaism. There is no question that the city of Baltimore has been remarkably affected by this one individual. His actions and thoughts have made an indelible impression on the city.

On one occasion, he revealed to his students what it was that caused him to dedicate his life to the service of Bnei Yisrael. He remarked, "I was a child in Shanghai, China, having escaped the inferno that was Nazi Germany. We had no toys, no clothing and no food. We had nothing. And then, there arrived care packages from Torah Jews in the United States. These people had so generously devoted their time and money to prepare these loving care packages for us - perfect strangers halfway around the world. Their kindness had a profound effect on me.

I felt that there was a certain integrity at play here – I would only permit myself to benefit from these care packages if I too would be willing to care for Bnei Yisrael with similar devotion.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn - Project Mesorah

The great Tzadik, **Rav Eliya Lopian zt'l** the mashgiach of Kfar Chasidim, would get up very early every morning before dawn to daven. As he got older and more infirm, his family tried to persuade him to stop this minhag, as it might have a detrimental affect on his health.

He said, "After 120 years, they're going to give me a fahear in shamayim. They are going to open up the Shulchan Aruch, and in the first siman in Shulchan Aruch it says: **יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו שיהא הוא מעורר השחר** – '***One should strengthen himself like a lion to get up in the morning to serve his Creator, so that it is he who awakens the dawn***.' – So I will fail at the first hurdle? So therefore, that's why I still have to do it."

And I want to add, that if you take a look in that first siman in Shulchan Aruch, it says: **ראוי לכל ירא שמים שיהא מיצר ודואג על חורבן בית המקדש** – '***It is fitting for every person who has fear of Heaven to be anguished and concerned regarding the destruction of the Temple***.' – The Mishna Brurah says this entails saying the Tehilim **'עַל**

נַהֲרוֹת בָּבֶל. Many of us don't say this before bentching during the week, but we should as it reminds us of the Churban. (On Shabbos of course we say שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת as we don't mourn on Shabbos).

I think it would be good practice to say עַל־נַהֲרוֹת בָּבֶל especially during the 9 days, and even every time that we wash and bentch over bread all year round, so that we will be aware of the חורבן בית המקדש.

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



Assembly of weekly articles for Machzikei Hadass, Manchester Community weekly news-sheet, mostly in Hebrew and entitled Noam Shabbos, which was started in 2002.The first two articles (Not on this file) were written by Reb Sholem Dresdner O.H.

Last week was presented a few examples of the Kashrus problems facing Jewish families in Manchester in those times. It would be difficult to give more details whilst preserving the anonymity of

those concerned. Suffice it to say that seriously observing Kashrus was then a lot more difficult than it is today.

As is well known, a Kehilla's first requirement is for a Mikvah. Due to lack of understanding by the Authorities a suitable site, or even a building to convert, was difficult to find. Even when found, the Gas Board (as it was then called) refused to connect a supply. There was then only one alternative. This was heating with coke and coal, a messy job for which someone had to be specially employed.

Meat, Mikvah, Milk and much more - all caused considerable bother and worry, particularly since there was a lack of organised effort.

In 1934 [N.B.Corrected in next page} a few Erlicher Yiden arranged a meeting. The agenda was the possibilty of organising an independent Kehilla; one that could aspire to the highest standards and did not, for example, have a Mechalel Shabbos in charge of Shechitah. The Machzikei Hadass was born.

Amongst the first efforts of the founders was the search for a Rav. An eminent name was suggested. This was Rav Berel Rotterberg, (a son-in-law of the Shotzer Rav) the Voydislaver Rav, an eminent Poisek, an inspired public speaker and a possessor of considerable charisma. His Hespedim on R' Meir Shapiro and the Chafetz Chaim had demonstrated his oratorical abilities to many. However, it was quickly realised that what was needed in the then circumstances was a Balabatishe Rav, not a Chassidishe one. - Reluctantly, it was decided to look elsewhere.

Last week we gave 1934 as the year of the foundation of the Machzikei Hadass. This was indeed the year when the Rav and Shochet were appointed, but it has been pointed out that the Kehillah's roots have their foundation some nine years earlier.

In the 1920s, amongst the many Shtieblach to be found in Strangeways was the Poilisher Shool, situated in Bury New Road near Broughton Lane. This converted house can be considered as the

forerunner of the present complex in Northumberland Street. However, it may be noted that its Friday night Minyan continued to exist for some years after the M.H. Shool, (then known as Yesoiday Hatorah) was started in 1939 at a mansion donated by R'Avrohom Yaakov Pfeffer. Interestingly, it had previously been the Manchester H.Q. of the British Union of Fascists headed by the notorious Oswald Mosley.

In 1924 several members of the Poilesher Shool and a few from other Shtieblach, such as the Estreicher, organised a meeting to discuss the possibility of an independent Kehillah. Yiddish posters were hung up to publicise the event. We do not have a full list of the organisers, but they included R'Hershell Heilpern, R'Alter Grosskopf, R'Wolf Dresdner, R'Hershell Reich and R'Aryeh Leib Sufrin.

The decision to form an independent Kehillah aroused considerable opposition and hostility from the existing entrenched organisations, both local and national. Nevertheless, a drive for paying membership was begun and was underway before 1930.

By 1934, the founders and members felt sufficiently confident to seek their own Rav and Shochet. With their engagement the Machzikei Hadass could be truly considered an autonomous body in Manchester Jewry.

By the early 1930s, the leaders of the nascent Kehilla began to look for a Rav. The name of Rabbi Dovid Feldman was suggested. Rabbi Feldman, born in Tolna, Galicia in 1884, was the head of the Orthodox Community in Leipzig, Germany. From an early age he was known as an outstanding Talmid Chochom and a master of Hoiro'oh. He had obtained Semicha from many Gedolim including the 'Oruch Hashulchon' and the Mahrsham.

In common with the majority of his compatriots at that time, he was anxious to leave Germany. Besides Manchester, he had been offered a post in Antwerp. It was our good fortune that he chose our budding

Community. He was already known to some members of the MH having visited Manchester in 1923.

Rabbi Feldman had also achieved renown for his edition of the Kitzur Shulchan Oruch, which was considerably enhanced by his preface, source notes, practical diagrams on Tefillin knots and Ttitsis, tables of weights and measures and much more. However, his outstanding qualities as a Rav and Manhig only became fully evident after he took up his position.

As a Posek and Lamdan he enjoyed the blessing of an amazing memory. He possessed a library of several thousand volumes. Since he had mastered its contents, its main use seemed to be confirmation, via instant quotation of references, of his immediate responses to Shaalos.

Perhaps more importantly, he possessed a natural affinity to Charedim, whether Chassidim or not and, of course, to the growing number of fellow refugees from Nazi oppression.

Added to an innate dignity, which enhanced the standing of his Community, his Yiras Shomayim and practical abilities enabled the Machzikei Hadass to achieve and maintain a standard in Shechita, Mikva and other necessities previously unknown in the Provinces.

Rabbi Feldman continued to lead the Kehilla until ill health led to his retirement in the early 1950s. He passed away in 1955.

Last week we wrote about Rabbi Feldman and how he steered and moulded the Kehilla in its early days. Before giving more details of M.H. activities during the period of his leadership, let us sketch in a few of the problems endured by local Charedim before the establishment of the MH.

Shechitah It should not be thought that there were no reliable Shochetim or butchers in those days. The problem for the fastidious individual was in ensuring that he or she got meat from a particular Shochet, via a preferred butcher. There was many a slip !

In fact, before the MH had organised its own Shechita - and we will come to this later - a scheme was mooted. This would have allowed the infant Kehilla to regularly obtain supplies from nominated Shochetim, such as two Chabad stalwarts, R'Avrohom Sender Nemtzov and R'Shmuel Rein. - The plan was stifled at inception when the non-chosen Shochetim threatened to withdraw their labour !

Before the appointment of an MH Shochet some local Charedi families had standing arrangements over a long period for weekly supplies to be sent by rail from the Gateshead butcher, Mr. Freedman [Editors note: This was my great grandfather who I am named after – Yitzchok Aaron (Henry)].

Other Baalei Batim restricted themselves to chicken. For some this meant buying a live fowl and taking it along to the Shochet. Then followed the tedious 'flicken und penken'. Reb Wolf Dresdner was able to slaughter his own fowls, but who else else could be so self-sufficient?

The arrival of Rabbi Feldman enabled the MH's progenitors to convert the dream of an independent Shechita organisation into a practical reality. But there were many hurdles to be overcome.

Before we mention the difficulties with the Manchester Shechita Board, (and there were many over the years) something, and more than something, needs to be said in favour of that Institution, which was founded in 1892.

Last week, with regard to the start of the MH Shechitah, we mentioned the Manchester Shechitah Board as being worthy of praise. The Board's experiences in the forty years from its foundation in 1892, influenced its attitude to the emergent and thriving new arrival.

The Shechitah Board was the first succesful attempt to regulate Shechitah and butchers in this city. To quote from the "History of the Manchester Shechita Board", "Almost from its inception, the

Board had to contend with various forms of opposition emanating either from butchers or from certain individuals." The book then goes on to detail several such episodes. These competing efforts were mainly from 'Vinkel Shochetim', but some had the support of individual Bnei Torah.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there were many periods of strife and skirmish between the Board and the young MH. Although by later years the animosity had mostly evaporated, traces of friction could still occasionally be felt. By the late 1940s, the Board had begun to seek improvements in its own standards of Kashrus.

A major enhancement in the Board's standing was effected in 1949 by the arrival of the eminent Dayan YY Weisz (described by Reb Feivush Feingold as the Posek's Posek) to head the Board's parent body.

Although there were undoubtedly other factors at work, it can be fairly claimed that the major impetus for this sea change in our city came from the existence and activities of the MH.

Besides the local opposition, which had the backing of the Chief Rabbinate, there were secular problems in starting a new Shechitah body. The 'Slaughter of Animals Act 1933' delegated the licensing of Shochetim to a 'Rabbinical Commission'. This body was composed of individuals appointed or nominated by the Chief Rabbinate and the Board of Deputies. All were inimical to potentially competing organisations, so inevitably each step meant a struggle.

Under the provisions of the Shechitah laws, the MH had to be certified by nominated accountants as having at least 100 paying members.

Eventually, by 1935 all formalities were completed, and the Community was ready for its own Shechitah.

To be continued….

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Yisroel Yaakov Levenstone, fondly known as YY by his family and friends, (and now me, too) is an average *Yiddisher* kid. After finishing school, here in Manchester, he joined a small in Yeshiva in Yerusholayim and soon settled down in his new environment.

This Yeshiva does not have dormitories for the bochurim, so YY was billeted with a local family. This family, consisting of parents and 8 children BYH, and a large extended family too, are Belzer chassidim living near the Belz Hoif. Although YY was given a small bedroom and bathroom in the basement, he was made to feel very welcome to join the family on the 3rd floor for his meals including on Shabbos. In fact, in time, he felt very much at home, and was welcomed into this family home. Truly, a home away from home.

Being warmed up in this incredibly warm household, YY began joining his *baal ha'achsanyeh* and his sons when they went to Belz for davening and for Tisch. And in time, he would even go by himself. YY enjoyed the atmosphere and felt at home here, too. Many a Shabbos, YY could be seen at the Tischen.

When it came to Chanukah, again YY joined the Belzer *Olam* at the *Hadlokas Hanerois,* being inspired by the tremendous *ruach* each night. One night he joined the long line of Chassidim filing pass the Belzer Rov Shlita, each receiving a coin personally from the Rov.

For YY, this was something very special. Here he was, in a short jacket and capel, in line with Belzer chassidim, all clad in the *chassidisher begodim*, all waiting their turn.

As YY came in front of the Rov, the Rov reached out his hand to shake YY's and asked him his name and where he was living. The Rov then gave YY a short brochoh and handed him a coin. YY now felt ecstatic, the feeling he had just won the lottery.

When YY arrived back at the home of his host, he shared his experience – and in his excitement showed the family his newly

acquired treasure. YY also asked his host if he had ever received a *matbeyah* from the Belzer Rov. The host confirmed that indeed he had and went into his study to retrieve it.

This *matbeyah* was larger and a special mint, not like the coin that YY had received that evening. YY spent some time admiring and holding this *matbeyah* whilst listening to the host relating how and when he had he received it. After some time, YY said, "I want to get one like that, too."

Over the next few weeks, YY made several enquiries in Belz as how to obtain a similar *matbeyah and* was directed to the senior Gabboim. He explained to YY that these *matbeyahs* are given to *Chassanim*, and that the Belzer Rov *benshes* each one before he gives it the *Chosson. Bekitzer*, come back when you are a Chosson, YY was told.

YY had no other option but to put his desire for such a *matbeyah* on the 'back burner' so to speak, wait till he became a *Chosson.* He often thought about it, though.

At the end of that summer *zman*, YY went home to Manchester, and for various reasons, he didn't get to go back to Yeshiva and to this wonderful family. YY got a job and joined *a working lads' chuburah.*

Three years went by, and now YY was into *Shidduchim.* This year, during the Yomim Noroim, YY became a *Chosson, Mazel Tov.* Now his desire for such a *matbeyah* was rekindled and he dreamt of travelling to Eretz Yisroel before his *Chassanah* to obtain a brochoh from the Belzer Rov and a *matbeyah.*

After Sukkos, as we all know, the *matzav* in Eretz Yisroel changed. Most flights were cancelled whilst the remaining few were expensive. YY's hopes of making it to Eretz Yisroel were fading. YY even went down to the local Belzer Beis Hamedresh to try to find one of the 'chevrah' to contact someone in Eretz Yisroel to get a *matbeyah* on his behalf, but was told, each time, that the *Chosson* must personally present himself to the Rov.

One day, one of the Belzer *yungerleit* told him that one of Belzer Rov's senior Gabboim was in town and he would accompany him to ask him, what he would advise in the circumstances.

The Gabai listened to Belzer *yungerleit* and YY, and then told them something amazing.

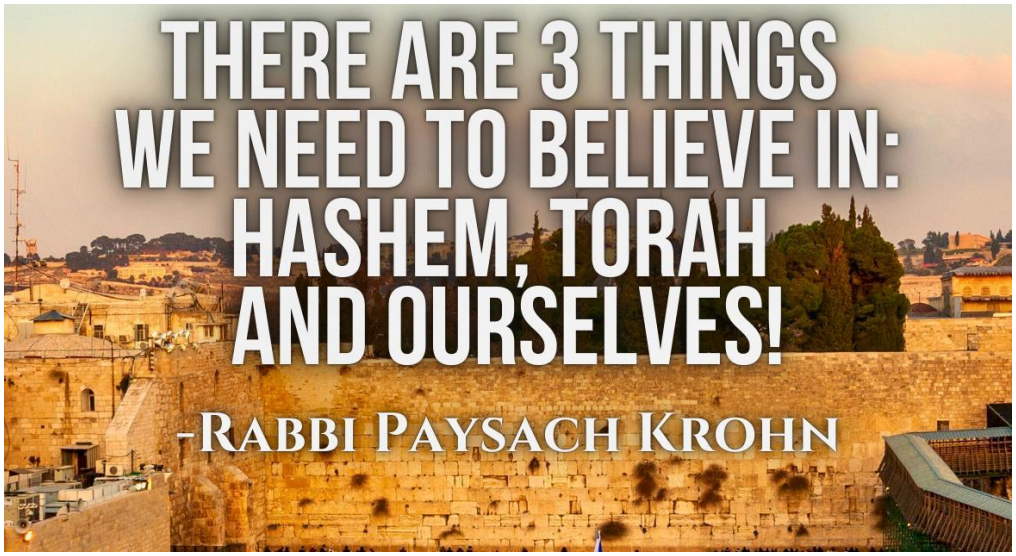
The Gabai told them, that before he ever travels, either on behalf of the Belzer Moisdos or privately, he always goes into the Belzer Rov for a brochoh. This time the Rov did something quite different from the usual practice. The Rov took out a *matbeyah* from his drawer, said various *tephillos*, then handed the *matbeyah* to the Gabai, giving him his usual *brochoh*, too, but not giving any explanation.

"I brought the *matbeyah* with me, with no idea what I was meant to do with it," says the Gabai. "I'm due to leave in half an hour. I'm now sure that the Rov wanted it for you, Yisroel Yaakov, please take it."

YY was so elated by the turn of events.

I asked YY how he felt now, and he replied, "Now I feel ready for my Chassanoh, I can't wait, Boruch Hashem."

Good Shabbos.



Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● The Sanctuary Cities

In this week's *sedrah* we read about one of Hashem's commands to the Am Yisroel as they were preparing to enter into Eretz Canaan. **כִּי אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן** – *When you cross over the Yarden to the land of Canaan,* **וְהִקְרִיתֶם לָכֶם עָרִים עָרֵי מִקְלָט תִּהְיֶינָה לָכֶם** – *you should designate for yourself, arei miklat, sanctuary cities* **וְנָס שָׁמָּה רֹצֵחַ מַכֵּה נֶפֶשׁ בִּשְׁגָגָה** – *and a killer who unintentionally takes a life shall flee there* (Masei 35:10-11).

It's talking about a man who accidentally killed a fellow Jew and now finds himself in danger of being killed by his victim's family. The *goel hadam* – the "blood redeemer" – has the right to avenge the blood of his dead relative and so the Torah provides a safe haven, a place to where the accidental killer can escape. In the *arei miklat* he is protected from the *goel hadam,* **וְלֹא יָמוּת הָרֹצֵחַ** – *and that way he will not die* (ibid. 12).

But we'll see now that not only was this city a place where *v'lo yomus harotzeiach,* where the killer is shielded from the vengeful anger of the *goel hadam,* but the Torah tells us that while he's there in that city the *beis din* is also required to go out of its way to provide him with all the means of normal living. **וְנָס אֶל אַחַת מִן הֶעָרִים הָאֵל** – *He has*

to flee to one of these cities, וָחָי *– and there he will live* (Devarim 4:42). And the Gemara says that more than just allowing him to find refuge, the word *vachai* means, *avid lei midi d'tihevi lei chiyusa – You must make a life for him there in that city.* Even though it's a form of a prison for him there, but *vachai – make for him a life;* the *beis din* has to provide the *rotzeiach* with all the necessities for ordinary existence.

● Life and Death

We don't tell him to live on bread and water; he's supplied with nourishing food and vitamins and medicines, everything he needs to live successfully. That, the Gemara says, is what *vachai* means – give him life; provide him with whatever he'll need to live a normal life.

Now, in the crazy world we live in today, you might think it means they have to supply him with color TV. After all, what's life without television? You know there was a big riot last year in one of the prisons upstate. The inmates broke windows and smashed tables. Why were they so upset? Because they only had ordinary TV, black and white TV. "It's not a life," they said. "We need *color TV.*" And so a special commission came, a state board of inquiry, and this committee of wise men sat down together *b'koved rosh* and thought deeply into what life means, about what living life to its fullest includes, and they concluded that the felons are right! How can you deprive human beings of color TV?!

But that's not the Torah view of life. Watching television or the movies today means you're going over to the dirty toilet and dipping a cup into the sewage and you're drinking non-stop. The worst thing that can happen to a man is if he gets water on the brain – if he gets *sewage* on the brain then there's no hope for him at all!

And so *vachai* means *no television!* Television is the opposite of life. Because "and you should provide for him life," means not that you give him what the lowest element of society thinks life is about

– *vachai* means you have to give him the means of living a *successful* life.

● **Jailing The Innocent**

And that's why the Gemara tells us a queer thing, something we wouldn't have realized on our own. The sages say that included in this mitzvah of '*vachai*' is, **תַּלְמִיד שֶׁגָּלָה מַגְלִין רַבּוֹ עִמּוֹ** – *When a person has to flee to the ir miklat his teacher is also sent into galus with him.* Just as you must supply him with a city where he can live out of reach of the hands of the *goel hadam*, and just like you provide him with all the necessities of life so that he should live a normal existence, you must also supply him with the opportunity of *vachai,* to live life most purposefully. And included in that is that we make his teacher, his *rebbe*, go into exile with him.

Now, the *rebbe* is innocent – it was the *talmid* who killed somebody *bishogeg,* not him – but when the student is sentenced to go into exile, the *rebbe* is forced by the *beis din* to go with his student.

● **Imprisoning the Rosh Yeshiva**

So the *rebbe says,* "What did I do?! I'm innocent! I have to be imprisoned in an *ir miklat?!*"

So we tell him, "We can't help it. The Torah says *vachai,* that your *talmid* has to live."

"Let him live," the *rebbe* says, "I have nothing against him living. But why should I be sentenced along with him? I'll write to him, I'll visit him, but let him live without me!"

"No," say our sages. "That's not called living life without a *rebbe*."

So the *rebbe* has to move; he has to leave his home and find a place to live in the *ir miklat* in order to fulfill the command of the Torah. If he has a *yeshivah,* he has to forsake his yeshiva; it's his responsibility to go with his *talmid* into the *ir miklat.* And it's based

on the admonition *vachai,* he must live. *Avid lei chayusa* – "Make a life for him," and there's no life without a *rebbe.*

● Sending a Torah Library

Now we could have thought that all this was in the olden days. In the ancient times when it was still forbidden to write anything except *Torah, Nevi'im u'Kesuvim* – you couldn't write the *gemara;* even to write the *mishnah* was forbidden – and so the only source of Torah knowledge was a live *rebbe.* Some *chumash* you could learn on your own but that's all – and even your *chumash* didn't have any Rashi. And so, without your *rebbe* you were cut off from the fountain of Torah.

But after printing was invented – suppose we had the system of *arei miklat* today and one of our disciples was unfortunate enough to be sentenced to *galus* so we would think that it's up to the *beis din* to provide him with a *shas,* a big *shas* with all the *mefarshim,* and all the *rishonim* and *achronim* too, and that's how we'd fulfill this mitzvahof giving him spiritual life – give him a Torah library and that's all he needs. So it would seem. The *rebbe* could continue with his great work maintaining his yeshiva wherever he was and he could make a big order from the Jewish book store and send a Torah library for the *talmid.*

● The Meaning of Life

And yet there's no such leeway given. Even today, with all of our printed books and with all of our Torah lectures on the telephone, when we have *arei miklat* again, this *din* of *talmid shegala, maglin rabo imo* won't change. *Vachai* means not only that he should have food and clothing and medicine and *seforim,* but most of all he should have his *rebbe* too. And the *rebbe* would have to come personally because that's what the Torah means when it says *vachai.* To live means you should live together with your *rebbe.*

Working on our Middos

Every Shabbos, the young Bachurim from the Yeshivah in Pressburg would eat their meals at the homes of members of the community. After Davening, they would leave the Shul as a group and walk through the town to their respective hosts' homes.

Every week, one of the young men would wander off by himself for a while and then catch up with the group a few blocks away. This young man, Chaim, was well respected among his friends as a caring, generous individual, who was always ready to help a friend in need.

Chaim's "disappearing act" intrigued his friends, and they decided to follow him one week to see where he went. The next Shabbos morning, the boys followed Chaim into a particularly poor part of town. Chaim walked to a basement apartment and knocked gently on the door. An old woman answered, and Chaim wished her a warm Gut Shabbos. Seeing the smile on her face, they assumed that this was his grandmother.

They managed to get away before he could see them, but when he rejoined the group, they confessed that they had followed him. "So," they asked, "who is that woman? Your grandmother?"

A bit embarrassed that he had been caught in the act, Chaim shyly responded that the woman was not even related to him. That piqued their curiosity even more. "Then Chaim, why do you go wish her a Gut Shabbos every week?"

By this time a bigger crowd had gathered, with everyone eager to hear Chaim's story. Chaim responded, "This woman is a widow, and she has very little family around. So, I figured I would go to wish her a Gut Shabbos. She seems so happy when I come, and it is such an easy thing to do. How could I not?"

The friends were stunned and awed by Chaim's act. Amazed that their young friend had the sensitivity to look after an old widow, they knew then that this boy would become something special.

Rav Yitzchak Shloime Blau, the one who shared this story, remembers it fondly, because he was a little boy at the time this took place, and the old woman was his grandmother. He said, "Although I was only six or seven years old at the time, I remember waiting outside for him every Shabbos, and then running inside to tell my grandmother, 'The Bachur is coming! The Bachur is coming!'"

Chaim's friends were correct in predicting that this young man was destined for greatness. Young Chaim grew up to become the great **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l**, the Rav of Yerushalayim!



Money is the Root of all Evil by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

In this week's Parsha, the Jews' forty-year sojourn in the wilderness is about to come to an end, culminating with their entrance into the land of Israel. As the Jews approached the land of Israel from the eastern border, they arrived at the Jordan River. As they were traversing this gorgeous, grassy territory, the tribes of Gad and Reuven couldn't help but notice the beauty of the land and how suited it would be for them in particular who owned a tremendous amount of livestock to be used for grazing terrain. They requested from Moshe that they be allowed to stay on that land and set up their homes there. Moshe agreed on the condition that they contribute their share in the conquering of the land, and indeed, the tribes of Gad and Reuven were the first into battle and carried out their end of the agreement to perfection.

However, the Midrash teaches us that they were nonetheless punished severely for their request to dwell on the other end of the

Jordan River. Later on, when the Jews were exiled from the land of Israel, the tribes of Gad and Reuven were exiled first, and only then were the rest of the tribes exiled, and the reason the Midrash gives for this punishment is because they dwelled "outside" of the land.

R' Eliyashiv Shlit"a poses a powerful difficulty on this Midrash. We know that even the other side of the Jordan River was considered to be part of Israel and contained almost the same holiness in every respect. Why then did their request warrant such a harsh response?

R' Eliyashiv explains that albeit the other side of the Jordan was certainly considered part of Israel, it was not the center. Gad and Reuven made a conscious decision to be located in a place which was distanced from the center of Jewish life, and for this they were punished.

R' Eliyashiv goes on to explain why isolation from the primary Jewish hubs is such an iniquity and is potentially very damaging to one's spirituality. R' Eliyashiv points out the effect our surrounding environment can have on us. If a person embeds himself in a community in which spirituality is the primary focus, there is no telling how deeply and positively such a decision can affect him. If on the other hand a person chooses to place himself in a milieu in which the people around him do not regard spiritual growth as particularly important, and have a different value system, he can rest assured that in a very short time, their value system will become his.

There is another approach completely to understanding Gad and Reuven's sin which I would like to discuss. Chazal point out that when Gad and Reuven asked to dwell on the other side of the Jordan, they first mentioned their interest in fertile grazing land, and only afterward mentioned their intention to set up good schools for their children's education. Rashi quotes the Chazal which says that this reversal of priorities is what earned them such harsh rebuke. It

seemed that they were more concerned with their livelihood then they were with their own children.

However, R Hanoch Leibowitz, the renowned leader of the Chofetz Chaim method, said that they did care very much about their children, and that was why they wanted to make such a good living!

R' Leibowitz explains that we see a very real pitfall that can happen during the Mitzvah of "making a living". Certainly the tribe of Gad and Reuven went into their business ventures with the sole desire to fulfill the positive commandment to support their families. But somewhere along the line, they got so focused on the specific jobs they were doing that they lost sight of the ultimate goal of their toil, and for this they were punished.

In other words, it was not a gross error which they made in which they placed their fiscal advances in front of their children, but rather a temporary lapse of concentration during which they confused their values, and this momentary slip earned them the stark retribution which they received.

It goes without saying that in today's day, this lesson is extremely poignant for us, who live a world which seems to worship money like a deity, how careful we must be to not confuse our own value system and place our financial careers in front of our family or our Torah observance.

R' Chazkal Levinstein, the great Mashgiach used to say that a person must be very cautious to constantly monitor himself for this dangerous trait of chasing after money. He would say that we learn from Gad and Reuven how damaging even a temporary lapse in this particular arena can be and how we must always keep our value system straight.

I once heard that when a certain Rosh Yeshiva was on his death bed, he told his shocked students that his whole life, he worked on this trait, and yet even now, a few minutes before he was to face the

heavenly courts, where money is obviously of no value, if somebody were to hold out a bill with a large denomination, he would have to fight his instinct to not reach out and grab it greedily for himself.

It is reported in the name of the **Chazon Ish** that when the Sanhedrin decided to force the Yetzer Hara to relinquish his ability to entice people to worship Avoda Zarah, the Yetzer Hara countered back that it would be unfair for him to be left with nothing in his arsenal to tempt people. The Rabbis then asked him what he felt would be appropriate to replace Avoda Zarah. He responded that if they would allow him to use the desire for money in place of Avoda Zarah, that would be sufficient for him to seduce people to sinning. The Rabbis thought about it and voted to agree to the Yetzer Hara's request.

May we all merit to understand the importance of our surroundings, and to always keep our spirituality at the forefront of our ambitions!



102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - A Snowstorm and an Act of Sacrifice

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein related the following story, which is printed in the biography of **Rav Shmuel Wosner zt'l**.

Rabbi Leib Ba'al HaYissurim, one of the prize disciples of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, passed away during the month of Cheshvan about 170 years ago. His actual name was Rabbi Leib of Terkish-Mohilov, but he became known as the Ba'al HaYissurim, the "master of suffering," because of all the suffering he endured in his lifetime.

Reb Leib was among the first Chabad chassidim to settle in Chevron. Toward the end of his life, he moved to Tzfas, and that's where he died and was buried. Before his passing, he announced that anyone who finds himself in a time of trouble should prostrate himself on his grave while reciting the entire sefer Tehillim (preferably on a Friday), and he would be helped.

Until today, people stream to Reb Leib's grave to recite the entire sefer Tehillim. So it was that a certain masmid from Bnei Brak decided to travel to the grave of Rabbi Leib Ba'al HaYissurim in Tzfas and pray that his daughter, who was getting older, find her match. There he would recite the entire sefer Tehillim, and he hoped that the merit of the tzaddik would bring him and his daughter the long-awaited yeshuah.

He and his wife had just boarded the bus to Tzfas, when it started to snow. In the northern region of Eretz Yisrael, the snowfall can be quite heavy. The man's wife decided to get off the bus before it left the station and go home before they got stuck in the snow, but her husband refused to give up and stayed on the bus.

Hours later, fighting the wind and snow flurries, he entered the cemetery in Tzfas, but visibility was low, and he couldn't find Reb Leib's grave. He wandered around the cemetery, searching and despairing.

Suddenly he spied someone standing next to a tombstone with a Tehillim clutched in his hand. He went over to the man, assuming he must be standing by Reb Leib's kever. He stood there, next to the stranger, and started reciting Tehillim with heartfelt emotion. It took two hours to complete the entire sefer, and the person standing next to him happened to finish at the same moment. When he was done, the masmid from Bnei Brak turned to leave, but the entire place was covered in a blanket of snow, and he had lost his sense of direction.

He turned to the stranger and asked, "Do you happen to know which way to go to get the bus to Bnei Brak?"

"Certainly. Come, I'll show you the way."

The two walked through the thick snow toward the bus stop. When they reached the stop, the man from Bnei Brak turned to thank his escort only to find that the other man had disappeared as if he had

never existed. When he arrived home, the masmid relayed the strange incident to his wife.

His wife laughed. "Maybe it was Eliyahu Hanavi."

"Stop imagining things," his wife chided. "It was snowing heavily, and you simply didn't notice how he left."

Days later, however, he couldn't stop thinking about the encounter. He decided to go see Rav Shmuel Wosner. He recounted what had happened in the cemetery in Tzfas and expressed his suspicion that the man had been an angel sent from Heaven.

Rav Wosner never got excited about such stories. "You're imagining it," he said. "The man simply left in a hurry and you didn't notice him leave." When the masmid heard Rav Wosner's conclusion, he decided to forget the incident once and for all and went home. The next day, however, there was a knock at the door. A young man was standing there. "Rav Wosner sent me to bring you to him right away."

The masmid hurried to Rav Wosner's house. He was trembling as he stood before the posek hador, who said, "I have to apologize for telling you yesterday that you were imagining things and that the person you met simply left in a hurry. That isn't true."

What Rav Wosner said next was astounding.

"It was Reb Leib Ba'al HaYissurim himself!

Rav Wosner continued, "I called you here first thing this morning, because Rabbi Leib Ba'al HaYissurim appeared to me last night in a dream and said to me, 'I am Reb Leib Ba'al HaYissurim. You should know that I was given permission from Shamayim to appear before that man after seeing his mesirus nefesh in coming to daven at my grave in the middle of a blizzard. I stood next to him and recited the entire sefer Tehillim together with him so that he wouldn't be alone in the cemetery. I was even allowed to accompany him to the bus stop. Now I request that you tell him that his prayer has been accepted, and his daughter will be engaged within a month.""

The masmid had never heard Rav Wosner talk about the manifestation of departed souls, but as Rabbi Leib Ba'al HaYissurim had appeared to the posek in a dream, he had to pass on the message.

And after years of being stuck in shidduchim that went nowhere, his daughter met a young man and became engaged in a matter of weeks.

Though the Wosner family avoided talking about the wonders Rav Wosner performed because he didn't seek such attention, this episode was publicized in a sefer called V'lo Shevet HaLevi Bilvad and confirmed by a relative of Rav Wosner.

Baba Maasehs



R' Eliyahu Bachur, who lived from 1469-1549, was the youngest of nine brothers. R' Eliyahu Bachur authored the Sefer Hatishbi, but his most famous work is called Baba Buch (literally translated as "Grandmother's Book"). This is a book of stories in Yiddish that he wrote for Jewish women which relates the wondrous story of the adventures of Prince Boav of Antona. The book was published over 500 years ago and became a huge success, with many editions, spreading far and wide. From there spread the idea of what we call today '*Baba Maasehs*'.

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



Listen to the Mussar

And Moshe said to the people of Gad and Reuven, "Your brothers will go to war and you will remain here?" (32:6)

The first Gerrer Rebbe was the **Chiddushei HaRim**. The second Gerrer Rebbe, the **Sfas Emes**, was not his son but his grandson. The Sfas Emes' father passed away when he was a child, and his grandfather raised him. He was an illui, a prodigy, the apple of his grandfather's eye. One night, when he was still a young boy, the Sfas Emes learned with his chavrusa straight through the night. He nodded off right before Shacharis, resting his head on the Gemara. After a few minutes, he awoke with a start. He washed his hands and hurried to the shul, but he was already a little late.

After Shacharis, the Chiddushei Harim called him over.

"What's this with coming late to Shacharis?" he said in a sharp tone. "It's bad enough for yourself, but think how it will affect others. If the grandson of the rebbe can come late, what kind of example is that for other boys? Or even men! It's a Chillul Hashem, no less!"

The Chiddushei Harim went on in this vein for another few minutes, but the Sfas Emes did not say one word in his own defense. He could have argued that it had been an accident, that he had stayed up all night learning Torah and that sleep had overcome him at the end for just a few minutes. But he remained silent.

A little while later, the chavrusa of the Sfas Emes asked him, "Why didn't you say anything to defend yourself? You were innocent! Why were you silent?"

"When a great man gives you Mussar [ethical advice or rebuke]," said the Sfas Emes, "it is worthwhile to listen, even if you don't deserve

it, even if you are completely innocent. I wanted to hear my grandfather's Mussar.

"I have a proof to this from the Torah. Moshe Rabbeinu gave the tribes of Gad and Reuven a strong tongue-lashing. He accused them of cowardice. He told them they were demoralizing the people just like the spies did. He went on and on for nine verses, and they remained silent. They never mentioned that they had intended all along to participate in the conquest. Why? Because it is always worthwhile to hear the Mussar of a great man."



R' Yitzchak Hutner told a story about a Yid who came to Vilna for the first time. He hired a coachman to drive him, and he sat in the carriage, learning from his Gemara. The wagon driver turned to ask him what he was learning. The passenger, assuming the driver to be unlearned, gave a polite, curt answer.

The wagon driver was intimately familiar with the topic, and he engaged the passenger in a conversation on the sugya. The passenger was impressed and shared a question of his own. The driver had an answer, and a learned discussion ensued.

Finally, the passenger could not contain his curiosity, and he asked the question on his mind. "In any town, you would be the rav. How is it that in Vilna you drive a wagon?"

The coachman explained that Vilna was a town filled with great talmidei chachamim and he was not unique just because he knew how to learn. This, he explained, was because of the **Vilna Gaon**.

"Is he the rav of the city?" asked the passenger.

"No," said the wagon driver, "he is not the rav."

"Is he the maggid meisharim?"

"No," came the reply.

"Is he the rosh yeshivah?" the passenger persisted.

"He was none of those things, and he is not even alive. He was niftar over a hundred years ago," said the driver.

"So how did he make you a talmid chacham?" asked the scholarly passenger.

"Veil ehr iz duh gevehn! Because he was here!" said the driver emphatically.

There are features in the history of a town that are so monumental, so immense, that they mark the town forever and the place lives on, forever bound up with that event or personality. Vilna will forever be associated with the man who learned Torah in a room with the shutters drawn. It is his city, and no other detail means as much to a Torah Jew.

When **Rav Yoel Teitelbaum (the Satmar Rav)** came to Eretz Yisroel, a Jew came and asked him for a Bracha before his departure. This Jew expressed the fear that after the Satmar Rav returned to America, there would be no one worthy to ask for a blessing.

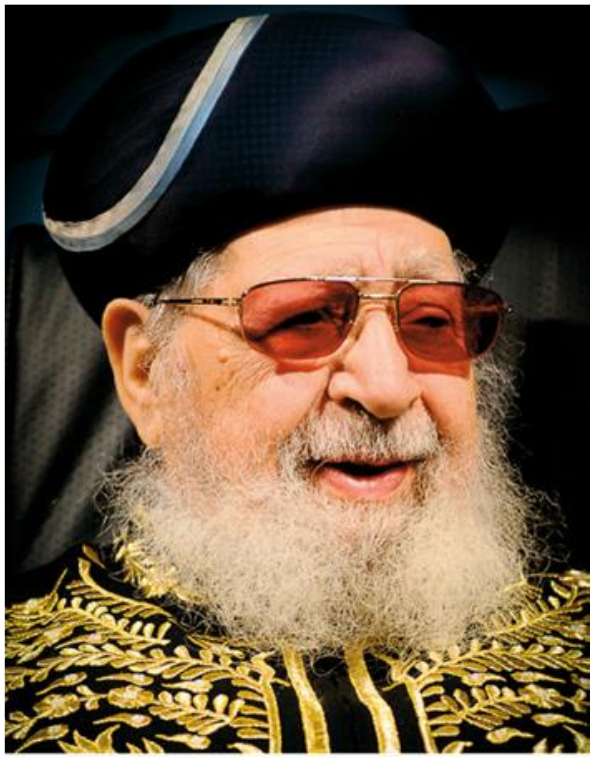
The Satmar Rav told him "Go to any Jew that has a number tattooed on his arm and ask him for a bracha. A Jew that has a tattoo on his arm and still puts on Tefillin can give you the best bracha. When such a person is available, you do not need the Satmar Rav to give you a bracha."

When They Were Young

AWAKENING THE GENIUS

RABBI OVADIAH YOSEF
הרב עובדיה יוסף זצ"ל





As a young child, Ovadiah had a strange sleep schedule. He would often sneak out of his bed after everyone was sleeping, just so he could learn. And since he was very bright and learned so much on his own, he found school boring. The combination of late nights and boring classes made Ovadiah doze off during class.

Ovadiah's *melamed* was not happy that he was sleeping in class. Every time Ovadiah fell asleep, the *melamed* would punish him. In turn, Ovadiah's mother was not happy that her son was being punished. She discussed the situation with the *melamed,* and then the principal.

The *melamed* did not want Ovadiah in his class if he kept dozing off. The principal was going to expel him from the school. But on the way out of school, Ovadiah and his mother met the *mekubal* Chacham Ephraim Cohen. Chacham Cohen was one of several *mekubalim* who learned in a separate section of the yeshivah. He already recognized

Ovadiah's potential. He said, "The boy remains, whether he learns or doesn't learn, comes or doesn't come, sleeps or stays awake. He must not be sent away from yeshivah. You can expel me, but not him!"

In the end, Ovadiah was moved to an older class, where the learning was on a higher level. Ovadiah did not find the class boring, and he stayed awake. And he kept on learning and learning.

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef

Ovadiah Yosef was born in 1920 in Baghdad, Iraq. His parents were Chacham Yaakov and Georgia. When he was four years old, he immigrated to Yerushalayim with his family. He first learned in Talmud Torah Bnei Tzion. When he was only twelve, he joined Yeshivat Porat Yosef, a yeshivah for much older *talmidim*.

As a young man, Ovadiah was already delivering *shiurim* and writing *sefarim*. In 1944, he married Margalit Fattal. Because of the hunger and poverty in Yerushalayim, the couple eventually moved to Cairo, Egypt. In Cairo, Chacham Ovadiah taught in a yeshivah and was head of the *beis din*.

They returned to Eretz Yisrael in the 1950s. Chacham Ovadiah served as a dayan in the *beis din* in Petach Tikvah and also in Yerushalayim. In addition, he opened a yeshivah for Sephardim.

In 1973, he was elected Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel. Chacham Ovadiah dedicated himself to helping and leading the Sephardic community. He passed away in 2013.

We think we are living normal lives, and that Galus is just the background. But this is the greatest distortion - we are not living! As long as we are without the Beis HaMikdosh, we are spiritually suffocating. - Rav Shach (Michtavim uMaamarim v. 1)

The Rabbi Who Refused to Bow in Iran



In Tehran, during the 1979 revolution, one rabbi's faith saved lives and defied tyranny.

1979 was a year of profound change and unrest in the streets of Iran. The country was in the throes of an Islamic Revolution that toppled the Western-backed secular monarchy led by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. After months of mass protests and political upheaval, the Shah had fled the country, leaving behind a power vacuum. Into this void stepped Ayatollah Khomeini, a previously exiled and enigmatic figure who would come to shape the destiny of the Middle East for decades to follow.

Khomeini's return from exile in France and his rise to power as "Supreme Leader" electrified the nation. His arrival marked not only a political upheaval but also the founding of a new theocratic regime. The revolutionary fervor quickly descended into chaos: armed factions fought for control of cities, revolutionary courts carried out summary executions of former regime officials, and anti-American protests intensified, fueled by anger over the U.S. granting refuge to the deposed Shah.

