



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



נשא

לעילוי נשמת



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ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

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Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



Be Committed

One of the laws in this week's parashah is that of the "Nazir." This section is introduced with the words: " **אֵישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי יַפְלִא לִנְדֹּר נֶדֶר** נָזִֽיר/ "***A man or a woman who shall disassociate himself*** . . ." (6:2)

R' Avraham ibn Ezra z"l (1089-1164) observes that the word "**יַפְלִא**" also can mean: "Who does wonders." He explains that a nazir, who disassociates him or herself from wine, is doing something wondrous–unlike the typical person, who is controlled by the pursuit of pleasure.

R' Simcha Bunim Alter z"l (1898-1992; fifth Gerrer Rebbe) adds that the section of nazir teaches us how G-d helps one who undertakes to improve himself. Becoming a nazir is a wondrous thing–indeed, it is nearly impossible to be around people who are enjoying normal pleasures and to refrain from partaking. Nevertheless, because the nazir undertakes sincerely to be different, Hashem helps him.

The Gerrer Rebbe adds: The same thing is true of any person who wants to change himself. Once one makes a sincere commitment to change–even if change appears impossible–Hashem will help.

This week's parashah is always read on either the Shabbat before or (more commonly) the Shabbat after Shavuot. The idea that Hashem desires our sincere commitments is closely tied to the holiday of the Giving of the Torah. - How so?

The Tosafot to Avodah Zarah (3a) teach that, although we are taught that the heavens and earth can exist only if we study Torah, in fact it is our sincere commitment to study, rather than the actual study itself, that keeps the world going. (Pardes Yosef)

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל־חַטֹּאת הָאָדָם לִמְעֹל מַעַל בַּה׳ וְאָשְׁמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא. וְהִתְוַדּוּ אֶת־חַטָּאתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וְהֵשִׁיב אֶת־אֲשָׁמוֹ -"***Speak to Bnei Yisrael, 'A man or woman who commits any of mankind's sins, by committing treachery toward Hashem, and that person shall become guilty. They shall confess the sin that they committed; he shall make restitution for his guilt*** . . ." (5:6-7)



R' Menachem Mendel Hager z"l (1886-1941; rabbi, rosh yeshiva and chassidic rebbe of Oyber-Visheve, Hungary) asks: Why is the mitzvah of vidui / confession taught here, in connection with the sin of stealing?

He answers: In reality, every sin involves an element of theft, for one misappropriates the powers that Hashem gave him to use for holy purposes and uses them instead for impure purposes. In this light, our verse can be read: "If a man or woman who commits any of mankind's sins, he should know that he is committing treachery toward Hashem." (She'eirit Menachem)

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ. יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ. יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם - "***May Hashem bless you and safeguard you. May Hashem illuminate His countenance for you and be gracious to you. May Hashem lift His countenance to you and establish peace for you.***" (6:24-26)



R' Shlomo Zalman Ulman z"l (20th century Hungarian rabbi) notes that all of the Priestly Blessings are phrased in the singular. They are addressed to each individual separately. How then can the last blessing speak of peace? Isn't peace a collective concept–peace between nations, peace between neighbors, etc.?

He explains: A Jew is commanded (Devarim 6:5) to love Hashem with all his heart and with all his soul. But man has other interests, and his organs are at war with each other. Some want to love and serve Hashem, while others may not. How can man win this war?

Our Sages teach that one who wants to purify himself receives Divine assistance. This is the meaning of the blessing that the Kohanim utter: "May G-d establish peace for you," i.e., within you. (Quoted in Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim)

"In every moment, remember that Hashem loves you more deeply than you can fathom. And His love is the ultimate source of comfort and strength." ~ Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch.

Birchas Kohanim

When the Kohanim bless the congregation, their hands are outstretched and they hold their fingers in such a way that there are three air spaces between the fingers of the two hands. What does this represent?

R' Pinchas Zelig Hakohen Schwartz z"l (pre-WWII Hungarian rabbi) explains: The Midrash says that Bnei Yisrael complained to Hashem, "We do not want the blessing of the Kohanim. We want Your blessing."

Hashem responded: "When they bless you, I am looking over their shoulders." In the words of Shir Hashirim (2:9), "He is standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices." (Ateret Paz)



אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי יַפְלִא לִנְדֹּר נֶדֶר נָזִיר/ "*A man or a woman who shall disassociate himself* . . ." (6:2)

Among the laws in this week's parashah are the laws of the nazir, who takes a vow not to drink wine, eat grape products or cut his hair for a certain period. These laws are introduced by the verse, "A man or a woman who will `יַפְלִא' to take a vow…" While some understand the word "יַפְלִא" to mean "disassociate himself," **Ibn Ezra** understands it to be from the root "pele," meaning "to do a wondrous thing."

R' Yerucham Levovitz z"l (the Mirrer Mashgiach) explains: Many people claim that they can readily change any of their habits, but that they just don't want to.

This verse says that this is not so; it truly is a "wonder" when a person makes a fundamental change in his habits. [Therefore, a person who wants to change cannot expect to work on himself casually. Rather, supreme effort is required.] (Da'at Torah Vol. IV, p.41)



R' Eliyahu Dessler z"l came to understand man's ability to fool himself by reflecting on his own battle to quit smoking. Every evening, as he suffered from terrible chest pains, he promised himself that the next day he would not smoke. But in the morning he said, "One cigarette won't hurt." And, before he smoked the second cigarette he said, "This, too, is only one cigarette." Before he knew it, he had smoked all day long, and again was suffering from terrible chest pains.

And so it is when man evaluates any of his deeds. (Michtav M'Eliyahu Vol. I, p.111)

The Chafetz Chaim (died 1933) once visited the town of Slonim, and a certain wealthy resident, R' Yosef, asked the sage to review his (R' Yosef's) will. R' Yosef want the Chafetz Chaim's opinion of whether he had divided his assets properly. The Chafetz Chaim looked at the will and saw that R' Yosef had divided his money into four equal shares – 10,000 rubles for each of his three sons and 10,000 rubles for his wife. In addition, R' Yosef had willed all of his sefarim / Torah library to various yeshivot. The Chafetz Chaim returned the will to R' Yosef and said, "You find the errors."

R' Yosef reviewed his will and replied, "I do not see any errors. It looks to me like it is all in order."

"No!" said the Chafetz Chaim. "Firstly, I am amazed that you left all your money to your family and your sefarim to yeshivot. Your

children, too, will need sefarim, while yeshivot lack money for food more than they lack sefarim.

"Secondly, you have transgressed the verse (Yishayah 58:7), `From your own flesh do not turn away.' True, `your flesh' refers to your relatives, but you are your own closest relative, and you have made no provision for yourself. You worked hard for this money, and you should give yourself an equal share. Create another share of your assets," the Chafetz Chaim said, "and then divide it again – one-half for Torah scholars and one-half to chessed organizations, for example, for bikkur cholim, for poor people, and so on. The portion that is for Torah scholars also will help feed and clothe poor people such that you will have a share not only in their Torah study but in their very livelihoods."

R' Yosef agreed and promised that he would change his will forthwith.

"Wait," said the Chafetz Chaim. "My advice to you is that you take your 8,000 ruble share and distribute it to appropriate institutions in your lifetime. You know how it is; when children see that their father has left a large portion of his estate to charity, they hire a lawyer to prove that their father was insane. Imagine the reaction in the Heavenly Court if you come there and they hear that, not only were your pledges to charity not fulfilled, but you were insane to boot!

"This," concluded the Chafetz Chaim, "is the lesson of the verse in Parashat Nasso (5:10), `A man's holies shall be his.' Only what a person sets aside for holy uses will ultimately remain his." (Quoted in Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim)

"A person who lives with a constant awareness of Hashem, will live a life of constant happiness." ~ The Chazon Ish.



זֹאת חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּיוֹם הִמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ מֵאֵת נְשִׂיאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – *'This was the dedication of the Altar, on the day it was anointed, from the Princes of Yisrael.'* (7:84)



The Torah has just enumerated in detail the offerings of each Nasi, Prince/leader. Twelve Nesiim each brought identical offerings. Yet, the Torah chose to detail each Nasi – offering separately.

The Rambam explains that while each Nasi brought the same offering, his machshavah, thought – process and reasoning, for arriving at the decision to bring this specific korban was distinct from that of any other Nasi. Their conclusions were identical; their machasvos, however, were different. Thus, the Torah follows the thought process. Why? Does it make a difference how they all arrived at the same decision concerning what to offer? As long as they are all similar, it is not necessary to record each of the twelve korbanos.

Horav Yaakov Yitzchak HaLevi Ruderman, zl, derives from Ramban's words a powerful lesson in mitzvah observance. The essential mitzvah is not its external, extrinsic aspect, the part that is displayed publicly. The essence of a mitzvah is the penimiyus, intrinsic machshavah, behind it. Each Nasi had his own individual

kavanah, devotion and intention, behind his actions. Although all of the actions of the Nesiim were similarly manifest, their intentions were individually unique.

Thus, insofar as the atzmiyus, essential aspect, of each korban was disparate from that of the others, the Torah felt it necessary to record each one separately.

The Rosh Yeshivah derives from here that, although on the face of it, two men perform what appears to be the same mitzvah, if their intentions are different, their mitzvos are different. - Thus, two men may be sitting on the same bench of the bais hamedrash, both learning, but one studies with fire and passion, while the other studies dispassionately, with an insipid attitude; we have before us two completely different examples of limud haTorah. - The two may not – and cannot – be compared to one another, because they are intrinsically disparate.



וְאִישׁ אֶת־קָדָשָׁיו לוֹ יִהְיוּ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִתֵּן לַכֹּהֵן לוֹ יִהְיֶה – '*What a man gives to the Kohen shall be his*.' (5:10)

Simply, this means that the man who gives of his material assets to the Kohen is not really giving it away; actually, it is an investment that will continue to give back. **לוֹ יִהְיֶה**, "it will remain his," forever, in his stead.

We have heard the maxim, Tzedakah tatzil mi'maves, "charity protects/saves from death." It is not as if charity is an added therapy. It is actually a preventative agent that wards off the Angel of Death. It is an added antibody which fights and eradicates the disease which might take one's life. Why? **לוֹ יִהְיֶה**, "it is his;" it remains with him, like a coat of protective armour.

The tzedakah one gives never leaves him. One need not be sick in order to benefit from the panacea of tzedakah. Lo yihiyeh; it will always be there, just in case it is ever needed.

This does not undermine the tzedakah that one gives if, or when, he is in need of merit. That, too, will have a beneficial effect. It is just that therapy administered prior to an illness has a greater chance of effecting a propitious result than therapy administered when the patient is quite ill.

Furthermore, tzedakah is not necessarily measured by how much one gives, but rather, by now much the beneficiary benefits.



**דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי יַפְלִא לִנְדֹּר נֶדֶר נָזִיר לְהַזִּיר לַה׳ – *'A man or woman who shall disassociate himself by taking a Nazarite vow of abstinence for the sake of Hashem*.' (6:2)

The translation of יַפְלִא, "shall disassociate," follows Rashi, who views the Nazir as someone who breaks with society's norms, seeking to separate himself from the temptations of his environment. It is a noble position to take, one to which not all of us can aspire.

Ibn Ezra takes it a step further. He defines yafli as wonderment. The nazir is doing something astonishing. It is truly out of the ordinary to undertake a vow that will sever oneself from the taavos, physical desires, which others find so "life-sustaining."

Ibn Ezra is teaching us a powerful lesson. To overcome one's habits; to deny oneself a deferment to his yetzer hora, evil inclination; to withstand the pressures of one's taavos, physical desires, takes a very strong person. Such a person commits an astounding act. To change requires greatness. It is a pele, wondrous act of heroism, to break away from one's taavos, desires.

In his Daas Torah, **Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl**, elaborates upon this theme, deriving from Ibn Ezra that one who follows his cravings is a true slave to his desires. He is not in control of his life. His desires are in control of him. -The mindset of a slave is one in which he wholly subjugates himself to his master. A person who is intrinsically a free man does not sell himself. His self-esteem just

does not allow for that. One who sells himself is by nature already a slave. His self-esteem has long been gone. As a slave, he has no self-image. He is a component of his master. Likewise, the baal taavah, one who is a slave to his physical desires, has no natural ability to break the strangle-hold that his desires have on him. The taavah beckons, and he immediately responds: "Hineni. I am here." He has no choice, no ability to say no. His "master's" choice is his choice. He is always thinking of ways to satisfy his lusts, because that is what a slave must do: always think of ways to earn the master's praise.

Thus, when a person is able to extricate himself from the vice grip of his yetzer hora, evil inclination, he is a 'pele', an astounding person. He was able to go against his natural proclivity. He said no!

There are those who, albeit ensconced in the grips of desire, comment, "I can stop whenever I want." Rav Yeruchem emphatically states that this is untrue. This person is ashamed to admit that he is too weak to break the hold the yetzer hora has on him. He is just a "regular" person. He is not a 'pele'.

נָשֹׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן גַּם־הֵם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם - "***Take a census of the Bnei Gershon, as well.***" (4:22)

Part of Bnei Gershon's responsibility was to participate in the musical accompaniment of some of the Korbanos Tzibur, communal offerings, a duty that in the Talmud Arachin 11a, Chazal characterize as labor.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, z.l., explains the significance of "**גַּם־הֵם**", also them, or, as well, as the Torah's way of demonstrating to us that no difference existed between the work performed by Bnei Kehas, who carried the Aron HaKodesh, and the work of Bnei Gershon, who were seemingly not involved in such a holy endeavor. Exactly what one does is not significant, it is how and why one performs Hashem's command. They were all carrying out Hashem's will.

The same idea, says Rav Moshe, applies to the area of Torah chinuch, education. There is no difference between the Rosh HaYeshiva who lectures to erudite young laymen and the rebbe who teaches young children. If they act l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven, if they view their work as carrying out Hashem's will to disseminate Torah, they are both equally praiseworthy.

Perhaps if more prospective educators would keep this idea in mind, Torah chinuch would build a new image.



וְכָתַב אֶת־הָאָלֹת הָאֵלֶּה הַכֹּהֵן בַּסֵּפֶר וּמָחָה אֶל־מֵי הַמָּרִים - "***The Kohen shall inscribe these curses on a scroll and erase it into the bitter waters***." (5:23)

Although it is forbidden to erase Hashem's Sacred Name, and one who does so is punished with malkos, lashes, Hashem commanded that His Name be erased in order to engender peace and harmony between man and his wife.

Domestic tranquility is the anchor of the Jewish family unit, so that one must go to all lengths to enhance the unity of the marriage bond. Throughout history, we find that this was a priority of many of our gedolim, Torah leaders.

Most recently, an individual of the calibre of **Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, z.l.**, invested endless time and energy to assure that peace reigned among those families with whom he came into contact. He would lovingly refer to his work as "the one mitzvah I do wholeheartedly."

In an appreciation of his life, his son Rav Yechiel Michel devotes an impressive section to perspectives, insights and stories which emphasize the significance of marital bliss. I take the liberty of citing a few of these vignettes:

When **Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, z.l.**, eulogized his wife, he made a statement that confounded everyone gathered there. In

fact, it left an indelible impression on the entire observant world. He said, "It is customary for one to ask mechilah, forgiveness, from his deceased spouse. In my case, however, it is not necessary to do so, for I never once offended her during our life together."

It was difficult for people to grasp how two people could live together for almost sixty years and not need to ask forgiveness from one another.

Rav Stern would often remark that it was common for young men to ask their rebbeim, Torah mentors, for advice concerning how to talk to girls during the dating process, but rarely would ask for advice on how to speak to their wives during marriage.

Now that's something to think about! - A "holier than thou" attitude prevails among many after they get married. After all, they're the ones learning. Regrettably, they forget who's supporting them.

Horav Naftali Amsterdam, z.l., preeminent disciple of **Horav Yisrael Salanter, z.l.**, recounted that after his marriage, Rav Yisrael queried him whether he was fulfilling the mitzvah of gemilas chasadim, acts of loving-kindness.

Assuming that he was referring to a gemach, free-loan fund, he responded that he did not have enough money to start such a fund. Rav Yisrael countered, "I did not mean that. After one is married, there are numerous opportunities for one to perform acts of kindness for his wife."

All too often, we are prepared to save the world, but we forget our responsibilities at home. - This suggests a new twist to the idea that charity begins at home.

"Challenges are not sent to destroy you – they are sent to promote you." ~ Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein.

דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמוֹר לָהֶם - "***Speak to Aharon and his sons, saying, so shall you bless the Bnei Yisrael***." (6:23)

The Kohanim are to serve as the vehicles through which Hashem's blessing is bestowed upon Klal Yisrael. In order to transmit blessing one must maintain a harmonious relationship with the people. Indeed, Chazal teach us that a Kohen who does not "get along" with the people should not bless them.

The Maharsham, zl, was bothered by the brachah which the Kohen recites prior to the blessing. He says, "And He commanded us to bless His nation Yisrael with love." - How does one express himself lovingly to all Jews? Does this "love" apply also to the rasha, wicked Jew, who has a distorted view of Klal Yisrael's destiny? Does the "ba'havah" apply equally to him?

He cited **Rav Shmelke, zl, M'Nicholsberg**, who said that we are enjoined to love all Jews, even reshaim. Rav Shmelke explained that all Jews, regardless of their spiritual alienation, have good within them. We are enjoined to focus our love towards that "concealed" good. Likewise, the Kohanim are to direct their blessing to the good in every Jew.



Every human being has a soul. A divine spark burning inside him. Sometimes it happens that a person moves away from their inner light. It may even seem as if the light of one's soul has been snuffed out. But the soul is like a pilot light; it never goes out completely. All she needs is someone to lovingly tend the embers until the spiritual fire springs forth again. ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe.





Does the Rav think that it's a good idea to try to daven at a minyan that has Birchas Kohanim every day?

That depends on where you come from and who you are. I want to make a remark, however. A remark about something else. There are tzadikim who daven Vasikin – very early. Now it's excellent but I must make one remark. On Shabbos they also daven Vasikin – and they miss the opportunity to hear a little bit of yiras shamayim from somebody who speaks. They come together for a minyan, they daven fast and they go home.

Instead of davening in a place where there is a Rav and sometimes he'll speak a few words of divrei mussar. It's a valuable opportunity. And it's more important than Vasikin.

"*Asei li'cha Rav*," means: Always be in a place where there is a Rav. Somebody who will tell you something. Don't think that you know everything. There's no end to the amount of information that we require to know the derech Hashem. But the people who go early Shabbos morning to Vasikin – they're so proud and happy when they come out early. And they come out without any kind of lesson. They're not any better than they were last week. Nobody is telling them anything wrong about themselves and that's a problem.

A person walks in blindness all his life. Do you know how many faults people have?! Somebody has to criticize you. Your wife is not enough. You need some kind of instruction. How else will you know the truth?

We are living in a world of darkness. "Hi'nei choshech yi'chaseh aretz." The world is covered with darkness. We are walking in darkness and we're blind to the truths. Only if someone is teaching you can you see through the darkness. - You have to have someone to tell you. There's nobody to tell you at Vasikin. Vasikin- they probably think it's the very best thing. No, I don't think it's the very best thing.



Would you say that the end result of someone who learns Torah is that he should be a humorless person in this world?

You're asking me if a person learns certain Torah subjects will he become humorless?

Who cares if he's humorless? This business that it's a problem if a person is lacking in humor is an American attitude. We don't find it anyplace in the kisvei hakodesh or in the divrei Chazal. You have to have humor?! No such thing. Unless you mean cheerfulness and kindliness; but humor we don't need. It's a goyishe idea. It's imported from the outside world, and we can get along well without it. There's no reason to be a humorous person.

Howwever, when a person learns Torah, he becomes patient and kindly. He won't make jokes or pranks though. If that's what you mean, no, he won't make any pranks; he won't make any mischief. But he understands other people and he tries to make them happy. - It's all gemilus chassodim. A person who learns Torah well, so he smiles at other people because he learned the gemara that taught him that

it's a mitzvah **המלבין שיניים לחברו**, to show his white teeth to others; it means a big smile. He's kind to people and he speaks words of consolation to them.

It's all in the gemara; it's all in the chumash. Wherever you look, you'll find these things. That's what we want; that's what the Torah teaches. But otherwise, the idea of being humorous has no place in the service of Hashem; it's not a midda tova at all and therefore we can forget about it.



The Rav mentioned earlier that a parent should use the word "please" when speaking to a child. But doesn't saying the word "please" imply that the fulfillment of the request by the child is really only going to be a favor on the part of the child?

No. When a parent says "please" to a child, but he says it firmly, and the parent insists that the child do it, then the child gets the idea that he must do it, and he learns from his parents to say "please."

It depends on the tone of the "please." Now, if you say "please" and the child ignores you, then you are a failure. You are remiss in your duty as a parent. Either don't ask the child to do that thing, or if you do ask, it must be carried out. Your request must be carried out. And therefore, before you ask, you have to judge whether it's feasible.

A certain great man once told me, "Do you know why I have a reputation of being a man of power?" And he was a man who wielded a lot of power. He told me, "Because I never tried anything that I

couldn't carry out." He only attempted things that he knew he could carry out. So he had a reputation that he was successful in everything. He always won! He always succeeded! Because he never tried anything that he would lose.

And therefore, if you want to be a successful parent, insist on things that you know you can win. Watch out! Watch your step and don't make a request regarding things that you won't win, things that won't be fulfilled. Because then you're going to become a loser in the eyes of your child.



How can a person do teshuva if he once smoked even if now he has stopped?

Anybody who smokes today is declaring, "I am a shoiteh gomur, a complete imbecile," because on the package it says openly what's going to happen if he smokes.

Now if he once smoked, he did a very great sin – don't think it's a small thing. Putting your life in danger is a terrible sin and that person should know that he's going to be held accountable.

What teshuva should you do? Spread the news to others not to smoke. Try to get people to stop smoking. By doing that, you'll save their lives and it'll be a kaparah for yourself. That's one of the ways of doing teshuva if once upon a time you were trying to commit suicide by smoking.

There are very few guarantees in life. The one constant is that Hashem will always be there for you. ~ Rabbi Yaacov Haber.

Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Ahrele of Belz, zt"l, once said that if one would really understand what it means to be a Yid when he says the Brachah of "Shelo Asani Goy", where we thank Hashem for Making us Yidden, it would not be possible for him to have any form of depression or sadness for that entire day! - The simple fact that he appreciates and recognizes how special it is to be a Yid, brings him to a happiness that will override all sorrow!

L'Maaseh



Rav Leibish Langer, a popular storyteller, and also a Rebbi in Yeshivah Darchei Torah, is a very experienced Rebbe who deals with many challenging boys.

One year, he knew right away that one of the boys who was coming into his class was going to be a difficult case. Already on the first day, the Rebbi called him to the front of the class, and the first thing this boy did was pull out a yo-yo and start to show off his talents. At first, the Rebbi was taken aback by the situation. A boy was interrupting the class with yo-yo tricks! But the Rebbi came up with an idea of how to reach this boy.

Right then and there, he requested that the boy show the class a new yo-yo trick that he could do, and he said, "I would like every day for you to show the class a new trick that you can do with the yo-yo, right at the beginning of the day, and to show it to everyone. Please make sure you practice!"

And so it was, at the beginning of each day, this boy would show the class a new trick. Soon, he started to feel accomplished and talented, and this helped him tremendously with his confidence.

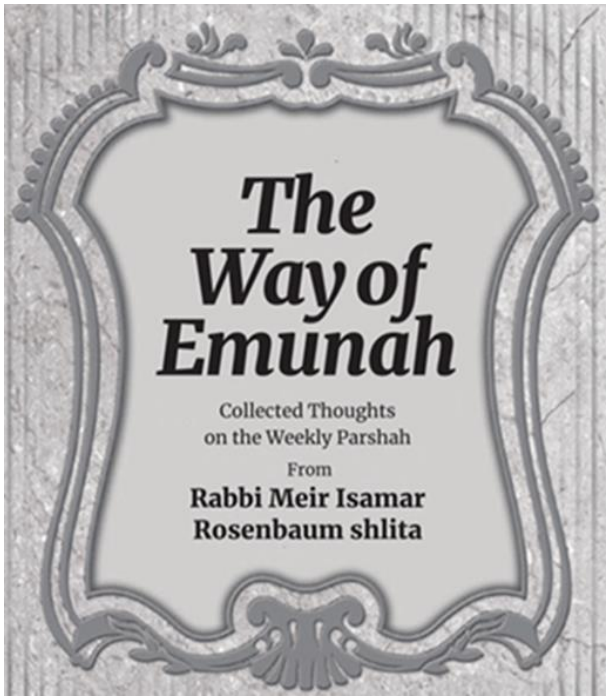
It wasn't long after this that the boy started progressing in his learning, and he used his unique ability to help him grow.

Eventually, this boy grew up and was able to help others that needed special and unique ways to connect to the Torah, and he has been doing this for many years.

Rav Langer understood that by seeing a person's qualities and valuing them, it gives that person motivation, inspiration, and enthusiasm, and with that, he can properly bring out his own unique strengths and abilities, that might have remained hidden if his skills weren't appreciated.

Seeing flaws only brings about unproductiveness, but productiveness comes by showing that someone has proper value, and that they are cherished, and this will bring about great benefits!

"Concerning prayer it is said, "Better a little with the proper intentions than a lot without the proper intentions." However, with respect to tzedaka, "a lot without the proper intentions" is also good! - The main purpose in giving tzedaka is to help others; the motivation behind the deed is secondary. In simple terms, the more money is given, the more good can result from it." ~ Baal HaTanya



נָשֹׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן גַּם־הֵם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם – '***Raise the heads of the sons of Gershon also them, according to their fathers' houses according to their families***.' (4:22)

- **Preparations for Rosh Hashanah**

The Satmar Rov zy"a related that his father, the **Kedushas Yomtov zy"a** would say that when the week of Parshas Naso arrived at the beginning of the summer, his stomach would start to churn out of fear of the Yomim Noraim. - He explained the pasuk of 'Naso es rosh" to mean that when the Parshah of Naso arrived, one must start to prepare for "Rosh" Hashanah.

Similarly, it is related that a man who spent Shavuos with **Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy"a** came to see the Rebbe on Motzoei Yomtov to receive his bracha and Rav Bunim told him, "Do you realize that we will be blowing the shofar soon?"

His intent was that right after Shavuos, one must start preparing for Rosh Hashanah.

וְאִישׁ אֶת־קָדָשָׁיו לוֹ יִהְיוּ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִתֵּן לַכֹּהֵן לוֹ יִהְיֶה – '***Everyone's holy things shall belong to him***.' (5:10)

- **One Who Gives to Others, Will Not Lose**

The Ohev Yisroel of Apta zy"a (quoted in Sefer Medrash Pinchos) explains this pasuk by citing the verse in Devarim (33:18): "Zevulun shall rejoice in his goings and Yissochor in his tents." He asks how Yissochor could give up some of his indescribable reward in Olam Haba that he earns through learning Torah, and give it to Zevulun in exchange for monetary support in Olam Hazeh.

He answers that we must say that Yissochor did not give up any of his reward in Olam Haba. He explains that the partnership between Yissochor and Zevulun was like lighting one candle from another. The second candle gets lit, but the first one does not lose any of its light. - So too, Zevulun got his own reward for helping Yissochor, while Yissochor retained his full reward.

With this in mind, he explains the pasuk that says that "everyone's holy things will be to himself" to mean that if someone gives a portion of his holy endeavors to someone else who supports him, he should not think that he is losing anything. Rather, it will still always be his.

The Ohev Yisroel adds that the same idea applies when one gives his money to help a talmid chochom. He should not think that he is giving something away, as he will receive a bracha to retain as much as he had before, while also benefiting from the mitzvah he did.

וְכָתַב אֶת־הָאָלֹת הָאֵלֶּה הַכֹּהֵן בַּסֵּפֶר וּמָחָה אֶל־מֵי הַמָּרִים – '***He shall write these curses on a scroll and erase it in the bitter water.***' (5:23)

The Medrash Rabbah (11:7) states: "Shalom is so great that Hashem says that His holy name should be erased in order to create peace between a man and his wife."

- **Helping at Home**

Rav Shimshon Aharon Polinsky zt"l was known as the **Tepliker Rov** and was a leading Posek in Yerushalaim. He once walked into his bais medrash a few days before Pesach and saw that it was full of young men sitting and learning. He immediately ascended the bimah and announced, "I have a long list of almanos who need help preparing for yomtov. Who wants to help them?"

The young men jumped up and offered to help. They all wanted a share in this great mitzvah. They all lined up, and the Rov gave each of them a folded paper with the name and address of a woman in

need of help. When they opened the papers, each one was shocked to see his own address.

The Rov was hinting that, of course, it is a big mitzvah to help a widow, but one also must help his own wife.

- **One Who Helps Others Helps Himself**

When one helps others, he is also helping himself. **The Sefas Emes** discerns this idea from the pasuk (Devarim 22:4) that states: **הָקֵם תָּקִים עִמּוֹ** –"*You shall surely pick him up with him.*"

This can be understood to mean that when one picks up his friend, he picks himself up along with him. This is as Chazal say (Rus Rabbah 5:9): "A poor man does more for a householder than the householder does for him."

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ – '***May Hashem bless you and watch over you***'. (6:24)

- **One Doesn't Lose From Serving Hashem**

Rashi explains this pasuk to mean that your possessions should be blessed.

The following story occurred in Syria, during the time of the tzadik **Rav Mordechai Abadi zt"l**: There was a man who would come to shul every morning to daven. After davening, he would learn Chok L'Yisroel and say a few chapters of Tehillim. One day, he took his tefillin off right after davening and went to work. A few days later, he started leaving before davening ended – right after Ashrei. And so it went – he kept leaving earlier and earlier until he stopped coming to shul at all.

Rav Abadi saw what was happening and went to the man's store to ask him what caused the change. When the man saw him entering his store, he got very excited. He brought the Rov a chair and asked him

if he wanted a drink. The Rov accepted the drink and began to converse with him. He then asked him why he stopped coming to davening. The main replied, "Why should I come? When I used to go to daven and learn, and only go to my store afterwards, I had no customers until noon. When I started leaving early, I started to get more customers. When I stopped coming at all, I had a line of customers waiting outside the door for me to open."

The Rov tried to explain to him that one's livelihood is determined in Shomayim on Rosh Hashanah and he should not think he has more customers because he gets to his store earlier but the man cut him off and said, "With all due respect, those are nice words but I have seen with my own eyes that they are not true."

The Rov was unable to sway the man at all until he finally said, "According to your calculations, how much do you think you are earning this way?" The man answered, "50 gold lira." The Rov said, "I accept responsibility to ensure that you won't earn less than that amount if you come back to daven and learn. Keep an accounting of how much you lost by doing so, and I will pay the shortfall."

The man agreed to the deal and began coming to davening again. He also went back to learning Chok L'Yisroel and even started learning a few pages of Zohar and sifrei mussar every day. When the Rov would ask him how things were going, he said, "So far, I have only earned two gold lira, but I can wait until erev Rosh Hashanah to make an accounting with you."

On erev Rosh Hashanah after Shacharis, the custom was that every member of the community would come to the Rov to receive his blessing for a good new year. This took a few hours, and the Rov would then go home and then to the mikvah.

The Rov had prepared the money to give to the man and after going to the mikvah, he went to his store and told him to take out his books and calculate how much he owed him. The man said, "You don't owe me anything!"

When the Rov insisted on keeping his word, the storekeeper told him, "An hour ago, a gentile from out-of-town came here and bought so much merchandise that I made a profit of 50 gold lira!"

The Rov told him, "You previously told me that you had made two gold lira. With this 50, you earned 52 in total. That means that you owe me two lira!" - He then said, "Now you see how right Chazal were when they said that the amount of money a person will earn is determined on Rosh Hashanah."

Chazal say (Devarim Rabbah 4:5) that Hashem promised that no one will lose by obeying Him. No one ever loses out by fulfilling the word of Hashem!

The Weekly Vort

● **עלהם בכתף ישאו – *They shall bear upon their shoulders*** (7:9) The word **ישאו**, literally, "they shall bear," means 'singing' as in the verse "(**שאו**) *Lift up (your voice) in song*" (Tehillim 81:3).

Even when you are required to carry a heavy burden on your shoulders, do it joyfully, with singing, not with a groan. [**R' Gedaliah Schorr**] (Great Chassidic Leaders)

"Knowing where an act of kindness will lead is impossible. One cannot possibly trace its progress through the world as it spreads goodness through the many lives intertwined in the fabric of humanity. No one can see what Hashem sees as the effects of one kind act mounts higher and higher. No one, therefore, can imagine the immeasurable reward he earns for his act of kindness. A person can only know that the good he has done is no doubt far greater than the good he thinks he has done." ~ The Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933).

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Shokeling



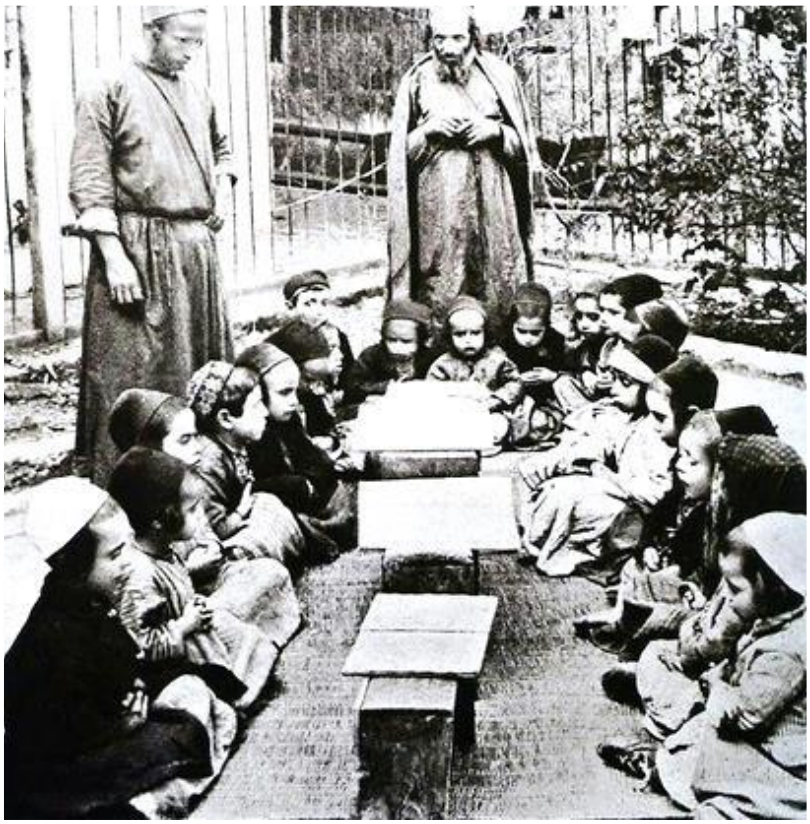
Why do Jew *shokel*, move back and forth when davening and learning?

The Zohar says the reason Jewish people *shokel* is because we are hewn from the holy lamp as it says **נר ה' נשמת אדם**, a man's soul is the lamp of Hashem. Once this lamp has been kindled from the supernal Torah the light upon it never ceases for a moment, like the flame of a wick which is never still for an instant. when a Jew has said one word of Torah, a light is kindled and he cannot keep still but sways to and fro like the flame of a wick.

Another reason for *shokeling* is told to us by the **Baal Haturim**. On the pasuk which it says at Har Sinai, **וירא העם וינעו**, the nation saw and trembled, the Baal Haturim tells us that the reason for swaying back and forth while learning Torah is because the Torah was given with awe, trembling and quaking.

In the Sefer Kuzari, the Rabbi reveals to the Kuzari an astounding reason as to why we *shokel*: it is because there would be ten or more people gathered around to read one sefer. This is why many of the

sefarim back then were large. Because the sefarim would rest on the ground, each of the ten would have to regularly bend over to read a word and then stand erect afterwards to allow another to bend over and read.



This is how moving back and forth originated. From that point onward it became an accepted tradition because people looked at the movements of others and wanted to emulate them, which is human nature.

It Feels Good to Be Loved!

Hashem instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to tell Aharon Hakohen to bless the Jewish People, with the well-known brachos known as Birchas Kohanim. The Torah (B'midbar 6:23) says, דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמוֹר לָהֶם - "***Speak to Aharon and to his sons, saying; This is how you shall bless Bnei Yisroel, saying to them.***"

Many of the commentaries are troubled by the seemingly extra words of the pasuk, "saying to them". **Kli Yakar** and others say that

these words teach us that the chazan should first say each word of the bracha followed by the repetition by the Kohanim.

Maskil L'Dovid learns that it teaches us that the kohanim should not rush through the brachos. Rather they should say them wholeheartedly and with concentration.

Rabbeinu Bachya learns a similar thought from the unusual spelling of an extra letter, "vav" in the word **אמור**, saying. -The extra letter "vav" which makes the word longer, is to tell the kohanim that they must not consider blessing the people as a burden to be finished as soon as possible. On the contrary, they should bless the people with all the concentration they are capable of.

The Talmud (Sotah 38a) brings two additional explanations for the seemingly extra word. One is that the kohanim are supposed to say the brachos facing the congregation, as one who is talking to the other. The other explanation is that it teaches us that the brachos must be recited out loud.

The Dubno Maggid has a different explanation (The Maggid of Dubno & His Parables by Benno Heinemann). He asks two questions. The first question, as we said previously, is why the Torah repeated the words, "You shall say to them". He also questions why the kohanim turn to face the congregation, rather than face the Aron HaKodesh as is done by the rest of the tefillos. After all, "Doesn't the Birchas Kohanim symbolize a prayer for Hashem to bless His people? Shouldn't those who pray to Hashem face the Aron, rather than turn away from it?"

The Dubno Maggid offers a parable to explain his answer: Once, a father was very angry at his son's bad conduct. Finally, and with great reluctance, he sent his son away from home. He told him not to expect any help from his family. The son left home. He was unable to find a job. He went hungry and his clothes were wearing out. Winter was approaching and he did not know what to do. He decided to go to a neighbor of his father's. He asked the neighbor to go to

his father on his behalf, to try to get some clothes to keep him warm for the cold weather.

The neighbor went to the boy's father and was happily surprised by the father's response. The father said that he was planning on going to the neighbor to ask him for a suggestion about how he could get clothes to the son.

"Do you really think that you must come to me and ask me to provide for my own son? He is my own flesh and blood. His happiness is as dear to me as my own. It was only because of his conduct that I had to act as if I no longer cared for him."

The father asked the neighbor to speak to his son to try to get him to change his bad ways. Then the father would happily open his arms and welcome his son back home, where he would supply him with all his needs.

The Dubno Maggid continued that this symbolizes our relationship with Hashem. There is no need for the kohain to face Hashem, as an intermediary, and ask Hashem to bless Bnei Yisroel. Bnei Yisroel are Hashem's beloved children. Hashem always desires to show us loving kindness. It is only because of our sins that we cannot always benefit from Hashem's mercy. That is why the kohanim face the people, with their backs to the Aron.

The words of the pasuk, "You shall say to them", is instructing the kohanim to tell Bnei Yisroel to behave in such a manner to be worthy of receiving all the gifts and blessings from Hashem. We are so special to Hashem! Hashem wants to constantly shower us with goodness.

At times, our sins block the abundant goodness that Hashem wants to give us. - May we always try our best to act in a manner worthy of receiving all of Hashem's gifts and blessings.

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

In the 1920's, **Rav Chaim Yokel Avraham Sova, ZT"L**, was the leader of the massive Tuchin community in Ukraine. The custom was that at every wedding the Rav would officiate, and if he did not do so, it was a big red flag.

There was a wealthy family making a wedding for their only daughter and wanted Rav Sova to attend. However, when the Rav heard that their daughter would not be covering her hair at the wedding he refused. A few weeks later, people told him that his gabbai was paid a hefty sum to officiate at their wedding and pretend to be the community Rav. Despite being betrayed, the Rav would not get angry, and even push back against his followers who wanted to reprimand the gabbai, saying, "It's not a big deal."

A couple of months later, the girl unfortunately passed away. The family was infuriated at the Rav because they thought he put a curse on their daughter after somebody told them Lashon Hara. Other people were mad at the family, "How can you accuse the Rav of intentionally trying to harm another Jew?" The conflict was ripping the town apart.

At sixty-two, after leading the town for over thirty years, Rav Sova decided he could not be the cause of a dispute and that peace was of paramount importance. He packed his bags and left with his family to a much smaller town.

Shortly after, when the Nazis came and decimated Tuchin, killing over 99,000 of the original 100,000 Jews, the Rav and his family were spared, all because he removed himself from a conflict.

Comment: This week's parsha deals with the priestly blessing, which focuses largely on peace. How many conflicts come from people trying to be right instead of trying to do what is right? Wisdom is not defined as being the smartest in an argument but distancing

oneself from it. The Torah teaches us that blessings do not come from beating our opponents but rather from being able to turn enemies into friends and transform conflicts into peace.

Hashem Was There - Rabbi Shlomo Landau



In the weeks following October the 7th, I had the zechus to share a number of miraculous stories of survivors of the Nova Festival. Of how Hashem had descended all the way into The Nova Festival, and plucked out certain people, and how many of them had changed their lives for the better and drawn closer to Hashem.

I did however receive 'push-back'. People felt that associating Hashem's direct involvement with The Nova Festival that was held on Shabbos and Simchas Torah, with many behaviours that go counter to Hashem's desire and will - was inappropriate and a chillul Hashem to directly associate Hashem to such a festival.

I heard their 'push-back' and 'feed-back', so I went back to the gedoilim and spoke to them about this matter. On the contrary, they felt - "The fact that Hashem is willing to descend into the midst of

such a festival on such holy days because His children are suffering and are in danger, is the most incredible display of just how much Hashem loves every one of us, and is a big chizzuk."

We are Hashem's children, and no matter where we are, He cares about us, and will intervene to make sure that we are ok.

This Shabbos, the issue was put to rest. Because you see, in parshas Naso we read about the Sotah. She is suspected of unethical and inappropriate behaviour, and what happens?

They bring this woman into the holy Beis Hamikdash and give her a special drink in which has the dissolved name of Hashem, to prove her innocence or to restore sholom bayis. - The Gemarah says that Hashem is willing to have His name erased in order to restore peace and to show that He cares.

So, is that not enough of an indicator that Hashem cares? – Of course He does! But it's even more than that, because the Gemarah tells us that Avraham Avinu said one sentence that was amazing and changed the future of the Jewish People. – In his humility, Avraham said, "**וְאָנֹכִי עָפָר וָאֵפֶר**" – ***'I am dust and ashes'***.

Because of those two words uttered, many years later, the Jewish People merited two important mitzvos. First, the Parah Adumah whose ashes were sprinkled on a person who is tamei, to purify him. And second, we take dust from the earth of the floor of the Beis Hamikdash, and this dust is used for this concept of **אשה סוטה**.

Now, I can understand Parah Adumah, but to associate Avraham Avinu with an **אשה סוטה** – is that something so meritorious ?

The answer is YES! Because Avraham Avinu cared about every single person. That was Avraham Avinu's middah. Chesed- altruistic chesed. He cared about every single person, because he saw their potential.

So, let's take a step back and understand that every single one of those miraculous stories of survival at The Nova Festival was

Hashem going down there and showing every Jewish person the He cares about them.

Is that not chizzuk? – does that not give us strength? – Yes, Hashem cares about each and every one of us, and He wants to be directly involved in us!

Reward for Patience by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt"l



Taking care of his mentally unstable grandmother in the geriatric ward of the hospital was a very taxing task for the young man. Although she was unreasonably demanding and sometimes violently so, he managed to maintain his composure and to treat her with the greatest respect.

One day, while he was visiting her, she could not find her false teeth. She shouted at him, accusing him of stealing her teeth.

When he tried to explain that he was innocent, she gave him such a resounding slap in the face that he felt as though he was about to lose his own teeth. He nevertheless suffered in silence and helped her locate the lost teeth.

A patient in a nearby bed was so impressed with the behavior of this young man that she decided to suggest him as a matrimonial prospect for a relative, a girl from one of the most respected families in Israel. The shidduch worked out and on the first day of their marriage the young couple went to visit the grandmother whose patience-inducing slap brought them together!

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From our Sages

מִמֻּגָּפֶן הַיַּיִן מֵחַרְצַנִּים וְעַד־זָג לֹא יֹאכֵל – *'He shall eat nothing that is made of the grapevine, from the seeds to the skin.'* (6:4)





When Noah took to planting, Satan came and stood before him and said to him: "What are you planting?" Said he: "A vineyard." Said Satan to him: "What is its nature?" Said he: "Its fruits are sweet, whether moist or dry, and one makes from them wine, which brings joy to the heart." Said Satan to Noah: "Do you desire that we should plant it together, you and I?" Said Noah: "Yes."