On November 4, 1979, Iranian revolutionaries and student groups stormed the American Embassy in Tehran, taking 52 U.S. diplomats and citizens hostage. Among the captives were three American Jews: Barry Rosen, Michael Metrinko, and Jerry Plotkin. During negotiations between the U.S. government and Iran's new regime, UN mediators proposed that clergymen from outside Iran be

permitted to visit the hostages during the holiday season, check on their wellbeing, and deliver letters to their families.

The first delegation approved for this humanitarian mission included two American Protestant ministers and two Catholic priests—one from the U.S. and another from Algeria. Following this, several Jewish organizations advocated for a rabbi to be included in a second delegation to provide spiritual support for the Jewish hostages. Iranian authorities agreed, with the stipulation that the rabbi not be American or Israeli, and that he be accompanied by Christian clergy from Middle Eastern countries.

Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Hershberg, then the Chief Rabbi of Mexico, was selected—at the suggestion of the Iranian authorities themselves—to serve as the Jewish representative in Tehran.

The selection of Rabbi Hershberg was anything but accidental. While the Christian clergy chosen for the delegation came from Syria and Lebanon, the Ayatollah's regime was intent on avoiding any appearance of direct engagement with Israeli or American Jewish institutions, which might have ties to the Israeli government. By inviting a respected rabbinic leader from Mexico—a country without direct political entanglements in the Middle East—Iran positioned itself as taking a more neutral stance in its engagement with the Jewish faith. This approach allowed Iranian authorities to address religious and humanitarian concerns without compromising their revolutionary ideological posture.

Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Hershberg, a Polish-born Holocaust survivor and renowned Torah scholar, was serving at the time as Chief Rabbi of Mexico. He was widely admired for his profound Torah knowledge, eloquence, and steadfast Jewish identity. Though Mexico's Jewish community was relatively small, it was spiritually vibrant, and Rabbi Hershberg served as its guiding force. His influence extended far beyond Mexico—he was well known in both

Jewish and diplomatic circles, and maintained a close relationship with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who had encouraged him in this mission.



Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Hershberg in Iran

Rabbi Hershberg's non-American, Spanish-speaking background lent him a sense of impartiality in the eyes of the Iranian regime, while still enabling him to minister to the spiritual needs of the Jewish hostages. Shortly before Hanukkah in 1979, he arrived in Tehran, visited the U.S. Embassy, and spent time with the three Jewish hostages. Together, they lit Hanukkah candles, sang, and danced—a powerful, emotional moment that brought light into the darkness of captivity. His visit offered hope, solidarity, and spiritual strength at a time when it was most needed.

The day after the delegation visited the U.S. Embassy, the clergymen were invited to attend the mass Friday prayers held in an open-air space on the grounds of Tehran University, where Ayatollah Khomeini himself would be present. For the Jewish delegation, this posed a significant halachic dilemma. Islamic congregational prayer involves full prostration—bowing and touching one's forehead to the

ground—a gesture that is strictly forbidden in Judaism except on certain occasions during the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), and only within the Temple in Jerusalem.

That Friday, hundreds of thousands of worshippers and Khomeini followers assembled in a vast sea of devotion. As the call to prayer rang out across the open space, the crowd moved in unison, prostrating themselves low to the ground, all facing the direction of Khomeini. In the midst of this powerful moment, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Hershberg stood upright, refusing to kneel—even as his fellow Christian clergymen did.

His quiet act of defiance evoked a powerful historical parallel: in ancient Persia, another Mordechai had likewise refused to bow before a man of power—Haman. Now, in modern Iran, Rabbi Hershberg stood firm before a different but equally imposing figure, Ayatollah Khomeini, embodying the enduring Jewish commitment to faith and principle.

A visibly irritated cleric approached Rabbi Hershberg and demanded, "Why did you not show respect? Why did you not bow like the others?"

Calmly and without provocation, Rabbi Hershberg explained that his refusal was not meant as an insult, but stemmed from religious law and personal conviction. He noted that he did not understand the Arabic being spoken, making any outward gesture of submission not only meaningless but, according to Jewish law, potentially idolatrous.

His composed and principled response defused the tension. The cleric, though storming off at first, returned moments later with an astonishing message: "The Ayatollah requests your presence."

The gravity of the moment was not lost on Rabbi Hershberg. With a silent prayer on his lips, he accepted his fate and was led to meet the man who was rapidly emerging as one of the most powerful—and feared—leaders in the world.

To his surprise, Ayatollah Khomeini greeted him with unexpected respect. Turning to a translator, Khomeini spoke in Persian: "Thank the rabbi for not pretending to be what he is not. I respect that he remained true to his faith and did not bow as the others did."

Rabbi Hershberg responded without hesitation: "Our Torah commands us, 'You shall not bow down.' I could not, in good conscience, take part in an act that I neither fully understood nor believed in."

Khomeini nodded and replied, "This I can respect. A man must follow his faith. That is the way of the righteous."

Sensing a rare and divinely orchestrated opening, Rabbi Hershberg acted immediately. Realizing he had gained favor in the Ayatollah's eyes, he requested a longer audience to discuss the welfare of Iran's Jewish community. Khomeini agreed and instructed his son, Ahmed, to arrange a follow-up meeting in Qom—the spiritual heart of Shiite Islam.

The moment echoed another from Jewish history: like Queen Esther who found favor in the eyes of King Achashverosh and requested a second audience, Rabbi Hershberg stood before the ruler of a modern Persian empire, using the opportunity to advocate for his people.

At the subsequent meeting in Qom, Rabbi Hershberg raised several pressing concerns regarding the wellbeing of Iran's Jewish community. At the time, Iran was home to nearly 100,000 Jews—the largest Jewish population in the Muslim world. Jews had lived in Persia continuously since the Babylonian Exile over 2,500 years earlier, making it the oldest uninterrupted Jewish community in existence.

Prior to the 1979 revolution, Iranian Jews enjoyed relative freedom, with many holding prominent roles in business, medicine, and other professional fields.

Amid the revolutionary chaos, however, the situation changed dramatically. Members of the Revolutionary Guards began confiscating religious items bearing the Star of David, wrongly associating the ancient Jewish symbol with the modern State of Israel. During the meeting, Rabbi Hershberg clarified that the Star of David was a sacred emblem of Jewish identity, deeply rooted in history and entirely distinct from contemporary political affiliations.

Impressed by the rabbi's explanation, Ayatollah Khomeini agreed to issue directives permitting Jews to retain their religious symbols without interference. Rabbi Hershberg also secured critical religious concessions, including permission to use wine for Sabbath and festival rituals—despite Islam's prohibition on alcohol—and an exemption allowing Jews to attend early morning *Selichot* prayers, even during the strict curfew hours then in effect.

In further meetings with Iranian officials, Rabbi Hershberg received assurances that Jews would not be persecuted or harassed solely on account of their religious identity, and that they would be allowed to continue practicing Judaism openly within the framework of the new Islamic Republic. In private conversations, he reminded Iran's leaders of the long-standing Jewish presence in Persia, reaching back to the time of King Cyrus and Queen Esther. He appealed not to political interests but to shared history and mutual respect, embodying the principle of *Darchei Shalom*—the pursuit of peace.

Through these tireless efforts, Rabbi Hershberg protected not only the material safety but also the spiritual continuity of Iran's Jewish community during one of the most volatile moments in its history.

Hershberg's presence in Iran in 1979 is more than a historical footnote; it is a powerful testament to the enduring values of the Jewish people. - In a time of chaos and extremism, he upheld the principles of faith, dignity, and peace. Without weapons, armies, or

political leverage, he confronted fear with wisdom and prejudice with moral clarity. His story is a reminder that even in the darkest times, one person's conviction can make a difference—not only for their own self-preservation, but for the welfare of the wider community and serve as an example for generations to come.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Fischel Schachter said that he was once taking a bag of garbage through his backyard to throw it away in in the garbage can, when for no apparent reason, the bottom of the bag ripped open, and garbage spilled all over his yard. He was frustrated, but he went to get a broom to clean it up.

When he came back with the broom, he saw that some animals had come out and were eating from the garbage that had spilled, and he realized that Hashem had wanted these animals to have Parnasah, and have what to eat that day. He waited for them to finish, and he then swept up the rest.

He went to get a hose to wash away the crumbs that were left, and when he came back, he saw that some bugs had come out and were eating from the crumbs, and he realized that Hashem wanted the bugs to have Parnasah, and this was their food. He waited until the bugs had finished, and he then sprayed the yard with water to wash it down a little from the mess.

He went to put the hose away, and when he came back, he saw some birds had come to drink from the water he had sprayed, and he realized that Hashem wanted these birds to have water to drink. He then understood why his bag of garbage had to break open in the first place. It was so that Hashem could provide for all of His creations!

Short Story of The Week by Yoni Shwartz

When forming a minyan, technically, not all people have to have not yet davened. However, the **Ribnitzer Rebbe, ZT"L**, had an interesting custom to only daven with a minyan where all ten hadn't davened yet.

One late night at his shul, they were struggling to get a tenth man. His gabbai stood outside asking the passersby if they had not yet davened. Unfortunately, most of them had. Then a boy heard the gabbai's call, said that he hadn't davened yet, and came in.

The Rebbe was making his preparations before davening when he sensed something funny. Somehow, he knew that one of the ten had davened already, so he asked out loud if anyone had already said Maariv. The boy who had just walked in said that it was him, so the gabbai went back out and found somebody else.

After davening, the Rebbe asked the boy for mechilah, saying, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to single you out. I just knew somebody had davened already."

The boy, with tears dripping down his cheeks, said, "Rebbe, why are you apologizing? That was an incredibly meaningful moment."

The Rebbe responded, "I'm sorry; I'm not sure what you mean."

The boy looked at the Rebbe with his glassy, water-filled eyes and said, "All my life, I didn't think my prayers counted for anything! I mean… why would they? I rush through davening each time, skip words, and I rarely have kavannah. When I was asked if I had davened, I said, 'No,' because I didn't think that my Maariv counted for anything in Heaven, so I genuinely meant it. However, now that I see that my prayers actually count for something, that they really do mean something to Hashem. This is one of the most meaningful moments in my life!"



In The Footsteps of Our Leaders



At one of the Yarchei Kallah gatherings of the Ponovezh Yeshivah, the Rosh Yeshivah, **Reb Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman**, shared with the participants a personal story that took place many years earlier.

When he was still a *bachur* in the **Chofetz Chaim**'s yeshiva in Radin, he had a *chavrusah-shaft* with a *bachur* who at first he thought was just a few steps behind him. But, as time went by, he realized that the *bachur* wasn't just a few steps behind but a few *stories* behind him. Reb Kahaneman was way advanced in the *sugya*, and his *chavrusah* was still trying to grasp the very basics. He continued in the *chavrusah-shaft* until the day came when he just couldn't go on. He felt that it would benefit both of them to break it off. So, he approached his *chavrusah*, and in a warm tone of voice, shared with him that he was parting the *shaft*. This was challenging for his *chavrusah*, but he accepted the reality.

Late that night, as Reb Kahaneman was learning in the *ezras nashim*, he heard weeping sounds coming from the main *beis midrash*. As the clock was ticking, the noise grew louder and louder. Reb Kahaneman

got onto his tippy toes and made his way quietly into the main *beis midrash*. There, he saw a figure from behind the *Paroches* with his face tucked into the *Aron Kodesh*.

"As I inched my way up," described Reb Kahaneman, "I was shocked at what I saw. It was my former *chavrusah*. From between the cries, I heard him plea, 'Only You, Hashem, know how much I want to learn, and how I desire to grow in my Torah learning.' Hearing those words pierced a hole right through my heart."

But what he heard next was the straw that broke the camel's back. "*Ana Hashem*," the *chavrusah* pleaded. "*B'Rachamechah harabim* — Please, Hashem, in Your infinite compassion, place a change of heart in my *chavrusah* so that he should continue learning with me." When Reb Kahaneman heard that, he knew that there were no two ways about it; he couldn't leave such a *mevakeish* lingering without a *chavrusah*. He would have to build up the courage and find the strength to continue their bond, one way or another.

The next morning, they were back to sitting in their same seats as they had been the day before. And although the learning didn't go so easy for Reb Kahaneman, he knew that he was doing the right thing. That filled him with joy.

That encounter escalated the *chavrusah* to a different plane entirely. Once they started learning again, the *chavrusah* started to see fruit from his labor like never before. Day in and day out, they learned together, and each day he saw significant improvement.

Before concluding the story, Reb Kahaneman said, "I cannot divulge who this *bachur* was, but one thing I *can* say is that before I deliver my *shiur klali* in the yeshivah, I check his *sefer* to see that my words are in line with his. He turned out to be one of the leading *roshei yeshivah* of this past generation.

"You have no idea what's awaiting you," concluded the Ponovezher Rav, "by not succumbing to the challenges posed before you. By his

determination and perseverance, he made it up to the top, and so can you. There is gold behind each challenge."

Sometime later, **Reb Simcha Kook**, the Rav of Rechovot, spoke in Har Nof and recounted this story, as he had been present when the Ponovezher Rav had delivered this account. However, Reb Simcha added one point: "As I was returning home from that Yarchei Kallah, I escorted the Rav to his house. When I got to his front door, I stood in the entrance way and demanded that the Rav tell me who that man was. And he did.

"But," concluded Reb Simcha, "I cannot disclose his name. Trust me — he was one of our greatest leaders, and that's what I'm leaving you with tonight."

But Reb Yonah Steinhouse, one of the participants at that *shiur*, wasn't going to leave this story lingering like a wet towel. He, too, was eager to find out who the *chavrusah* had been. So, he imitated his *rebbi*, and at Reb Simcha's door, he stood and insisted on knowing who that man was. Reb Simcha told him that it was the renowned **Reb Elchonon Wasserman**. - *Now, that is gadlus.*



R' Shimshon Pincus was quoted once as having said: "*If you would find out that you were mistaken in thinking that you are Jewish – that you are actually a gentile, what is the first thing that you would do? –*

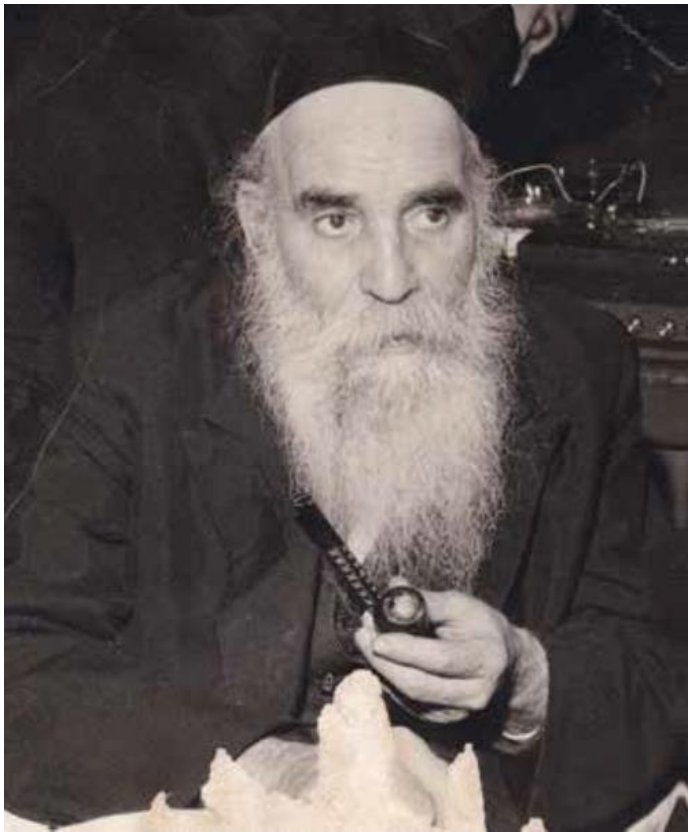
Each person gave a different answer of things that are forbidden to them that they wished they could do.

R' Shimshon answered, "*If I would be able allowed to do what a Jew can't do, I would go up to the Temple mount and bring a korban.*"



Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov

The Gaon, Chossid and Tzadik, Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov Zt'L (Yartzeit Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av 5737/1977) was a distinguished Rav, a master of Nigleh, and at the same time, an enthusiastic Chossid and emissary of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe. He later became a true *mekushar* to The Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel).



He was born in a small town named Yokshitz near Babroisk on the 7th of Menachem Av in 5646 (1886). From a young age, his father Rabbi Avrohom Dov, a chasid of the Rebbe Maharash, would bring him along on his trips to Lubavitch, and on one such trip, he decided to leave young Yitzchok to study in the cheder there. He was a young child of nine or ten years old at the time. From that day until his marriage, Reb Yitzchok had the merit to be in constant and close proximity to the Rebbe Rashab and Frierdiker Rebbe.

Even during his younger years when he was too young to understand the maamarim of the Rebbe Rashab, he was profoundly impacted by his presence. Young Yitzchok and his cheder friends would often spend their breaks standing unobtrusively behind the Rebbe Rashab's wall. The structure was thin and sounds easily carried through, so the children were able to listen to the Rebbe Rashab's davening, which was often conducted at great length, accompanied by many dveikus niggunim.

On one occasion, Reb Yitzchok later recalled, the Rebbe Rashab spent 45 minutes reciting just from the word echad until the end of

Baruch sheim! At the age of 14, Yitzchok joined Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim. Six blissful years passed for Reb Yitzchok in the yeshiva.

He excelled in his studies and was a considerable Gaon in both nigleh and Chassidus by the time of his marriage.

Reb Yitzchok married Zlata Swerdlov in 5671 (1911) and accepted a Rabbinic post in Penza (Russia). Over the next 11 years, he served as Rav in several Russian cities. One story about his rabbanus demonstrates Reb Yitzchok's strong character: Reb Yitzchok once received a shaila regarding an animal's kashrus. The shochet felt that there were grounds to disqualify the animal, but the butcher feared a major loss and threatened to slander Reb Yitzchok to the government if he ruled against him. This was no empty threat. Nonetheless, Reb Yitzchok paskened that it was treif, picked up a handful of the animal's innards and threw it at the butcher!

Fearing retribution, Reb Yitzchok fled to Rostov/Lubavitch, where Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah gave him lodging in a room in the Rebbe Rashab's home. While there, he heard a knock at the front door. Listening closely, he heard a police officer from the GPU ask the person who opened the door if Yitzchok Dubov was home, "we have come to arrest him."

Immediately, he jumped out the back window and hid in a barn for several days, while the secret police combed the city searching for him. After the Soviets lessened their surveillance, Reb Yitzchok left Rostov and took on the position of Rav of Pandel (a city near Moscow). He was very involved in saving Jewish boys from the army. It wasn't long before the government heard about his activities and caught up with him again.

Once again, he had to flee town, running for his life. Reb Yitzchok realised that he had no other recourse but to leave Russia for good. Reb Yitzchok fled to Riga (Latvia) where he was invited to serve as Rav of the "Russian minyan." For the next seven years, Reb Yitzchok lived in Riga and finally found some peace and tranquillity after

having lived in oppression for so long. He had parnassa, peace of mind and freedom.

Riga was close to the city of Dvinsk – the residence of **The Rogotchover Gaon.** This gave Reb Yitzchok the opportunity to meet and become friendly with the renowned Torah genius. Reb Yitzchok received semicha from him, and the Gaon relied on him for all halachic matters.

During this period, there was a gathering of Rabbonim at which the Rogotchover sat together with the Misnagdim. When Reb Yitzchok entered and approached the Gaon, the Rogotchover was happy to see him and said, "Ah, finally a Chosid has come!"

Once Reb Yitzchok was the recipient of the Rogochover's well known irascible tendency. In discussing some halachic issues, the Gaon as he was wont, gave a very difficult and deep explanation on the topic. When Reb Yitzchok 'dared' ask him to repeat himself, the Gaon responded testily, "*Bok* [oaf], what's with you?!"



On one of the Gaon's visits to Riga, the Rogochover was greeted by a large throng of people at the train station. He was besieged by many questions in Talmud and halacha. He abruptly turned to the crowd and asked, "Who's here, Chasidim or Misnagdim?"

The crowd, which was composed of both, were quite surprised by the question. Meanwhile, the Gaon continued with the following reasoning, "If there are Misnagdim- ther's no reason to answer their

questions, and if there are Chasidim, well one can just pass some *mashkeh*, say a bracha, and we will answer Amein!"

Reb Yitzchok's stay in Riga came to an abrupt end due to his tremendous *mesiras nefesh*. In 5687, Reb Yitzchok had the opportunity to be involved in the Frierdiker Rebbe's release from Soviet Russia. It was shortly after Yud-Beis Tammuz and Chassidim understood that the Frierdiker Rebbe was still in grave danger and needed to leave the Soviet Union immediately.

Reb Mordechai Dubin, a Chossid and prominent member of the Latvian parliament, was leading the rescue efforts in Riga. He attempted to arrange a visa for the Frierdiker Rebbe to immigrate to Latvia but was faced with various challenges. At one point, he had an idea to have all the local rabbanim invite the **Frierdiker Rebbe** to serve as their chief rabbi.

Reb Yitzchok was the one who made it happen. From morning to evening, he ran from one Rav to the next, requesting, cajoling and convincing them all to sign the letter. Ultimately, their efforts bore fruit and the Latvian government agreed to issue this visa.

With the Frierdiker Rebbe now in Riga, Reb Yitzchok merited to be in close proximity to him. They would often speak in learning together, and the Rebbe showed a great friendship towards him, and said that all halachic questions should be directed to Rabbi Dubov.

During this time period, Rabbi Dubov merited to become acquainted with a young man who made a deep impression on him – none other than The Ramash – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Shneersohn. Twenty-two years later, in 5710 (1950) Reb Yitzchok was amongst those who crowned him as Rebbe. Reb Yitzchok said, "*And even though he doesn't want it, we must crown him as Rebbe, as it is clear to me that he is perfectly suited for the position, as I knew him well back in Riga.*"



Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov in his younger years as Rav in Riga.

Reb Yitzchok gave up his own position as Rav of Riga for the Rebbe, saving the Rebbe's life. The Rebbe Rayatz appointed Reb Yitzchok Dubov as his official personal emissary. Reb Yitzchok left Riga (5688/1928) to travel to a distant unknown land – Manchester, England. There he became a Rav and Baal Tefillah (Adass Yisrael Nusach Ari shul) and a Magid Shiur and Mashgiach in the Manchester [Litvish] Yeshiva. He lived in Manchester for over 50 years until his death.

Reb Yitzchok was a talented composer and a powerful baal tefillah and baal menagen. He retained many of the niggunim he learned in Lubavitch, and in many cases, was the only link transmitting those niggunim to Chassidim of our day. When the Frierdiker Rebbe heard a niggun he had chosen, he noted that according to the Alter Rebbe, this was a niggun that… "***makes the neshama shudder!***" This occurrence later became a tradition. Whenever Reb Yitzchok would come to visit 770, the Rebbe would ask him to sing a niggun during the first farbrengen where he was present. This occurred every time without fail.

On Shabbos Yud Shevat 5710 (1950) the Frierdiker Rebbe passed away. Reb Yitzchok Dubov was at the petirah and rushed over on Motzei Shabbos and was present throughout the *tahara* (in which only temimim from Lubavitch were permitted to participate) and the preparations for the levaya. Amidst the pain of the terrible loss, Reb Yitzchok immediately began thinking about the future. Rabbi Dubov had been deeply connected to both the Rebbe Rashab and the

Rebbe Rayatz and recognised that Rabbi Menachem Mendel would be a worthy successor and be the next leader of Chabad Lubavitch.

As soon as heard about the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Avrohom Sender Nemtzov sent a telegram of consolation to 770 which he concluded with the words, "*May Hashem console us with Menachem.*" In this way, he expressed the anticipation and hopes of the Chassidim that the Rebbe succeed the Rebbe Rayatz and accept the mantle of leadership of Chabad. Three days after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Dubov asked the Rebbe to accept the nesius and the Rebbe reacted sharply, "What do you think, [Menachem Mendel] is a Rebbe?"

Yud Shevat 5711 (1951) marked the end of the year of mourning, and it was nearly certain that the Rebbe would accept the nesius even though he had refused to give prior official notice. The Yud Shevat farbrengen was scheduled for Motzaei that day. Many Chassidim went to 770 and crowded into the small shul. In the first sicha, the Rebbe spoke about hiskashrus to the Rebbe Rayatz. In the second sicha there was a more open hint. The Rebbe said, "Here in America people like to hear a statement, a declaration that is novel and preferably sensational. I don't know whether there is a need for things to be done in this way, but 'when you come to a town, follow its customs.' - ***The novel thing is that we need to ensure that every Jew has the three loves — the love of G-d, the love of the Torah and love toward a fellow Jew."***

Reb Yitzchok's hiskashrus to the Rebbe was unwavering. He had an incredible love for everything from the Rebbe. When the first volume of Likutei Sichos was published, he kissed it when it arrived in the mail, and decided that he would study it every week along with being maavir sedrah.

The Rebbe exhibited great respect and esteem for Reb Yitzchok. Once when Reb Yitzchok came in late for a febrengen, the Rebbe

demonstrated that he had taken notice by slightly lifting himself up in his seat.

When Reb Leizer Nanas came to America for the first time, he said to the Rebbe that the appearance of Chabad Chasidim was not the same as they were back in Lubavitch, and that he hadn't merited to see a true Chasid for quite some time. The Rebbe told him to travel to Manchester in England to see Rabbi Dubov- "He is a real *Tziur* (image) of a genuine Lubavitcher Chasid, who has not changed in over 40 years! the Rebbe explained: '*A kuk ton oyf Itche Yokshitzer iz oichet a inyan*, to see Itche Yokshitzer (Reb Yitzchok's nickname) is also significant.'



It was through the yeshiva where Reb Yitzchok made his most lasting impact. He would deliver a 'fartzeitishe shiur,' where he focused on Gemara, Rashi, Tosfos, and basic mefarshim like Maharsha and others. The bochurim enjoyed it immensely." Reb Yitzchok didn't allow his role to remain in the realm of nigleh. He constantly utilized his relationships with the bochurim to teach them Chassidus and to connect them with the Rebbe. He maintained a daily shiur Tanya with the bochurim and used every opportunity to teach them messages of Chassidus.

Reb Yehoshua Ozer Halperin of Manchester was learning in the Yeshiva as a young 14-year-old boy. When it was time for shiur, all the bochurim left the beis hamedresh to go to shiur except him.

Rabbi Dubov came over to him and asked him why he wasn't going into shiur. Yehoshua Ozer said, "I've not yet officially been accepted into yeshiva."

Rabbi Dubov replied to him, "I've been Maggid Shiur and Mashgiach here for over 40 years, I came to the yeshiva for trial run, and I'm also still awaiting to be officially accepted…! "

I remember Davening as a 10–14-year-old in Adass Yisroel Shul where Rabbi Dubov was the Rav. My Oppapa Mr Oscar Grunsfeld Zt'l was the gabbai. I was zoche to sit less then 4ft directly in front of him at mizrach. I can honestly say that I have never been so frightened by the holy sight of that great man.

On erev Yom Kippur, he gave his *gartel* to Oppapa to give him Malkus (as is the minhag). My zeide did not want to hurt the great Gadol, so he tapped him on the knuckles very lightly as a token gesture. Rabbi Dubov was such an *Anav* and Gadol, that he said to my grandfather, "No, that's not good enough – hit me harder, I must feel the pain!"

Several large Lubavitch families in England today attribute their connection with the Rebbe to Reb Yitzchok, and a number of the Manchester bochurim later went on to study in 770 and become shluchim of the Rebbe. Even those who didn't continue on to Lubavitch harboured a profound respect for their distinguished mashgiach. "Even the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Segal, studied Tanya with Reb Yitzchok on a daily basis," says Rabbi Avraham Jaffe. "And until this very day, Reb Yitzchok's former (Litvisher) talmidim arrange a minyan at his gravesite each year on his yahrzeit, to honour his memory."

"The key to his relationship with the local misnagdisher community was respect," says Rabbi Chaim Rapoport. "In addition to his authenticity and his avodas Hashem, Reb Yitzchok was a warm person who showed respect to everyone he encountered, never belittling or demeaning anyone, no matter how much he disagreed with them."

For many years, Reb Yitzchok would visit 770 at least once each year. He was no youngster; these trips took place through his seventies and eighties, but he was never too tired to make the trip. During farbrengens that he was present, the Rebbe would usually ask him to begin a niggun.

As Reb Yitzchok progressed in age, his eyesight began to fail him. Once when he was in New York, his son approached the Rebbe during a farbrengen and asked the Rebbe for a bracha on his behalf. The Rebbe said that he would deal with it in their yechidus the following night.

The next night, the Rebbe told Reb Yitzchok that he won't begin seeing immediately because everyone is waiting outside to see the bracha materialize and they will say that this is the only reason you came here. But one morning, the Rebbe said, Reb Yitzchok would wake up and his eyesight would be restored, and he would be able to start davening from the siddur again three times daily.

During his last visit to the Rebbe for Yud Shevat 5735, he was quite weak, and the Rebbe asked him to sit during the yechidus. For Reb Yitzchok, sitting during a yechidus was unthinkable. He told the Rebbe that he wouldn't sit; if he needed support, he would lean on the Rebbe's desk.

Reb Yitzchok's eightieth birthday fell out during a visit to New York (Av 5726/1966). During a farbrengen, he approached the Rebbe with some mashkeh and shared that he had reached 80 years of age, and the Rebbe blessed him to become a "*ben tishim*," to reach 90 years as well. Indeed, Reb Yitzchok passed away on Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av 5738, several days before his 91st birthday. The day before his passing, he related that there are two merits that he is bringing along to the next world. First, that he helped bring the Frierdiker Rebbe out of Soviet Russia, and second, that he had a hand in the *hachtara* of the Rebbe.

Literally thousands of ex-talmidim all over the world remember his noble spirit and kindness with which he sought to plant in them his love of Torah and Chasidus. He expressed his distaste for those who would talk during davening. His spirit of Ahavas Yisrael and warmth was felt by all those who came into contact with him.

Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov was loved and respected by all – Chosid and non- Chosid alike. Z'Y'A

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Rashi



Being that Rashi's Yartzheit (29th Tamuz) is approaching, we will discuss this great man. In the year 1039, a man named Yitzchak possessed a very precious gem. He went to sell the precious stone to the local jeweller. Since the jeweller didn't have enough money to pay for it, he suggested to the bishop that he buy it. The bishop offered a huge amount of money for it as he wanted to put it on his idol. When hearing that this is why the bishop wanted the gem, Yitzchak refused to sell it. He knew, however, that if he did not sell the stone, it would be taken from him forcibly. He therefore threw it into the sea.

A Heavenly Voice then resounded: "For this great sacrifice you will be blessed with a son that will outshine all the precious stones in the world, and the light of his Torah will shine forever." The following year a son was born to him who he named Shlomo (Rashi), saying, may Hashem grant me wisdom like unto King Shlomo.

R' Shlomo Yitzchaki- also known as Rashi- who was an only child, was born in Troyes which is about 25 miles from Paris. His mother's

brother was the Rav of Mainz, who was a disciple of Rabbanu Gershom. On his father's side, Rashi has been claimed to be a 33rd generation descendant of R' Yochanan Hasandler who descended from Dovid Hamelech.

Rashi's father was his main Torah teacher until his death when Rashi was still a youth. At the age of 17 he married and soon after went to learn in the Yeshiva of R' Yaakov Ben Yakar (a student of Rabbenu Gershom) in Worms, returning to his wife three times yearly- for the Yomim Noraim, Pesach and Shavuos.

At the age of 25 he returned to his hometown where he continued to study on his own. Rashi was elected Rabbi of his town Troyes, but he did not accept any wages. He earned his living from the sale of wine, just like his father had.

Rashi returned to Troyes with notebooks and from those notebooks he developed his commentary. In his humility, Rashi distributed his first draft of his commentary to the Gemara anonymously under the simple title of **קונטרוס** - notebook. In later generations, Rashi himself would be referred to as **קונטרוס** as we see many times in Tosafos.

Rashi hesitated to come out into the open with his commentary so that it would be favourably received. What did he do? He wrote his commentaries on slips of parchment and set out on a two years' journey, visiting the various Yeshivos of those days. He went 'incognito,' never disclosing his identity. Rashi would come to a Yeshivah and sit down to listen to the Shiur being given.

At a certain point the Rebbe came to a difficult passage in the Gemara which he struggled to explain. When Rashi was left alone, he took the slip with his commentary, in which that passage of the Gemara was explained simply and clearly and put it into the Gemara of Rebbe. On the following morning, when the Rebbe opened his Gemara, he found a mysterious slip of parchment in which the Gemara was so clearly and simply explained that he was amazed. He

told his students about it, and they all decided it must have been sent from heaven.

Rashi was very happy to know how useful it was to the students, but he did not say that it was his.

And so Rashi went on visiting numerous Yeshivos in various lands and cities where he planted his slips of commentaries secretly. Being that these slips were well received, it made Rashi realize how needed they were. He continued to write his commentaries on the entire Chumash, Navi and the Mesachtos of Shas. Although these "mysterious" slips of parchment were copied and widely circulated throughout Yeshivos, nobody knew who the author was. The secret was out when Rashi was discovered planting a slip of his commentary. Immediately he was celebrated by all as the great author of that wonderful commentary.

Rashi's commentary has been acclaimed for his ability to present the basic meaning of the text in a concise and lucid fashion. The study of the Torah and Gemara is now almost unthinkable without the aid of Rashi's explanation. Rashi's commentary on the Chumash is the essential companion for anyone who studies it at any level. Drawing on the breadth of Midrashic and Talmudic literature as well as his knowledge of Hebrew grammar and Halacha, Rashi clarifies the simple meaning of the text so that a bright child of five could understand it.

At the same time, his commentary forms the foundation for profound legal analysis and mystical discourses that came after it. Commentators debate why Rashi chose a particular Midrash to illustrate a point or why he used certain words and phrases and not others.

It has been said that **רשי** forms an acronym for **רבן של ישראל**

In the last years of his life, Rashi lived to see troubled times. It was the period of the crusaders, when thousands of Jews were

massacred by angry mobs that participated in the crusades and wiped out whole communities on their way.

Rashi passed away in 1105 at the age of 65. His sons-in-law and grandchildren- including R' Tam and the Rashbam- were famous scholars and commentators of the Torah and Gemara. Rashi's grandsons and students were the authors of Tosafos.

Peninim Al Hatorah

ויאיר בן מנשה הלך וילכד את חותיהם ויקרא אתהן חוותיאיר. ונבח הלך וילכד את קנת ואת בנתיה ויקרא לה נבח בשמו *Yair ben Menashe, went and conquered their villages and called them Chavos Yair. Novach went and conquered Kenas and its suburbs and called it Novach after his own name.* (32:41,42)

Yair had no children to carry on his name. Therefore, after conquering the villages, he named them after himself as a memorial. Novach also conquered villages. He, too, named them after himself. Only, in this situation, we observe a disparity in the naming process.

Rashi indicates that, in the word "lah," the letter "hay" is not marked with a dagesh, dot. The fact that the dagesh is missing indicates a weakening of the possessive message implied by the "hay." Rashi quotes **Rabbi Moshe HaDarshan** who explains that, since the name Novach did not endure for long, the word lah was weakened, so that it sounds more like la (with an aleph), which means "not."

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, notes that every dot in the Torah is present for a reason; every dot teaches us a lesson. What important lesson is imparted by the missing dot? Why is it important for us to be aware that the city of Novach did not retain its name for an extended time? In contrast, the Chavos Yair, thirty cities conquered by Yair ben Menashe and named for him still carry the name he gave them – Chavos Yair. Wherein lay the difference between the "naming's"?

Property is often called by its owner's name to indicate possession. He wants people to know that he conquered it, he built it. It is his. Thus, Yair named the cities Chavos Yair to inform everyone that he had built these cities.

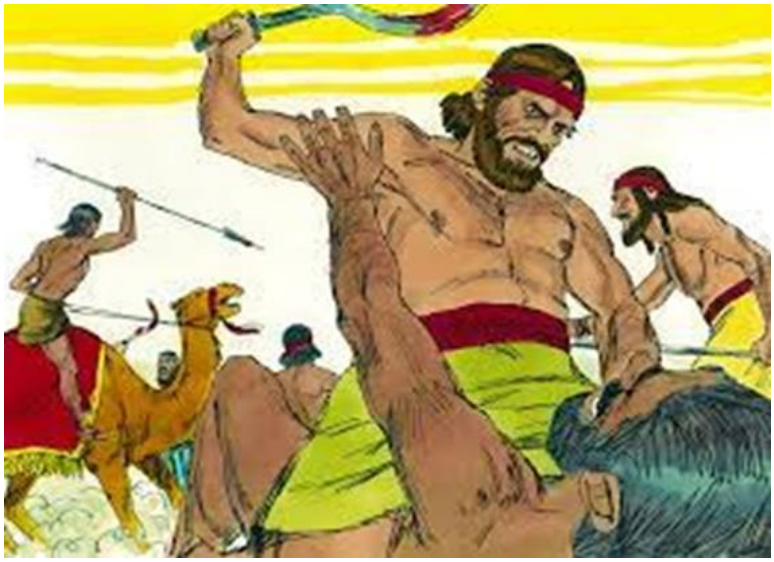
Novach also wanted to indicate possession, but his message was, "Yes, it is my city, but, actually, it is more than my city. It is Novach city. I and my city are one and the same." Novach identified completely with his property. This is inappropriate.

One may identify with possessions, but not to the point that he and his material abundance are one and the same. Thus, the city did not retain the name Novach. As all physical entities are temporal, so, too, was the name Novach; here today – gone tomorrow. While Novach was censured for identifying himself so closely with his material abundance, a person who identifies with ruchniyos, spirituality, becomes elevated. One who identifies with his spiritual demeanour takes on a new image.

He may have a physical body, but his essence is ruchniyos. The greatest blessing is to become one with Hashem, His Torah and mitzvos.

Torah U' Tefilah- Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וַיִּקְצֹף מֹשֶׁה עַל פְּקוּדֵי הֶחָיִל ***Moshe got angry at the officers for not following instructions and he spoke to them*** (31:14). **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin** (Oznayim LaTorah) observes that Moshe did not speak to them in his state of anger. Instead, he waited for his anger to subside and then he spoke to them in a soft-spoken manner. If we speak when we are angry then we tend to speak more harshly and irrationally. But, if we follow Moshe's lead and wait to react, we can have a more successful conversation, as well as a chance for our opinions to be heard.



Torah Tavlin

וְאֶת־מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן הָרְגוּ עַל־חַלְלֵיהֶם
And they killed the Midianite kings upon their slain 31:8

R' Chaim Aryeh Leib Fenster zt"l (Shaar Bas Rabim) says: The words **עַל־ חַלְלֵיהֶם** - 'on their slain ones' seem to be superfluous?

Instead of on their slain ones, it should have said 'Im challeleihem' - with their slain ones. However, seeing the strength of the Jewish people, the kings of Midyan realized that their chances of survival were slim. In order to save themselves, they deviously crept in among the slain, hoping that the Jews would think that they were also dead and not touch them. Fortunately, their plan failed and the Jews, seeing through their deception, killed them while they were laying **על** - 'on their slain ones.'

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

When the **Ksav Sofer** was in his early 20's, his father, the **Chasam Sofer**, requested that the Ksav Sofer take over his daily Shiur. At first, the Talmidim were surprised about this, but them they were amazed at the genius of his Shiurim, and they praised him highly to the Chasam Sofer.

The Chasam Sofer replied with great happiness, "Do you think that I was Zocheh to have such a child without tears? You should know that from the day he was born, not a Tefilah passed without my crying many warm tears that he succeeds in learning Torah. This is the secret of his Hatzlachah!"

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo



The months of July and August, when we experience the three weeks of mourning, are the only two months named after Roman Emperors! Julius Caesar and Augustus the Emperor were powerful rulers from Edom - Rome. This golus is called "Golus Edom" and it is the longest and harshest exile our people have ever experienced. We must do what we can to remove the power and influence of the goyim, especially at this time of "**בין המצרים**" when it is at its zenith.

When Yitzchok Avinu wished to bless Yaakov, thinking that he was Esav, he said: "**הקל קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו**" - "***The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Esav***."

Interestingly, the word "**קל**" is spelled without a "**ו**" while the second word "**קול**" (the same word) is spelled with it.

The Vilna Gaon zt"l explains that herein lies the secret to our failure or success vis-à-vis the nations of the world! We must read it as such: " **הקל קול יעקב** " - When the voice of Yaakov is **קל** (weak) in Torah and Tefillah, then "**הידים ידי עשו**" - the weapons of Esav are strong and powerful. One is connected to the other.

When we are strong in Torah and Tefillah, which symbolizes the dialogue between Hashem and His people, our connection to Him is stronger. But when we slack off, our enemies and their physical power have the strength to cause us harm.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

כָּל־דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־יָבֹא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בָאֵשׁ 31:23



The Bais HaMikdash was destroyed with fire. Why fire? Because fire symbolizes anger and hatred. This is the cause for almost all the pain and suffering of Klal Yisroel. Everyone is affected by it, Chazal tell us **בבא מציעה קיד:** that only a Jew is called "**אדם**"; a gentile is not called **אדם**. Why?

Because all other words that mean "Man" can be pluralized. "**איש**" becomes "**אנשים**", "**גבר**" becomes "**גברים**" and even "**בן אדם**" becomes **בני אדם**. Only **אדם** cannot be made plural!

Only Klal Yisroel is called **אדם** because only Klal Yisroel is ONE PERSON. It's not you, me , he and she .... we are all one person! Some of us are the eyes, some of us are the brains, and some of us are the heart! But the bottom line is that whatever happens to you, happens to me, and if I don't feel your happiness or your pain, I am experiencing a major identity crisis! In truth I am you and you are me!