What did Satan do? He brought a lamb and slaughtered it over the vine; then he brought a lion and slaughtered it over it; then he brought a monkey, and slaughtered it over it; then he brought a swine and slaughtered it over it; and he watered the vine with their blood.

Thus he alluded to Noah: When a person drinks one cup, he is like a lamb, modest and meek. When he drinks two cups, he becomes mighty as a lion and begins to speak with pride, saying: Who compares with me! As soon as he drinks three or four cups, he becomes a monkey, dancing and frolicking and profaning his mouth, and knowing not what he does. When he becomes drunk he becomes a pig, dirtied by mud and wallowing in filth. (**Midrash Tanchuma**)



◣ The Great Ascent - Rabbi Gamliel Rabinowitz

We read Parshas Naso after Shavuos to indicate that after Kabbalas HaTorah and our sincere acceptance and devotion to the performance of Torah and mitzvos, we will have attained a new level of "נשיאה" - elevation from the level we were on before Yom Tov. - This grand ascent is the entire purpose of Kabbalas HaTorah.

◣ Sacred Items - Baron Rothschild of Frankfurt

וְאִישׁ אֶת־קָדָשָׁיו לוֹ יִהְיוּ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִתֵּן לַכֹּהֵן לוֹ יִהְיֶה - "***A man's sacred objects shall be his; whatever a man gives to the kohen shall be his***." (5:10)

What is the value of a man's wealth? - The pasuk tells us clearly: "A man's sacred objects shall be his." - What is a man's "sacred items"? Only that which he has pledged to tzedakah. This sacred money shall be his - an eternal merit that will always remain with him.

◣ Anything But Ordinary - Koznitzer Rebbe

אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי יַפְלִא לִנְדֹּר נֶדֶר נָזִיר לְהַזִּיר לַה' - '***If a man / woman sets apart a vow, a Nazirite vow to set himself apart for Hashem***.'

The verse uses the word יַפְלִא (set apart), since a person who is willing to separate himself from the pleasures of the world is a peleh - an extraordinary individual.

◣ Peaceful Blessings - Reb Meir Shapiro of Lublin

דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - "***Speak to Aharon and his sons, saying, 'In this manner shall you bless the Children of Israel…'***" (6:23)

Aharon's forte was "Loving peace and pursuing peace..." (Avos 1:12). "So shall you" - with your character - "bless the Children of Israel," that among them there shall be harmony and peace.

◣ Blessed With Unity - Lenchener Rebbe

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ - "***May G-d shine His countenance toward you…***" (6:25) - The priestly blessing is said in the singular, since the greatest blessing that the Jews need is one of unity.

◣ Humble Sacrifice - Reb Kalmus Kalman Epstein of Krakow

יְהִי הַמַּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ נַחְשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב. וְקָרְבָּנוֹ קַעֲרַת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת "***The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nachshon, son of Aminadav… His offering consisted of one silver bowl…***" (7:12-13)

Why are the words "his offering" mentioned twice?

Hashem requested that Nachshon bring the first sacrifice, but he was embarrassed. He had a great deal of inner conflict and grief. He did not know why he merited being the first to sacrifice.

His grief from embarrassment Hashem considered as self-sacrifice. That is why the pasuk mentions "his offering" twice. The first was his self-sacrifice and the second was "one silver bowl."

"A person should be treated with at least the same respect and dignity we give our esrog on succos." ~ Bais Ha'levi.

Rabbi David Ashear's Living Emunah (1:158)

A businessman told me that he had a longstanding account with a large billion-dollar chain store. The massive company employing over company supplied, and his company was given six of them. When the 22,000 workers had nine slots of the product that this businessman's chain store hired a new buyer, the businessman met with him to continue the corporate relationship as well as to see how much product he would be ordering for the upcoming season.

However, the new buyer said he was not planning on ordering anything new. Understandably, the businessman was stunned. He explained to the buyer that their companies had been successfully doing business with one another for many years, and the product had always sold well.

After seeing every persuasive argument fail as the buyer would not budge, the businessman scheduled a dinner meeting with the buyer's supervisor. During the cordial meeting, the businessman respectfully inquired as to why the store had been purchasing three million dollars in merchandise for years and now completely changed their plans, abruptly deciding not to order any more products.

The supervisor said he would need to think it over, so the businessman continued praying to reclaim the potentially massive loss of revenue and finally received a call back a few days later. The supervisor informed his former colleague that the company would not overturn their decision in order not to challenge the new buyer.

The businessman then contacted the president of the company to plead his case, but once again the discussion failed.

He turned to Hashem once more and said, "I don't understand. Why am I going from $3,000,000 to nothing?"

A few months later the news broke that this chain store - Caldor - was filing for bankruptcy and couldn't pay off its debt to its suppliers.

The businessman again turned to Hashem and said, "Now I understand. You didn't take away millions of dollars - you saved me $3,000,000!"

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Any *hachnosas sefer Torah* is a joyful occasion, with the dancing procession through the streets, bringing the new *sefer Torah,* usually attracting a lot of attention and interest.

Rabbi Dovid Pincus, had been commissioned to write a *sefer Torah* for a Chabad community in Florida. The community was spread out across five different neighbourhoods, but the community members all belonged to one Chabad centre which they attended for events, lectures and the like. This Chabad centre was located approximately five miles away from the donor's home. The Chabad centre had a shul, and it was to this shul that the *sefer Torah* was being donated.

This presented a logistical problem. The procession was meant to begin from the home of the individual donating the *sefer Torah,* who lived in one of these neighbourhoods. Walking and dancing in the streets for five miles all the way to the shul was asking a bit much. The organisers therefore decided to hire a motorised float which was large enough to, comfortably, accommodate the Chuppah, and this float would travel through the streets for the five-mile stretch to the Chabad centre.

Chabad pulled out all the stops. They arranged with the local police to block off the side streets along the route so that the float could proceed undisturbed. Signs were posted everywhere informing local residents of the event, and a live local band was hired to play music on the float for the duration of the procession.

Rabbi Pincus, who had flown in from New York for the occasion, was invited to sit with the *sefer Torah* under the Chuppah as it passed through the streets. And so, the procession began.

It was a special occasion. The band struck up a lively tune as the float began coasting along. Besides the members of the community, numerous Jews and non-Jews stopped what they were doing to watch. Some stood still in the street, others got out of their cars or looked out of their window, all smiling, cheering or clapping as the procession passed them. It was a wonderful Kiddush Hashem.

"So there I was," recalls Rabbi Pincus, "sitting on the float while the band was playing, when all of a sudden a woman who had been watching from the sidewalk jumped onto the float, pulled out a clarinet and started playing with the band."

"Well, this was so unexpected; and I wasn't the only one who thought so. The lead musician was totally caught off guard and stopped playing and just stared in shock. But what could we do. So, we continued for the last leg of the journey with an extra musician."

A number of years later, Rabbi Pincus found himself in Texas to participate in another *hachnosas sefer Torah*. This, too, was for a Chabad shul, and the celebration dinner after the procession was being held in a large hall. They were expecting a large crowd, with guests from other states too.

Rabbi Pincus sat at the head table and observed the guests as they entered, some on their own, others with their families. Suddenly, he heard his name being called… - "Rabbi Pincus."

He turned to see a Lubavitcher chassid with a long beard and frock making a beeline towards him. He was smiling from ear to ear.

"Rabbi Pincus," he said again when he had reached his table, "how are you? It is so nice to see you again after all these years."

Rabbi Pincus smiled and looked at the fellow, but for the life of him could not remember who he was.

"Boruch Hashem, how are you?" he replied, desperately searing his memory and the fellow's face for some kind of clue. The man noticed his puzzled expression.

"Don't you remember me?"

"I'm afraid I must confess that I don't," Rabbi Pincus replied with a somewhat embarrassed smile.

"Do you remember being in Florida some years ago for an hachnosas *sefer Torah*? You were on a float that carried you and a band to the local Chabad centre."

"Sure, that was quite an event."

"Well, I was the leader of the band that played on the float. I recognised you as soon as I walked in."

Rabbi Pincus looked again at this man and finally recognition dawned. The man then sat down at the table, and they chatted for a while.

"By the way," the fellow said with a twinkle in his eye, "Do you remember that lady who suddenly hopped on the float and started playing the clarinet with the band?"

Rabbi Pincus smiled, "Do I remember. Of course, I remember! How could I forget. That was really something; she took us all by surprise."

"Well," the man replied. "That clarinet player became my wife!"

Rabbi Pincus was dumbfounded. - The man then pointed to his right where the erstwhile clarinet player stood smiling as she listened to her husband recount their story.

This *hachnosas sefer Torah* event was the spark that ignited the hearts of the band player and the clarinet player to *yiddishkeit*. Who knows how many others get *chizuk* and inspiration from witnessing such magnificent events.

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Guarding Our Eyes



In Sichos Rav Nosson Tzvi, **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l** explains: The Gemara teaches: "The topic of Nazir was juxtaposed with the topic of Sotah to teach that one who sees a Sotah at the time of her disgrace should abstain from wine" (Sotah 2b). The simple explanation is that one who had the rare experience of glimpsing the miraculous eradication of *Tumah* (impurity) must take the lesson to heart and spur himself to grow in serving Hashem, for otherwise, he will be left with nothing from the experience.

Another explanation offered by many commentaries is that when a person witnesses the disgrace of a Sotah, revealed through the waters, he is exposed to impurity and is liable to be affected by what he saw and be drawn after it. Therefore, he must build extra spiritual safeguards around himself to avoid stumbling similarly.

Rav Nosson Tzvi explains that the juxtaposition of these two topics of Nazir and Sotah illustrates just how devastating one single glance can be, and how it can cause a person to fall headlong into a downward spiral that ends in spiritual catastrophe. It also underscores how much effort we all must make to strengthen our *shemiras einayim*, guarding our eyes, by avoiding forbidden sights and gazing only upon that which is pure and holy.

I would like to share with you something amazing that I heard from **Rav Yechiel Spero shlita**: In his Haggadah Shel Pesach, **Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l** writes an incredible story about the **Chazon Ish zt"l**.

On an extremely hot summer day, the Chazon Ish came outside of his apartment, with a blindfold in his hand. He called over to some young boys that were nearby, and he asked them if they would be willing to play a game with him. The boys knew who Chazan Ish was, and they thought it was quite unusual. After all, the Chazon Ish was not someone who played games – the Chazon Ish was quite serious-minded.

The Chazon Ish told the young boys that they will have a fun time. "I must go somewhere, and I would like to be blindfolded," he said. "Tell me where to step, and where to stop." The boys agreed to play the Chazon Ish's game. Step by step, the boys directed the Chazon Ish until they finally arrived at their destination. When they arrived, the Chazon Ish asked the boys if they would mind waiting for him so they would be able to continue the game on the way back home. The boys agreed, and on the way home they played that same game, with the boys directing the Chazon Ish where to go.

What the Chazon Ish was really doing, only dawned on the boys decades later. The Chazon Ish did not want to have to go through the *nisayon*, the test of *shemiras einayim* (guarding one's eyes). The Chazon Ish made his walk into a game! The boys would never realize, and the Chazon Ish was able to be protected from seeing something that can be damaging to his *Neshama* (soul).

What Greatness! While we may not be expected to act on such a high level, we can all aspire to take small steps to add more *Kedushah* (holiness) to our lives. In merit of our efforts to guard our eyes may Hashem grant us success in all endeavors!

HaGaon Rav Asher Zelig Rubenstein ztz''l



In January 2014, during the Shivah mourning the loss of Rav Asher the beloved Rosh Yeshiva of Toras Simcha – a young man entered the Rubinstein home to share the following story:

The Rosh Yeshiva was once interested in hearing a private lecture given by my Rosh Kollel in Yerushalayim, and he was granted special permission to attend as a guest. The Rosh Kollel was very strict about not allowing the use of cellphones during the learning sessions in the Kollel, but as the participants sat enraptured while listening to the lecture that day, the shrill ringing of a cellphone pierced the air. The phone was immediately silenced, and the Rosh Kollel ignored the violation. A few minutes later, the cellphone rang again, and it was once again silenced immediately. When the phone rang a third time, the Rosh Kollel became so upset that he closed his Gemara and said. "If the members of our Kollel are not able to keep their cellphones off during the lecture, then I think I will have to close the Kollel."

A stunned silence followed, and no one knew how to react. Suddenly, Rav Rubinstein stood up, removed his cellphone from his pocket, and turned it off. "I'm terribly sorry. Please don't close the Kollel. It's all my fault and it won't happen again."

Pacified, the Rosh Kollel opened his Gemara again and continued where he had left off. - Everyone was inspired by the Rosh Yeshiva's willingness to embarrass himself in public and admit his mistake.

A couple hours later, another member of the Kollel entered the Shivah house to comfort the Rubinstein family and repeated the

same story. The mourners nodded their heads, pretending that they were hearing the story for the first time. However, the young man indicated he wasn't yet finished telling his story…

"I was the owner of the ringing cellphone, and I had simply forgotten to silence it before the lecture. The Rosh Yeshiva accepted the blame for my mistake and saved me from tremendous embarrassment!"



Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Bless with Love

Rav Elazar Papa, author of Pele Yo'etz says in his sefer **אלף המגן על התורה ע' פח** – In this week's *parsha* when the *Kohanim* are given the mitzvah of *Birchas Kohanim,* the pasuk says: **כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמור להם** – "*…so shall you bless the Children of Yisroel*, ***say to them***" (6:23).

This is based on what Chazal say – 'the greatest blessing that Hashem can bestow upon a person is peace.'

The way to achieve peace is in the way he responds to anger. **מַעֲנֶה־ רַךְ יָשִׁיב חֵמָה** – '*A muted response subdues the anger.*' (Mishlei 15:1)

This is what the pasuk is saying over here… **כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** How? **אָמֹור לָהֶם** – in a gentle and soft manner - **אמירה רכה**.

When the *Kohanim* bless the nation, they precede their blessing with a *birchas hamitzvah* [blessing recited prior to doing a mitzvah]: **אשר קדשנו בקדושתו של אהרן וצונו לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה** – "*who has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aharon and commanded us to bless His nation Yisroel*, ***with love***".

Therefore, it is certainly noteworthy that "***with love***" is specified in the blessing of *Birchas Kohanim*. Apparently, the *Kohanim* are required to give over their blessing with love. This emotional requirement at the time of the blessing reflects a firm requirement on the part of the *Kohanim* in their mitzvah performance. (It is

me'akev proper execution of the mitzvah.) If there is someone in the audience that the *Kohen* hates, such that he cannot bless him "with love", then he should not *duchen*. It must be delivered "with love."

The *Shivtei K-ah*, writes: "…and the Torah, by writing **אמור להם** (literally 'say to them') implies with great focus and with complete love. And there is a hint in the *pasuk* that it must be said with love." What is the hint? "For the word **אמור** in the language of other nations means 'love.'" [Amour is a Latin word and same word used for love in many languages French, English, Spanish and Arabic.]

How does one say Love in French? Amour

How does one say Love in Italian? Amore

Rav Moshe Dovid Valle, the Italian disciple of the Ramchal, thus interprets the Hebrew expression, **אמור להם**, as hinting at the idea of delivering *Birchas Kohanim* to the Jewish people with love.

He then says, "Do not be surprised at this 'foreign allusion' because we find parallel ideas in the words of our Sages in a number of places." This is not the first case of a Biblical word deriving etymologically from foreign languages. The most famous example is the word *totafos* (*Devorim* 6:8). The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 4b) writes that we derive the fact that the head *tefillin* are to contain four *parshiyos* based on exegesis of the word *totafos* since "*tot* means two in the Catfi language and *fos* means two in the Afriki language."

Rav Valle explains that the Torah sometimes uses foreign words to convey ideas. The reason for this is that our holy language (i.e. — Hebrew, *lashon haKodesh*) is the mother of all languages.

The world thinks that "Latin is the mother language of all tongues." The *talmid* of the Ramchal says, "*chas vesholam*!" *Lashon Kodesh* is the mother of all tongues! The nuances of all other languages are derived from it. There is no word in any other language that is not alluded to in some derivation from the holy tongue.

Thus, according to the *Shivtei K-ah*, the expression **אמור להם** — from the French amour and the Italian amore — is a hint at the source of, **לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה** - "*bless the Children of Yisroel **with love**.*"

176



Parshas Noso is the longest single parsha consisting of 176 pesukim. It is interesting to note that the number 176 features in other areas as well. Tehillim 119 also contains 176 pesukim. [8 pesukim for each of the letters of the Aleph Beis. 22x8] Also, the longest Masechta in shas (Bava Basra) has 176 Dafim.

What is the significance of the number 176?

The Marharal says that the number 8 always represents **למעלה מן הטבע** – *Something beyond nature*.

The idea is perhaps this: All of Torah transcends physicality of this world. What these three occurrences represent are: Parshas Noso and Tehilim – **תורה שבכתב**. The Gemara - **תורה שבעל פה** – Both of which transcend this world.

Chapter 119 of Psalms has 176 verses because it follows a pattern whereby the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used to begin 8 verses each. That is, 22-times-8 equals 176.

Which of course raises the question: What is the significance of 22 and of 8?

22 is a number of completeness, because it is the full representation of the 22 letters of the Alef-Bet - i.e. everything from A to Z (from Alef to Tav). As for the number 8: We know that 7 represents the "natural realm" - i.e. 7 days of the week, 7 notes in the musical scale,

etc. But 8 represents completeness beyond nature - a completeness in the spiritual realm. That is why Brit Milah is held on the 8th day of a boy's life.

The product of two "complete" numbers, "22-times-8," is therefore the ultimate completeness. That's why 176 is used to demonstrate the supernal perfection of our holy Torah.

[Bava Basra, dealing as it does with the ultimate Redemption and the final and permanent Beis HaMikdash, has 176 pages; the numerical value of the word **לעולם**-eternal.]

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



- **The Dedicated Nazir**

In our *parsha* this week (6:12) we read about the *Nazir* who became impure – he accidentally walked into a room where there was a dead body, or maybe he touched a *meis* – and he must now begin his term of Nezirus all over again. But before he could restart his *nezirus,* he first had to bring a *korban asham* to the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Regarding this *korban*, the *gemara* (Nazir4b) relates a statement that Shimon Hatzadik, a *Kohen Gadol* who served during the early years of the *Bayis Sheini* period, made to his *talmidim*. He said as

follows: "In all my days I never ate from the *asham* offering of a *Nazir* who had become *tamei*." He had a principle never to eat from that *korban*. He had a certain reason (see Nedarim 9b) which we won't speak about now; what matters for us is the story related there.

- **The One Exception**

The *gemara* there says that there was one time when Shimon Hatzadik made an exception. One day a handsome young man, a *Nazir* with beautiful long hair, came to the *Beis Hamikdash* to bring his *korban*, and Shimon Hatzadik saw him and took note of the beautiful locks that were hanging over his shoulders.

You know today, if you see a man wearing long hair, what it means is that he wants to show the world that he's a rebel; a tramp. But it was different in those days; in those days they wore long hair not because they imitated the gentiles — it was the way that people went. And so, Shimon Hatzadik said to him, "*Bni*, my son; *mah ra'isa l'shacheis sei'ar na'eh zeh;* what reason did you have to shear off such beautiful hair? Why make a vow to become a *nazir* when you knew that you would have to cut off such beautiful hair at the end of your *nezirus?*"

- **The Yetzer in the Mirror**

And so this young man told Shimon Hatzadik the following story: "I am a shepherd for my father's sheep. One day as the sheep were drinking from a spring in the meadow, I too was thirsty so I bent over to take some water for myself. As I leaned close to the spring I noticed my reflection in the clear water; I saw my image and I noticed that I was good looking." This shepherd wouldn't have known otherwise because in those days men never looked at mirrors; but it happened this one time by accident.

Now, when this shepherd saw his reflection, he felt a stirring within him: *Pachaz alai yitzri* – "*My yetzer hora leaped upon me,*" the

shepherd said. It doesn't state what the *yetzer* urged him to do, so we take it in its most simple explanation that it was the evil inclination of vanity. He saw that he was a handsome young man and he felt a surge of pride; and right away he understood that he was becoming conceited.

This young man understood the danger that was brewing in his heart and he said to himself, "Young man, you need a talking to". Ordinarily, when you hear such words, somebody else is saying it to you, but in this case when there's nobody else around to criticize you, so you have to say it to yourself.

- **Early Detection**

And listen to his words. "*Rasha! You evil person!*" he said to himself, "*Mipnei mah atah misga'eh b'olam she'eino shel'cha? Why are you proud, so conceited with a world that does not belong to you?!*" Now, to hear such words being spoken by this young man is a remarkable thing. Because the fact that he was virtuous enough to recognize in his incipient conceit that it was the work of the *yetzer hora* is already a *madreigah*.

Imagine someone tells you that you are handsome or maybe that you are wise or whatever it is and you feel a stirring of pride within you; would you think to say such a thing: "Wooah! Hold on a minute here! That's the *yetzer hora* that just leaped upon me." If you do that then you're something special; you're an exceptional person if you recognize that.

And not only did this young shepherd understand that this was the work of the *yetzer hora,* but he went a step further and he said, "*Ubikesh l'tardeini min haolam – This evil inclination was attempting to drive me out of the world.*" He was wise enough to realize that "*Ga'avah rosh kol chatos,*" that arrogance is the beginning of all sins and that the *yetzer* was using a stratagem to lead him astray. That's a *chochom!* To recognize the danger not after it had already progressed and led him astray, but at the very first stirring of

conceit! The mere awareness of beautiful hair or a beautiful nose or a beautiful complexion or beautiful eyes, he recognized it as the beginning of a campaign to drive him out of this world.

- **The Ancient Shepherd**

Now, this young man wasn't anybody we would consider exceptional; he was nothing but an ordinary shepherd boy pasturing his father's sheep. He wasn't in the *beis hamedrash;* he was alone somewhere in the fields. But as we listen in on the words of this shepherd boy, we get a little taste of what the Jewish nation was in the early days of the *Bayis Sheini;* we begin to understand the greatness of our nation. It was a people that were trained in piety and *yiras shamayim* and the *emunah* had so saturated the nation that the teachings had permeated down even to the lower levels of the people, down to the working boy.

That's what he was – a working boy. But we see from this young man's words that he was very aware of the great issues of life; the truth is that if we're going to be honest with ourselves we'd have to say that the old time working boy of the *Bayis Sheini* was far superior to some of our very good people today.

The Truth About The World

And so we're going to sit now at the feet of this shepherd boy as if he were one of the sages of the *Am Yisroel* and listen to his words as he teaches us one of the *yesodei ha'emunah;* one of the Torah foundations of understanding life and all the phenomena of this world. That's a very big order, but we're going to hear about it now from this shepherd boy. "As I was looking at my image in the water and felt the stirrings of vanity, I thought to myself, 'What's going on here? *Rasha! You evil person! Why are you proud, so conceited with a world that does not belong to you?!*

Now, in those words we hear a very great message. It's the message we're going to listen to tonight. He recognized that this world is not

his; that it has an Owner, a Landlord. That's what we hear from the words of this boy. "I'm living in a world that belongs to Someone Else! And everything in the world belongs to Him including my handsome face and my beautiful hair. It's loaned to me for a short time. It's not your hair," he was telling himself, What's there to be proud about?"

- **The Tuxedo Gmach**

Imagine someone borrows a tuxedo or an expensive *chassidishe* suit from a friend. And so he's strutting down Thirteenth Avenue wearing his friend's outfit, fancying himself a wealthy man now because he's wearing his tuxedo. He's so proud of himself. "Ahh, my beautiful tux! I'm a wealthy man!" What would we say about such a fellow? "*A meshugeneh*," we'd say. It's all a *dimyon;* it's your imagination. You're being *misga'eh b'olam she'eino shelcha* – you're proud about owning a tuxedo that's not yours. If you're an honest man, as you walk down the avenue and people are admiring you, so you say to yourself, "Don't live in a world of fantasy! You're parading around in borrowed finery."

And if we would study well the words of our teacher, this shepherd, we would understand immediately that even the rich man, the "owner" of the tuxedo, if he's walking down Thirteenth Avenue thinking that he's proud of his tuxedo, so he's exactly like that poor fellow parading around in borrowed clothing. Nothing is his! Of course, it's his; but he understands that it really belongs to Hashem! The rich man is only temporarily in charge of the property. And if he's arrogant, he's being *misga'eh b'olam she'eino shelo* – he's being arrogant with a world that doesn't belong to him.

- **Giving Back**

So this Nazir said to himself. "How could I be arrogant with hair that is not mine? It's not my hair anyhow!' And so, what did he do? "*Ha'avodah she'agalchacha la'Shomayim,*"he said. "I take an oath by the temple service to be a *Nazir;* I'll let this hair of mine grow and

then at the end of the period of *nezirus,* I'll shave off all of this beautiful hair and give it back to its true Owner.

"I'm living in a world that is not mine, wearing hair that's not mine, and that's easy to forget in *Olam Hazeh.* I need some time to think about; time to reflect about the One who owns this world and remove the conceit from my mind; and so I'll become a *Nazir* and after a period of time thinking about that, of drilling that truth into my head, I'll take *Your* hair and give it back to *You.*"

- **The Ancient Orthodox**

You know, in the olden days people were loyal to Hashem. You have no idea how much people were devoted to Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the early days. The common people thought about Hashem always and the awareness that He was the *Adon,* the Master, was paramount to them in their hearts.

We are very far away from that today. If a person is *frum* today we don't examine him too much; we're not interested in how much he's thinking about Hashem in his heart. *Halevai* he should be *mikayeim Kol Hatorah kulah* in all its technicalities and we'll consider him a *tzadik gomur.* But in the olden days it was the Awareness of Hashem that was the criterion. Everyone lived with the declaration of Hashem that **כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ** – *"I am the one who owns the land"* (Vayikra 25:23). And what mattered most in those days was how dedicated you were to Hashem in your heart, how much you recognized Him as your Master.

And therefore, if someone felt that he was lacking in this awareness of Hashem, if he felt there was some shortcoming in his dedication to this principle, so to remedy that, sometimes he or she – it was available to men and women – would accept upon themselves a term of *nezirus.* It means you make a decision to set aside a certain period of time – thirty days or longer – to recognize that you belong to Hashem and you express that dedication by becoming a *Nazir.*

- **The Hairy Crown**

Now, the laws of *nezirus* are made up of many details; in many ways the *Nazir* was imitating the laws of a *kohen* who was the prototype, the *eved Hashem* par excellence. But one of the most prominent aspects of a *Nazir* was the hair on his head. When you study the laws of a *Nazir* in our *parsha*, you'll see that it's states as follows: **כִּי נֵזֶר אֱלֹקָיו עַל רֹאשׁוֹ** – *The crown of Hashem is on his head* (Naso 6:7). Now a *possuk* like that is something that's almost unequaled! His hair is a crown of Hashem resting on his head! That's something! We have to study that; it's not for nothing that it's in the Torah.

It's a remarkable thing – for thirty days he was chosen by Hashem to wear a crown on his head – that's his long hair. And the crown was considered so sacred that when the *nezirus* ended he had to cut off his hair, it was burnt in the fire upon which they were cooking the *korban shelamim* that he had brought. The *hair* of the *nazir* was burnt as an offering to Hashem!

An offering of hair!? Yes, his hair was *kadosh* now because this man had recognized that even *his* hair, growing from *his* hair follicles, on *his* head, it all belongs to Hashem. A *Nazir* became a new person. Not only that he looked different; it could be that externally the only change you would see would be his hair growing, but more important was that his *mind* was growing. For one month – sometimes more than that – this person had devoted his or her mind to Awareness of Hashem.

- **The Thirty Day Campaign**

Now, it doesn't mean he didn't do anything during that time. I'm sure that the *Nezirim* learned and they *davened* too. Some of them even worked — there were *nezirim* who were farmers and blacksmiths. The shepherd in our story didn't stop herding his father's sheep. But whatever it was that they did, their minds were devoted entirely to thoughts of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, to recognizing that we are guests in His world.

That was the crown of a *Nazir*, the long hair on his head was a crown of dedication to Hashem, a sign of what was doing *in* his head. He was learning that he's living in an *olam she'eino shelo,* in a world that's not yours. And once a person underwent such an experience, once you went through that, then all of your life, the impression of that period remained on your mind.

Yeshivas Bircas Hatorah
ישיבת ברכת התורה

The Nazir by Rabbi Moshe Krieger



This week's Parsha contains the laws of the Nazarite, - one who takes upon himself a vow to abstain from wine and haircuts, and to not defile himself by visiting the cemetery, even for his closest of relatives. He must maintain this conduct for a minimum of 30 days and may continue as long as he likes.

If we examine the verses which instruct him what to do and the end of his term, we notice a very interesting point. The Torah commands "The Nazir" to bring certain sin offerings and then says that the "Nazir" may go ahead and drink wine and do the things that were previously forbidden to him. It is interesting to note that the Torah still refers to him as a Nazir, even though his vow was completed.

The Alshich Hakadosh explains that the Torah is teaching us that it is proper for the Nazir to take the lessons he learned during his

Nezirus term of holiness and abstinence and continue conducting himself with this praiseworthy conduct even after his oath is completed. In other words, he shouldn't allow the admirable traits which he acquired to go to waste shortly after his Nezirus is finished by drinking large amounts of wine and acting gluttonously as he may have in the past before his vow.

It is also interesting to note that the Nazir brings a sin offering at the end of his term. This seems strange. Shouldn't his vow of Nezirus be lauded by the Torah and not denigrated with a sin offering?

The Ramban answers that although it is certainly praiseworthy that he desired to abstain from the worldly pleasures, the Torah is showing him that it would have been appropriate when he saw how much he grew spiritually from his vow that he continue the vow and become a permanent Nazir.

We see again from this Ramban how a person is expected to not be satisfied by a little bit of growth but rather is required to always continue growing and never remain stagnant. Similarly, if a person notices a certain strength or gift that he has, he will be asked to defend himself if he did not fully develop that gift and do everything in his power to continue using that gift to grow toward Hashem.

The verse in Iyov says, "Man was created for work". Chazal explain in Sanhedrin that this verse is referring to all aspects of Torah, and to all spiritual endeavors therein. **The Maharal** explains that this word in the verse "work" is referring to constant work and that Iyov is telling us that we must be on constant vigil and constantly moving forward and that this is the obligation of every Jew.

The Maharal adds that when a person is born, the first thing done to him is circumcision. The Midrash asks, if Hashem believed that circumcision completes a human being, why didn't He just make us born without a foreskin?

The Midrash answers that Hashem wanted us to perfect ourselves and the way to do this is by circumcising ourselves. The Mahahral explains that this Mitzvah is actually the paradigm for all the Mitzvos. In each and every Mitzvah we are required to utilize every aspect to perfect ourselves and labor in spiritual growth so that there is never even one moment in which we are lying fallow with nothing to do. This is what the verse means, "Man was created for work".

The Mesillas Yesharim buttresses this point at the end of the first chapter by saying that man's purpose in this world is to keep the Torah and all the Mitzvos and to stand up to the enticement of the evil inclination. This seems a bit wordy. If a person is keeping the Torah, isn't he by definition standing up to many trials?

The answer is that a person can technically keep all the Mitzvos in the Torah by rote and may be fooled into thinking that he does not really need to grow from his Mitzvah observance on a constant basis. When the Mesillas Yesharim adds the words, "He must resist temptation", he is telling us that in addition to keeping the commandments, we are required to grow from the commandments and be in a constant state of self-restraint to keep the commandments properly. This is a completely different awareness.

When a person reaches this state of being one who is constantly growing and moving forward, he will be encouraged to realize that he brings the entire world forward with him.

May we become the true "Bnei Aliyah" that we are capable of and merit a great life in this world, and the next!

"Emunah is not something to be found outside oneself. It is a flame that burns within the heart of every person, waiting to be kindled." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk

The Nazir

In this week's Parsha, one of the topics discussed is the laws pertaining to a Nazir. A Nazir is somebody who takes a vow for at least thirty days to abstain from wine and all vineyard products, to allow his hair to grow, and to not come in contact with any corpse. The Torah goes to great lengths to praise a Nazir's decision to sanctify himself and even says that he achieves a holier status than a Kohen. Furthermore, from the moment he accepts these stringencies upon himself, the Torah pronounces him holy, even before he completes his vow. In another verse, the Nazir is described as having a crown on his head, implying that his level of importance is elevated to that of a king of Israel!

Why does the Torah "go to town" so excessively for these seemingly minor abstentions that the Nazir has accepted upon himself, and all this, even before he has actually made good on his vow?

R' Chazkal Levinstein was bothered by this issue, and he found an **Ibn Ezra** who scrutinizes the verse, "**איש כי יפליא נדר**" – "When a man takes on a wondrous vow". The Ibn Ezra explains this odd term by saying that if a man chooses to swim against the indulgent current of the world, which seems to gravitate toward self-fulfillment and the blind seeking of pleasure no matter what the cost, this truly is a praiseworthy decision and deserves great adulation by the Torah. A man who chooses to keep his passions at bay, amidst a sea of people that will simultaneously be wary of him, and scorn him, has truly earned the title of "holy" which the Torah bestows upon him for he has fought two very natural tendencies – to go with the flow, and to follow his wants. A person who chooses to work on these traits, even though they may ultimately fail, is dubbed by the Torah as holy.

R' Chazkal would bring **The Vilna Gaon** who takes it a step further. The Gaon says that for a person to limit his food intake, and to control his other physical desires, is his entire purpose on

this earth, and if he can manage to do so, it is greater than all the fasts in the world.

He goes on to say that for every moment that a person controls himself, he will merit to see a light that even the angels themselves cannot fathom, (which makes sense since angels have never had to control their passions), and that in doing so, he will be forgiven for every sin that he has ever done! Such is the significance and power, asserts the Gaon, of controlling one's desires.

However, there is one loose end that R' Chazkal felt the need to tie up. After all we have said, and all the praise we have given the Nazir, the ending doesn't make any sense. After his term of Nezirus, the Nazir has to bring a very serious sin offering, so serious in fact, that it is more severe than had he broken his vow in the middle of his term, which only gets a double bird offering? - How then can we understand the severity of the way he is treated in light of all the aforementioned commendations?

The Ramban explains succinctly that the offering brought is not to atone for what he has done, but rather to atone for the fact that he is now ending the term of his vow. After he saw what it feels like to be holy, and to be considered a monarch, and to rule over his inclinations, how could he choose to simply abandon all that loftiness, and go back and swim with the riffraff?

Such a decision warrants a severe reprimand and that is the rationale behind the sin offering he must bring at the end of his term.

The Mashgiach would conclude by saying that this type of Yetzer Hara is not uncommon. How often do we find a Jew who has a kindred spirit, and achieves all sorts of levels in his growth, only to abandon them shortly afterward when he becomes discouraged? We must all strengthen ourselves on this point to never falter once we have begun growing, and make sure to continue growing our entire lives.

It is said about the **Steipler** that he refused to learn in an air-conditioned room, because he feared he would become accustomed to it, and then if he were ever deprived of it, would find it difficult to learn. On the other hand, somebody who is in control truly feels like a king! He has achieved sovereignty over his own heart, and that thought is extremely empowering. Considering this notion is an effective tool in helping one overcome his natural pulls.

Another valuable suggestion comes from the Rambam. The Rambam in fourth chapter of the laws of Nezirus rules that it is forbidden for a Nazir to sit amongst his friends while they are indulging in wine, lest he come to get caught up in their merriment and transgress, and he should physically distance himself from such a group.

The Rambam is teaching us a valuable lesson in control. It is nearly impossible to do it when there is no social support to back a person up. If a person wants to be successful in managing his cravings, he cannot be around people that are wildly giving into theirs, for he will certainly founder.

May we all merit to actualize the lofty lessons we learn from the Nazir and to control our passions for the sake of Hashem!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

Reb Shmuel Botnick writes about Rav Nota Greenblatt, zt"l, that Rav Nota would describe how he had been a weak child, and when he was nine years old, his health began to seriously decline. His father was very concerned and brought him to see Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook, zt"l, to get a Brachah for a full recovery.

Rav Kook pulled young Nota under his Tallis and gave him a heartfelt Brachah, reciting the Pesukim of Bircas Kohanim. He then Davened for Nota's Refuah Sheleimah and concluded with a Brachah that he "live a long life and become a Talmid Chacham."

Rav Nota was always mesmerized when he would say over this story. He relived those minutes that he stood beneath the Tallis, watching a Tzadik Daven on his behalf.

The effects of Rav Kook's Brachah were evident for nearly ninety years, as Rav Nota traveled from city to city, often surviving on only Matzah and sardines, going to sleep after eleven o'clock and, not infrequently, rising in the predawn hours to catch his next flight.

When he was ninety-two years old, he was staying in the home of Rabbi Yosef Grossman in Houston, Texas, when Rabbi Grossman noticed that Rav Nota looked somewhat uncomfortable.

Rabbi Grossman asked him, "Is everything okay?" Rav Nota admitted, "I have a headache." Rabbi Grossman offered, "Can I get you an Advil?"

Rav Nota responded, "Advil? In all my life I took only six pills! I have a Brachah from Rav Kook. Who needs pills?"

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

There is a famous Jewish family who has merited riches. Half of their children are among the greatest rabbanim and teachers of Torah in our generation. The rest are fabulously wealthy and generously support the study of Torah.

When **Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein** met one of the grandsons of the family, he asked him to tell him something about his grandfather, the patriarch of this renowned family, who merited such praiseworthy descendants. - This is what the grandson related:

Those stories you hear about people going bankrupt and officials coming to the house to take everything a person owns used to happen even decades ago. Our grandfather, who was a building contractor in Yerushalayim, saw many such occurrences in his day.

This is one of the most traumatic experiences in a businessman's life. He is living the life of a wealthy man, and then suddenly he is bankrupt and people come to his house to take all his possessions, leaving it empty. No furniture. No electrical appliances. Nothing.

The person doesn't want to leave his house. He doesn't want to see people. His life has been turned upside down, from one of luxury and dignity to one of suffering and anguish. In their despair, some people even end up doing terrible things as a result.

The trucks sent by the court to take possessions of a debtor's assets would deliver the "merchandise" to the police station plaza in Machaneh Yehudah, where the items would be auctioned off for a steal, and it wasn't unusual to find lowlifes and criminal elements hanging around there, alert for potential bargains. One look from one of these people was enough to convince other buyers not to bid and raise the prices.

One day my grandfather was passing the police station in Machaneh Yehudah, and he saw a huge truck packed with furniture and appliances. He recognized those furnishings; they belonged to one of his contractor friends, and he understood that his friend must have declared bankruptcy.

Without thinking twice, my grandfather entered the police station and headed to the plaza where the items from his friend's apartment would go on sale. The truck hadn't been unloaded yet, and there were already a few of those lowlifes peering through the truck's windows to get a look at the merchandise and acquire it at a price "acceptable" to them.

My grandfather added himself to the list of buyers, and when the auction started, he offered a very high bid so that he would be able to walk away with everything.

The veteran buyers raised their eyebrows at the newbie apparently trying to block them from making a deal. They gave him dark looks,

but he wasn't fazed, and when they raised the bid, he did too, again and again, until they realized that they couldn't win and gave up.

Then my grandfather went over to the driver of the truck, with all items still inside, and said to him, "I'd like you to do me a favor. I will pay you, of course. Please turn around, return to the apartment from which you took all the furnishings, and put them all back where you found them. - The driver did what my grandfather asked. The friend who had gone bankrupt couldn't believe it. How could it be that all his furniture was being returned to him?

The truck driver told him about the man who had kept raising his bids, preventing others from buying the items, and who then ordered him to return all the furniture to the apartment. From the driver's description, the man realized who the buyer was-my grandfather, to whom it had never occurred to present himself as the person who had rescued his friend's things. He merely returned home, thrilled that he had the merit to perform such a big mitzvah.

The contractor hurried to my grandfather's house and hugged him tearfully. He couldn't stop thanking him for what he had done. "You might think that you saved just my possessions. But you should know that you saved far more. After the officials emptied my apartment, my wife told me she was leaving me, and my children said they couldn't remain in an empty house either. My whole life fell apart. When I saw my furniture had returned, so did my spirits. You have literally brought me back to life!"

This was one of the stories that the grandson told when Rav Zilberstein asked him to talk about his grandfather. Rav Zilberstein responded that as much as the ways of Heaven are hidden from us, and no one can know why this grandfather merited everything he did, such a story is sufficient proof for the reason for his amazing success. - (Chashukei Chemed)

In a Manner of Speaking

The bachurim of Yeshivas Toras Chaim of Denver were frightened. For weeks, a local gang had been harassing them, shouting threats and calling them names, and hateful graffiti had been scrawled on the yeshivah building on many occasions. After the situation had persisted for a while, the hanhalah decided that it was time to call in the police.

A police officer arrived at the yeshivah and asked to hear a detailed account from the bachurim of their experiences.

"Depending on what the gang members have been saying, their actions might be classified as a hate crime," he explained. "That is a much more severe crime than a simple conflict between teenagers." But when the policeman questioned the bachurim, he was surprised to find that one bachur after another could not bring himself to repeat the profanities that the gang had hurled at them. Each bachur simply replaced every expletive with a "beep."

The policeman threw up his hands in exasperation. "How am I supposed to write a police report like this?" "I can't report to the judge that those boys called you 'beep, beep, beep Jews'!" Then his tone softened. "But the truth is that that's why we like you boys so much," he admitted. - "Because of your refined speech, you seem much more human than other teenagers on the street."

The Chovos Halevavos states that the mouth is the "quill" of the heart; it gives expression to the thoughts and feelings buried within a person's heart, exposing them for the world to see. Through our speech, we reveal the Divine spark hidden within each of us.

When a religious Jew speaks with refinement, with respect for others, or in a way that demonstrates his elevated moral standards, he reveals the workings of his heart.

Short Story of The Week by Yoni Schwartz

Each Shabbos, **Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT"L**, would walk to his yeshiva. On his way home Friday night, he would often pass by a park where his granddaughters were playing. Every time they saw him, they would run over, excitedly asking for a Shabbos bracha: "Yesimcha Elokim… Yevarechecha Hashem V'yishmerecha…" With joy, Rav Moshe would place his hands on their heads and bless them each time.

One week, when his granddaughters were about nine years old, they were joined by two friends - also nine who asked for a Shabbos bracha as well when they saw their friends receiving one. Standing nearby were Rav Moshe's sons, Rav Reuven and Rav Dovid, who watched with curiosity. By that age, placing his hands on the girls' heads might no longer have been appropriate and they wondered what their father would do.

To their surprise, Rav Moshe gently placed his hands on the girls' heads and gave them the bracha just like he did to his granddaughters.

One of his sons later asked him why he did so.

Rav Moshe replied, "I could find ten heterim that would permit me to touch their heads, but I couldn't find even one heter that would allow me to embarrass them."

Comment: In this week's parsha, Naso, we read about the priestly blessing that Aharon and his sons would give to Bnei Yisrael. This blessing which ends in, "…May Hashem bestow upon you peace," still echoes in the mouths of Jewish parents and grandparents every Friday night over 3,300 years later. Judaism treasures many values: ahavas chesed, yiras shamayim, and a deep dedication to Torah. However, our most treasured value, mentioned no less than eighty-two times each week in prayer, is shalom, harmony.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Aish Kodesh, Rav Klonymus Kalman Shapira of Piaseczna, zt"l, taught that a Yid must believe in Hashem's salvation, not solely when he understands how it can happen. Even if one doesn't have any plan and he doesn't see any possibility for a natural way for his salvation to come, he must still believe and trust in Hashem's salvation, and that Hashem can help him in unlimited ways!

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Friendly Flames




At the start of Shabbos, we light two distinct candles, each standing alone. At the end of Shabbos, at Havdalah, we light a single candle woven from two intertwined wicks. What is the symbolism here?

The two separate candles we light at the start of Shabbos symbolize the separation we often feel—from one another and from our closeness with Hashem—after a week weighed down by daily pressures. These candles burn brightly, yet apart, reflecting our initial distance. But as Shabbos unfolds, something beautiful happens. We gather with family, connect with friends, and draw nearer to Hashem through the kedusha of Shabbos. The day becomes a sacred bridge, closing the gaps that the week has carved.

By the time Shabbos draws to a close, we recite Havdalah, holding a single candle woven from two intertwined wicks. This unified flame

embodies the harmony we've cultivated—between ourselves, our loved ones, and our Creator. The once-separate lights now burn as one, a radiant reminder that Shabbos has the power to renew our bonds and bring us closer together.



Simple Greatness

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah: "**וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ מָנוֹחַ, אַחֲרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ; וַיָּבֹא, אֶל-הָאִישׁ, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַאַתָּה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה, וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי**

Mano'ach arose and followed his wife. He came to the **man** and asked him, 'Are you the **man** who spoke to my wife?' [The angel] answered, 'I am.'" (Shoftim 13:11)

Why does the prophet refer to the angel as a man? In order to fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story shared in Yisroel Besser's biography of Rav Dovid Feinstein (p. 138)

There was a meeting of leading Roshei Yeshivah at the Brooklyn office of a community lay leader. Because the organizers knew the gathering of prominent sages in Boro Park would attract attention, there was security at the door, ensuring that only invited rabbis could enter the building.

Rav Dovid Feinstein arrived in his short jacket, carrying a shopping bag with the groceries he had just purchased, and he was turned away at the door.

'It is only for rabbis,' the guard said.

Reb Dovid, the Rosh Yeshivah, smiled and shrugged, "*Please, if you don't mind, can you go tell them that David Feinstein is here?*"…

Rav Dovid Feinstein had a student who was also very close with Rav Henoch Leibowitz, the Rosh Yeshivah of the Chafetz Chaim network of yeshivos. Rebbetzin Pesha, Rav Henoch's wife, had a message for Rav Dovid Feinstein, which she conveyed through this student.

She heard that Rav Dovid Feinstein ate breakfast in a local pizza shop each morning, she insisted the student tell the Rosh Yeshivah that it was not becoming for a great man to sit in a public eatery.

The student was not sure what to say, and he was very quiet the next time he drove his Rebbi. Rav Dovid Feinstein picked up on it and asked the student what was on his mind.

'I have a message from the wife of a Torah scholar, but I am not comfortable sharing it.'

The Rosh Yeshivah encouraged him to convey the message, so the student said, 'Rebbetzin Leibowitz asked me to say that it is not befitting for an adam chashuv (great indivivdual) to eat in a pizza shop.'

Reb Dovid didn't hesitate. "*She is right, and that is why her husband should certainly not eat in a pizza shop, as he is indeed an adam chashuv – but what's it got to do with me?*"

Rav Dovid Feinstein (Kol Dodi Haftaros) beautifully explains that the prophet may have referred to the angel as a man because the heavenly being concealed his awesomeness so that Mano'ach's wife would not be frightened. Some of the holiest people cloak their greatness under humble modesty – just like 'Reb Dovid.'



15 Minutes

Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen Shlita grew up in the same area and was neighbors with the great Gadol Hador **HaRav Moshe Feinstein זצוק״ל**. The mikvah in that area was just a few blocks away from where Rav Moshe lived. One Friday when Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen was a very young man, as he came to the mikvah he noticed Rav Moshe finishing up and leaving. Rav Simcha Bunim went in, and Rav

Moshe left. After a good 10-15 minutes Rav Simcha Bunim came out of the mikvah building and who does he see? None other than the Gadol Hador Rav Moshe standing there.

A little taken aback by seeing Rav Moshe Feinstein standing there, Rav Simcha Bunim asked if the Rosh Yeshiva was waiting for someone.

Rav Moshe told him, "I waited for you so that you wouldn't have to walk alone and that we could walk together!" [It is obvious that Rav Moshe was thinking in learning as he waited outside the mikva.]

We are talking about the Gadol Hador who utilized every moment of his life, and here Rav Moshe waited close to 15 minutes just so a young man should not have to walk alone!

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

In Parshas Naso, the Levi'im are assigned their roles, and they had two main jobs – avodas masa, transporting the mishkan, and "avodas avoda, work of the work."

One understanding is that it refers to the singing and playing music during the offering of korbanos.- Why would singing and playing music be categorized as such?

Rabbeinu Bachya says that the singing was important because it enabled, "ivdu es Hashem b'simcha, serve Hashem with happiness." Indeed, sometimes being happy takes work, and you have to do what it takes to get yourself in the right mindset. The music helped those serving Hashem to feel the joy of serving Him, and to make their work feel less like work. Being happy is serious business, and that's why the musical accompaniment was truly an important avoda.



Inspired by Time by ר׳ יהושע פרנקנהויז

This week's parsha, Parshas Naso, is the longest in the Torah. With 176 pesukim, one might expect it to be filled with complex halachos, profound secrets, or sweeping narratives. Yet when we open the parsha, we find something surprising: repetition. A lot of it.

We read about the korbanos brought by each of the nesi'im during the inauguration of the Mishkan. Astonishingly, each one brought the exact same offering — and yet the Torah lists each one in full detail, twelve times over.

Why not list the offering once and simply note that each nasi brought the same? After all, the Torah is famously concise. We derive countless halachos from a single extra word — even from the tiniest kotz. So why here, of all places, does the Torah devote so much space to what seems like repetition?

The Gift That Matters

Chaim was a Holocaust survivor who, after enduring the fires of Gehinnom, rebuilt his life with remarkable strength. Surrounded by children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren, he cherished each one — they were his pride and nachas.

When he turned 90, his large, four-generation family decided to surprise him with a birthday celebration. There would be food, music, and joy — but most importantly, each child and grandchild would prepare a personal gift to present to him.

Chaim was deeply moved by the surprise, especially when they lined up to offer their gifts — each one lovingly prepared.

Near the end of the line stood a young boy, Avi, holding a small

watch box he had made by hand. But when he saw that his older cousin had made a nearly identical box — only more polished and beautiful — his excitement turned into embarrassment. By the time he reached his grandfather, he was hiding the gift behind his back.

"What are you hiding?" Chaim asked gently.

"I'm embarrassed," Avi replied. "You already got one like this — and his is better. You don't need mine."

Chaim took the box, held it to his heart, and said, "I may have a box — but I don't have your box."

The Secret of Parshas Naso

That is the secret of Parshas Naso. Hashem doesn't need silver bowls or ketores. He doesn't need korbanos. What He wants — is you.

The gift is not valuable because it is different from others, but because you brought it. That's why the Torah repeats each korban in full detail — again and again — because each one came from a different heart.

The fact that eleven nesi'im had already brought the exact same offering did not diminish even slightly the nachas or significance of the twelfth. Each gift was unique, not in its form, but in its giver.

Hashem famously refers to Klal Yisrael as Beni Bechori Yisrael — "My firstborn son." Though He has thousands, even millions of Yidden, they are not just "all" His children. Each and every one of us is His beloved, only child. He looks to us — with loving, patient eyes — awaiting our avoda, our special gift.

"Bitachon is the ability to dance in the dark, knowing the light will return." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

A Message from the Kalever Rebbe - Shabbos is Our Sign which is the source of blessing

וְשָׂמוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי, עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; וַאֲנִי, אֲבָרְכֵם - "***And they shall place My Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them***." (6:27)



This truth has been clearly evident throughout the generations: the zchus of Shabbos observance brings salvation and healing.

The **Zohar**'s teaches (Yisro 88a) that all blessings—both spiritual and physical—depend on the sanctity of Shabbos. **The Chafetz Chaim zt"l** explained the reason that Shabbos observance is even more important than other mitzvos, saying, "We find (Shabbos 10b) that Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu, 'I have a precious gift in My treasure house, and its name is Shabbos, and I wish to give it to Israel.' If a bride returns the gifts that the groom sent her, it shows she does not want him, and the engagement is broken. Likewise, if we do not keep Shabbos, it is as though we are returning the gift that G-d gave us, showing that we do not value our relationship with our Father in Heaven."

The Chafetz Chaim said that Shabbos is like a sign hanging over a store. As long as the sign is up, even if the store is closed, passersby assume the owner is just away temporarily. But once the sign is removed, everyone understands the store is permanently closed. So too, Shabbos is the sign of a Jew, as it says (Shemos 31:17), It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever... As long as a Jew observes Shabbos, it is like he is wearing a sign that says, "I am

a Jew who believes." But when he removes this sign, it shows he has chosen to cut himself off from his Creator.

This concept is also alluded to in this week's parsha in the section of Birchas Kohanim: Hashem turns to the spiritual leaders of every generation, who are compared to the Kohanim, of whom it is written (Malachi 2:7), "For the lips of a Kohen guard knowledge, and people seek Torah from his mouth," and says to them: "And they shall place My Name upon the children of Israel" — 'My Name' hints to the holy Shabbos, which the Zohar calls "the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He."

Additionally, the word "**שמי**" (My Name) is an acronym for S'habbos, Y'om M'enuchah (Sabbath, Day of Rest).

These leaders are charged to strengthen the "sign" of Shabbos upon the Jewish people—and then, "And I will bless them" — Hashem will pour down all manner of blessings through the Shabbos, which is the source of all blessing.

The Holy Nadverner

The Holy Nadverner from Bnei Brak, of blessed memory, always told his wife and the people who were working in the kitchen, "Please don't forget, when you cook for Shabbos, you have to say constantly *lekoved* Shabbos, *lekoved* Shabbos."

One Friday night, The Holy Nadverner refused to eat the soup. The people ran in to the kitchen to the Rebbetzin. They said, "G-d Forbid, did something happen to the soup that the Rebbe doesn't want to eat it?" The Rebbetzin smiled. She said, "I know what happened. I took in a woman, a new cook, and I forgot to tell her to say *lekovod* Shabbos while she's making the soup. So the Rebbe won't eat it." I bless you friends that not only your food should be *Lekoved* Shabbos. All your life should be *Lekoved* Shabbos.



"Your Money Or Your Wife?" and Other Such Life Decisions

Parshas Naso contains the Parsha of Sotah 5:11. Rashi comments on the adjacency of this section to the preceding passage: "A man's holies shall be his and what a man gives to the Kohen, it shall be his." Rashi explains the connection as follows: If you withhold the gifts of the Kohen, I swear by your life that you will need to come to him to bring him (your wife) the sotah. In other words, if a person does not visit the Kohen to give him what is his due, the person will inevitably have to visit the Kohen for another reason.

The Medrash Rabbah comments in a similar vein, if one does not pay the poor who come to his house to ask for support, he will wind up having to pay that same money to the doctor (for medical expenses for himself or family members). This is a very scary thought. When the Almighty gives us money, we are supposed to perform mitzvos with the money — tzedakah, chessed [charity, kindness]. We have the choice and opportunity to use the money that we are given properly; however if we do not use it properly, the Medrash says that we will wind up using it to pay doctors' bills.

The sefer Lulei Sorascha records many episodes from the life of **Rav Shach, zt"l**. Usually, when I read such stories, the names mentioned do not mean anything to me. However, I recently came across a story mentioning someone that I know well. This is a person, several years older than me, whom I grew up knowing in Seattle, Washington. The person's name is Rav Tzvi Genauer. He is a very distinguished individual, who has been living in Eretz Yisrael for many decades now.

What is the story? A person came into Rav Schach and gave him $5000 with the instructions that he could do whatever he wanted with money. He could give it to whomever he felt needed it. It was not every day that someone walked into the Rosh Yeshiva's office and dropped $5000. Rav Schach inquired regarding the source of the money. The person told the following story:

Rav Tzvi Genauer needed an eye operation. He wanted a certain doctor to perform the surgery. In Israel a person cannot choose his doctor, but rather, must go wherever Kupat Cholim sends him for his medical needs. So Rav Genauer went to a person who had "protexia" in the system. The person was able to pull some strings for Rav Genauer, such that he had his surgery done by his preferred ophthalmologist. Kupat Cholim paid the full price of the surgery — $5000.

As a token of appreciation to this intermediary who was able to get him into his preferred doctor, Rav Genauer gave him $100 for the charity of his choice and thanked him for arranging the operation for him. He came home and proudly told his wife that as Hakaras Hatov, he gave the man who pulled the strings for him $100.

Mrs. Genauer said, "You only gave him $100? You should have given him $5000! His intervention saved you $5000 in out-of-pocket expenses that you would have been willing to pay to have the surgery done by Dr. so-and-so." Rav Genauer thought about it and said, "You're right!" He went back to the intermediary and told him "Here is $5000. This is the money that I would have had to pay out. You saved me from having to pay it out. Now that you saved me from paying it out, I want it to go to tzedakah."

This is a reverse form of the choice alluded to by the Medrash. Either we can give the charity to the poor or we will have to give it out one way or another. Knowing of this choice, we would all much rather give our money to the poor than to doctors.

One Must Carry a Tune, Not a Chip on His Shoulder

Rav Gedaliah Schorr draws another lesson in communal service from a second verse in this week's portion. It states (Bamidbar 7:9) regarding the transporting duties of the children of Kehas, **בַּכָּתֵף יִשָּׂאוּ** - "And they should carry it on their shoulders." And yet, there is an interesting Gemara in tractate Eruchin [11a] which interprets the word "יִשָּׂאוּ," not in relationship to carrying but in relationship to singing.

How ironic, says Rav Gedaliah Schorr, that the same word, which means they should schlep on their shoulders, also means that they should sing. -- There are two ways one can schlep something — one can schlep with a sigh or one can schlep with a song. When one is working for an organization one can schlep and complain and be bitter about the difficulties encountered. On the other hand one can keep in mind the importance of the work and can work with a smile and indeed even with a niggun.

The weight of community service must be borne with a tune and with enthusiasm. That must be the approach to Avodas HaTzibbur. Anyone who has ever worked for any communal organization knows that the work is full of aggravation. People rarely come up and say "Yasher Koach, it was a beautiful job." They come with complaints and critiques. One can put on a dinner for a thousand people. Everything can be beautiful and one fellow comes up and his only comment is "Why did you sit me next to the door?" The chairman has worked for weeks, and this is all he gets? "Why did you put me next to the door?"

"On their shoulders they should lift it (יִשָּׂאוּ)". As the Talmud says, the word יִשָּׂאוּ refers to song. In other words, forget about it! The reward awaiting community service is very great. It should be borne with a song, not with a sigh.

Peace Begins at Home

This week's Parsha contains the Priestly Blessing. Each of the Priestly Blessings [Bamidbar 6:24-27] is said in the singular. The reason is because a Bracha always has to be tailor-made for the recipient. This makes perfect sense throughout the Priestly Blessing, until we come to the final blessing וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם - "And may He grant Peace to you."

We recently mentioned that Peace is the most important of all blessings. "Without peace there is nothing" [Sifra Bechukosai]. "G-d did not find a vessel that could hold blessing other than Peace" [Uktzin 3:12]. A person can have health, wealth, children, everything. But if he doesn't have Shalom, he doesn't have anything.

Maseches Berachot, the first tractate of the Talmud, ends with the words "G-d grants strength to His nation; G-d will bless His nation with Peace" [Tehillim 29:11]. The last tractate in Talmud, Uktzin, contains the above quoted Mishneh (G-d did not find a vessel that could hold blessing other than Peace). Shalom is the key to everything.

Peace and the lack thereof always involve more than one person. If a person doesn't have peace with his wife or his neighbor, there are at least two people involved. If there is no peace in the world it is between countries. Why then, is the blessing for Peace in the singular.

The Menachem Zion says that the premise of the question is a mistake. Indeed, a person needs Shalom. But the most primary need for peace is between a person and himself. One must be at peace with oneself.

If we look at people and talk with people throughout various stages of their lives, we invariably find that people are torn about what they should do and what they should not do. There is sometimes

inner conflict and inner turmoil about how people should lead their lives.

This is something that affects young and old, Jew and non-Jew. The whole matter of "mid-life crises" is that a person has no inner peace. He reaches 40 or 45 and asks himself "Is this what I really want to do? Is this what it is really all about?" Again, there is no peace.

The place where Peace has to begin is "at home" — a person has to be at peace with himself. People who are always upset, always fighting, never happy with everybody else, are ultimately and essentially not at peace with themselves. People who are disappointed; people who are dissatisfied with themselves — are dissatisfied with everything else, as well.

Therefore, when the Torah gives us the blessing of Peace, G-d knows where to start. He starts with the individual. **וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם**. Once a person has inner peace, he can have peace with his wife, peace with his family, and ultimately peace with the entire world. But it starts with himself.

Yaakov's Connection to the Sheep

The majority of the parsha is devoted to the sacrifices that were brought by the Princes of the Tribes. Each Nasi brought a single young bull, a single ram (ayil echad) and a single sheep (keves echad).

Rash"i explains that the young bull represents Avraham, as it says "He brought a young bull" [Bereishis 18:7]; the Ayil represents the ram of Yitzchok, as it says "And he took the ram" [Bereishis 22:13]; and the Keves represents Yaakov, corresponding to the verse "And Yaakov separated the sheep" [Bereishis 30:40].

The Torah references each of the sacrifices to the essence of one of the Avos. What is the essence of Avrohom? Avrohom is the master of Chessed. Therefore, by mentioning a young bull,

the Medrash marshals an example of Avrohom's kindness – when Avrohom ran to the herd to bring a young bull to feed the Angels. The essence of Yitzchok is Gevurah [spiritual strength]. The Torah portrays this attribute of Yitzchak's Awe and Fear of G-d through the Akaidas Yitschak. Therefore, the ram alludes to Yitschak.

We are able to understand that the first two references epitomize Avrohom and Yitzchak. However, how does the incident with Lavan's sheep represent the essence of Yaakov? Why does the Medrash use that pasuk?

Rav Bergman, in his sefer Sha'arei Orah, points out that the reason why Yaakov separated the sheep was to insure that Lavan would not have the slightest suspicion that Yaakov was trying to cheat.

Yaakov wanted all of his sheep to be one kind and all of Lavan's sheep to be another kind, so that Lavan would not be able to claim that Yaakov took any of his sheep. Yaakov made great efforts, not only to avoid actual theft, but also to avoid even the slightest suspicion of theft. This illustrates Yaakov's essence: Give Truth to Yaakov [Michah 7:20]. That one sheep (keves echad) symbolizes the attribute of Yaakov: honesty above reproach.

Interestingly, in the Yotzros of Hoshannah Rabbah, the author of the poem "Ta'aneh Emunim" (Answer the Faithful) describes Yaakov as "the one who peeled rods at the troughs of water". Is this is all that the author can think of to tell us about Yaakov? What about telling us about Yaakov learning in the Yeshivah of Shem and Ever for 14 years? What about fathering the 12 Tribes?

Here too, the answer is the same. Yaakov's honesty and truth is his essence. Even when dealing with a crook like Lavan, Yaakov goes out of his way to be faithful in his dealings. Therefore, the sheep and the peeled rods of Yaakov do represent Yaakov's essence – that of Emes – Truth.

Birkas Kohanim: Peace of Togetherness Vs. Peace of Separate Pieces

I found the following idea in a sefer by Rav Dovid Zucker, a Rosh Kollel in Chicago.

The last *bracha* of *Birkas Kohanim is* "**וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם**" (And He Will Give You Peace) (Bamidbar 6:26). The more common Hebrew word for the verb "to **give**" is *v'**yiten***. Why does the Torah here use the less common word *v'**yasem** lecha shalom*, which literally means "He will **place** peace in you"?

Furthermore, the last *bracha* of *Shemoneh Esrei* also invokes the prayer "***sim** shalom*" (**place** peace), rather than "***ten** shalom*" (**give** peace). Likewise, the *bracha* concluding the evening *Shemoneh Esrei* begins with the words "*shalom rav **tasim**.*" In all three places, we find the peculiar verb ***sima***, as opposed to ***nesina***. Why?

To address this observation, Rav Zucker quotes a comment from **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**: There are two ways of making peace when people are having an argument. One way is to "make *shalom*" – everyone shakes hands, makes up, and resets their relationship such that everything is good again. However, sometimes the only way to "make *shalom*" is by a **lack** of contact.

Consider the case of two partners who have a business and they get into a fight. They unfortunately hate each other and can in no way, shape or form, reestablish a peaceful relationship. What is the best approach? The best approach is to sell or split the business so that they can each take their half and go their separate ways. They can no longer work together. That is one way to achieve *shalom*, by no longer being together.

It happens in marriages as well. Sometimes a marriage counselor can make *shalom* between a husband and wife who are having marital problems. However, sometimes the only way to make *shalom* is for them to split.

This is exactly what happened between Avram and Lot. Their shepherds had an argument. By mutual agreement, they concurred that the best plan was: "If you go left, I will go right and if you go right, I will go left." (Bereshis 13:9) That made *shalom*.

Thus, the *v'**yasem** lecha shalom*– the last *bracha* of the *Birkas Kohanim*– is that there should be *shalom*, but also that it should be a desirable type of *shalom*– a *shalom* where people can make up and be together again and have real *shalom* once more. So too, by *sim shalom* and *shalom rav tasim*, *Hashem* is giving us a *bracha*, not merely to have any kind of *shalom*, but to have *shalom* that enables us to coexist and be together as before.

Why Didn't Manoach's Wife Tell Her Husband the Rest of the Story?

Parshas Naso's Haftorah contains the story of the birth of Shimshon. Shimshon's mother was childless. The Angel of Hashem appeared to her and told her that she was going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. That son turned out to be *Shimshon haGibor*. However, the *pasuk* does not only say she would become pregnant and have a son. It begins by saying "Behold you are barren and have not given birth." [Shoftim 13:3]

The Medrash asks – why was it necessary for the Angel to tell Manoach's wife that she was barren and had not given birth. This was a fact of which she was obviously aware!

The Medrash answers "This teaches that there had been a dispute between Manoach and his wife." In Biblical times, they did not possess the medical knowledge or technology that we have today to determine when a couple is infertile, whether the cause lay with the husband or the wife. Manoach had told his wife "Our childlessness is your problem! You are the barren one." She argued back to her

husband, "No. The problem comes from you. You are the infertile one and the reason we do not have children."

According to the Medrash, this was part of the Angel's message to the woman. The Medrash first says that Manoach's wife was a *Tzadekes* and for that reason the *Malach* appeared to her with this Divine message rather than to her husband. The Medrash says that the *Malach* came to make peace between husband and wife, by presenting them with the "Divine diagnosis" of the source of the problem. "It is indeed your "fault" that you have not had children with your husband. Stop fighting about that. But you should know that now, you are going to become pregnant!"

Manoach's wife told him, "An Angel told me that we are going to have a baby." [Shoftim 13:7] However, she conveniently left out from her statement to her husband the fact that the *Malach* confirmed that he had been right all those years in their argument regarding the cause of their inability to have children.

Now this seems somewhat odd. The Medrash says that she was a *Tzadekes,* and that in her merit, the Angel appeared. We are not talking here about just your average woman on the street. We are talking about a woman who merited speaking with a *Malach,* and whom the Medrash calls a *Tzadekes*! So then why does she not confess to Manoach that she had been wrong? Why doesn't she tell him "You know, after all these years that we have been fighting with each other about this matter, the Angel revealed to me that you were right and I was wrong!"?

The reason is that one of the hardest things to do in life is to say "I am wrong. It is my fault." The novel idea here is that a person can be a *Tzadekes,* and a person can be on the level where they merit speaking with a *Malach,* but to say the words "It is my fault. I am wrong" is a very difficult challenge.

I once gave a *drasha* entitled "The Three Most Important Words in Marriage." I began my speech by asking "What are the three most

important words in a marriage?" Some suggested "You look beautiful." Others suggested "I love you." I maintain that the three most important words in a marriage are "**It's my fault**." This is very hard to do. One can be a *Tzadekes*, one can speak with an Angel, and one can announce that "we are going to have a baby." But to say "You were right. I was wrong. It was my problem"—that is very difficult.

The Dual Meanings of "Ki Yaflee" Coincide Wondrously

Parshas Nasso contains the laws of Nezirus: "Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: A man or a woman who shall set himself apart by taking a nazirite vow to set himself apart to Hashem…" 6:2.

A Nazir is prohibited to drink wine. He is prohibited from coming into contact with ritual defilement of the dead, and even from attending the funeral of his own relative. He is prohibited from shaving or taking a haircut. By saying the words "Behold I am a Nazir," he takes upon himself all these restrictions. Regarding the restrictions of avoiding Tumas Mes [death defilement], the Nazir has the exact same status as a Kohen Gadol [High Priest].

This section begins with the words "A man or a woman ki yaflee to make a vow…" What do the peculiar words "ki yaflee" connote and what is the connection between that term and the institution of Nezirus?

The early commentaries contain two interpretations. Rashi cites a commentary that "L'haflee" is from the same root as "L'hafrish," meaning to separate oneself. The pasuk would then read "A man or a woman who chooses to separate themselves by taking a nazirite vow".

Alternatively, "L'haflee" may mean "to articulate" or "to express" This is the approach of the Rambam. In his 14 volume work, Yad HaChazakah, the Rambam includes the Laws of Oaths, Vows, Nazir, and Cherem in the book of "Hafla'ah". It is called "Hafla'ah" because

all these laws relate to expressions uttered by a person who takes upon himself certain restrictions or responsibilities.

But there is a third possible interpretation to the word "L'haflee". "L'haflee" could connote "It is a peleh [wonder]!" Whether the interpretation of "L'haflee" is separation or articulation, they both coincide with something that is wondrous (full of peleh).

The Sforno comments that for a person to separate from something he likes (e.g. – to vow not to touch a drop of wine) is wondrous. Think about it. What if someone took a vow not to have another soda in his life? Not to have another piece of cake? Never to have a doughnut again? It would be a peleh that a person would have the ability to voluntarily separate himself from the pleasures of this world.

The second interpretation of "L'Haflee" is also wondrous. The fact that a human being can express himself, the gift of speech, to articulate sensible thoughts and emotions is the greatest wonder. The ability to speak is what separates man from animals. The power of speech is what gives man the power to reveal what is in his living soul. This is a peleh!

With Nezirus, with two words "Hareinee Nazir" [Behold I am a Nazirite], one can gain the holiness status of a Kohen Gadol! Through words alone, he can change his essence to one of great holiness. Through words alone, he can restrain his passions. That is why the two words coincide. Whether Nezirus is separation or utterance, it is all the same. The Peleh that speech can change a person and that the person has the ability to separate himself from his desires is wondrous. That is why the Torah introduces these laws with the words "A man or woman ki yaflee". Both concepts are indeed a peleh.

"Hashem is the ultimate source of all good: Everything else is merely a vessel for His blessing." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler.

Rav Mordechai Gifter (1916-2001), zt"l, wrote that the greatness of the Nazir was not the fact that he abstained from wine and shaving for 30 days or that he abstained from attending funerals for a month's time. - The Nazir's greatness stemmed from the fact that he bothered to think. He bothered to look around at his world and to contemplate the meaning of what was going on around him.

The Rokeach writes that the congregants should face the *Kohanim* with open arms and make personal requests for whatever their needs are during *Birkas Kohanim*.- This is a most propitious time for making such requests, which then have an increased potential for being answered.

If someone has pressing needs, a most fitting time to ask for Help is during *Birkas Kohanim*—a point in the liturgy that is particularly ripe for Heavenly dispensation of blessing.

The Heilige Karliner would say before Shabbos, "Master of the World, I have fish for Shabbos, I have challah for Shabbos, but where do I get Shabbos for Shabbos?"

So you know, this is a very special privilege to have Shabbos on Shabbos, because it is possible to keep Shabbos, to keep every law, but to taste Shabbos? To taste Shabbos is so special.

So this is what our Holy Rabbis teach us. There is Shemiras Shabbos – keeping Shabbos Holy. Then there is Oneg Shabbos – the bliss of Shabbos. The bliss of Shabbos, it's a special gift, a gift from Heaven.

A Wise Man would say: *"He who has health, has hope; and he who has hope, has everything."*



One of the very last parts of the avodah that the kohanim did in the Beis Hamikdash that remain today is Birchas Kohanim. In this week's sedra we are told the words that the kohanim used in their priestly blessings.



The Sifrei says that these 15 words comprise every bracha that is contained in the entire universe. These words contain the brachos of wealth, health, happiness, security, children – And then the culmination of everything is… PEACE! Shalom is the vessel that holds every bracha.

But how important is shalom? And how can we display this in a practical way nowadays?

The Torah clearly tells us that Hashem allowed his Name to be erased in the pursuit of matrimonial harmony between man and wife. But practically for us, what can we do?

Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita – the Rosh Yeshiva of Darchei Torah said over the following story: [When I heard this story, it almost brought me to tears.]

There was a young boy in 2nd grade who went outside during recess (break time) in order to have a snack. He took out a bar of chocolate

that his mother had put in his rucksack that morning. He opened it up in order to eat it. He could hear around him that other boys were laughing at him. He looked up, and to his horror, many of his friends around him were mockingly calling him a '*shaigetz*', because that chocolate that he had taken out wasn't chalav Yisrael.



This poor boy sitting over there didn't know where to turn. His rebbi in the corner of his eye noticed what happened. He ran over to this boy, and he said, "tell me, can I look at the chocolate?"

The boy says, "sure", and he gives his rebbi some of the chocolate. His rebbi sees that it's not chalav Yisrael. The rebbi says, "Can I have some?" - The boy says, "Sure."

The rebbi takes some and loudly, proudly makes a bracha on the chocolate and takes a bite. It had been 18 years since that rebbi had eaten chocolate that was not chalav Yisrael, but he didn't hesitate… Why? – For the sake of sholom. Putting that boy at ease was the greatest priority.

Decades later, this boy comes to his Rosh Yeshiva and says to him, "What happened that day changed my life forever.

That's the power of sholom. That's the power of peace that every single one of us has within us. And that carries the greatest bracha of all… We should all try to make sholom with everybody that we know to ensure that sholom resides in the world in the greatest way.

Have an amazing Shabbos!



The *Chiddushei HaRim* (*R. Yitzchak Meir of Ger; 1799-1866; founder of Gerrer Chassidic Dynasty*) points out that according to *Rambam* and many others, *vidui*, confession, is a major part of the *teshuva* process. For a person to truly be able to return to *Hashem* after having gone astray, he or she must verbally acknowledge the sin.

The source for this view is a *pasuk* in this week's *parsha* (5:7) in the section dealing with *gezel*, stealing. The Torah teaches that aside for the sacrifice in the *Beis HaMikdash* to atone for the sin, and the necessary monetary restitution for this errant behavior, one must confess.

Why, the *Chiddushei HaRim* asks, are we taught this lesson about confession when learning about *gezel*? Why not in the section dealing with murder, or some other "major" transgression?

The *Gerrer Rebbe zt"l* explains that at the root of every sin is theft. G-d gave us our bodies, our very lives, to be able to create, do acts of charity and kindness, and continuously grow in a close relationship with Him. When we use these self-same Divine gifts to move away from the Almighty, to hurt others, **we are stealing from Him**. Hence, when the Torah wants to teach us a lesson about how to undo the effects of sin, and how to properly rebuild a decayed relationship, it uses the section of *gezel* as the paradigm.

'Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes it's the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow."' ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980)

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

Lifting Up the Dejected



In 1846, at the young age of 30, **R' Avraham Mordechai Alter**, the son of the Chidushei Harim (1799-1866) became very ill. Seeing his son low-spirited, the Chidushai Harim told him to have a will to live as in **ובחרת בחיים** - choose life. After his father left the room, R' Avrohom Mordechai pleaded with Hashem to have another few years to his life so he can have another child. He then said that he will call him Yehuda because **הפעם אודה את ה'** - gratefully praise Hashem- the words expressed by Yehuda's mother when he was born. The following year- in 1847- Yehuda Aryeh, otherwise known as the Sefas Emes (1847-1905), was born.

In this way, we can grasp the words in our Parsha **נשא את ראש בני גרשון** - lift up those people who feel that they are divorced from Hashem. We see an example of this by Kayin who was told ... **למה נפלו פניך הלא אם תיטיב שאת** - why are you down, if you improve yourself you will be forgiven.

In a day and age where so many feel dejected, it is relatively easy to fulfil this. Giving someone a word of encouragement or some advice can go a long way. Even to ourselves we can fulfil this as there are many times when we feel down as well.

"A person's task in life is to be grateful for the past, active in the present, and hopeful for the future." – Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

Matching Up



We know the one who sets up a couple is called a **שדכן**. What is the meaning of this word?

The **ר"ן** tells us that it is from the term tranquillity and rest as the Targum on **ותשקט הארץ** - the land was tranquil, is **ושדוכת ארעא**. The feeling one has when they find their match is of such calm and serenity as they now are at ease.

The Baal Hamaor writes that Shiduch is a term meaning **קשירה** - to join, arrange as this is what a Shadchan does.

The Sefer **מגדיל ישועות מלכו** brings that **שדכן** is an acronym for **כִּי** שָׁבַר דַּלְתוֹת נְחֹשֶׁת - He smashed copper gates. This is because the Shadchan works hard to pair up the Chosson and Kalla to the extent that at times there are things preventing the Shiduch that are like iron and copper walls until the Shadchan finishes off the Shiduch.

Another acronym for **שדכן** is said from R' Yaakov Emden- **שקר דובר כסף נוטל** ; *speaks falsehood and takes money*. After a Shadchan was told by the boy and girl following the first date that they both weren't interested in continuing, she told each side that the other wants to give it another try. The boy and girl agreed to give it another attempt. Not too long after they were engaged and then married. Today they have a family of 13!

R' Baruch Mezbitzer writes, "When the Shadchan doesn't say any falsehood regarding a Shiduch, I guarantee that the Shiduch won't follow through.

This can be understood with the following analogy. If a dog is obstructing one's path on his way to his destination, he may throw a

piece of meat at a distance so that the dog will run after it keeping him satisfied. Similarly, the Satan wants to block a Shiduch from going through. To keep him pleased, we say some falsehood so that the Shiduch may follow through.

Taking the initials of **כמעט שכנה דומה נפשי** - had Hashem not been a help to me, my soul would have soon dwelt in silence, we get the word **שדכן** . This is because in every Shiduch, we see such **השגחה פרטית** - Divine Providence and as it says **מה' יצא הדבר** - the matter stems from Hashem.

Torah And Chessed



Each of us needs to have Torah and Chessed as just one isn't sufficient. In fact, the Gemara tells us that **תורה תחלתה גמילות חסדים וסופה גמילות חסדים** - the beginning and end of Torah is performance of kindness, as the Torah begins with Hashem clothing Adam and his wife and concludes with the burial of Moshe. Chessed may include helping another with learning Torah, giving encouragement, opening a Gemach or even just smiling to someone.

The following are some allusions to having Torah and Chessed:

1) The Gematria of **גמילות חסדים** is 611, the same as **תורה**.

2) The term **תורת חסד** hints to that we should possess Torah along with Chessed.

3) In the Parsha of Matan Torah- Yisro- we have 72 Pesukim. This is the numerical value of **חסד** , again indicating that we need Chessed and Torah.

After World War Two, a boy came to a Yeshiva in London to learn Torah. Being that he missed many years of Torah study, struggling to survive the war, he was the weakest student in the school. However, there were two people who set aside time to learn Torah with him. They were Moshe and Tuvya. These two later became **R' Moshe Shternbuch and R' Tuvya Weiss**- the Raavad and Gaavad of the **עדה החרדית** of Yerushalayim.

Let us conclude with some teachings that talk of Torah and Chessed.

a) R' Elazar told his students that to be spared from the **חבלו של משיח** - travail of Moshiach, one should occupy himself in the study of Torah and acts of kindness.

b) The Gemara relates that Rabba who engaged in Torah lived for 40 years whereas Abaye who engaged in Torah and acts of kindness lived until 60.

c) Whoever engages in Torah study and bestowing kindness merits glory and wealth.

d) When we engage in studying Torah and perform acts of Chessed, the Yetzer Hara is given over to us.



Every human being has a different fingerprint. Every single person is one of a kind. There never was one of you and there will never be another one of you. ~ R' Zecharia Wallerstein Zt"l.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Peace At All Costs!

וְכָתַב אֶת־הָאָלֹת הָאֵלֶּה הַכֹּהֵן בַּסֵּפֶר וּמָחָה אֶל־מֵי הַמָּרִים

"And the kohain shall write these curses in a scroll, and he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness" (5:23)

The Midrash Rabbah (Bamidbar 9:20) cites a fascinating story. A certain woman used to attend Rabbi Meir's weekly Friday evening shiur. One Friday night, the shiur ended a little later than usual. When this woman returned home, her husband asked her where she had been. She replied that she had been at Rabbi Meir's shiur.



Her husband was upset and told her that he would not let her come home until she would spit in Rabbi Meir's face! The woman returned to the beis medrash to daven to Hashem. Meanwhile, Eliyahu the prophet revealed himself to Rabbi Meir. He told Rabbi Meir what had happened to this woman. When Rabbi Meir saw the woman, he pretended that his eye was bothering him. He asked the woman to please spit into his eye, seven times. When she finished, Rabbi Meir told her to return home and tell her husband the following: "You asked me to spit [in Rabbi Meir's face] once, but I did it seven times!"

Rabbi Meir's actions disturbed his students. They felt that allowing the woman to spit in his face was a degradation of Torah. Rabbi Meir responded that he had learned from Hashem to forego his own honour to bring peace between a husband and wife. Where did Rabbi Meir learn this?

From the story of the *sotah*, in this week's parsha. If she was innocent, then she returned to her husband. Hashem said that he would grant her children as a reward for the shame that she had suffered **(Ibn Ezra)**. If she had difficult childbirths in the past, then future childbirths would more comfortable. She may also give birth to children who were more beautiful **(Rashi)**.

Drinking this potion and remaining alive proved beyond a doubt that she was free of guilt. Although it is normally prohibited to erase Hashem's name, Hashem permitted His Holy Name to be erased to bring peace between husband and wife. This was the lesson that Rabbi Meir learned from the Torah. **To foster peace between husband and wife, one should be willing to forego his own personal honour**, even the honour of one representing Torah.

Although it may be difficult, sometimes a husband or wife must forego slights to their personal honour for the sake of peace.

Aharon Hakohain also loved peace and <u>actively</u> pursued it (**Pirkei Avos** (1:12)). He had been anointed Kohain Gadol by Hashem. In many ways he was as great as Moshe Rabbeinu. Yet he was willing to sacrifice his personal prestige for the sake of peace. The **Talmud** (Kallah Rabbasi Perek 3) tells us that when Aharon heard that two men had quarrelled, he would go to one and say to him, "Peace be upon you, my master!" to which the man replied, "Peace be upon you, my master and teacher! What does my master seek here?" Then Aharon said, "Your friend sent me to you to appease you. He said, "I have offended my friend".

The man was so impressed that such a righteous man as Aharon had come to appease him. He said to Aharon, "Master, it was I who offended him". Aharon went to the other man and said the same to him. When the two men met, they would ask each other for forgiveness. Similarly, when Aharon heard of a husband and wife who had quarrelled, he would go out of his way to make peace.

Aharon's actions earned him the love of the entire Jewish nation. In fact, after his death the **entire** Jewish People, both men and women, mourned him (Bamidbar 20:29) whereas by Moshe's death, only the men mourned (Devarim 34:8).

Many couples whose marriages had been strengthened by Aharon, showed their gratitude by naming their next son after him. At Aharon's funeral, there were 80,000 other "Aharon's" that walked behind him in the funeral procession (Kallah Rabbasi Perek 3).

Both Aharon Hakohain and Rabbi Meir learned their lesson from Hashem. It is a lesson for all of us.

To foster peace between two people or between husband and wife, one should be willing to forego his own personal honour.

Brotherly Love!

בַּיּוֹם֙ הַשֵּׁנִ֔י הִקְרִ֖יב נְתַנְאֵ֣ל בֶּן־צוּעָ֑ר נְשִׂיא֙ יִשָּׂשכָ֔ר "On the second day, Nesanel son of Tzuar, the leader of Yisachar offered [his offering for the dedication of the Altar]" (Bamidbar 7:18)



There is a beautiful story that has been passed down for many years.

There were two brothers who lived on opposite sides of a hill. One of the brothers was married and had a large family. He was very poor. The other brother was rich but was alone. One night, during harvest time, one brother tossed about in bed. "How can I rest comfortably when my brother has so many more mouths to feed?" He arose, gathered bushels of

wheat, and quietly climbed the hill to bring them over to his brother's field.

Meanwhile, his brother across the hill also could not sleep. "How can I enjoy my harvest and not be concerned with my brother. He is alone in the world, without someone else to support him in his old age?" He arose in the night and quietly brought over bushels of wheat to his brother's field.

The next morning each brother was surprised to find that they had the same number of bushels as before. The brothers repeated these night- time visits for many nights. Each morning, they were astounded to find that they had the same number of bushels as before. One night the brothers met on the top of the hill. Then they realized what had happened and the brotherly love that was shown. With love, they embraced.

These brothers could have been jealous of each other for each one had something in life that the other brother did not. Instead of acting with jealousy towards one another they exhibited brotherly love.

The day that the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) was completed was very joyous. The leaders of all the tribes (nesiim) brought special offerings in honour of the occasion. Each offering consisted of many different animals to be sacrificed to Hashem. Each offering also included a silver bowl and basin filled with fine flour that was mixed with oil, as well as a gold ladle filled with spices.

Nesanel son of Tzuar was the leader who advised the other leaders to bring an offering at this time. He also advised the other leaders to bring the <u>exact same</u> offering. The *Chofetz Chaim* explains that Nesanel did not want one leader to try to "outdo" the other by adding to his offering. Nesanel wanted to prevent any feelings of jealousy among the leaders. These efforts brought such pleasure to Hashem. Normally, only communal offerings are brought on the holy Shabbos. The offerings of the leaders were personal, from their

own belongings, and normally would not have been allowed to be brought on Shabbos. The *Midrash* says that Hashem was so pleased with their efforts to promote love and friendship and prevent jealousy and hatred. Hashem wanted to "join them" and offer them Shabbos. Hashem **permitted** the personal offering of the leader of one of the tribes to be brought on Shabbos.

Additionally, since the leaders of the tribes showed such respect for one another, Hashem gave them an added honour. The Torah records the offering of each leader separately. Since the offerings were the same, the Torah could have listed them once and stated that this same korban was brought by each of the leaders of the tribes. Instead, the Torah repeats the same psukim over and over to accord honour to each leader individually.

We see how much Hashem cherishes it when we show love and respect for each other. **Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lutzato** says in the Mesilas Yesharim (Path of the Just. Chapt 19), "…The more that a person loves his fellow Jew, the greater is the love that Hashem showers upon him."

Each of us should make every effort to foster feelings of love and friendship and to try to avoid causing jealousy. Those actions will bring nachas, joy & happiness to Hashem and will cause Hashem to increase His love for each of us.

What does bitachon mean?

It isn't trust that Hashem will carry out what you want. That is not real bitachon.

Bitachon means understanding that Hashem is completely and solely in command of all the affairs of the world. Bitachon means knowing that the world and all its events are orchestrated by one author. ~ R' Avigdor Miller Zt'l.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman-Ramat Shlomo

6:27 וְשָׂמְוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם



The beautiful berachos of Birchas Kohanim are truly all-inclusive. They contain blessings of ruchniyus and gashmiyus, protection, parnassa, health, hatzlacha, and anything one could possibly need. At the conclusion of the berachos, Hashem says, "*I will place My name on Bnei Yisroel, and I will bless them.*" Why is this necessary? If all the berachos come from Hashem, then Kohanim cannot bless anyone unless Hashem Himself wishes to shower the blessing on us from Above!

R' Shimon Sofer zt"l explains that a person can be blessed with riches, and health. He can have all the good in the world, but he only sees bad. He views the world through a dark lens and therefore everything good in his perception is bad. On this world, there is never total perfection, there will always be something missing in a person's life. The question is what should a person choose to focus on? What will determine his happiness in life?

The word CHACHAM stands for **חֲצִי כּוֹס מָלֵא** - the cup is half full! A wise person is one who always sees the good in his/her life. This is why Hashem Himself comes to bless His beloved nation after the kohanim have showered us with everything good under the sun. Hashem gives us the ultimate blessing, that we should see the good in all of the goodness. - May we all be zoche to be happy with what we have, because that is truly the greatest blessing of all.

How Valuable is it?



וַיְהִי הַמַּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם וְקָרְבָּנוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ נַחְשׁוֹן בֶּן־ עַמִּינָדָב לְמַטֵּה יְהוּדָה..

"The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nachshon son of Aminadav of the tribe of Yehuda. And his offering was…" (Bamidbar 7:12-83)

At the dedication of the Mishkan, all 12 nesiim offered korbanos to Hashem. All the korbanos were identical; three vessels of a specific weight, containing flour, oil, or incense and 21 different animals. There are 72 psukim in the Torah – repeating over and over the exact details of each identical korban from all of the nesiim.

Rabbeinu Bechaya questions this oddity. The Torah is always careful to be very brief- Why did Hashem include in the Torah, so many psukim? It could have been written once and indicated that this is the same korban that all of the nesiim bought?

The Midrash explains that the "intent" of each nasi was different. Each tribe had a tradition from our forefather Yaakov what their specific destiny was. At this auspicious time, at the dedication of the mishkan, when bringing the korbanos, each nasi had in mind the destiny of their tribe. Since each intent was different, each korban was, in reality, different. Thus, the Torah listed each one separately.