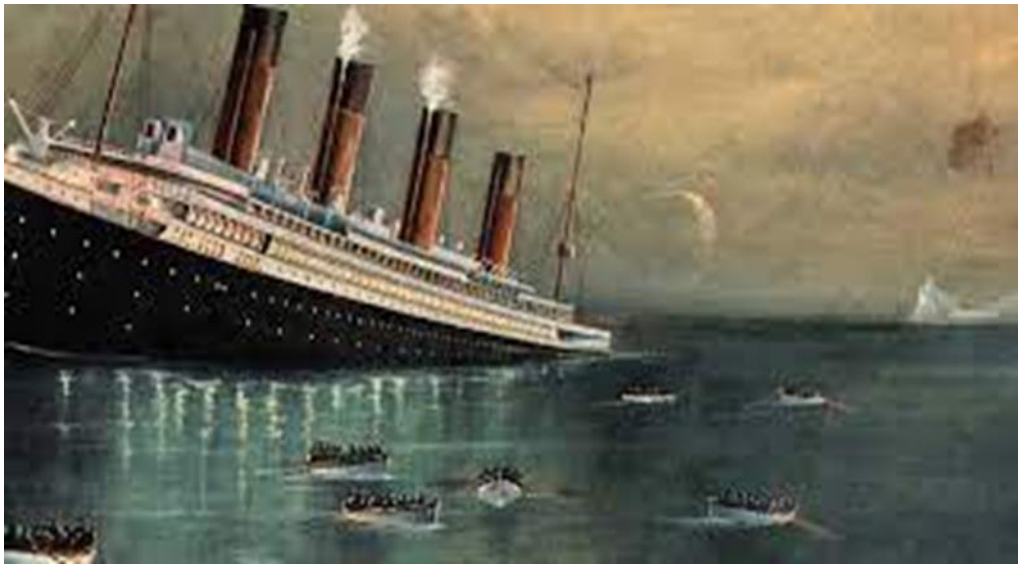
The fire that destroyed the Bais HaMikdash was a fire of hatred and disconnection; but fire can also be the conduit for warmth and a burning love for others. Fire can heat up a home, cook a delicious meal - it can even weld metal together! Fire can destroy and fire can connect.

A warm smile and a sincere compliment can light up one's day. One who has a fire burning in his heart for **קירבת אלקים** (closeness to

Hashem) and love for his fellow Jew, will rebuild the Bais HaMikdash with fire.

On Tisha B'av, we say the following words in Nachem: **בָּאֵשׁ הִצַּתָּהּ וּבָאֵשׁ אַתָּה עָתִיד לִבְנוֹתָהּ** "With fire, You set the Bais HaMikdash ablaze and with fire You will in the future rebuild." With a burning desire to truly identify as KLAL YISROEL, may we be zoche to see the third Bais HaMikdash come down from Heaven amidst the passionate fire of love that we create for all our fellow Jews.

Titanic



In the annals of history, one of the greatest tragedies to have occurred in the early half of the twentieth century, was the improbable sinking of the Titanic. Billed as the largest ship every created by the hand of man and considered "unsinkable" due to its many modern engineering upgrades and sea-faring capabilities. Over 1500 passengers drowned on that fateful night, although very few Jews were actually aboard or affected by the tragedy. One righteous man, upon the coded advice of his Rebbe, was spared the fate of all those who perished on the Titanic.

There was a wealthy chasid who was a fervent follower of the **Rebbe of Chortkov, R' Yisroel Friedman ZT"L**. He would always make the time to visit his Rebbe and seek his advice on many facets of his personal and professional life. Early in the spring of 1912, he was scheduled to travel overseas to the shores of the United States on

important business issues. As news of the completion of the huge passenger luxury liner, the H.M.S. Titanic, swept throughout the world, he decided to travel in style on the "grandest ship in her Majesty's fleet."

He purchased a ticket and prepared himself for his voyage. Of course, the man would not leave on such an important trip without first visiting his Rebbe in Chortkov and receiving a parting blessing.

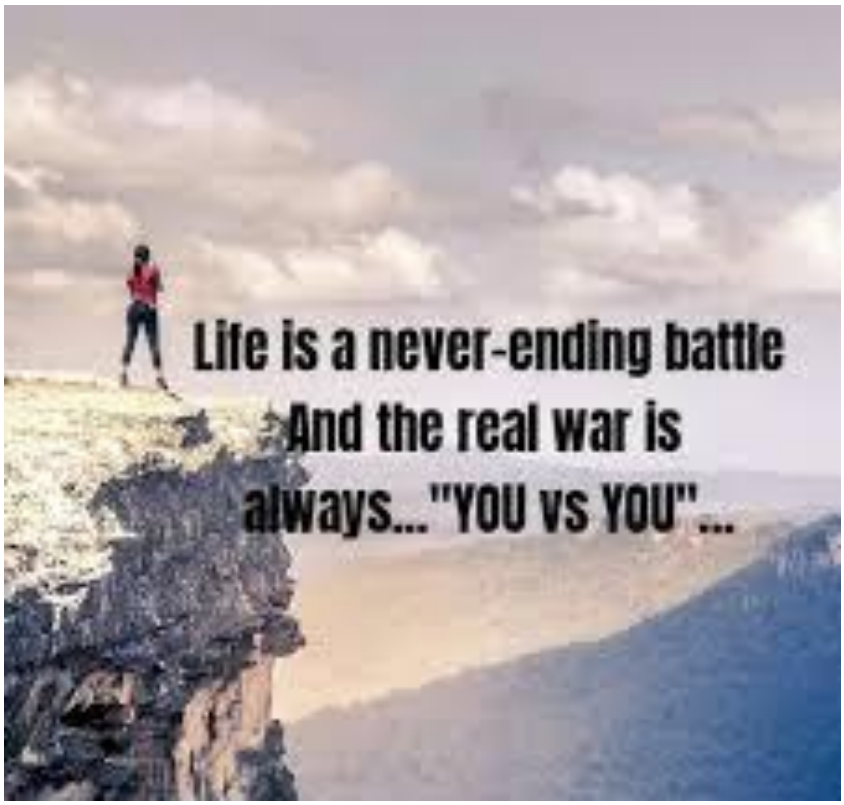
The Rebbe welcomed him in and they spoke for a few minutes before the chasid explained that he was planning to travel very soon to America. He requested a blessing for a successful trip and a safe passage back and forth. R' Yisroel listened quietly. Then, he looked at the chasid and cryptically replied: "Give my regards to the American G-d!" The chasid blinked hard in confusion and astonishment. Of all the things he was expecting to hear, he never dreamed of the unusual statement that the Chortkover Rebbe just said. He was totally at a loss and remained quiet.

Finally, R' Yisroel broke the silence. In a soft and wise voice, he told the man, "What I meant to say is that the same Gut (G-d) that can help you in America, can help you just the same here in Europe. Why do you feel that you must travel there in order to be successful? If Hashem intends to allow you to succeed, He will do the very same thing here!"

The chasid nodded in understanding. The Rebbe disapproved of his trip to America and was telling him not to go. As soon as he left the presence of the Chortkover, he cancelled his plans and returned home. How fortunate he was and how utterly amazed at the Ruach Hakodesh of his spiritual mentor, when the whole world, learned of the enormous tragedy and loss of life that took place just a few days later. His Emunas Chachamim was what saved his life from the ignominious fate of the Titanic.

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick - Going to war or coming from war?

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־אַנְשֵׁי הַצָּבָא הַבָּאִים לַמִּלְחָמָה



After we had already beaten Midyan in war, we are given laws about kashering utensils. This paragraph receives an interesting introduction; it starts with the words 'and Elazar the Kohen said to the people of the army who are coming TO war' (31;21). Shouldn't it be 'the people who came FROM war?'

The Chovas Halevavos explains that in life, the war never ends. One might think they have won a victory, but there is always a bigger battle coming – the battle with the yetzer hara.

Here, too, he points out that though the Bnei Yisrael won a physical war, they were now coming to the real war; the war with the yetzer hara to avoid haughtiness about their victory and to attribute it to HaShem.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Lazer Brody taught that when you pray with tears, you unlock the Heavenly gates; but when you pray with joy, there are no gates!

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick- Family Wealth



"The Reuvenites and the Gadites had a very large number of cattle … and they said: We will build sheepfolds here (outside the land of Israel) for our cattle and cities for our children … and Moshe said: Build cities for your children and then folds for your sheep" (BaMidbar 32:1,16,24).

Rashi comments that the Reuvenites and the Gadites mentioned their wealth ahead of their children, but Moshe rebuked them: What is of primary significance should be first, i.e. build cities for your children, and what is secondary should come later, i.e. then folds for your sheep!

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Vilna wonders how could the Reuvenites and the Gadites make such a blatant mistake as to prioritise their cattle over their children? Didn't they realise that family is much more important than wealth?

The Reuvenites and the Gadites knew that in the past 40 years of wandering in the desert they had experienced a life full of miracles and so they first said "We will build sheepfolds for our cattle", because their cattle would not warrant a miraculous protection. Only afterwards did they mention "cities for our children".

Moshe corrected them though, because from now on they would lead a natural existence and therefore the top priority would certainly be to build cities for the children! Sheepfolds would be much less important.

Penninim Al Hatorah

גדרת צאן נבנה למקננו וערים לטפנו Pens for the flocks shall we build here for our livestock and cities for our small children. (32:16)

The response tendered by Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven, "we will build pens for our flock and (then) cities for our small children," did not sit well with Moshe Rabbeinu. By prioritising the needs of the flock before those of the children, they were implying that the sheep had greater significance in their eyes than the children. Moshe immediately corrected their attitude. It is difficult to believe that such holy individuals as Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven would have misplaced priorities.

Horav A. Henach Leibowitz, zl, explains that addressing the needs of the flocks was indeed all for their children, but they got carried away. Concerned with their livelihood so they could better support their families, they became involved in raising animals. They became so involved that they lost sight of their goals, the children; and they turned their livelihood, the animals, into an end onto itself. As a result, they neglected to pay better (or at least equal) attention to their children.

A person's sensitivities are most often influenced by his actions. Indeed, a person cares most about something for which he has expended energy, effort and time.

The bottom line is that we all have our priorities, but we must neither misplace them, nor get carried away by them. Our families are all important and providing for them is essential, but at what expense?

Torah study is paramount, but so are our wives and children. There must be a balance in life, which the Torah provides – if we are willing to listen.

A Tefillah That Saved a Life and Changed a Life



"It's hard to describe the feelings I had as a participant in the Siyum HaShas that took place in America this past winter. It's hard to describe that special feeling of dancing together with tens of thousands of Yidden celebrating the seven-and-a-half-year cycle, during which they invested endless effort and energy in learning Torah until they completed the entire Shas."

This was the introduction presented by **Rabbi Yoel Gold** of Los Angeles to this remarkable story that occurred while he attended the Siyum HaShas at Metlife Stadium this past January.

"Among the thousands of celebrants at the event, an elderly Jew who was bent in stature but with a glowing countenance stood out in the crowd. He sat next to me throughout the long hours of the event. From time to time, my eyes rested on him, and towards the end of the event, when the crowd was singing thunderously and dancing enthusiastically in honour of the Torah, I was amazed to see him dancing with the energy of a man much younger. He danced together with his sons, grandsons and great grandchildren – four generations of ovdei Hashem who were clearly bnei Torah.

Their dancing was joined by a young non-Jew, who looked most incongruent in that setting. "The scene moved me deeply, especially when I saw the ethereal joy on the older man's face. I had to know the story behind this clearly fascinating person. I waited until after they finished dancing, and then approached the older man and asked if I could speak to him for a few moments. "He replied in the affirmative, and that is how I heard the amazing story of Rabbi Nosson Appelbaum, may he have many more healthy years."

This is what he related: My story begins when I was a young boy running around in one of the neighbourhoods of Brooklyn. I grew up on a typical Jewish American home, which in America of those days could be defined as a 'religious' home. We practiced many Jewish customs, especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov, but we did them without really understanding what we were doing. I learned in public school and had very little Jewish education. So I grew up knowing very little about my religion.

The date 17 Kislev 5702/ December 7, 1941, at the height of World War Two, became the day that will live in infamy, with the infamous attack on Pearl Harbour. Thousands of American soldiers perished, and extensive damage was wrought to the American Navy. As a result, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. The president issued a massive call-up of soldiers for the war, and I was in that draft. I was trained as a communications officer and was sent to serve on the island of Guadalcanal, in the Pacific Ocean. The region was the site of extended battles between the soldiers of the American and Japanese armies. One evening – it had been a relatively calm day – Japanese bombers suddenly appeared on the horizon. It was brief and brutal: they showered their bombs onto the base where I was serving, and then disappeared. Six American soldiers died in that attack; dozens were injured, me among them. I lay in the ruins of the building I had been in, seriously injured and only partially conscious.

The world around me was burning, and I felt like I was losing the sensation in my hands and legs. It's hard for me to describe what I felt like when I looked in horror at my hands, which were hanging at my sides like two burnt pieces of flesh. It was a sense of mounting dread, a fear for my existence. I nearly choked on the dust that I inhaled and coughed incessantly in an effort to gasp a bit of oxygen into my lungs.

In the interim, I found myself talking to the Ribbono shel Olam, for the first time in my life, from the depths of my heart. I cred tearfully, soundlessly: "Please, Hashem! Give me back my hands! Please…I can't feel my hands, please restore the sensation to my hands!" From the depths of the pain I added, "I promise that after I get out of this inferno, I will dedicate my life to serving You as a loyal servant!"

To this day, I have no logical explanation for the miracle that occurred a few seconds later; after I was sure that even if I would be spared, I'd remain crippled for the rest of my life, I suddenly got back the sensation in my hands and legs.

A few weeks later, after extensive rehabilitation, Rabbi Appelbaum was released to his parents' home. He did not forget his promise… When he entered the Young Israel shul in his area for the first time in his life, the first thing he encountered was the bulletin board, which had a sign posted with a list of Torah shiurim that were regularly given at the shul.

Rabbi Appelbaum decided at that moment to join one of the shiurim, and to this day, he has not stopped learning. He adds: The first thing I was busy wondering when I began to learn, and realized for the first time in my life how truly divine the light of Torah is, was: Where had I been I until now? How had I allowed myself to forgo such a lofty thing through my years of youth? But I did not delve into these questions for long…I simply began to learn and learn, and I haven't stopped learning to this day.

Nearly seventy-five years have passed since, and Rabbi Appelbaum is still learning constantly. He currently lives in an assisted living home, where his room is full of sifrei kodesh – and it looks more like a bais medrash.

When the staff enter his room and try to encourage him to come out for 'activities' being offered, Rabbi Appelbaum proudly points at his sefarim and says, almost apologetically, "I'm so sorry but this is my preferred activity…I 'speak' to HaKadosh Baruch Hu all the time through my learning. I'm simply addicted to learning Torah and I can't stop…"

Rabbi Appelbaum's day begins early in the morning, when he awakens with gratitude to Hashem for giving him life. He recites "Modeh Ani…" with a special incantation that he and his family have been using for many years.



When Rabbi Appelbaum is asked about the secret of the special brachah he has merited - such a long life with good health – he modestly points to a colourful placard hanging over the sink in his room. It bears the words of Asher Yatzar in large letters, with beautiful illustrations that depict the remarkable miracles that accompany the proper function of the body, for which we thank Hashem in this brachah.

He declares: "In the last fifty years, I have never, even once, made the brachah of Asher Yatzar by heart – I say it only from the text! I recognize the tremendous miracles Hashem has done for me and my body and I try to thank Him for it at every opportunity, with utmost sincerity."

Rabbi Appelbaum concludes with a piercing message for the younger generation: "If you connect to Hashem, you have a passport to Gan Eden! You have a passport for life in the World to Come!"

"Before parting from this very special person," Rabbi Gold relates, "I couldn't help but ask him: 'Who is the man with the Asian appearance who danced with your children at the Siyum HaShas?' "When he heard this, Rabbi Appelbaum smiled and replied: 'He's my carer!' Then he explained, "When Mashiach will come, and it will happen soon…the nations of the world will all recognize the eternal truth and will submit themselves to the Kingship of Hashem. When the thousands of people sang, 'Vetaher libeinu l'avdecha b'emes' I said to myself: Why should we not pretend that Mashiach is here already…? I gave him a hand and called him to come and dance with me. And that's how you saw that strange scene.'

Torah Anytime - Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski

The Apter Rav, once heard of a man who was known to give successful and blessings time after time. Wondering that was so special about this particular individual, the Rebbe went to visit him and perhaps gain some insight into his hidden greatness.

The Apter Rav was quite surprised. The man appeared to be a simple Jew who ran a store all day long. Yet, the man did do one small thing which caught the Rebbe's attention. After every sale, he would take some of the money and store it away in the cash register, while the remaining money would be placed in a tzedakah box.

A short while later, the Apter Rav approached the man, and asked. "I heard that you are especially known to grant effective blessings. Would you be able to tell me what it is that makes them so successful?" The answered "it's very simple. Some time ago, I was having a very hard time making any profits in my store. After things spiralled downward, my wife suggested that I look for a partner with

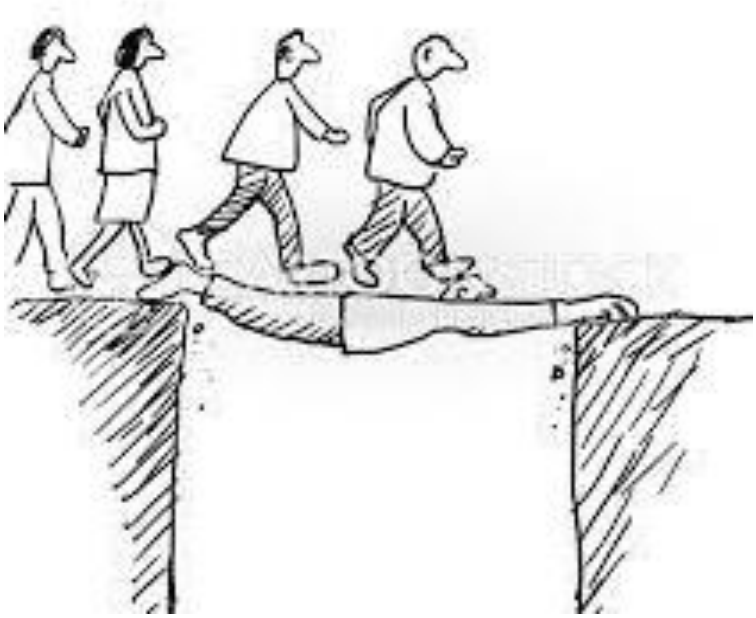
whom I could expand the store and look to increase my revenue. I heeded her advice and began looking for someone I could trust. But I didn't find anyone. I continued searching but nothing came from it all. "Then one day,



I finally told myself that there is someone I can trust: Hashem. He can become my partner and 50 percent of the income will go to Him, and 50 percent will go to me.

Ever since I thought of this idea, Hashem and I have been partners. "Now, I've heard that in a partnership, if one of the partners makes a commitment, the other partner must live up to it and fulfil it. And so, now you understand. I am a partner with Hashem, and so, the blessings I give to others He fulfils."

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחַר תֵּאָסֵף אֶל־עַמֶּיךָ
"Take revenge for the children of Israel against the Midianites; afterwards you will be gathered to your people." *31:2*

Rashi: ***אף על פי ששמע שמיתתו תלויה בדבר עשה בשמחה ולא איחר:*** *Although he heard that his death depended on the matter, he did it joyfully, without delay.*

Despite being told that he would be taken from this world as soon as he had finished battling Midyan, Moishe unhesitatingly assembled the army to fight the Midianites, fulfilling hashem's will with joy and without delay. Even though Moshe could have delayed the war and prolonged his life by many years, he put the needs of Klal Yisrael first and saw their advancement into Eretz Yisrael as the best thing for them.

This act of selflessness epitomises Moishe's relationship with Klal Yisrael. Moishe never cared for his own needs, rather, he was solely focused on the role that Hashem gave him- to lead and care for the Jewish People.

kiddush



Shortly after **R' Yaakov Kaminetsky** married his second wife, she prepared an elaborate kiddush for Shavuos morning consisting of several elaborate cheese dishes. R' Yaakov sat there smiling and staring and the full table before him. When his rebetzin asked him why he was sitting there staring at the table, he told her that he wasn't prepared for such a kiddush.

She understood his words to mean that he was just admiring all her efforts, but the truth was that R' Yaakov had a family minhag not to eat dairy foods on Friday, and that year, Shavuos was on a Friday. When she stepped out of the room for a moment he quickly turned to 3 yeshiva students who were his guests and asked them to quickly form a beis din and be *matir neder*. He explained that had he known

that his refraining from milchigs would cause his wife pain, he would have never adopted this as his custom and therefore it was permissible to dissolve such a vow. The 3 boys followed his directive and R' Yaakov went on to enjoy the foods his wife had prepared for the festive kiddush.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



וּמִקְנֶה רַב הָיָה לִבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלִבְנֵי־גָד עָצוּם מְאֹד ***"The descendants of Reuben and Gad had an abundance of livestock very numerous"*** *32:1*

The Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven had an abundance of cattle. How did this transpire? Where did they get access to this huge amount of livestock?

The Shach says that there was one *Degel* in the Midbar that consisted of Reuven, Gad and Shimon. Reuven still had with them the *De-doim* that belonged to Leah. They would put them amongst the livestock. The *De-doim* are Mesugal for *laida* and *heraoin* and this increased the amount of cattle that they had.

The Shach says that Bnei Gad asked them if they could borrow the *De-doim* . The Bnei Reuven lent it to them and therefore the Bnei Gad also had an abundance of livestock. However, when Bnei Shimon also asked for the *De-doim,* they were refused because of what occurred with the aveirah with Zimri. They wanted to distance themselves from Shimon. So much so that they requested their portion of land to be outside of Eretz Yisroel (Ever HaYarden), away from Shimon. They assumed that because they were part of the

same *Degel*, they would remain together after the re-allocation of land.

Reb Yoinosson Eibushitz says a fascinating thing. Most of klal Yisroel's stock of flock, cattle and herds depleted during the time that they were in the Midbar due to the fact that they used them to supplement the *Mon* so that they could eat meat. However the Bnei Gad never ate anything aside for the *Mon*.

When the *Mon* is described in parshas Beshalach **וַיִּקְרְאוּ בֵית־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־שְׁמוֹ מָן וְהוּא כְּזֶרַע גַּד** ***The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed..****16:31*- it says it is like the food of Bnei Gad! So therefore, their livestock never got diminished.

Where did Bnei Reuven get all their livestock from? **Reb Yoinosson Eibushitz** says that when Yaakov Avinu left Lavan's house he left with Avodim and Shifchos. **וַיִּפְרָץ הָאִישׁ מְאֹד מְאֹד וַיְהִי־לוֹ צֹאן רַבּוֹת וּשְׁפָחוֹת וַעֲבָדִים וּגְמַלִּים וַחֲמֹרִים:** ***And the man became exceedingly wealthy, and he had prolific animals, and maidservants and manservants, and camels and donkeys. Bereishit*** *30:43*

Where did he get these from? He says that Yaakov had such a huge number of livestock, that he sold some to pay for the more expensive servants.

The Medrash says that People were prepared to pay a high price over the odds for the prize livestock of Yaakov. They knew that they had Bracha in them and that they reproduced *shelo kaderech hateva*. This was a great investment.

When Yaakov Avinu was niftar, all his children got a share in his estate, but Bnei Reuven got al pi shenaim- so that they had double the amount as the others. So even if they used some for meat, they had plenty more and would never be depleted.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

Hakaras haTov / Gratitude

נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים ***"Take revenge for the children of Israel against the Midianites"****31:2*

Moishe was commanded to take revenge. But what did he do? In the next Pasuk it says **וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הֵחָלְצוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם אֲנָשִׁים לַצָּבָא וְיִהְיוּ עַל־מִדְיָן לָתֵת נִקְמַת־ה בְּמִדְיָן׃** ***So Moshe spoke to the people, saying, "Arm from among you men for the army, that they can be against Midian, and carry out the revenge of the L-rd against Midian.****31:3*

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה לַצָּבָא אֹתָם וְאֶת־פִּינְחָס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן לַצָּבָא ***Moshe sent them the thousand from each tribe to the army, them along with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the kohen to the army,****31:6*

Moishe Rabeinu stays behind! Ignoring a direct command. **The Medrash Tanchuma** says That Hashem says to Moishe, ***"Go and avenge the Bnei Yisroel you yourself, and you send others?"***

Since Moishe had a time in Midyan that he received Gedulah, (benefit) it is incorrect for me to now go and take revenge personally? They once did me a Toiva.

This is analogous to a well of water that you have drunk from, don't throw a stone in it. (see **Rabbi Paysach Krohn** as below)

The obvious question is that Hashem also knew this, so why is Moishe making Cheshboinos?

Reb Yechatzkal Levenstein says that from this we see a tremendous Chiddush. That although Hashem said take revenge personally, Moishe had to think about the manner in how he was going to accomplish this task. This was an opportunity for Moishe to show Klal Yisroel the basis on which the whole Torah stands for. That was

the concept of **Hakarat haTov.** When it comes to Hakarat haTov, there is nothing that stands in its way.



The Chofetz Chaim was someone that epitomised Middos Tovos in Klal Yisroel. He was once in a bath house or Mikva and he fainted and was in a bad way. The attendant came in, revived him, and sorted him out. For the rest of his life the Chofetz Chaim made sure that this person stood next to him during Davening with a seat beside him. Every day he would greet him and have a Lechaim on Yom Tov. He would kiss him on his forehead and wish him Arichas Yomim.The attendant *Takke* outlived the Chofetz Chaim.

This is what the Torah is telling us. That the Midda of Hakarat haTov never ceases to exist. Even though Midyan came along to try to uproot everything that Moishe Rabeinu had instilled in Klal Yisroel, Hakarat haTov remains.

In our lives ,every moment we have to show Hakarat haTov to Hashem. Hamechadesh Betuvo B'chol Yom Tomid Maaser Beraishes Bchol Rega Verega. Our Hakoras Hatov must never cease to exist.

"The words of Torah uplift and purify the one who learns them. Torah does not only inform the mind, but it also transforms the person." ~ The Chida zt"l.

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה לַצָּבָא...וּכְלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַחֲצֹצְרוֹת הַתְּרוּעָה בְּיָדוֹ



And Moshe sent them, a thousand from each tribe to the army…and the Holy Vessels and trumpets for blowing were with him [Pinchas] *(31:6)*

Rashi tells us that one of the "Holy Vessels" brought into war in order to provide merit for the Jewish People was the Ark. However, if we consider what was inside the Ark, its role as a merit is difficult to understand; for the Gemora says that the Ark contained the original tablets that Moshe broke upon seeing the Jewish People sinning with the golden calf.

Surely, this is one thing that one would *not* want to be taken into a war? How were these broken tablets — which served as a reminder of the most terrible sin — supposed to bring merit to the Jewish People; if anything, they would bring the opposite?

In fact, we find Bilam attempting to mention the golden calf as a means to discredit the Jewish People and demand their annihilation, which, if not for Hashem's deep love for us, would have succeeded as a claim.

The answer is that while it is certainly true that these tablets represented a terrible sin which has stained the history of the Jewish People ever since, at the same time, it shows the great merit of those who did teshuva. After the sin, the Jewish People did

teshuva for forty days until they were finally forgiven, at which time, their sin was completely washed away.

Therefore, the broken tablets were no longer a sign of their sin, but a sign of their renewed commitment to Hashem.
As such, there was no greater symbol of the love of the Jewish People, and no greater merit to bring into war than the broken tablets, for they demonstrated the Jewish People's commitment to Hashem, as well as Hashem's commitment to the Jewish People to always leave the door open for teshuva.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

The word "Matos" means sticks, and often times, people feel like they've been beaten down. Wherever they turn, there is another potch coming their way. Certainly, in today's times, we feel overwhelmed. If it is not Covid, it is rioting. If it is not antisemitism it is a complete moral breakdown of society. People live in fear of what tomorrow will bring.

It is a time of Matos, a time when the "sticks" of life are being hurled at us in order to break us. But the **Sefas Emes** says no! One should not go through this parsha alone. Connect it to "Masei." This means to travel. One who is overcome by hardship should not allow his worries and fears to pull him down. A person must pick himself up and carry on.

Falling down is common. It is human nature. It is perfectly normal. The problem is when we allow ourselves to STAY DOWN. Then we are in the clutches of the yetzer hara. We must move, travel, journey away from that scary, uncertain and negative place in our minds. A person must make every effort to fill himself with positive and hopeful thoughts. This is the way to combat the yetzer hara.

The Tolna Rebbe shlita says: "**כִּי־בְשִׂמְחָה תֵּצֵאוּ**" - the way to get out of a difficult situation is through simcha! By constantly talking about the terrible matzav today, we do not gain - in fact, we lose whatever sense of normalcy we still maintain. People bemoan the political situation in the world, our financial situation, the physical and emotional health problems we are experiencing. The racism, materialism, anxieties and mental disorders People are so busy lamenting this that they literally pull themselves into a terrible state of depression. Once this happens, the yetzer hara is quite satisfied. He has accomplished his mission.

Anything that will fill us with Emunah, Ahavas Hashem and Simcha is OUR ammunition against the yetzer hara.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



The laws of vows (**נדרים/שבועות**) are discussed in the beginning of this week's parashah, and it says, **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה** ***"One shouldn't make his words insignificant. Whatever he promises, he should keep"*** (30:3).

Rebbe Eizik of Kamarna zt'l writes that **יַחֵל** also means to hope, as in the passuk **חִזְקוּ וְיַאֲמֵץ לְבַבְכֶם כָּל־הַמְיַחֲלִים לַה׳** ***"Strengthen your hearts, all those who hope [and trust in] Hashem"*** (Tehillim 31:25).

According to this translation, Rebbe Eizik of Kamarna says, the passuk is teaching us a lesson in tefillah. Some people are afraid that their tefillos won't be answered, and that their efforts to pray are chas veshalom in vain. The passuk says, **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ**, one shouldn't only hope that his tefillah will be answered; one should be certain that

his prayers will be effective. One should approach tefillah with the conviction that **כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יֵעָשֶׂה** - whatever you ask for will be.

The Kamarner adds, "Even if he just said the words without deveikus, it will be effective." If we approach tefillah with this certainty, our appreciation for tefillah is enhanced. We will look forward to each opportunity to daven and we will put all of our concentration into every word. It is because people aren't certain that their tefillos will help, that tefillah is undervalued and sometimes even disrespected. As the Gemara says, "Tefillah goes up to the highest worlds, and people disregard it" (Brachos 6).

The truth is that tefillos aren't always answered immediately. The Kamarna's commentary was primarily referring to the tefillos of tzaddikim. As he writes, "All tefillos are accepted before the G-d of the world, however sometimes, it takes a long time, and one endures heartache [before he sees that his tefillos are answered.

But for tzaddikim it states] **כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יֵעָשֶׂה** – whatever they ask for, Hashem gives them immediately. And it is written, **רצון יראיו יעשה**, ***'Hashem does the will of those who fear Him.'*** Their tefillah is effective immediately. A tzaddik decrees and Hashem immediately fulfils it and gives him what he requested…"

Most of us aren't on this level; we can't guarantee that everyone will see immediate results after the tefillah. Nevertheless, there are many times when we see vividly that our tefillos are answered immediately. And if do we have to wait, and/or pray many times, it is still worthwhile, since every tefillah brings us closer to our goal. We should therefore approach every opportunity for tefillah with the conviction that all of our needs will be achieved through it.

The Rokeach writes, "After the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't give goodness to the Jewish nation without tefillah." **The Hafla'ah** (Kesuvos 67) writes, "It is known to all those who believe in Hashem's hashgachah that our parnassah and food supply, in galus, is because of tefillah." He explains that

when the Beis HaMikdash stood, parnassah came from the **מזבח**. Indeed, the altar is called **מזבח** because it was **מזין** (supplied food) for the world. Today, when there isn't a Beis HaMikdash, tefillah fills the function of the **מזבח**, and through tefillah, sustenance comes to the world.

Rebbe Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apt, the Ohev Yisrael, zy'a, had a kollel in his beis medresh. Every month, on Rosh Chodesh, he would give the scholars a stipend, which would support them and their families for the upcoming month. On one Rosh Chodesh morning, one of the students was davening Shemonah Esrei. He reached the brachah Shomei'a Tefillah (in this brachah, one can add personal requests) and he thought, "I don't have to daven for parnassah since anyway, the rebbe is supporting me." He completed the brachah Shma Koleinu without asking for parnassah.

Later that day, all the yungerleit were waiting in line to receive their monthly stipend. When it was his turn, the rebbe ran out of money. "I will get some more," the rebbe said. When the rebbe returned with more money, for some reason, this yungerman wasn't in front of the line, he went to the back of the line and waited his turn.

When his turn came, the rebbe said, "I'm sorry, there isn't any money left." The man was devastated: "What am I going to do? How am I supposed to live this month?" The rebbe replied, "Every month, Hashem gives me exactly the amount of money that I need to support the yungerleit of the kollel. If you didn't receive your stipend, it is certainly from Heaven. Check your deeds; see if you can discover the source that caused this."

The man reviewed his deeds, and he remembered that he hadn't davened for parnassah that day. He learned that even when one is supported by others, he will not receive if he does not daven for it.

Hashem is My Shepherd

מִזְמ֥וֹר לְדָוִ֑ד ה' רֹ֝עִ֗י לֹ֣א אֶחְסָֽר׃ בִּנְא֣וֹת דֶּ֭שֶׁא יַרְבִּיצֵ֑נִי עַל־מֵ֖י מְנֻח֣וֹת יְנַהֲלֵֽנִי׃

"A song for Dovid: Hashem is my shepherd. I will never lack. He will have me rest on grassy fields; He will lead me to pure waters." (Tehillim 23).



In this renowned chapter, Dovid HaMelech compares Hashem's care for His nation to a dedicated shepherd taking care of his sheep. **Reb Chaim Volozhiner zt'l** elaborated on this analogy and explained that conflicts can often arise between the sheep and their shepherd. Sometimes, the shepherd has the sheep pasture in a field, but the sheep want to move on, because they remember that there is a better pasture elsewhere. The shepherd however knows more. That pasture, that the sheep remember, was already consumed. Now it is time to graze on this spot.

Sometimes, the sheep are enjoying their meal in a plush pasture, but the shepherd urges them to move on. The sheep don't understand why they can't finish their meal, but they can't complain either. Their destiny is in the hands of their shepherd. The shepherd brings them to a stream of water so they can quench their thirst from the burning sun.

Similarly, Hashem knows what is best for us, and He leads us as He knows is best. We don't always understand why. There are times when we wish that our life would be different – that Hashem would lead us to different pastures. And there are other times when we

are in a good pasture, and we want to stay there, but our Shepherd moves us to different places.



Our avodah is to believe that Hashem is always leading us in the very best way. We don't always understand why, but we trust and believe that the Shepherd knows what's best for us.

Parashas Mattos begins with **וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳** (30:2).

The Rebbe of Chemelnik zy'a taught that **מַטּוֹת** is from the word **מטה**, low. It is referring to when one is feeling low, his mazal is failing, and everything is going against his will. At these times one must remember **זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳** Hashem planned this, and therefore it is certainly for the best. "When one realizes this, I guarantee that things will become better for him," the Rebbe of Chemelnik said.

A teacher who applied for a teaching position in a school where there were many students with behavioural problems. The principal brought him into a classroom, and said, "I want to see your teaching abilities. Teach this class." The principal sat down on the side of the room, to observe. The man began to teach and at first, things were going well. The students were listening, participating, and the teacher was glad that he was able to make a good impression on the principal. But one of the rowdy students wanted to test him. He kept moving his chair forwards and backwards, scratching the chair's legs on the floor, making a racket and disturbing the class. Because of this boy, I'm going to fail this try-out, he thought to himself. But

he controlled himself and didn't allow himself to get angry. "I see that your chair is wobbly," the teacher told him, totally calm and in control. "Take another chair," The student obeyed and the class was silent, and he could teach once again.



Another student wanted to test the teacher. He threw a paper airplane that landed on the teacher's head. These kids are causing me to lose the job, he thought again, but this time too, he didn't lose his temper. With a smile on his face, he said, "The Taz in Shulchan Aruch (51:1) writes that a **פתקא נפל מן שמיא** - a paper fell from heaven, and taught the Anshei Knesses Hagdolah the 87 words of Baruch She'amar. I see that I also merited a letter from heaven…"

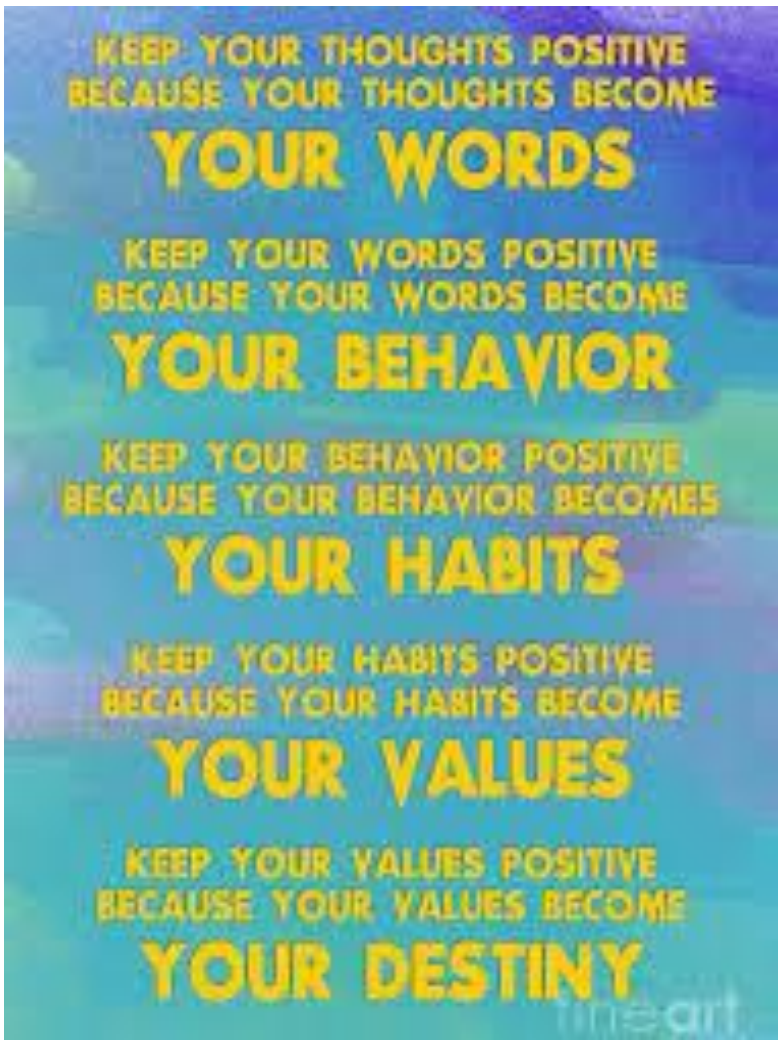
The principle was very impressed with this teacher, because the boys tested him twice, and he didn't lose his temper. He called him into his office, they discussed some money matters, and he was hired for the job. The teacher returned to the classroom to say goodbye to his new students and this time, he felt an extra special closeness to them. In particular, he had gratitude to the two mechutzafim. He knew that because of them, he got the job. What seemed to be a problem turned out being for his benefit!

Hashem is leading the world, and even when matters aren't the way we would want them to be, if we look closer, we will see how everything is for the good.

Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky - Leadership Lessons

Parshas Matos begins with the laws of vows. The Torah tells us, וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה'... אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה' אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אִסָּר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה ***"Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying, 'This is the thing that Hashem has commanded. If a man makes a vow to or makes an oath to prohibit himself, he shall not violate his word…"*** The Torah then discusses how a person must honour his word, or properly nullify his vow.

Interestingly, Moshe did not teach these laws himself to the Jewish people, but he told the rashei hamatos, the heads of the tribes, to teach them. Why is that?



After **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt"l,** escaped Europe and took a temporary position in Seattle, he became a Rav in Toronto. The congregants, mostly of Polish descent, had some customs which differed from Rav Yaakov's Lithuanian heritage. They would slightly hint to him that they would appreciate if he would adopt some of their customs.

Once, after noticing that he did not wear a gartel, they left one on his seat! When he was asked as to why he did not wear Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin as was the minhag of chassidim, he answered that it was not the custom of Lithuanian Rabbanim."But the **Chofetz Chaim** wore Rabbeinu Tam!"

they countered. "The Chofetz Chaim only put on Rabbeinu Tam later in life when he was 90 years old," replied Rav Yaakov. When I turn 90, I will also put them on.

Indeed, when Rav Yaakov turned 90, (50 years later) he suddenly began to wear Rabbeinu Tam. According to reliable sources, it was not because that was the age that the Chofetz Chaim wore them, rather, because he had implied that when talking to his Toronto baalei batim.

My grandfather, **Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l**, explained as follows. Moshe is teaching the leaders an important principle. A person's word is gold. He must honour it and keep his resolution, come what may. But who is able to teach this by example? Only a leader who practices this in real life.

A leader must keep his word. Moshe told the leaders of the tribes, that they must set an example to their constituents. The only way to teach integrity is by practicing it. A leader must do more than just lead. He must be able to practice what he preaches. Only then, can he genuinely impart these lessons to his disciples.

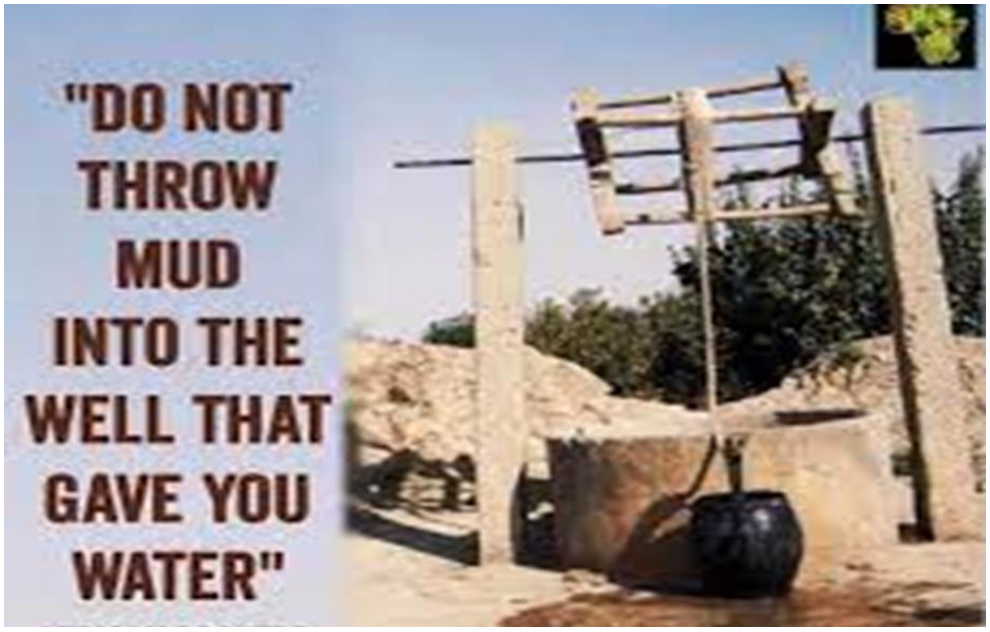
Rabbi Pesach Krohn- Project Mesorah

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה לַצָּבָא אֹתָם וְאֶת־פִּינְחָס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן לַצָּבָא
Moshe sent them the thousand from each tribe to the army, them along with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the kohen to the army, *31:6*

Moishe Rabeinu sent soldiers and Pinchos to lead the battle against Midyan. However, a few pesukim earlier it says Hashem told Moishe Rabeinu himself to go and fight the battle of Midyan. **נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים** "***Take revenge for the children of Israel against the Midianites***"*31:2*

Why did he delegate it to others and not go himself ?