Two people can say the exact same bracha or do the same mitzvah, yet qualitatively their actions can be miles apart because their intentions are different. **The value of each mitzvah is determined by the act of the mitzvah, the way it is done (quickly, happily, etc.) and by the intent.**

1) Let's do our mitzvos with the highest quality, by elevating our intent, acting purely to serve Hashem.

If we can't elevate our intent and even if our intent is self-centred, it is still important and still productive to do a mitzvah. On the way to the Land of Israel, the Jews had to battle two very powerful kings, who were also giants.

Moshe had no problem with the first battle against the mighty Sichon. Before battling the next king, Og, Moshe felt a sense of fear.

What was the basis of Moshe's fear?

He knew that Og had performed a good deed and was concerned that this good dead may protect Og and make it difficult or impossible to defeat him.

What was that good deed?

Og was kind enough to tell our forefather Avraham that his nephew Lot was captured. This information enabled Avraham to mount a rescue mission to save Lot – which he did. It was this good deed that Moshe feared.

How could Moshe possibly have been afraid of this deed?

Og's intention when he performed this good deed was not very nice. Rashi tells us that he hoped Avrohom would die while trying to rescue Lot. Then Og would marry Avrohom's wife, Sarah, himself.

What an evil intent! Yet the deed was still credited. Moshe feared that the reward for this deed would protect Og, until Hashem told him not to be concerned.

2) Doing a mitzvah, even without pure intentions, still has some value.

As he was about to die, the great tzadik Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai started crying. He explained his emotions, by showing his students

his tzitzis and saying that this easy mitzvah costs pennies to do, yet after death, one can no longer do it.

We are born to develop a close relationship with our Creator. The way to do that is by learning Torah and performing mitzvos (between us and Hashem and to between us and our fellow man). We must grab every single mitzvah we can, while we still can. Every single mitzvah we do is precious.

Torah Tavlin



R' Chaim Aryeh Leib Fenster zt"l (Shaar Bas Rabim) would say: **וַיְהִי הַמַּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ נַחְשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב.. וְקָרְבָּנוֹ** - **קַעֲרַת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת**

Why is the posuk written **וְקָרְבָּנוֹ** - 'and his offering' regarding Nachshon ben Aminadav? He was the first Nasi to bring, so what does the 'and' imply?

According to the Medrash it was Nesanel ben Tzuar who suggested that all the Nesi'im bring korbanos during the inauguration of the Mishkan. Anyone who encourages others to do good deeds receives a reward for the encouragement and also shares the merit of the deeds themselves.

Therefore, although Nachshon ben Aminadav brought his korban first, it is written 'and his offering' to indicate that the merit was not entirely his but shared with Nesanel ben Tzuar too."

From every human being there rises a light. - Baal Shem Tov

Chacham Rabbeinu Chayim ben Attar zt"l (Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh) writes: יברכך ה' וישמרך - 'Hashem shall bless you and protect you.' Chazal tell us that this blessing refers to parnassa - one's livelihood.



As we know, 'One who increases his possessions, increases his worries,' and the minds of wealthy people are unsettled as they must supervise all their assets. Their time is always short and their nerves under strain. However, Hashem's blessing will only enrich a person 'and will not add sadness with it.' For Hashem's blessing is complete. Thus, after He blesses us with wealth, He then 'protects' us from all the worries and problems associated with prosperity.

Concepts In Avodas Halev From R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ יָאֵר ה' | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ יִשָּׂא ה' | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם 6:24-26

It is interesting to note that all three of the priestly blessings that Aharon HaKohen said in the Mishkan, and his descendants continue to recite until this very day, were delivered in the singular form as if it were given to each individual person. And yet, the most crucial of these three berachos is the third part, the blessing of shalom, peace.

Chazal tell us: **אם אין שלום אין כלום** - without peace we have nothing in life. A person can have wealth, honour, health, children .... he can truly believe that he is happy .... but without peace, when quarrel and strife are a huge part of his being, what does he really have?

Nothing. We say in our tefillos many times, **ה' יברך את עמו בשלום** - "Hashem will bless His Nation with peace."

This is what we strive for. But if so, then why is the last beracha of **שלום** not in plural form – **לשון רבים** - as peace is something between two people: husband and wife, a person and his/her friend, two neighbours, or even two siblings. Why is this beracha given in singular form?



My machshava here is not an answer to the question, because I believe that the entire premise of the question is entirely false. True peace is not between two people; real shalom and tranquillity can only be attained when a person is at peace with himself – **בין אדם לעצמו**.

Often, people get upset in life and are unhappy because they do not achieve inner peace with themselves. Why am I considered less important than my friend? Why am I not as happy as my neighbour?

My friends, if you don't have peace within yourself, you will never have peace within your home or your community. Therefore, the final beracha of **וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם** is said in singular form directed to each person individually. May we all be zocheh to attain an inner shalom.

A Life of Meaning

"The greatest pleasure in life is knowing that you are living for something meaningful." ~ R' Noach Weinberg zt"l.

5:15 וְהֵבִיא הָאִישׁ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵבִיא אֶת־קָרְבָּנָהּ עָלֶיהָ

When **R' Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt"l** was the Chief Rabbi of Yaffo, an immigrant couple from Bialystok came before him. The woman complained terribly about her husband's behaviour and demanded a divorce. After meeting with them for a while, the Chief Rabbi saw that there was no chance of making peace between them and agreed that divorce was the only solution. However, the cruel husband refused to free the woman from the torture she suffered at his hands and would not agree to divorce her. No manner of persuasion was effective. This went on for over two years.



One day, the couple returned to the Beis Din with good news; the husband finally agreed to give his wife the divorce. Everyone realized the urgency of the situation and R' Kook rushed to summon the members of his Rabbinical Court, the sofer and the witnesses. Immediately, he asked the couple their complete Hebrew names and the sofer wrote the Get in its complete form. However, before the actual ceremony, the Chief Rabbi suddenly announced that he wanted to daven Mincha first and it must be right now! The people agreed, and they began to pray.

Uncharacteristically, R' Kook prayed for an unusually long period of time. By the time Mincha was over, the judges on the Rabbinical Court looked at the clock and announced that since the sun had already set, the date of the Get was no longer accurate; rendering it unfit to use. They asked the couple to return tomorrow when it could be rewritten. The woman's family was quite upset. It took over two years to get the husband to agree to give the Get; who knows if

he wouldn't change his mind by tomorrow. Left with no choice, they had to cooperate with the Beis Din.

That very night, a man from Bialystok happened to pay a visit at the home of the Chief Rabbi. He was an old acquaintance of the rabbi and they began to catch up on old times. During the conversation, R' Kook mentioned the divorce he was in the midst of performing, as both husband and wife hailed from Bialystok. The visitor knew the couple, but he was surprised when he heard the rabbi say her name. "Her name is not Rivil, as you wrote in the Get. She used to live in my neighbourhood, and I know for sure that her name is Esther Rivka!"

Of course, the rabbi grilled his guest who insisted that he has no doubt as to her real name since she lived near him for many years. R' Kook realized that the Get in its present state was incorrect and had he gone through with it, the couple would not be legally divorced. The consequences of this proceeding could have been devastating for many reasons.

The next day, when the couple returned to the court, the Chief Rabbi immediately began asking them their complete Jewish names. The woman once again stated that her name was Rivil, but when R' Kook persisted in questioning her, she admitted that Rivil was really a nickname that her friends called her; her actual name was Rivka.

Word got around and the entire city of Yaffo was humming with excitement at the incredible Divine intervention that their Chief Rabbi enjoyed. It must be a miracle, they claimed. But when someone mentioned this to the Chief Rabbi himself, he chuckled and insisted that it was no miracle.

"I will tell you what was going through my mind," said R' Kook, to the gaggle of followers who were listening. "You see, one of the witnesses who was brought in to sign the Get was a prominent member of the community who works at a public institution. Recently, this man had sent me a number of letters pertaining to

personal and communal matters and I noticed that the letters were written on stationary of the firm where he worked."

R' Kook looked at the people and said, "I thought to myself: according to the Torah, this man is considered a thief; notwithstanding the small amount he is taking without permission from his company. Consequently, he is disqualified from acting as a witness. If I allow the husband to give his wife this Get, it will not be valid since it does not bear the signature of two valid witnesses. On the other hand, I did not want to embarrass this man by disqualifying him in public, so I decided to stall for time and reschedule the entire ceremony for the next day when I could invite someone else to be a valid witness.

"Since I was careful not to embarrass a fellow Jew, I received Divine assistance on a matter which I was totally unaware of; the real name of the woman!"



R' Gamliel Rabinowitz Shlit'a would say:

"We read Parshas Naso after Shavuos to indicate that after Kabbolas Hatorah and our sincere acceptance and devotion to the performance of Torah and mitzvos, we will have attained a new level of **נשא** - 'elevation' from the level we were on before Yom Tov.

This grand **נשיאה** is the entire purpose of Kabbolas Hatorah."

6:23 דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמוֹר לָהֶם

As inconspicuous as he tried to be, the Gedolim of his generation recognized the true value of the Pressburger Rav, **R' Akiva Sofer ZT"L** (Daas Sofer). **The Belzer Rebbe, R' Aharon Rokeach ZT"L**, would go to visit R' Akiva whenever he came from Tel Aviv to Yerushalayim. His attendants related that whenever he went, he asked that his shoes be polished in honour of the Daas Sofer.



The Belzer Rebbe once asked the Rav to bless him, placing the Rav's hands on his head. The Daas Sofer refused until the Rebbe begged him a few times, after which he agreed. A few days later, the Pressburger Rav was walking in Meah Shearim with his shamash, when a beggar extended his hand for a donation.

R' Akiva gladly obliged him. Having received a sum, the beggar lifted his hands, intending to place them on the Rav's head in blessing. In defence of his Rav's honor, the shamash pushed off the beggar's hands, but R' Akiva gently stopped him, saying, "If the saintly Belzer Rebbe took a beracha from a lowly person such as me with hands on his head, then I too can take a blessing in this manner from this poor man!"

The Birchas Kohanim are an expression of Hashem's love and kindness - how His Holy Name is placed upon His holy nation. When the Kohen recites these blessings, he raises his hands and stretches them out. This is to teach us that although people do give blessings generously, and it is indeed a benevolent practice, nevertheless, it is

extremely important to not just utter words; we must also "raise our hands" and "stretch them out" - we must actually do something materialistic, whether financially or through extra toil and effort, to help a fellow Jew in need.

Eternal Gifts By R' Mordechai Kamenetzky

וְכָל־תְּרוּמָה לְכָל־קָדְשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־יַקְרִיבוּ לַכֹּהֵן לוֹ יִהְיֶה 5:9



What a person gives away seems forever lost. The Torah, in cryptic fashion, uses proper nouns and pronouns in a mysterious medley that teaches us a little about real property, about what you give and what one really has.

The Torah tells us about tithing. "And every portion from any of the holies that the Children of Israel bring to the Kohen shall be his. A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his." What the Torah seems to tell us is that the donor has no further right to item given to the Kohen. So why not say it clearly? "What a man gives to the Kohen belongs to the Kohen." Obviously, there is a dual reference attached to the pronoun. What lies within that double allusion?

Rabbi Betzalel Zolty, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, of blessed memory, related the following story: The Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka Yeshiva, **Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein** was in America in 1924, raising much needed funds for his Yeshiva. During his visit, he received an urgent telegram. The Lithuanian authorities were going to conscript the Slobodka students into the army. **Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel**, the founder and Dean of the Yeshiva, made a decision to open a branch

of Slobodka Yeshiva in the ancient city of Chevron in Eretz Israel. He would send 150 students to Palestine to establish the Yeshiva, and in this way free them from service in the apostatizing, ruthless Lithuanian army. That monumental undertaking would require a sum of $25,000 to transport, house, and establish the Yeshiva. Rabbi Epstein was put to the task. He discussed the program with a dear friend of the Yeshiva, Mr. Schiff, who immediately decided to contribute the massive sum in its entirety.

Years later, in the 1920s, the tide turned for Mr. Schiff. With the crash of the stock market, and plummeting real estate prices, it took only a few months before he was forced out of his own apartment and was relegated to the cellar of a building that was once his, existing on meagre rations.

At the same time, the health of Rabbi Epstein was failing, and he no longer had the strength to travel. His son-in-law, **Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna**, made the trip to America, in his stead, to raise funds for the Slobodka Yeshiva. He did not know of Mr. Schiff's situation until the man got up to speak at a parlour meeting on behalf of the Yeshiva.

"My dear friends," he began. "I do not wish my business misfortunes on anyone. I invested literally millions of dollars in all sorts of businesses, and they all failed. I have absolutely nothing to show for them. But there is one investment I made that continues to bear fruit. I gave $25,000 to establish a Yeshiva in Chevron, and that investment is the best one I ever made. - One must know where to invest."

When Rabbi Sarna, heard that Mr. Schiff was literally bankrupt, he cabled Rabbi Epstein, who quickly responded to arrange to give him a $5,000 loan, in order to get him back on his feet and begin doing business again. Through some generous benefactors, Rabbi Sarna got a hold of the cash and went directly to the basement apartment where Mr. Schiff now resided. He explained to him that Rabbi Epstein insisted he take this money as a loan. Mr. Schiff jumped up

in horror, "What do you want from my life? The only money I have left is the $25,000 that I gave the Yeshiva. Do you want to take that from me as well?"

In its mystical manner, the Torah teaches us the power of the eternal gift. "A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his."

We invest much in this world. We work. We buy. We build. We spend. But what do we really have? At the end of the hopefully long day, we call life, what can we say is eternally ours? Stocks crash, and buildings crumble. How real is our estate?

The Torah tells us, what the man gives to the Kohen shall be his. It does not say, "… will belong to the Kohen. It says, it shall be his! What we invest in the eternity of spirituality, in order to proliferate Hashem's eternal message, will never be relinquished. For what we invest for eternity, will be eternally invested. It shall always remain ours.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

An older, wealthy man once asked Rav Aaron Leib Shteinman, "Why is it that there are so many *Kollels* these days? When I was young, there were never so many!"

Rav Aaron Leib responded, "I'd like to ask *you* a question. Why is it that today there are so many wealthy Jews? It never used to be like that!

The answer is that there are so many wealthy Jews because there are so many *Kollels* that need to be supported. If there were less *Kollels*, there would be less wealthy Jews!"

Chacham Rabbeinu Yitzchok Karo ZT"L (Toldos Yitzchok) would say:



"In the blessings of Birkas Kohanim, the first posuk has three words, which alludes to the three people called up to the Torah on Mondays and Thursdays. The second posuk has five words, alluding to the five people called up on the Yomim Tovim, and the last posuk has seven words, alluding to the seven people called up on Shabbos. It ends with the word 'Sholom' and in order that there not be any arguments between the Kohanim, Leviim and Yisroelim.

It was determined that both sets receive eight aliyos in a week. Yisroelim receive five on Shabbos morning, one by Mincha, and one each on Monday and Thursday, while the Kohanim and Leviim together receive two on Shabbos morning and Mincha, and two on both Monday and Thursday. This way, there was no room to quarrel."

R' Chaim Soloveitchik ZT"L would say:

"The halachah states that at the end of Shemoneh Esrei, one must take three steps back before he is allowed to say 'Sholom'. For **שלום** - peace, it is worth taking a few steps back!"

כָּל־הַבָּא לַעֲבֹד עֲבֹדַת עֲבֹדָה וַעֲבֹדַת מַשָּׂא בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד 4:47



The renowned Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius, was a prominent figure in the early 1900's who played an important role in the formation of the Finnish national identity. His mastery of the orchestra and his symphonic talents have been described as "prodigious."

Sibelius was once hosting a party at which many of those in attendance were businessmen. I close friend approached him and wondered aloud, "Why in the world would you invite so many businessmen to your party? You're a musician. What in the world could you possibly have in common to talk to businessmen about?"

Sibelius shook his head in wonder. "I don't understand. I talk to them about music!" His friend was shocked. "Music? What do businessmen know about music? If you want to talk about music, why don't you invite musicians to your party?" Sibelius laughed, "Musicians? I can't stand talking to musicians! All they ever want to talk about is money!"

The Torah clearly defines the role of the Leviim in the Mishkan and later in the Temple sanctuaries. Their Avodah was to sing, play musical instruments and create an atmosphere of holiness through song and continuous praise of the Almighty. They were chosen for this because this is where their talents lay and they had no right to forgo this privilege if they were uninterested or unwilling to sing.

All of Bnei Yisroel should learn a lesson from this that if you have a talent, you're expected by the Almighty to utilize it to its fullest. If you can sing, daven for the Amud! If you can speak, talk to others and assist them! If you can write, become a scribe! If you have a G-d-given talent – don't waste it!

The famous Greek philosopher Aristotle was known as a brilliant and revered man, whose writings created a broad system of philosophy, encompassing morality and aesthetics, logic and science, politics and metaphysics.

Aristotle was once dining at home when some of his students came to discuss matters of philosophy with him. The students were led into the dining room where their revered teacher was eating. They were rather surprised to discover that they could not see their master's face. He was indulging, headfirst, into an enormous piece of chicken!



They said to him, "Our master, how is it that a great man such as you can sink to such depths of baseness?" Aristotle barely lifted his head as he replied, "When I am outside, I am the great philosopher, Aristotle, but when I am in my own home, I'm just a regular man who wants to eat!"

This is not the Jewish way, says **R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L**. A Jew must behave in a proper manner both in public and in private. We see this from the description of the twelve princes' offerings for the dedication of the mishkan, which is repeated twelve times, followed by the sum total of all that they brought.

Rashi delineates from here that all the vessels of the Temple were equal, both individually and when weighed together, "no more and no less." Just as the holy vessels were of the same weight whether taken alone, or as a group, so too, a person must live his life in equal proportions; he must be the same inside and outside, in public and in private. This is the way a Jew must live in order not to cause damage to his spirituality.

דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמוֹר לָהֶם 6:23



When the German Army's notorious "Afrika Korps" invaded and conquered North Africa in 1941, many of the large Sephardic communities of Tunisia, Libya and Morocco came under Nazi control and were made to suffer as their brethren in Europe did. However, the first order of the Germans, even before the round-up and persecution of the Jews, was the arrest of all important government officials. Governors, city leaders and men of civic distinction were seized and herded off to a massive holding facility in the city of Budniv, Morroco, which happened to be the city where the great Baba Sali, **R' Yisroel Abuchatzeira ZT"L** served as Rabbi.

One of the prisoners, the revered Arab ruler, Al-Haj Tahami El Jilavi, a benevolent leader who treated Jew and Arab equally well, was also incarcerated in Budniv. On the day that the Arab leader was taken out to face his German captors, he was paraded through the streets to shame and embarrass him. As they were walking, El

Jilavi looked out and noticed the holy Rabbi of Budniv walking on his way. Immediately he stopped and called out to the Baba Sali. R' Yisroel also stopped. An interesting spectacle was unfolding between the Arab governor and the Jewish rabbi, and the Germans' interest was piqued. El Jilavi shouted, "Holy rabbi, do you have a son?" Unsure if this was some sort of ploy, R' Yisroel hesitated. But remembering the benevolence of the Arab governor, he finally responded, "Yes, Honourable Governor. I have a son. His name is Meir." "Splendid," called out El Jilavi. "Rabbi, I want you to bless him."

A strange request, but the Baba Sali complied and murmured a blessing to his son Meir. "No, rabbi," said the Arab. "That's not the way one gives a blessing, murmuring under one's breath. From the depths of your heart, concentrate on your son and deliver a heart-felt blessing." This time, R' Yisroel closed his eyes and began to slowly intone a special prayer on behalf of his son. Suddenly, the Governor interrupted him and called out, "Now, rabbi, include me in your blessing!"

The Baba Sali paused, surprised, but then did as he was asked and included the name of the Arab Governor in his prayer. Finally satisfied, El Jilavi allowed himself to be led away. Very soon, thereafter, word got aound that Al Haj Tahami El Jilavi, the Arab ruler, was let free and allowed to return to his provincial palace in Marrakesh. But before he left Budniv, he made a special stop at the home of the rabbi of Budniv to thank him, as he attributed his fortuitous release to the blessing of the holy man.

When the Baba Sali asked him why he insisted on including himself in a blessing for his son, rather than request a blessing for himself, the governor smiled and said, "Rabbi, I'm sure you know that the Almighty in Heaven will listen to a prayer or blessing, if it is delivered from the depths of one's heart. For me personally, I could not be sure that the rabbi's blessing would be perfectly sincere and genuine. But I knew that for the rabbi's son, he would surely muster

up the emotion needed to effect a Heavenly response. It was this blessing that I wanted bestowed upon me, and obviously, the Almighty hearkened to this heart-felt request!" The governor remained kind and a friend to the Jews all his life.

Once a man brought his ten year old son to visit R' Aharon HaGadol of Karlin ZT"L.



As they were sitting and talking, R' Aharon asked for a bowl of apples to be brought in. R' Aharon and his guests each took an apple, and with great intention recited the blessing, "Borei Pri HaEtz", and began to eat. The boy thought to himself, "What is the difference between me and the Rebbe. He eats apples and I also eat apples. He makes a blessing and so do I. Even I could be the Rebbe someday."

R' Aharon, attuned as he was to the thoughts of others, felt what the youngster was thinking. "Oh, there is a real difference between us, my son," divulged Reb Aharon. "When you wake up in the morning and look out the window, you see that there is a beautiful apple tree in your yard. You see the juicy, red apples growing on it and right away you can think of nothing else but those apples. You run to wash your hands, get dressed as quickly as possible, bolt out the door and scamper up the tree. You quickly decide which apple is to be your breakfast and open your mouth for the first delicious bite. You almost take that bite until you remember, just in time, that you must make a blessing before eating an apple. So, you make the blessing in order to eat."

The boy and his father listened, enraptured, to the words of the great Rebbe. "But you see, my son, when I wake up in the morning," continued R' Aharon, "it is a different story. When I wake up and look out the window, I see a beautiful apple tree. I think about the wonder of Hashem's creation. I contemplate how this apple tree began as a small seed in the ground, and how it slowly grew year by year until one year it flowered and then apples appeared. I remember to wash my hands before I run outside to take a closer look at this amazing creation. In awe of Hashem and His Creation, I want to make a blessing on the apple tree and its fruits. I begin to say the blessing, but then I remember, in order to make a blessing, I need an apple!"

R' Aharon took the young boy's hand. "The gemara **בבא קמא ל:** teaches us "One who wants to be a true Chassid - pious Jew, must fulfil the laws of blessings." This advice is good for us today. Each blessing which one makes, represents a stride forward in ever increasing d'vekus to the Creator. This is d'vekus, and this is the essence of Chassidus!"



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"Hisbodedus, self-solitude, is good for the soul. But the primary form of hisbodedus is actually when one is among people.

After all, when one is silent while alone, what restraint has he exercised?" – Harav Yitzchak of Vorka.

Migdal Ohr - J. Gewirtz

R' Tzvi Pesach Frank z"l, served on the Bais Din of the Eida HaChareidis for over 60 years, eventually becoming the Av Bais Din and Rav of Jerusalem. He possessed the courage of a lion as he fearlessly ruled Halacha the way he saw it, despite giving the utmost respect to preceding poskim.

R' Tzvi Pesach earned lofty titles such as Posek HaDor, Adjudicator of the generation, yet when it came to dealing with the populace, he had a heart of soft gold. When a poor person brought him a chicken to check and he found it was not kosher, he would take money out of his pocket and tell him to buy another one.



Once, a poor woman came with a treif chicken. He knew she would be insulted if he gave her money, so he walked into the kitchen and asked his daughter if they had any freshly slaughtered chickens, which they did. He disposed of the treif chicken, replacing it with his own. He then brought the new one out to the woman and told her that after examining her chicken, he ruled it Kosher.

Parsha Pages - Blessing of the Kohanim

כֹּ֥ה תְבָרֲכ֖וּ אֶת־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל 6:23

The Baal HaTurim says: כֹּה – Thus - This word (first word of the instruction of the blessing) has the numerical value of 25. The Torah mentions the word "brachah" 25 times and also the word "shalom" 25 times. This is in keeping with the words, "HaShem yevoreich es amo vashalom" (HaShem will bless His people with peace).

וַיְהִי הַמַּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ נַחְשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב לְמַטֵּה יְהוּדָה

When the Torah describes the sacrifices brought by the nesi'im – leaders of the tribes, the first leader, Nachshon Ben Aminadav, is not identified as being a nasi. All it states is, "The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nachshon ben Aminadav, of the tribe of Yehudah." The second nasi is described only as the "leader of Yissochar," as if he was just one of many. Only from the third nasi on does the Torah say, **נָשִׂיא לִבְנֵי זְבוּלֻן**- "the leader of the children of Zevulun."

Why does the posuk purposely play down the titles of these great princes and leaders of their people? Why aren't all the nesi'im written in the same manner?



R' Moshe Chafetz ZT"L explains: The Torah is teaching a tremendously important lesson to all leaders, and that is to always be humble. Thus, to "compensate" for Nachshon's being listed first, he is not described as a nasi, i.e., he is given no honorific. Nesanel Ben Tsuar, the prince and leader of the tribe of Yissochar, who is listed second, is not called "the leader of the sons of Yissochar," but just the "leader of Yissochar," a somewhat more modest title. Once the honour of being listed first or second is past, only from the third nasi on is the full title given.

A Wise Man would say: ***"The greatest danger in life for most people is not that they aim too high and miss their goal, but that they aim too low and reach it."***

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Holding on to the Inspiration

In this week's parashah, the Torah lists the korbanos the nesi'im brought to dedicate the Mishkan (chanukas hamizbeiach). The Torah writes, זֹאת חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּיוֹם הִמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ "This is the dedication of the mizbeiach, on the day it was anointed" (7:84). A few pesukim later, the Torah writes again, זֹאת חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אַחֲרֵי הִמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ "This is the dedication of the mizbeiach after it was anointed" (7:88).

So which one was it; the korbanos were brought on the day or after the mizbeiach was anointed? (Rashi 7:84 addresses this question.)



The Imrei Emes zy"a teaches that from these two terms: on the day - after, we derive that whenever one has a day of inspiration, he should make sure that this uplifted spirit will continue afterwards as well. For example (and presently applicable) we've just finished celebrating the holiday of Shavuos. Now we must maintain its spirit with us. We can do this by making a kabalah (resolution) to do a good deed that we will keep in the upcoming months. Whenever one is inspired, he should translate that inspiration into a good deed, and the inspiration will remain with him.

Those who were inspired on Shavuos, and have reached a higher level, must be more wary from the yetzer hara. This is the reason one must translate the inspiration into deeds and make resolutions, so he won't lose it.

Never Give Up

Regarding the Nazir who brings two korbanos for inadvertently becoming tammei, the Torah tells us: He shall sanctify his head on that day..... the previous days shall be cancelled (lit. will fall) (Bamidbar 6: 11-12).

The Bais Yisroel would emphasize from these pesukim that a person who has sinned should never give up hope of returning to Hashem. After the nazir accidentally become tammei, it would be natural for him to have thoughts of hopelessness, "Hashem obviously doesn't appreciate my attempts to grow in ruchnios if this happened to me".

The Torah tells us He shall sanctify his head on that day... the previous days shall be cancelled. - Forget all your "cheshbonos" and cry out to Hashem, "I am starting fresh today". Never give up after a fall.

Torah Gems

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם 6:24-26



In the sacred writings of the Ramcha"l, **R' Moshe Chaim Luzzato ZT"L**, it is explained that the berachah found in this weeks parsha, **יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ** - "May Hashem shine His face upon you," constitutes the apex of all blessing, as it is all-encompassing.

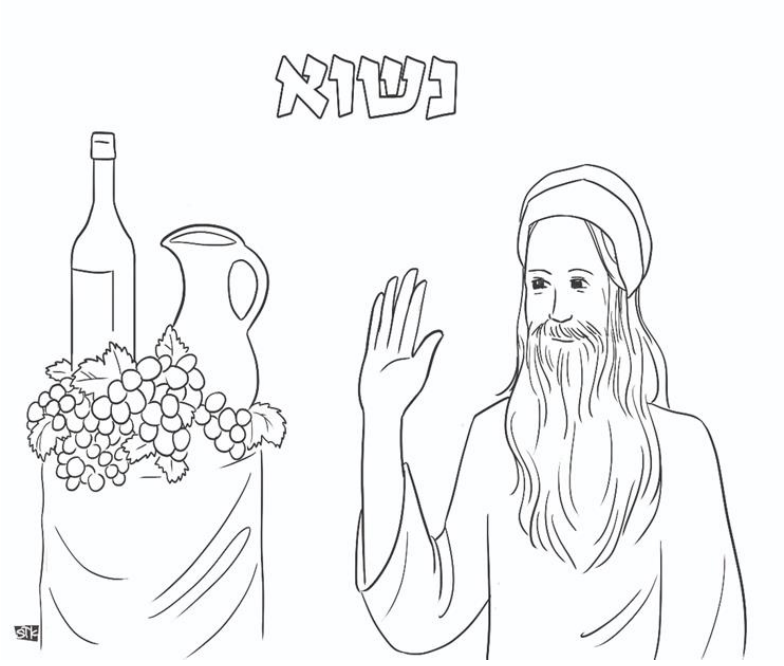
The Medrash comments, "Yisroel said before the Al-mighty, 'All we have to ask for is the shining of Your face,' as the posuk states, 'L-rd of Hosts restore us, shine Your face and we will be saved!'"

How do we merit the shining of Hashem's face upon us, the blessing which incorporates all berachos and the peak of all goodness, including success and salvation? There is a guaranteed way.

Explains **R' Avigdor Miller ZT"L**, as we know, Hashem treats us measure for measure. Thus, "Whoever has compassion for other people, the Heavens have compassion on him." Whoever shines his face to others - family members, friends and even acquaintances - Hashem up above will shine His face upon him.

Let's remember to always smile and maintain a pleasant countenance, and deal with others patiently and benevolently. In this way, we may merit the shining of Hashem's face upon us, which contains all the berachos in the world! Is there an easier way to achieve all this abundance of goodness and prosperity?

Torah Tidbits by Rabbi Nachman Winkler



The sedra teaches us the laws of the Nazir. The haftara tells us of a famous Nazir, Shimshon. The nazirship of Shimshon is not typical. His was "ordered" by G-d via a heavenly angel and was to be a Nazir from birth, for Shimshon's entire life. "Regular" nazirship is proclaimed by a vow and is for a limited time, usually one month. The nazir's outward appearance - his unshorn hair - should be the external evidence of an inner sanctity. In Shimshon's case, his nazirship was accompanied by miraculous feats and heroic achievements against the Philistines who were Israel's major adversaries of the time.

Although the lengthy parsha of Naso includes numerous different topics, the Rabbis chose the mitzva of nezirut to be the bridge to connect us to the parsha and, by necessity, it had to relate the story of Shimshon HaGibor. "By necessity", because there is no person in all of Tanach who is identified as a nazir except for Shimshon (there is an argument in the Talmud as to whether Shmuel HaNavi was a nazir precisely because the text never calls him such). The haftara is taken from the Book of Shoftim (chapter 13) which relates to us the miraculous birth of Shimshon to a once barren woman and the laws of nezirut that would guide him throughout his life.

We read almost nothing about Shimson's life in this haftara and certainly that is understandable, as the theme that connects us to the parsha is that of the strictures imposed upon the nazir - which is precisely what the haftara relates as well. And yet, one can imagine that Chazal's choice of only this perek may have also been based on the fact that much of the Samson story is troubling. Like the greats of Israel, Yitzchak, Ya'akov, Yosef and Shmuel, he was born to a barren woman and, like Yitzchak, his miraculous birth was harbingered by G-d's angel. Shimshon would be the saviour of Israel who would begin to cast off the yoke of Philistine rule and a man who, as the final words of the haftara reveal, would have the spirit of Hashem "resound" in him.



But as we continue his story in the subsequent chapters, we read of a man who is the only shofet who fails to organize an army behind

him and who battles the enemy only for personal revenge. His own people do not rally around him and even hand him over to the enemy! His marriage to a Philistine woman and his downfall through the hands of another Philistine woman, his hedonistic lifestyle and his attachment to the Philistines, hardly depict a nazir-like spiritual giant we would expect from one who had the spirit of Hashem "resounding" in him.

The very fact that the Plishtim remained a powerful adversary of Israel throughout his life so that Shimshon, weakened and subsequently imprisoned, died having been blinded by the very enemy he was to subdue, makes us wonder if indeed he kept Hashem's charge to begin casting off the yoke of the Philistines.

However, this troubling story of the final judge in the Book of Shoftim must also be understood as a criticism of the entire nation who, knowing of his miraculous birth and the promise he held for them - a promise given by an angel of G-d - nonetheless fail to join him and support him. They appear passive and submissive, fearful and meek.

No leader, no matter how great, can be successful without willing followers. The nation's lack of faith in Hashem and in His promises prevents Shimshon from living up to his potential.

G-d grants us opportunities - but it is up to us see them, believe in them, and take advantage of them. A message we would do well to remember.

כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר בטל דבר בטלה אהבה. ושאינה תלויה בדבר אינה בטלה לעולם "Any love that depends upon a thing is annulled if that thing is annulled. Love that does not depend upon a thing will never be annulled." ***Pirkei Avot 5:19***

Person to Person – Rabbi R Apple of Sydney



The Chafetz Chayim notices something very interesting about the priestly blessing which is one of the major features of this sidra. He sees that the kohen (or kohanim) whose task it is to pronounce the blessing is commanded to address the whole community ("They shall place My name on the Children of Israel"), yet the blessing is couched in the singular. The kohen says יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ, "The L-rd bless thee and keep thee." Logically the words should be plural – "The Lord bless you (all of you) and keep you…"

The Chafetz Chayim's explanation is that though the kohen is addressing the community as a whole, he is really speaking to every one of the individuals who make up the community. This one needs comfort, this one needs encouragement, this one needs a supportive hand - they are all part of the community, but none is apart from the community. The kohen reaches out to every individual. No one gets shunted aside or pushed behind anyone else.

"The greatness of Hashem is that He is infinite, and yet He takes an interest in the small details of our lives.

He runs the entire universe and yet listens to the prayer of single individual." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Birkat Kohanim



This week's Sedra includes the blessings recited by the kohanim. Although in earlier times the kohanim blessed the nation every day, a centuries old custom has developed that they do so only on Festivals when the Jewish people still feel the joy that should accompany these blessings.

In Israel they are recited every day, and twice on Shabbat and holidays. We can ask a very basic question. Why does Hashem need the kohanim to bless us? Can't He do it Himself? The verses even seem to point to just this question. First Hashem instructs the kohanim "thus shall you bless the People of Israel... and concludes with saying "and I will bless them - **וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם**".

So who is actually blessing? The kohanim or Hashem?

The Rashbam answers that the kohanim were not commanded to bless the nation as one friend might bless another friend, but rather to invoke the Divine blessing on the nation. G-d promised to respond to the prayer of the kohanim that He bless and guard Israel. Hashem stands with the kohanim to bless us.

If Hashem is the one blessing us - then why do we need the kohanim at all? This is another example of enlisting human cooperation in the work of Hashem. Kohanim, reciting their blessing, prepare the nation to be ready to accept the blessings bestowed on them by G-d. The blessings of the kohanim focus them to be able to receive and appreciate G-d's blessings.

There are many people who go to great lengths, travel far distances, to get a bracha from a great Rabbi. While this can't hurt, it is told

that **Rav Shvadron**, himself a kohen, when asked by someone for a blessing, told him, why don't you come to the shul where I prayer every morning, and then I can give you a better bracha then my personal one - I can be a conduit for G-d's blessing as the verse says VAANI AVAR'CHEIM. To improve our iyun tefila for a prayer said every day it would be beneficial to understand what we are saying.

The blessings are in an ascending order. This ascending order and increasing surge of blessing is reflected in the language and rhythm of the verses of birkat kohanim.

The first verse has three words, then 5, then 7. The blessing referred to in the first verse relates to man's material needs as Rashi says - "man's properties will be blessed - Y'VARECH'CHA and protected -V'YISHM'RECHA - both from outsiders who might steal his things, but also from his own selfishness or haughtiness.

The second verse deals with our spiritual growth - VICHUNEKA - as the Midrash says "that you should be CHONENIM to each other - caring for each other. Hashem looks favourably on us making it easier for us to look positively on our fellow Jews.

The third blessing is the climax - combining both of these factors together - "may G-d shine His countenance to you" - Rabeinu B'chaye explains this to mean Hasgacha pratit – G-d won't be angry at us and won't hide His face, but will be with us. He will grant us with peace, without which blessings cannot be fully realized. May we have true peace soon in our times.

"When a person has a major problem, worrying prevents him from thinking of practical ways to solve the problem. The calmer you are, the easier it will be for you solve the problem." ~ R' Yosef Yuspeh Hahn of Frankfurt ZT"L (Yosef Ometz)

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

7:18 בַּיּוֹם֙ הַשִּׁשִּׁ֔י הִקְרִ֖יב נְתַנְאֵ֣ל בֶּן־צוּעָ֑ר נְשִׂ֖יא יִשָּׂשכָֽר - פני דוד



"Why does the Posuk not state Nesanel's title of Nasi before his name, and why does the word **נשיא** have a Shva underneath the Nun, as opposed to all the other Nesi'im who have a Komatz underneath the Nun?

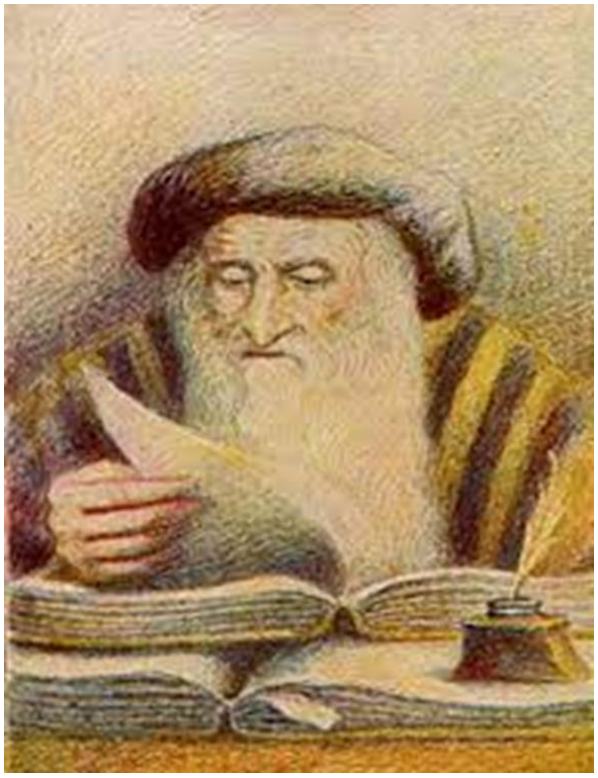
Nesanel was a great Anav, was truly humble. The Torah placed the word **נשיא** after his name to tell us that he was humble, and also placed a Shva under the Nun, for a Shva is like one leaning, versus the Komatz, which is like one standing. Nesanel was always leaning, did not stand up straight, due to his incredible humility.

Birchas HaTorah

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zy'a said in the name of tzaddikim, that after birchas HaTorah is an eis ratzon - an auspicious time for tefillah. Birkas HaTorah is when one accepts on himself the yoke of Torah, with the goal to learn it and to teach it. Therefore, this is a very special time and his tefillos are answered. One should pray for success that day, and he will merit it. This is a tested and proven segulah.

There are three crucial ingredients to a successful Jewish home: Torah, Kedusha, and Simcha. - Rav Pam.

Torah U'Tefilah - L'Maaseh



The greatest commentator we have on virtually all areas of Torah is Rashi. His name is an acronym for Rabban Shel Yisroel, which means 'The Rebbe for all of Klal Yisroel'.

There is a story told about his mother while she was pregnant with Rashi. She was visiting the city of Worms and happened to be walking down a narrow alleyway. Suddenly, a French knight on a horse turned down the alley she was on and was galloping down the street and headed straight for her. There was no room for her to move to the side because the road was so narrow, and she couldn't possibly get back to the beginning of the alleyway because of how fast the horse was running.

Without any other choice, just as she was about to be trampled by the horse, she pressed herself against the stone wall of the alleyway, flattening herself as much as she could. Inexplicably, the stones slid inward and allowed her to make room for the knight to get past her, avoiding any harm!

When it was safe again, she stepped back into the alleyway and saw how there was miraculously an impression that her body had left in the stone wall where she had pressed against. The wall remained indented like that for years to come!

There is also a great story told about Rashi's father, Rav Yitzchok, who was a dealer in precious stones. One time he was selling a particularly rare and precious gem. One of the king's noblemen happened to notice it and told Rav Yitzchok that he would like to purchase it, as it was a perfect match of a gem in one of the king's idols, and they had been searching for another such stone.

The nobleman ordered Rav Yitzchok to pack it safely and travel with him to see the king and present it to him, and he would be paid very generously for the gem. Rav Yitzchok had no intention of selling his gem for use in idol worship, but he dared not refuse the nobleman, so he agreed to travel.

For part of the trip, they had to travel by boat, and Rav Yitzchok came up with a plan. He started talking to the other noblemen and passengers about the gem, and about how much the king would pay for it. He threw in comments like, "If you would only see it, you would appreciate how valuable it is!" Finally, the people's curiosity was piqued enough, and they asked to see the gem.

Rav Yitzchok refused, and said that if anything would happen to it, he would be devastated. However, the people said that nothing would happen. He allowed them to persuade him to show the gem to them, and with deliberate drama, he unwrapped the precious stone.

As everyone was admiring the gem, Rav Yitzchok pretended to lose his balance when the boat started rocking, and he threw the precious stone into the water, pretending that it happened by accident!

Immediately, he started crying and shouting that he lost his treasure, and carried on for the rest of the trip, blaming everyone for 'making him' show them, and now he would not be getting the promised fortune from the king. When he later stood in front of the king, Rav Yitzchok was still crying over his 'loss', and when the king saw how remorseful and upset Rav Yitzchok was, he dismissed him and sent him home! It has been said that because of the sacrifice Rav Yitzchok made by throwing his valuable gem into the water in order not to benefit Avodah Zarah, he was Bentched with a child like Rashi, who would illuminate the world with the light of Torah and be the Rebbe for the entire Klal Yisroel!

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לְאָחִיו וּלְאַחֹתוֹ לֹא יִטַּמָּא לָהֶם בְּמֹתָם כִּי נֵזֶר אֱלֹקָיו עַל רֹאשׁוֹ
***To his father, to his mother, to his brother, to his sister, he shall not make himself impure for them upon their deaths, for the crown of his G-d is upon his head* (6:7)**

Due to his holy status, a Nazir is prohibited from coming into contact with a dead body — even of his close relatives. However, a Kohen is also called "holy," yet his may come into contact with the dead bodies of his close relatives. Why is a Nazir considered more holy in this regard than a Kohen?

The Shem MiShmuel answers that the difference between a Nazir and a Kohen is not in their level of holiness, but in how they acquired their status of holiness. A Kohen received his holy status through birth — the simple fact that he was born into a family of Kohanim makes him a Kohen. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate for his level of holiness to be a factor which prohibits him from acting in such a way towards his family — which was his very right to his level of holiness in the first place. However, a Nazir attains his level of holiness through choice — not through any connection with his family. As such, there is no factor to prevent the prohibition of becoming impure for them.

With this understanding, the Shem MiShmuel explains why the Kohen Gadol — despite being a Kohen — is not permitted to become impure for his family members. It is because the Kohen Gadol's status of additional holiness did not come through his family, rather through his own merits of being the most suitable person for the position. Therefore, like the Nazir, there is nothing to prevent the prohibition of becoming impure for a family member.

The Torah is teaching us a beautiful message: Despite one's lofty position, one must never turn his back on that which directly brought him there.



Perhaps this message is best demonstrated through the actions of **Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman** who was saved from the War, first by hiding from the Germans under bushes and then through eating wild berries in the forest where he fled and lived for six months.

After moving to Eretz Yisroel, Rav Gustman would water his neighbor's plants and the bushes around the Yeshiva. When the students suggested that it perhaps wasn't befitting the Rosh Yeshiva to take time away from his learning to do that, Rav Gustman responded that bushes and plants saved his life, so he owes a debt of gratitude to them!

Even though they clearly weren't the same bushes and plants, and perhaps not even the same species of bushes and plants, nevertheless, Rav Gustman understood the message from our Parasha; that his lofty position did not excuse him from showing appreciation to that which was the direct cause for him to reach that position.

Greeting people on Shabbos

It is important to greet people on Shabbos and say "Good Shabbos."

The Shelah Hakadosh says that when one says "Good Shabbos", one fulfils "זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ," adding that if done b'simchah, it is as though one is greeting Hashem!

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

וישם לך שלום - ***And establish peace for you*** (6:26)



Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, zt"l, finds the source for greeting another Jew with 'Shalom' in this Posuk. When one Jew meets another Jew he wants to bless him with Bircas Kohanim – the Priestly Blessings – but the Brachah is too long to recite to everyone he meets in the street, so instead, he stretches out his hand.

There are fourteen joints in the hand corresponding to the first fourteen words in the Bircas Kohanim. Since there are fifteen words in Bircas Kohanim he verbally states the last word, and he says "Shalom". (Umatuk HaOhr)

Parsha Points to Ponder Compiled by Ozer Alport

Why are the blessings of Birkas Kohanim, which are only recited in the presence of at least 10 males, worded in the singular and not in the plural? (Darkei HaShleimus)

Rav Shloma Margolis suggests that the blessings are given in the singular to hint that blessing is most prevalent when there is achdus (togetherness) and the community is united as one.

Alternatively, even if some of the people aren't deserving of the blessings, the individuals who are, will still receive them.

Rabbi Y Richtman - Call Her Tante

This week's parsha has the most pesukim (179). The topic which uses the most pesukim is the korbanos of the Neseim. Every letter of the Torah is important and teaches us many halachos and not one thing is extra. Then there must be a very important lesson that we are supposed to learn from these pesukim.

In the Ohr Yechezckal it is written "this is to give us an understanding of how careful we must be with the honour of another person." Each nasi had a specific intent in each of the items he was bringing. Then he comes to the mishkan and he sees that the other neseim are bringing the same things he is.

Most people would get annoyed and start to claim you stole my idea or do something to make his offering better. However the Torah is testifying here, that is not the proper way. Rather the Torah is teaching us be aware of another person and think how your actions will be understood by someone else.

R' Meir Roch said he saw this type of sensitivity from his uncle R' Yecheil Gurdman. R' Yecheil lost his wife and children in the Holocaust. After the war he moved to America and got remarried.

Once R' Meir came to America and his uncle told him he must stay by them. R' Meir was very happy to accept the invitation. However, he told his uncle that he won't be arriving till very late. He figured his uncle will leave the door open for him.

When his arrival was delayed, he didn't think anything of it. Since he never thought that someone would be waiting up for him. When he arrived at the house it was way past midnight, and it was very cold.

He couldn't believe what he saw, his uncle was waiting outside. He said to his uncle" I really didn't expect you to wait up for me. Thank you very much but why did you wait outside?"

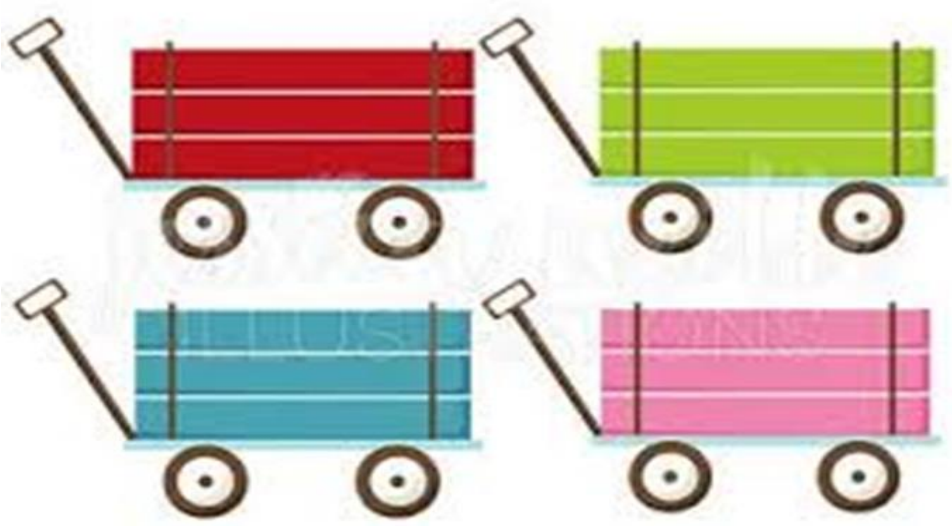


He answered him I have something important to ask of you before you come in.

"You have never met my second wife, and I wanted to make sure that you call her Tante. I want her to feel that she is really very much part of my family."

This is exactly what the Torah is teaching us here to be very careful of someone else's feelings.

Living Jewish וְאֶת אַרְבַּע הָעֲגָלֹת וְאֵת שְׁמֹנַת הַבָּקָר נָתַן לִבְנֵי מְרָרִי



The four wagons and the eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merori (Num. 7:8). The four wagons were needed to transport 48 fifteen foot panels, in addition to pillars, connecting rods, ropes and pegs.

Why were so few wagons provided? If it was possible to carry out the job with four wagons, it was important to do so, thereby using each one to its fullest capacity. If another wagon had been provided, the others would only have completed part of their appointed task. "G-d did not create one extra thing in His world." This applies also to our abilities and strengths. We must give our all in everything we do. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Which Is More Important, The Bottle Or The Water? By Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

נָשֹׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן גַּם־הֵם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם *"Take a census of the sons of Gershon, **as well**, following their fathers' household, according to their families."* (4:22)



The commentators note that the words "as well" appear to be redundant. After all, since Hashem had previously instructed Moshe to count the sons of Kehas, we automatically know that now He is instructing Moshe to count the sons of Gershon, that they are to be counted "as well."

As always, the Torah's perfection and limitless teachings justify the question: What are we being taught from these seemingly superfluous words which stress that *also* the sons of Gershon are also to be counted?

Whereas the sons of Kehas had the privilege of carrying the holy Ark, the sons of Gershon were "only" entrusted with carrying the seemingly less significant curtains, coverings and screens of the Mishkan. As such, answers Rav Moshe Feinstein, the Torah stresses that the sons of Gershon are to be counted "as well" as the sons of Kehas, meaning that they are to be counted together — in the same way — for they are equally fulfilling *their* unique purpose. And even though carrying the fabric of the Mishkan involved less fanfare than the holy Ark, it was no less crucial in any way.

Everyone is created differently: physically, mentally emotionally, and spiritually. Our strengths and weaknesses are different from one another, as are our experiences and struggles. As such, our

success in life cannot be determined by being compared to those around us. Our only measurement to determine success is whether we could have done better based on our own potential.

To illustrate this: Reuven and Shimon are carrying bottles of water. Reuven's bottle has the capacity to hold ½ a litre, and his bottle is filled right to the top. Shimon is holding a bottle that can hold 2 litres, but it is only filled half-way. Whose bottle contains more water? Shimon's; because he is carrying a litre of water. But whose bottle is "full"? - Reuven's; even though he is only carrying ½ a litre.

The same is true with all of us, we each have different skills, tools, resources and limitations. Our goal, however, is to take our bottle, whatever the size, and fill it to top, for this is the only factor that determines our success.

6 Things To Be Careful With When Learning With a Chevrusah - Rav Avrohom Genackovsky zt"l



What follows are six thoughts expressed by haGaon HaRav Avrohom Genackovsky zt"l culled from his shiurim on Meseches Derech Eretz Zutah.

1. Listen to what he is saying.
2. Don't respond or argue until after you thought about what he said.
3. Respond in order: First, Second, Third..
4. Thank him for enlightening you with the Emes – truth.
5. Don't say that you understood something that you didn't really understand.
6. If you don't know something, say you don't know.

Pennies From Heaven- Rabbi Mordecai Kamenetzky

The portion of Naso contains phrases that are said every day by every congregation in the world. In the Diaspora they are incorporated in the repetition of the Shemone Esrai, the (morning) standing prayer, and in Israel the kohanim themselves, the priests, recite them each morning as they bless the nation: Birkas Kohanim, the priestly blessings.

In this week's portion Hashem instructed the kohanim to bless the people: "Thus shall you bless the nation of Israel, speak unto them. May Hashem bless you and safeguard you. May He illuminate His countenance upon you and let you find grace. May He lift His countenance upon you and establish peace for you." (6:22-26)



It seems that we ask for more than blessing. Why is each one of the blessings followed with its practical implication? Bless us… and safeguard us. Illuminate us … and let us find favour in the eyes of others. Lift countenance.. and establish peace for us. Is it not enough to be blessed and have the illumination of his countenance? What is the necessity of the second half of each blessing?

Noted attorney Robert Harris, Esq. of Woodmere, told me a wonderful story:

A man once pleaded with the Al-mighty to bestow a bit of His abundance upon him. He implored and begged his Creator for long life and wealth. After all, the poor soul figured, G-d had an abundance of everything; why then, wouldn't He spare something for a Jew in need. He entered a huge, empty synagogue on the Lower East Side and began to cry.

"Ribono Shel Olam," he cried "in the great extent of Your eternity what is a million years?"

The man began to tremble. He imagined that he actually heard a response.

"To Me a million years is just a mere second!" boomed a voice inside his mind.

The man continued. "And," he pleaded, "to the magnitude of Your great bounty, what, may I ask, is a billion dollars?"

"A billion dollars is just a mere penny," came the resonating reply.

"Then," begged the man, "can I not have just one of your pennies?"

"Surely!" came the response. And then a pause. "But you must wait a mere second!"

It is not enough to get a blessing from Hashem. It must be given with the assurance that it will have a practical implication. Many people receive blessings of wealth and health only to lose them to thieves and aggravation. Each of the priestly blessings is followed by a safeguard – a follow up. A blessing of wealth alone is not enough. Hashem must guard it. Illuminating us with His countenance is not enough. Unless fellow humans appreciate the grace that G-d has given the Jews, in this very corporeal world, it is a worthless gift. And of course, even if He lifts his countenance upon us we still need the blessings of shalom – peace.

The Torah also teaches us that blessing others must be done with a full heart and full hand. To bestow generosity on others must include a vehicle to appreciate the bounty. Otherwise you have given the gift of a billion dollars – in a million years. We may give blessings to our fellow Jews, but the greatest blessings we receive and give are those that we can use – immediately and forever.

Play It Again Schloomiel- Rabbi Mordecai Kamenetzky



Naso is the longest portion in the Torah. It did not have to be that way, but the Torah chose to include seventy verses that say the same thing — over and over again.

The end of the parsha discusses the dedication of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). It describes the offerings that every Nasi (prince) brought in honour of the auspicious occasion. Each Nasi brought the same items.

Numbers 7:12: "On the first day, Nachshon the son of Aminadav brought his offering. It was (comprised of) one silver bowl that weighed a hundred and thirty shekels; one silver basin that weighed seventy shekels. Both were filled with fine flour and oil. One golden ladle filled with incense. A young bull, a ram, a sheep, and so on." The Torah uses six verses to expound, in precise detail, the exact measurements and components of the offering.

On the second day, Nesanel ben Tzuar of the tribe of Yissachar brought the exact same offering. On the third day Eliyav of Zevulun performed the same ceremony. Elitzoor ben Shdayoor of Reuvain repeated the same ritual on the fourth day, and on the fifth day of the dedication, Shimon's prince **Schloomiel**, repeated the same. This

was repeated twelve separate days, by twelve different N'siim (princes). And each day the Torah repeats verbatim the entire offering, changing only the name of the presenter and his tribe.

Normally, the Torah is concise and abbreviated. It leaves us to expound the hidden and to deduce the conclusions. In fact, the two Talmudic Tractates that explain the intricate laws of marriage and divorce are derived from only a handful of verses in Deuteronomy. Why, if all twelve brought the exact same gifts, is each and every Nasi's offering detailed over and over?

The Torah should simply say the following: the daily offering was brought on twelve consecutive days. It consisted of the following: "one silver bowl that weighed a hundred and thirty shekels one silver basin that weighed seventy shekels filled with fine flour and oil. One golden ladle filled with incense a young bull, a ram, a sheep, and so on."

Next, the Torah should list the names of the twelve princes who brought the offerings. The first day… Nachshon of Yehudah; the second day… Nesanel of Yissachar; and so on. That way, seventy verses would be compacted into no more than ten or fifteen! And Parshas Naso would be fifty verses shorter.

A noted American Rabbi was invited to address two major cities in South Africa. Since the cities were hundreds of miles apart, he only prepared one speech for both events. It was a wonderful lecture. It encompassed a wide spectrum of Jewish ideas and was filled with Midrash and Jewish law. Informative, enlightening and entertaining, it was the best speech he had ever prepared.

The first night's audience attested to that. They sat with their mouths open, taking in every nuance and motion of the dramatic presentation. After the lecture a crowd gathered around the Rabbi to both praise him and hear variations on his poignant theme.

After such a wonderful reception, the Rabbi thought that the second evening on the other side of the country should be a breeze. As he walked up to the podium to deliver his magnum opus he looked at the crowd and froze. He spotted at lease fifty faces of people he was sure had attended the previous night's speech.

Stunned, he quickly ruffled through the index cards of his mind. He pieced together parts of an old High Holy Day speech, added little from Chanuka, Purim, and the Hagadah. What resulted was a scattered array of varying thoughts. To say the least, it was not his best performance.

After the speech the same faces of the previous evening gathered once again around the Rabbi. "I'm sorry," he stammered to them, "I had originally planned to repeat last night's speech. Seeing your faces, I hastily arranged a piecemeal lecture based on some previous talks. Had I known you were coming, I would have prepared a totally new talk. I am sorry for my poor performance."

"But, Rabbi," they replied. "That is exactly why we came! Last night's talk was the most fascinating we had ever heard. We expected you to repeat it. We came all the way to hear it over again word for word!"

The Torah, in repeating the twelve offerings, and spending six verses on each one, leaves us with a message that is as powerful as it is pertinent. Many of our deeds are repeats of generations passed. Many are repeats from yesterday. They are all beloved and cherished. Day after day after day… Hashem wants to hear and see the exact same prayer, blessing charitable action over and over again. It is as dear as the first time.

"Generosity is not measured by how much we give, but by how much we care." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

THE TORAH ANY TIMES NEWSLETTER

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - Home for Hashem's Daughters

יאר ד' פניו אליך ויחנך – *'May Hashem illuminate His countenance for you and be gracious to you.'* (6:25)

When I first founded Ohr Naava in 2004, it began as a small weekly study group for women. However, slowly but surely, it mushroomed into a renowned centre for women of all ages to be able to connect to Torah and socialize in a healthy environment. It would provide round-the-clock Torah lectures and inspirational events and serve as a warm home for thousands of women and girls on all levels.

During the program's incipient stages, I went to **Reb Aharon Leib Shteinman** in Israel to receive a bracha that it be successful. As I arrived, he had just finished delivering a lecture and a large number of people had closely gathered around him. Approaching him, he asked me to explain what exactly Ohr Naava is about. I said that it is a place for women to learn, socialize and grow in their understanding of Torah and Yiddishkeit. "How old are these women that you are opening this program for?" he asked. "I am thinking from 16 until 120," I replied. "And what will happen if a woman wishes to attend, and she is 121; are going to throw her out?"

As he asked this question, laughs were heard around the room. While Rav Shteinman is known to be serious and not the type who would make humorous remarks, that day was different. "Rosh Yeshiva," I replied, "if she is 121, I will call and ask you what to do."

"Don't worry; it will never happen," he told me. As he said that, I began to think that it will never happen because people live only until 120. However, that was not what Rav Shteinman meant. "You know why it will never happen?" he said. "It is because a woman never tells her real age."

From that day on, Rav Shteinman and I became very close. Every time I would visit him, everyone recognized me as the man of "one hundred and twenty-one."

Some time after I began Ohr Naava, I started looking to create a high school for girls. It was to be for girls who had gone through trauma and abuse throughout their lives and needed a safe place to find warm direction and guidance in life. When I first considered opening the school, I was strongly dissuaded from doing so. As I was already running Ohr Naava and a business of my own and needed to care for my family, I was told that opening another school would be too much to handle. But I continued to remind myself what my father had always told me: "If you say, 'My plate is full, get a bigger plate.'"

Despite all the discouragement, I started the high school. The students were provided therapy and given the best teachers who selflessly gave of their time and effort to meet the needs of the girls. The problem, however, was that the kids would return home for the weekends. When they would then return on Monday, there would be countless new problems needing to be addressed. Sending the girls back to their dysfunctional homes was not a smart decision. And certainly, if they had a few days off, such as during a Yom Tov, the problems we had to deal with when they returned were overwhelming. We therefore concluded that the most effective way to help the students would be to not only have a school for them, but a house for them. A frum family would live in the house and take care of the girls. There would be a teacher who would overlook them and make sure they returned by a curfew. They would as well be given meals and the opportunity to experience Shabbat together.

After looking into the matter, I finally found a house for the girls. The only setback was that it was in shambles. I needed to raise $300,000 to redo the entire house. Although we did not have that much money, I was determined not to give up. Planning to be in Israel for Yom Kippur, I figured that I would go to Rav Shteinman on Erev

Yom Kippur for a bracha. I told my staff not to worry about anything as I was close to Rav Shteinman. He would give me a bracha and we would have a house.

Walking into his room, I said, "Does the Rosh Yeshiva remember Ohr Naava?" "Yes," he said. "I now have a high school for girls at risk and without a place to call home. I am looking to buy a house for them to stay in. I need to raise $300,000. Could the Rosh Yeshiva give me a bracha that it goes easy? I really want this and so do the girls." Looking up at me, Rav Shteinman said, "You want it? Who says Hashem wants it?" As soon as he said that, my heart dropped. "No, no Rosh Yeshiva. This is not about me. I do not want to rebuild my house for three hundred thousand dollars. It is for the girls." Looking at me again, he repeated, "Who says Hashem wants such a house?"

Standing there dumbstruck, the gabbai began ushering me out the door as I had already asked twice and was told no.

I immediately called my brother-in-law and said, "We are in trouble. Rav Shteinman said that Hashem doesn't want this house. I can't understand. Why wouldn't Hashem want this? It is for His daughters!" However, not receiving the bracha did not dissuade me from trying to raise the money anyway. I continued to set out to raise the necessary funds.

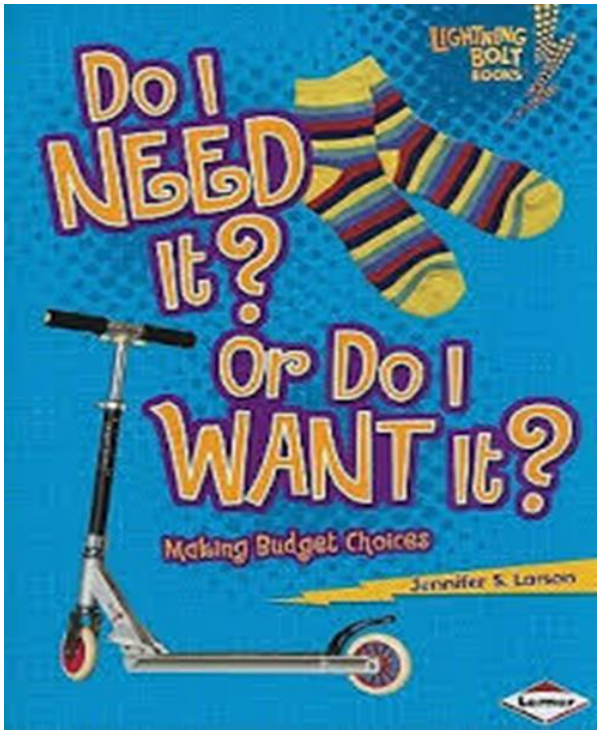
Baruch Hashem, I was eventually able to find one person who planned to donate all $300,000. Thrilled to no ends, we all looked forward to finally being able to help the girls in the best way possible. However, at the last moment, the man decided to back out. "Don't start building," he said. "I received a large offer for an investment in Manhattan and I decided to use the money for that." As I was told this, I knew that my lack of success was due in part to Rav Shteinman not giving me the bracha. But I still did not give up.

The following year I went to Israel for Yom Kippur, as I always do, and thought that I would go to Rav Shteinman and try it again.

Entering his home, I said to him, "It only got worse. I have more girls in my school and I have bigger problems. We need that house. You need to give me a bracha. I cannot send the girls back to the abusive homes they came from."

As I said this, Rav Shteinman looked up at me. "It's going to be easy; you are going to raise the money. And not only are the girls going to live in that house; the Shechinah is going to live in that house."

As I heard this blessing, I was taken aback. Not only did he give us a wonderful bracha, but he even said that Hashem will dwell in the home. But there was one question which was bothering me. Mustering the courage to ask it, I boldly turned to Rav Shteinman and said, "Could the Rosh Yeshiva please tell me the difference between last year and this year? Why last year did Hashem not want the house, and this year He is moving in? That is a big difference. Is it me? Did I do something?"



Looking back at me, Rav Shteinman said penetrating words I will never forget. "Rabbi Wallerstein, last year when you came to me, you told me that you and the girls ***want*** a building for your high school. What you want in life, Hashem doesn't always give you. This year, however, you said that you ***need*** a building. If a daughter of Hashem needs something, of course He will give it to her."

I learned an amazing lesson at that moment. As I was later speaking at an over-forty singles event, I related this idea to them. "I am not telling anyone what to do," I said, "but let me tell you something very important. People who *want* to get married do not always get married. People who *need* to get married, however, do get married."

I later received a letter from a woman. "Thank you Rabbi Wallerstein. I was at that event and I am now happily married. I had gone out with someone and thought to myself, "He is not exactly like me." But then I thought again. Do I **want** to get married, or do I **need** to get married? Thinking about the situation again, I realized that perhaps this man was the right one for me. Now I am married."

In life, there is a very big difference between wanting and needing. It is the difference between someone who actually changes his own life and changes the world. Many people want to help others, but those who feel the need to do so will actually take the initiative. Take for example Avraham Avinu. In pain on the third day after his brit milah, he nevertheless went out of his way to invite guests into his tent. For Avraham Avinu, the disability to perform chesed pained him more than anything else. He was not someone who simply wanted to perform kindness; he needed to perform kindness. That is the true hallmark of a person: do you want or do you need?

A Short Message From Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein



I once heard a beautiful and profound line, "A siddur that is falling apart belongs to someone who isn't." A siddur which is worn out and has clearly been used countless times belongs to the individual who isn't falling apart in life, but rather constantly places his trust in Hashem and is firmly confident that He will help him throughout all of life's vicissitudes. Such a siddur stained with tears and wear and tear is testimony to a person who has deep-seated bitachon that His Father in Heaven will hear his prayers.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS NASSO

"Like A Malach"



Moshe Natan Neta, z'l, 14, and Yehoshua, z'l, 9, Englard.

Yakir Asaraf, a secular Israeli, who like many others was shocked by the immensity of the Meron tragedy, decided that he had to do something to share in the families' pain, and he and a friend went to pay a shiva call to the Englard family of Jerusalem, who lost their two sons, Moshe Natan Neta, z'l, 14, and Yehoshua, z'l, 9.

He wrote a Facebook post about his experience, which quickly went viral and moved thousands of Israelis.

"It could be that I just experienced one of the most significant moments of my life," Asaraf wrote. "I just left the shiva of the Englard family, who lost their two sons at Meron. And my heart is simply bursting with mixed emotions, my eyes are filled with sad tears, but my heart is full of simcha."

"When my friend Maor and I, dressed in jeans and T-shirts, entered their home, we really stood out in the Chareidi crowd. Some people looked up and two wonderful Chareidim quickly got up and let us sit, mamash opposite Menachem Mendel, the father who lost his two sons just days ago."

"The father noticed us and quickly stopped speaking in Yiddish with the other menachamim and turned to me and Maor in Hebrew."

"'I'm happy you came,' he said, and his eyes are wet with tears but his face is radiant. "When are we already zochech to meet together – you and I?' he said.

"Maor and I looked at him with sparkling eyes as if he's a malach talking to us.

"'You should know that what's happening here is the truth," he said. 'You and I are both pained by the great loss. We're giving chizzuk to each other. It doesn't matter if you're chilonim (secular) or Chareidim – we're Jews."

"Everyone else in the room – in eerie silence – is quietly listening to Menachem Mendel talk to us.

"'I want you to invite me to your simchos!'" I say.

"'And I'll invite you to my simchos!'" he responds.

"A few minutes of silence and he looks down and mumbles; 'Mi K'Amcha Yisrael.'

After the tefillah, we approach him and before we had a chance to say words of comfort, he says, 'Thank you for coming. You were mechazeik me.'"

"Maor and I leave the house, looking at each other, but unable to speak. We can't process what just happened, and while I'm writing these words, I still can't process it.

"This meeting represents the truth of our Am, the endless Ahavas HaChinum we have for each other, our shared pain, the tremendous emunah that continues to unite us."

"I'll end with a tefillah l'Yoshevi Ba'Meromim – for Ahavas Chinam between us, and for besuros tovos, and for all the families of the victims to be zochech to true nachas, and that I'm zocheh to be invited to the smachos of the wonderful Menachem Mendel." (*Yeshiva World News)*

Saved By the Enemy

Moshe trudged through the deep snow, shivering in his rags and shuffling along as quickly as he could to avoid yet another beating from the Nazi guard. He and the other concentration camp inmates had already been savagely beaten earlier that morning before they were ordered out of the camp. Now, he marched along as best as he could, one of a double line of men who were ordered to build railroad tracks for their enemies.

Soon, they arrived at the unfinished tracks. Moshe wearily bent over his task, hammering and banging all day long as they laid new rails. The overseer watched his prisoners carefully, eager to spot the first sign of slacking or laziness that would allow him to unleash a fresh string of expletives and another beating.



Whenever the inmates completed a section of the track, a train was sent down the mountainside to test the efficiency of the newly finished rails. Moshe and the others quaked at the thought of their tormentors finding fault in their work.

There came a time when Moshe felt that all his strength was gone. His arms trembled as he tried to lift up the heavy

hammer. Feebly, he pounded at the track as the rails swam in front of his eyes.

Suddenly a shout rang out. "Everyone off the tracks! They're sending a train down!" All the inmates ran off the tracks to safety - except Moshe. Utterly exhausted, he simply collapsed right where he was, lying across the tracks as the train thundered down the mountainside.

Later, he found out how his life had been saved. The overseer had spotted Moshe lying on the track and pounced on him. "Lazy, dirty Jew!" the man bellowed. "Get up and get back to work!" When Moshe did not respond, the overseer exploded with rage and reached out a beefy hand to grab the unconscious Jew by his ragged shirt and lift him bodily off the tracks.

"How dare you disobey me?" he bellowed, shaking Moshe violently before tossing him to one side with disgust. Moments later, the train roared along the tracks, shaking the rails from side to side as it passed over the point where Moshe had been lying only moments earlier.

Years later, when Moshe emigrated to America, he related this story to **Rav Aharon Kotler**. R' Aharon smiled and noted, "If it is Hashem's will that one should live, then even a murderer can be the savior." (Visions of Greatness II by Rabbi Yosef Weiss, z"l)

Miracle on East 69th Street By Mindy Lankry

In one minute, everything changed; my whole perspective on life, my security, my carefree attitude. It was the minute my little girl was hit by a car. It was a minute I will never forget.

The sky was blue the air clear and warm, spring after a long cold winter. The kids took advantage and rode Batya's new scooter for the very first time. I could hear their shouts of glee through the open window, watched as Meira's hair whipped in the wind her head

thrown back with infectious giggles as Batya gave her a ride up and down the sidewalk.

She waited, as patiently as her four-year-old body could, as Shlomo also got a ride from his sister, and then it was her turn again and she bubbled with laughter as she held on tightly and zipped down the sidewalk. The hour was getting late; I went to interrupt the fun so we could do all the boring stuff, like homework, and dinner.



I stepped out onto the platform on top of my steps, that little space that became the balcony to the gruesome show that would play over many more times in my head. I called out "kids, it's time to come inside now" and little Meira, so pleased to see me, so eager to listen, so obedient, just jumped off the sidewalk and ran across East 69th street.

"STOP!! STOP" I am screaming and then a silver jeep hit my baby. Her hot pink sweater a blur of color as her tiny body flew up in the air and landed in a crumpled ball, a motionless rag doll.

"NNNOOOOO " a scream, an unearthly roar of horrific pain tore from my throat as I ran to the crumpled little figure lying on the ground. I thought her life was over, and so was mine. A strange thought came speeding through my brain; "I would rather lose our job than lose our child"

Somehow, I am sitting on the black pavement and the motionless limp body of my baby is in my arms. In some conscience part of my brain, I realize that I picked her up and that was the wrong thing to do, so

I begin to lower her to the ground carefully and she stirs and begins to cry.

I cry too, I have never been so happy to hear her cry. My husband is sitting on the ground next to me, my children standing around us and hundreds of New Yorkers fill the sidewalk and street watching the drama unfold. The police arrive along with the ambulance and fire trucks. There is chaos, people calling commands and advice to me, but I cannot hear, the sounds are distant and muffled.

I know I will never ever be alright if something should happen to my little girl. Please don't let her die, I sob inwardly to Hashem, please don't let us die. They try to put her on a board but she squirms, cries and refuses. Someone calls out, "she will be OK". How can they know? Only five minutes ago she was OK. How can we know anything?

The driver is crying and apologizing, I tell him it's not his fault, but look at the vehicle a hundred times the size of the little body in my arms and start to shake. We get her in the ambulance she is crying bitterly and telling me she is OK and wants to go home. She sounds like herself; she never wants to go to the doctor and always tries to minimize her pain.

I hold her hand and promise not to leave her for even a second. Her head is bleeding, bumps are forming but she looks at me with pain fogged eyes and says "Mommy, I scared". I hold her little fragile hand and promise again that I will be with her the whole time and everything will be OK. I can't believe she is talking and making sense.

A whole team meets us as the ambulance doors open and she is wheeled quickly inside and evaluated. There are big bumps on the head and a scrape on the back, but no other outer signs of injury. She is rushed for a cat scan and x-rays and I am by her side just as I promised.

The doctors surround her bed and recheck her again. She is resting calmly now and they are baffled. They prepare her for IV and

possible surgery as they await the results of the test. The results come in and they are even more puzzled. There is no internal bleeding, no brain damage, not even one broken bone. Just a concussion, perhaps a hairline fracture of the skull, but there is nothing that needs to be done. No surgery, no stitches, no casts, nothing.

My tiny little girl weighing 22 pounds is whole and unbroken after being hit by a 5000 pound SUV! The doctors are amazed, "You have Someone upstairs watching over her" one says, "what a fantastic miracle, we have patients with greater injuries from falling off their bikes"

And so, after seven hours of observation, at 1:00 am, we take her home. My little girl in one piece is in my bed with me and as she softly sleeps my tears flow as I try to grasp this awesome miracle that Hashem has performed for us. I am overwhelmed with gratitude, I can't even comprehend how I can ever repay this gift, this miracle. I am so indebted to Hashem I cannot fathom where to begin to express my gratitude and love to Him.

I know with certainty I can never live my life the same. I will never see things as I have before. I can never take for granted each day, each child, each gift He has given me.

It has taken some days as I walked around like a zombie reliving those terrifying moments of uncertainty, seeing the bouncing giggling girl in pink, and her sudden crumpled body on the floor. It takes just one moment and life can be altered so drastically. We get bogged down with details of life and things to be done that we lose sight of the big picture until in one flashing moment it's changed. And we wonder why we didn't treasure it before. Why didn't we realize what we had? Take advantage of your gifts in life and may we never need a miracle. Miracles are happening to all of us all the time. We just need to open our eyes and see them!

A Rooftop Sukkah in Chicago by Yair Weinstock

Michoel's poverty was no secret. He was a man of many crafts, but no blessings. With a large family to support, he was forced to seek his fortune in America, then considered a spiritual wasteland.

Michoel lived in a small shtetel in Poland. The letters they received from his wife's sister and brother-in-law, who had moved to America a few months before, were glowing with praises of the glorious land of opportunity and laced with much prodding and encouragement for Michoel and family to follow them.

Finally, Michoel gave in and moved with his family to Chicago, where his brother-in-law promised to give him a job in the laundry business that he had started. But not before Michoel received a blessing from his Rebbe, the Sfas Emes, who let him go on one condition – that he and his descendants would never shave off their beards. Thus, said the Rebbe, no harm would come to their Yiddishkeit.

For the first few days in Chicago, Michoel and his family were overwhelmed by the metropolis. They felt dizzy looking down from their sixth-floor apartment. It was a lot different than their simple wooden cottage back in Poland. Michoel was disappointed with his brother-in-law's transformation – from Yosef to "Joe," and with the absence of his former beard. He had already become Americanized, and Michoel was determined not to let that happen to him and his family. He would not deviate an inch from their observance of Torah and mitzvos.

One thing bothered Michoel about his new apartment – there was no kosher porch. "What is a kosher porch?" his wife asked. Michoel explained, "Our porch is completely covered by the one above it. I want a porch that stands open to the sky. I need a kosher porch for a sukkah."

Thinking of other options, they ruled out building a sukkah on the sidewalk – this was not their quiet shtetel in Poland, and doing such

would likely land them a hefty fine and the ire of their neighbors. Finally, he thought of the roof. The roof!

The building had a broad roof which belonged to all the tenants. Most of the space was taken up by various structures that had long ago been erected by tenants and which had decayed and rusted with the years. There was a maze of chimneys as far as the eye could see, as well as abandoned crates and cartons.



Michoel's heart quailed at the sight. Was this a place to build a sukkah? He looked around, and finally found a kosher spot in a secluded corner of the roof. It was only four-square cubits in size, but it was an empty area with no chimney or other structure on it. It would be difficult to put up a sukkah in that corner because of the piles of garbage that had accumulated there. It would take several workers to dig out the mess and clear the small space.

That was no problem; he and his sons would do the work. First, though, he must put up the sukkah walls to claim the spot as his own. The noise of hammering the wooden walls brought many tenants up to the roof to see what was going on. A short time later, a severe-looking man appeared and said something to Michoel in English.

It took time to convey the message, as Michoel's knowledge of English was still sparse, however, he understood that he was being told that the roof was not a free-for-all. The owner of the building

was waiting to see Michoel right now for an explanation of his actions.

When sitting across from the owner of the building, Michoel explained, "Please sir, the roof is empty. I checked it carefully. I am not bothering anybody. Why would you mind if I live in my little "wooden room" for eight days, and then immediately take it apart?"

The owner made a rapid calculation. He lived for money and would never give anything away for free. "Eight days? Rent free? I can't permit that!" he exclaimed.

Michoel was taken aback. But then he had an idea. "What if I buy that piece of the roof from you?"

The owner stared at him. The Jew looked quite excited. He could take advantage of this. He must be sure and suck this bone very dry. "If you buy it, then it would have to be a final sale. You can't come running back to me after eight days and say you want to cancel our agreement. Pay me $500 and that piece of the roof is yours."

Michoel was thunderstruck. Five hundred dollars for a few square cubits of space? At that price, he could buy half an apartment! But the owner was unmovable. Seeing no alternative, and feeling a deep commitment to fulfilling the mitzvah of sukkah, Michoel borrowed the $500 from his brother-in-law. By doing so, he gave up half his salary every month for many years to come. But he was willing to sacrifice such a fortune for the precious mitzvah of sukkah.

The owner insisted on signing a contract of sale, properly sealed and notarized. The building's owner had brought in a competent lawyer to make sure there were no loopholes for Michoel to wriggle through later. Now Michoel was free to build whatever he pleased on his property.

As he and his sons laboured to clear all of the trash from their spot, his eyes suddenly bulged out of their sockets. "What's this?" One of the old bundles he was clearing away had burst open – to reveal a pile

of pearls and gems! Michoel rubbed his eyes. "Am I dreaming?" he whispered. His son then found pieces of gold jewelry – handfuls of it!

The news spread as though carried on wings. Soon most of the building's tenants were aware of Michoel's marvelous find. The building's owner cried, puffing and panting as he ran up to the roof,

"The treasure is mine! You bought only the rights to use the roof."

Michoel countered, "Shall we take the case to the police? As an honest citizen, I think that we must hand the treasure over completely into the hands of the law."

Reluctantly, the owner agreed. For the next two months, the treasure sat in a vault at a local police station while an investigation was launched. It turned out that the loot had been hidden by a gang of robbers that had operated in the area twenty years before. The jewels had long been forgotten, and no one had put in a claim for them. By law, they were to be returned to the man who had found them.

"Look here," the lawyer said, waving the contract of sale in the build-owner's face. "What does it say?"

In small letters, buried amid the rest of the legal jargon, were the words, "This corner of the roof, along with all its contents, is sold in its totality to Michoel Gottleib!" His financial sacrifice for the mitzvah of sukkah was repaid in full measure – measure for measure. (*Holiday Tales for the Soul*)

To love another means to be their mirror when they've forgotten their own beauty. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Maor VaShamesh, Rabbi Klonimus Kalman Epstein (1753-1823).

The Unexpected Miracle Worker by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton



Some 200 years ago on a freezing, snow-stormy night on a desolate road in the middle of Poland, a Jewish businessman's wagon, laden with goods, was stuck deeply in the mud in a blizzard. Perhaps the ice broke under the wheels, but the wind was whistling so crazily it would have been impossible for the driver to hear. One thing for sure, the wagon wasn't budging and the two strong horses that had previously been faithfully doing their job were now helpless.

The driver tried all the tricks he knew; whipping, prodding, begging them, turning the reigns this way and that, but nothing helped. The horses strained until they were exhausted, another few hours in the cold and they would freeze to death. The forest was filled with wolves and robbers who were just waiting for such an opportunity. The horses and the contents of the carriage would be easy pickings. The situation was desperate.

The businessman was at the end of his wits. He turned to the driver and yelled at him over the wind to run to the nearest town; perhaps there he could find someone with a horse or two or a few strong men to come back and help. They had to do something fast. He would wait here in the carriage until he returned.

The nearest town was the city of Apta, perhaps a half hour's run from where they were. The driver took a small swig from the small vodka flask he carried and began running. But by the time he entered the town it was well after midnight and except for the screaming winds and snow the streets were enveloped in total, black, awesome, frozen silence.

The driver stood alone and looked around, all lights were out, everyone was certainly warmly curled up under their blankets fast asleep. Where would he find anyone to help him now? But he couldn't go back. With no choice he began walking, hoping to find some sign of life but in vain. It was so hopeless he wanted to cry.

He saw a dim light in the Synagogue; he had to get out of the cold. He entered the silent building, tried to warm himself up and after a few seconds burst into tears.

Suddenly he heard from a corner of the room someone say something. He looked up to see that a thin, young man who had probably been sitting and learning Torah by candlelight was standing looking at him. "What's wrong?" the young man repeated. "Why are you crying? What happened?"

The driver walked over to him, dried his tears, shook the young man's hand and told him the whole story; where the carriage was stuck, how he had come looking for some help and added that possibly there was a tavern or some other place in the town where they could find strong fellows or maybe a horse or two to help push the carriage. He was pleading for help.

The young man told him not to worry, put on his coat, closed his book and told him to follow him. The driver couldn't believe his ears! It was a miracle!! He thanked the young man profusely and thanked G-d for sending him. Soon there would be help! Probably he knew where there were some big strong men!

The driver followed him out of the Synagogue into the street but to his surprise the young man didn't turn right or left; he kept walking straight out of the town in the direction of the carriage!

The driver tried to protest, to explain that it was senseless to go alone, they had to go back and get help; bring a horse or even three. But the young man just kept walking swiftly through the swirling snow and freezing wind until they arrived at the site of the carriage.

When the businessman saw they had arrived he jumped, half frozen, out of the carriage expecting to see salvation. But when he saw that this skinny fellow was all he had brought back he turned around, held his head in agony and began to moan. "No! NO!!! This is what I have been waiting in the cold for, for over an hour?! For this?! Who knows if the horses aren't frozen dead already? How is this matchstick going to get us out? Oy!! HaShem!! Have mercy!!"

But the young man seemed totally unaffected by all this. He just said quietly. "You have already been stuck here too long. I hate to see it when people are stuck. The time has come that you should continue in your journey."

There was something so simple in this young man's words that it caught the driver by surprise. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean, go back up to your seat, crack your whip over the horses and continue in your journey." He replied.

"And what will you do?" The driver asked.

"I'll get in the coach and return with you to Apta".

The tone of the young fellow's voice made the driver, without a further thought, jump up onto the carriage, climb to his place, grab his whip and snap it over the horses and amazingly, the horses, as though they had just been waiting for this, with no effort pulled the carriage smoothly out of the mud to freedom!!

The businessman and the driver turned in astonishment to the young man who waited for the businessman to enter the carriage, then entered after him and motioned for the driver to go. Minutes later they entered Apta and when the carriage stopped the young man alighted and walked quietly off into the darkness without saying a word.

Before they could digest what just happened the irresistible smell of freshly baked bread wafted softly into their nostrils. The bakery of Apta was preparing for the morning customers. They followed the smell and in just moments found themselves entering the bakery and being greeted by its owner, a religious Jew.

"Welcome! Welcome honored guests! Come and partake of freshly baked bread! Come wash your hands and sit down" he said in the friendliest voice possible.

It was as though they had suddenly been transported into a warm pleasant, new world as though in a dream. They suddenly realized that their ordeal had left them very tired and hungry. They washed for bread while the baker prepared some hot tea and as they ate, they told their host about the miracle that they had just experienced.

"Young man? Miracles? I know everyone in this city" the baker said "and I can tell you for sure there are no young, thin miracle workers here. Must be someone from another city, or maybe it was Elijah the prophet! You know it says in the Talmud that he makes miracles! But one thing for sure, you should have asked him for a blessing! I mean, if he could do such wonders then who knows what else he could do for you?!"

Suddenly the side door of the bakery opened and a skinny stooped over figure wrapped in an old cloth winter coat entered the room. The baker's smile faded and a look of disgust darkened his face. "Oy! That's my son in law! What a lazy bum! The whole day I work

like a slave to support his family and... you know what he does?! Nothing! He drives me crazy!"

The driver's face became pale. That's him!¦ that's the one that took us out of the mud!!"

As soon as the baker understood what happened his eyes widened like saucers! "Him? He's the Tzadik (miracle worker)?!" He fell with a thud on the chair behind him totally confused, mumbling, "It can't be! It just can't be!"

As soon as the baker's son in law heard the thud and the commotion, he ran to his father in law's aid but when the latter came to his senses he fell to one knee, took his son in law's hand and began to beg his forgiveness.

That night a hidden 'Tzadik' became revealed to the world; a great miracle worker who would help thousands 'out of the mud' known as "Ha'Y'ehudi HaKodesh M'Peshischa" (The Holy Jew of Peshischa).

In His Shoes

In our Torah portion this week Nasso, the Torah tells us how Hashem commands Moshe to count the Jews. When commanding Moshe to count the Jews, the Torah uses the word *"Nasso."* The word *"Nasso,"* can also mean *"to uplift."* It is therefore possible to understand the verse in the following spiritually uplifting way:

Hashem is giving Moshe Rabeinu (our teacher) the power to uplift the Jews. Since the time of Moshe Rabeinu, Hashem has appointed in every generation Tzadikim to lead Klal Yisroel. Just as Hashem gave Moshe Rabeinu the power to uplift the Children of Israel, so too does Hashem give the spiritual leaders of every generation the power to uplift Jews. The following story will inspire us to believe in the power of Tzadikkim.

In a certain area of Jerusalem many years ago, some Jewish stores were open on Shabbos. Rabbis and lay leaders tried to convince the proprietors to close their stores before sunset Friday afternoon. Eventually they were successful with all the storekeepers except one -but no amount of pleading or pressure could get this particular Jewish grocer to close his store. Business was good, and to his mind, profits outweighed any regard he may have had for Shabbos observance.



Reb Aryeh Levin, of blessed memory, heard about the stubborn grocer and was pained that a fellow Jew would willfully desecrate the Shabbos. One Friday afternoon, R' Aryeh dressed early for Shabbos, donned his shtreimel (fur hat worn on Shabbos), and went to the store. It was well before sunset when R' Aryeh entered the shop.

He walked quietly through the store, eyeing the goods on the shelves and watching the brisk flow of customers and purchases. He sat down on a chair near the back of the store and observed the activity.

The owner recognized R' Aryeh but didn't say anything to him, thinking that perhaps the elderly rabbi was resting and would soon be on his way to shul. As sunset drew near, however, the grocer wondered why R' Aryeh made no effort to go. He began to feel a bit uncomfortable at the great rabbi's presence in his store so close to Shabbos. The proprietor was busy with his customers, but every once in a while, he would steal a glance at R' Aryeh, who seemed to be sitting there for no apparent reason. Finally, the grocer approached R' Aryeh and said, *"Rabbi, I see you have been sitting*

here for a while already. Can I do something for you? Are you feeling all right?"