The Daas Zekanim Baal Hatoisfos answers that Moishe Rabeinu lived in Midyan for many years. He was raised there. When he ran away from Pharaoh and stayed there for many years. So because of Hakoras Hatov, he felt that he could not fight the Midianites himself.



The Daas Zekanim Baal Hatoisfos brings the famous Gemorah in Bava Kama 92b **בירא דשתית מיניה לא תשדי ביה קלא** - ***If there is a well that you drank from, do not throw a stone into it.***

Anything that we get benefit from needs to be treated with respect even inanimate objects. Kal V'chomer people.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

This week's Parsha talks about nedarim. The Torah gives very clear instructions. **אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה' אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אִסָּר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ** ***If a man makes a vow to the L-rd or makes an oath to prohibit himself, he shall not violate his word*** *30:3.*

Rashi says **לא יעשה דבריו חולין** ***Don't make your words meaningless.*** **כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה** ***according to whatever came out of his mouth, he shall do****. 30:3*

This is an incredibly simple but important idea. It is so easy to say things, lie, exaggerate, to make things up. We must be aware that

the Torah regards our speech as one of the most important things that we have.



Unkelos tells us in Parshas Beraishis, that, which separates a human being from an animal, is the power of speech. But when we use our speech in the wrong way, we are no longer a human being, we become an animal. Treat your words with Kedusha with seriousness.

The Chofetz Chaim's granddaughter tells a story of her mother. The Chofetz Chaim when he wrote his seforim, he was very Makpid to make sure that every page was there, was printed correctly and wasn't selling someone a faulty sefer. So he used to meticulously go through every sefer prior to selling it.

He said to his daughter one day please help me to check some seforim today. His daughter said, "I'm just going out to the park now with some friends, can I do it when I return". The Chofetz Chaim said, " I would really appreciate the help right now". "But I really want to go to the park, I will tell you what, when I return, I will do 100 sefarim". And off she went.

When she came back, there were exactly 100 sefarim sitting on the table wating for her to check them. The Chofetz Chaim understood that every word that comes out of our mouth is holy. As it says **כְּכָל־ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה**

"There is a word that is seldom said, a word for an emotion almost too deep to be expressed: the love of the Shabbos."

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP] - Hashem Can Do The Job!



נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחַר תֵּאָסֵף אֶל־עַמֶּיךָ **"Avenge the Jewish People on the Midianites; then you shall be gathered to your People." (Bamidbar 31:2)**

The **Midrash** (Bamidbar 22:6) in this week's parsha says that Yehoshua was supposed to live for 120 years, just as his teacher, Moshe Rabbeinu, did. However, Yehoshua lost 10 years of his life and only lived for 110 years.

Hashem told Moshe to avenge the death of the 24,000 Jews whom Midian had led to sin. Hashem added that Moshe would die as soon as the battle was ended. One would think that Moshe would delay in going to battle. On a personal level, any delay would mean that Moshe would live longer. On a communal level, it would mean that the Jews would benefit from Moshe's leadership and influence for additional time. Furthermore, Hashem did not give Moshe a specific time when to go to battle. Despite these factors, Moshe followed Hashem's command with *zrizus*, with alacrity. He went to war to fulfil Hashem's command as quickly as possible.

Yehoshua was told to battle the 31 kings in *Eretz Yisroel*. Yehoshua knew that he would die as soon as his mission was complete, just as Moshe had died. Yehoshua felt that it would benefit the Jewish People if he would remain alive longer. He knew that after his death the Jewish People would sin by turning away from Hashem (see Devorim 31:29 and **Rashi**).

The **Maharzu** explains, Yehoshua felt that Moshe erred by not delaying the battle against Midian. Therefore, when it was up to

Yehoshua to determine what to do, he delayed in fighting the remainder of the battles. Even though Yehoshua's intentions were noble, his inaction was considered a sin [for someone as great as he] because he did not fulfil Hashem's command quickly, with *zrizus*. As punishment, Yehoshua lost 10 years of his life.

Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l explains that a person is obligated to do the right thing. If the *Shulchan Aruch* indicates he should do something, then he should do it. He should not be concerned about what is going to happen in the future. Hashem runs the World and Hashem takes care of the Jewish People. If Hashem wanted the Jews to remain on an exalted level, they would remain so even without Moshe or Yehoshua's leadership and guidance. Halacha dictated that Yehoshua act with alacrity. He did not and for someone as great as he, it was considered a sin that cost him 10 years of his life. That was despite his noble intentions. **The end does not justify the means!**

The Rosh HaYeshiva zt"l used to say that the biggest moralists who are concerned about the World, shed the most blood. They believe that the end justifies the means. Thus, they will kill anyone who get in their way of helping the World.

Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt"l gave two other examples of this idea. One is recorded in the **Talmud** (Brachos 10A). The prophet Yeshayahu came to King Chezkiyahu, telling him that he would soon die. Yeshayahu told him that Hashem was upset that he did not get married and did not fulfil the mitzvah of having children. King Chezkiyahu felt that he had a very good reason not to marry. He foresaw that he would have a descendant, Menashe, whose actions would cause the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. King Chezkiyahu's calculation was an error. He was obligated to follow the halacha and marry, hoping to have children. That was **his** mitzvah! As to what his descendant would do, that was Hashem's "worry".

Again, we see that **our** obligation is to follow the halacha. We must "let" Hashem concern Himself with what happens in His world. [King Chizkiyahu davened to Hashem with intensity, did *teshuvah* and did not die at this time.]

The **Midrash** (Braishis 61:6) gives a third example. Hashem blessed our forefather Avraham with the power to bless (see **Rashi** on Braishis 12:2 and 25:5). According to one opinion, Avraham did not to give these blessings to his son, Yitzchak, even though the brachos meant so much for the future of the Jewish People. Avraham felt that that it would not be proper to give these brachos only to Yitzchak but not to his other children, Yishmoel and the sons of Ketura (see the **Matnos Kehuna** on the Midrash).

Avraham felt that the end does not justify the means and it would not be proper to give the powerful blessings to one of his children if that would hurt the feelings of his other children. Avraham did not want to give the brachos to Yitzchak because he foresaw that the wicked Esau would descend from him. Avraham felt that halacha determined that he should not give the blessings. Then how would Yitzchak receive them? Avraham said to himself, Hashem runs the World. If Hashem desires Yitzchak to have the blessings, then He Himself will give them to Yitzchak. That is what happened and eventually, Hashem did give the blessings to Yitzchak.

The Midrash illustrates Avraham's dilemma with a parable. A king hired someone to tend to his orchard. In the orchard there were two trees intertwined with one another. One of those trees produced a life-giving potion while the other one produced a deadly poison. The hired hand was in a dilemma. If he watered and tended to the good tree, the poisonous tree would also flourish. If he would not tend to it, then both trees would die. He decided to do nothing and let the owner of the orchard decide what to do. Similarly, Avraham did not pass down the blessings to Yitzchak. He decided to let Hashem, the "owner of the World", figure out the solution.

Hashem wants us to follow His will, to follow halacha. This is true even if we feel that we know better and can achieve better results if we do not follow halacha. We should trust that the Creator and Maintainer of the World has a plan and can take care of things even better than we can.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Chessed

Reb Moshe Shleifstein shlita is bli ayin hara a ninety-nine-year-old man from Tzfas. He doesn't use a cane, he drives a car (which he owns for forty years) and is healthy. He accredits his long life to a good deed he did on the day of his bar mitzvah.

This is his story: When he was a bar mitzvah bachur, he was living in Lanzut, Poland. For weeks before his bar mitzvah, he prepared the haftarah to lein. But on the Shabbos of his celebration, a chassan, from a different town came to the beis medresh, and wanted maftir in honor of his upcoming wedding.

Reb Shapiro, the rav of the congregation, said that since the chassan is a guest, and the bar mitzvah bachur and his father are regular members of the beis medresh, they aren't obligated to give away the haftarah to the chassan. Nevertheless, Reb Moshe Shleifstein chose to be mevater. He said, "I will have many other bar mitzvos to celebrate — because I will live many thirteen years — but this is a once in a lifetime occasion for this chassan. I want him to get maftir."

Reb Moshe Shleifstein says that in this merit, Hashem has given him many bar mitzvos. Indeed, Reb Moshe has lived nearly eight sets of thirteen, and with Hashem's help, he will enjoy many more healthy years.

Living Jewish - The Belzer Rav

Reb Aharon Rokeach, the fourth Belzer Rav, was born in Elul, 5640 (1880), to his father **Reb Yissachar Dov**, the third Belzer Rebbe. With great miracles he survived the holocaust but lost his entire family. He reached Eretz Yisroel where he re-established the Belzer chassidus. He was a saintly man, totally detached from this world, and many stories of miracles and ruach hakodesh are told of him. He passed away on the 21st of Av (1957).

It was known that the Belzer Rav ate very little. Once, one of his chassidim living in Antwerp wanted to send a large package of salami for the Belzer yeshiva. During that time period, there was a shortage of many food items in Eretz Yisroel and this was considered a great donation. The chossid sent his gift with a courier with a strong request, almost a demand, that the Rebbe taste even just a bit of the meat, which was prepared with the utmost standard of kashrus and kavana.



The shamash of the Rav relates: "I saw that the Rav did not refuse the request, though it was regarding something so foreign to him. The messenger had brought the salami while the Rav was eating some soup, and the Rav motioned for me to bring him a knife. I handed it to the Rav who motioned again that I give it to the messenger.

Encouraged by the gesture, the messenger proceeded to cut a slice of meat when to our great amazement a worm came crawling out of it! A great fear befell the bewildered messenger and on all of us, and the Rav tried to calm him, "I know it is not your fault; it's just that from heaven, they do not want me to eat meat…"

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Birthday Parties



We know many people make a birthday party when that big day arrives. What is the Jewish outlook on this?

Yidden traditionally do not celebrate birthdays. The only birthday party mentioned in the Torah, is Pharoah's.

The Navi, Yechezkiel brings a mashul of a child who was abandoned, and a kind benefactor takes care of her. This signifies the birth of Klal Yisrael in Mitzrayim and how the Riboino Shel Olam cares for us every day since. We re-tell and re-live this at the Pesach seder every year. This is the celebration of the birthday of Klal Yisrael.



R' Yisrael Lipshitz (1782-1860), the author of the commentary Tiferes Yisrael on Mishnayos, told each of his family members, in his Tzavaa, that all the siblings should send birthday greetings of Mazal Tov on the occasion of their birthdays. He writes further that this custom shouldn't be stopped, and only if there is an absolute emergency should it be shortened.

The Midrash Seichel Tov says:

מחבבים...ושמחים בו ועושין בו משתה רוב בני אדם , to most people, their birthday is beloved to them and they rejoice and make a party. **The Ben Ish Chai** remarks that there are those who are accustomed every year on their birthday to make it a festive day, and this is a good omen. This is what we are accustomed to doing in our house. Some gedoilim say that a birthday party is a seudas reshus, however,

R' Ovadia Yosef writes that when there are Divrei Torah and songs and praises (**שירות ותשבחות**) to Hashem at a birthday meal, it is a Seudas Mitzva.

When the **Chafetz Chaim** turned 70 years old, he invited his students—**R' Elchonon Wasserman and R' Yosef Kahanamen** —and said the Bracha of Sheheciyanu in their prescence and gave them cake and *schnapps*— **יין שרף**

Chazal assume that the average life-span of a person is 70 years, therefore, we celebrate living a full life and thanking Hashem.

Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman celebrated his 70th birthday.

R' Dovid Chazzan would celebrate his birthday yearly after he reached the age of 70.

The Chofetz Chaim said that is says in Tehilim 90:10 **יְמֵי שְׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָּהֶם שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וְאִם בִּגְבוּרֹת שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה** - so if a person lives beyond 80, it is a special gift from the Riboino Shel Olam. For such a gift, one should give thanks each year.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe used to celebrate his birthday each year, saying just like if a person was in danger, and he gets a yeshua, he makes a seudas ho'daah each year, similarly, there is no greater nes then a child's birth. We should therefore celebrate it every year with a seudas ho'daah.

R' Nosson Adler (1741-1800), the Rebbe of the **Chassam Sofer**, held a birthday party on the 80th birthday of his mother and invited the entire town.

For **R' Shmuel Salant's** 70th, 80th and 93rd birthday, on Rosh Chodesh Shvat in 1909, a party took place at his house with cake. Nearly all of Yerushalayim was there including the Chevra Kadisha, the staff of the Bikur Cholim hospital and the B'datz of Yerushalayim.

The gemarah Yerushalmi (RH) says that when Amalek came to do battle with the Yidden, they chose people whose birthday it was, to fight on the front lines.

The Korbon Eida explains that on one's birthday, a person has a special mazel.

The Chida says that this mazel is especially strong on one's birthday.

Chabad.org

"וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות...איש כי ידר נדר לה'...ככל היצא מפיו יעשה"
"Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes...'If a man takes a vow to G-d...According to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do.'" (30:2,3)

Moshe taught all the commandments first to the heads of the tribes and afterwards to the entire community (see Rashi). Why is this emphasized in connection with the laws of vows?



Often a candidate for office makes lavish promises. Moreover, when actually in office, he endeavours to impress his constituents that he will perform their every wish, yet when not actually facing them, he erases their concerns from his mind. Therefore, Moshe specifically warned the heads of the tribes that their promises and pledges were to be treated seriously. A man shall not desecrate his word, but "Whatever comes from his mouth shall he do." (**חתם סופר**)

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

לא יחל דברו, ככל היצא מפיו יעשה (ל:ג) …He shall not profane his word, whatever comes from his mouth shall he do. (30:3)

The custom of Israel is to do Ha'taras Nedarim, releasing of vows before three men on Erev Rosh HaShanah.



This is based on the ***Shl"a Ha'kodosh*** in *Mesechta Yoma*, in order that Jews are not judged inappropriately, ח״ו, because of the sin of **נדרים** - vows. As we say in *Ha'taras Nedarim*, "…And I ask from you to release me from them, perhaps I will stumble and I will be punished, ח״ו , because of the sin of vows and oaths." We then continue to ask that all our future vows be nullified.

The *sefer Likutei Maharich* (*Seder Erev Rosh HaShanah*) brings a hint from the *sefer Sifsei Kohen* from this *pasuk* in *Matos*. לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה The last letters of the first four words of our *pasuk* spell out **אלול** , indicating that in the month of *Elul* we should be concerned about vows and oaths.

Additionally, since we are focusing on the last letters of the words, this hints to us that *Ha'taras Nedarim* should be done at *the end* of the month of *Elul*, just before *Rosh HaShanah*. (*Chaim shel Torah*)

"A person's greatness is measured not by his successes, but by how he stands up after he falls." ~ R' Moshe Aharon Stern zt"l.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

On Shabbos morning, as the *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah* (1:4) teaches, we should wake up early to go to *shul* to *daven* and learn Torah.

One of the special *tefilos* (prayers) that we say on Shabbos is *Nishmas kol chai*. There are many reasons for saying this, but one of them is because on Shabbos we have a *Neshamah Yeseirah*, an extra soul, and this *tefilah* starts off with the topic of *neshamos*, souls (*Ziv HaShabbos*, p.144).



The *Ben Ish Chai* (*Shana Beis*, *Parshas Toldos*, 3) writes that the prayer of *Nishmas* is very special and it should be said with a sweet voice. It is a good *segulah* (treasure; attribute) for any problem that a person might be going through!

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

The *Rama* (*Orach Chaim* 257:8) says that it is a mitzvah to have hot food on Shabbos because it is a way of honouring and delighting in Shabbos.

The *Mishnah Brurah* (257:49) adds that whoever enjoys hot food on Shabbos shows that he listens to and believes in the words of our Sages and will merit to see the days of *Mashiach*!

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



When *Bnei Yisrael* return from battle with Midian, Moshe gets upset at how they rationalized and spared enemies, allowing them to survive (31:14). *Rashi* points out (31:21) that because Moshe got angry, he forgot the *Halachah* about how to *Kasher* utensils, and therefore Elazar had to instruct the people how to act.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz taught a very important lesson from this. We see how strongly anger can affect a person. Even though Moshe was getting upset for a valid reason and he was correct, anger causes a person to forget his Torah knowledge.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



When **Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach, *zt"l***, was approximately 75 years old, he became very ill, and he felt that he didn't have much time left to live. Until that time in his life, he was very well known to *Talmidei Chachomim*, but he generally did not involve himself in public matters. He thought that perhaps, if he would be able to do more for others, Hashem would allow him to recover in

that merit, and he decided to start giving more *brachos* to people. This was something he did not regularly do out of his humility, but if people would derive *chizuk*, strength from it, then he would do it, and this could help strengthen their *Emunah* and *Bitachon* in Hashem.

Rav Shach started to give *brachos* to people in need of *yeshuos*, salvation from Hashem, and soon after he recovered from his illness, and he started to involve himself in all communal affairs. Rav Shach felt that Hashem had kept him alive so that he could help other people and ended up living for another 30 years!

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

Rav Yissochar Frand once said that when the ***Chofetz Chaim*** finished writing the *Mishnah Brurah*, he said, "*Ribbono Shel Olam*! You have been so good to me! You have allowed me to write the *Mishnah Brurah*! How can I ever pay You back?"

Rabbi Frand noted how many people would have had the opposite reaction and would have said, "*Hashem*! Look what I just did for You! When can You repay me?" The *Chofetz Chaim's* reaction was completely different. He realized that his accomplishments were entirely from *Hashem*, and he said to *Hashem*, "*Hashem*, You have been so good to me! How can I ever repay You?"

We too must realize that whatever we may have accomplished, it is only due to the kindness of *Hashem* that He has allowed us to accomplish anything!

"When you focus on the eternal benefits you will gain by performing mitzvos, you will not mind the difficulties and hardships involved." ~ Dubner Maggid

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos



R' Zakai was *zocheh* to live a very long life. One day his students asked him what special thing he did that he was rewarded with such longevity. R' Zakai answered that it was because he was careful to only say *Kiddush* over wine on Shabbos! (*Megillah* 27b). In fact, *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* (*perek* 18) teaches that whoever says *Kiddush* with wine will be rewarded with long life.

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

וַיִּקְצֹף מֹשֶׁה עַל פְּקוּדֵי הֶחָיִל

Moshe got angry at the officers for not following instructions and he spoke to them (31:14).

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin (*Oznayim LaTorah*) observes that Moshe did not speak to them in his state of anger. Instead, he waited for his anger to subside and then he spoke to them in a soft spoken manner. If we speak when we are angry then we tend to speak more harshly and irrationally. But, if we follow Moshe's lead and wait to react, we can have a more successful conversation, as well as a chance for our opinions to be heard.

"Never cease to implore your Heavenly Father. The more you speak to Him as a father, the more he will hold that role." ~ The Magid of Mezritch

L'Maaseh

Many years ago in Yerushalayim, lived a young couple who were married for a number of years but were not yet blessed with children, though they *Davened* fervently for this. In those days, the only way to do laundry was by hand. After each article of clothing had been thoroughly washed and wrung out, it would be hung on an outdoor line to dry.



One day, this young woman washed her laundry and, as usual, hung the items on her line outside. After she went inside, a hot-tempered woman who lived in a neighbouring apartment entered the courtyard on her way home. As she walked by, she slightly became entangled in the laundry which hung drying on the line. Her temper flared up, and in a rage, she ran to her apartment and quickly returned to the courtyard with a pair of scissors. Without a moment's hesitation, she cut the clothesline and all the clean laundry fell into the dirt. She then went home. A short while later, the first woman went outside to see if her laundry was dry. When she saw how the rope had been cut, tears came to her eyes. Silently, she gathered up her laundry and brought it inside.

As she began her second wash of the day, she vowed to herself not to tell her husband what had happened. Were he to find out, he would surely be distressed, and out of concern for his wife, he might seek to discover the identity of the one who did such an inexcusable thing. She knew that *Machlokes* is like fire, and one must do everything in their power to avoid it.

When her husband came home from the *Bais Medrash* that evening, she didn't say a word. However, there was commotion in another home that night. A young child of this hot-tempered woman suddenly developed a high fever and he seemed to be getting seriously ill. A doctor was called in to check on him, and the boy's father went to visit the *Rav* of the city, **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, in order to get a *Brachah* for the child's recovery.

Hearing of the suddenness with which the child got sick, Rav Yosef Chaim asked if anything unusual had occurred at home in the hours beforehand. The husband said he did not know of anything, but he said that he would go home and ask his wife. When he asked her, she became full of shame and told her husband of her terrible act. They quickly both returned to Rav Yosef Chaim. When he heard what had happened, the *Rav* swiftly put on his hat and coat. He said to them, "We have no time to lose. You must beg for forgiveness immediately." He accompanied them to the woman's home and knocked on their door.

The husband was completely shocked to see the *Gadol Ha'dor* standing in his doorway, and the *Rav* said they had come to see his wife. The hot-tempered woman did not wait any longer. She saw the other woman, ran up to her, and started crying. She said, "I am the one who cut your clothesline. I feel terrible that I did that and *Hashem* has already punished me by causing my child to become very ill!" With great humility, she begged to be forgiven. The other woman accepted her apology and said that she forgave her with a full heart. The first woman thanked her profusely, and her child's fever soon subsided, and he made a full recovery.

While all this was going on, Rav Yosef Chaim noticed that the husband of the woman who had hung out the laundry was totally confused by what was taking place. Rav Yosef Chaim asked him if he knew what had happened, and he said that he did not. Rav Yosef

Chaim said, "You mean to say that your wife did not inform you of what had occurred to her today?"



The man said, "That is correct. This is the first that I am hearing about it." It became clear to Rav Yosef Chaim that this man's wife was very righteous, since she did not make any mention of the incident.

Deeply moved, he said, "In the merit of your silence, may you be *Bentched* with a son!" One year later, this woman gave birth to a boy, and they named him Yosef Sholom. He grew up to be the great **Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashev**, the world renown *Poseik*!

The Torah Any Times Newsletter



Rabbi Eliezer Ginsburg - Conversing with the Satan

One of the great tzaddikim who lived during the years of Tach-V'Tat (1648) was **Rav Shimshon of Ostropoli**.(who was murdered *Al Kiddush HaShem*, during the Chmielnicki Massacres that are known as *Gzeiros Tach VeTat*, "the decrees of the years 5408 and 5409." These are the dates indicated by the letters **ת"ח** and **ת"ט**, which correspond to the years 1648 and 1649.)

Reportedly, he was of such righteous stature that he was even capable of speaking to the Satan. One such documented conversation occurred as he walked down the street during the month of Elul and noticed the Satan making his way as well down the street, yet he looked very broken. "What's the matter?" asked Rav Shimshon to the Satan. "What do you mean?" retorted the Satan. "Throughout the whole year, I entice people to sin and I gather together bundles of sins. Yet when Elul arrives, everyone is repenting and wiping their sins away and turning them into merits."

After Yom Kippur, Rav Shimshon met the Satan and this time he was smiling and looked in a good mood. "Why are you in a good mood?" asked Rav Shimshon. "We just went through Yom Kippur, we all repented, and all our sins turned into merits! You should be broken." "I made a deal with Hashem," replied the Satan. "A ship will be docking at the port, and it is filled with Lulavim and Esrogim. I received permission to poke a hole in the ship, and water will fill it entirely and ruin everything!"

During the middle of Sukkos, Rav Shimshon met the Satan again, and now the Satan looked depressed. "What now?" asked Rav Shimshon. "I thought you received permission to make a hole in the ship!" "I'll tell you," replied the Satan. "The top layer of the Lulavim and Esrogim did not get ruined, because the water rose throughout the ship, but didn't reach the top deck. Those few Lulavim and Esrogim which remained on the top were valid, and a number of Jews gave away their wealth just to purchase their Lulav and Esrog. And not only that, but when they came to shul with their one Lulav and Esrog, everyone lined up and waited for the chance to shake it. They delayed their Yom Tov meal just to shake the Lulav and Esrog! These Jews beat me; they defeated me."

What we are experiencing right now is a decree from Heaven. The Satan has received permission to take a small virus, something which we cannot even see, and spread it throughout the world. It has

caused havoc and turmoil. But we, as the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, what do we do? We gather together in prayer, we make efforts to learn Torah in every which way we can, and we increase in our chessed.

We can be sure that as we continue strengthening ourselves with teshuva, Torah study, tefilla and chessed, the Satan is saying, "These Jews beat me; they defeated me…"

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS MATTOS

Rabbi Shimshon Pincus Saves His Student's Marriage



A couple from Ofakim in Israel contacted Rabbi Shimshon Pincus concerning various problems that had beset them in their home. During the course of the conversation Rabbi Pincus asked to speak privately with the husband. He said to him, "I've noticed that you barely smile, is there something wrong?"

The husband replied, "Yes, my front teeth are broken and ugly, and I don't feel comfortable smiling and exposing them to people." The Rabbi asked if there was a way of treating the problem; the husband replied that with advanced dental care, his teeth could be restored to their natural look.

"So why are you neglecting the treatment?" Asked the rabbi warmly, and the husband replied, "I cannot afford the enormous expense of the treatment."

"So?" Rabbi Shimshon asked him the following question: "Tell me, how much will the treatment cost you?" The man mentioned a very

high sum, though Rav Shimshon was not deterred, he immediately wrote a cheque for the entire amount. He said, "Please use this cheque to repair your teeth, because in my opinion many of your problems are simply due to the fact that you barely smile", fix your teeth and then we'll speak"...

Needless to say, the situation at home improved dramatically after the husband began to smile.

This story was recounted by Rabbi Avraham Deutsch, who added an equally wonderful continuation.

Rabbi Deutsch approached Rabbi Pincus and asked: "I know that you are very precise when it comes to expenses at home, even the necessary ones – how could it be that the Rav wrote out a cheque of such a large sum for 'another' just like that?!"

Rav Pincus scolded his student and said, "One who doesn't feel another Jew like a son, lacks perfection in the service of G-d - so I would like to ask you: 'if he was called 'Pincus' wouldn't I have spent that kind of money on him?

This was the noble way of Rabbi Pincus zt"l: to feel the 'other' - as his son, and by this approach it is no wonder how he was able to humble himself and travel every day for two weeks in a row to the infant department of the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem to bottle-feed a premature baby, to offer himself as having enough spare time on the eve of Passover for a lonely widow who did not even know his name, to travel from Ofakim to Jerusalem back and forth in the middle of the night to help a yeshiva student in distress, and many more countless acts of kindness, some of which are known to us, and some which will remain undisclosed.

"Hashem is our only source of true security – and trusting Him is the key to finding inner peace." – Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

If Necessary, I Will Do It Myself by Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon

Yisroel related, "It was nine years ago, (in Tishrei of 5769/2008) when I was greeted by a member of the Chabad community, and he offered to help me do a mitzvah. I was touched by his concern for another Jew and his warmth and understanding, and in a short time I became a regular at the Chabad Shul.

While every time I began fulfilling another mitzvah, I felt wonderful, however, I can't say it was easy. At that point I was already married and had some children, however, my wife and children did not join me for this uplifting experience.

My wife respected my wishes and didn't request that I take her shopping on the Sabbath, but she didn't observe it. She knew I wanted a special meal and would prepare food for me, but couldn't understand why I won't eat the freshly cooked food she specifically prepared for me on Sabbath day for the Sabbath meal. I would only eat the cold stuff from yesterday.

Our children continued to play with their friends and neighbors in the neighborhood and didn't accept the change that certain foods can no longer be eaten.

To put it mildly, although I was still respected as the head of the house and being a decent provider, my family and associates thought I just lost it.

For seven years, I was becoming stronger in my observance; I was putting on tefillin every weekday, studying some Torah thoughts almost every day. However, my lifelong friends were concerned that I went over the deep end.

Then two years ago, I was going through a difficult situation, and I would silently pray to Hashem; "You know what I am enduring with, but I have continued fulfilling Your mitzvos. Please show me a sign that You appreciate my sacrifices. It is so difficult when one is on

their own, without the support of their loved ones. Please give me a sign that You are with me and are supporting me."

However, I was disappointed. No sign from Above and then doubt began creeping in. Maybe my family and friends are correct? Maybe I am taking it too far? Maybe being kind and respectful to others is sufficient? Why do you have to be different?



It came to a point that I said to myself, they are correct. I will stop this. I will go back to my old way of life. Without mentioning it to anyone, even my dear wife, being that I made that decision, I got into my vehicle to go to the upscale [non-kosher steak] restaurant that I hadn't patronized in these last seven years.

At that moment the Chabad Shliach called me. Now you have to realize, this is the first time he called me in all those seven years. Not that he wasn't warm to me. To the contrary he was extremely understanding and would speak to me quite often in the shul, or when he met me at a function. But perhaps he didn't want to stress out my family, so no calls when I was at home.

My first thought was, isn't this the sign from Above that I was looking for, and I should stop this madness. But as the conversation ended, I said to myself, no, it just happened that he called to see if I know someone etc., and I began driving.

Ten minutes later, one of the men that daven with me at the Chabad Shul called. Once again, I had the question, is this the sign which I prayed for, but at the end of the conversation, I dismissed it.

Then as I pulled into the parking lot of the restaurant, I received one more phone call. This time it was from the person that gave me the initial inspiration to come closer to the ways of the Torah and mitzvos. He created the connection I have with the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe. but as the conversation ended, I got out of my car, entered the restaurant and ordered a delicious [but treif] steak.

As everyone knows, it takes some time for the steak to be prepared, so I ordered a salad that would be ready in five minutes and began sipping from the glass of water.

A minute later, a young man ran into the restaurant and seeing me he asked, "Are you Jewish?" I wasn't wearing my kippa and didn't know why of all people sitting there he asked me, but hearing the frantic sound in his voice, I replied "Yes."

He then said, there is an elderly gentleman down the block, lying on the sidewalk, and speaking gibberish. I believe he is Jewish and saying something in the language of the Jews. Please help that man.

I immediately got up, as my steak won't be ready for some twenty minutes anyways and followed him to the elderly gentleman. The other man was correct, the elderly gentleman was speaking in Hebrew and saying, his foot is hurting him.

I asked him if I could help him, if he lives nearby and he replied, he tripped and needs help to walk to his car a block away. Helping him up to his feet, we saw that it wasn't broken and I thanked the other person and assisted this elderly gentleman to his vehicle.

As he sat down in his car, he turned to me and asked, "Are you a Lubavitcher?" My mind was in turmoil, what am I supposed to say, as I am about to eat that non-kosher steak. But I replied, "Yes."

The man said, I really can't express how thankful I am to you, for what you have done for me just now. I would like to show you my appreciation, but I don't know how a man of simple means as myself,

can give something meaningful. However, since you are a Lubavitcher, I have something special for you.

Many years ago I took a trip to New York. My friends convinced me that on Sunday I should go to the grand Rabbi and receive his blessing. The Rebbe blessed me and gave me a dollar. I carried that dollar in my wallet for all these years. I know you, as one of the Rabbi's followers would appreciate it. So please accept it as my expression of appreciation.

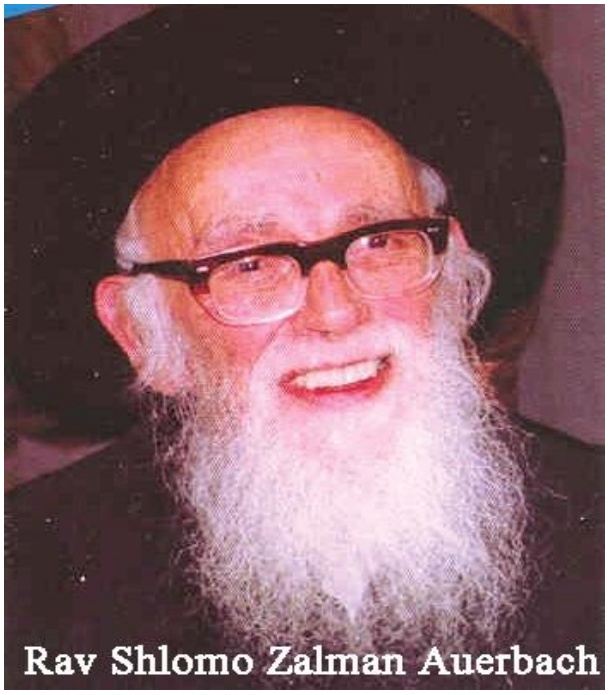
Yisroel concluded his narrative and said, "You understand, at that point I went to my car and sat there for a few minutes. I was overcome with emotions. I realized that Hashem sent me three messages, but I ignored them. So Hashem sent me a message directly from the [great tzadik, the Lubavitcher] Rebbe himself. There was no mistake about it, my sacrifices are appreciated, and my observance since then is much stronger."

Rav Shlomo Zalman's Advice to the Mother of Three Young Orphans

A widow raising three young children once approached **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt"l***, and asked for his advice. She said that she did not have a lot of money, but she was somehow able to put a small amount together, and she wanted to do something with it that would be a *Zechus* for her husband.

Some of her friends suggested using the money to buy *Seforim* or give it to a *Gemach*, and she asked Rav Shlomo Zalman for his suggestion.

Rav Shlomo Zalman thought for a moment, and then he said, "I have the perfect suggestion for you to do something meaningful as a *Zechus* for your husband, and I am confident that if you follow it carefully, it will be a great source of merit for him.


Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach

"I want you to take the money, and go with your children to a toy store, and use the money to buy games and toys for them. Then, go home and play these games with your children. Also, make sure to take your children to the park as often as you can, and play with them there. Spend time with your children and create a strong and loving relationship with them. This will make your children happy and wholesome."

Rav Shlomo Zalman smiled at her and said, "Trust me, raising genuinely happy children will serve as the greatest *Zechus* for your husband!" *(Torah U'Tefillah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights collected by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

R' Aryeh Levine zt"l and the Thief

A neighbour once knocked on Rabbi Aryeh Levine's door and told him that he just saw a thief break into a nearby kiosk. The neighbour said that he wanted to stop the thief, but he feared to do so lest the thief harm him. Undaunted, Rav Aryeh ran to the kiosk, approached the thief, and whispered in his ear, "My son, perhaps you have forgotten that the Torah states that it is forbidden to steal."

The robber stared at Rabbi Levine's white-bearded face, lowered his eyes in shame, and returned the merchandise he was about to steal. ~ **Ish Tzadik Haya**

"The best way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

The Unfinished Diary: A Chronicle of Tears [This is a personal family account from the Erlich side]

A rare Holocaust diary appears 70 years after being written by its doomed author. By Chaim Yitzchok Wolgelernter, Hy"d



As he sat crouched in a foul-smelling cowshed and hayloft for months on end, with nothing but his own bleak thoughts to keep himself occupied, Chaim Yitzchok Wolgelernter turned to his pen as a means of endurance. An unusually gifted writer, this young husband and father of two made it his goal to chronicle his Holocaust experiences as they were occurring.

And so, as he wandered the countryside from hideout to hideout, worrying about the fate of his family members who were also on the run, Chaim Yitzchok wrote. And as he hid in a dilapidated *mikveh* building together with his terrified younger brothers, Chaim Yitzchok wrote some more. And as he sought refuge in the barn of a Polish woman, who would eventually turn her back on him, Chaim Yitzchok continued to write.

The result: a personal Holocaust journal with a rare level skill apparent in each chapter chronicled by the author.

Unfortunately Chaim Yitzchok did not survive the inferno of the Holocaust; he was brutally murdered just a few months before liberation. His diary, though, did survive. It was rescued by his brother and eventually made its way to North America, where it lay in a drawer, untouched, for many years.

In the meantime, Chaim Yitzchok's surviving child, Feivel, grew up, married, and had children of his own. His son, Nafti Wolgelernter, was the one who pushed for his grandfather's diary to be deciphered and translated so that the family could connect with Chaim Yitzchok's writings.



(l-r) Meir, Yitta, Chaim Yitzchok

What followed were many years of meticulous work and effort, and now, 70 years after being written, this fascinating diary is finally being brought to light, released in English to the public.

This rare, historic work can be appreciated at many levels. Each page reveals an astounding depth of emotion, coupled with a cynical, witty – at times, even humorous – literary style. The diary is breathtaking in its eloquence and scope, heartbreaking in its descriptive account of the travails suffered by the author and his family. It reveals shocking details on the reaction of the local Polish populace to the unfolding disaster. Given its unique perspective, this compelling account lends an entirely new dimension to the world of Holocaust literature.

The following excerpt from The Unfinished Diary *illustrates just one of Chaim Yitzchok's brushes with death during his time spent in hiding and on the run.*

My Miraculous Escape



Chaim Yitzchok and Chayele Wolgelernter in Krakow, late 1930s

At midday, I continue on. In order to avoid the main road where wagons travel, I walk through the village of Drozejowice. I am almost at the far end of the village when I hear a vehicle approaching at high speed. Turning around, I see two German army wagons. They must be the same ones that were in Szyszczyce last night, heading back from Dzialoszyce for a second round.

In a flash, I am in the fields looking for a place to hide. But no more than twenty meters behind me, one of the soldiers chases me on foot.

"Halt!" he shouts.

When I do not stop, a shot rings out.

As I continue running, I notice a peasant woman coming out of a little farmhouse with a burnt roof, closing the door behind her and bolting it with a chain – a sure sign that no one remained at home.

I stretch out flat on the floor, quickly cover myself with the straw and lie there holding my breath, fearing the worst.

Without a moment to lose, I race over to the house, silently remove the chain and enter the front room. Seeing a ladder standing there, I climb up, ducking down to make sure no one can spot me from the outside through the exposed roof.



Chaim Yitzchok and Chayele with their firstborn child, autumn 1940; note white armband on sleeve

There is a thick layer of straw in the attic, protecting the house from rain. I stretch out flat on the floor, quickly cover myself with the straw and lie there holding my breath, fearing the worst. Barely do I finish throwing the last piece of straw on myself when the door of the house is thrown open.

The German soldier enters, looks around for a few minutes, then leaves. A moment later, he comes back in and starts climbing up the ladder. *This is it… I am doomed*. He stands in the attic for a short while, scanning it carefully, then goes back down.

I hear many loud voices outside. It seems all the soldiers are looking for me. Straining my senses, I peek out from beneath the straw and see the peasant woman being led by the arm.

"Where is the fellow who escaped from us?" they interrogate her. "Where is he hiding?"

She has no idea what they are talking about.

"*Kreuz-Donnerwetter*!" they shout, slapping her. "If you don't tell us, we'll burn down your house!"

I am in grave danger. *O Merciful G-d!* I pray. *It is not yet three months since I was orphaned of my parents. Shall my two-year-old son, my one remaining child, now become orphaned, too, of a father whom he hardly knows? If I perish here in the fields of Drozejowice, there will be no witness to my death, and my dear Chayele will remain a tormented agunah for the rest of her life.*

Tomorrow night is our seventh anniversary. Shall our happy married life come to such a tragic end?

Today, the eighth of Adar, is the yahrzeit of my grandfather Rav Yechiel Issamar. Zeide! For whom have I undertaken this dangerous trip if not for my brothers, the children of our exalted father, your son Yeshayah! Shall your yahrzeit, a day when the soul rises to a loftier realm, be stained by the blood of your murdered son's child?

After all, I am only living for my wife Chayele, for our one and only innocent little child, and for my rescued brothers who have not yet experienced happiness. Shall the hands of the murderers succeed in destroying all these lives at once? I want to live to avenge the blood of my parents and sister…!

At that moment, I made a decision: I would not fall into their hands alive! Taking out the razor blade I carried on me, I held it close to my throat and observed the ensuing events.

The peasant woman crossed herself and swore by all her saints that she knew nothing. I saw one soldier hold her to make sure she did not escape, while the others tossed straw and grain out of the adjacent barn. "He's got to be hiding right around here!" I heard one German shout.

I am still in great danger…they may decide to come up here again.

I watch as several soldiers move on to search the neighboring houses. A few continue to stand outside, holding onto the woman. I feel like my eyes are popping out of their sockets. How long the search lasts, I cannot determine.

The soldiers return, unsuccessful.

"It can't be!" I hear one of them insist. "He must be here somewhere!"



Feivel Wolgelernter, about one year old, beginning of 1942

Not only do I see death before me but I already feel it; every one of my limbs has gone numb.

Again, they begin to flog the peasant woman, threatening to demolish her house. By now, not only do I see death before me but I already feel it; every one of my limbs has gone numb.

Suddenly, it grows quiet: one minute, two, three…

I peek out again from under the straw. I do not see a soul. My heart slowly resumes beating. I wait a bit more…I do not hear a thing. I wait for what I estimate to be half an hour…still quiet. Then, I hear the crack of a whip. The wagons must be leaving. With G-d's help, the danger has passed.

I lie motionless in the attic until it becomes pitch dark; I cannot be sure they haven't left one of their men behind. Then I climb down the ladder, approach the woman and ask her what happened.

With tears in her eyes, she tells me the whole story.

"Are you sure they are gone?" I ask her.

"They did not leave anyone behind," she assures me.

"I am the one they were looking for," I inform her, offering her some money. After all, it was because of me that she received a beating.