R' Aryeh stood up and, after exchanging pleasantries, said to the grocer, *"I heard that you keep your store open on Shabbos. I know that others have spoken to you about it, but I wanted to come and see for myself how difficult it is for you to close for the holy Shabbos. Now I know without a doubt how hard it is for you to close and give up so much business. Honestly, I feel for you - but what can I say? Shabbos is Shabbos!"*

The grocer was silent for a moment, and tears welled up in his eyes. He said, *"My dear Rabbi, you are the only one who took the time to come over here to see the situation from my point of view. It means so much to me that you came to my store. Everyone else just criticized me from a distance."* Warmly, he shook R' Aryeh's hand and said, *"I promise you that I will do what I can to see if I can close the store on Shabbos."* R' Aryeh wished the grocer, *"Good Shabbos."*

Within weeks, the store was closed by sunset every Friday afternoon. Only after R' Aryeh was in *"the grocer's shoes"* did he undertake to reprimand him, and even then, he did so only with great sensitivity. No wonder people listened to R' Ariyeh's words. (Along the Maggid's Journey, R. Pesach Krohn, p.113)

When we go in to ask a Tzadik for advice, it is important to listen very closely to his holy words. The advice the Tzadik gives is the closest thing to that coming directly from Hashem. Why then should we be so foolish as to contradict this heaven-sent advice? By seeking the advice of Tzadikim we are guaranteed to live happier, less worrisome lives.

There are men who travel far to look for something that they can find in their own homes." ~ Mishle Yehoshua.

The Importance of Being Able to Give to Others by Rabbi Reuven Semah

***כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... יְבָרֶכְךָ ה׳ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ "So shall you bless the Children of Israel…May Hashem bless you"* (Bamidbar 6:23-24)**



If Hashem commanded the Kohanim to bless the people as the verse above says, "So shall you bless," why do the Kohanim pass this duty on to Hashem?

The Ktav Sofer explains that the best blessing a person can give his friend is to wish him that Hashem should bless him. This is due to the fact that only Hashem knows what is best for each person. What a human being may perceive as being a blessing for his friend may in reality be to his detriment, and what may seem a difficulty is a true blessing.

In a similar vein it says in Tehillim "*May only good and kindness pursue me all the days of my life.*" The term "pursue me," implies that the person will be running away from it. Why would someone flee from goodness?

The Chofetz Chayim answered: Very often people don't realize what is truly best for them and they go to great lengths to avoid things which are really beneficial to them. So King David implored Hashem: Even if in my nearsightedness I attempt to run away, please be certain that goodness and mercy pursue me and overtake me.

The following story is a perfect example of someone who didn't know what was good for him. There was once a miser who refused to give

a penny to charity. He was so stingy that the word "give" was literally foreign to his vocabulary.

One day this man was travelling by ship, when he fell overboard and began to drown. Another passenger stretched his hand out to the fellow and said, "Here, give me your hand!" But the miser could not understand the word "give" and continued to struggle helplessly.

Finally, the other man yelled, "Take my hand!" The miser did so and was saved. He could think only in terms of taking rather than giving.

We must thank Hashem for all the opportunities for us to give, because you are actually saving yourself by becoming a better person.

Who Was That Boy? By Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

As I was once speaking to someone who attends the same shul as I do, he told me that he once heard a particularly moving speech from **Rav Simcha Kook z"l,** Rav of Rechovot. Rav Kook mentioned how he had heard the **Ponovezher Rav** relate the following personal story:

During my years spent in Europe, I was hired to learn with a certain boy who was very weak in his learning. As I began studying with him, I could see that he was struggling to make any significant progress, and I felt that my time was not being used most judiciously. I then made up my mind that the next day I would tell him that I would no longer learn with him.

Later that evening, as I stood in the Ezrat Nashim, I heard someone crying. Looking down, I saw that it was this very boy. He was holding onto the Aron Kodesh and crying, "Hashem, I want to learn your Torah!" When I heard this, I said to myself, "If he has such conviction and resolve to learn despite his weaknesses, I am going to stick with him."

"Let me tell you about this boy," concluded the Ponovezher Rav. "He went onto become one of the most respected Torah giants of history whose insights we study to this very day."

As Rav Kook related this incident which he had directly heard from the Ponovezher Rav, he continued to relate what he did immediately following the speech:

"Eagerly curious to find out the name of this boy, I followed the Ponovezher Rav all the way to his house. But he refused to tell me his name. But I was persistent.



Walking up to his door, as he was about to close it, I stuck my foot inside. "Rebbe," I said, "I will not let this door close until you tell me who that boy was." Hesitantly, he told me his name. And I can vouch that he grew up to become a venerable Torah sage whose revered words we study to this very day.

"And then there I was," said my friend to me in Shul. Rav Kook did not reveal who this boy was, but I was also especially intrigued to discover his name. And so, I literally and figuratively followed in Rav Kook's footsteps. Walking behind him all the way to his house, I continuously asked him, "Rebbe what was the name of this boy?" But he likewise refused to divulge who this illustrious sage was. And so, I did the same as Rav Kook himself had done. I stuck my foot in the door and said, "I will not leave until you tell me who it is." "I am sorry," said Rav Kook, "but the Ponovezher Rav told it only to me and I cannot tell you." "No," I adamantly said, "the same way he told you, you tell me."

He finally agreed to tell me.

Now it was my turn. So, I asked the man who this mysterious figure was. Fortunately, I got away without sticking my foot in any door.

It was **Rav Elchanan Wasserman hy"d**, famed student of the **Chofetz Chaim** and author of numerous works whose words echo to this day in every beit midrash around the world.

Sometimes we convince ourselves, "I cannot learn." But we mustn't ever feel that way. Each and every one of us holds the potential to rise to the occasion and become the greatest we can become. Torah has the power of propelling us to the loftiest of heights and opening new doors which we never knew existed. And when that occurs, we no longer need to place our foot in the door, because this time, it stays wide open.

Rabbi Samson's Great Escape By Nissan Mindel



Rabbi Samson Wertheimer (1658–1724)

Some three hundred years ago, in the city of Vienna, capital of Austria, there lived a famous rabbi, Rabbi Samson Wertheimer. (Rabbi Samson Wertheimer was born in Worms in 1658 and died in Vienna at the age of 66.

Through his great friend, Samuel Oppenheimer, the great financier, Rabbi Samson was presented to the royal court and, together, they were of great assistance to King Leopold the First. Later, after the death of Oppenheimer, Rabbi Samson took over his post, which he kept also during the reign of King Joseph.)

This rabbi was renowned not only on account of his riches and high government position, but also on account of his wisdom and fine character. He was King Leopold's Finance-Minister, and was entrusted with all the financial secrets of the country. He also supplied much of the war material for the army in the great war with Spain at that time.

Rabbi Samson used his great influence at court to benefit his oppressed Jewish brethren, and with his great wealth he supported the poor and needy. He took great pride in his Judaism, and he fought against those who told malicious lies about the Jewish people and their traditions. His piety and kindliness made him beloved by all Jews.

At that time, a certain bishop (who was surely a direct descendant of the wicked Haman) won the king's favour. The bishop could not bear to see the king giving so much honor to, and having so much faith in, a Jew. He tried all methods to place Rabbi Samson in the king's disfavor. Try as he would, the bishop could not find any excuse to cause the king to mistrust him.

The bishop once came to the king and said: "Your majesty, there is a Jew whom you have trusted with all the wealth of the kingdom. Do you know if he is faithful and honest? Maybe he enriches himself at the king's expense? Do you know if he has earned his wealth honestly?" The king replied: "I certainly do have faith in him. Have you any proof that he has cheated me?"

"I have no doubt whatsoever that he cheats you"; continued the bishop, "but I also have a way to prove to your majesty that my accusations are not groundless. I bribed a bookkeeper of your Jewish finance minister, and he gave me a copy of his books. I didn't believe my eyes when I saw what a huge amount of money he has amassed! Let the king ask him how much he is worth and see what he answers you. If his answer will conform to the amount written in his books, then I will also admit that he is an honest man. But if he

states a sum less than that mentioned in the books, then you know that he is a swindler. The king may then give him over into my hands, and you can rest assured that he will receive his just punishment."

"Very well! I am willing to try out your test," the king answered. "You will then see that all your suspicions are groundless."

"One condition, I would ask of your majesty," the bishop went on. "If it will be proven that Wertheimer has lied, he must be burnt alive, and, meanwhile, your majesty can have the furnace heated, so that the death sentence can be carried out immediately."

The king allowed himself to be influenced, and the furnace was prepared. Meanwhile the king gave orders to his hangmen that, if a person, no matter who it may be, should come to them and ask in the king's name: "Have you carried out the king's order?" they should straight away grab him and throw him into the furnace without any questions!

The bishop left the palace in high spirits, rubbing his hands gleefully at the thought of ridding himself of his Jewish enemy, Wertheimer.

The king then had his Finance Minister Rabbi Samson Wertheimer brought before him. He did not tell him that this was a matter of life and-death, but just started a friendly discussion with him. The king led the conversation up to the point where the king asked him about his personal welfare and inquired if he was satisfied.

"Praised be the Almighty, I cannot complain," the rabbi answered humbly.

"Do you receive suitable pay for your devoted service? About how much is your personal wealth, my good friend?" the king asked matter-of-factly.

"The king has to be told an exact amount, and that is difficult to estimate on the spot."

"I don't mean to the exact gulden," the king interrupted. "How much are you certain of, that you have no doubts about?"

Rabbi Samson Wertheimer thought for a moment and then mentioned a certain amount.

The king could hardly restrain his astonishment and anger. Rabbi Samson had mentioned an amount roughly one-tenth of the amount he was supposed to own, according to the books. It looked as if the bishop was right. His trustworthy and reliable finance minister had apparently fooled him!

The king told him to go to the furnace and ask the hangmen if they had carried out the king's orders. Rabbi Samson went to carry out the king's order, not dreaming that he was going to a certain death.

On the way he met a Jew who was very pleased to meet him. "Worthy rabbi, today my newborn son is eight days old. I have to carry out the holy mitzvahof circumcision, and I cannot find another *mohel*. I beg of you, Rabbi, please come with me and perform the ceremony."

In addition to his many qualifications, Rabbi Samson Wertheimer was a mohel. He was always happy to carry out this great mitzvah, and never charged any money for it. Now Rabbi Samson was at a loss what to do. "The king sent me on an errand; how can I delay? I am obliged to carry out his order."

"And I have been sent by the King of Kings!" the Jew persisted. 'The sacred mitzvah of circumcision can certainly not be delayed! I will not leave you, dear rabbi, until you grant my wish."

The rabbi, seeing that such a great Mitzvah came his way, did not hesitate too long, and went with the Jew.

The house was already filled with guests. Rabbi Samson was greeted with great honor and joy. After the ceremony, a meal in honor of the mitzvah was served, and wine was drunk, with everyone expressing good wishes for a healthy life.

As soon as Rabbi Samson drank a glass of wine, he felt slightly dizzy; he lay down for a while and soon fell asleep. No one wanted to awaken the honored guest.

That night, the bishop could not sleep. He had heard that the king had sent his Jewish finance minister to his certain death. He also had heard that the king had confiscated Rabbi Samson's possessions; the bishop was in the seventh heaven. "I must go personally and make sure," the bishop thought. "I will still manage to see the Jew's bones burning in the furnace." and with a devilish smirk on his face he went to the furnace.

"I have come to see with my own eyes if you have carried out the king's orders!" the bishop remarked gaily.

"Aha! We are waiting for you." the hangmen answered. They grabbed hold of him and started dragging him towards the furnace. They took little notice of the bishop's protests and cries. They stopped up his mouth and threw him into the furnace.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Samson woke up and hurried home. It was already after midnight, and he felt disturbed at having to leave the king's order until the next day.

He found the house in an uproar. his family were worrying about him because all his possessions had been sealed by the king's servants and they felt that they were all in great danger.

In the morning, straight after morning prayers, Rabbi Samson hastened to carry out his king's command.

"Yes! We carried out our orders to the letter," the hangmen replied.

"You should have seen the bishop tremble but it served him right. I always knew he was a false person" one of the hangmen remarked.

Rabbi Samson remained standing, unable to understand what had happened. He ran to the king and became even more bewildered when he saw the king looking at him, as if he, Rabbi Samson, were a ghost.

Rabbi Samson excused himself for having been unable to carry out the royal command the same day, due to a most urgent matter, and he was forced to postpone it till the following day. He hastened to reassure the king, however, that his command had been carried out, and the bishop had been burned according to the king's order. On the other hand, he could not understand why the king had confiscated all his property that he, Rabbi Samson, had so honestly earned.

The king suddenly broke out into uncontrollable laughter. He laughed and laughed until he could hardly remain standing. He then embraced Rabbi Samson and pressed him to his heart, and continued to laugh joyfully, tears coming to his eyes.

Rabbi Samson regarded the king in amazement and waited patiently until the king would come to himself.

Finally, the king told him the whole story about the bishop's accusation, and what a remarkable escape the rabbi had enjoyed from the certain death that the bishop had prepared for him, but had himself suffered.

"I am now assured that you are a religious, G-dly man, whom your great G-d has saved from a certain and unearned death," the king said earnestly. "But tell me, why did you deny the truth and not admit the full amount of your riches?"

"G-d forbid!" Rabbi Samson replied. "I would not tell the king a lie. When the king asked me how much I was sure I possessed, I could not state the amount in the books. That was not definitely mine. Only yesterday I had this amount, and today the king confiscated everything. The only certain possessions that I have are those that I have donated to charity. They cannot be taken away from me. I am used to giving a tenth of my earnings to charity, and therefore that is the amount that I stated."

The king was extremely pleased with Rabbi Samson's explanation.

"There can be no question any more of confiscating your properties," the king remarked, beaming. "I grant you them once more, with pleasure. Please tell me how I can repay you for the unpleasantness I caused you so unnecessarily?" the king asked.

"The king has already sufficiently rewarded me, with his trust and friendship," Rabbi Samson replied. "Even so, I would like to ask a favor of his majesty: I would like to build a large synagogue in Vienna, where my devoted brethren would be able to come to serve G-d."

Rabbi Samson's wish was granted, and a great synagogue was erected in the capital, known as "Rabbi Samson's Synagogue."

Rabbi Samson lived out his years in Torah study, charity and good deeds, and he accomplished a lot of good both for the Jews and for the country. Before his death he willed a large part of his possessions to charity: this "Wertheimer Fund" existed till the First World War, and gave much help to charitable causes.

He Who Sustains the Bear



The story is told of a Yid who made a living chopping wood in the forest and using his horse and wagon to sell the firewood. Near his worksite, a shepherd would watch over a flock of goats.

One day as the Yid was working, he noticed a goat slip away from the flock and go into the dense shrubbery of the forest. The next day, he noticed a different goat slipping away from the shepherd and making his way into the forest. When the scene repeated itself yet

a third day, the Yid's curiosity was aroused, and he decided to follow the runaway goat.

He carefully made his way through the tangled vines and saw the goat climbing a hill and then entering a cave. The Yid followed the goat into the cave, only to come face to face with a huge, growling bear. At first, frightened out of his wits, he soon realized that the bear was severely crippled and could move neither his front nor his back paws.



The Yid was overwhelmed with what he witnessed. The *Ribbono shel Olam*, Who sustains every living thing, was sending this crippled bear a goat each day so that he should not starve!

The Yid returned to his horse and wagon, and instead of working, returned home.

His wife, concerned that he returned so quickly and with an empty wagon to boot, was concerned to see him.

"What happened?" she asked in alarm.

"He Who sustains the bear will sustain us as well!" he replied.

She became even more worried and was convinced that he was unwell, and this was why he was acting so strangely. As she stood there wondering what to do next, two men arrived at the door and asked whether they could rent the horse and wagon for the day.

"You see how wondrous the ways of Hashem are!" the husband told his wife, "no one asked to rent our horse and wagon until the moment I decided to stop chopping wood."

He agreed to rent it to the men and gave his wife the money for the day's expenses.

"But what will we eat tomorrow?" his wife fretted.

"He Who created the morrow will sustain us," her husband assured her.

The two men were two violent criminals who wanted the wagon so they could bury their latest victim. During the burial they came across a chest of gold coins, which they happily loaded onto the wagon.

Each of them was determined that he alone would keep the entire treasure; and in their attempts to settle the matter they both shared the fate of their victim.

The horse waited all afternoon, and when darkness fell it decided to trot back home, pulling a vast treasure in the wagon. The Yid inspected his wagon and joyfully informed his wife, "Hashem has brought us our needs for tomorrow — today!" (*Reprinted from the May 18, 2017 edition of Hamodia.)*

Sha'arei Eliyahu כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

"*This is how you shall bless the children of Israel etc*." (Bamidbar 6:23).

Moshe instructed the Kohanim to bless the nation with outstretched arms. The reason for this requirement is that each hand contains fourteen joints all joined together by one's palm thus having a total of fifteen components. These fifteen components are the vectors and medians through which the fifteen words of Birkat Kohanim descend through Heavens and rest on the Jewish nation. **ברכת הרי"ח**

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky



"מיין ושכר יזיר" *"From new or aged wine shall he abstain."* (6:3)

QUESTION: The laws of a *nazir* apply only to the *nazir* himself. Why did the angel tell Shimshon's mother that *she* should not drink wine? (See Judges 13:2-25)

ANSWER: Many parents set ambitious goals for their children and expect them to live by lofty standards. Unfortunately, they fail to realize their own need to live in accordance with the same standards they set for their children. Parents must conduct themselves the way they want their children to behave.

The angel was giving Shimshon's mother an important lesson in raising children. He told her that the son she would bear was destined to be a *nazir*. In order for him to properly observe his restrictions, it was necessary that *she*, too, take on the restrictions of a Nazirite, and thus be a living example for him. (אור כשלמה)

"איש איש כי תשטה אשתו ומעלה בו מעל" *"A man a man whose wife shall go astray and commit treachery against him."* (5:12)

QUESTION: Why is the word "*ish*" — "a man" — repeated twice?

ANSWER: Marriage should be regarded as a holy union. Until marriage, the man and woman were lacking something important, now they have become a complete entity. For a marriage to be happy and long-lasting, each partner must recognize the other's rights and

respect the other's opinions. For the home to be harmonious both man and wife must be equally involved in it.

If a man seeks to overdo his "manliness" and attempts to be the autocratic ruler of his home, demanding that *his* decisions be enacted, or if he becomes oblivious to the needs of his household and is egoistically concerned only with "*ish*" — himself — the marriage is doomed to failure. The Torah warns us that the behavior of *ish* — a man — who is *ish* — totally concerned with himself — will spoil his family life, and ultimately destroy his own existence as well. **(מלאכת מחשבת)**

"וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש" - *"And he shall provide him atonement for having sinned regarding the person."* (6:11)

QUESTION: Rashi comments that his sin was that he abstained from drinking wine while he was a *nazir*.

Every *nazir* abstains from wine and is considered holy (6:8); why is a *nazir* who becomes impure considered a "sinner" for the same reason?

ANSWER: *A nazir* who keeps himself pure throughout the term of his vow and abstains from wine is considered holy. However, a *nazir* who is not careful and becomes impure must begin a new period of *nezirut* for thirty days so that his previous days of *nezirut* are canceled. Thus, his previous days of *nezirut,* during which he abstained from wine, were days of needless self-imposed deprivation. A person who has caused himself needless pain has sinned and requires forgiveness.**כלי יקר**

"Torah is meant to refine a person, not merely inform him." ~ Based on the teachings of R' Yitzchak Sher zt"l.

"כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמר להם יברכך ה' " – *"So shall you bless the Children of Israel, saying to them: 'May G-d bless you."* (6:23-24)

QUESTION: Before the *Kohanim* administer the Priestly Blessing, they recite the blessing, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to bless His nation of Israel *'be'ahavah'* — 'with love.' " (See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 128:11, and *Magen Avraham* 18.)

Where were the *Kohanim* commanded to bless with love?

ANSWER: The Priestly Blessing starts with the phrase *"Yevarechecha Hashem veyishmerecha"* — "May G-d bless you and safeguard you." Since Hashem told the *Kohanim* "So you shall bless the *Children of Israel,"* should not the blessing be in plural — *"yevarechechem"* — "Hashem should bless you (plural)?"

Although the *Kohanim* are indeed blessing the entire congregation, they do so in the singular in order to indicate that G-d desires to bless the Jews with the unity that results when love prevails. Thus, in the *berachah,* the *Kohen* is announcing his fulfillment of Hashem's command to bless *K'lal Yisrael "be'ahavah"* — "with love." (**טעמי המנהגים - תורת חיים**)

The word *"ahavah"* (**אהבה**) has the numerical value of thirteen, which is also the numerical value of *"echad"* (**אחד**) — "one." The *Kohanim* were commanded to bless the Jewish people *"be'ahavah"* that they be united as one.

Alternatively, the word **באהבה** has the numerical value of fifteen. In the Priestly Blessing, from the word *"yevarechecha"* until the word *"shalom,"* there are a total of fifteen words. Thus, the *Kohanim* are referring to the command to bless the Jewish people *"be'ahavah"* — with the fifteen-word Priestly Blessing which Hashem lovingly gives his people Israel. (**תולדות אהרן**)

"דבר אל אהרן ואל בניו לאמר כה תברכו את בני ישראל"
***"Speak to Aharon and his sons, saying: 'So shall you bless the Children of Israel.' "* (6:23)**

QUESTION: According to *halachah* (*Orach Chaim* 128:5), when the *Kohen* recites the Priestly Blessing he must remove his shoes. Why?



ANSWER: At the time of the miracle of the burning bush, Hashem commanded Moshe, "Do not approach here; remove your shoes from your feet, for the place upon which you stand is holy ground" (*Shemot* 3:5). The ground on which the *Kohanim* stand when they bless the Jewish people is also holy and thus they must remove their shoes. (**לבוש סי׳ קכ״ח**)

When Hashem instructed Moshe to remove his shoes, he prefaced the command with the words, "*Al tikrav halom*" — "Do not approach here." The word "*halom*" (**הלם**) — "to here" — has the numerical value of 75, which is the same numerical value as the word "*Kohen*" (**כהן**). Thus, the *pasuk* is a message to the *Kohanim*: "*Al tikrav*" — "do not approach" — "*halom, shal ne'alecha*" — "*Kohen,* remove your shoes." (**חנוכת התורה, לקוטים**)

Alternatively, according to the *Gemara* (*Sotah* 40a) if a *Kohen's* shoelace breaks and he sits down in the middle of the blessing to fix it, people may suspect him of stopping in the middle of the blessing because he is a disqualified *Kohen,* i.e. the son of a woman forbidden to marry a *Kohen*. Therefore, the Rabbis forbade *Kohanim* to wear shoes during the priestly blessing (even without laces).

"וישם לך שלם" - *"And establish peace for you."* (6:26)

QUESTION: When the *Kohanim* conclude their blessing, it is customary for people to thank them by saying *"yasher ko'ach."*

It is a *mitzvah* for them to bless the people. Why do we say to them *"yasher ko'ach"* when they are commanded to do so?

ANSWER: When a *Kohen* extends the blessings, he is indeed fulfilling a *mitzvah*. However, he is at liberty to go to any *shul* he wants and recite the blessing there. The people of the *shul* which he selected are grateful to him for coming, and for this they say *"yasher ko'ach."* (**אוצר כל מנהגי ישרון, ועי' ילקוט יוסף**)

"זאת חנכת המזבח ביום המשח אתו...זאת חנכת המזבח אחרי המשח אתו"
***"This was the dedication of the altar, on the day it was anointed...This was the dedication of the altar after it was anointed."* (7:84, 88)**

QUESTION: Why does it say *"on* the day it was anointed" in the first *pasuk* and *"after* it was anointed" four *pesukim* later?

ANSWER: It is common for people to cherish something new. As time passes, however, the novelty often proves short-lived. For example, a boy preparing for his *Bar Mitzvah* often begins putting on his *tefillin* with excitement and lofty intentions. As he grows older, unfortunately, it becomes a daily routine, and even while wearing his *tefillin* he gives them little attention.

On the day the altar was anointed, everybody was in high spirits. The Torah is telling us that not only were they in great spirits "on the day the altar was anointed," but that even *"after* it was anointed," it did not lose its newness, but was cherished with the same love and awe as on the first day. (**חידושי הרי"ם**)

"דבר אל אהרן ואל בניו לאמר כה תברכו את בני ישראל" *"Speak to Aharon and his sons, saying: 'So shall you bless the Children of Israel.' "* (6:23)



QUESTION: According to *halachah* (*Orach Chaim* 128:5) when the *Kohen* recites the Priestly Blessing he must raise his hands and stretch them out. What is the significance of this?

ANSWER: Many people are accustomed to give blessings generously, and it is indeed a benevolent practice. For example, we bless a sick person, "May you have a speedy recovery," and we bless a person in financial straits with *hatzlachah* in his livelihood.

With this *halachah* our Sages are imparting a very important lesson; while giving blessings is laudable, it is extremely important that we also "raise our hands" and "stretch them out" — that we actually *do* something materialistic to help the person in need. (**פון אונזער אלטען אוצר**)

"Through Emunah, we recognize that Hashem's presence is constantly guiding and supporting us, even during times of challenge or adversity." – Iggeres HaRamban.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

The *Chofetz Chaim* (*Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah, Bereishis* 2:3) writes that Shabbos is a day that is not like the other days of the week and is full of *brachah* and *kedushah*. Therefore, it would be very wise to try our best to start Shabbos as early as possible and end Shabbos as late as we can. This way, we can spend as much time as possible on the *kadosh* day.

The *Chofetz Chaim* also says that Shabbos is a precious gift for us from Hashem. Therefore, anyone who tries to take away time from Shabbos by ending early, is really only cheating himself from gaining all that Shabbos has to offer.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



One day, a man who was very distraught came to the ***Chazon Ish*** for help and advice. He told the *Chazon Ish* that he was quite ill and that the doctors did not have any effective medication for him and told the man that he had only four days left to live.

The *Chazon Ish* opened a *chumash* to *Parashas Bereishis*, and turned to the first *pesukim* (verses) of the *parshah*. He said to the man, "Look what Hashem created on the first day," and the *Chazon Ish* began to recite all the things which Hashem created on the first day of Creation. "Look what Hashem created on the second day," and

again the *Chazon Ish* read the *pesukim*, and listed one by one the things which were created on the second day. He continued with the third day, and the fourth day.

"If the Creator of the World was able to create *so many things* in four days, don't you believe that in four days He can create a medicine for you which will heal you completely? Four days is a very long time!"

The *Chazon Ish* encouraged the man not to give up hope, but rather, he should *daven* for himself and plead with Hashem that He heal him. He reminded the man that the Gates of *Tefilah* are never locked, especially before the *tefilah* of a sick person— which is *tefilah* at a time of *tzarah*, distress. The eyes of the man lit up at the words of the *Chazon Ish* and he began to *daven* fervently for himself, following the instructions of the *tzadik*.

An unbelievable miracle occurred, and a new medicine was imported to Eretz Yisroel from America in the following days. This sick man was one of the first people that the medicine was tested on, and it proved to be successful to fight his illness. Within a short time, the man was healed completely! (*Borchi Nafshi*)

Just One Word

The normal Nazir period is for 30 days. The Gemarah in Nazir (5a) derives this from the fact that the word " יֵהָוֶה " (Bamidbar 6:5) equals 30.

There are many daphim in mesechtos Nazir which derive many Nazirite laws from this gematria. **The Chafetz Chaim** makes the following powerful observation: just look what is contained within one gematria of one word of Torah! How much more so one pasuk, one mishna, one amud of Gemarah.

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



The end of the *Parshah* enumerates the gifts of each and every one of the *Nesi'im* (Tribal leaders). Why do we need to mention everyone individually?

Ramban explains the need for repetition to stress that all the *Nesi'im* were equally important, as were their gifts. Rabbi Eli Mansour offers a different approach to this. Firstly, something which is important is worth repeating, and when one has an important message, he will constantly repeat it. Additionally, the repetition shows the greatness of the *Nesi'im*. A person's natural tendency is always to try to out-shine his predecessor.

The fact that they did not do this, but rather they each offered the exact same offering, displays that they weren't looking for personal honour— and this warranted the extra six *pesukim* (verses) for every *Nasi* (an extra sixty-six *pesukim* in total).



The Present

You are too concerned with what was and what will be.

There is a saying: ***"Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. But today is a gift."***

That is why it is called the present!

Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

דבר אל אהרן ואל בניו לאמר כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמור להם *Speak to Aharon and to his sons, saying: So shall you bless the children of Israel, say to them* (6:23)



Many congregations have the custom that when the *Kohanim* come down from the *duchan* after *Birchas Kohanim*, the congregation thanks them and says "*Yasher kochachem*".

Seemingly, why do we need to thank them, they are only fulfilling the commandment that was placed upon them? The author of "*HaNesivos Shalom*" explains that this 'thank you' is required because they conveyed the *brachah* with *ahavah* – love. This love is not the same with all the *Kohanim* and every *Kohen* has to arouse the love within him, each according to their ability, and for this they deserve thanks. (*Siach Aharon*)

Saying of The Week With Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"***Even when you sleep it can be considered like you are doing Mitzvos***."

When the Mishkan was completed the Nesi'im brought extra presents. They brought wagons for the Levi'im to use for carrying the Mishkan. The Torah calls these wagons a Korban (offering).

The Ramban says that it was called a Korban because they were used to help bring Karbonos. When someone does something that helps do Mitzvos it is considered like doing a Mitzvah. Therefore, when one goes to sleep in order to be able to fulfil Mitzvos, their sleeping is considered a Mitzvah, as well.

The Siddur Speaks - A closer look at Davening

Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, *zt"l*, was known to recite each and every *brachah* with the utmost concentration. He used to keep cards in his pocket on which were written the various *berachos* for foods, so that he could always recite them from a written text, and this would help him concentrate and have *Kavanah*. He also recited the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* from a written text as well.



Every word of his *davening* was recited slowly and intensely, as if it were *Ne'ilah*, the concluding *Tefilah* of Yom Kippur. It happened once that a certain visitor wanted to take advantage of this, and he wrote his name in the margin of Rav Segal's *Siddur* next to the *brachah* of *Atah Chonein* in *Shemoneh Esrei*, so that Rav Segal would have him in mind when beseeching Hashem for the gift of Torah wisdom.

After some time had passed, the visitor felt bad about what he had done, and asked forgiveness of Rav Segal. Rav Segal told him, "Believe me, until this very moment, I was unaware that you had written your name in my *Siddur*. You see, when I *daven*, I do not permit my eyes to wander anywhere, and I only look at the word that I am reciting. I don't see the margin of the page, and I wasn't aware of your name written there, so you have nothing to ask forgiveness for!"

Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh — The Rosh's Guide to Life

שֶׁלֹּא יָשִׂיחַ שִׂיחָה בְּטֵלָה. וְיִזָּהֵר לִלְמוֹד בַּלַּיְלָה עַד שֶׁיִּשַּׁן מִתּוֹךְ דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה, וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ שִׂיחָה בְּטֵלָה **18.** One should not be involved in idle conversation. *One should take care to learn Torah at night until he falls asleep through words of Torah, not pointless conversation.*

The *Tosfos Yom Tov* points out that by following this practice and learning *Torah* at night when he is tired, he will fall asleep in the midst of speaking words of *Torah*, and not idle conversation.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz taught that doing this will sweeten one's sleep, and those words of *Torah* will flourish and grow throughout the night. **Rav Moshe Shternbuch** notes that the idea behind this is that one should go to sleep among thoughts of *Torah*. Also, there are times when a person is tired, yet he will do things that he desires to do, despite the fact that he is tired. When one learns when he is tired, he is showing that he truly desires to learn *Torah*, and fall asleep among words of *Torah*.

Early one morning, the ***Chazon Ish*** was found sleeping on the floor right near his bed. When he awoke, he was asked what had happened. He replied, "It is my custom to learn *Torah* late every night at the *Shtender* next to the table. I learn until I feel that my eyes are closing on their own from being tired, and at this moment, I make a quick calculation of how much more time it will take me until I fall asleep. I know that the time it takes me to get from the *Shtender* to the bed is about one minute. Therefore, I learn until just one minute before sleep overtakes me, and then I go to my bed and fall asleep.

Last night," the *Chazon Ish* concluded, "it appears that I miscalculated, and I learned past that 'one minute' mark. I did not make it to my bed before I fell asleep along the way!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rebbetzin Kolodetsky, the daughter of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**, once



spoke about the importance of waiting for *Shabbos*. She quoted **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, *zt"l***, who said that *Kedushas Shabbos* begins from *Chatzos*.

She said, "Many women run to light *Shabbos* candles at the last moment. This is very wrong. Those women who are ready ten minutes before the time and wait for *Shabbos* and show *Shabbos* that they have love and respect for it, will gain the reward of all those who should honour *Shabbos* but miss out on the opportunity! This is so since they atone for the others.

Rav Shteinman promised that the *Tefilos* and requests that are said in those ten minutes will be answered by *Hashem*!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Yaakov Haber writes about **Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, *zt"l***. "Students of his would return to Yerushalayim after many years of being away from the *Yeshivah*, and Rav Scheinberg would remember their stellar qualities when he would see them again. He would say things like, 'Do you still have that amazing memory?' or 'You never lost your smile!'

He did this for many thousands of students. He taught us many times that we can make another person's day — and sometimes their life — with a well-placed, simple compliment. We have the power to make people great!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Even as a young child, **Rav Chaim of Sanz, *zt"l***, was renowned for his love of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*. Once, an adult saw little Chaim murmuring to himself with great seriousness, and he asked him why he was talking to himself. The young boy smiled. He said, "I'm reviewing the 613 *Mitzvos* of the *Torah*. I want to know them by heart." The man responded, "Wouldn't your time be better spent studying *Chumash* or *Mishnayos*?"

Chaim replied, "Let me explain. One day, I happened to overhear a conversation between two of the Czar's soldiers. One soldier asked his comrade, 'Do you remember what our commander instructed us to do during the military mission we'll be carrying out tomorrow?' The second soldier answered, 'Of course. Every evening, I review the commander's orders. A good soldier must know all the military commands by heart. Even if one soldier doesn't bother reviewing and makes a mistake on the battlefield, he causes all the soldiers to lose the battle!'"

Young Chaim continued, "When I heard that conversation, I thought to myself that we *Yidden* are soldiers in the army of *Hashem*! Our 'military commands' are the *Mitzvos*, and I very much want to be a good soldier in *Hashem's* army. That's why I constantly review the *Mitzvos*!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



When it came to his personal needs, **the *Chofetz Chaim*** avoided all luxuries, but when it came to the honour of *Hashem* and His *Torah*, he had a completely different approach. Also, some cases he considered to be '*Klal Yisroel* matters', and he would spare no expense.

When the *Chofetz Chaim* built the *Yeshivah* in Radin, he insisted that it should be a beautiful and striking building, and towards this goal he spent tremendous amounts of money. The same applied to the *Mikvah* in Radin.

The *Chofetz Chaim* said, "Anything that is to be built for the benefit of the public had to be magnificent in order to give honour to *Hashem*, His *Torah* and those who learn *Torah*!"

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rav Avraham Trop, *z"tl*, who was the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Karlin in the United States, used to relate to others about the time he became deathly ill when he was a young man learning by the ***Choftez Chaim*** in Radin. His friends ran to the *Chofetz Chaim* and said, "What are we going to do? Avraham Trop is close to death!"

The *Chofetz Chaim* instructed the boys to whisper in Avraham's ear that if he would commit himself to spreading Torah to Jewish children his entire life, he will be cured from his illness. The friends

hurried to carry out the instructions but when they arrived by Avraham's bedside, he had already lost consciousness. They ran back to the *Chofetz Chaim* and explained the situation to him. The *Chofetz Chaim* said that he himself would go to Avraham's bedside and see what he could do.

When the *Chofetz Chaim* reached the sick boy, he requested that everyone leave the room. The boys left, but they strained their ears behind the door and peered through the keyhole to see what the *Chofetz Chaim* was doing.

They saw and heard the *Chofetz Chaim* standing next to the wall and calling out the names of Avraham's ancestors, who were known *tzaddikim*. He said, "Go to the *Kisei HaKavod*, the Holy Throne of Hashem in Shamayim and announce that your grandson Avraham accepts upon himself to teach Torah all his life to Jewish children!" The *Chofetz Chaim* then left the room. Shortly later, Avraham began showing signs of life, and his condition gradually improved until he was completely cured.

L'Maaseh



Once, **Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky, the *Steipler Gaon***, asked someone who was an expert at making *Batim*, the encasings, for *Tefilin*, if he could come to his home and repair the stitching on his *Tefilin*. The *Steipler* stood over the craftsman's shoulder and supervised every detail of the delicate work.

At one point, when the worker was intensely concentrating, the needle he was using fell to the floor. The *Steipler* was upset to see anything lost, and he immediately got down on his hands and knees

to look for it, and the other man joined him. The two of them looked everywhere, but the needle seemed to have slipped into one of the cracks on the floor, and it was nowhere to be found.

The young man, without much patience, explained that the needle cost next to nothing and it certainly wasn't worth the time and effort to look for it any further. However, this did not satisfy the *Steipler*. He said, "This needle belongs to your father in Yerushalayim, and right now there is a *Mitzvah* of *Hashavas Aveidah*, returning a lost object. *A Mitzvah*!"

The *Steipler* tried again to sweep the floor with his hand to search for the missing needle, but he was not successful in finding it. Finally, they took another needle to replace it, and the man continued with his work. After the young man finished, he left and started on his way home.

Before he had gone very far, he heard the *Steipler* calling after him. He barely had time to turn around when he saw the *Tzadik* hurrying to catch up to him. With a look of joy on his face, the *Steipler* announced, "*Baruch Hashem*! I found the needle! We're able to do the *Mitzvah* of *Hashavas Aveidah* now!"

The young man was very moved by how the *Steipler* was nearly overwhelmed by the excitement of doing a *Mitzvah*!

Tefila is one of the areas in which we constantly need chizuk. We must remind ourselves from time to time what it says in the Kad HaKemach that tefila is so great, it has the power to even change nature. - We must remind ourselves of the Meiri who writes that we should feel confident in the power of one good tefila to break a decree. - The effectiveness of any tefila depends on the amount of mesirus nefesh a person is willing to put into it. The more we put in, the more powerful it becomes.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



Rebbi Chananya ben T'radyon taught (*Avos* 3:3) that when two people sit together and there are no words of *Torah* between them, it is a session of scoffers. However, if two people sit together and there *are* words of *Torah* between them, the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) rests among them.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner, *zt"l*, in *Ruach Chaim*, explains that the key words in this teaching are: *'between them'*, there are no words of *Torah*. That is to say, when two people sit to learn *Torah* together, in reality, sometimes they are only learning *by themselves*, and not with each other. They just happen to be sitting together. Therefore, since there are no words of *Torah between them*, it becomes a session of scoffers because each one will scoff at the learning of his fellow.

One should therefore make extra effort when learning with others to actually learn *with them*, and thereby cause the *Shechinah* to reside amongst them!

"The key to reaching greatness is to use the minutes others allow to go to waste." ~ Chasam Sofer.

Live Up to Yourself by R' Yaakov Rahimi



Rav Shimshon Pincus said that you are will never find a farmer that works with chickens, to have a desire to enter the chicken coop and to start clucking. A farmer, although he spends most of his time with the animals, does not want to act like them. Why not? Because animals are animals, and a human is a human.

The only time that you get influenced by the society around you, is when you think that you are supposed to be like them. When you know that you are different. When you know that you are a son or daughter of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, you are made and built differently, you are a Yid, your neshama is higher. Then you will never be influenced in the wrong way by the society around you.

Our goal is to be mekadesh Shem Shamayim. Our priority in life is to make Hashem proud, by learning more Torah, more chesed and doing more mitzvos.

When you are proud of yourself and have the confidence as to what it means to be a Jew, you will never ever get influenced by the society around you.

When you are happy inside, you are not going to look for things outside. Be happy and proud with who you are. Understand, that Hashem really has high expectations of you. Live up to those expectations. Don't expect any less than what Hashem expects of you!

Talk to Them By R' Zecharia Wallerstein ZTL

I had a Rosh Yeshiva in Mir called **Rabbi Shmuel Birnbaum**. One of the Kollel guys was there for about 40 years. His wife was seriously ill with a devastating terminal disease. The doctors gave her 3-4 weeks to live. He went to the Rosh Yeshiva, and told him that if she dies, then I will not be able to learn anymore as she was earning the parnasso and looking after the house. She just wanted her husband to learn forever.

He sid to the Rosh Yeshiva, "You have to do something. If I lose her, I won't know how to take care of my family, and I definitely won't be able to continue learning."

The Rosh said, "I am not a Rebbe, nor a Baba nor a mekubel. I don't do miracles; I just sit and learn."

He said, "Rebbe, I am begging you. I have been learning here for 40 years."

He said, "Ok, I will daven for her."

Two weeks later when she was extremely sick, there was news that there was a new experimental drug that had a slim chance of helping her. Being that she was on the verge of dying, she underwent the trials of this drug in Belgium with 19 other people.

Out of the 20 that underwent the trials, two made it. His wife made it and started improving immensely. She finally had a scan which showed that she was completely clear of the illness. Mamash a nes from The Riboino Shel Olam.

He goes back to the Rosh Yeshiva, and says to him, " I guess that you really are a miracle worker. I know that this refuah must have come about due to you."

The Rosh Yeshiva said, "I think you should know what I did."

"I opened my gemara after you left me. There was a machlokos between Abaye and Rava. I said, listen Abaye, listen Rava, I have to

talk to you. Almost every single day I **talk** to you, not learn about you, but actually **talk** to you. There is a Kollel man in my Yeshiva who also **talks** to you both. His wife requires a refuah. She is very sick, and if she dies, he won't be able to **talk** to you so much. Maye you would be willing to go in front of Hashem to the Kisei Kakavod and request that you would like to continue talking to him."

When the Rosh Yeshiva learnt, he was talking to them. It is a different level of seeing Hashem through Torah. Don't just learn from them – talk to them!

Peninim on the Torah

ואם לא נטמאה האשה וטהורה היא ונקתה ונזרע זרע *But if the woman is pure, then she shall be proven innocent and she shall bear seed. (5:28)*

Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl, quotes *Chazal* (*Makkos* 23b), "One who sits and refrains from doing an *aveirah*, sin, is given a reward like one who performs a *mitzvah*." The *Talmud* (*Kiddushin* 39b) states that this rule applies only when the opportunity for sinning presents itself, yet the person resists the temptation to sin. *Rashi* explains that controlling one's *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, is in and of itself one of the greatest *mitzvos*.

Rav Chaim Vital writes that he heard from his *Rebbe*, **the *Arizal***, that when he was in *yeshivah,* he would pepper the speaker with a multitude of questions. He never let the lesson conclude until he was completely satisfied, and all his questions resolved. It reached a point that he was removed from the *bais hamedrash*.

As a result of his humiliation before all the sages, he was rewarded to be the only who can raise his voice in question during the *shiur* in the *Mesivta d'Rakia*, Heavenly *Yeshivah*.

This is the reward one receives for accepting shame and not responding (by flying off the handle).

The *Chafetz Chaim* once walked down the steps of his house not taking notice of a fruit peel that was in his path. He slipped and fell down all the stairs. A group of cynical students, who were clueless as to the identity of the elderly Jew who had fallen down the stairs,



made jest of him tumbling down the stairs. The sage was overjoyed. Indeed, he entered the *bais hamedrash* atypically in an extremely jovial mood. When queried concerning his unusual mood, he replied, "Everyone pays honour to me. I am never humiliated. What will I do about my 'many' sins? What will expiate them? *Bushah*, embarrassment, is one of the greatest and most effective atonements. Now, I have been cleansed. Should I not be happy?"

Humiliation has an extraordinary power behind it, allowing for one who has been humiliated to confer his/her blessing on someone in need - and achieve singular efficacy. The following story underscores this idea.

It was an evening dedicated to *chizuk*, strengthening, for women, covering the gamut of areas from emotional stress to spiritual ascendency, with presentations rendered by well-known gifted speakers. The lead speaker was an accomplished *mechaneches*, educator, who was both a knowledgeable and captivating speaker. She ascended to the lectern and patiently waited for the women to get settled, so that she could begin her talk.

Suddenly, a tall, thickset woman, whose wild eyes were filled with anger, came up to the lectern and began to berate the would-be speaker, "Years ago, you humiliated me in public. My life has been a

miserable failure since that day. I will never get over the shame that you brought upon me. You are a murderer! You destroyed my life!"

She yelled all this in the presence of hundreds of women.

The speaker calmly responded, "I am sorry that you feel this way, but I have no idea who you are. I do not remember ever meeting you and certainly not putting you to shame."