She declines. "Thank the good L-rd, I am glad that I truly did not know you were up there!" she says. "This way a person was saved through me. I do not want a reward for that." She would not even tell me her name.

The next morning, back in the loft in Skalbmierz, Magda relayed the conclusion of the previous day's events, which she had heard from a Drozejowice villager.

The Germans barged into a house where some young peasant boys were playing cards. Identifying one of the boys as the supposed escapee they were searching for, they beat him savagely, forcing him to confess why he had run away.

The fellow remained unconscious for four straight weeks.

Hearing the Horn Blast of the Elephant



In this week's portion Mattos the Torah tells us how the Bnai Yisroel used horn blasts in their battles against Midian. In this vein, the Midrash discusses some of the other uses of horn blasts in Jewish communal life.

The Midrash tells us that in earlier times, the custom on erev Shabbos was to blow three horn blasts to inform the public that the Holy Shabbos was approaching. The attendant of the shul would go

up onto the highest roof of the city and there he would blow the horn.

The first set of horn blasts was blown earliest in the day, in order to give notice of Shabbos to those workers in the fields who were the farthest away from the city. The second set of blasts was later in the day and was directed at those working even closer to the city. The third set of blasts began as the final moments of Shabbos approached. By the end of the third set of blasts, all of the residents of the city were to cease from all the creative labors which are forbidden on Shabbos.

It is interesting to note that to this very day, many Jewish communities in cities such as Jerusalem and Monsey, New York, use horns to announce the arrival of Shabbos.

Besides the interesting historical value of this discussion in the Midrash, what spiritual lesson can we take out of the fact that Shabbos is announced with horn blasts? The commentators teach us a beautiful and inspirational lesson based on this section of the Midrash.

This world is compared to the six days of the week, while the World to Come is compared to Shabbos.(See Sanhedrin 97a) As we approach the World to Come, which is a time of the eternal Shabbos, horn blasts are being blown to call Jews home to Torah and mitzvahs. The first set of blasts is now being blown.

As we mentioned above, in earlier times, this first blast was to call those workers home who were furthest away, in order to give them enough time to come home. So too, as we approach the redemption and the World to Come, the world of the eternal Shabbos, the first horn blast has been blown for those Jews furthest away to come home to Torah observance.

We should recognize certain events in our lives as the horn blast calling us home. The further we are away from Hashem, Torah and

mitzvahs, the sooner we must begin coming home, in order to be ready for the days of the eternal Shabbos. The following amazing and even humorous true story illustrates how one Jew heard the horn blast and made his way home.

Rabbi Eliezer Sandler was fortunate; in 1973, he became the first full-time Chief Jewish chaplain in the South African army since World War II. As part of his duties, Rabbi Sandler would visit bases throughout South Africa and Namibia. At that time, the army was fighting terrorist elements who were trying to destroy the fabric of South African society.

On his first visit to a certain base, Rabbi Sandler was told that there were three injured Jewish servicemen in the infirmary.

"I will go there at once," said Rabbi Sandler. The first two patients were clearly ill, their faces were gaunt and pale. One wore a cast from the hip down. The other was recovering from malaria. But the third patient surprised Rabbi Sandler. This third patient was a tall healthy-looking soldier who did not seem to be hurting in any way.



"Why are you here?" Asked Rabbi Sandler in puzzlement. "I am recovering from shock." The young soldier explained. "You see, I was trampled by an elephant."

"An elephant!" Said Rabbi Sandler in astonishment. The soldier nodded and said: "Let me tell you my story: I was part of a reconnaissance patrol. We were roaming though the jungle, looking for the enemy. Now remember, this is a wild jungle. Besides the human enemy, we also have to contend with the danger of wild animals such as lions and tigers. And when you see those animals

close up in the African jungle, they look a lot larger than when you see them in a zoo!"

"As the radio man, I always carry radio equipment on my back. The radio gear is a big heavy package. If we spot the enemy, it is my job to call it in on the radio.

"Well, one day we happened to bump into a huge elephant. By buddies were bored and they decided to have some fun by teasing the elephant, pulling at its ears and tail. Nothing much happened at first. But eventually the elephant got angry. He raised his tusks in the air, he blasted his horn and trumpeted his war march, and started coming for us.

"We got the message, and we started running away as fast as we could. But my radio pack was heavy; it slowed me down. I tripped over a root on the jungle floor and fell flat on my face. Seconds later, the elephant ran right over me!"

"Now, elephants are pretty heavy. (An adult male African elephant can be up to 11 feet tall and weigh up to 6 metric tons!) The radio pack on my back was squashed to the size of a penny. So why am I still alive? That is just it. It was an absolute miracle. The ground happened to be soft sand, and when the elephant ran over me I sank right into the ground. I ended up completely unhurt. I am here just to recover from the shock."

Rabbi Sandler was in shock himself when the soldier completed his amazing story. "I have never heard a story like that," Rabbi Sandler began to say. "You know, you have to bench gomel and offer thanks to G-d for saving you."

"I have never heard of that," said the soldier with interest. "How does it work?"

"You have to go to a shul and make the blessing with a minyan." Rabbi Sandler explained.

The soldier raised up hands and said "I am afraid that I still do not know what you are talking about."

Rabbi Sandler explained to the under-affiliated soldier some of the basics of Jewish ritual, including the idea of praying together in minyan (a quorum of ten men) in a shul. The young man listened intently. Unfortunately, he had grown up without any real Jewish education. After hearing what Rabbi Sandler had to say, the soldier was even more interested in giving thanks to G-d, but there was no synagogue or minyan in the African jungle.

After his recovery, the soldier returned home to Johannesburg, South Africa, where he finally had the opportunity to "bench gomel" in a shul on a day when the community read from the Torah. However, the soldier did not stop at just "benching gomel." He was determined to find out more about his heritage, the heritage which he was deprived of while growing up.

Little by little, the young man learned more and more about Torah and mitzvahs. Today, the young soldier has come home and is totally Torah observant. All of his Torah is because of the foot of an elephant! (Visions of Greatness Vol. 5, Rabbi Yosef Weiss, p.90)

In our story, the soldier heard the horn blast from an elephant. We should recognize the horn blasts in our own lives. These blasts are sounded to bring us home to Torah observance; so that we will be prepared for the times of the eternal Shabbos, the World to Come.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

No person should ever say that he is not worthy to *daven* over the *Bais HaMikdash* or over *Eretz Yisroel*, for Hashem hears the prayers of everyone. (*Mechilta D'Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai*, *Mishpatim* 22)

Maaseh Emunim-The Tefillah That Depended on a Decision



Harav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt"l, of Manchester, lovingly called the Chofetz Chaim of Europe, was known to be a pious tzaddik. For many years, he served as the rosh yeshivah in Manchester, England, and turned out legions of students, many of who went on to illuminate the world with their Torah and Yiras Shamayim. Rav Yehuda Zev was also known for his tefillos, which were said at length, and with deep kavanah and copious tears. To the observer, he always appeared to be davening as fervently as if it was Ne'ilah of Yom Kippur. He would often say that an investment in tefillah is the most worthwhile investment, as all of a person's life depends on it.

He was famed for guarding his speech, and his mesirus nefesh to disseminate the practice of studying the relevant halachos. He would say that one who wants the tefillos that emerge from his mouth to rise On High and be accepted, must at the same time guard his tongue. Chazal have compared tefillah to the arrow and the mouth to the bow, and just like a broken bow cannot shoot an arrow too far, likewise, a mouth that is not clean cannot offer a tefillah that will be accepted. He was so cautious about his shemiras halashon, that it was no wonder that he also became renowned as one whose brachos were fulfilled. People from all over the world streamed to his home to receive brachos for a yeshuah.

What many do not know is that Rav Yehuda Zev did not suffice with just giving a brachah; he would also daven fervently for the person seeking the yeshuah. Above all, he was known for his deep love for his students, and his dedication in setting them on the right path in Torah and Yiras Shamayim.

Once, a student approached him and related that he had just been diagnosed with a dreadful disease, and his doctors did not give much hope for his recovery. The rosh yeshivah was beset by anguish, as if it was his own son who was ill.

Rav Yehuda Zev immediately gathered all the talmidim in the yeshivah, and instructed them to storm the Heavens with their tefillah. At the same time, he comforted the ailing boy and encouraged him with words of emunah and bitachon in Hashem, in Whose Hands life and death is given, and if He wants, the decree could be torn up at any moment.

The rosh yeshivah knew this bochur and his family well. His father was a well-known balebos, who worked hard for his parnassah, and sent all his children to learn in Manchester until their marriage. But he was of the firm belief that after their marriage, they had to come work in the family business. Reb Yehuda Zev worked hard to persuade this father to change his views, but the man, who had grown up with this principle himself, remained unconvinced. Now, in light of his son's dreadful diagnosis, the rosh yeshivah invited the father for an urgent meeting. As expected, the father arrived, and his pain and anguish were written all over his face.

When he entered the room, Rav Yehdua Zev began to speak: "I just heard about the serious diagnosis from your son. In my view, you must not give up and despair of Heavenly Mercy. I see a great hope that b'ezras Hashem, he will emerge from darkness to light. However, in light of this situation, it will take great effort to tear up the decree. I have thought a lot about it, and reached the clear conclusion, that if you commit, with a firm pledge, that if your son recovers you will do everything possible to enable him to dedicate his life to Torah, and that he will always remain in learning, I guarantee you that he will recover quickly and be completely healed from his ailment."

The father, who fully trusted the rosh yeshivah, was very emotional when he heard these clear words. It took a few long moments until he could utter a word. On one side of the equation was his son's life, and on the other was the way of life that he was so firm about promoting and implementing. For him, it was a difficult decision, because beyond conceding his aspirations for his son, he would have to commit financially to supporting his family for many years to come. He struggled to give an immediate answer and asked the rosh yeshivah for a bit of time.

Rav Yehuda Zev gazed at him with understanding combined with pity, but didn't say a word. The man stumbled out of the room. In the ensuing days, as the rosh yeshivah awaited the father's answer, he did not stop davening for his beloved talmid, and at the same time, he also give him a lot of support and chizuk to raise his flagging spirits. The young man's condition deteriorated, and he began to look awful; the rosh yeshivah could not stand idly by and watch.

Two weeks passed, and the boy's condition just grew worse. The rosh yeshivah summoned his student and asked him to give his father an urgent message, that he was still waiting for his answer. But the father still did not have the courage to make a decision…

Some more time passed. The weakened bochur hardly came to the beis medrash anymore, and suddenly they heard the bitter news that his condition had taken a turn for the worse, and that he was now critical. His organs began to fail, and the doctors were compelled to tell the parents that they had to prepare for the worst. For the doctors, it was a matter of hours, perhaps days…

The father no longer had the luxury of deliberation. He ran desperately to the rosh yeshivah's room in a storm of emotions, and as he entered he announced, "I decided to agree to everything the rosh yeshivah said. I decided that if my son will get well I will do everything possible for him to stay in learning until the end of his life…!"

A few moments later, Minchah began in the yeshivah. The rosh yeshivah rose to daven, in his regular fervent manner. When davening was over, the rosh yeshivah was still in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei. - The yeshivah students, fearful for the fate of their friend, who was hanging between life and death, remained in the beis medrash. They could not shift their eyes away from their rosh yeshivah, who appeared to them at that moment like the Kohein Gadol standing in the Kodesh Hakodashim. When he reached the tefillah of Elokai Netzor, his voice rose a bit, and those standing close to him could hear him pouring his heart out to Hashem, and saying in simple words: "Ribbono Shel Olam, three times, I promised that if this bochur's life would be dedicated to Torah, he will be cured of his ailment. Please! See the mesirus nefesh that this father needed to agree to it, and now that he has made the pledge to support his son in learning for all his life, please allow my promise to be fulfilled…"

Rav Yehuda Zev continued to daven for several long moments, in a similar vein, and when he regained his composure a bit, he stepped back to recite Oseh Shalom. A sigh of relief rippled through the yeshivah students; the sensed that indeed, the yeshuah was at hand.

Later, they received word that there had been a significant improvement in the bochur's condition. He had opened his eyes, to the great shock of his doctors, and asked for a drink of water. Over the next few days, his condition continued to improve. The doctors, who could not believe what they were seeing, sent him for repeated tests. One by one, they showed that the disease was receding, until it completely disappeared.

A few weeks later, the boy returned to the beis medrash with a clean bill of health. The father, who witnessed this open miracle, valiantly kept to his promise. From that day on, he did everything in his power to ensure that his son could learn undisturbed. The bochur began to thrive, and in time, married the daughter of a talmid

chacham whose only aspiration was a husband who would grow in Torah.

The father continued to support the growing family and watched as his son made great strides in Torah. Today, he is known as one of the prominent Torah scholars in England, who dedicates his life to teaching Torah to others.

Vechol Maaminim

Kiss the Sefer Torah and Open the Hand

(ל ג) איש כי ידר נדר לה' או השבע שבעה לאסר אסר על נפשו לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה

The Maggid of Kelm was once invited to spend Shabbos in a town in Europe. On Shabbos morning, he noticed that when they took the Sefer Torah out to be read, the mispallelim did not kiss the Torah with their mouths. Rather, they touched it with their fingers and then kissed the tips of their fingers. After the Torah reading ended, the Maggid saw further that the gabbai banged on the bimah and announced that anyone who would not pay the pledges he made when having an aliyah would no longer be called to the Torah…

When davening ended, the Maggid was invited to speak, as was customary. In his words, he delivered a veiled rebuke: "In your town – I saw an upside-down world. In all the Jewish communities, they kiss the Torah with their mouth and give tzedakah with their hands, but here, I saw that you kiss the Torah with your hand and give tzedakah by mouth…"

"Bitachon is the antidote to anxiety, for when we trust in Hashem, we have nothing to fear." – Rabbi Avraham J Twerski

Short And Sweet Story of The Week



Two people once came to a Din Torah before the **Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk, ZT"L**. When he issued his ruling, one of the plaintiffs refused to abide by it. "You should know," Rav Menachem Mendel told the insubordinate plaintiff, "when I was appointed Rav here in Vitebsk, I brought a box with me, and that box is sitting with me above that closet."

Pointing to the box, Rabbi Menachem Mendel said, "This box is where I keep anger, and when I have to get angry to defend the honour in Heaven, I stand on the bench and climb onto the closet so that I can open the box and take out some anger. Then I got angry." "If I get angry at you," Rabbi Menachem Mendel continued, "there will be no cure for what the consequences will be! Consider yourself warned!" The plaintiff was frightened and submitted himself to the Rebbe's ruling.

DIVREI TORAH ON THE PARSHA BY BORUCH KAHAN

Yehoshua's Life Shortened by 10 Years

The Medrash tells us that even though Moshe Rabbeinu knew that his last battle on behalf of Bnei Yisroel was against the Midyonim and once he defeated them then they would go into Eretz Yisroel without him and he would die, nevertheless he did not delay fighting them and knew once the outcome had happened that that would be the end for him.

The Medrash then contrasts this with Yehoshua who also knew that once he had lead Bnei Yisroel into Eretz Yisroel and done the Kibbush of 7 years and Chilluk of 7 years he would die but unfortunately he did not follow Moshe's example and did delay starting this and as a result 10 years of his life was deducted in that he should have lived till 110.

The Medrash does not spell out how long Yehoshua delayed .It is certainly apparent that it was NOT 10 years so why was this Davka the amount he lost possibly a more apt punishment would have been that his life should be shortened by the amount of years he delayed going into fighting the 31 kings of the land.

The late Mr. Michael Wechsler Z"L once offered me a possible answer to this related to an earlier Dvar Torah mentioned on Parshas Shelach .There we said that Moshe had added on a letter yud to Yehoshua's name so that the Shem of HKB"H would be in his name and save him from the bad advice of the other spies. But if now Yehoshyua was defying HKB"H and delaying the Kibbush and Chilluk perhaps HKB"H felt that He should as it were take back that yud from Yehoshua as he did not live up to being a leader like Moshe so that is why he perhaps lost 10 years of his life.

A Further comment to this can be found in the Etz Yosef on the Merash Tanchuma in Parshas Teztaveh that Yehoshua lost the 10 years on account of the ten worded prophesy that Eldod and Meidod said in Parshas Behaaloisechoh that Moshe would die and Yehoshua would take Bnei Yisroel into Eretz Yisroel and Yehoshua never protested.

Similarly, we find this is so in the Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer Perek 39 who explains why Yosef lost 10 years of his life as he also did not make any protest when he heard from Yehuda a description of Yakov his father as an Eved which he heard from him 5 times and a further 5 times from the interpreter who was between Yosef and his brothers.

The Medrash further in Vayechi pairs together various characters in the Tenach and beyond who died at the same age and places Yehoshua and Yosef as a pair implying that there was a link in them both dying at 110 as if there was some punishment and that actually both should have lived till 120.

The Airplane



A boy asked his father, "Dad, how big is the Hashem?"

The father looked up at the sky and saw an airplane, so he asked his son, "How big is that plane?"

The boy replied, "It is very small, I can hardly see it."

Then his father took him to the airport. As the plane came into land, he asked his son, "Now how big is the plane?"

The son replied, "Wow dad, it's huge!"

Then the father told his son, "Hashem's size depends on how close or far you are to Him. The closer you are to him, the greater and greater He will be in your life."

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Chofetz Chaim would teach about how one should speak to Hashem like a child speaks to his father, and he should tell Hashem everything that is on his mind.

The Chofetz Chaim was known, even from a young age, to seclude himself and pour out his heart to Hashem!

Etz Hachaim by CT Blau



In last week's parsha, Pinchos ben Elazar ben Ahron HaKohen removed Hashem's anger from upon the Jewish People by killing two people, one of them was a woman by the name of kuzby, a midyanite woman. The Pasuk says that Pinchos's act saved **כלל ישראל** from being completely wiped out.

In Parshas Matos, Moshe sends specifically **Pinchos** together with 1,000 men from each tribe to fight the Midyan nation.

The question is why did Moshe send Pinchos to battle and not his father Elazar who was the **כהן גדול** ?

Rashi gives 3 answers.

1) Pinchos was the **כהן משוך מלחמה**

2) Pinchos had to take revenge on the Midyanim for not taking Yosef Hatzadik back to his father Yaakov years earlier. Yosef had told them at the time, that if they bring him back to his father they would receive great reward, but his offer fell on deaf ears. Instead, they sold Yosef as a slave. Pinchos from his mother's side was a descendant of Yosef so he was the one to take revenge.

3) Pinchos went and not Elazar because Hashem said, "The one who already started with the **mitzvah** of killing the Midyanite woman whose name was "**כזבי**" should also be the one in charge of **finishing** the Mitzvah of killing them out. **אמר הקב"ה מי שהתחיל במצוה... יגמור**

"Things work out best for those who make the best of how things work out."

Living The Daf – כתובות דף יא.

מהו דתימא עובד כוכבים בהפקירא ניחא ליה דהא קיימא לן דעבד ודאי בהפקירא ניחא ליה

The **גמרא** says that for a goy it's not a zchus to be megayer him since **עובד כוכבים בהפקירא ניחא ליה**.

I heard from HaRav Dovid Renner **שליט"א** that a survey was done where many Jewish children were asked what would they do if they would find out one day that they were a goy?

Sadly, the survey's results were not so positive. This is not a good thing. We want to educate our children that they should be so proud to be a Jew that they should want nothing else. They should have an internal love to be a Jew. We don't want our children to have the ideals of **בהפקירא ניחא ליה**

It is not an easy thing to imbue and infuse into our children. But it definitely starts with the responsibility of the parents themselves having that intense love to be a Yid and then it will spill over into the next generation.



Reb Boruch Ber once said, when he says the Brocho "Sheloi Asani Goy" every morning, he does not think of some low class Goy, he thinks of the most "choshuveh" Goy and he thanks Hashem, that he is not a Goy.

Once Reb Boruch Ber saw a Polish cleaning man and he asked someone how to say "Thank you" in Polish. Reb Boruch Ber then turned to the cleaner and told him "Thank you" in Polish. Someone who overheard the conversation told Reb Boruch that the cleaner was really a Yid and he understood Yiddish perfectly fine.

When Reb Boruch Ber found out that the man was really a Yid, he was devastated, and he felt terrible for what he did. He immediately went over to him and asked for forgiveness. The cleaner just laughed and said, "Of course I am Mochel." Reb Baruch Ber was not satisfied, and told him the following story.

"There was once a young girl who lost her mother, and she received all her mother's jewellery as a yerusha. One day a friend borrowed her the pearl necklace that she received from her mother. The next day the borrower came and apologized that she had lost the necklace.

The girl said to her, "Don't worry I forgive you, necklaces are replaceable it's nothing at all." The young yesoma came home and told her father what happened and how she was mochel the pearl necklace. Her father's face turned pale and he yelled, "Do you realize what that necklace was?! That necklace was passed down in the family for many generations!! You were only forgiving so easily because you did not understand the value of that necklace. Therefore, your forgiveness was meaningless…"

Rav Boruch Ber turned to cleaner who was a Yid. "The reason you were mochel, just like that, was because you aren't machshiv what it means to be a Yid. You aren't Machshiv how choshuv you are, what a treasured nation we are, and what a gift you have of being a Yid. Because if you did, you would be furious with me for thinking you were not a Jew, so your mechilah was really meaningless! So, I ask you for mechilah again, now that you know what a precious position you are in. This time the man stopped and thought, and only then told Rav Baruch Ber that indeed forgave him.

The Divrei Chayim of Sanz writes; ***"If one would realize the chashivus of being a Yid he would melt from simcha – absolute happiness".***



Rav Ahrel'e M'belz once said that if a person would really understand what it means to be a Yid, when he says the Brocho of "Sheloi Asani Goy" it is not Shayech for him to have any form of depression or sadness that day. The fact that he appreciates that he recognizes how special it is to be a Yid, brings to a happiness that will override all sorrow.

Reb Yoel On the Parsha

פרק לא פסוק יד–טו רבי זלמן סורוצקין

ויקצף משה...ויאמר אליהם משה החייתם כל נקבה - "Moshe was angry…Moshe said to them, 'Did you let every female live?'"

Moshe teaches us that when someone is angry, he should wait until the anger passes before speaking. After his anger has passed, he can speak, as the *pasuk* indicates: first it says, *Moshe was angry* and only after that does it say, *Moshe said to them*.

If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape one hundred days of sorrow.

When R' Naftali of Ropshitz was a child and attempted to rise early in the morning to serve G-d, his evil inclination would tell him "Why do you need to get up so early? It's still dark outside."

The young Naftali would respond boldly: "You have already risen to do your job – but you're telling me not to rise for my job?" ~ Likkutei Battar Likkutei.

Peninim on The Torah – Chinuch

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein Shlita relates a story which underscores the outstanding chinuch, education, a young girl had growing up in a home steeped in Torah. This girl, in turn, became a grown woman and the mother of **Horav Eliezer Palchinsky, zl** (brother-in-law of **Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zl**).

Parents must realise the impact their behaviour has on their children. "Do as I say, not as I do" is the sad state of affairs in some homes.

When she was a young girl, Rav Eliezer's mother was sent by her parents to the **Ohr Sameach** with a shaaleh, halachic query, concerning an egg (it had been cooked in a dish). Rav Meir Simcha rendered the egg not kosher. He then turned to the young girl and asked, "What will you do with the dish?" (Since, if the egg was prepared in it, the same ruling would apply to the plate.)

The girl's response indicates her righteous upbringing and the reason she merited a son who was to become a gadol baTorah. After thinking for a moment, she said, "I will put it away until I become engaged, and then I will give it to my future mother-in-law to break at my tenaaim, betrothal."

When the Ohr Sameach heard her answer, he remarked that it was obvious that she was the daughter of a Torah scholar. She, too, would merit to raise her children to become distinguished erudite scholars.

Children learn from their parents. Hopefully, what they learn will be constructive.

"Smart people know of what they speak; fools speak of what they know." – Rav Yosef Chaim Kara, Minchas Shabbos on Avos.

Hakoras Hatov

נקם נקמת בני ישראל מאת המדינים ... וישלח אתם משה אלף למטה

Take vengeance for Bnei Yisrael against the Midyanim… Moshe sent them a thousand from each tribe. *(31:2,6)*

Moshe Rabbeinu was the paradigm of a baal ha'koras ha'tov, one who acknowledges his debt of gratitude and repays it at his earliest convenience. This is the definition that applies to everyone. Moshe is not everyone. He lived by a bar with much higher standards.

In this parsha, Hashem instructed him to mete out vengeance against the Midyanim for their role in provoking the Jews to sin. The Midrash Rabbah (Bamidbar 2:4) comments, "Hashem instructs Moshe to take action. Yet, he instead sends others. He did this due to an overriding sense of ha'koras ha'tov.

He had spent much time in Midyan, following his escape from Egypt and his marriage to Tzipporah, the daughter of Yisro, who was the priest of Midyan. He felt that having benefitted from this country, he had no right to raise his hand in battle against them." Moshe applied a rationale, Bor she'shassia mimenu al tizrok bo even; "Do not throw a stone into a well from which you have drunk."

One who develops a strong sense of ha'koras ha'tov will understand to Whom we owe our greatest debt of gratitude: Hashem.

By acknowledging that our every breath, our every action, is a unique gift from Hashem, we develop a greater sense of subjugation to Hashem for all that He does for us.

Many stories have been written which detail the various levels and practices involved in hakaras ha'tov. They all have a common denominator: a living person expresses his gratitude to another living person.

The following powerful story reflects a different form of hakoras ha'tov.

Horav Yosef Glick, zl, was attached to a number of Chasidishe Rebbes. Among whom he was particularly close to was the **Belzer Rebbe, Horav Aharon Rokeach, zl**.



The Rebbe was meticulous to use schach kainus for his succah, and he replaced the schach annually. When the Rebbe immigrated to Eretz Yisrael after escaping from the European holocaust, during some years appropriating kainus schach was difficult to impossible.

Rav Yosef worked very hard to provide the Rebbe with kainus schach. He succeeded in locating and delivering the schach to the Rebbe. The Rebbe was known for his hakoras ha'tov. He did everything within his power to repay the favour, to show his gratitude. One cannot show gratitude unless one is physically alive to do so. The Rebbe did not live long in Eretz Yisrael and, as a result, never had the opportunity to repay Rav Yosef.

Rav Yosef related that he dreamt that the Rebbe had visited the chareidi Moshav Yesodos. The entire community, including him, went out to greet and pay homage to this venerable Torah giant. When he shook hands with the Rebbe, the Rebbe said to him, "Do not worry. I remember what you did for me. I will pay you back and protect you from this world."

He woke up drenched in sweat. He wondered what the Rebbe had meant when he said that he would protect him. He was healthy; why should he worry? He thought, "As a devoted chasid who believed in the Rebbe's powers, I should have immediately made a doctor's appointment to check myself out – just in case. Things being the way

they are, we tend to procrastinate and not go to the doctor until something is urgent."

A few weeks passed, and Rav Yosef began to experience serious back pain. He finally went to the doctor who, after reviewing the MRI that he had taken, delivered the bad news. He had a large tumour on his spine. It was too dangerous to operate and, at best, the surgery would only give him a few extra weeks. He was encouraged to put his affairs in order and prepare for the inevitable. Rav Yosef was not concerned, so sure was he concerning the Rebbe's promise to him.

Years passed from the day that the doctor read the results of his scan. Baruch Hashem, he lived many more years and was able to dance at his grandchildren's weddings. The Belzer Rebbe made sure to pay his debts.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

מטות – מסעי

מסעי – מטות hints that you should **מטות** , bend and accept the things that happen to you in life, **מסעי** , and then you will travel peacefully through life.

Someone owned a very strong and quick horse, and the proud

owner fed it well and took good care of it. But eventually the horse became old and its upkeep was costly. Nevertheless, the owner had *hakaras hatov* to the horse, so he continued feeding it and caring for it.

One day, the horse fell into a very deep pit and couldn't get out. The owner thought it was an opportune time to put the end to his horse and began shovelling dirt into the pit to bury it. The horse looked up with pleading eyes, wondering why his owner was throwing earth over him. But the owner didn't pay attention to his horse's plea and kept tossing in earth.

As the pit filled up with earth, the horse climbed on top of that earth, and slowly, slowly it was raised, until it was able to leave the pit.

There are circumstances in life that seem negative, and sometimes we feel that someone is trying to bury us alive, but ultimately, we grow from all those hardships, as everything is planned only for our benefit.



Success Comes From Hashem

The Torah says (31:4) **למטה...תשלחו לצבא אלף למטה אלף** , ***a thousand people to a tribe, a thousand to a tribe…send to the army."***

Why are the words **אלף למטה** repeated?

The Midrash teaches that each shevet sent two thousand people to Midyan. One thousand soldiers to fight the war and one thousand people to daven for their success.

Reb Yechezkel Levinstein *zt'l* asks:

(1) *Tefillah* can be done in the beis medresh. Why were they sent to the front to daven?

(2) Why was it necessary for a thousand people to daven? Wouldn't a minyan be sufficient? Why was each soldier matched with another person to pray for him?

Reb Yechezkel Levinstein *zt'l* answers that miracles were needed to win this war. It was only twelve thousand people against an enormous army, and to win the war, they had to acknowledge that their successes were from Hashem. However, the nature of people is to

think that they are doing things on their own. Therefore, it was possible that when the warriors would win battle after battle, they would think they were succeeding with their own might.

Therefore, Hashem commanded someone to be praying for each soldier on the frontlines. This would remind the warriors that Hashem is fighting for them. And when one recognizes Hashem and knows that his success comes from Hashem, he will succeed.

Respect Your Words – Rabbi Shlomo Farhi



Rav Don Segal once flew to another country to attend a relative's wedding. He's at the wedding for maybe an hour, and he tells his host who is also at the wedding that he is going to go back home now but you don't have to leave. Don't worry about me, I will take a cab back. The host agreed, and Rav Don went back to the house.

A few hours later when his host came home, he said to the Rabbi, "Rav Don, I don't understand, you flew all the way from abroad to specifically be at this wedding, and yet you only stayed a short while, why didn't you stay longer?"

Rav Don said, "When we left the house, your young son said that he doesn't want to stay at home by himself. And you told your son not to worry, somebody will be back home before 11pm. I looked at my watch, and I realised that if we didn't leave the wedding right now, no one would be home by 11pm. It didn't seem like you were about to go, but I was also there when you said this to your child!" - What an unbelievable concept of **לא יחל דברו**.



Chazal tell us that when a person is careful with his words, Hakadosh Baruch Hu sees that you treat your words with respect, then when you daven, Hashem also respects your words. But if you don't respect your own words, how do you expect Hashem in heaven to?

How do you expect your tefillos to rise to the highest places?

Torah Compilations with Yossi



This week, we read the parshah of Matos where we read how two and half tribes of the Jewish people were allowed to settle east of the River Jordan outside of the Divinely-ordained boundaries of the Holy Land.

What intrigues me is the tribe of Menashe – why was it divided, half this side of the border, and half that side of the border? We know that Reuven and Gad preferred to be east of the Jordan, but what about the tribe of Menashe?

The Degel Machaneh Ephraim explains that Moshe was afraid that once Reuven and Gad would be geographically separated from the rest of the people in the course of time, they could attain a separate independent identity, which could then lead to a split in the nation. Consequently he created a bridge, half of Menashe on this side, half

on the other side, and as a result there was a constant flow of people. Everybody knew they might be separated, but it was one nation.

This is such a pertinent commentary at this time of the year. As we approach Tisha B'Av, when we recall how we lost our Temple because of Sinas Chinam, causeless hatred, because of the unnecessary divisions within the Jewish people.

From Moshe we learn how important it is to always create and maintain bridges within the Jewish people to guarantee our togetherness and unity at all times. So, let's try to love every individual for who they are.

Migdal Ohr

When the **Chacham Tzvi** was forced to flee Amsterdam for political reasons, he wandered incognito. In Frankfurt, he found himself invited with other poor guests to the home of a local. The man, Meir Anshel, recognized the great sage but didn't disclose his identity.

After Shabbos, the Chacham Tzvi left. R' Meir Anshel followed him and apologized for not according him honor. The Chacham Tzvi was happy his secret had not been revealed, but refused the money his host offered, as "One who hates gifts will live."

The host then put the bag of coins on the ground and declared them ownerless, turning around and riding home. The Chacham Tzvi took the money, as it was no longer a gift and ought not to fall into the wrong hands and blessed his host.

That blessing was effective, and the fortunes of Meir Anshel Rothschild and his family became legendary.

Vechol Maaminim - Amen

From morning to night, we merit to be surrounded with brachos: brachos of praise, Birchos Hanehenin and Birchos Hamitzvos. We merit to recite Meah Brachos, and more, each day, but ultimately, the supply is limited… Because more than we have been warned to recite the necessary brachos, we are also cautioned not to recite brachos that we do not need, Brachos She'einan Tzrichos.

However, in contrast, answering amen has no limit. Every person who wants to can accumulate a countless number of amens during the day,



if he is only a 'shomer emunim,' meaning he tries to hear brachos from many people and to answer amen after them. The renowned Mashgiach, **Harav Dov Yaffeh, zt"l**, shared a simple, but remarkable message:

HaKadosh Baruch Hu created our physical world in a way that the more vital something is for a person, the more readily available it is. Oxygen, with which a person cannot live without for even a minute, is unlimited. Water and basic food products are also found in abundance, and so forth.

Apparently, the Mashgiach said, that this is also applicable to the spiritual world. The more something is vital the more available it is. The availability of the mitzvah of answering amen teaches us the tremendous necessity of it for the soul of a Jew.

Rav Avigdor Miller on Shabbos Sleep



QUESTION: Should one sleep on Shabbos afternoon?

ANSWER: Absolutely. Absolutely! However, that doesn't mean that you should climb into your pajamas and remain there all Shabbos. Because Shabbos is a wonderful opportunity for much better things than sleep. There's so much thinking you have to do; about *briyas ha'olam yeish mei'ayin,* about *olam chesed yibaneh,* about *beini u'vein bnei Yisroel.* There's so much to accomplish on Shabbos.

But you must understand that sleep is extremely important for our health. It's extremely important for our mental health and it's being neglected by very many people. So Shabbos is a good opportunity to catch up on your sleep. Because of Shabbos, many people are able to survive the week – otherwise, they would collapse for lack of sleep. So certainly you should utilize Shabbos for sleep. But of course, don't overdo it.

And by the way, since you mentioned the subject, I will tell you that you must be careful to go to sleep every night on time. And make sure that you get enough sleep because due to lack of sleep many, many people have ruined their lives.

"The gematria of הכנה is 80, the same as יסוד, foundation. This is a hint that the foundation of proper mitzvah performance is its preparation." ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

The Persian King, the Rabbi, and the Slave By Yossi Ives

The Talmud (end of Tractate Avoda Zara.) describes an encounter between the Persian King Shapur and the distinguished rabbi, Rav Yehuda, along with his servant Bati bar Tovi.

The Persian king was knowledgeable in Jewish law, and there are many reports of his encounters with the great rabbis of his era – especially the famed Shmuel, one of the outstanding personalities of the Talmudic era and the head of the Neharda'ah Academy. In the story below, Shapur is meeting with Shmuel's leading student and successor, Rav Yehuda.



The story begins with the two men engaged in conversation when an *etrog* (citron) fruit was brought to them.

The king pulled out a knife, cut a slice, and handed it to Bati bar Tovi, the servant. He then thrust the knife into the ground ten times (to cleanse it from non-kosher residue) and cut a slice for Rav Yehuda. Bati was offended that Shapur had served him a slice before cleansing the knife. Turning to the king, he protested: "Am I not a Jewish person?" "Don't the laws of kosher apply to me too?!"

We presume he regretted asking this question, given the king's response. The king's retort was not flattering to Bati. Shapur tells Bati that he knows Rav Yehuda to be pious and scrupulous about religious practice, but he is not at all sure he can say the same for Bati.

The Gemarah continues, but this is a basic version that is all that is required.

This story about the happenings in an exotic Persian palace resonate down to our times. Shapur venerated Rav Yehuda, because he knew he was true to his values. Because Rav Yehuda respected himself and his own religion, Shapur respected them too.

Had Shapur thought that Rav Yehuda would easily forgo his strict observance of kosher, he most likely would have not bothered to clean his knife. It was the rabbi's firmness in upholding his religious standards that earned him respect from a powerful monarch.

I found the above article, and it piqued my interest, as I remember that 50 years ago almost everybody's back garden had knives stuck into the soil as a way of kashering them. I asked my wife if she recalls this phenomenon, and she said she also remembers it.

Was it erroneous or did the previous generation know the halacha which has now been largely forgotten?

I found the article below that explains this strange minhag.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

וַיִּמָּסְרוּ מֵאַלְפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלֶף

לַמַּטֶּה שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר אֶלֶף חֲלוּצֵי צָבָא ***From the thousands of Israel one thousand was given over for each tribe, twelve thousand armed for battle.***

The Pandemic took a toll on all of us. We lost loved ones and our sense of connection and togetherness. Many of us also lost our Parnassa. In Eretz Yisroel as well, many were impacted by Covid.

Tour guides were among the most affected by the disappearance of tourists. Meir, a licensed tour guide, found himself with more time on his hands than he had planned for, and it was truly a tremendous simcha when tourists began to flock back to the Holy Land a full year later, around Pesach time.

Not long ago, Meir was privileged to take a family to Chevron (Hebron). After seeing the city, they stopped at the Gutnick Centre

for lunch. The food is excellent, and the location is perfect. The eatery even has a wonderful non-eating option. You can purchase a coupon, redeemable for one pizza pie. Yet, the pizza pie is not for you.



The pizza coupon is specifically sold to benefit the soldiers who risk their lives daily to protect those who visit Chevron and the Mearas HaMachpelah. You purchase a coupon, and when you leave the centre, you give it to a group of soldiers as a small token of Hakoras HaTov (gratitude).

Meir brought his small group to the Gutnick Centre for lunch and while he was there, he noticed a Chassidish couple enjoying their pizza. He observed that the man was holding not one but two pizza coupons. As he walked past their table, he called out in a friendly tone, "Shalom Aleichem," to which the man smiled and replied, "Alaiychem Shulem."

Noticing Meir's tourist license hanging from his neck, the man took the opportunity to ask Meir some questions about the Mearas HaMachpelah. Amidst the conversation, Meir asked him, "Where are you from in the States?" The Chassidish man with the long "gekrazzled peyos" answered that he is from Kiryas Yoel in Monroe. "I assume you are a Satmar Chassid," Meir offered and the man nodded enthusiastically.

With a twinkle in his eye, Meir said, "I see that you purchased two pizza coupons for the soldiers. Should I assume that you support Tzahal and its soldiers?"



Our Chassidish friend became very serious as he answered, "What I think of the Tzahal is irrelevant. At this moment and at this place, our ideological differences are not important. What is timely and essential is for me as a chassid and for all Yidden who are here, to have Hakoras HaTov. My purchasing coupons for the soldiers has nothing to do with ideology or approval. These boys are protecting us as we speak, as we sit here and eat. Without them putting their lives at risk every day, we would not be able to visit Chevron and daven at the burial site of our Avos Hakedoshim. If the Rebbe zy"a himself was here now, he would have bought all the available coupons. He was very careful about Hakoras HaTov, and his sense of gratitude was boundless. Of course, I bought coupons for the soldiers. Hakoras HaTov doesn't distinguish between a shtreimel and an army helmet. It is the least I can do for these brave Yidden who protect us."

He suddenly stood up and said to Meir, "Come, let us go together to give the soldiers our coupons. I see you have purchased one as well." They walked out into the bright sunlight and immediately came across a group of soldiers.

The Satmar chassid placed one ticket into the hand of one of the soldiers. "Yasher Koach, Todah Rabah!" he exclaimed, with great emotion. The soldier looked at the chassid and answered, "A groisen dank." (Thank you in Yiddish) The chassid looked shocked; he wasn't expecting the young IDF soldier to answer in Yiddish! The soldier continued as he noticed the surprised look on his benefactor's face.

"Ich bin oich fun Anshei Shlomeinu!" (I am also part of "our tribe"). The chassid from Monroe recovered quickly and answered on the spot, "Avada, vos is di shayla!" (of course, you are, what's even the question?)

The three of them - Meir, the chassid and the soldier - all smiled and embraced. A sense of unity and togetherness enveloped them. They laughed and celebrated their familial connection, realizing once again that "so much more connects us than divides us." For a too-brief moment, they were no longer ideological rivals. They were brothers who loved each other. And as they bonded with true love, Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, who were just a few yards away, smiled and nodded their heads in approval. And Moshiach's footsteps came closer and closer... (Rabbi R. Y. Eisenman, Olami Resources)

Write On By Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn



Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky zt"l, one of the greatest Torah scholars of our generation, reviewed the entire Talmud Babli, Talmud Yerushalmi, Shulhan Aruch, Midrash and Tanach every year! In order to complete Talmud Babli in one year, one must study about seven and a half pages a day, but Reb Chaim studied eight pages, so as not to feel the pressure to rush his studies during the final month. Reb Chaim completed his daily eight pages by sunrise every morning, in time to pray with the sunrise minyan.

In the autumn of 2001, Reb Chaim suffered a stroke. While recuperating in the Mayenei Hayeshua Hospital in Bnei Brak, he began physical therapy. His therapist asked Reb Chaim to write something on a blank sheet of paper, in order to accustom the great Sage to using his hand and fingers. Reb Chaim is the author of over

a dozen sefarim, so writing is an integral part of his life. Slowly and painstakingly, he wrote in Hebrew, יְקוּם פּוּרְקָן מִן שְׁמַיָּא - "May salvation arise from Heaven" (the opening phrase of the prayer for those who uphold the Torah, recited by Ashkenazim after the Torah reading on Shabbat).

The therapist was impressed by Reb Chaim's choice of words, which were obviously a prayer for his recovery. But the therapist was surprised, as well. "I have been doing this work for years," he said to Reb Chaim. "Every single patient that I ever had always wrote his name when I first asked him to write something. This happened every time without fail. Why did the Rav not write his name?"

Reb Chaim looked out at the therapist from under his thick bushy eyebrows and said with simplicity and sincerity, "Hazal (our Sages of blessed memory) teach that a person should not write his name on a blank sheet of paper, lest a dishonest person find it and write above the signature that the undersigned owes him money, and then he would be liable!" (See Ketubot 21a).