The attacker refused to be placated, "I remember vividly the day that you ruined my life. You will not get away with it. I want everyone to know what kind of evil person you are." With these words, she grabbed the microphone from the speaker and screamed, "It is forbidden to listen to this woman. She murdered me by ruining my life. Her public humiliation of me destroyed whatever self-esteem I had. Look at me! She is responsible for the way I look!"

By this time, one of the hostesses who had arranged the evening approached the angry woman and attempted to calm her down – to no avail. This woman was in serious pain, and she was not leaving. She pushed the woman away and continued with her harangue.

The assemblage was torn. On the one hand, the speaker was a distinguished, accomplished woman, who had reached out and helped many. On the other hand, the woman who was hurt came across as very angry, but otherwise sincere.

The speaker appeared devastated. She had just been publicly excoriated, humiliated, raked across the coals. She broke down in tears. Suddenly, she looked up and asked, "Please get Rachel." The organisers called for Rachel, who, after a few minutes, walked up to the podium, "Rachel, you do not know me, but I am a good friend of your mother. Actually, we grew up together. I would like you to know that, during this moment of my travail, when I have sustained a terrible humiliation and did not respond, I am granted the power of efficacious blessing. I know that you have yet to be blessed with a child. In the merit of the travail that I have just experienced and

my lack of response to the baseless degradation that was hurled at me, may Hashem bless you with a child. *Ana Hashem*, please Hashem, may my shame be a *zechus*, merit, for Rachel *bas*..."

The woman's actions stunned all those within hearing distance. Whoever was privy to what had just taken place was flabbergasted. They had never seen such magnanimity.

During these few moments, the accuser stood quietly. One of the organisers asked her, "Do you know the name of the speaker?" (She felt that the speaker might be the victim of mistaken identity.) "I do not know what her married name is today, but when I knew her, her name was Cohen," she replied.

When the organiser heard this, she took the microphone and declared for all to hear, "Our speaker's maiden name was Chain – not Cohen. She must have a strong likeness to the woman who humiliated this woman years ago."

When she heard this, the accuser thought for a moment and said, "I guess I made a mistake." She neither apologised nor sought to make amends. She just walked off the stage and ignored everyone staring at her. Clearly, she has been the victim of serious emotional trauma which had left her unhinged.

The entire room broke into an uproar over the extraordinary act of *chesed* which the speaker evinced. She maintained her cool; not only did she not lose it, but she had the presence of mind to realise that, at this moment, her humiliation could be used to help a woman in need.

One year later, Rachel *bas*... gave birth to a healthy child!

The Kotzker zt'l said, "It's a good thing that worrying doesn't help, for if worrying would help, people would worry even more."

כה תברכו את בני ישראל... *So shall you bless Bnei Yisrael.* *(6:23)*
ושמו את שמי על בני ישראל ואני אברכם *Let them place My Name upon Bnei Yisrael, and I will bless them.* *(6:27)*



In the three *pesukim* of *Bircas Kohanim*, the Priestly Blessing, the *Kohanim* serve as the medium through which Hashem's blessing reaches us. Hashem is the One Who blesses us via the conduit of the *Kohen*. Prior to offering the blessing, the *Kohanim* recite a *berachah*, "Who commands us to bless His People, *Yisrael – b'ahavah*, with love."

Thus, if the blessings are to achieve efficacy, the tenor of the relationship between *kohen* and congregation – and vice versa – must be one of love, no animus towards any member of the congregation for any reason. This applies to the flipside. If the congregant bears a grudge against the *Kohen*, he cannot love him. If one hopes to be strengthened and empowered as a result of this blessing, love must reign.

How important is *Bircas Kohanim*? **The *Netziv, zl*** (*Naso*), writes: "All of the blessings in the world are included within the words of *Bircas Kohanim*. There is nothing to be added to them."

Shaarei Orah (*Shaar* 10) writes: "When the *Kohanim* bless, they open up via their blessings, the world of *Rachamim*, Heavenly Mercy, a world where Strict Judgment does not exist. Thus, even if the Jewish People transgress, *Bircas Kohanim* prevents any negative influence from reaching them."

Horav Eliezer HaLevi Turk, Shlita, relates how some *gedolim*, Torah leaders, went out of their way to participate and receive the Priestly blessings. ***Horav Yisrael Gustman, zl,*** insisted that there should be at least two *Kohanim* at his *minyan* (In Yerushalayim, *Bircas Kohen* is recited daily.) On *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, he made a point to have ten *Kohanim* at each *minyan*.

Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl,* and *Horav Moshe Yosef Milotzki, zl, were known to trek from *shul* to *shul* to participate in *Bircas Kohanim.*

When ***Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl,*** came to America together with the ***Gerrer Rebbe, Shlita***, on their historic trip, *Rav* Shteinman insisted on davening in a *Sephardic shul*, since the *minyan* there recites *Bircas Kohanim* every day. Indeed, as *Rav* Shteinman explained, *Bircas Kohanim* is the only *avodah*, service, rendered in the *Bais Hamikdash* that is still extant after its destruction.

Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, was walking home from *shul* in the accompaniment of a number of students. He commented, "You know that there is someone in that *shul* who is proficient in giving *berachos*. His blessings achieve extraordinary efficacy under the most negative circumstances." They followed him into the *shul* during *Chazoras Ha'Shatz*, the repetition of *Shemoneh Esrai*. He looked at them and said, "Two minutes." They joined the congregation for *Bircas Kohanim*. The students looked at their revered *Rebbe* as if to say, "So what? It is only *Bircas Kohanim*." He replied, "Hashem says, 'And I will place My Name on *Bnei Yisrael*, and I will bless them.' Is anyone's blessing more effective than that of Hashem?

Let me tell you a story. A relative of mine was experiencing a difficult labour. The doctor wanted to perform a caesarean section surgery to deliver the infant. They called ***Horav Nissen Karelitz, zl,*** for advice and a *berachah*. The *Rebbetzin* took the call and replied that the *Rav* was unavailable. She advised them, however, to refuse surgery at the moment, to hold out until the morning when

the situation would be re-evaluated. Night passed, and, by morning, the situation had resolved itself, and mother and child were out of the woods.

Weeks later, *Rav* Shimshon had occasion to visit *Rav* Nissen and his wife. He said to her, "*Rebbetzin*, you are a miracle worker. To take upon your shoulders to offer advice that is counter to medical opinion."

The *Rebbetzin* replied, "You think that it was I who blessed the child? The truth is that I am a firm believer in the power of *Bircas Kohanim*. The *Kohanim* bless the people. At times, however, for whatever reason, their blessing does not (at that time) achieve efficacy. As a result, a number of "loose" blessings are drifting all over. I collect and save them. When someone is in need of blessing, I release one of the blessings. They are not my blessings. These blessings come from Hashem. I just happened to have saved them for the next opportunity!"



R' Michael Rothschild - The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation

Have you ever heard of a happy ruler?

One of the measurements that the gemara talks about is a Tefach- the width of four fingers. But here is the amazing thing: There are two types of Tefach measurements. There is a Tefach Atzey-vos which means a Tefach that is sad, and there is a Tefach Soy-chay-Chos which means a Tefach that is smiling and happy.

What is going on? Since when are measurements happy or sad?

Well, a Tefach Atzey-vos is when your fingers are closed very tightly together, which signifies a person whose hand is closed to tzedakah and chessed. That Tefach, the Torah says, is sad.

The Tefach Soy–chay-Chos is the measurement when the fingers are open. This represents a person whose hand is open to tzedakah and chessed. This measurement is called happy. What does all this mean?

The Sefas Emes says that human beings are made up of a guf -a body, and a neshama – a soul. The guf is made from the ground, which has a connection to depression.

The neshama on the other hand, comes from Hashem. In Shamayim, that is where true simcha lives. The more we connect to Hashem, the more we connect to the source of happiness.

So how do we connect to Hashem? Well, Hashem is a 100% giver. He doesn't need anything, and all He does is give all day long!

That is the secret to the happy Tefach! When we give, we are like Hashem, and connect to Him. And once we are connected to Hashem, who is the source of all giving and happiness, this makes us happy.

Can you imagine, there are still people in the world that believe that holding onto their money will actually make them happy. How weird!

Are you looking for happiness? It's been inside of you all the time! It's in your neshama, the part of you that comes from Hashem. The more you connect to it with chesed and tzedakah, the more you will unleash the happiness inside of yourself!

The Chazon Ish zt'l writes, "I don't feel that it's important to ask help from people many times. I rely on the Chofetz Chaim, who often said, 'From a human, one doesn't ask too much.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."



Thirst for Torah

Before drinking a beverage, one recites **שהכל נהיה בדברו**. However, when it comes to water, one only says this brachah when he is thirsty. If he isn't thirsty, he cannot say the brachah. This is because water is very sweet, but solely for those who are thirsty.



Torah is compared to water, and indeed, Torah is similar. The pleasure of Torah study is only experienced by one who thirsts for it. When he studies it without interest and thirst, he won't appreciate and enjoy the Torah he's learning.

There's an expression in the *rishonim* (see *Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah* 4:3), **מילא כריסו ש"ס ופוסקים** - "to fill one's stomach with *Shas* and *poskim*."

The Kotzker *zt'l* asks that it should state, "to fill one's ***mind*** with *Shas* and *poskim*" because one learns Torah with his mind, not with his stomach.

The Kotzker answers: A few hours after one eats a meal, he wants to eat again. This is the appetite we need for Torah. We should never be satisfied. We should always be thirsty for more.

Try Again



This week's *parashah* discusses the laws of a *nazir*. One of the halachos is that he is not permitted to become *tamei* (impure from contact with a human corpse). If he becomes tamei, the Torah states he must start the *nazirus* all over again.

The Beis Yisrael taught that when one fails in his resolves, he shouldn't mope and give up. Instead, he should start over from the beginning and try again.



Many stumble and fall from high levels of avodas Hashem, as it says (*Mishlei* 24), **שבע יפול צדיק** "a tzaddik falls seven times." There is a cycle of improvement and regression; we often tend to fall back to being our old selves. When this occurs, we are tempted to give up. The laws of the *nazir* teach us to keep on trying. If the first attempt failed, try again until you succeed.

Shlomo HaMelech says, **שבע יפול צדיק וקם ורשעים יכשלו ברעה**, "a tzaddik falls seven times and rises, while the *resha'im stumble in bad." Both the tzaddik and the rasha fall. The difference is that the tzaddik doesn't remain in his fallen state.* **וקם**, *he picks himself up again and again. Even if he falls seven times, he will get up and try again. But when the rasha falls, he remains there.*

Growth is attained through falling back and then picking oneself up and trying again. Chazal call this process **ירידה לצורך עליה**, a descent for the sake of climbing even higher.

The Be'er Mayim Chaim (*Noach* 8:1) explains, "The purpose of the relapses is to be raised up again. Therefore, even when they fall, they are really moving upward, and not down. As it says, **שבע יפול צדיק וקם**, this means that all seven descents are part of the getting-up process. It can be compared to someone who desires to throw something high into the air. He bends down low and drops his hand behind him, which enables him to throw the object with greater force into the air.

The same occurs when people fall. From the depths, they rise up to the heavens."

Setting A Tone

Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's, **zt"l**, consideration and sensitivity to his entire family set the tone for the behaviour of all household members toward one another. The Auerbach home on Porush Street, Yerushalayim, had entrances on both Porush and Ussishkin streets. After his Rebbetzin's petirah, Rav Shlomo Zalman used only the entrance on Porush street, which was reached by climbing a steep flight of stairs. The other entrance led directly into one of the rooms occupied by his son Baruch, zt"l, who had moved in to help his father, and Rav Shlomo Zalman didn't want to invade his privacy.

"True joy comes from recognizing the blessings that surround us each day. Gratitude is the key to unlocking that joy." ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Gladdening the Hearts of Prisoners

The famed tzaddik of Yerushalayim **Rav Aryeh Levin, zt"l**, used to visit various jails to spend some time with the prisoners, offering them comfort and encouragement and brightening their black lives. One Shabbos, Rav Aryeh arrived at the gates of a certain jail, only to find that the British sentry on duty would not allow him to enter. "There's a curfew on today," the sentry told Rav Aryeh. "You're not allowed to be out on the streets now. Make your way home immediately!"



A Jewish policeman standing nearby pleaded with the British sentry to make an exception for Rav Aryeh. "Why prevent an elderly man from performing an act of kindness?" the policeman said persuasively, "It must be very difficult for a man his age to walk all the way over here," he went on, "but Rav Aryeh does it every week, on a purely voluntary basis, to gladden the hearts of the prisoners." The sentry could not believe his ears. The old man volunteered to visit prisoners? How could that be?

The sentry shook his head. No, it was impossible. He was sure Rav Aryeh received some compensation for his work. And if that was the case, he'd better find himself a different line of work!

While the British sentry and the Jewish policeman were arguing, Rav Aryeh made his way around the building, checking for an opening of some sort in the wall surrounding the jail. Maybe he'd find a foothold he could use to help him climb in. Finally, he found what he was looking for: a small foothold sticking out of the smooth wall. Like a

young, agile boy, Rav Aryeh used the foothold to help him climb to the top of the gate. Then he leaped inside to the prison grounds.

The British sentry saw what had happened. "You are right," he said to the Jewish policeman. "The man must be a volunteer. A man who did this job for pay would never go to such lengths to get inside the jail. This man is determined to visit the prisoners no matter what!"

Adding And Enhancing a Name

Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l, Rav of Yerushalayim, was named Chaim at his bris. The name Yosef was added on later in his life, when he was already a young man. Rav Chaim fell ill one year shortly before Yom Kippur, and he was afraid he might not be able to fast on the holy day.

When Rav Chaim's rebbi, the **Gaon of Brisk, zt"l**, heard about the situation, he asked that Rav Chaim be told in his name that he gave Rav Chaim his word that he would be able to fast safely - on condition that he spend Yom Kippur day resting at home. It seemed as if Rav Chaim accepted his rebbi's instructions, so his family was astounded to see him hurrying out to the beis knesses to daven Maariv on Erev Yom Kippur!

"My rebbi said nothing about Maariv," he explained. "His messenger specifically said I should rest at home all day." After Yom Kippur, Rav Chaim's situation took a turn for the worse. His rebbi spent an entire day at his bedside and then finally decided to add the name Yosef to his given name, Chaim. The name Yosef literally means "he will add," and the name Chaim means "life." The name Yosef Chaim alluded to everyone's prayers that Hashem add years to Rav Chaim's life. Indeed, Rav Yosef Chaim immediately felt better. Within a few days, he was back to his regular routine.

A few years later, on Purim, Rav Yosef Chaim brought his rebbi mishloach manos very early in the morning. The Gaon of Brisk praised

his student for his alacrity, stating, "Zerizin makdimin lemitzvos." Rav Yosef Chaim smiled and said, "It was the rebbi who turned me into a zariz. At first, my name was only Chaim. When the rebbi added Yosef to my name, the gematria [numerical equivalent] of my full name, Yosef Chaim, became equal to the gematria of the word zariz."

Hearing Rav Chaim's clever response, the Brisker Gaon rose and recited the blessing written in the Gemara to be recited when one sees that one's student is successful: Brich Rachmana dechamei li peirin ad da'ana bachaim, "Blessed is Hashem Who has shown me fruits during my lifetime."

A Necessity of Life

"I'm tired of giving tzedakah," a chasid complained to **Reb Yaakov of Radzimin, zt"l**. "No matter how much I give, poor people keep coming back to ask for more. It never ends!"

"Tell me," said Reb Yaakov, "don't you get sick of eating? Every single day, three times a day, you sit down to eat, and no matter how much you eat you are hungry again in a short while. How can you stand it?"

"But Rebbe,"protested the chassid, "a person needs food in order to survive! One can't live without food!"

"And how can one live without giving tzedakah?" Reb Yaakov countered.

"Know that the key to success lies in faith and wholehearted trust in Hashem. With Emunah, one can traverse the highest mountains, and overcome the greatest obstacles." ~ Rabbi Yehuda Halevi [The Kuzari].

Pity for the Birds

The members of the household of the **Pnei Menachem of Gur, zt"l**, once noticed that something was wrong with their sink water. One of the Rebbe's attendants decided to check the family's solar water heater to see if he could find the source of the problem. (In Eretz Yisroel, people take advantage of the abundant sunshine to heat their water. The system is made up of water tanks and solar panels installed on the roof.)



On the roof, the Rebbe's attendant saw that the cover of the water tank had fallen off. Two little birds perched on the edge of the tank were drinking from the water inside. The attendant enlisted someone else to help him pour the contaminated water out of the tank. On the bottom of the tank lay a dead bird. Apparently, it had fallen in while taking a drink.

The attendants cleaned the tank thoroughly and replaced the cover. Then they went downstairs and told the Rebbe that the problem was taken care of. The Rebbe thanked them profusely, but his heart was filled with pity for the poor birds who would now have to search for a different source of drinking water.

"Please place a bowl filled with water on top of the cover of the water tank," he instructed his attendant. "That way, when the birds come to drink, they'll find what they're looking for."

Quick Thinking

Rabbeinu Yechiel, one of the Ba'alei Tosafos who lived in France more than 800 years ago, was once invited to the royal palace, where the king offered him a cup of wine. Rabbeinu Yechiel found himself in a terrible dilemma, because it was forbidden for him to drink the wine (wine touched by a non-Jew is yayin nesech), but the king was liable to be furious if Rabbeinu Yechiel told him so!

While he was pondering the situation, a servant brought a washbowl into the room for the king to wash his hands. As soon as the king had washed his hands, Rabbeinu Yechiel drank the water in the basin.

Turning to the king he said, "It is forbidden for me to drink this wine, but I am honoured to have drunk the water with which the king washed his hands." The king smiled, and disaster was averted.

Just a Few More Minutes

The Lelover Rebbe, Harav Moshe Mordechai Biderman, zt"l, suffered tremendous pain during the last few years of his life, but he never complained or even so much as groaned aloud. "Tell me your secret," his doctor once asked him. "How can you bear such intense pain in silence?"

"It's very simple," replied the Rebbe. "You see, I believe with perfect faith that Moshiach will arrive at any moment, and when he does, all pain will disappear. When I bear in mind that my suffering will last only a few moments longer, the pain is not that terribly difficult to bear."

"Emunah is not a leap in the dark; it is a leap into the light of Hashem's love and providence." Rabbi Dovid Ashear.

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

וְאִישׁ אֶת־קָדָשָׁיו לוֹ יִהְיוּ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִתֵּן לַכֹּהֵן לוֹ יִהְיֶה Everyone's holy things shall belong to him; whatever a man gives to the kohen shall be his. (5:10)

A Person's Real Possessions Are His Torah and Mitzvos:

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l says that the Torah is teaching us the most important thing that a person must remember throughout life. One must recognize that his only true possessions are his spiritual acquisitions, such as the Torah he learned, the mitzvos he performed, the tefillos he prayed, and the acts of kindness that he did for others. These are possessions that one will keep forever, even after he dies. Only "the holy things shall belong to him." All of one's material possessions, however, are only his temporarily. They will eventually be lost. The Medrash explains this concept with a mashal:

A man had three good friends – Reuven, Shimon and Levi. The man considered Reuven his closest friend and the two loved each other very much. Shimon was also a close friend, although not quite as close as Reuven. Levi was a friend, but not nearly as close of a friend as Reuven or Shimon. One day, the man was called to stand before the king. He was very nervous and worried that he might be in trouble for some reason. He was afraid to go alone, so he called each of his friends to ask them to accompany him.

To his surprise, his closest friend Reuven refused to go with him. Shimon, his second closest friend, also said that he wouldn't go all the way into the palace, although he did agree to walk with him until the gate. When he asked Levi if he would accompany him. he had very little hope that he would agree. However, to his shock, Levi immediately said that he would go with him all the way to the king, and he would do whatever he could to speak on his behalf.

In the end, Reuven refused to go with him at all, Shimon only agreed to go until the palace gates, and Levi agreed to go all the way inside and to defend his friend – and he ultimately was saved due to Levi's help.

The nimshal is as follows: The thing that a person thinks is his best friend is his money. A person loves it more than anything else, but, at the end of one's life, it doesn't accompany him at all. It leaves him alone, and he then realizes that it was never his true friend. (As an aside, my grandfather, the **Kretchnifer Rebbe zy"a**, would say that although one's money doesn't accompany him after his death, as is stated in Avos 6:10, one can "send it ahead" by giving it to tzedakah, and it will be waiting in Shomayim for him.)

The Shimon in the mashal represent a person's family members and friends. They won't abandon a person when he dies. They cry for him and accompany him until the grave – but they are then forced to depart from him and leave him alone. The only true friends a person has that will accompany him all the way into "the King's chamber" are his Torah and mitzvos.



That is why we have to appreciate this "friendship" and spend as much time as we can obtaining more Torah and mitzvos. The pasuk tells us that only the holy things are one's true possessions. All of the money he has in the banks and all of his material items will eventually leave him and go to someone else's pocket. Only the money he gives to tzedakah and the chesed he does will remain his.

יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם ***May Hashem raise His face toward you and grant you peace.*** (6:26)

Thanking Hashem Removes Worries:

Sefer Chochmas Hanefesh Hayahadus relates the story of a certain Rosh Kollel who had many monetary worries and was drowning under the crushing debts that the Kollel had amassed. He was so burdened by the debt that he felt that he couldn't go on any longer. He went to **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l** and cried his heart out. He told him, "I spoke to frum psychologist and asked his advice. He told me that I am not cut out for this type of responsibility. He said that my nature is too week to deal with so many worries and that if I continue at this job, I am in danger of completely falling apart. Should I follow his advice and quit my job as Rosh Kollel?"

Rav Shlomo Zalman asked, "How long have you served as a Rosh Kollel?" The man answered, "For 25 years." "Were there difficult times before?" Rav Shlomo Zalman asked. "Yes," the man answered. "Did Hashem help you then to get through the challenging times?" Rav Shlomo Zalman asked him. "Yes," the Rosh Kollel said. 'He always did. Every time I had a hard month, I somehow got enough money by the end of the month." "So you see that Hashem always helped you in the past," said Rav Shlomo Zalman. "Why don't you just rely on Him to help you now as well?"

He continued, "You are not the only one in your position. Every Rosh Kollel and Rosh Yeshiva has a hard time raising money. And every businessman also has to worry about money. In fact, every person has to worry about how to have enough money to marry of his children. The answer to all the worries is to stop worrying and to trust in Hashem. And how does one come to have bitachon? By thanking Hashem.

"I will give you a tried and true solution. Go out and buy a small notebook and keep it with you all the time. Every time you see Hashem's help getting you through a challenge, right it in the

notebook as a means of thanking Hashem. When you daven Shemonah Esrei, before reciting 'Modim', take out the notebook from your pocket and look through everything you wrote in it so that you remember every miracle Hashem did for you and you thank him for it. If you do this, I promise you that your worries will go away on their own."

All Gates Are Open to Those Who Help Others

The Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch zy"a once said to his son, ***"When you help a Jew with parnassah, even if you only helped him make a dollar by selling a calf, you merit having all the gates of Heaven that provide all abilities open before you."***

A few years later, when his son asked him about this, he added, "This is true. The gates that provide whatever one needs do open for one who helps another Jew. But that isn't the important thing. The main thing is to help another Jew with a full heart and with the desire to assist him."

The chasid Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Homil related: "The first time I came to Liazhna, I met the elder chasidim who had been chasidim of the **Mezerticher Magid zy"a and Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk zy"a**. They would often say: ***'If you love your fellow Jew, Hashem will love you. If you do a favour for your fellow Jew, Hashem will do favours for you. If you draw a fellow Jew close, Hashem will draw you close.'"***

The Chazon Ish said, "If a non-Jew would know the enjoyment of learning a daf Gemara before Shacharis on Shabbos morning he would convert just to be able to experience this joy."

Parsha Pshetel

יברכך ד' וישמרך *"May Hashem bless you and guard you."* 6:24

In the same Posuk, there is a Brocha that Hashem should bless us, and guard us. One would think that it is two separate things: to be blessed by Hakodosh Boruch Hu and to be guarded by Him. However, the Posuk puts them together, telling us that they are directly connected. What is the connection between Hashem Bentching us, and Hashem protecting us?

Hakodosh Boruch Hu sent down much blessing to the world. Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants to infuse each and every one of us with much blessing. However, we need to be a proper receptacle in order to receive that blessing.

Imagine you are told that you can go into the treasury of the king and take as many jewels and riches as you want. There is one caveat, you need to have a container to take the jewels, or you are not allowed to take them. If one goes into the treasury and does not ensure to procure a container, he will never be able to access those jewels which are right in front of him.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu placed Brocha right in front of us. There is an abundance of Brocha which we can tap into, but we need to have the receptacle to receive it. We must work on learning Torah, and following the Mitzvos, so that we can have a "container" to receive all the Brochos. We must seek to do Teshuva and refrain from sin, so that we do not have a "container" to receive any Klolos. With all of this, we must know that we need the assistance of Hakodosh Boruch Hu to accomplish this. We cannot make containers on our own – rather we need the help of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

We need to work on it as much as we can, and then we can be certain that Hakodosh Boruch Hu will help us to truly achieve our goals. May we be Zoche to only have Brocha pour down on us, and not Klalah.

An Important Rokeach to Know When Listening to Birkas Kohanim

Outside Eretz Yisrael, we only say Birkas Kohanim on limited occasions— the Shalosh Regalim, Rosh HaShanah, and Yom Kippur. **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin**, in his sefer Oznayim L'Torah, stresses that when the Kohanim recite the three Priestly Blessings mentioned in Parshas Naso, they should realize that they have vast power in their hands. Every word of the Birkas Kohanim can make tremendous differences in a person's life.

The pesukim in the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai, prior to the Tochacha, contain the blessings of "Im Bechukosai Teileichu." The Rokeach writes that throughout all those pesukim, which describe the blessings that will come our way if we keep the Torah's laws, [Vayikra 26:3-13], the letter Samech does not appear.



The Rokeach explains that the blessings of Parshas Bechukosai are all conditional, as implied by the word 'Im' ('if' you will follow My laws). However, he says, the blessings of Birkas Kohanim, which contain sixty letters are unconditional. The letter Samech, with a numerical value of 60, represents the Birkas Kohanim. Those blessings do not have strings attached. Therefore, we do not find the letter Samech in the conditional blessings of Parshas Bechukosai.

The Rokeach writes that the congregants should face the Kohanim with open arms and make personal requests for whatever their needs are during Birkas Kohanim. This is a most propitious time for making

such requests, which then have an increased potential for being answered. If someone has pressing needs, a most fitting time to ask for Help is during Birkas Kohanim—a point in the liturgy that is particularly ripe for Heavenly dispensation of blessing. This is something worth keeping in mind when listening to Birkas Kohanim.

Limuday Moshe - Birchas Kohanim

The Brisker Rav was davening Shacharis in shul. When the time came for birchas kohanim (which is said daily in Eretz Yisroel), they realized that there were no kohanim present. He instructed somebody to go to Zichron Moshe, a minyan factory nearby, to bring kohanim from there to do birchas kohanim.

Although the other shul was nearby, the entire process required close to 15 minutes of idle waiting. Some of those present grew impatient and began to complain that the wait was against halachah since it is forbidden to delay longer than the amount of time required to say the entire shemoneh esrei. Additionally, they argued that the wait constituted an unnecessary burden on the congregation.

The Brisker Rav answered that legally, there were no grounds for concern since the Rema rules (Orach Chaim 65:1) that a lengthy delay is only problematic in the event that it is involuntary. In this case, there was technically nothing preventing them from continuing to daven, so their voluntary choice to wait didn't constitute a legal problem.

As for their second concern, regarding the significant inconvenience for the assembled, the Brisker Rav expressed astonishment at their argument. He noted that people regularly travel days and even weeks to request a blessing from a chassidishe rebbe or other pious Jew. Upon their arrival, they often wait in line for hours until it is their

turn to enter to receive a blessing which emanates from a mere mortal no matter how righteous he may be.

In the case of birchas kohanim, regarding which Hashem writes in the Torah a guarantee that its proper recital will bring forth Divine blessing, isn't it surely worth a short wait of 15 minutes?

The Sensitivity of Our Gedolim – by Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld Rosh Yeshiva Beis Dovid



There was a non-Jewish Puerto Rican lady who worked in Manhattan Hospital, and when she heard the news that the great **Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Zt'l** was niftar, she burst out crying. Somebody asked her, "Why are you crying, did you have a connection with him?"

She said, "I will tell you. This Rabbi was once admitted to this hospital, and he was in a wheelchair. His grandson's used to push him around.

I remember that every time that I was sweeping the floor of the ward, which was numerous times a day, that old Rabbi would make sure that his grandson's would bring him over to me and tell me, 'Dear lady, I want you to know, that I appreciate everything that you do. I realise how important your job is, of maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of the hospital.'"

The lady said, "You know something, I have had a hard life. I have never before had somebody acknowledge my contribution as a domestic worker and made me feel like a human being."

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Rabbi Aharon Kotler Zt'l had a driver who used to take him all over the country. He used to pass many toll booths on these travels. You can either give the exact change into the automatic machine, or you can go through the lane where there is an attendant who will take your money and give you change with a receipt.



Additionally, you can pre-register for an "easy pass", which allows you to pass through uninterrupted and you are charged automatically.



Reb Aharon once had a new driver who had positioned his vehicle to go through the "easy pass" lane, which was quicker and less hassle. Reb Aharon made him change lanes to go to the booth which was manned. The driver was a little perplexed at this, and asked Reb Aharon for his reason.

Reb Aharon said, "Many people choose the 'easy pass' lane where the only interaction is with a machine. Here you have a human being sitting there all day. How do you think he feels when he is ignored in favour of a machine? Let's go to the human, and we can say thank

you to him and wish him a good morning and have a great day etc." We can make him feel that the job that he is doing, is appreciated.

Reb Aharon understood what it meant to have kavod habriyos for another individual. Even if that individual is a Yid or not, religious or not religious.

B'ezras Hashem, we should learn from this that we should have kavod habrios for everyone. And Bisyata Dishmaya, it will bring bracha into our lives.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



The Gaon Rav Leibel Kovner, zt"l, was the great-grandfather of the **Brisker Rav**. On the day he was hired for the position as the Rav of Kovna, one of the Maskilim of Kovna, who was pursuing a path of 'enlightenement' in Judaism, decided to test him.

He asked Rav Leibel if he can prove that Hashem runs the world. Rav Leibel replied, "Sure! Please bring me a Rambam from the shelf." The man brought over the Rambam, and Rav Leibel opened up to Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah. He read the words of the Rambam, ***"The foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdom, is to know that Hashem preceded everything, and He created everything and caused it all to be in existence."***

Rav Leibel said, "There is your indisputable proof, right here in the words of the Rambam. Not only that, but even the Raavad, who constantly argues on every disputable point in the Rambam, remains silent in agreement. Even all the commentaries who always ask questions on the Rambam, like the Magid Mishnah, the Kesef Mishnah, the Lechem Mishnah, and the Mishnah LaMelech, don't

utter a single doubt on the words of the Rambam in this instance. Is there no greater proof than this that Hashem runs the entire world?!"

L'Maaseh



The Belzer Rav, zt"l, Rav Yissachar Dov Rokeach, would relate an anecdote to demonstrate how far one must go in order to fulfil the Torah's standards for performing Chesed with others, and that is, to be completely selfless and devoted to another. Otherwise, it is not true Chesed.

A medical student who had completed his courses and was about to begin his internship, was set to take a final exam. Prior to taking the written exam, he had to take an oral test in the form of a conversation with the dean of the medical school.

He was an exceptional student, gifted, and talented, one who should have no problem passing the test. The dean asked him, "How would you treat one who got a cut, and was bleeding profusely?" The student replied that he would put a certain medicine on the wound, which would stop the blood flow. "What if you do not have this medicine available?" the dean asked. "I would use an alternative salve which works just as well," the student replied. "And if you have neither the medication of choice, nor its alternative, what would you do?" asked the dean. "I would grab a piece of cloth, burn it and place its ashes on the open wound," the student quickly responded, quite satisfied with himself.

"Let us imagine that there is no available medicine or cloth to burn, what would you do then?" the dean asked. The young would-be doctor had no answer. All options had been exhausted, and he admitted that he didn't know what he would do in that case.

Surprisingly, the dean refused to grant him access to the internship. The young man was incredulous. He had one of the best averages in the entire medical school. How could he be denied his degree? The dean replied, "When a doctor cannot locate a piece of cloth or material to burn for ashes, he removes his own shirt and sets fire to it. A doctor who is not prepared to take off his own shirt to save a patient, has no business in the field of medicine!"

The Belzer Rav would say that this is how we must relate to the problems of our fellow Yiden. We have to be prepared to do everything we possibly can to help others!

Short And Sweet Story of The Week with Rabbi Mordechai Levin

The caretaker of the Beis Haknesses of Batei Nathan in Yerushalayim, Rav Avrohom Shimon Lipschutz, ZT"L, was married for twenty years, but did not have any children. He wrote to the **Chofetz Chaim, ZT"L**, asking for a Bracha, and enclosed some money in the envelope.

Weeks later he received a reply. The Chofetz Chaim wrote: *"I received your letter. I don't usually give Brachos, as I don't see myself as worthy to do so. I also don't accept money, and I wanted to return it to you. However, from your letter, I discerned that you are a Talmid Chochom, and I am afraid to embarrass a Talmid Chochom. Therefore, I gave your money to the yeshiva, and enclosed is a receipt. Additionally, I will give you a Bracha, a Birchas Kohen that is my gift from Shamayim, that you should be blessed with a healthy child."*

Within a year, Rav Lipschutz's wife gave birth to a son, and they went on to have numerous children.

Comment: The Pasuk in Parshas Naso details how a Kohen was tasked with giving Brachos to Klal Yisroel (Bamidbar 6:23). The Rambam (in the Sefer HaMitzvos) counts this as one of the 613 Mitzvos. Additionally, if a Kohen refuses to ascend and bless the people he transgresses three Mitzvos! Best of all, a Kohen who blesses as instructed is rewarded with his own blessings from Hashem. As the Pasuk states (Bereishis 12:3)., "VaAvorcha MiVurachecha - and I will bless those that bless you".

Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh- Chapter 7:18. שֶׁיְכַבֵּד אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת כִּבְרָכַת ה' אֱלֹקָיו אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לוֹ - One should honour Shabbos according to the means that Hashem has Bentched him.



Yeshayahu HaNavi tells us (58:13,14) that if one delights in, enjoys, and honours Shabbos, then he will be Zocheh to delight in Hashem, and Hashem will give many Brachos to one who keeps Shabbos the right way. (See Rashi there.) This is the source where we learn that we are supposed to really enjoy Shabbos.

The Mesilas Yesharim (Chapter 19) describes how getting ready for Shabbos is part of the Mitzvah of 'Zeh Keili V'Anveihu' (Shemos 15:2), which teaches us that we should honour and beautify Hashem by doing Mitzvos beautifully.

Every day, Shammai HaZakein would eat in honour of Shabbos. On Sunday, if he would find a nice piece of meat, he would buy it and say, "This is for Shabbos!" The next day, if he would come across a nicer piece of meat, he would buy that one for Shabbos and eat the first one during the week. Because of this, all of Shammai HaZakein's meals were considered to be in honour of Shabbos (Beitzah 16a).

The great Amora'im of the Gemara would busy themselves on Erev Shabbos with tasks to help honour Shabbos. Rava would salt the fish for the Seudos. Rav Huna would light lamps in the house. Rav Pappa would make wicks for the lamps. Rav Chisda would finely cut the vegetables. Rabbah and Rav Yosef would split wood. Rebbe Zeira would start the fires that were used for cooking. Rebbe Nachman bar Yitzchok would clean the house and carry things in for Shabbos (Shabbos 119a).

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 be Zocheh to see the days of Mashiach!

The Shulchan Aruch rules (Orach Chaim 250:1) that everyone should wake up early on Friday to help with the Shabbos preparations, as the Mishnah Brurah (250:3) explains, the Mitzvah of honouring Shabbos applies to each and every person. Even though there are many jobs to do just to get everything done for Shabbos, everyone should be extra careful to keep calm and only speak nicely to each other (Shabbos 34a).

The Gemara (Shabbos 113a) says that we should have special clothes to wear in honour of Shabbos, as this also adds to the Kedushah of Shabbos (Otzar HaMedrashim, Yisro 20:8). Devarim Niflaim al Shabbos Kodsheinu (p. 45) notes that if we only understood how much S'char comes from the seemingly 'small Mitzvah' of polishing

our shoes for Shabbos, we would be much more eager to do this and even greater Mitzvos!

The Chofetz Chaim taught his students to make the most of what Hashem gives us, learn Torah, do Mitzvos, and honour Hashem. When it comes to honouring Shabbos, both the rich and poor must do the most they can, within their means, even if it is something small, as explained by the Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Brurah (beginning of Siman 242). "It is a mistake", said the Chofetz Chaim, "to think that you can't honour Shabbos because you don't have beautiful china or silverware. This," he said, "is only hiding one's love of physical things behind a wrapping of Ruchniyus. We should use whatever we have with full hearts to serve and honour Hashem!"

Whatever one does to help prepare for Shabbos, he should say, "This is L'Kavod Shabbos Kodesh!" These words actually imbue Kedushah into what we are doing (Machatzis HaShekel, Orach Chaim 250:1).

The Chofetz Chaim used to say the words, "L'Kavod Shabbos" when he put on his Shabbos clothes. The Sefer Devarim Niflaim al Shabbos Kodsheinu (p. 25) writes that these words are so powerful that every time they are said, a Malach is created!

Rav Yosef Eisen once taught that even putting things away from Shabbos has an aspect of Kavod Shabbos. As we clean things up after Shabbos, we should try to appreciate the specialness of Shabbos and thank Hashem for this tremendous gift. Just like we would thank someone who gave us a present, we should certainly thank Hashem with love for the special day He gave us. Rather than feel unhappy that Shabbos is over, we should look forward to, and prepare for, the next Shabbos. These tasks that we do after Shabbos now become part of Kavod Shabbos, if we have in mind that we are preparing for Shabbos, instead of just cleaning the house.

This truly shows Hashem that we cherish the gift of Shabbos, because we prepare for it so far in advance!

Once, a woman was in desperate need of a Brachah for a very sick child, R"L, and she went to the Chofetz Chaim for help. After hearing her painful story, the Chofetz Chaim told her that if she accepted to do two things, everything would be fine with her child. The woman said that she was willing to do and take on almost anything that might help her, and she waited anxiously for the Chofetz Chaim's instructions.

"The first thing you must agree to do", said the Chofetz Chaim, "is to make sure that the Shabbos table is set with a tablecloth and Leichter on Friday before Chatzos, midday." The woman was relieved. That wasn't too difficult, but she waited for the second instruction. "Second", continued the Chofetz Chaim, "from the time the candles are lit, there can be no more work done in the house by anyone."

The woman readily agreed, and as a result of her new efforts L'Kavod Shabbos, she saw the miraculous and complete recovery of her child! The Chofetz Chaim taught her that Shabbos is indeed the source of all Brachah!

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

After *davening Maariv* on Shabbos night, and we are ready to go home from *Shul*, it is not the time to start talking in long conversations. This applies even to not talk at length about *Divrei Torah*!

Everything has its time and place, and this time is for one to go home with happiness and a high spirit, to begin the first of the *Shabbos seudos*. After all, there are two *Malachim* waiting to escort us home. How can we make them wait for us while we finish talking? (*Ziv HaShabbos*, p.94)

Distractions by R' Moshe Malka

A young man came to the Rabbi recently and told him that he is getting married shortly- "I am very uncomfortable."

The Rabbi said, "Why? You have a beautiful kalla and you have your chasuna to look forward to."

"I know Rabbi, but I grew up in a home where there was a lot a chaos and a lot of machlokes, and I have fears that this will repeat itself in my marriage. I also don't know where my parnasso is going to come from. How am I going to have the ability to support us, buy a house and raise children? I am worried for tomorrow what's going to be."

So the Rabbi took him to his office, which was at the back of his house. It was a freezing cold winters day. He made him a hot cup of tea, and he sat him down in an armchair.

He said, "Are you comfortable David?"

The boy said, "Yeah, this is really comfortable. I'm in a soft couch with a hot cup of tea and the office is warm."



The rabbi asks his young son to open the back door. When he opens the door, a freezing cold blast of wind enters the office. And then he tells him to open the front door. An unbearable gust of crosswind blows in and it's freezing cold.

The Rabbi says, "Habibi, my student, are you still comfortable?"

David says, "Nah, nah, I'm not comfortable anymore, I'm frozen cold. I can't function, it's frigid."

The Rabbi says, "What happened? Five minutes ago you were comfortable?"

David says, " Rabbi, the back door is open, and the front door is open."



He says, " My dear student, listen to your own words. In your present state, you are very happy and comfortable. You have a kalla and are about to get married. You are happy now. Why are you letting yesterday's door open with all your fears? Why are you letting the front door open with fears of tomorrow? Don't open the front door and don't open the back door to allow in all the anxieties and fears. Remove the distractions and focus on the moment."

Chazu Bonai - Chizuk In The Parsha

ובבוא משה אל אהל מועד לדבר אתו וישמע את הקול מדבר אליו (ז:פט)

The simple reading of this **פסוק** is that **משה** entered the **אהל מועד** in order for **הקב״ה** to speak with him and he then heard the voice (of **הקב״ה**) speaking to him…

However, the **חתם סופר** has a different way of looking at this **פסוק** which contains an important message. The beginning of the **פסוק** is actually referring to **משה** 's intention to speak to **הקב״ה** - **לדבר אתו** means to *daven*.

When he entered the **אהל מועד** he found that actually **הקב״ה** was speaking to him. This is because, although **משה** prepared to speak

to **הקב״ה**, he found that the words he was saying were provided to him by **הקב״ה**, they were speaking to him.

This says the **חתם סופר** is true for all of us. In truth, it should be impossible to communicate with the **רבש״ע** Who is beyond our reach. Nevertheless, if we prepare properly and arrive in shul with the right intentions, then the words will be provided for us.

This idea is contained in the **פסוק** in **משלי** which says: **לאדם מערכי לב ומה׳ מענה לשון** meaning, a person has to gather his thoughts and think about what he wants to say but ultimately it is **הקב״ה** Himself who puts the right words in our mouths in order that they reach their intended destination…

Chizuk From Our Chachomim

י״ח סיון marks the 87th Yohrtzeit of **Rav Yerucham Levovitz זצ״ל**, the famed **משגיח** of **ישיבת מיר**.



Born in 1873 to R' Avrohom and Chasya Levovitz in the town of Luban, Belarus, at the age of 16, Rav Yerucham went to learn in Slabodka becoming a close **תלמיד** of the Alter, **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel זצ״ל**. Six years later, he was sent to Kelm where he became a close **תלמיד** of the **Alter of Kelm זצ״ל**, but after just six months the Alter was **נפטר** . Rav Yerucham cried that entire night and later in life testified that much of his **סייעתא דשמיא** came from that night of mourning the Alter of Kelm.

After marrying Rivka, Rav Yerucham learnt in seclusion for eight years, and subsequently became **משגיח** in the **Chofetz Chaim**'s **ישיבה**

in Radin. In 1910 he became the **משגיח** in **ישיבת מיר**, and besides for short stints in Ponevezh and Slabodka, he remained the **משגיח** there for the next 26 years until his **פטירה**

In 1930 many German and American **בחורים** started coming to the **ישיבה** and Rav Yerucham gave them a special **ועד** where instead of teaching them **מוסר**, he gave them **חומש רש"י שיעורים** focusing on **אמונה**. Those **שיעורים** became the basis for his famous **ספר** on *Chumash* - **דעת תורה**.

Many of his teachings focus on the individuality of every person, teaching the need for each person to focus on his **שורש הנשמה** and believe that he has a unique role to play in the world.

One **יום כיפור** a **תלמיד** noticed that Rav Yerucham had stayed behind after everyone had gone home to break their fast. The **תלמיד** hid under a bench and saw Rav Yerucham pacing up and down the empty **בית מדרש**, He appeared agitated and was pointing to himself and repeating the *Pasuk*, **אולי ימשני אבי והייתי בעיניו כמתעתע** (maybe my father will feel me, and I will be a mockery in his eyes, quoting **אבינו יעקב** over and over again!

In 1936 he suffered a brain haemorrhage and was **נפטר** shortly after. He left behind 4 sons and a daughter, thousands of bereft **תלמידים** and his famous *Seforim*, **דעת חכמה ומוסר** and **דעת תורה**.

יהי זכרו ברוך

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"The verse in Tehillim (19:8) says – תּוֹרַת ה' תְּמִימָה "The Torah of Hashem is perfect."

The reason is, that it is so deep, so profound, that people – despite their great efforts – have not even begun to scratch its surface!" – The Ba'al Shem Tov.