Who would have thought of this except for Reb Chaim? (Reflections of the Maggid)

Circle Time – Paying the Paid Debt

לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה ***He shall not violate his word, everything that comes out of his mouth, he shall do.*** (30:3)

Why does the Torah use a repetitive phrase? **The Ben Ish Chai** explains that the second "He" refers to Hashem! It is saying that if someone is very careful to keep his word, Hashem will make sure that everything that comes out of his mouth comes true!

The talmidim couldn't go on like this any longer. The yeshivah was struggling and had no money. Now, all yeshivos struggle and have no money, but this yeshivah literally had nothing. There was not a crumb

to be had. The talmidim had no choice but to ask their esteemed rebbi, the Tanna Rabi Akiva, for help.

Rabi Akiva understood and resolved to get some money for them. He decided to borrow a large sum to support the talmidim until donations could be raised. But where would he get such a big loan?

There was a wealthy Roman lady who lived near the sea. She trusted in Hashem and Rabi Akiva thought she would be willing to give the yeshivah a loan. He went to visit her and told her how much he needed. "Will you agree to lend this money to the yeshivah?" he asked. The lady thought a while before she spoke. "That is a lot of gold and silver," she finally said. "You know I have the funds, and I might even be willing to lend it.

I trust in your G-d. However, I don't trust you! How do I know I will get it back?" "We will make a guarantor, someone who will take responsibility to make sure you are paid back." "Who will guarantee the loan?" "Whom do you trust? It can be whomever you want." Again, the noblewoman thought at length. "I trust your G-d and I trust the ocean," she said. "I want them to guarantee that I will get paid back when the loan is due, and not a second later!" "Okay," Rabi Akiva replied. "The Master of the World and the ocean will guarantee the loan on time, not a second late."



The woman gave him a basket of silver and gold. Rabi Akiva used it to support the talmidim while working hard to collect enough money to pay back the loan. Payday came and Rabi Akiva had the money -- but he was sick! He could not get out of bed or even move. He was very upset because he never broke his word, but he was clearly an oness. There was nothing he could do about it.

At her beachfront property, the rich noblewoman waited for Rabi Akiva. Why wasn't he returning the money? At last, someone came, but it was not the rabbi. "I have a message for you," a boy came to tell her. "Rabi Akiva is sick. He will come to return the money as soon as he is physically able." Hearing this, the lady went down to the water's edge. She had been promised the money back on time and not a second later! She raised her eyes to Heaven. "Master of the World!" she cried. "You guaranteed this money on time! Please pay back the loan!"

She looked toward the ocean. There, floating toward her, was a large chest! She waited until the box floated to a stop at her feet. Taking it into her home, she opened it. You guessed it — it was full of diamonds, gold, silver, and jewels. The total worth was far more than she had been owed! How did the box get to her? Across the sea, the princess of the Roman Caesar had gone crazy! The young woman was struck with madness that caused her to fill a treasure chest with all her gold and jewellery and toss it into the ocean. That box floated to the noblewoman, delivered by her two guarantors — Hashem and the ocean.

A few days later, Rabi Akiva came to the woman's house. "I had all the money on time," he said, "but I became sick. I came as soon as I could." "No worries!" the woman said. "Keep your money. The debt has been paid!"

"It has??" The woman told Rabi Akiva the whole story. "…So you see," she concluded, "your guarantors paid in full and you don't owe anything. As a matter of fact, you get change!" She escorted Rabi Akiva to her treasure house, where she gave him riches of gold and jewels — enough to support the yeshivah for a long time!

Rabi Akiva was always careful to keep his word, so Hashem made sure he could continue to do so — even using the ocean as a guarantor, just as Rabi Akiva had said!

What's the Truth about . . . "Planting" Knives to Kasher Them? By Rabbi Dr. Ari Z. Zivotofsky



Misconception: A legitimate method to *kasher* non-kosher silverware is to "plant" it in soil for a period of time.

Fact: While there are specific instances where thrusting a knife into hard soil ten times will *kasher* it, that does not work for other cutlery, and there is no halachic basis for leaving a knife in the soil for a long period of time.

Background: I was first exposed to this practice when visiting my grandparents in Jerusalem in the 1980s and seeing silverware planted in flowerpots on their porch. This practice seems to have deep roots. Rabbi Hillel Herz (1615-1690), in a discussion on *kashering* knives, notes (*Beit Hillel*, *YD* 10:2) that one should not plunge a knife once in the ground and then leave it there, as this doesn't accomplish anything.

The practice stems from a legitimate method of *kashering* knives. *Kashering* utensils is necessary because non-kosher food can adhere to the utensil or the non-kosher taste (*ta'am*) can be absorbed into it. When utensils are used for kosher food, they must be free of any non-kosher residue or absorption of the taste of non-kosher food that could, in turn, get absorbed into the kosher food.

Reasons for *koshering* utensils include: *milchig* utensils used for *fleishig* food, utensils used for non-kosher food that are subsequently to be used for kosher food or Passover utensils that were used with *chametz*. In general, all of the actual tangible

prohibited substances that adhere to the *keli* must be removed, and the unwanted absorbed taste eliminated.

The basic principle regarding removing or destroying absorbed substances is *k'bol'o kach polto*—the manner in which the unwanted food was absorbed is the way to remove it. For example, the method of *kashering* metal utensils used directly on the fire with no liquid, such as baking pans or a barbeque grill, is *libun*—heating the utensil to a very high temperature (*Shulchan Aruch*, *OC* 451:4; *Mishnah Berurah* 451:27). This works by incinerating both the adhered and the absorbed unwanted substances (*Shach*, *YD* 121:17; cf. *Mishnah Berurah* 451:27). For utensils used to cook food including liquids, the method used is *hagalah*—the utensil is placed in boiling water that draws out the taste, which is then nullified in the water (*Shulchan Aruch, OC* 451:5).[3] Sometimes it may be sufficient to pour boiling water on the utensil, *iruy rotchim*. In many cases, if the non-kosher food was cold when it contacted the utensil, the utensil merely needs to be washed with cold water (*Shulchan Aruch*, *YD* 121:1).

The Shulchan Aruch states that kashering a knife is different from kashering other utensils and requires either libun (YD 121:7) or hagalah (*OC* 451:3). But there is also a method of kashering knives that involves sticking the knife into soil. When the Mishnah (Avodah Zarah 5:12 [75b]) enumerates kashering methods, it states that a non-kosher knife may be polished or buffed and thus rendered kosher.

Commenting on this, the Gemara (ibid., 76b) mentions an alternative method, ne'itzah b'karka—thrusting it into hard earth ten times. The Gemara qualifies that this method only works if the knife will be used for cold food. In other words, a non-kosher knife which is thrust into the ground ten times may be used to cut cold kosher food or a *fleishig* knife so treated may be used to cut cold cheese. The Rema (*YD* 121:7) qualifies that this should be done only as a

temporary measure, but for regular use, even for cold food, the custom is to fully *kasher* the knife.



This method is mentioned in a few different contexts in halachah. It would appear that it is not meant to expel the non-kosher taste absorbed into the knife but rather to remove surface fat (*shamnunit*). The hard dirt does the job of cleaning the knife, and removing all non-kosher remnants from the blade. Unlike the other *kashering* methods listed earlier, however, this method does not seem to remove the non-kosher taste absorbed in the utensil. However, Rabbi Yehudah Leibish Landau of Sadigura (d. 1900; *Yad Yehudah* 10:3), in a tour-de-force, expounds on the possibility of *ne'itzah b'karka* having an effect on some or all of the absorbed taste as well.

The Gemara mentions that one must thrust the blade into the earth ten times. Tosafot (*Avodah Zarah* 76b, s.v. *ha'sakin*) cites a Yerushalmi that says three thrusts but concludes that one should be careful to thrust it specifically ten times. Similarly, Rambam (*Ma'achalot Assurot* 17:7) and the *Shulchan Aruch* state ten times.

The *Knesset Hagedolah* (*Hagahot Tur*, *YD* 121:99) quotes earlier authorities who say fewer thrusts are sufficient, but concludes with ten, and *Yad Yehudah* (*YD* 89, *Perush Hakatzar*:34) concludes that despite other opinions, the correct approach in his view is ten thrusts.

The soil is described in our version of the Gemara as being "unworked," but other versions of the Gemara, as well as

the *Shulchan Aruch*, state the earth must be hard (*Gra, YD* 121:20), and this is understood to mean that each thrust should be in a different spot in the soil. The blade must be smooth and not pitted. This method is only mentioned regarding a knife; the knife is unique that it involves both a stringency and a leniency.

A chumrah associated with a knife is that it more easily acquires non-kosher matter and *ta'am* because of *duchka d'sakina*—the pressure of the [cutting] of the knife. On the other hand, because a knife can be thrust straight into the ground, the earth can serve as an abrasive cleaner for it but not for other utensils.

One may not use a knife that is usually used for meat to cut cheese or even to cut bread that will be eaten with cheese. This is true even if it was used only to cut cold food items (that are dairy) and it is now being used to cut cold food items (that are *fleshig,* or the reverse), because fatty residue adheres to the surface of a knife that is in frequent use (*Nekudot HaKesef*, *YD* 89:6). However, the Rema (*YD* 89:4) says it would be permitted to use the *fleishig* knife if it was jabbed into the hard ground ten times.

It seems that at one point in history it might have been common, likely due to poverty, to regularly use a *milchig* knife for *fleshing* after thrusting it into the ground ten times (and the reverse as well). The Rema, however, notes that one should not use one knife for both *milchig* and *fleshing;* the custom is to have two knives, and to label them. Some people even had a third knife specifically to cut bread, which would be *pareve* (*Aruch Hashulchan, YD* 89:16).

Meat that had been salted but not rinsed is not considered kosher and thus, if it is cut with a kosher knife, the Shulchan Aruch (YD 69:20) rules that the knife requires hagalah. The Rema says it suffices to thrust such a knife into the hard ground ten times. Similarly if a dairy knife was used to cut warm meat, there is a concern that fats will linger on the surface of the knife; the Rema

says it can be kashered by thrusting it into hard dirt (Darkei Moshe 105:5; Rema, YD 94:7).

This method is also mentioned as a means to kasher a non-kosher knife (bought from non-Jews) for cold use (Shulchan Aruch, YD 121:7).9 According to the Shulchan Aruch, a knife kashered in this manner can even be used to cut a davar charif—a "sharp" item, such as an etrog or radish (Gra, YD 121:22), although Darkei Teshuvah (YD 121:80) cites authorities who disagree with this.

It seems that this method works because the abrasive nature of the hard soil serves to clean and remove the fatty sheen. An obvious question is whether other methods of accomplishing this goal are acceptable. Rabbeinu Tam (*Sefer Hayashar* 790) writes that it is not specifically thrusting it into the earth but even rubbing it well on a stone suffices.

The Meiri (*Chullin* 8b) says that merely washing or rubbing the knife with a cloth does not suffice because it does not remove old fat, but using sand or soap is equivalent to thrusting a knife into the ground. Rabbi Yosef Greenwald, the Puppa Rav (*Vaya'an Yosef, YD* 162), was asked if steel wool could serve the same function. He states that thrusting the knife into the soil is preferable, but otherwise he approves of using steel wood; however just as one is required to thrust the blade into a different spot in the dirt each time, the steel wool should be replaced for each of the ten rubs.

It is clear that in the sources there is an unusual method of *kashering* knives that involves thrusting in the ground ten times. This method, *ne'itzah b'karka*, has few practical uses and seems to have been widely misunderstood. The folk practice of burying silverware is clearly a misapplication of this technique, and as *Beit Hillel* (*YD* 10:2) stated there is no *kashrut* benefit to planting cutlery that has become non-kosher.

This misconception obviously developed when thrusting a knife into hard soil morphed into burying, and knives were expanded to include

other utensils. Today, as most people can afford to purchase a lot of utensils and they therefore *kasher* much less frequently than in the past, expertise in all methods of *kashering,* including *ne'itzah b'karka,* has decreased among the laity.

Highlights from the Midrash - The Buried Cauldron

It is well known that Bilam flew away from Bnei Yisrael using kishuf and Pinchas knocked him down with the Tzitz. Bilam was killed with all four forms of misas beis din and his body turned to snakes. Why did he deserve such a terrible punishment?

• Aside from trying to curse Klal Yisrael and get them to sin, Bilam tried to spread his evil across the world. The Zohar (Parshas Balak 198b) says that Bilam collected all kinds of magical herbs, put them in a cauldron with snake heads, and made a potion out of them. He took the cauldron to the site on which the Beis Hamikdash would be built. On the spot where the Mizbe'ach would stand, he dug a hole 1,500 amos deep and buried it. In this way, he was hoping that his kishuf would contaminate the kedushah and outward flow of the Beis Hamikdash, spreading his evil to the entire world!



• When Dovid Hamelech dug the foundations for the Beis Hamikdash, he reopened the same hole when digging a channel for the wine poured on the Mizbe'ach to enter the depths of the earth. At 1,500 amos, he encountered Bilam's cauldron! He was able to neutralize it by reciting the 15 chapters of Tehillim that begin with Shir Hama'alos

The Power of a Neder – HaRav S F Zimmerman



Parshas Mattos is the sedra of vows and oaths. The Pasuk says, זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ 30:2 Rashi says that all the naveim used the word Koh as in בכה אמר ה׳ as did Moshe Rabeinu. But Moshe was unique in that he used the words זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה׳ as he had a greater clarity in nevuah.

The questions, why is this point mentioned here in the parsha of Nedarim? What is unique about this?

The answer could be, that the parsha of Nedarim brings out the uniqueness of a human being.

The uniqueness of a human being is the power of speech. The greatest level in the power of speech is the ability to create a vow or oath – an obligation where there wasn't one before, and to create a transgression and *issur* where there wasn't one before. This is truly a G-dly power that a human being has.

It is interesting to note, that we begin Yom Kippur with Kol Nidrei. Every Jewish soul is stirred by the special haunting melody, but in essence , it is just *hatoras nedarim – the nullification of vows*.

The ability to make a vow or oath, brings out the strength and uniqueness of a human being, and that is what stirs up what is deep within us.

"Love is not the result of giving; love is created by giving. When a person gives to another, he becomes bound to him." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.

Peninim on The Torah

ויאמר בני גד ובני ראובן אל משה... עבדיך יעשו כאשר אדני מצוה ... עבדיך יעברו כל חלוץ צבא לפני ד' למלחמה כאשר אדני דבר

Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven said to Moshe… Your servants shall do as my lord commands… And your servants shall cross over, every armedperson of the legion, before Hashem, to do battle, as my lord speaks. (32:25,27)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* exhorted *Bnei* Gad and *Bnei* Reuven to assume their share of the battle of conquering *Eretz Yisrael*, concluding, "*V'nichb'shah ha'aretz lifnei Hashem, v'achar tashuvu*, "And the Land; shall be conquered before Hashem, and then you shall return" (ibid 32:22).

Chazal (*Midrash*) comment that Moshe's statement, *V'achar tashuvu*, "And then you shall return," was fulfilled *b'm'lo muvan ha'milah*, to the word. Every member of *Bnei* Gad and *Bnei* Reuven returned home from the war and apportioning of the Land, a total of fourteen years. Not a single one died, not even of natural causes! *Tzaddik gozeir v'Hakadosh Boruch Hu mekayeim;* the *tzaddik*, righteous person, issues a decree, and Hashem fulfils his request.

The *Maharil Diskin, zl*, explains that this is why the Torah first quotes *Bnei* Gad and *Bnei* Reuven as saying, "Your servants shall do as my lord *commands…* The *anshei tzavah*, men of the legion, the soldiers who fought the war, were between the ages of twenty and sixty years old. The second group, the *chalutzei tzavah*, armed men of the legion, was comprised of those who were past the age of the draft, sixty years old, who really did not have to go, but went anyway, due to a sense of *achrayus*, responsibility, for *Klal Yisrael*; they responded, *kaasher adoni doveir*, "As my lord speaks." Hashem had issued no command for them to go. When they heard, however, Moshe's assurance that all would return, granting them fourteen years of life, they were going. Moshe's word meant something to them.

The word/promise/assurance of a *tzaddik* is like money in the bank. A young man was studying diligently in *yeshivah* and had reached marriageable age. He had decided that the time was ripe to look for his life's companion. He met a young woman who hailed from a fine family. She was replete with *middos tovos*, refined character traits, G-d-fearing and kind-hearted.

Two weeks following their engagement, the *kallah* began to have headaches accompanied by body tremors. The *chassan's* mother began to worry. Two weeks later, the *kallah* told her *chassan* the bleak news: she had developed a grave illness that would require treatment. With the help of the Almighty, she was hopeful for a recovery. She told him that she understood that he may want to break the *shidduch*, engagement, and move on with his life. He looked at her incredulously, "What are you saying? Absolutely not. We are in this together!"

The young woman was a bit more perspicacious. She said, "Let us wait and see how your parents feel. Talk it over with them, and then *you* can make *your* decision."

The young *chassan* came home and spoke with his parents. They sympathised with the young woman and her family, but they "agreed" that the *shidduch* should be severed. When the *chassan* argued, his mother countered, "Do you not think it strange that she became sick right after the engagement?" She was intimating that the illness had not just appeared now, that the girl had not been well prior to their engagement.

The *chassan* was not budging. He would not forsake his *kallah* at such a difficult time. The parents felt that, after a few days, he would come to his senses.

The *chassan* returned to his *yeshivah* and studied diligently. A week passed, and he called his *kallah* to inquire about her health. Her mother answered with a question, "Why are you calling? The *shadchan*, matchmaker, has informed us that the *shidduch* is off."

The young man was floored, "No one can break this *shidduch* except me, and I will marry your daughter!" The young man went home and asked his parents to allow him to make his own decisions. They countered, "Let us ask *daas Torah*. We want to ask ***Chacham Ovadiyah Yosef, zl***, and we will abide by his word." Their son agreed, on the condition that they acknowledge up front that he was going only because one does not reject a *gadol*, Torah giant, of *Chacham* Ovadyah's stature. As far as he personally was concerned, his mind was made up: he was marrying his present *kallah*.

The meeting with *Chacham* Ovadyah took place the next day. The *Chacham* first inquired about the young man's learning, his diligence and erudition. He remarked that his father was a distinguished Torah scholar. The *Chacham* then asked the young man if he agreed with his parents, who contended that the girl had been aware of this grave illness prior to the engagement, which would invalidate the engagement. The *chassan* replied that while he could not prove it, in his heart he felt that this was not a ruse. The young lady was a wonderful, sweet, kind, righteous, G-d-fearing woman, everything that he sought in a wife: "I feel that He Who sits upon High is testing my resolve and commitment. This is the young woman with whom I want to spend the rest of my life!"

The young man broke down in bitter weeping. The *Chacham* embraced him and, himself weeping, declared, "You will marry her. Hashem will bless her with a complete recovery, and the two of you will establish a beautiful *bayis*, home, for generations to come! As you are stalwartly committed to her, so shall she be to you throughout your life."

The *chassan* walked out of the room and signalled his parents to enter. The *Chacham* said, "At first, I portrayed myself as being antagonistic to the marriage. I wanted to see if he was truly committed. He is – and he will be blessed."

When a *gadol* utters his blessing, it is an appeal to Hashem from an individual whose relationship with the Almighty is an inextricable bond. *Chacham* Ovadyah Yosef was a *gadol* whose life was Torah, the lifeblood of our people.

The wedding took place as soon as the *kallah's* treatments had successfully been completed. The *Chacham's* blessings were realised: a healthy mother and father raised eight healthy children.

After studying for a number of years in *kollel*, the father became a *rosh yeshivah*, reaching out to hundreds of students. Most of their children were married off, and the next generation was already a part of their lives. Everything seemed perfect until the faithful *chassan* became ill with a dread disease that causes the death of the neurons controlling muscles. It began as weakness and progressed to complete paralysis of everything but his fingers and head.

Thirteen years have passed, and his wife has never left his side. Her devotion is beyond belief and indescribable with mere words. *Chacham* Ovadyah came to every milestone and, amid tears, rendered his blessing to the wife to have the strength and courage to continue her extraordinary work.

As her *chassan* stood by her years earlier, she continues to stand by him. *Chacham* Yosef's blessing continues to realise fruit.

The Bal Shem Tov's Ahavas Yisrael

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

Rabbi Shlomo Farhi – Anything but the Truth is a Lie



Rabbi Ezra Attiya Zt'l was the Rosh Yeshiva of **Yeshivas Porat Yosef (ישיבת פורת יוסף)** a Sephardic yeshiva in Jerusalem, with locations in both the Old City and the Geula neighbourhood.

Someone came to him and asked if he could write him a haskamah for his sefer. Rav Ezra said, "no problem, but we will need to go to the yeshiva in Geula to write it."

The man said , "why? what's wrong here in the Old City?"

Rav ezra said, "because the letterheads that I have here, have got the address of as Yeshivas Porat Yosef in Geula. For me to sign it here, would be a lie!"

It is unfathomable to us this type of *Emess* and care of exactitude that come out of the mouth of a gadol. As the Pasuk says, **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה** ***"One shouldn't make his words insignificant. Whatever he promises, he should keep"*** (30:3).

This is a world that we have to bring back.

Hands Off

In a bathhouse, the **Chofetz Chayim** once saw a person using an article that belonged to someone else. The Chofetz Chayim went over to him and whispered, "A person who washes himself with something that does not belong to him ends up dirtier than when he started." ~ **Tnuas Hamussar**

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

A Gutten erev Shabbos Kodesh rabboisai!



It is so interesting that the sedra of Mattos talks about nedarim – accepting upon oneself thigs that are normally **מותר** and Masseh which describes the Yidden's travels.

This is possibly hinting to the fact, that before a person travels, for instance on vacation, that it is a good time to take upon things - create boundaries, before one goes away.

The Sefas Emess says an amazing thing.

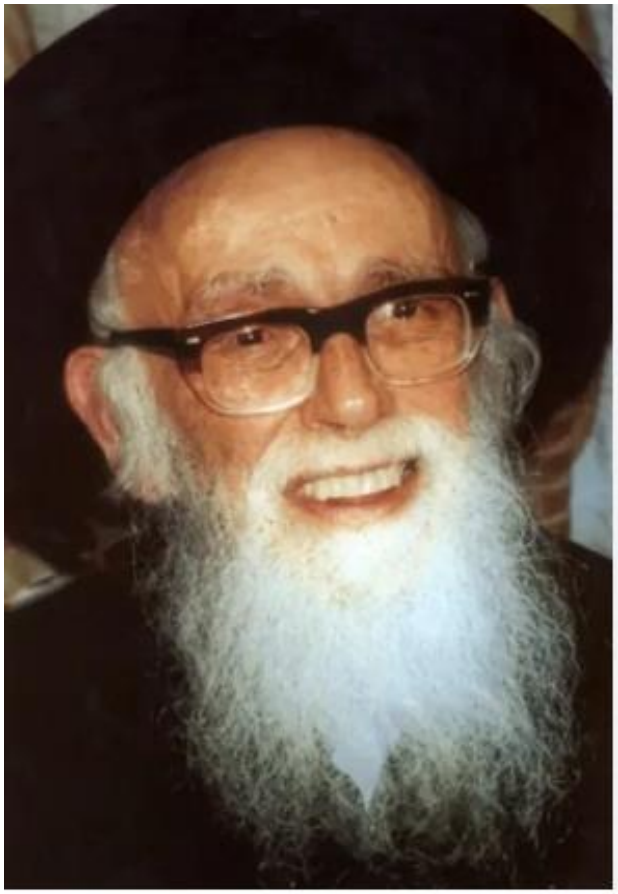
Why is it that the sugya of Nedarim – taking on vows and oaths comes right at the end of all the halachos in the Torah?

The Sefas Emess tells us that because after all the halachos and everything that we have learnt, we must be able to have the koach of speech. Because the ability to speak, is the greatest koach and gift that a human being can have. In fact Targum Onkelus tells us that the most important thing that differentiates between a human being and an animal, is the power of speech! And the words that come out of our mouth is most important.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

"Bitachon means trusting in every situation that the outcome is entirely in hashem's hands, and nothing happens randomly." ~ Chazon Ish.

A Dance for a Chiddush

Rabbi Sholom Schwadron (left) and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach

It was late at night in the Shaarei Chesed neighborhood in Yerushalayim. Most of the early-rising residents had already retired for the night. One lone figure, however, was seen walking jubilantly through the quiet streets.

Walking? No, it was more like dancing! It was the famed Maggid, R' Sholom Schwadron, who was making his merry way to the home of his brother-in-law, R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

R' Sholom had just grasped the meaning of a sugyah in Gemara, and had realized that the explanation of his grandfather, the **Maharsham**, constituted an awesome chiddush. He was so elated with his precious find, that he could not contain himself; he had to share his great happiness with his brother-in-law.

R' Sholom climbed – or rather floated – up the stairs of R' Shlomo Zalman's house. He knocked excitedly, not realizing that most of the

lights were out in the apartment. R' Shlomo Zalman's son answered the door and softly told R' Sholom that his father had just gone to his room to lie down, but he was not sleeping yet.

R' Sholom said, "If he is not asleep yet, allow me to make him happy." As he approached the bedroom door, he called, "R' Shlomo! It's worth your while to get up!"

R' Shlomo Zalman came out to greet his brother-in-law. R' Sholom triumphantly offered the Maharsham's explanation as R' Shlomo Zalman listened intently, his eyes joyously drinking in this gem of Torah.

"Nu, that's some chiddush, isn't it!" R' Sholom said eagerly. "Isn't it gevaldig? Let's dance!"

Hand in hand, these two Torah giants circled the room – one, two, three, four times – in a joyous mitzvah dance. These two giants, who had amassed innumerable Torah gems, rejoiced over a precious morsel of Torah as if they had discovered a priceless treasure. (**Voice of Truth**)



A Choshuvah Yid From The Mir Yeshiva related to me the following story that recently happened:

My parents flew to France (just for the record, France is full of Arabs). They took a train from the airport and then a taxi to where they were going to be staying. The taxi was basically at their destination when my father realized that he had forgotten his Tefillin on the train and my father was not happy about it.

He immediately told the driver to take him back to the train station. The driver drove back to the station. It was a busy city and the chances of getting his Tefillin back were very slim. My father ran here and there until he was directed to a desk where an Arab woman was standing. My father knows Arabic and he started to explain to the woman that he lost a Jewish article… before my father even got a chance to finish, she pulled out from under the desk – his Tefillin! - "Is this what you are looking for?" She said.

My father was shocked - it was his Tefillin. "How did you get them?" My father asked.

She explained, "Your boxes were brought to the station and brought to me. I'll tell you the truth, I was threatened that if I don't just get rid of them, I will lose my job. I risked losing my job to hold onto your boxes! I even told my manager that I guarantee that the Jew is going to come back to get them. I was sure of it and therefore, I held onto them."

But why would an Arab woman care for Jewish boxes?! Why would she go so far as to risk losing her job for the sake of the Yid? The answer was forthcoming.

"You know why I was willing to risk my job for you? I will explain When I was a young girl in Turkey, every day my father would come home from work and tell us how kind his Jewish boss was to him and how well he was treated. I will never forget this for my entire life! That was the driving force that inspired me to even risk my own job for one of the people from your nation."

"A person thinks he must change the world; in truth, the whole world changes when a person changes himself." ~ Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz.

Working on our Middos

The Badchan, Reb Yonason Schwartz, would often tell this Mashal which illustrated how someone can spend his entire journey in this world exchanging goods back and forth, and arriving home in Olam Haba with absolutely nothing to show for his work or for his eternal reward.

Berel and Shmerel were two good friends who decided to join together and try to earn a decent living. One time, Berel told Shmerel that he heard of a village where they sold excellent whiskey by the barrel for very cheap. The village was very far away, and travel in those days was exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, the two decided to travel there and buy a barrel, which they hoped to sell, one shot at a time, and they expected big returns.

When they finally arrived at the village, they were overjoyed to learn that the rumour was true. They purchased one barrel for several dozen rubles and planned to sell the whiskey for five rubles a shot, and become rich.

As they travelled home, Berel said to Shmerel, "Listen, our journey is so long and it's freezing out here. Why don't we strengthen ourselves with a little drink every so often?"

"That's not a bad idea," agreed Shmerel, "but we must protect our investment and not come home with an empty barrel. How about we do this: whoever takes a drink will have to pay the other five rubles."

Berel happily agreed. They travelled along, and every few hours, one or the other would take a drink to warm himself up. Each time they would exchange five rubles from one hand to the other. When they finally reached their town, the barrel was empty, and there was no profit to show for their business venture.

Reb Yonason would ask, "Is this what your world looks like? Are you busy chasing profits, only to run in circles, with nothing really to show for it in the end?

We must remember that we are on a journey through life, and we must make good 'business decisions' with all of our dealings, so that we can have the most profit in S'char when we get to the end of our journey in Olam Haba!"

A Powerful Segulah

The Baal Shem Tov taught that Simchah should be an integral part of everyone's life. Even if there are many difficulties that one is going through, everyone has something to be happy about. The Baal Shem Tov teaches that if one works on this Middah of Simchah, it is a Segulah for Parnasah.

One time, on Tu B'Shvat, the Baal Shem Tov was sitting together with a group of his closest Chasidim. They were eating fruit and drinking a little wine in honour of the Rosh Hashanah for trees. The Baal Shem Tov addressed the incredible value of Simchah and the impact it can have on our lives.

He taught from **the Arizal** that the Malach who is appointed to oversee Parnasah, is called - **חתך** -'Chasach'. This is hinted to in the words of Tehilim (145:16), **פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת־יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רָצוֹן** "***Open up Your Hand***." This is a reference to Hashem's Hand that sustains us. The last letter of each of these words, Ches, Saf, and Chof, spells Chasach.

In addition, the Baal Shem Tov explains that the Gematria, the numerical equivalent of the word '**וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ**' in the Pasuk, which means, "and sustains," is 428, which is the same Gematria as the word Chasach!

When the Torah writes about the Yom Tov of Succos (Devarim 16:15), "**וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ**" "and you will be completely joyous," the last letters of these words are also Ches, Saf, and Chof. This teaches us that Simchah brings about Parnasah!

The Baal Shem Tov explains the reason for this is that a happy person is one who is satisfied, and he always sees the good right in front of him. Everything he has is a reason to be full of Simchah. This person is not constantly complaining about what Hashem has given him. He is happy with his lot, and he knows that if this is what he has, this is exactly what Hashem wants him to have. -This approach of Simchah allows him to accept the Shechinah in his life, and that is why it is a Segulah.

Rav Avraham from Slonim, zt"l, taught that Simchah is the key to everyone's Parnasah and sustenance, both physically and spiritually. Through Simchah, one can achieve anything. And because Simchah is so powerful, the Yetzer Hara tries to trap people in self-doubt, worry, and depression.

Our challenge is to see through this and recognize that the troubles that come to us are a ploy of the Yetzer Hara, so that we shouldn't utilize the great power of Simchah!

There was once a terrible epidemic in the town of Mezibuzh, and **Rav Baruch from Mezibuzh, zt"l**, Davened with all his strength that the epidemic should end, and that all those affected should be cured. However, despite his Tefilos, the epidemic raged on.

One day, a procession for the Levayah of one of the victims of the epidemics was passing by his home. A Badchan came to Rav Baruch's home to try and lift his spirits with a little humour. With an illuminated expression on his face and joy in his voice, he said, "Rebbe! The plague has ended!"

The Rebbe solemnly replied, "Look outside my window! The Aron of another victim is being brought to the cemetery as we speak!"

The Badchan, in a clever tone, answered, "That? No! The cure has been so powerful that even the dead are coming back to life! That coffin is on its way back home from the cemetery!"

The Rebbe smiled slightly. He then began to Daven again with Simchah, and immediately, the plague began to subside!

That is the power of Simchah!



Suffering

An acquaintance of **Rabbi Aryeh Levine zt"l** once met him on the way to a funeral.

"Who was deceased?" asked the acquaintance.

"I don't know," replied Rabbi Levine. Noticing the puzzling look on the other person's face, he explained, "On the announcements for the funeral it was written that the person died after much suffering. Suffering elevates a person, so I'm doing this final *chesed* with an elevated person."



R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l

Once a rabbi who lived in a southern state called R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l with a complicated problem. R' Moshe analyzed the matter and then said, "In a typical situation, we would follow the stringent opinion in this matter. But in this case, where the woman is still childless after twelve years of marriage, it is correct to follow the lenient opinion."

The caller was dumbfounded. "But, Rosh Yeshiva!" he exclaimed. "I did not mention this fact, nor did I mention the woman's name. How could the Rosh Yeshiva know that, indeed, she is childless after twelve years of marriage?" "It slipped out of my mouth," was all R' Moshe could say.



Malka's Soup

As his last few days in this mortal world approached, the **Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizensk** lay in his bed unable to eat. His son the Rebbe Reb Lazer begged his holy father to try to eat something, anything. "Isn't there anything I can give you?" he asked. "Oy," sighed the Rebbe, "if only I could get some soup from Malka, the wife of Reb Leibele the water carrier, life would be better."

As if a jolt of electricity had passed through him, the dutiful Reb Lazer ran down to the ramshackle home of the destitute water carrier. "My father the Rebbe is very ill, and all he can eat he says is some soup you once gave him. Please give me the recipe." The worthy Malka started to cry, saying, "I have to tell you the whole story. My husband and I always dreamed that maybe, some day, the Rebbe Reb Elimelech would come to visit us, but it was such a foolish dream. We would never have the chutzpa or the audacity to invite such a holy man into our dilapidated hovel.



"Strangely enough, a few weeks ago the Rebbe passed our house. We saw him coming and thought it was our biggest chance, so my husband ran out on to the street. He didn't know what to say, he just stood there, but the Rebbe is such a special Yid and he understood what my husband wanted.

He said, 'You know what Reb Leibel, I'm very tired, could I spend some time in your house?' The Rebbe Reb Elimelech came into our home, and it was just like Gan Eden. We didn't know what to do with ourselves. The Rebbe sat down with my husband. Now my life partner is a good man but not really all that educated. He is just a water

carrier with simple ways, he didn't have anything to say to your Holy Father; he was just happy to have such a tzaddik sitting there with him.

"Suddenly he said to me, 'Malka! What's going on here? We have such a special guest; we better give him something to eat.'

"I ran into the kitchen, looked around, and suddenly I remembered that we ourselves hadn't eaten in days. There was no food in the kitchen. All I saw was salt and a pot of hot water on the stove.

What could I do? I took a spoon and began to stir the water, and I davened, 'Hashem, I have nothing, but if I had something, anything, I would give it to the Rebbe Reb Elimelech. You, Hashem, You have all the tastes of paradise. Can You please put some taste into this water? This is our soup.' As I stirred the water I cried, and some of my tears fell into the soup."

Reb Lazer came back to his holy father, and Reb Elimelech said, "Now you understand. With ordinary soup, you can keep from getting hungry. With Malka's soup you can bring people back to life."



Stop Honking

R' Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l once told a driver who was honking at a group of children, "You must treat the children with *derech eretz* because they will be the ones to greet *Mashiach*."

"When we rely on Hashem, we tap into an infinite reservoir of strength." ~ Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



After Klal Yisrael went into battle with the b'nei Midyan, they divided up the booty, and after they had been rebuked for keeping certain people alive, they came to Moshe rabbeinu and told him, " **וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדֶיךָ נָשְׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדֵנוּ וְלֹא־נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ** 'They said to Moshe, "***Your servants counted the soldiers who were in our charge, and not one man was missing from us***." (31:49)

The Targum says **וְלָא שְׁגָא מִנָּנָא אֱנָשׁ** – that not a single man was missing – Rashi says **לֹא נֶחְסַר** – Not one man was missing.

This is an amazing miracle – **אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה** - to go into battle with about 12,000 men and not to lose even one casualty!

The Ben Ish Chai brings a beautiful and fascinating way of explaining what p'shat is: What does it mean **וְלֹא־נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ** ? The Pasuk could simply have said **וְלֹא־נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ**. Why does the Pasuk add the word **אִישׁ**?

The Ben Ish Chai brings a story from the Medrash that occurred with Shloime HaMelech: One of Shloime HaMelech's 1,000 wives was the daughter of Pharoah. She was a bit of a nut job, and said to her husband, "I know that you have got **חכמה** in all matters. I want you to build me a palace made out of the bones of every species of bird in the world."

Shloime tried to dismiss the matter, but bas Pharoah was insistent. So, he had no choice. He commanded that all the birds in the world gather at his palace by the end of the month.

They all came straight away except one who came right at the end of the month. Shloime HaMelech asked it – "Where have you been?"

The bird said, "I was on the way, but I was interrupted because I had to take a poll."

"What was it?"

"I needed to know if there were more men or women in the world."

Shloime HaMelech asked the bird, "What did you come up with?"

"Well, there must be more women, because one of you, married 1,000 women."

So Shloime HaMelech said, You are mistaken, because I know for sure that there are more men in the world than women."

The bird said, "No, you haven't got the gist of what I'm trying to portray. When I said that there are more women than there are men, - I meant that even some of the men are women! A man who can't stand up for himself, and his wife rules over him, particularly with foolish demands, then he is a woman – not a man!"

Shloime HaMelech got the message and sent all the birds packing.

Says the Ben Ish Chai – 'A man who doesn't learn Torah, doesn't put on tefillin or keep the mitzvos, is not a man – he is a woman!

When the **פְּקוּדֵי הֶחָיִל** came to tell Moshe **וְלֹא־נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ** they were telling him that they retained their avodas Hashem – they still davened and did all the mitzvos – Not one of those people that went into battle lost their Yiddishkeit – we didn't even lose one man. No one lost their title of **אִישׁ**.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה׳ אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אִסָּר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה (30:3)



The beginning of parshas Mattos talks about the dinim of nedarim. This is the only place they are mentioned. They are not repeated elsewhere in the Torah like many other halachos.

Shloime HaMelech says (Koheles 5:4) - **טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִדֹּר מִשֶּׁתִּדּוֹר וְלֹא תְשַׁלֵּם** - It is better not to make nedarim in the first place then to make a neder and fulfil it. **נדרים ושבועות** should be avoided. A person should be very careful in this matter. **Sefer Kav Hayasher** says that a person should even avoid **תקיעת כף** - shaking hands on something – which is a sign giving someone your bond.



סדר התרת נדרים צג

(שנוהגים לעשות בערב ראש השנה או בערב כפור
אחר סליחות ויעמוד לשני שלשה שרים בית דין
ויאמר בזה הלשון יש מנהג באנגד לטר אחר ר"ח
אלול)

שִׁמְעוּ נָא רַבּוֹתֵינוּ כָּל נֶדֶר אוֹ
שְׁבוּעָה אוֹ אִסּוּר אוֹ קוֹנָם אוֹ חֵרֶם
שֶׁנָּדַרְנוּ אוֹ נִשְׁבַּעְנוּ בְּהֶקְיֵן אוֹ
בַּחֲלוֹם אוֹ נִשְׁבַּעְנוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹת
הַקְּדוֹשִׁים שֶׁאֵינָם נִמְחָקִים וּבְשֵׁם

If a person wants to retract his neder, he must undertake **הַתָּרַת נְדָרִים** with a chacham – a **יחיד שהוא מומחה**. [I was zoche one year to do this with **Rav Eliyashiv Zt'l**.] Alternatively, it can be done in front of 3 regular people.

Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin [the Rav in Brisk, long before the Brisker dynasty] once related that when his father – **Rabbi Binyamin Diskin** was the Rav in Lomza, Rabbi Akiva Eiger once came to visit.

There was a Yid who came to Lomza, and he made a neder that he would not leave the confines of the shul. He stayed in the shul the whole time – he lived there, and he refused to leave. He sat and learned all day **בקדושה ובטהרה**. This was a strain on the towns people, as they had to see to all his needs – food, clothes, laundry etc.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger was sitting with Rabbi Binyamin Diskin, and Rav Binyamin told Rabbi Akiva Eiger about this person who was a talmid chacham but refused to leave the confines of the shul. Rav Eiger said, "If he is such a big talmid chacham, I must go and visit him."

When all the towns' people saw that the two gedoilim were making their way to visit this man in shul, a massive crowd converged on the shul to see what was going to transpire.

The two of them went to the shul. When the man saw that Rabbi Akiva Eiger together with the Rav had come, he stood up in their honour.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger said, "I have heard about you, and know that you won't leave the shul, therefore I have been forced to come and visit you."

The man said, "I feel terrible that you have had to come to me – but I made a neder not to leave. If it wouldn't be for the neder, I would have run with all my strength to come to you."

Rabbi Akiva Eiger said, "Seriously, if you would have known that potentially I would be in this town, you wouldn't have made this neder in order to come and greet me?"

"Absolutely."

"In that case - **מותר לך, מותר לך, מותר לך**" - And with that, Rabbi Akiva Eiger and Rabbi Binyamin Diskin walked out!

This was the chachma of a **יחיד שהוא מומחה**.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld – Rosh Hayeshiva

נְקֹם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחַר תֵּאָסֵף אֶל־עַמֶּיךָ (31:2)

There is a fascinating Medrash in this week's sedra – Moshe Rabbeinu is told to go and wage a war, and take revenge against Midyan – and what happens? Moshe Rabbeinu instructs other people, he doesn't do it himself, seemingly going against a direct command from Hashem! What happened here?

Explains the **Medrash, and the Daas Zekeinim MiBaaleh Toisfos** – Moshe Rabbeinu had Hakaros Hatov. He grew up in Midyan, and therefore could not bring himself to take revenge. As the expression goes – "*Don't throw stones into the well that you drank from.*"



Now let's put things into perspective: The Midianites were tremendously evil to Moshe Rabbeinu and to all of Klal Yisrael. They themselves hired Bilaam to curse Klal Yisrael. They caused the Yidden to stumble in aveiros that caused 24,000 Jews to die. And if Pinchos wouldn't have got up to stop that, Chazal tell us the whole of Klal Yisrael would have been wiped out.

This is the same Midyan, and yet Moshe Rabbeinu still sent others. The Medrash says, that this shows how powerful Moshe Rabbeinu's Hakaros Hatov was, as Hakaros Hatov is not necessarily for somebody else, but it can be for yourself!

Somebody once came to his therapist, and said, "That's it – I can't work in my workplace anymore. My office is a terrible place to work

in. My co-workers are obnoxious. I can't work in such an environment anymore."

So, the therapist said, "Is there anything positive about your work?"

"No – Nothing, everything is terrible."

"Well tell me something – do you get paid for your work?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"Well, that's something positive, isn't it?"

"Do you get paid late, or on time?"

"I always get paid on time."

"Well, that's something positive, isn't it?"

"How long does it take for you to commute every day to work?"

"What do you mean – my workplace is right around the corner from my house. I don't have to commute at all, I just walk there."

"Well, that's wonderful, isn't it?"

They went through eleven different items that were positive and amazing, and listed them on a sheet of paper! The therapist told him, "Take this paper home, and read out all eleven items out loud in front of the mirror every morning before you go to work. Do this for 30 days and then come back to me."

After 30 days, he went back to his therapist, and said, "Wow, everybody at work has changed, they are different people. They are much more amiable and pleasant to work with!"

If we learn to look at the positives in life, and understand that we must focus on the good, and have Hakaros Hatov, then everything around us will also change for the better.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!



לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה ***He shall not profane his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth, shall he do****. (30:3)*

Rashi defines **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ**, "*He shall not profane his word*." While he does not necessarily profane his word, the mere fact that he does not use his G-d-given speech/word for a purpose imbued with sanctity is considered profanity.

When a person uses his G-d-given speech, it should be elevating, sanctifying and complimentary, obligating himself in higher, more consecrating endeavours. Even a mundane conversation which wastes time that could have been used to improve and enlighten is, by omission, a form of profaning.

If we want Hashem to listen to our words, we must see to it that they have value and significance. When we assume responsibility, it should be with, and for, purpose. It goes without saying that such a purpose must sustain a spiritual connotation in some manner.

The following well-known vignette, cited by *Horav Chaim Toito, Shlita*, underscores this idea. ***Horav Yaakov Yehoshua Falk, zl***, popularly known by his *magnum opus*, ***Pnei Yehoshua***, was a premier Torah giant who led a number of *kehillos*, congregations, with distinction. He was mentor to many, with his *Pnei Yehoshua* becoming a classic commentary used by every student of *Talmud*.

While it certainly requires a scholar with a brilliant and encyclopaedic knowledge to author such volumes of commentary, it equally demands extraordinary diligence and commitment to think, write, edit and see these volumes to fruition. How did it happen? What motivated the *Pnei Yehoshua* to accept upon himself such a responsibility?

It was *Kislev* 3, 1703, in the city of Lvov, and the *Pnei Yehoshua* was teaching a group of students. Suddenly, they heard loud noises, like shooting or fire crackers. This was followed by an explosion that set off a conflagration that destroyed a large part of the Jewish community. Apparently, the army had stored kegs of gunpowder which exploded. Miraculously, although the house in which the *Pnei Yehoshua* was teaching was demolished, he and his students were spared. His wife, daughter and thirty-four members of the Jewish community were not as fortunate.

In the midst of the wreckage that had once been his teaching room, the *Pnei Yehoshua* took a vow that, if he managed to survive, he would spend his days and nights in ceaseless Torah study. He was twenty-three years old at the time. He survived, and, shortly thereafter, he commenced writing his *sefer*.



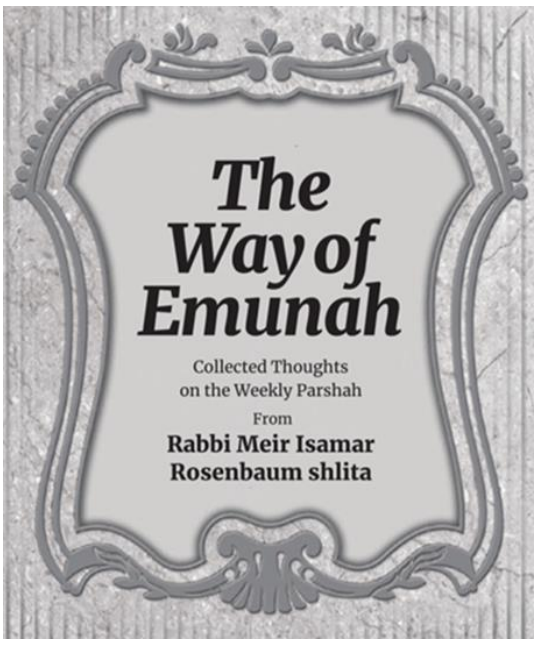
The *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, attested to the fact that the *Pnei Yehoshua* had completed *Shas*, the entire *Talmud*, thirty-six times before he wrote his commentary. The *Chasam Sofer* said that, from the time of the *Rashba* (a *Rishon*), no *sefer* had achieved the eminence and distinction of the *sefer* of the *Pnei Yehoshua*.

The *Pnei Yehoshua's* learning was so intense that he could sit in the cold and not notice. One day, his students could not leave their homes due to the bitter, frigid weather. When the sun came out in the afternoon and it warmed up enough to go outside, the students found the *Pnei Yehoshua* still wrapped in his *Tallis* and *Tefillin*, learning – with icicles hanging from his beard!

After the ***Chida*** visited the *Pnei Yehoshua*, he remarked, "I was *zocheh*, merited, to be *mekabel* the *Pnei HaShechinah;* his visage is like that of a *Malach Elokim*."

Returning to our *pasuk* (from which we digressed), we derive from here that, if one is in dire circumstances such that he feels that it behoves him to make a vow for therapeutic reasons, it should be for a commitment to a *davar she'b'kiddushah*, holy undertaking (as did the *Pnei Yehoshua*). He should not make a vow abstaining from an aspect of materialism (such as, he will not eat steak, etc.). It should be to undertake to learn a specific study, such as: *Mishnayos, Gemorah, halachah*, etc., or to involve himself in a Torah or *chesed*-related endeavour.

His vow should be about elevating the sanctity of his life – not profaning it. A vow that focuses on materialistic abstinence, as opposed to elevated sanctity, is *chillul devaro*, profaning his words.



Accepting Everything With Love

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' – '***And Hashem spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Yisroel saying: This is the thing***…' (30:2)

The word "**לֵאמֹר**" saying, is found in the middle of this pasuk. This needs explanation, as this word usually only appears at the end of a pasuk.

The Alexander Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Tiferes Shmuel) suggests that the Torah is hinting that Moshe Rabenu was teaching Klal Yisroel that a fundamental aspect of serving Hashem is always telling oneself: "This is the thing that Hashem commanded." No matter what happens to a person, he should say that Hashem commanded it

to happen, and he should accept it with love because everything that Hashem does is for our benefit.

Thus, the pasuk can be understood to be saying that Moshe told Klal Yisroel "to say that this thing was commanded by Hashem…"

Silence is a Segulah for Long Life

The Rebbe of Peshischa zy"a related: "I once saw an old sefer that writes that there is a set number of words that a person can speak in his lifetime. One will not die until he says the number of words designated for him. (If one speaks a lot, he is causing his words to be used faster and shortening his life.) Therefore, it is good advice not to talk too much, as this will lengthen one's life."



Sefer Kedushas Hadibbur relates the following incredible story in the name of **Rav Naftali Trop zt"l.**

In his younger years, the **Chofetz Chaim** suffered from lung problems. He went to a hospital in Warsaw, where the doctors diagnosed him as suffering from tuberculosis and told him that his days were numbered. The Chofetz Chaim accepted this news without complaint, as he fully believed that whatever Hashem decreed was for the good; however, he was pained by the fact that he had just recently printed his Sefer Chofetz Chaim, which focused on the importance of refraining from forbidden speech. Dovid Hamelech says that one who desires life should guard his tongue from speaking evil, and the Medrash (Vayikroh Rabbah) teaches us from this pasuk that one who watches his words will merit a long life. He was worried that if he would die now, people would say that the bracha does not always

work. If they saw that the man who was famous for guarding his tongue died young, it would be a Chilul Hashem. Even those who did believe in the pasuk would say that since it must be true that one who watches his word lives long, the author of the sefer must have secretly not been so careful with what he said. This too would be a Chilul Hashem, as they would think that someone was acting like a tzadik while really fooling everyone.

He became so full of anguish that he began to regret printing the holy sefer before first waiting to see if he lived until old-age without any trace of the sin of lashon hara. But he did overcome the disease and he ended up living until almost the age of 100.

When the Chofetz Chaim turned 80, he informed his talmidim that he was having a party to celebrate his birthday. This surprised them, as it was not customary for tzadikim to make birthday parties. A birthday was looked at solely as a day to make a chesbon hanefesh and accept new kabbalos, not as a day for parties.

At the gathering, Chofetz Chaim explained, "I made this party to thank Hashem for the miracle He performed for me by curing me from tuberculosis and allowing me to live until the age of 80. This proved that it is true that one who refrains from lashon hara will merit a long life. This party is to celebrate a public Kiddush Hashem."

Etz Hachaim – R' C T Blau - "צדקה תציל ממות"

The גר״א writes (משלי י:ב) "Not only is **צדקה** intrinsically good…. It saves a person even from death and there is nothing in the world that can help more than this.

Rav Shloima Levenstein שליט״א brings down that the word death in Hebrew is spelled **מות**. If you place the letter **ע** into the word **מות** it will change to the word **מעות** instead of **מות**. Which means that through giving **מעות** it takes away from **מות**.

Remaining Silent When One Cannot be of Help



Rav Mottele of Hornisteipel zy"a once got very sick and became bedridden. The doctors decided that there was a need to treat him by burning one spot on his back with a red-hot skewer. The Rebbe agreed to undergo this painful treatment. There were three level of heat used for this procedure. If the patient didn't feel any pain from the first level of heat, they would use the second, hotter skewer. If the patient didn't fill this skewer either, they would use the third, hottest one. Most people, however, felt the pain from the first application.

The Rebbe was able to take a lot of pain. Therefore, when the doctor burned his back with the first stick, he took the pain and remained silent. The doctor thought that he must not feel anything, so he picked up the second skewer and used that one. The Rebbe had so much self-control that he still did not utter a sound. The doctor then burned him with the third stick, and the Rebbe continued to accept the pain without issuing a single cry.

The doctor was amazed and said, "***I don't know if he is an angel or a demon***!" Since the doctor was speaking Russian, the Rebbe did not understand him. He asked his gabbai, "What did the doctor say?"

When the words were translated for him, he said, "***Tell him that when a Jew comes to me with a kvittel and I am unable to help him, it hurts a lot more than this but I have to remain silent even then***!"

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

A Future Gadol - Rabbi Aaron Brafman by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman

Rabbi Aaron Brafman spent the summer of 1968 in Camp Torah Vodaath as a rebbi. Around a decade later, he became learning director of Camp Agudah, a position he held for six years.

During the summer of 1979 at Camp Agudah, Rabbi Brafman took a special interest in a camper from London named **Yitzchok Meir Morgenstern**. Yitzchok Meir had little interest in playing ball, so Rabbi Brafman offered to learn with him in the afternoon. It did not take long for him to perceive special abilities in this boy. Concerned that the boy's parents wouldn't know how to properly help him reach his potential, he took the time to write them a letter:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Morgenstern: I have rewritten this letter four times, each time differently, because I want to express myself without sounding ridiculous or creating in you any anxiety about Yitzchok Meir's potential.

I truly feel (as do others) that he is something special. I have seen many bright boys but never the combination of a good head, hasmadah, yiras Shamayim, and middos tovos as one sees in Yitzchok Meir, bli ayin hara. His joy in learning and his sensitivity and understanding are just beautiful. And it is all natural, not forced, which is why he is a perfectly normal, happy child.

I can tell you I felt an aura of taharah and kedushah when I learned with him or talked to him. I felt I had an image (of course our later generations are on lower madreigos) of what the ***Chofetz Chaim or***

Chazon Ish *might have been like in their youth. I am not saying this facetiously — he electrified and captivated the whole camp.*

If this stays with him and he grows in learning, he will someday be a manhig Yisrael. I'm sorry if this makes you feel a bit concerned, because it is an awesome responsibility, but you are blessed with a special matanah.

If I may offer some advice: I'm sure he is above his class level, and that could begin to frustrate him. On the other hand, he can't be out of yeshivah for social reasons and because of a need to avoid the kinah of others. Perhaps you could have someone (who is a talmid chacham, not just an older bachur) tutor him for a while during school time. Have him learn another perek or masechta. Yitzchok Meir will find the time to review it.

If he can do this for two or three years, he will become a baki in hundreds of blatt. After that, he probably will finish the rest of Shas on his own at that time. He should be exposed to people who are gedolim to develop his havanah, and ultimately he will choose and create his own derech in learning.

I hope someday to be able to say that I had the zechus of learning with him when he was a bachur. I want to repeat that I have not gone mad. I deal with hundreds of bachurim and have been in chinuch for fourteen years. With best wishes for a kesivah vachasimah tovah and a gut gebentched yahr. Sincerely, Rabbi Aaron M. Brafman P.S. Regards to Yitzchok Meir.

For decades, Rabbi Brafman had no idea what had become of this boy. Around two years before his passing, he paid a shivah call and noticed a framed photo on the wall of someone of saintly appearance whom he did not recognize. In response to his question, the avel said that it was Rav Yitzchok Meir Morgenstern, a renowned tzaddik and mashpia in Yerushalayim, a rosh kollel, mekubal, and author of sefarim.



Rav Yitzchok Meir Morgenstern



Rabbi Aaron Brafman

Two weeks later, Mrs. Brafman was introduced to Rav Morgenstern's sister at a wedding. She told Mrs. Brafman that when her father passed away, they found Rabbi Brafman's letter in his pocket. When she returned to England, she sent Mrs. Brafman a copy of the letter. Apparently, it had made a huge impact on Mr. and Mrs. Morgenstern and, in turn, on their son.

Later, Rabbi Brafman called two young rebbeim into his office at the beginning of the school year and read to them the letter he wrote to the parents of Rav Yitzchok Meir Morgenstern. Rabbi Brafman wanted these rebbeim to realize the opportunity that they had to impact the life of each and every talmid.

"Each moment that a person refrains from speaking the forbidden, he merits a hidden light that no angel can fathom." – The Vilna Gaon quoted by the Chofetz Chaim.

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

תורה תבלין

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר (30:2)



A grandson of **R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l*** related the following incident. One day while tending to the needs of his illustrious grandfather, R' Chaim mentioned to him that when he was younger, he tried to memorize the entire *Mesaches Kedushin*. This way, if he ever found himself in a position where he didn't have a *Gemara*, he could still continue learning by heart.

About halfway through the *masechta* though, he realized it was taking too much time away from other things he was learning, so he stopped.

"*Zaidy*," the grandson asked, "doesn't it say in *halacha* that starting something constitutes a *neder*, a promise, thereby obligating you to finish?"

R' Chaim looked at his grandson with a warm smile. "Correct," he said, "but this story happened before the age I was obligated to keep a promise."

The grandson looked at R' Chaim and was dumbfounded, "Does that mean *Zaidy* did this before he was 12 years old?" he exclaimed. R' Chaim nodded with a wink. His grandson got the point!

The virtues of honesty and integrity are not just descriptors of individual persons' characters. Rather, they are social values, which ideally should define the essence of human communities and entire societies.

From a Jewish perspective, "honesty" and "integrity" cannot be restricted to individual paragons of virtue, saints and holy men, but must become universal cultural norms. This is why the laws of vows, unlike all the other laws of the *Torah*, are explicitly given to *"Roshei HaMatos"* the chieftains of the tribes. It is to emphasize that the sanctity of speech is not just a goal for a few spiritually gifted individuals. It must be enunciated as one of the essential mores of the entire tribe.

Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

כאשר צוה ה' את משה *'As Hashem commanded Moshe.'* (31:7)



What is the Torah teaching us with the words, 'As Hashem commanded', when discussing the battle with Midian?

It teaches us that they only surrounded the city on three sides, and they left the fourth side open, leaving a place for those who wanted to run away.

This is what Hashem commanded, to teach us to conduct ourselves with mercy, even with our enemies in a time of war. [Ramban] (Medrash HaGadol – Otzer HaMedrashim)

Failure is the key to success; each mistake teaches us something.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

ויאמר משה לבני גד ולבני ראובן האחיכם יבאו למלחמה ואתם תשבו פהולמה תנואון את לב בני ישראל מעבר אל הארץ אשר נתן להם ד'

When the **Sfas Emes** was only two years old, his mother died, and six years later, his father tragically passed away as well. The young orphan was raised by his grandfather Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter, the first Gerrer Rebbe who was known as the **Chiddushei Harim**. Even as a young boy, the Sfas Emes was renowned for his hasmada (diligence in Torah study), and he once decided to stay up an entire night engrossed in his learning.

After shacharis, the Sfas Emes felt tired and went to lie down for a bit, but his grandfather noticed his absence and was shocked to find him sleeping so late in the morning. The Chiddushei Harim proceeded to scold his grandson at length over what he perceived as laziness and a lack of commitment to Torah study. The Sfas Emes listened to the words of rebuke, opting to remain silent instead of speaking up in his defence to explain that he had been awake learning throughout the night.

Later, one of his friends asked him why he did not respond to the Chiddushei Harim's suspicion by telling him the truth, thereby sparing himself unwarranted chastisement. The Sfas Emes responded that when a person has an opportunity to hear mussar (words of re-buke) from an adam gadol (great man), it is worthwhile to listen even if one knows he is innocent. He therefore chose not to defend himself so that he could hear his grandfather's entire lecture.

The Sfas Emes added that he had a Biblical source for his conduct. At the end of Parshas Chukas, the Jewish people conquered the lands of Sichon and Og, which were just across the Jordan to the east of Eretz Yisroel. In Parshas Mattos, the tribes of Gad and Reuven approached Moshe with a request. They noticed that these lands were particularly well-suited for raising animals. Since these

two tribes were blessed with an abundance of livestock, they asked to receive and settle this area as their portion of the land of Israel.

Moshe responded harshly, questioning why their brethren should go to battle to conquer Eretz Yisroel while they comfortably remain behind. He sternly added that their decision could dissuade the rest of the Jews from wanting to enter and possess the land, similar to the effects of the discouraging report brought back by the spies. After Moshe concluded his sharp tongue-lashing, the tribes of Gad and Reuven clarified their intentions, explaining that after they built cities for their families and animals, they would fight with the other tribes in the war for the land of Israel proper. Only after it was fully conquered and settled would they return to their families. When Moshe heard this, he agreed to their proposal.

The Sfas Emes explained that the tribes of Gad and Reuven always planned to participate in the conquest of Israel. If so, why did they patiently wait for 10 verses as Moshe accused them of cowardly forsaking and trying to demoralize their brethren, charges on which they knew they were innocent? Why didn't they speak up right away to reassure Moshe that they intended all along to assist with the battle for Eretz Yisroel?

Because they cherished the opportunity to hear mussar from someone as great as Moshe, an approach that he adopted when his grandfather admonished him.

Wanting to learn Torah and wanting to daven well are good wishes. But to want what the Ribono Shel Olam wants, that is something else entirely. ~ The Beis Avraham zt'l

"Prayer isn't about changing Hashem's will, it's about aligning our will with His." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk.

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק. **באר היטב**
בס"ד פרשת מטות מסעי תשפ"ג
PARSHAS MATOS MASEI 5783 Vol. 14 No. 40

וַיִּקְצֹף מֹשֶׁה עַל פְּקוּדֵי הֶחָיִל שָׂרֵי הָאֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמֵּאֹות הַבָּאִים מִצְּבָא הַמִּלְחָמָה
'***And Moshe was angry with the officers of the army, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, who came from the battle***.' {31:14}

Actually, Moshe Rabbeinu had not given an explicit command to kill the women of Midian. Why, then, was he now angry with the officers for having allowed them to remain alive?

This incident proves that, when it stands to reason that something should be done, one must do it without first waiting for an explicit command to that effect.

Similarly, Bilom, too, said: חָטָאתִי כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אַתָּה נִצָּב לִקְרָאתִי בַּדָּרֶךְ "***I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the way against me***." (22:34).

Ignorance or failure to understand what should be readily understood constitutes a sin in and of itself. • **Shelah Hakodosh**

Rabbi Pesach Krohn- Project Mesorah

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־אַנְשֵׁי הַצָּבָא הַבָּאִים לַמִּלְחָמָה זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה This is an incredible Rashi – (31:21) '***Since Moshe came to a state of anger, he came to err, for the laws of purging gentile vessels eluded him. A similar incident happened on the eighth day of the investitures [of the kohanim], as it says, "He [Moshe] became angry with Eleazar and Ithamar" (Lev. 10:16); he came to a state of anger, so he came to err. Similarly, in the episode of "Now listen, you rebels… and struck the rock" (20:10-11); through anger, he came to err***.' — [*Sifrei Mattoth* 48]

Why does Rashi even mention these 3 times that Moshe Rabbeinu got angry?

Sichas Mussar (Rav Chaim Shmulevitch) explains that Moshe Rabbeinu didn't err, and he wasn't pushed for getting angry these 3 times – he had every right to be angry, but it was a natural occurrence - it was a consequence that he forgot the halacha.

If somebody gets angry, consequently, they forget their learning, and they can't think straight, even if it is for a valid reason.

This is something that we must be so careful of especially during the 3 weeks. Life is full of so many tensions, and sometimes, we just lose it, and we think that we're right in getting angry! But don't forget – If you get angry, you're not going to act logically, and you are going to forget things.

"***Keep calm – Don't rush to anger, because even if you are right – you're wrong***!"

Chabad.ORG Matos in a Nutshell - Bamidbar 30:2–32:42

The name of the Parshah, "Matos," means "Tribes."

Moshe conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel.

War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moshe is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

Matos Haftorah in a Nutshell - Jeremiah 1:1-2:3.

This week's *haftorah* is the first of a series of three "*haftoros* of affliction." These three *haftaros* are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

Jeremiah recounts how G-d appointed him as prophet — despite his initial reluctance to accept the task — and tells of the encouragement G-d gave him to fulfil his crucial mission.

He then describes two prophetic visions he was shown. The first featured an almond tree branch. G-d explained to Jeremiah that just like an almond tree is very quick to blossom, so too G-d will carry out his plan — to punish the Jews for their sins — in due haste.

The second vision was that of a boiling pot whose foam was directed northward. G-d explained that this was an allusion to the afflictions the Jewish people would suffer at the hands of the people from the north of the Holy Land, namely Babylon. G-d will cause the kingdoms of the north to lay siege on Jerusalem and Judea and He will pass judgment on the Jewish people due to their abandonment of G-d's ways and their idol worship.

G-d then encouraged Jeremiah to deliver the prophecy and not to fear the Jewish populace who would certainly not take kindly to such harsh words.

The *haftorah* ends with a reassuring prophecy to the people: "Go and call out in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: so said G-d: 'I remember to you the loving-kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me in the desert, in a land not sown. Israel is holy to G-d, the first of His grain; all who eat him shall be guilty, evil shall befall them, says G-d.'"

The Reward for the Mitzvah



One should make a great effort to *Daven* with a *Minyan* because *Hashem* does not reject the *Tefilah* of a congregation, and the *Tefilah* will be more accepted by *Hashem*

Rebbe Yochanan teaches us in *Brachos* (6b) that when *Hashem* comes to a *Shul* and does not find ten men gathered there for a *Minyan*, *Hashem* immediately becomes angry. The *Meiri* explains that if a *Minyan* is not present when the time for *Davening* arrives, it is clear that the people are lacking in their devotion to serving *Hashem*, and this provokes *Hashem's* anger.

Rav A. Leib Scheinbaum relates the following story. In a resort hotel in *Eretz Yisroel* outside Yerushalayim, the *Mashgiach*, the *Kosher* supervisor, would see to it that there was a daily *Minyan* for *Minchah*. It happened that one day he had a very difficult time completing the *Minyan*, and he decided to go outside to search for a tenth man.

He soon met a Jew who neither had a clue about what a *Minyan* was, nor about what the *Mashgiach* wanted from him. After the *Mashgiach* explained the significance of *Minyan* and the incredible reward in store for those who participate in a *Minyan*, the stranger agreed to join them as the tenth person. He went with the *Mashgiach* into the building and began walking up the stairs to the dining hall, where the *Minyan* took place.

Suddenly, someone told the *Mashgiach* that the son of one of the regular people at the *Minyan* had arrived, and they now had a *Minyan*.

The *Mashgiach* turned to the Jew who had only walked up the steps, and told him that their *Minyan* problem had just been solved. He thanked him for his good intentions and wished him a good day.

Ten years went by. One night, when the *Mashgiach* was sleeping, he had a dream. In the dream, the man whom he had called in to be the tenth man appeared before him, and his face was shining brilliantly. The man related to him that he had passed away from this world during the previous month.

He said, "I have come to thank you for attempting to include me in your *Minyan*. You have no idea of the incredible spiritual reward I have received because of the few steps I walked up in order to complete the *Minyan*."

He added, "I have one favor to ask of you. I have one son who lives in Yerushalayim. He is non-observant. In fact, he is very estranged from a life of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*. Please go to him and ask him to recite *Kaddish* for me. It will mean so much." The *Mashgiach*, of course, met with the son of this man, and was successful in convincing him to say *Kaddish* for his father.

Rav Scheinbaum commented, "This man got great reward, and it was all a result of him going a few steps out of his way. Can we even begin to imagine the reward for actually completing a *Mitzvah*? The *S'char* must be astounding!" [-*Reprinted from the Torah U'Tefilah.*]

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Eliyahu Dessler writes: "For those that say they work so hard and everything they do is all L'sheim Shamayim, for the sake of Heaven, they should ask themselves, 'Do Torah thoughts come to mind when I work, or do work thoughts come to mind during Shemoneh Esrei?'"



Rewriting History



Among **Rabbi Dovid Braverman**'s sacred work is visiting prisons to be *mechazek* fellow Yidden. To some, he offers words of *chizuk*; to others, he becomes a guide on their path toward becoming *baalei teshuvah*.

One day, he was taken on a tour of a prison wing he had never entered before — a section reserved for hardened criminals. What he saw there startled him.

Seated among the rough, intimidating inmates was a young *bachur* — unmistakably a Bnei Brak child — his appearance and bearing entirely out of place in that environment. Rabbi Braverman restrained his curiosity, but something deep inside him was stirred.

As he exited the prison, he noticed the same young man waiting at the bus stop. He approached him and inquired as to where he was headed. When the *bachur* replied that he was traveling to Bnei Brak, Rabbi Braverman warmly invited him to join his ride.

Before Rabbi Braverman could even begin a conversation, the young man began telling his story.

"I grew up secular," he said quietly. "I knew very little about my heritage. My life wasn't really a life. My father was a sought-after thief, constantly on the run. I grew up with fear, instability, and tension. When I was still a child, I was adopted — by a Bnei Brak family."

He paused.

"They showed me what life could be. For the first time, I experienced a family sitting around a table. No cellphones. No alcohol. Just warmth. Just Shabbos. Just meaning. I gravitated toward that life. It was a no-brainer. I integrated fully into their family and embraced their lifestyle. I wanted nothing to do with my past.

"Years went by. I was learning in *Mesivta* and studying *Maseches Kiddushin*, where it discusses the mitzvah of *kibbud av v'eim*. And I felt stuck. On the one hand, I desperately wanted to fulfill this sacred mitzvah. On the other hand, my father is a criminal behind bars. How am I meant to be *mekayem* such a mitzvah?"

He brought the question to **Rabbi Mendel Shefrin**, one of the respected *rabbanim* of Bnei Brak. "In a warm tone," the *bachur* continued, "Rabbi Shefrin said, 'I would not have instructed you to pursue the matter. But now that you are asking — yes, you should respect him and visit.'"

"How can I?" I asked. "What is there to respect?"

"Just go and visit," Rabbi Shefrin told me. "Nothing more."

"My first visit was about a month ago. As I entered, my father stood up to kiss me — but I wasn't ready for that. I couldn't receive it. Today," he concluded, "when I visited, he extended his hand for a handshake, but I turned him down."

Rabbi Braverman was silent.

Instead of dropping the young man off at his yeshivah, he made a sudden turn. They drove to Rechov Chazon Ish and stopped in front of a modest building marked simply: 5.

Rabbi Braverman led the bewildered *bachur* inside — to the home of the Rosh Yeshivah, **Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman** (1914-2017)

After briefly explaining the situation, the *bachur* was ushered into the room. The Rosh Yeshivah rose and extended both hands warmly. "*Shalom Aleichem*." Then he said words that stunned the young man. "*Ich bin dir mekaneh* — I envy you."

"Envy me?" the *bachur* replied incredulously. "There is nothing to envy."

Rabbi Shteinman responded softly: "The reason I envy you is because you have parents — and I no longer do. I can no longer fulfill the obligation of respecting my parents."

"Respect my parents?!" the young man burst out. "There is nothing worthy of respect! And if you want it, you can have it."

Rabbi Shteinman's eyes grew serious. "You are looking at your father's face — and therefore all you see is his faults. You must learn to look at his *neshamah*. True *kavod* lies in the *neshamah* — the very same *neshamah* that stood at Har Sinai. That *neshamah* is now trapped in the darkness of *galus*. You cannot imagine the pain it endures.

"So, the next time you visit your father," he concluded, "search for the part that is worthy of respect."

The words lingered.

The next time the *bachur* visited the prison, his father did not attempt a hug or a kiss. He remembered the previous rejection. But this time, the son stepped forward — and embraced him.

It was no small embrace. It lasted until his clothing was damp from tears — tears he did not fully understand. As they slowly separated, his father looked at him and said: "This…this is what the Torah does to you? Then I want to learn some."

And that was the real turning point.

Not when the son extended his hand. Not even when he accepted his hug. But when he chose to see a *neshamah* instead of a criminal.

Rabbi Braverman began visiting the father regularly during his prison rounds. Slowly, patiently, he drew him closer to his own buried *neshamah*, which had been lying in silent pain for decades.

When we learn to see the neshamah, we do not only rewrite someone else's future. We can rewrite history.



There was a woman who made an appointment with her shul Rav. She sits down and she says to him, "My Shalom Bayis, my harmony at home is in a shambles. I just don't feel appreciated. I work so hard to run a beautiful home, to have a beautiful Shabbos. I'm just not appreciated by my husband, and it's really difficult."

So, the Rav says, "What, he never shows his appreciation".

She said," he does. He says thank you here and there, but that's it."

So the rav says, "Okay, I'm going to speak to your husband."

He calls on the husband and says, "I want to talk to you a little bit about your Shalom Bayis."

He says, "You know, your wife works so hard. Do you ever show your appreciation?"

He goes, "Yeah, I say thank you here or there."

So the rav says, "Can I ask you a question? Do you ever buy her a gift?"

He goes, "No, I'm not into buying gifts."

He says, "Well, that's your first step. Start buying her gifts. It'll make a big difference."



But a half a year later, the wife comes back to the Rav and she says, "Nothing has changed. He still doesn't show his appreciation."

"Really", the Rav says? Let me speak to him.

The Rav calls the fellow in and he says, "Did you buy your wife any gifts?"

He goes, "I sure did."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Talk to me a little bit more about the gifts."

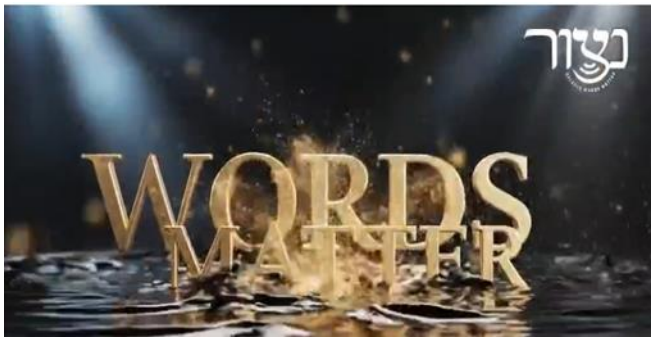
He goes, "The day that you spoke to me, I went out and I bought six amazing gifts, a piece of jewelry, a piece of silver, something for the house. And I put them in a closet. And I told my wife, whenever you feel like you need a gift, go over to the closet and take one. This way you know you'll have a full stock of gifts if you need them."

"Oh the rav says. You think it's the gift? You think it's the object? - It's the heart. It's what's behind the gift that's meaningful. Of course your wife feels underappreciated."

Now we could chuckle when we hear such a story. What a clueless fellow. But the truth is, how different are we? There's so many things in our life that we do for the **רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם**. We do mitzvahs, and we learn, and we daven. But so many of them are just by rote. They're not much different than the presents in the closet. And we say, "Hashem, take one when you need one."

רַחֲמָנָא לִבָּא בָּעֵי. What Hashem really wants, what He really is asking us for, what He, **כביכול**, needs, is our heart. We've got to be all in.

And it's hard to be all in all the time. But at least to create moments throughout our day, throughout our week, within our schedule, where there's לִבּוֹ, where there's heart. Because then, it's a totally different relationship.



Rabbi Shlomo Landau

Reb Chaim is a dynamic speaker who speaks for many diverse audiences. One time he happened to be invited to speak to a sixth grade class. He's brought into the classroom and the entire sixth grade is there and he begins to share with them a beautiful story about Reb Arieh Levine. About three minutes into his story all of a sudden he notices one girl writing a little note. She folds that note up and she passes it to the girl next to her, and the girl next to her passes it to the girl next to her. And slowly but surely, that note makes its way around the entire classroom.

The speaker was a little taken aback. That's not so respectful. But he finished his speech, and he thought he did a great job. As he's walking out, the principal stops him and says to him, 'Reb Chaim, how was the speech?' And he says, 'it was really good. The girls were attentive. It looked like they were into it, but I'm going to tell you the truth. I don't want to leave the school until I find out what really happened in that classroom.'

The principal was taken aback and said, 'what do you mean? What happened?'

And he shared that there was a note written by one girl, and it was passed around the classroom.

The principal says, 'you really want to know?'

He says, 'yeah'.

'OK, let me find out. Stay here.'

The principal goes into the classroom and comes back three minutes later clutching the note in her hand. She opens up the note, and she smiles, and she reads it to Reb Chaim. And the note said, 'The story that Reb Chaim is saying, he said last year to our class.'

Reb Chaim's a little taken aback. But then there was one more line that said, 'Let's try to look interested so he doesn't feel bad.'

Imagine the purity, the beauty, the chashivas of one girl and then an entire class who are careful with another person's feelings.

You know, the root of Lashon Hara is **עין הרע**. It's when we nitpick the negativity of the people and the situations around us. To combat Lashon Hara, we need to have an Ayin Tov. We have to focus on the positive qualities of the people around us. This one young lady certainly had an **עין טובה**. She was able to take what could have been a challenging situation and turn it around and ensure that the speaker felt good about himself.

And while maybe he thought he taught the girls a lesson with a great speech, he learned a very important lesson that day, that when you put other people first, Lashon Hara is not an issue.

Let's focus on having an **עין טובה**, looking at the world around us positively. Then Lashon Hara will go away, and the brachas that will follow will be immeasurable.

"A person imagines that he possesses many things — wealth, honor, influence — but in truth he only possesses that which he has given. What he gives becomes part of him; what he keeps remains outside him. Therefore, generosity is not loss but acquisition, for through giving a person builds his eternal self." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler.



Shlomo HaMelech says in Mishlei, **שֹׁמֵר פִּיו וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ שֹׁמֵר מִצָּרוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ** - *"He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles."* — Mishlei 21:23

Whoever can watch his mouth and tongue saves himself a lot of agony and trouble. Most of our troubles are man-made. We do it to ourselves, we do it to our children, we do it to our friends. And most troubles come from words we say.

There's a guy I know who lives in Monsey, and about 10 months ago he found out that Baruch Hashem, he and his wife are expecting a tremendous Simcha after waiting for the baby 12 and a half years.

They did every single medical and spiritual and financial effort, and unfortunately nothing was helping. Some experts even told them to give up.

Now let me share with you behind the scenes of this story, of this miracle. This man went for Rosh Hashanah to Eretz Yisroel, and before Rosh Hashanah he went to Meron to daven some. In Meron he meets a friend from Yeshiva. He learned with him mostly 20 years earlier. The friend tells him, I want to share a story with you.

'So I have Baruch Hashem a nice family and one of my children unfortunately got sick and we tried to go to doctors and hospitals and Daven, but no news. At a certain point, I went to a certain tzaddik who I felt comfortable with and I shared with him the difficulties we are having with our child and in the conversation the tzaddik tells me I have a feeling that you have a heavy heart on someone and because you carry this on your heart this blocks your shefa, your access to refuah for your own child.

So I went home, I spoke to my wife, and I told her, the tzaddik is right. I do have a heavy heart on someone, and you know who this someone is. And he tells the guy, '***you are the guy***.'-



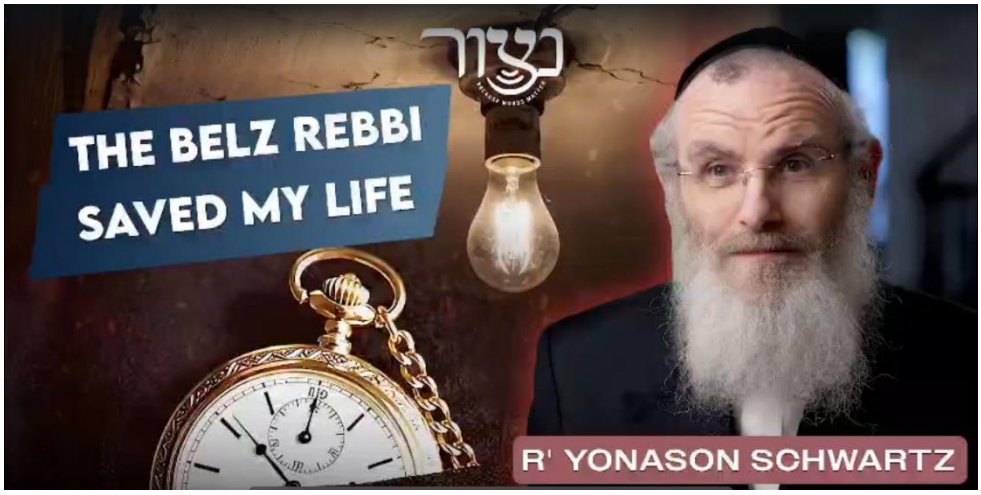
In yeshiva, when we used to learn together, we used to go Shabbos to eat meals by families. And unfortunately, I had a habit that I made a lot of sounds while I was eating, unpleasant sounds. And once you made fun of me in front of a few people by the meal, and this really, really hurt me. And ever since I carried this, I did not wish you the greatest things for your life.

But now that the tzaddik spoke about it, I made a decision to be moichel and forgive you with my whole heart, and Baruch Hashem, things started to improve.'

So, he tells him, but do me a favour, can you please check the exact date you went to the tzaddik to talk to him about this matter? And he sets a date. The guy almost lost it. – 'That day, we got our Yeshua starting'

If we can see what negative words can do, let's focus on the positive words. Let's be nice to each other because words really matter.

"The greatness of kindness is not measured by the size of the gift, but by the care taken to protect the dignity of the recipient." ~ Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv.



After my mother passed away when I was only 10 years old, in Yeshiva, in Yeshiva ketanah, in Yeshiva Gedoilah, every trouble had my fingerprints all over it. I was thrown out from Yeshiva, here and there, there and here. I didn't have easy teenage years. I will never forget about when I was 17 and a half, 18, I almost gave up on my life.

And then came the call from the Rosh Yeshiva and he told me, Mr. Schwartz, Yonosson, out. This is what you did, I don't even remember what. And I was thrown out of Yeshiva. And I tried to beg and beg. I would never forget the most painful statement, sentence that he told me. – '***Look at the light bulb and talk to the light***.'

That's it and he ignored me completely. I was shattered.

It was in the days of Chanukah, and on Chanukah we always went to the Belzer Rebbe and as I'm standing the two sides are opening the Belzer Rebbe walks by and I had like a little gold watch a pocket watch sticking out my suit was open and on the vest there was like a a pocket watch with a gold chain, and the Belzer Rebbe stops next to me, and all he said as he pulled out the watch, was, '***A boy who is gold deserves a watch which is gold***.'

This is probably the sentence that changed my life, completely changed my life. It injected in me so much hope, although I knew that I'm far from being a gold boy. But this strong sentence is what gave me the courage to go out,and d Baruch Hashem, today I'm involved in probably, if you know me, in hundreds and hundreds of projects that helped Klal Yisrael. And this is no question about it.

The turning point of my life was that sentence – '***A boy who is gold deserves a gold watch***.'

Everyone has kids, teenagers, are troublemakers. So if you have one, remember the power of a strong chizuk word for a teenager boy, for a teenage girl, it can definitely change a life forever.



My mother, Aleha HaShalom, had this thing that she always took food with her when she went out on the street in case someone's gonna ask her for food. - No one ever asked her for food.

Even if you went on a picnic, she took food to the picnic and food in case someone asks her for food. She never told me why, until once she did. She didn't like speaking about the war, but she was on the death marches, and they had been walking under the hot sun with wooden clogs. Girls were dropping like flies. And at one point they passed a German woman and she was holding food in her hands, and they begged her for food and she spat at them and said, you don't ask people for food on the street, you miserable Jews, and she walked away.

There was one girl that just died on the spot. The pain, it just culminated and she fell to the ground, and if they tried to help her, they were they would be shot. As soon as that German woman walked away everyone started cursing her and my mother said I had this thought what do I get out of cursing? I get nothing out of it. If I live through this war I promise You I will never leave my house unless

I have food to give to someone. And that's why she always wanted to give food.

So when she met my father after the war, the two had absolutely nothing in common. They didn't speak the same kind of Yiddish. They came from different countries. The only thing they had in common was they didn't have a roof over their heads. And my father said that during the war, I had no food. And we came to someone's house. He wouldn't give us any. And I said, 'If I live through the war, I'm not going to wash unless I have a guest.' Because the other boys were cursing that person. I said, 'I'm not going to curse.' My mother said, 'Great. I did the same thing. Let's get married.'

My mother's 74 years old and I'm taking her for treatments in Manhattan until I got her into the car with the walker and we're driving. We come to the corner and the doctor's nurse says, where are you? I said, the doctor's on 55th Street. I'm on 50th. We'll be there soon. Doctor happened to be 55th in Manhattan. I was 50th in Brooklyn, but I didn't lie. And we get to the BQE and my mother says to me, turn around. I said, my why? She says, 'I forgot to bring food.'

Well, for 70 years, no one asked you for food. I said, 'Ma, I'll get food on the way.'

No. I'll run up to the bikur cholim room, I'll bring... 'No, turn around.' We went back, we got food, and we came to the doctor very late. The doctor was very, very upset. The reports that he read were not good. On the way back, we parked at my mother's request a block away, and we were walking, and there used to be, on the corner of 51st and 13th, there used to be...

There was a bank, a Rite Aid, all kind of stores over there. And there was an old man sitting there on a bench. He used to sit there all the time on a milk crate. I never heard him say a word. And as we passed by, he said to my mother, 'Mrs., you have something to eat?' And my mother went like this to me. And she took the food out of the pocket

and gave it to the man as if to say, who cares what the doctor said? Forget the Germans. Forget the war. They didn't get me to curse. They get me to bentch. - At that moment, she won the war.

If we can take that pent up emotion, that is within us when we want to really let it out at someone else and say Hashem I'm holding it back okay I want to use it for good then you don't know how many years of life HaKadosh Baruch Hu just granted you. What a pity to waste the opportunity.



לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ; כְּכָל-הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו, יַעֲשֶׂה - *He shall not profane his words; whatever comes out of his mouth he shall do.* (30:3)

The superiority of man, over the rest of creation, is his power of speech. As the **תרגום אונקלוס** on **בראשית** writes **וַיְהִי הָאָדָם, לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה; וַנְפַח בְּאַפָּיו, נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים**. When **הש׳** blew a **נשמה** into **אדם**'s nostrils, he was endowed with the power of speech. Since the **כח** of speech came directly from **הש׳** it is full of **קדושה**.

The **אידן** in particular were given special use of this **כח**; as the **פסוק** writes: **הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב**. Therefore, it is important to ensure that ones words stay **קדוש** and do not become **חולין**. This is achieved by keeping ones word and not violating any agreements; as the **פסוק** writes **לֹא יַחֵל, דְּבָרוֹ** and **רש״י** explains **לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה דְּבָרָיו חֻלִּין** (he shall not make his words profane). If a person is careful with his speech and is very particular concerning that which comes out of his mouth then he will be **זוכה** to the second half of the Pasuk **כְּכָל-הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו, יַעֲשֶׂה** . His **תפילות** will be **מקובל** and whatever he decrees will be fulfilled. (**שפת אמת/תרל״ד/ה**)

Let's see some stories of **גדולים** who were exceptionally meticulous in speaking the truth…. **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ**

❖ When **רבי יעקב קאמינצקי זצ״ל** was eighty years old he started to wear **תפילין דרבינו תם** every day. The reason was, many years earlier he was in the **בית המדרש** and an old man was putting on his **תפילין דרבינו תם** and someone had asked him, 'Why don't you wear **תפילין דרבינו תם**?' and he had answered jokily, 'When I get to his age I will also put them on.' Since he had said it he was true to his word and began wearing **תפילין דרבינו תם** when he grew old! (**טובך יביעו**)

❖ The **חפץ חיים** once asked his 10 year old daughter to check some volumes of his **משנה ברורה** to make sure that there were no blank or badly creased pages. Since she was on her way out to play she said, exaggerating somewhat, "Tatteh! After playing I don't mind checking 10 sets!"

When she came home, waiting for her on the table were 10 sets for her to check! (60 volumes!) She was a little surprised as this was not exactly what she had had in mind. The **חפץ חיים** noticed her surprise and taught her a lesson for a lifetime, "A person must know: a word is a word" (Along the Maggid's Journey/151)

❖ The Rov of Mir was born to very poor parents. At his **ברית סעודה** **רבי איסור זלמן מלצר זצ״ל** wished the parents **מזל טוב** and gave them a **ברכה**; 'May we be **זוכה** to be together at his **סעודת בר מצוה** - 13 years later, on the **שבת בר מצוה** of the **בחור** the father invited the Rov to a **קידוש** which consisted of a little whisky and some cake, since that was all they could afford.

At the **קידוש**, the father said, "Really, in my present dire economic situation I wouldn't have made a **קידוש** at all but since 13 years earlier, at the **ברית**, when the Rov gave me a **ברכה** that we should be together at the **סעודת בר מצוה** I answered **אמן**. Perhaps that was considered as an agreement, and therefore I want to fulfil my word."

❖ **The Ponevezher Rov** would eat alone on **ראש השנה** at night, even when he was married. Once, a **תלמיד** asked him the reason for this **מנהג**. The Rov replied, 'In the year **תרפ"ט** I was in Chicago collecting funds for the **ישיבה**. Just before **ראש השנה**; a very wealthy rich member of the community there invited me for **ליל ראש השנה**. Sensing that his house was not the right environment for **ראש השנה** and not wanting to offend him, I told him my **מנהג** is to eat alone on **ליל ראש השנה**. Since I said it, I must keep to it.'

❖ Once the **וילנא גאון** was sitting in his **סוכה** engrossed in learning and he failed to notice that someone was standing at his side, waiting for him. In the meantime this person thought the **ג"ר'א** had something against him and for that reason he was ignoring him. He then asked the **ג"ר'א** what he had against him. The **גאון** assured him, **ח"ו**! I have no hard feelings against you' and he gave him a **ברכה** that he should live until 100.

When this person was 98 years old, he became ill and his family wanted to call a doctor but he strongly objected saying, 'I still have two years to go!' He was **נפטר** on his 100th birthday. (**אוצרות התורה/שכב**)

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-אַנְשֵׁי הַצָּבָא, הַבָּאִים לַמִּלְחָמָה: זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה... כָּל-דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-יָבֹא בָאֵשׁ, תַּעֲבִירוּ בָאֵשׁ, (לא/כא-כב)

We find by **הגעלת כלים** a **בליעה** [something that has been absorbed into the walls of the **כלי**] which can't be removed through hot water can be removed through fire.

So too, writes the **תפץ חיים**, the **פסוק** is being **מוסר** to us that **תורה** is considered like fire and can **טוהר** the **נשמה** of a person. Even if a person has **ח"ו** done a lot of **עבירות**, the **תורה** of **כח** can remove all the **טומאה** that he has absorbed. That is why the **פרשה** of **הגעלת**

כלים opens with the words of **זאת חקת התורה** to tell us that the **תורה** itself has the same quality as **הגעלת**.



When the **שפת אמת** was a young child his grandfather, the **חדושי הרי"ם**, once gave him a long **מוסר דרשה** for an incident which had happened. The **שפת אמת** had a good answer to excuse himself of all faults but he remained silent and listened carefully to his grandfather.

When asked why he didn't immediately give his excuse, he opened a **חומש** to this week's **סדרה** and asked, 'If **בני ראובן** and **בני גד** had intended to go with the **אידן** and help them to conquer **ארץ ישראל**, as soon as **משה** started to give them **מוסר** and said "your brothers should go to war and you want to stay here?!" they should have immediately answered **משה**, "We plan on going to war with our brothers," why did they wait until **משה** had finished giving them the long **מוסר דרשה** (10 **פסוקים** in total)?

We see from here they did not want miss the opportunity of hearing **מוסר** from there Rebbe. - That was my **חשבון** too.' (**לקוטי יהודה/רכג**)



A grandchild of **Rebbe Isser Zalman Meltzer זצ"ל** relates writes that on one of his last visits to his grandmother she told him the following story: one afternoon before **מנחה** the **חפץ חיים** banged on the **בימה** in the shul of Radin and announced "**מורי ורבותי**, tomorrow I am moving up to **ארץ ישראל** and I would like to depart from all of you now with **שלום**."

That evening the **חפץ חיים**'s wife became ill and the trip had to be postponed. The **ח"ח** held that the reason his plan did not materialize was because he did not say tomorrow I am **בעזרת השם** [i.e. moving up to **ארץ ישראל**].

Reb Isser Zalman, who was in the next room, came out and said, 'you forgot to say over the main part of the story. The **ח"ח** was very

meticulous to always say **בעזרת השם** for every small thing e.g. he would say **בעזרת השם** I am now going into the next room. It wasn't that the **ח"ח** forgot, rather it was decreed from **שמים** not to let him say it so that he should not carry out his plan. (**ח"ח החדש על תורה**).

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Authentic Hashkofa from Gedolei Yisroel

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הֶחָלְצוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם אֲנָשִׁים לַצָּבָא וְיִהְיוּ עַל־מִדְיָן לָתֵת נִקְמַת־ ה' בְּמִדְיָן -

'Moshe spoke to the people, saying: set out from yourselves men for the army, and they will attack Midyan, to give the vengeance of HaShem in Midyan.'

"To the people", not to the leaders, because the vindication of Yisroel's spiritual and moral integrity was to come from amongst the people themselves.

The war was waged against Midyan and not against Moav, because Moav sought to weaken Yisroel physically but did not seek its moral and spiritual destruction.

Hence, it was necessary to make the people aware of the moral and spiritual motivation of this campaign. Yisroel's true enemy is not one who seeks its physical destruction but the one who plots its moral and spiritual demise. (**Rav Shamshon Refoel Hirsch**)



The Vehicle of Growth

Tefillah is more than the words we say. It is the vehicle Hashem gave us to carry us from one spiritual level to the next. ~ Based on the teachings of R' Yechezkel Levenstein zt"l

Bein Hametzorim & Aveilus - Rav Yonoson Eiybeshitz On Sinas Chinom

In his classic work Ya'arov Devash, vol. I Drush 10, Rav Yonoson Eiybeshitz offers a new perspective on what Chazal tell us that the Second Churban was caused by sinas chinom.

The sinas chinom, he explained, was indifference to the other's spiritual state. When one saw his fellow Jew straying from the path of the Torah, in halacha or in Emunah, he did not spring into action. "What's it my business?" each one thought to himself. "The important thing is my own actions. Why stick my nose into someone else's affairs?"

This, declares Rav Yonoson Eiybeshitz, is true sinas chinom. How could you not care? How could you not do whatever you can to help your fellow Jew in the most important area of life – heeding the Torah? Is not the entire purpose of living in This World earning our portion in the Next World? If you have a possibility of directing your fellow Jew in the right direction, how could you let it all pass by on the grounds that it's not comfortable to get involved?

Without this understanding, Rav Yonoson Eiybeshitz points out, the words of Chazal would be extremely puzzling. The only issue of Klal Yisroel of that generation was sinas chinom? But we know that there were many heretical groups which left the path of the mesorah and defied heeding the Chachmei HaTorah. Many invented new practices and ideas which were against the Torah – some of them, in fact, were later adopted by the Christians. So why do Chazal ascribe the Churban solely to sinas chinom?

The answer, of course, is that all these deviations began only on the background of indifference. Had there been an atmosphere of concern, had every new aberration been met by a storm of protest, none of these movements would ever have developed and Klal Yisroel would have remained pure.

Why, indeed, do people not take seriously their obligation to correct other Jews?

One major reason, explains Rav Yonoson Eiybeshitz, is that they think that only a rabbinical figure has the authority to confront another Jew. But this is not true. To the contrary, the actions and attitude of the general community is more effective than that of the rabbonim.

"Chovas Hamacha'ah" - The Torah Obligation To Protest

Let us begin with the legendary warrior for Yiddishkeit in pre-war America, **Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman**. In his daughter's book about him, All for the Boss, she records many incidents where Rav Yaakov Yosef courageously stepped forward to protest the actions of others if they were not in accord with the Torah. Here, we will cite just one, where Family Herman were invited to a wedding of a close family friend:

When we entered the hall and saw that many couples were dancing to the lilting music, Papa's eyes flashed. He grabbed a chair, jumped on it, and called out loudly, "The Torah forbids men and women to dance together. I beg you to stop."

There was a sudden hushed silence … The bridegroom's parents came over to Papa, who was busily arguing with some excited guests. "Mr Herman, you are disturbing the wedding. We will have to ask you to leave." … Papa marched out, with Mama, Moshe and me following like soldiers behind the general. (All for the Boss, p. 129)

Around the same period of time but across the ocean, in pre-war Manchester, England, a young talmid chochom called **Rav Yehuda Zev Segal** – later to become famous as "the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva" – had the identical reaction to witnessing mixed dancing at a wedding, and experienced the identical result of being ejected:

His refined, humble demeanor never prevented him from offering reproof whenever necessary, as he had already demonstrated in years past. Upon his return to Manchester from Mir, R' Yehudah Zev had learned that an Orthodox member of the community was planning a wedding at which, it was reported, mixed dancing would take place. R' Yehudah Zev went to the wedding with a sefer Mishneh Berurah in hand and found, to his dismay, that the report was true.

He unabashedly approached the bride's father, opened his sefer, and read from the passage which strictly prohibits such practices. The man became incensed, grabbed hold of R' Yehudah Zev and led him out the door.

When relating this incident years later, R' Yehudah Zev said happily, "I felt that a protest was in order. I did get myself evicted, but baruch Hashem, I did my share."

It's important to remember that both Rav Yaakov Yosef and Rav Yehuda Zev were not well-known rabbinical personalities at the time that these incidents occurred. They did not come to make a protest as a rabbi, but as a concerned Jew who cannot stay silent while others disregard the Torah.

From these inspiring accounts we now turn to a surprisingly little-known story about **Rav Shimshon Pincus**, which took place almost forty years ago, in Nissan 5747 (1987).

At the time, there was a massive advertising campaign which involved placed extremely immodest advertisements on bus stops around the country. Rav Shimshon, for all of his pain at the situation, disagreed with the concept of youngsters independently going to bus stops and destroying the ads. In his view, such actions should be done only be respected and responsible people. But while many shared this

opinion, no one stepped forward to volunteer, and thus, Rav Shimshon took up his own challenge…



One or two weeks passed [from his address on the topic], and at one point he strengthened his heart and decided that the responsibility to act rested upon himself. He took a bucket, a paintbrush and paint and set out to Be'er Sheva, the capital of the South – to colour over several repulsive pictures. "Not for a moment did I think that I would succeed in avoiding arrest, and that I wouldn't end up in court," he said later to his family. "But even so I did what I did, because I was of the opinion that this obligation was my responsibility."

Three times he went out. On three different nights. The first night he went out alone. … A week later, the rav went out again to remove the repulsive disgrace from the streets. [They were spotted and chased by a police car, but succeeded in appearing innocent enough not to be arrested.] …

Two days passed since that event. Rav Pincus participated in a Brit Yitzchak in Be'er Sheva, and heard there that the repulsive pictures had again appeared in the city streets. He simply turned back and travelled with pain held in check from Be'er Sheva to his house in Ofakim; there, he equipped himself with bags of black paint, and returned to Be'er Sheva. The time was two o'clock in the morning. He succeeded in throwing only the first bag, which exploded its contents all over a picture, when several police cars suddenly appeared. …

That Thursday night, the rav spent in police custody. … After a marathon of activity of R. Gafni and R. Avrohom Deutch, the rav of the kehilla was released under bail in honour of Shabbos.

In court that Sunday, Rav Pincus refused to commit to not repeat his "criminal offense", and instead gave an emotional speech on the Torah perspective on the topic. Ultimately, he was released with a five-hundred shekel fine under the condition that if he repeated a similar crime in the next two years he would receive three months imprisonment.

From all these examples we see the same theme – every individual taking personal responsibility for the interests of the Torah. Regardless of how unpleasant the situation and of the personal repercussions, these Torah-true people stepped forwards when they could just have well stayed out – despite knowing fully well that their actions would be met with no understand or sympathy, but rather with antagonism and criticism. With purity of heart, they overcame their natural desire to avoid confrontations and were prepared to act for the sake of kvod Shomayim.

May we merit to work all together to bring Klal Yisroel closer to the Torah, and see with our own eyes the coming of the Geulah soon!

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

We often don't know why we must go through hard times and challenges; however, **Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zt'l*** said that in the future, everything will be explained. We will be told why we had to go through what we did. And then we will laugh at how worried and upset we were at the time. Then we will see that everything was for our benefit.

בס"ד

למודי משה

The Power of a Yids Mouth

In this week's *Parsha* the *pasuk* says: **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה**- "*Do not profane your words, keep everything that comes out of your mouth.*"

The *Chida* explains that if one does not pollute his mouth with forbidden words and only uses it for the right things, then even when he uses it for simple, everyday speech, his mouth is not defiled (*yachel* is a *lashon* of *chilul*). Such a person is then rewarded that "**כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה**" – literally - whatever he says, Hashem will do.

The *Chida* explains that this is the secret of a **צַדִּיק גּוֹזֵר וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְקַיֵּם** – *a tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills.*

There is a story brought down in *sefer Otzros HaTorah* of the **Vilna Gaon**.

He once had a wart in his throat and the doctors said that they need to operate on it. Family members told the Gaon that instead of undergoing surgery, why not call a woman who was known to whisper on a wound and make it disappear.

The Gaon agreed but he wanted to make sure it wasn't done with a "*koach hatuma*" – an impure power.

He arrived at the woman's house and asked what her method was and where she learned it. She answered, "I am an *almonah*, a widow, with a house full of orphans. I was left alone without any income and had no means to support myself and my children. So I went to the *shul*, opened the *Aron Kodesh*, and poured my heart out to Hashem. After a few minutes, I heard a voice call out, "My dear daughter, what is your trouble?" After I answered, the voice called out and said, "I advise you to heal people by making the *berachah* "*borei nefoshos*"

after drinking a cup of water in front of the sick person. In this way you will have *parnosah* to support your family."

"This is my method for healing the sick", she said.

When hearing this, the Gaon started laughing until his wart popped out and no operation or whispers were needed anymore.

The woman wasn't sure what the Gaon found funny.

He explained: "The voice that you heard in *shul* on that day was none other than my own voice. I was learning in the *ezras nashim* one winter night and a crying woman was disturbing my learning. Out of desperation, I asked her what the trouble was and gave some advice, without imagining for a second that my idea actually was taken seriously and being used successfully. I did this just to quieten her so that I could carry on learning without being disturbed."

This is a clear illustration of **צַדִּיק גּוֹזֵר וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְקַיֵּם**



Who Took the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?

In Eretz Yisrael, not every *kollel* has its own beis midrash. It is common for several *kollelim*, sometimes made up of *yungeleit* from very different backgrounds, to share the same building. Although they may be learning different *limudim*, they inevitably cross paths in the kitchen, coffee room, or coat area. Those interactions often lead to friendships and mutual respect. Occasionally, they become unforgettable lessons.

One such story took place in a shul in Ramat Beit Shemesh that housed two very different *kollelim*: one for English-speaking working

men and another *Chassidish kollel* for aspiring *dayanim*. It was customary for people to bring *kibbud*, some food to the kitchen as a *zechus* for a loved one's *neshamah*, allowing the *yungeleit* to enjoy a light refreshment before learning.



One morning, **R' Saul Barron** arrived more than an hour after *seder* had begun. He had spent the morning taking care of several matters for his children and had not even had a chance to eat. When he entered the kitchen, he spotted a tray with two generous slices of babka accompanied by a note requesting that anyone eating it make a *berachah l'ilui nishmas* the deceased.

Not wanting anyone else to assume the babka was still available, R' Saul picked up the tray and moved it off to the side. Satisfied that it was "claimed," he turned around to prepare himself a cup of coffee. A few moments later, he heard someone enter the kitchen. Before he even had a chance to turn around, the newcomer walked directly over to the tray and began eating one of the slices of babka.

R' Saul's heart sank. There went his breakfast. But why would someone take food that had clearly been set aside? Ordinarily, he might have spoken up. But the man was one of the Chassidim from the *dayanus kollel*, and between the language barrier and the cultural differences, R' Saul hesitated.

The Chassid, however, sensed that something was wrong. Looking at R' Saul, he asked, "Would you like the other piece?" R' Saul didn't immediately answer. After all, he was quite hungry, and had thought both pieces were his. The Chassid smiled, unconvinced.

Realizing he had to say something, R' Saul finally admitted, "I... had actually taken them both for myself." The Chassid looked at him thoughtfully, then handed him the remaining slice.

"Let me tell you a story," he said. R' Saul was puzzled, but listened.

Mrs. Levi* was once waiting in Jerusalem's central bus station before a two-hour bus ride. To make the wait more pleasant, she stopped at a kiosk and bought herself a bag of cookies. She found a seat at a table in the food court beside another woman she had never met. After settling down, she reached into the bag of cookies on the table and took one. As she ate, she casually watched the crowds of travelers, the buses coming and going, and the constantly changing departure board. She paid little attention to the woman sitting beside her.

A few moments later, she reached for another cookie. At that exact moment, the other woman also reached into the bag and took one. Mrs. Levi froze. "Is she taking from my cookies?" she wondered. She could hardly believe it. Of course she would have gladly shared had the woman asked. But simply helping herself?

Trying to judge favorably, Mrs. Levi reasoned that perhaps the woman was embarrassed or in a rush. She decided not to say anything.

A few minutes later, the woman took another cookie. Then another. Back and forth they went, each quietly taking cookies from the same bag without exchanging a single word.

Mrs. Levi became increasingly uncomfortable. "Doesn't she realize how awkward this is?" she wondered.

Finally, only one cookie remained. The woman picked it up, broke it in half, and placed one half in front of Mrs. Levi. That nearly pushed her over the edge. "After eating half my cookies, she's *generously* giving me half of the last one?" Before Mrs. Levi could respond, the woman stood up, blended into the crowd, and disappeared toward her departing bus.

"What *chutzpah*," Mrs. Levi muttered as she recited her *berachah acharonah*. She then reached into her shoulder bag to retrieve her

bus card. There, sitting untouched inside her bag, was the unopened package of cookies she had purchased. She had spent the last several minutes eating someone else's cookies!

R' Saul sat silently as the Chassid finished the story. Then he looked at him curiously. "If you're telling me that story," he said, "I suppose I should also be *dan l'kaf zechus*. Tell me... were you the one who brought this babka?"

A broad smile spread across the Chassid's face. "I had brought it this morning *l'ilui nishmas* my grandmother. When I saw it was still sitting there more than an hour into *seder*, I assumed nobody wanted it, and therefore took one slice for myself, and would move the remainder one to the central giveaway spot."

Pointing toward the remaining slice, the Chasid said warmly: "Enjoy."

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - Changing Metal into Gold

The following story happened to an important Yid who lives in Eretz Yisrael. His family lived in Boro Park, New York, and as a bachur he learned in Yeshivas Kaminetz in Yerushalayim. Naturally, he went home only about twice a year and lived in the dormitory the rest of the year. The problem was finding a place to stay for the rest of the Shabbosos, Yamim Tovim, and bein hazmanim.

The mashgiach, **Rav Moshe Aharon Stern, zt"l**, realized there was a problem. He approached the bachur and told him, "Starting today, my house is open to you. You don't need a special invitation. Just come when-ever you want — for Yom Tov, or any other time. My house is your house."

The mashgiach, a tzaddik, opened his home to the bachur. In time, the bachur became very close to the mashgiach, and loved him like a father. After a few years, the bachur got engaged and was going to

live in Boro Park. Before going home for the wedding, he went to the mashgiach and said emotionally, "Rebbi, I came to say goodbye."

"No," said the mashgiach, "we're not saying goodbye here. We're saying it at the airport. I'm coming with you until they don't let me through any further. I would have wanted to come with you to America and participate in the simchah, but since I can't, at least I'll bring you to the plane."

The rebbi and his student got to the airport and found a corner where they could sit and wait together. When the chassan was called to show his passport and boarding pass, he turned to his rebbi and said, "Rebbi! I don't want to leave you! I know that in the beginning, I'll call you before every Yom Tov to say Gut Yom Tov and Gut Yahr, but 'Out of sight is out of mind,' and I know that I'll end up calling you only once a year! But you gave me so much, you were like a father to me. I don't ever want to forget you. Tell me something, a vort, a story, or something like that so I'll remember you my whole life!"

The mashgiach thought for a moment, then said, "I will tell you something precious, and I guarantee that you'll remember me for the rest of your life — until a hundred and twenty!

Rabbeinu Bacheye, in his sefer Chovos Halevavos, describes the alchemists, who insisted they had the formula that would turn ordinary metal into gold. They would pretend to take some scrap metal, broken wheels or rusty spikes, and turn them into bars of pure gold. - "It would seem that an alchemist should be the most tranquil person in the world. He can conjure up gold whenever he wants; he can become the richest person in the world and he can guarantee his livelihood until a hundred and twenty. But Rabbeinu Bachaye gives ten reasons why someone who has bitachon will be even calmer than an alchemist.

"In our times, scientists have determined that gold is an element; it is impossible to form gold from any other substance. But there is one person in the world who does know the formula for turning iron

into gold. That person is standing in front of you and talking to you at this moment — that person is myself! I have decided to reveal the formula to you. With this formula, you can turn simple metal into gold. That's how you will remember me until a hundred and twenty."

"Listen to the wonderful formula, and never forget it. In each minute, there are sixty seconds, which can be used for good or not so good. You can take a minute and waste it by doing nothing. You can take a minute, and dream, chat, or joke around. You can take a minute and throw it in the garbage of history.

"On the other hand, you can take sixty seconds and infuse them with spiritual content. In each minute, you can learn a few pesukim from the Torah, read a perek of Tehillim, learn a mishnah, or read a few lines of Gemara. You can take those sixty seconds, eternalize them, and meet up with them again many years hence. Every minute can be turned into pure gold if you take advantage of it properly; every minute can become eternity and support you spiritually forever.

In order to grow in Torah, one must value every minute, take advantage of every second, and remember that time is the most precious treasure that man has.

"In materialistic America, people like to say, 'Time is money!' But we say, 'Money is time!' Time is worth more than money. The money a person made during his lifetime doesn't come with him, neither to Har Hazeisim nor to Har Hamenuchos. But the time that he took advantage of during his lifetime — this he takes with him to Olam Haba and enjoys forever."

Let us be smart and not allow our lives to pass us by. If we would only pay attention, we would see how many hours are consumed and lost when we aren't paying attention, how many hours are wasted and thrown away "in the garbage of history."

We need to take advantage of every moment in our lives, to catch one more shiur, one more page of Gemara, one more perek of

Tehillim, one more perek of Mishnah, one more chessed, one more pleasant expression to another person. We must immerse ourselves completely in Torah, thereby meriting, with siyata d'Shmaya, to be שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית ה', planted in the House of Hashem, and to change every moment in our lives to an eternal moment that will stand by us forever.

Yesodos m' ha Sedra

R' Yaakov Yosef Joseph *24 Tamuz 5662*



In Europe, most sizeable Jewish communities were organized at different levels and capacities. In addition to dayanim, shochtim, and community rabbonim, there was a 'chief rabbi' at its head, and it was an official position that was often government mandated.

In America, this was very much a foreign concept and Jewish life was much less organized in the early years. Truth be told, in the late 1800's, there was a large kehilla called Beth medrash Hagadol in the Lower East Side (of New York City) and was led by R' Avraham Ash, a noted talmid chacham, but he was at odds with much of the kehilla in areas of hashkafa and he ultimately resigned.

At that point, this large kehilla invited smaller congregations to join them in the search for a new chief rabbi and they formed a new body comprised of some thirty-two kehillos, called United Hebrew Orthodox Congregations.

Originally, the group decided to offer the position of Chief Rabbi to the Malbim and set out on a fundraising campaign to fund the project. Those behind the project were very excited to have a single

rav to serve them and strengthen shemiras Shabbos, kashrus, and chinuch in the new world of America. However, before they were in a position to be able to extend the offer to their choice candidate, the Malbim passed away and the community reached out to eight great talmidei chachamim in Europe, seeking recommendations, but also hoping that one of them would accept the position themselves.

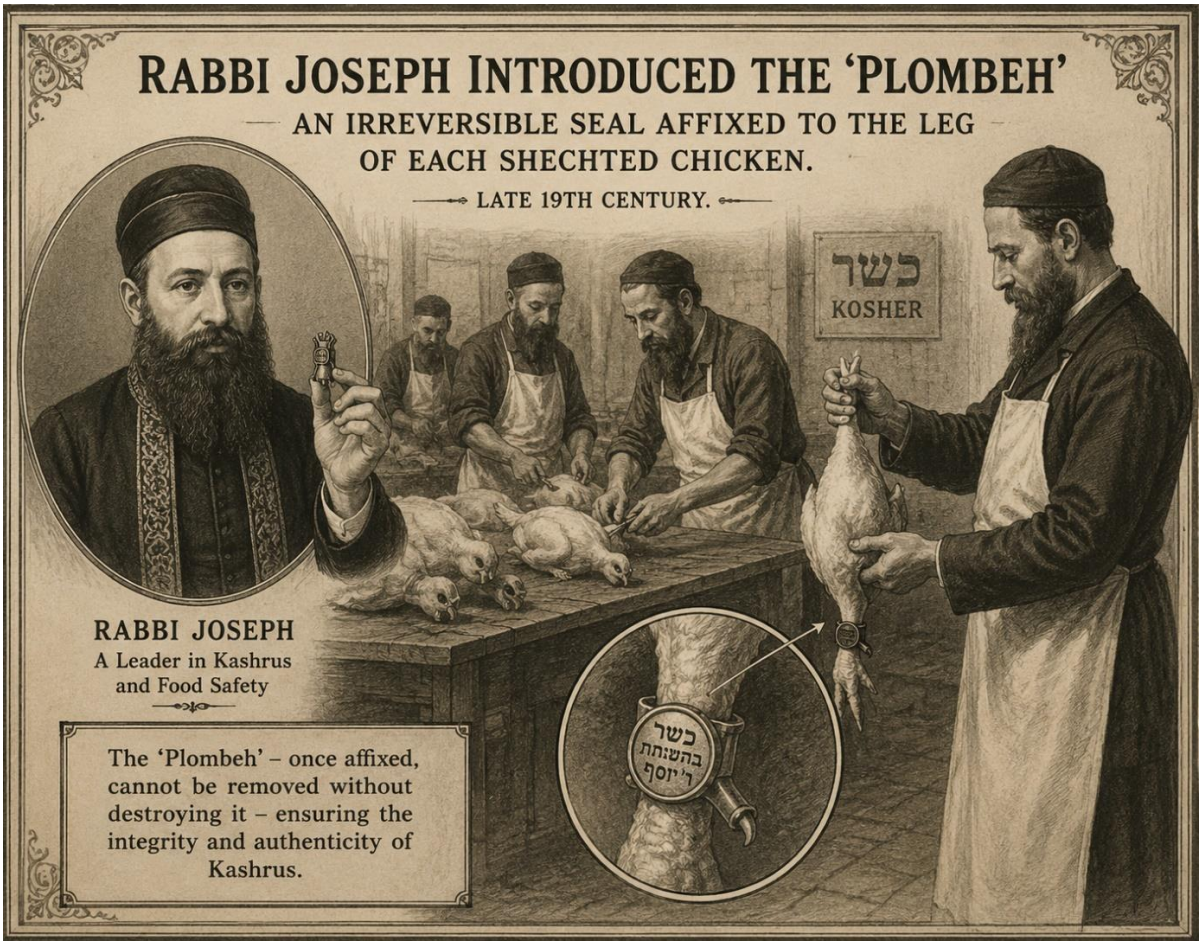
Among those contacted were R' Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor, R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin, R' Chaim Berlin, and R' Yaakov Joseph. While a couple of rabbonim expressed interest if the position would have official government recognition (as was the norm in parts of Europe), only R' Yaakov Joseph was willing to come.

Although he was hesitant to move to America, the difficulties of supporting his family on his small salary in Vilna forced him to accept the lucrative offer of a three thousand dollar annual salary, which was an honorable sum in those days.

On July 7th 1888, Rabbi Joseph arrived on American shores and an entourage went to greet him and escort him to his new home in New York. He was to be in charge of kashrus and rabbonus.

According to the newly drawn up bylaws, no congregation may hire a rabbi, nor may any rav give a hechsher without the Chief Rabbi's approval. This was not met without challenge; the reform controlled media and other more modern leaders attacked this European rabbi who was new to America, but on Shabbos Nachamu, Rabbi Joseph gave a public derasha and the streets surround the Beth Medrash Hagadol was filled with Jews from across the spectrum.

The new Chief Rabbi quickly discovered that kashrus in America, specifically shechita, was chaotic at best. Routine mandatory examinations of lungs were not being carried out, since the shochtim, who were well-meaning but unlearned - were largely employed by the butcher shops. In addition, treif chickens were being sold as kosher and Rabbi Joseph introduced the '**plombeh**' - an irreversible seal affixed to the leg of each shechted chicken.



In order to pay for the extra expenses involved in proper kashrus supervision and certification, a 'shechita tax' was added to each chicken and this was something which did not find favor in the eyes of many who claimed that Rabbi Joseph's new rules were a way to make himself rich off of the poor.

He was subject to further personal attacks by other rabbi who wanted to provide kosher certification. Eventually, Rabbi Joseph became an employee of the butchers but maintained his kashrus standards and dignity throughout.

However, 1895 the butchers stopped paying his salarly and Rabbi Joseph was left penniless. He had a stroke and spent the next five years paralyzed in bed, passing away at the age of just 59.

It is said the the Satmar Rav encouraged people seeking yeshuos to daven at Rabbi Joseph's kever and indeed many of attested to experiencing extra siyata dishmaya after doing so.

When There's Life, There's Hope - R' Dovid Orlofsky



Parshas Mattos you have the war against *Midyan*. And in the war against *Midyan* we go out and *Pinchas* goes out with the *Tzitz*.

Why? Because *Bilaam* using his black magic got all of the kings of *Midyan* to fly. But when they saw the *Tzitz* it cancelled that black magic and they came crashing down and *Bilaam* fell right on a sword and died. - That was the end of *Bilaam*.

And it's very interesting because *Bilaam* makes his first appearance way earlier. I'm not going now with the *Medrash* who says he was *Lavan*. But he was one of the advisors of *Paroh*. And we see him doing a number of things in that role. He's the one who said to kill *Moshe* when he was a baby and that's why he had to have the test with the hot coals. And he was even earlier, he was one of three advisors of *Paroh*.

It was *Bilaam*, it was *Yisro*, and it was *Iyov*. And they saw that the Jewish people were increasing and they were worried that they were going to become more powerful than Egypt and they asked what should we do? And so *Bilaam* said enslave them. And *Yisro* said be good to them, they bring you *bracha*, look at *Yosef*, all the good that they did for Egypt. And *Iyov* said nothing.

And what was the result of this? *Yisro* got to become a Jew and his descendants were part of the *Sanhedrin*. *Iyov* who was silent got all of the sufferings of *Iyov*, and *Bilaam* died by the sword.

So asks ***Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz***, it looks like *Iyov* got a worse punishment than *Bilaam* because *Bilaam* just got a nice clean death and *Iyov* suffered and suffered.

There's a *Tosfos* that says *Chanania Mishael* and *Azaria* agreed to be thrown into the *Kivshan Ha'eish* because they knew they would die quickly, but if they would have been tortured, they would have ended up bowing down to the idols.

So here *Iyov* loses his wife and children, gets struck with disease, loses all his money, all these terrible things that happened to him because he remained silent?

And *Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz* says an unbelievable thing. There's a *pasuk*, we say it in *Hallel*, **ייסר ייסרני קה ולמות לא נתנני**. *Hashem* gave me a lot of *yissurim* and a lot of suffering, but better a life of the worst *yissurim* and I'm still alive. - I'm still alive because while you're alive you can do things, when you're alive you can accomplish things, but once you're dead it's over.

The Chicken Soup for the Soul tells the story about a guy who was in a motorcycle accident, became a quadriplegic. And they say he was a very happy guy, couldn't move anything from his neck down, but he was a happy guy.

He was asked, 'how could you be happy?'

He says I used to be able to do 10 million things, now I can only do 1 million things. So I can focus on the 1 million things I can do or the 9 million things I can't do.

But as long as you're alive. People ask me how you doing? I have a standard answer. People say how you doing? I said I'm still alive. That's good, I woke up this morning.

Because after that whatever happens is positive because I'm still alive. Because you know one morning I'm going to wake up and I'm not going to be alive and that's going to be a real bummer. I'll probably not even get to *shul*, you know, and often I make the *minyan*. And you're like 'oh man I'm dead', by the way you don't always know, so sometimes you need a little time to find out that you're dead, but

it doesn't matter what suffering you go through, as long as you're alive, - where there's life there's hope.

You can't give up. And this of course is what Viktor Frankl wrote about his experiences in the concentration camps. He says those people who lost hope they died, and those people who kept their hope they were able to survive.

And so everybody has *yissurim*. And don't ever make the mistake of judging somebody else's *yissurim* because you don't know what their tolerance level is. Some people can handle an enormous amount and other people - a small amount of difficulty just sends them to their bed and pulls the blanket over their head they can't go on. So don't judge anybody's pain, everybody has pain. What you have to say to yourself is I woke up this morning, I'm still alive, where there's life there's hope.

And that's it, *Torah* is *chayim* and everyone needs a bit of light. *Im yirtzeh Hashem* we should have a beautiful *Shabbos*.



Inspired by Time - Appreciation for Torah – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Chazal relate that one of the reasons the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed was because שֶׁלֹּא בֵּרְכוּ בַּתּוֹרָה תְּחִלָּה – they did not recite Birchas HaTorah prior to learning.

The Mefarshim explain that this does not merely refer to the failure to recite a brachah, but to a far deeper issue: the people did not truly appreciate the immense value and eternity of Torah. They therefore did not feel the need to recite a brachah thanking Hashem, "אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ."

We must use the precious days between now and Tisha B'Av to gain a greater appreciation of Torah, to realize how valuable and precious it is to Hashem. We must remember that even the relatively minor difference between learning from one's own Rebbe and learning from another Rebbe is the difference between life and death.

Every crumb, every drop of Torah – whether in quality or quantity – is not merely precious; it is life itself.

What's more, if we come to this appreciation during the final week of the zman, before we leave our regular schedule, we will use our available learning time during Bein HaZemanim to its fullest. Ringing in our ears will be the message that a proper attachment to Torah is a matter of life and death.

As we go deeper and further into the depths of galus, we feel the absence of the Beis Hamikdash and the pain of the Shechinah progressively less. We no longer have the same attachment to the times of old and become numb to the bitterness of galus. Past generations would cry bitter tears over the Churban on a daily basis. Today, there is barely a tear in shul, even on Tisha B'Av.

We must endeavor to find things that even our distant generation can feel, and over which it can be mitzta'er and cry.

"Crumbs" of Torah

At the very end of Shemoneh Esrei we daven: **יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ שֶׁיִּבָּנֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ**. We then continue with a seemingly unrelated request: "**וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ**" – Grant us our portion in Torah.

What is the connection between these two tefillos?

The Chazon Ish explained that while today we are fortunate to have many shuls, schools, yeshivos, kolelim, and talmidei chachamim, they are merely 'brekalach' – crumbs – in comparison to the Torah of the

times of the Beis Hamikdash. We are unaware of it, but we are missing so much of the real Torah.

In light of the above, this is simply a travesty. Even a small lack in Torah is considered "death." How dreadful it is that we possess merely crumbs of Torah when compared with former times.

Let us contemplate this enormous loss and increase our tefillos: **שֶׁיִּבָּנֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ**

Rabbi Shlomo Hoff Shlita

רבותי, ערב שבת פרשת מטות–מסעי, שבת חזק, שבת מברכים.



I'd like to share a powerful **יסוד** from the **מדרש** in **פרשת מטות**.

The **מדרש** quotes the **פסוק** where **הקב"ה** tells **יהושע**: **כאשר הייתי עם משה אהיה עמך.** The **מדרש** understands this to include that **יהושע** was meant to live 120 years, just as **משה רבינו** did. Yet **יהושע** lived only 110. Why were ten years taken from his life?

The **מדרש** explains that when **הקב"ה** told **משה** to avenge **מדין**, adding, **"ואחר תאסף אל עמך," משה** knew this would be his final mission. Nevertheless, he carried it out immediately, without delaying in order to prolong his life. A **שליחות** from **הקב"ה** is done when He commands it.

יהושע, however, reasoned differently. He thought that perhaps, like **משה**, his life would end when his mission was complete. Therefore, he prolonged the conquest of **ארץ ישראל**, as the **פסוק** says: **ימים רבים עשה יהושע את כל המלכים האלה מלחמה.** - He hoped to gain more years of life by delaying the completion of the **מלחמה**.

הקב"ה responded: **"בכך עשית, הריני מקצר שנותיך עשר שנים."** - He lost 10 years of his life.

The **מדרש** concludes with **שלמה המלך**'s words: **רבות מחשבות בלב איש ועצת ה' היא תקום**. - ***"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Hashem's purpose that prevails."***

The lesson is timeless. We often make our own calculations—in business, career, finances, or family decisions. Sometimes personal interests or **נגיעות** lead us to choose a path that isn't fully aligned with the **רוח התורה**. We imagine it will benefit us, but if it isn't **עצת ה'**, it will ultimately not endure. True success is only that which is built on **רצון ה'**.

The next **מדרש** makes the same point through **בני גד ובני ראובן**. They chose to settle in **עבר הירדן** because of their wealth and livestock. Although they received permission, it was not the ideal **רצון ה'**. Their success was, in the **מדרש**'s words, **חטופה**—something grasped on their own terms—and they were the first tribes to go into **גלות**.

The message is clear: before making important decisions, we should ask ourselves, *Is this* **עצת ה'**, *or is it simply* **רבות מחשבות בלב איש**? And if we're unsure, we should seek the guidance of someone objective, someone without our personal **נגיעות**.

When our choices are guided by **עצת ה'**, they have lasting **קיום**. As the **פסוק** promises: **"ועצת ה' היא תקום."**

Wishing everyone a **לעכטיקן שבת**, a **גוט חודש**, and **בשורות טובות לכל אחד ואחד**. - **כל טוב**.

The Window of the Heart

The sun never stops shining. When its light doesn't reach us, it's the window that needs cleaning.

Hashem's light is no different. Tefillah cleans the window of our hearts, allowing His light and blessings to shine into our lives. ~ Based on the Ramchal.