Circle Time - Highlights from the Midrash (7:5)

Serach's Cows? קַח מֵאִתָּם וְהָיוּ לַעֲבֹד אֶת עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד - Take from them, and they will be of service to the Ohel Moed.



The Midrash teaches that when the nesi'im donated oxen and wagons for the use of the levi'im in the Mishkan, Moshe did not want to accept them. He feared that they would get old and broken at some point, and they would have to be disposed of. Essentially, they would become big pieces of "sheimos," and how would they get rid of sheimos cows or wagons? Hashem promised him that they would never get old and broken. What happened to those oxen?

- The midrash says that when the Mishkan arrived at Gilgal they were brought as korbanos since the Mishkan was no longer going to travel.
- They were brought as korbanos later, at Nov.
- They were brought as korbanos later at Givon.
- They were brought as korbanos in the first Beis Hamikdash, over 480 years later!
- The final opinion says that the oxen are still alive! Hashem promised they would never age. Indeed, they are living somewhere today, healthy, young looking, and without a mum.

This is a lesson for Klal Yisrael: If oxen that had brief contact with the Mishkan could live forever, Klal Yisrael, who are firmly attached to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, will certainly last forever!

This Date In Jewish History

The 12th of Sivan is the *yahrtzeit* of **Rav Yitzchak Hakohen of Prague** (son-in-law of the **Maharal of Prague**) who was *niftar* in 5384 (1624). Rav Yitzchak is not as well-known as his illustrious father-in-law and is also not as well-known as the legend he supposedly helped create.



According to the original stories written about the Golem of Prague, Rav Yitzchak, as son-in-law of the Maharal, was one of the three people present at the creation of the Golem and the infusion of life-force within him. The original story is written in his voice, from his perspective, as if he wrote it.

According to the legend, the Maharal, Rav Yitzchak, and a *talmid* named Rav Sasson gathered at the riverbank late one night and formed the body of a man out of clay. They then walked around it many times reciting Kabbalistic formulas, and it came to life. This was the Golem, who had a long career saving Jews from evil plots against them. He was eventually retired and put to rest forever in the attic of the Altneu Shul in Prague.

Many people doubt the truth of the story. According to Jewish historian and scholar Professor Schneur Zalman Lyman, the story was a fictional tale, never meant to be taken seriously at all… it just took on a life of its own.

A proper perspective, stated by many *talmidei chachamim,* is that while there may be some doubt as to whether or not the Maharal ever made a *golem*, there is no doubt that he was able to do so.

Another healthy perspective is that the Maharal definitely "made" *talmidim* like the **Tosafos Yom Tov** (Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller) and **the Kli Yakar**, and that is a far greater miracle than making a *golem*!



Rabbi Avi Weisenfeld – The Power of Speech

Little do we realise the power of our speech.

The Chofetz Chaim brings a **Vilna Gaon** who says that for every moment that a person muzzles his mouth and doesn't say that juicy bit of lashon horah that he wants to say – the light that you receive from this inaction - even the **מלאכים** don't understand it.

The Heilige Chofetz Chaim brings a mashol from the hakdamah of Shemiras Halashon:

In the olden days, when sefarim were hard to come by, peddlers used to go round selling small selections of sefarim. He had a gorgeous leather bound *shas*. It was beautiful and exquisite.

A wealthy man came past, and said, "I would like to buy such a *shas*. I learn the Daf – imagine walking into the beis hamedrash with this beautiful shas. How much is it?"

It was a small fortune, so he ran home to get the money. He paid for it and took away the beautiful leather bound shas. He found a space in his bookcase, and he proudly put it there.

He is so excited to start a new masechta that he will be learning with his chavrusah. He pulls the volume off the shelf and opens it to look how beautiful it is inside – BLANK! There is nothing there, it is completely blank inside!

There must be some sort of mistake – next page – blank, completely empty. It is too late, there is no way that he can return it as the pedlar has long gone. He has been conned out of a great deal of money.

Says the heilige Chofetz Chaim – A person can live his whole life on this world, learning Chumash, Mishnah, Gemarah etc. He is so excited to go to the next world with all these accomplishments to accompany him. But when he arrives in the next world, there is nothing there, it's all disappeared! Where's it all gone?

The Chofetz Chaim says that it's not there because the lashon horah that you said, erases it all completely! (Of course, there is Teshuvah). A few bad words from your mouth can destroy everything.



Emunah

Chazal (*Shabbos* 31.) call *Seder Zeraim* (the tractate of Mishnayos that discusses the laws of agriculture) emunah. What is the connection between emunah and *Seder Zeraim*?

We can explain it this way: Agriculture reminds us that even when everything seems lost, something good will sprout from it. A person plants seeds in the earth, the seeds rot, and it seems like nothing will come from it. But these rotted seeds will sprout, and the field will soon be covered with produce.

Similarly, we must believe that even when we go through hard times, something very special will sprout from it. It looks like a problem right now, but something very good will come from it.

The Only One 👤 By R' Moshe Malka



There was a man that was living a few years ago. He was 102 years old. He came from Poland in the pre-war days. He wasn't well, and they took him to the hospital.

He told his kids, "*Don't vorry*, I'm not going to die – don't *vorry*!"

They said, "What do you mean abba – you are 102 years old ?"

He said to them, "I guarantee that I'm going to live another two years!"

[Sure enough, the doctor checked him over and said he is ok to go home. He lived to be over 104!]

The kids asked him, "How can you guarantee that you are going to live that long?"

He answered them, "When I was a kid, aged 14 in 1930, I was in shul, and the Rabbi got up to announce the **מולד הלבנה** (birth of the new moon) for Rosh Chodesh. He normally called out for example – 'The **מולד הלבנה** will be Wednesday night at 10.42 and 43 **חלקים** (seconds).' But this month he called out – Tue night at 10.30. 00.00

Everybody was waiting for the chalakim, but there were none – it was exact to the hour and minutes – no seconds!

The Rabbi said that this is an interesting, strange and very rare occurrence. This phenomenon occurs only once in 87 years when there is no mention of seconds, as it falls out exact. And **יְהִי רָצוֹן** you should all live to hear this one more time in 87 years from now.

Everybody said, "Wow, that's crazy", but I shouted out **אמן**. The Rabbi said 'You will live to hear it again!'

"I am 102 now. It's 85 years since that story happened. I have two more years to live!" And sure enough, two years later, he was in shul when they announced the **מולד** without any **חלקים**."

A short time later, he was niftar! But how did he live till 104?

ONE **אמן**! Which is the gematria of 91 – **מלאך**.

This angel that he created, took care of him!

In Your Head

A group of young ruffians attacked a wagon traveling down the road. They intended to terrorize and rob the coachman and his passengers. A man stuck his head out the window. To the mischief-makers he was just another Jew. To the Jews, he was known as "**The Shaagas Aryeh**."

He looked at the youths, then reached up and pulled back his talis, revealing his Tefillin. The boys were terrified and ran off, in fulfillment of the verse, "And all the nations shall see the Name of G-d upon you and fear you," which the Gemara (Brachos 6a) states refers to "Tefillin She'b'rosh," the Tefillin worn on the head.

One onlooker asked his friend. "They saw my Tefillin on my head; why weren't they afraid?" His friend replied, "The Gemara doesn't say the Tefillin ON your head, but rather IN your head. The Shaagas Aryeh embodies everything that the Tefillin stand for, and that is why they feared him."

"Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently."

Brachah From The Satmar Rebbe

The Satmar Rebbe Harav Yoel Teitelbaum zy'a visited Eretz after the Holocaust. Rav Moshe Eisen came to him togetherwith Reb Asher Shulman to receive the Rebbe's brachah.

Rav Asher gave the Rebbe a kvittel and the Rebbe read it and gave him a warm brachah. Then Rav Moshe handed the Rebbe his kvittel.

The Rebbe held it for a moment and suddenly dozed off allowing the kvittel to fall to the floor.

Rav Moshe picked up he kvittel and handed it back to the Rebbe but once again he dozed off and the kvittel fell from his hand. Rav Moshe picked it up and handed it to the Rebbe for the third time.

This time the Rebbe sat upright and alert. He held the kvittel firmly in his hands, read it and said, "You will have brachah ad bli dei.

Brachah was Rav Moshe's youngest daughter, and she was the sole survivor of the blast that killed the rest of her family. She grew up, married into the Saks family of Bnei Brak and raised a large, wonderful family!

The Happiness Recipe By R' Avi Slansky

There is a quote from **Reb Aaron Leib Shteinman Zt'l** who said, "What is the recipe for a happy life? – Three things:

1. Be Mevater. – Give in. Let the other person be right.
2. Be Mevater.
3. Be Mevater.

If you live your life, letting the other person win, **you** are the winner. Let the other person be right. You will always end up being a happier person.

Once a man came to Reb Aaron Leib for a bracha. Reb Aaron asked him, "For what do you want a bracha for?"

The man answered – "Sholom Bayis."

Reb Aaron Leib asked him – "Sholom Bayis? You look like an old individual, how old are you?"

"I am 83 years-old!"

Reb Aaron Leib said, "A Jew who is 83 years-old – should know how to be mevater."

To Reb Aaron Leib, happiness and Sholom Bayis was synonymous with being mevater – it's the same thing.

This is an extremely important thing that we must work on.

Reb Shmuel Donn – Remez

וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם 6:26

Birchas Cohanim ends with the greatest bracha of all – peace!

The Rabbeinu Ephraim writes that this bracha is what protects us on a day-to-day basis -from the goyim who want to harm us. This bracha is what maintains *sholom- peace* in our lives, from the threats of our enemies around us.

This is why the word **שָׁלוֹם** is the same gematria as our enemy **עשו**.- (376)

The bracha of Sholom is our protection from the goyim. The Rabbeinu Ephraim continues… **עשו** is the gematria of 376. The word **יִשְׂרָאֵל** appears exactly 376 times in the Torah.

This hints to us, that so long as we follow the Torah and behave like good Yidden, (**הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב**) then **עשו** will have no power over us, and we will live in **שָׁלוֹם**-(376).

And the first perek in Eicha has exactly 376 words in it. When the Churban happened, **עשו** was in power, and we had no **שָׁלוֹם**.

Reb Shmuel Donn – Remez

וַיְהִי בְּיוֹם כַּלּוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְהָקִים אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן ***And it was that on the day that Moses finished erecting the Mishkan. 7:1***

This day was so great and so special, that it was as beloved by Hashem, as the day of Matan Torah!

The Rabbeinu Ephraim points out that the *sofei teivos* of the words **לְהָקִים אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן** spell out the word – **מתן** as in Matan Torah !



Birchas Kohanim

The Akeidas Yitzchak (74) written in the 15th century asks five questions:

1. The Kohanim get up and give brachos to the tzibbur. Why are they doing this, isn't Hashem the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה** - shouldn't the brachos come directly from Hashem without going through the middlemen?
2. The Gemara in Rosh Hashana says that the Kohanim must be very careful not to include any additions to any of the three brachos. He is not allowed to, and if he does, it is "**בל תוסיף**". This stringency is so severe, that if a person says **יישר כוח** to the kohen after the *duchening*, and the kohen answers back **בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה** – this could be construed as adding on a bracha!

   However, a kohen has got a licence to bless, so why can't he add on this **בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה**?
3. In Birchas Kohanim Hashem's name is mentioned many times. Why do we mention His name numerous times?

4. There is the famous *shitta* of the Chareidim who hold that not only is there a mitzvah for the kohanim to bless the **ישראלים**, but there is a mitzvah for the **ישראלים** to be blessed by the kohanim. Why is this statement necessary? Isn't it obvious? – who doesn't want to be blessed ?
5. After Birchas Kohanim, the Pasuk says **וְשָׂמ֥וּ אֶת־שְׁמִ֖י עַל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וַאֲנִ֖י אֲבָרֲכֵֽם**.
   The Akeidas Yitzchok asks, 'how does this Pasuk fit in here?'

The Akeidas Yitzchok answers all the questions with one simple but inspiring message which gives us a whole new outlook to Birchas Kohanim.

When a person normally makes a bracha, he says: **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'** – Unfortunately, this is regularly mis-translated as "***Blessed are You Hashem***." But the true translation according to the Akeidas Yitzchok, Rabbeinu B'Chaya and many others is that – '***Hashem is the*** **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**' – **בריכה** is a pool. He has all the blessings pooled.

The Akeidas Yitzchok explains that this is what Birchas Kohanim is all about. When the kohanim get up to *duchen*, and they say **יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ** – they are saying that 'Hashem should bless you and guard you'. All these brachos are coming from Hashem. It is not actually the kohanim who are giving the brachos, but are reminding us that they are coming from Hashem Himself, who is the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**.
This answers all his five questions:

1. Why do we need the kohanim? To remind us that Hashem is the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**.
2. It also answers why the kohanim can't add to the brachos? Because if they add, it defeats the whole purpose. It will appear that they are the ones giving the blessings, when really the brachos are from Hashem.

3. This also answers why we mention Hashem's name so many times? Because this re-iterates that all the brachos are coming from Hashem - the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**.
4. Why do we need to be told that it is a mitzvah to be blessed? Because nobody likes to be told what to do. A person does not like to get a *mussar schmooze*. The kohanim are telling us that all the brachos are coming from Hashem - the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**. – This is like a *mussar schmooze*. So the Chareidim add that it is also a special mitzvah to be blessed.
5. The Pasuk of **וְשָׂמוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם** is coming to remind us that Hashem Himself, is the **מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה**. And then the Yidden will thank Hashem for everything, and be **מכיר טוב** for everything – then **וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם** – '***I will give them more blessings***.'



The Holiness of a Nazir

One of the primary halachos of a nazir is that he is forbidden to drink wine. Standard nazirus is for thirty days. So, it is just a bit of prishus, because how hard is it to refrain from wine for thirty days? And yet, it causes holiness, as it states **כל ימי נזרו קדוש הוא לה׳**, "***For the entire duration of his abstinence, he is holy to Hashem***." (6:8)

The Lev Simchah writes, "This parashah teaches us a profound lesson, and it is a great wonder. A person accepts upon himself not to drink wine – kosher wine – for a short period of thirty days, and he already reaches the level of **כי נזר אלקיו על ראשו קדוש הוא לה׳**, ***'The crown of Hashem is on his head… he is holy to Hashem***.'

From this we learn the power of a kabbalah tovah. He accepts upon himself a small amount, and from heaven, he will receive much more and divine aid. Hashem's crown is on his head."

Another primary halachah of a nazir is that he may not become tamei to a human corpse. This halachah is another indication of the immense kedushah a nazir attains through his prishus.

The Alshich HaKadosh writes, "In addition to the shefa of kedushah that is poured onto him when he is poresh (refrains from drinking wine), he acquires another kedushah – the kedushah of kohanim. Therefore, he may not become tamei to the dead. Furthermore, he receives the kedushah of a kohen gadol, who may not become tamei even to his closest relatives. He attains the level of a kohen gadol because of his prishus and chasidus.

The Alshich adds, "The nazir is even greater than a kohen gadol because a kohen gadol's crown is the holy oil, and for the nazir, his crown is Hashem himself." As the Pasuk writes regarding the kohen gadol (Vayikra 21:12) **נזר שמן משחת אלוקיו עליו** , "***for a crown – the oil of Hashem's anointment – is upon him***."

The crown is "the oil of Hashem's anointment."

However, about a nazir, it states **נזר אלקיו על ראשו**, "***for the crown of His G-d is on his head***." The nazir's crown is Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself!

It is wondrous. All these levels in return for a small prishus of abstaining from wine for thirty days!

The Last Word A One-Liner Worth Remembering

"Parents feel the pain of their children, but the children don't see the suffering of their parents. - Likewise, Hashem feels our pain, but we are blind to His." ***~ Kotzker Rebbe.***

Time

When the **Satmar Rebbe *zt'l*** visited Eretz Yisrael, he was invited to test the children studying in the cheder Eitz Chayim.
The Rebbe asked a child, "What does it mean **שניים יסעו?** (*Bamidbar 2:16)*
The boy replied that it means "the years are flying by."
The Rebbe replied, "You deserve a rebuke because you didn't know the correct translation of these words. But for me, my entire trip from America to come here was worthwhile, if just to hear this message: The years are flying by."
As the saying goes, "time flies."
Fortunate are those who grasp onto time and use it wisely.

A bachur once asked the **Steipler**, "Which yeshiva should I learn in?"
The Steipler answered, "It doesn't matter. The main thing is, don't waste your time."

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ"ל- נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד

Birchas Kohanim

There is a beautiful, fascinating **Kli Yakar** that shows the beauty of Torah.
There are 30 words in Birchas Kohanim. This is easy to remember, as each Pasuk begins with a **י** and 3 Yuds are gematria 30.
How do the kohanim do Birchas Kohanim? They lift up their 10 fingers and bless the people. Why 10 fingers? What is the significance of this?
If you take the **י** and write it out in full – **יוד**, so the **נגלה -י** =10 and the **נסתר -וד** also =10.
The Kli Yakar says that the Gemarah in Niddah tells us that there are 10 components that a person has. Five come from the father,

and five from the mother. There are an additional 10 *ruchniyus* things that come from the Ribboino Shel Olam.

When the Kohen bentches us with his 10 fingers, this alludes to the 10 portions that we get from our parents and the 10 portions that we get from Hashem. This corresponds to the **נגלה ונסתר**.

Inaugurate the Mizbe'ach with 'Zos'

זאת חנכת המזבח ביום המשח אתו מאת נשיאי ישראל... (ז פד)

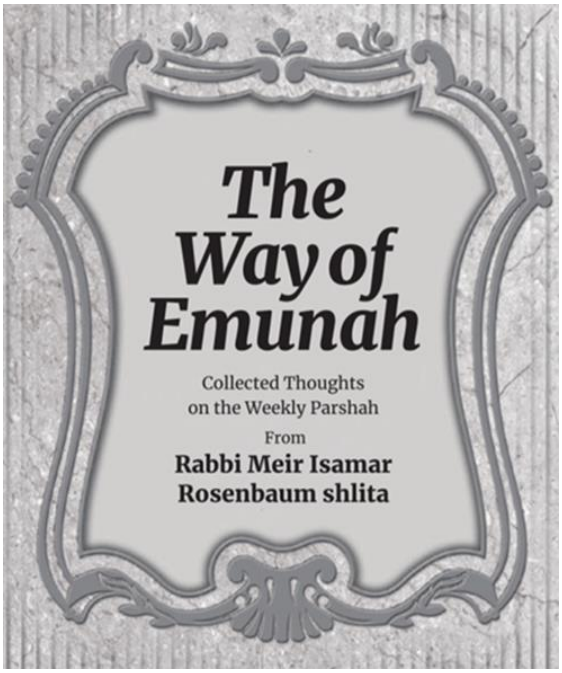
The Rosh Yeshivah, **Harav Elchanan Wasserman** spoke at the inauguration of the building of Baranowitz Yeshivah and shared an allusion from this passuk: The word **זאת** is numerically equivalent to 408, which is the same as **צום** – teshuvah, **קול** -tefillah and **ממון** - tzedakah.

We can explain from this that when we inaugurate a new place intended for avodas Hashem – a Chanukas Hamizbe'ach, we should precede it with "zos," meaning to arouse the hearts to teshuvah, tefillah and tzedakah.

At the groundbreaking for the yeshivah in Bnei Brak, which took place not long after the destruction of European Jewry, the **Chazon Ish** told **Harav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman**, the Ponevezher Rav something that caused the latter to burst into tears that shook all of those present:

"When you begin with drinking and confections – then the success of the endeavour is in doubt… But when you plant with copious tears, it will certainly be successful…"

"No matter what challenges you face, or mistakes you have made, Hashem's love for you remains constant and unwavering." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.



Learning Torah Provides Simcha For an Entire Day

Sefer Bais Aharon relates that one year on Sunday of Parshas Naso, **Rav Aharon of Karlin zy"a** spoke about the topic of learning Torah and stressed that whenever one is able to find time when he is not busy with work or personal matters, he should sit down to learn.

He said, "Even if you are having a very bad day, one hour of limud haTorah with enthusiasm can make the entire day better. Through joy, you can extricate yourself from all bad things and bring in untold goodness."

It is known that the **Lechovitcher Rebbe zy"a** (quoted in Torah Avos, page 169) explained the pasuk in Yeshaya (55:12): "*For with joy we go out and with peace we come in*," to mean that through joy one can take himself out of any bad situation and through peace one can bring himself to a state of perfection.

The Power of a Good Commitment

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אִוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי יַפְלִא לִנְדֹּר נֶדֶר נָזִיר

Speak to the children of Yisroel and you shall say to them: A man or woman who sets himself apart by making a nazirite vow. (6:2)

Sefer Likutei Yehuda quotes the **Lev Simcha of Ger zy"a** as discerning a deep lesson from this pasuk. We see that if a person merely accepts upon himself to refrain from drinking wine for the short time of 30 days, he has already reached a lofty level. The Torah testifies about him (ibid:7) that he is "holy to Hashem." He becomes so sanctified that he is not even permitted to make himself tamei to his father and mother.

The only other person on such a high level is the Kohen Gadol. And this is all because of the commitment he made not to drink wine for 30 days.

We can all learn from here the great power of a good "kabbalah". If one commits to do a good thing, Hashem sends holiness to him, and he receives Divine assistance to reach ever new heights. Therefore, if a person is facing a difficult challenge that he doesn't know how to overcome, he should commit to do something good. The power of his kabbalah will lift him to new levels and grant him new Divine strengths, which will allow him to get through his challenge.

Superior

R' Isser Zalman Meltzer z"l, the great Rosh Yeshiva and sage, was on his way to deliver a lecture in Yeshiva when he was stopped by a beggar asking for tzedaka. R' Isser Zalman gave him a generous amount, but the fellow complained that it wasn't enough. The rabbi gave him more, but the man still had the audacity to ask for more. Once again, R' Isser Zalman gave him another coin.

The student walking with R' Isser Zalman was aghast at how the beggar treated the great man, and stunned at the sage's response.

"Why are you shocked?" asked R' Isser Zalman, when they had walked further. "Do you think I'm better than him because I've learned a lot of Torah and I give shiurim?

The circumstances of life have led me to be a Rosh Yeshiva and him to be a beggar. I do not feel superior to him, so I felt obligated to grant his request, regardless of how he made it."

Hashem's presence is very obvious. When we are able to stop for a moment and focus in the middle of turmoil and remind ourselves of this simple fact, it will help us stay at peace and feel that we are always in the best Hands.





Someone who has a nature to come late, what's an eitzah to improve himself?

First of all, if he comes late because he goes to sleep late and he gets up late, so the first thing is to go to sleep early. He must get enough sleep. You must get sleep! And after a good night's sleep, have an alarm clock to wake you up.

Now, in case it doesn't help, make a neder. Listen to me; make a neder that the first time you'll come late will cost you $50 for a yeshivah that you don't like. Just one time. Not forever. Just that the first time you come late you'll have to make a $50 donation to the yeshivah. You'll keep on putting off the first time. You're getting up in the morning for $50.

If chas v'shalom you are oiver, so it costs you $50 that week. Then make another neder. The first time it happens again, another $50. Little by little I guarantee you'll stop coming late.

Plumbing The Depth Of The Parsha By R' Moshe Klein

Moishe Wasserman went to the kosher meat restaurant by his house and the head waiter came over and greeted him with a smile.

"Good morning, sir, may I take your order?" the waiter asked.

"Yes," replied Moishe. "I would like two boiled eggs, one of them so undercooked that it's runny, and the other so overcooked that it's hard to eat. Also, a steak that has been left out so it gets a bit on the cold side; burnt toast that crumbles away as soon as you touch it with a knife; margarine straight from the deep freeze so that it's impossible to spread; and a pot of very weak coffee, lukewarm."

"That's a complicated order, sir," said the bewildered waiter. "It might be quite difficult." Moishe replied, "Oh? Well, that's what I got yesterday!"

Some people take their physical needs a little too seriously. There are entire industries that take advantage of human weaknesses for such vices as food, external appearances, lust, and honour/prestige. The fact that consumers become dependent and addicted to these temptations even at personal detriment is of little significance to the businesses that take full advantage of human weaknesses to make a buck.

This week's Parsha, Naso, brings down the Halachos of a Nazir (Bamidbar 6:2): "Speak to the Jewish nation and say to them: If any man or woman explicitly utter a Nazir's vow, to set themselves apart for Hashem; they shall abstain from wine and any other intoxicant."

The Mei Hashiloach quotes Tehillim (146:8), which states: "Hashem restores sight to the blind; makes those who are bent stand straight; and loves the Tzaddikim (righteous)." While it makes sense for Hashem to make the blind see and the crooked be straightened, what exactly is the meaning of Hashem loving the righteous? Who else is Hashem supposed to love if not His Tzaddikim (righteous ones)?

Getting back to our conversation, the Gemara Nazir 22a) states that a Nazir needs a Kaparah for the sin that he did. What was the sin?

He held himself back from wine. If one who withheld himself from wine needs a Kaparah (atonement), how much more so would one who fasts or performs other acts of abstinence need to be held answerable and is considered a sinner. It's not the way of Jews to cause themselves pain. Hashem doesn't want us to live lives of suffering unnecessarily. As such, why does one become a Nazir?

To answer, he brings down the Gemara (Nedarim 9b) that Rabbi Shimon HaTzaddik said: "In all my days as a Kohen, I never ate the

guilt-offering of a ritually impure Nazir except once. A particular man who was a Nazir came from the South and I saw that he had beautiful eyes and was good-looking, and the fringes of his hair were arranged in curls. I said to him: My son, what did you see that made you decide to destroy this beautiful hair of yours by becoming a Nazir?

He said to me: I was a shepherd for my father in my city, and I went to draw water from the spring, and I looked at my reflection in the water and my evil inclination quickly overcame me and sought to expel me from the world. I said to myself: Wicked one! Why do you pride yourself in a world that is not yours? Why are you proud of someone who will eventually be food in the grave for worms and maggots, i.e., your body? I swear by the Temple service that I shall shave you for the sake of Heaven.

Shimon HaTzaddik continues: I immediately arose and kissed him on his head. I said to him: My son, may there be more who take vows of being a Nazir like you among the Jewish people."

The Mei Hashiloach puts it all together. The Nazir is a person who has a great Yetzer Harah but wants to make himself a better person. As such, he is swearing himself off from his self-recognized weakness like drinking wine. This man makes not-such-natural boundaries to guard himself against sinning.

It turns out that this is the Tzaddik that Hashem says He loves. It's not about loving the best of the best who are always doing the right thing. The Tzaddikim in question are the ones that fear their Yetzer Hara and want to do something about it since they don't want to fall. Those are the ones that Hashem loves as they are very special people.

There are many people who do not want to acknowledge their weaknesses and their vulnerabilities. They rather sweep their imperfections under the rug because they do not want to feel bad about themselves. However, when one cannot look themselves in the

mirror and be honest with the direction they are taking in life, they will not be able to achieve and be successful on a personal level. - We all have our weaknesses and when we deal with them head on, we will be able to excel in life.

The lesson of the Nazir is that he is an imperfect person, but he is righteous because he acknowledges his flaws and learns how to deal with them to fulfil his potential.

Short Story Of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

The wife of **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman ZT"L** had a very wealthy grandfather, **Rav Moshe Chaim Rottenberg, ZT"L**. His brother was the great Rebbe, **the Chiddushei HaRim, ZT"L**. Rav Moshe Chaim supported his brother and his entire family, who were all very poor.

At one point, the Polish government decided to build a road from Warsaw to Moscow, a monumental and lengthy undertaking, and placed the contract up for bid. Reb Moshe Chaim bid on the project, and his bid was the one accepted.

He asked the government official in charge why his bid was chosen over all the others. The man responded: "When I was a young boy, my father threw me out of the house on numerous occasions. Your father, who was the Rabbi of my town in Poland, had pity on me and gave me food. So, I chose to award you this huge contract, to repay your father's kindness."

From this project, Rav Moshe Chaim Rottenberg became fabulously wealthy.

"A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there."

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series



Rabbi Shimon Schwab brings an amazing insight in Maayan Bais Hasho'eivah on this week's haftorah [Shoftim 13:2-25.] – about Shimshon Ha'Gibor.

This week's *haftorah* describes the birth of Shimshon, a lifetime nazirite. Manoah and his wife, members of the Tribe of Dan, were childless. One day an angel appeared to Manoah's wife, informing her that she will give birth to a child. This child, the angel instructed, was to be a lifetime Nazirite.

In addition, the angel instructed her to abstain from all foods forbidden to a Nazirite — such as wine or ritually impure foods — from the moment she would conceive. The angel further informed the woman that her son will save the Jewish people from the Philistine oppression they were enduring at that time.

The soon-to-be-mother told her husband the good news. He entreated Hashem to send His messenger again — they were unaware at the time that the messenger was an angel. יָבוֹא־נָא עוֹד אֵלֵינוּ וְיוֹרֵנוּ מֶה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לַנַּעַר הַיּוּלָּד - '***let him come now again to us, and teach us what we shall do to the lad that will be born***.'

Hashem sent the angel again, and he repeated his instructions to Manoah and his wife - וַיֹּאמֶר מַלְאַךְ ה' אֶל־מָנוֹחַ מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר־אָמַרְתִּי אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה תִּשָּׁמֶר - And the angel of Hashem said to Manoah, "***Of all that I said to the woman she should keep***."

מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא מִגֶּפֶן הַיַּיִן לֹא תֹאכַל וְיַיִן וְשֵׁכָר אַל־תֵּשְׁתְּ וְכָל־טֻמְאָה אַל־תֹּאכַל כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתִיהָ תִּשְׁמֹר - ***From all that comes out of the grapevine she shall not eat, and wine or strong drink she may not drink, and***

any unclean (thing) she may not eat; all that I commanded her, shall she observe."



Asks Reb Shimon Schwab- 'Exactly which details of Nezirus was Monoach missing that he requested that the angel return to explain?' It is pretty much written in every detail, and the angel repeated exactly the same thing anyway?

Reb Shimon gives an amazing answer:

Monoach's question wasn't actually in the details of bringing up a child as a Nazorite, this was pretty clear, but **מַה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לַנַּעַר הַיּוּלָּד** - what are **we** meant to do for this lad that is going to be born? How are **we** supposed to bring up this child as a Nazir – when **we** are not Nazarites ourselves? How's that supposed to work? How am I supposed to bring up a child with all the Nazarite restrictions [of kedusha], when **I** am not restricted at all?

So when the angel came back to repeat the instructions, he said - **מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר־אָמַרְתִּי אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה** - "*Of all that I said to the woman* **תִּשָּׁמֵר** - ***You*** *(Monoach) should keep."* You become a Nazir as well!

מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא מִגֶּפֶן הַיַּיִן לֹא תֹאכַל וְיַיִן וְשֵׁכָר אַל־תֵּשְׁתְּ וְכָל־טֻמְאָה אַל־תֹּאכַל כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתִיהָ תִּשְׁמֹר – ***From all that comes out of the grapevine YOU shall not eat, and wine or strong drink YOU may not drink, and any unclean (thing) YOU may not eat; all that I commanded her, shall YOU observe***."

Reb Shimon says, that "***Do as I say, doesn't work***." It must be – "***Do as I do***". you can't expect children to listen to parents if they don't keep what they preach.

I remember to this day, that I was once in shul when a kid was slapped on the face by his father for talking. The father continued talking to his own friend.

This happened more than once, until eventually the child turned around to his father in tears, and asked, "Daddy – when will I be old enough to be allowed to talk in shul!" [To the credit of the father, that was the last time that I saw him talking in shul.]

Important Rokeach to Know When Listening to Birkas Kohanim

Outside Eretz Yisrael, we only say Birkas Kohanim on limited occasions—the Shalosh Regalim, Rosh HaShanah, and Yom Kippur.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin stresses that when the Kohanim recite the three Priestly Blessings mentioned in Parshas Naso, they should realize that they have vast power in their hands. Every word of the Birkas Kohanim can make tremendous differences in a person's life.

The pesukim in the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai, prior to the Tochacha, contain the blessings of "Im Bechukosai Teileichu." The Rokeach writes that throughout all those pesukim, which describe the blessings that will come our way if we keep the Torah's laws, [Vayikra 26:3-13], the letter Samech does not appear.

The Rokeach explains that the blessings of Parshas Bechukosai are all conditional, as implied by the word 'Im' ('if' you will follow My laws). However, he says, the blessings of Birkas Kohanim, which contain sixty letters are unconditional. The letter Samech, with a gematria of 60, represents Birkas Kohanim. Those blessings do not have strings attached. Therefore, we do not find the letter Samech in the conditional blessings of Parshas Bechukosai.

He writes that the congregants should face the Kohanim with open arms and make personal requests for whatever their needs are during Birkas Kohanim. This is a most propitious time for making such requests, which then have an increased potential for being answered. If someone has pressing needs, a most fitting time to ask for Help is during Birkas Kohanim—a point in the liturgy that is particularly ripe for Heavenly dispensation of blessing.

Wife of Manoach; Shimshon's Mother: Midrash and Aggadah

Manoah's wife, the mother of Samson, is included among the twenty-three truly upright and righteous women who came forth from Israel. The midrash teaches how she experienced the social shame of being a barren woman. Soon thereafter, an angel of Hashem appeared to her and told her she would conceive a child.

Manoah's wife gave birth to Samson and did all she could to fulfil his calling as a Nazirite and the deliverer of Israel. This included dissuading him from marrying the Philistine woman from Timnah.

The Rabbis commented on why the angel revealed himself to Manoah's wife, and not to Manoah himself. they asserted that Manoah was an ignoramus who did not even learn Scripture, while his spouse was a righteous woman.

Manoah's wife, the mother of Samson, is included among the twenty-three truly upright and righteous women who came forth from Israel.

The Babylonian Rabbis knew Manoah's wife as "Zlelponi" or "Zlelponith" (BT *Bava Batra* 91a 10:5). Another interpretation of this name is that Manoah's wife merited seeing an angel of Hashem, and an angel is called *zel* (shadow). The form *zll*, with a double *lamed*, is a plural of *zel*, since she saw the angel twice, in the city and in the field (*Num. Rabbah*, loc. cit.). A third explanation is that she sat and expounded until the meaning of the Torah became clear (*hizlilah*).

The midrash claims that their lack of children ("His wife was barren and had borne no children" - Jud. 13:2) resulted in a quarrel between Manoah and his wife. He would tell her: You are barren and cannot give birth; while she would charge him: You are sterile, and therefore I did not give birth.

When the angel of Hashem appeared to her, he informed her (Jud. 13:3): "You are barren and have borne no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son."

The angel mentioned barrenness in order to effect domestic peace: he tells her that she is barren, and this is why she has not become pregnant (*Num. Rabbah* 10:5).

There is also, however, a contrary tradition, that maintains that in order to bring peace between Manoah and his wife the angel engaged in a fabrication, for Manoah was sterile, and not his wife.

Teaching of the shame attached to barrenness, the midrash relates that the Judge Ibzan had sixty children and held one hundred and twenty feasts when they married, but he did not invite Manoah and his wife to a single one of these celebrations. He reasoned: How will this barren mule repay me? This couple has no children, and they will never be able to invite me to their banquet.

In the end, Manoah and his wife were blessed with a son, while all of Ibzan's offspring died in his lifetime. This gave birth to the popular saying: "You begat sixty, of what benefit to you are the sixty. Try and beget one, who will be brighter than sixty." That is, the only child of Manoah and his wife brought greater benefit than the sixty sons and daughters of Ibzan (BT *Bava Batra* 91a).

This barrenness is actually mentioned in praise of Manoah's wife, since she is among the list of renowned barren women: Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Hannah and Manoah's wife.

In addition to a son (Samson), Manoah's wife also gave birth to a daughter named Nashyan (BT *Bava Batra* 91a).

According to the Biblical account, Manoah's wife saw the angel twice, while some traditions speak of a third time, when she returned with her husband (*Mishnat R. Eliezer*).

The angel elected to reveal himself to Manoah's wife, and not to Manoah himself. The Rabbis assert that Manoah was an ignoramus, who did not even learn Scripture (BT *Berakhot* 61a), while his spouse was a righteous woman. Manoah, however, did not want to rely upon his wife, and wished to speak with the angel himself.

The midrash has Manoah saying: Until now I heard from my wife, but women are not qualified to teach, and I do not rely on what they say. "Let your words come" [Jud. 13:12] - I want to hear from your mouth, for I do not believe what she says, perhaps she may have changed something while speaking, or omitted or added something. "What rules shall be observed for the boy" [idem.]—what form of naziriteship shall the child be required to observe after he is born?

The angel, however, did not concur with the attitude expressed by Manoah. He was respectful of the latter's wife, and consequently bade him (v. 13): "The woman must abstain from all the things against which I warned her." The angel thereby sought to give added force to his original statement and to endear her to him (*Num. Rabbah* 10:5).

Mother of Samson

The Rabbis emphasize that Manoah's wife did everything in her power to ensure that her son fulfilled his calling as a Nazirite and the deliverer of Israel. The Bible relates that she scrupulously observed his nazirite status when he was still in her womb, and she refrained from any fruit of the vine, as the angel had commanded her.

Manoah's wife thought that her son would be a Nazirite all his life, and so when she repeated the angel's command to her husband, she added: "[for the boy is to be a Nazirite to G-d from the womb] to the day of his death." She did not know that another woman would violate his nazirite restrictions.

"Most people imagine spiritual greatness comes in dramatic leaps. In truth, it is built through small, consistent acts of inner work that no one else sees." ~ Rav Wolbe (Alei Shur).

Baruch Dayan Emes: Gadol Hador Hagaon Harav Gershon Edelstein, Zecher Tzaddik L'bracha *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*



The Olam HaTorah in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world is in deep aveilus upon the passing of the Gadol HaDor, HaGaon HaRav Yerachmiel Gershon Edelstein, z'tl, shortly before 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning at the age of 100.

Shortly beforehand, HaRav Gershon's situation became critical, and the doctors tried to resuscitate him. Meanwhile, the Torah world in Eretz Yisrael stopped everything to plead for Rachamei Shamayim.

HaRav HaGaon Gershon Edelstein, zt'l, was the Nasi of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah and the leader of Chareidi Jewry in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world and served as the Rosh Yeshivah of Ponevezh Yeshivah for 80 years. After the petirah of HaGaon HaRav Aryeh Leib Shteinman, z'tl, HaRav Edelstein and HaGaon HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, zt'l became the leader of the Olam HaTorah.

The levaya is tentatively scheduled for 3:30 p.m. at Yeshivas Ponevezh. A bittul melachah has been called throughout the entire city of Bnei Brak during the time of the levaya.

HaRav HaGaon Gershon Edelstein, z'tl was born in 1923 in the Russian town of Shumyatch to HaRav Tzvi Yehudah, the Rav of Shumyatch.

As a child, Rav Gershon's mother obtained fake birth certificates for her sons with the wrong dates of birth to delay mandatory school attendance under the Communists. Instead, HaRav Gershon and his brothers learned Torah with a private Rebbe at home. Meanwhile, HaRav Gershon's mother developed typhus, later passing away from the illness.

In 1934, Rav Gershon's father obtained permits to enter Israel. He and his sons travelled by ship from Odessa, arriving in Israel on Lag B'Omer. The family settled in Ramat Hasharon, where HaRav Gershon and his brother Yaakov slept on the floor. There too, the boys learned Torah at home with their father since there was no religious school in Ramat Hasharon.

In 1935, HaRav Tzvi was elected as the Rav of Ramat HaSharon. The same year, after HaRav Gershon begged his father, he and his brother Yaakov were sent to the Lomza Yeshivah in Petach Tikvah.

Shortly later, HaRav Shmuel Rozovsky requested that HaRav Gershon and Yaakov join the newly established Yeshivah Ponevezh. HaRav Tzvi agreed and the two brothers lived in the home of HaGaon HaRav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz, zt'l.

The Rosh Yeshivah, HaGaon HaRav Yosef Shlomo Kahneman, z'tl, initially appointed HaRav Gershon to teach young Holocaust survivors in the Batei Avos orphanage, and in 1945, HaRav Gershon began delivering shiurim to talmidim at Ponevezh. In 1947, HaRav Gershon married Henya Rochel, the daughter of HaGaon HaRav Yehoshua Zelig Diskin, z'tl the Rav of Pardes Chana, and the same year, he was appointed as Rosh Mesivta in Ponevezh.

HaRav Edelstein, z'tl, became the Rosh Yeshivah of Ponevzeh together with HaGaon HaRav Baruch Dov Povarsky in the mid-1990s. In 2003, HaRav Edelstein was appointed to the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Degal HaTorah.

In the wake of the petirah of HaGaon HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, z'tl, a little over a year ago, HaRav Edelstein was recognized as the Gadol HaDor and was the address for all major issues and shailos for Chareidi Jewry throughout the world.

וכל בית ישראל יבכו את השריפה אשר שרף ה'

The Nature of the Loss – Rav Gershon Edelstein zatzal by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

He uniquely combined vision, knowledge, leadership and love of man.

The loss of Rav Gershon Edelstein zatzal is significant not only because of the loss in Torah – he was of the Ziknei HaRoshei Yeshiva who gave iyun shiurim until the very end. He was the Rosh Yeshiva of the very prestigious Ponevech Yeshiva. The loss is so significant because he was not just the Gadol haDor in learning – he was the Gadol haDor in chinuch and guidance. A few years ago, he gave a remarkable hashkafa session – about chinuch and how to deal with those who are either struggling or off the derech r"l.



Rav Edelstein zt"l told of a story where a wealthy individual had a delicate question regarding his off the derech son. The son asked the father if he could buy him a car. The parents were unsure as to whether to buy him the car, on condition that he not use it on Shabbos. The husband and wife discussed it between themselves and decided to present it to the Chazon Ish.

The Chazon Ish paskened to the husband that he should buy him the car with no restrictions. When the husband came home, he related the psak to his wife. She could not believe it. "There is no way that the Chazon Ish could have paskened that way. You must have heard wrong or misunderstood him."

The wife would not budge and they bought the car – but with the restrictions on Shabbos use. Rav Gershon, in tears, emphasized

that he was intimately involved with the parties and he saw that the young man was turned away from Torah entirely.

Rav Edelstein zt"l constantly emphasized and implored parents and Rebbeim not to force a child to do things. He gave examples: In Tefillah, rather than force the child to daven – learn with him (or her). Teach them what is gained through tefilos and the opportunities lost as well. Never teach through kaas – anger. It is so counterproductive.

The Rosh Yeshiva explained that some children or young men are extraordinarily sensitive, and they must be treated very delicately. He told of a young man who was very sensitive. He could not learn Gemorah, but used his time in being meshamesh a Rosh Yeshiva.

What was the reason for his being so sensitive?

When he was young, his parents did not force him to do anything, but they constantly pointed things out and left him with the feeling that nothing he did was good enough. The young man lost his desire to learn. He does not hate his parents, chas v'shalom. He is just a young man that is not happy with his lot.

The Rosh Yeshiva also cautioned not to give a child everything he wants. Believe it or not, this can lead to a sense of superiority on behalf of the child – even feeling that he is above his parents! The child must realize that he should be batel to his parents in order to facilitate true growth. It will also lead to true yiras shamayim.

Parents, Roshei Yeshiva, and Rabbeim would come to him daily for advice. The loss of his sagely advice is devastating. Yehe zichro boruch.

"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."

The Rosh Yeshiva's Tzavah & The Shofros That Were Returned Prior To Kevurah



HaGaon HaRav Gershon Edelstein, ziti, served as the Ba'al Tokea at Yeshivas Ponevezh for over 70 years, including this past Rosh Hashanah.

HaRav Gershon, zt'l, would only trust HaRav Tzvi Greineman, the son of HaGaon HaRav Meir Greineman, the nephew of the Chazon Ish, regarding the kashrus of the shofros. In recent years, he only used the shofros belonging to HaRav Tzvi and two of the shofros were on loan at HaRav Edelstein's home.

Less than two hours after the petirah, HaRav Tzvi received a phone from the Rosh Yeshivah's family members inquiring about his whereabouts and informing him that his shofros would be immediately delivered to him. The family members explained that the Rosh Yeshivah, z'tl, left a tzavah that all debts and borrowed objects in his possession be returned to their owners prior to kevurah.

HaRav Edelstein, z'tl, began blowing the shofar while still a bochur by the Chazon Ish – in 1944.

The Chazon Ish is rumored to have said about HaRav Edelstein that "Rebbe Gershon is 'handicapped' in the midah of gaivah – even the 'eighth of the eighth' that is permitted for a Talmid Chacham."

זכרו תורת משה
בס"ד
י"ג סיון ה'תשפ"ג
לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
Vol. #111
HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Mitzvos…Right and Left!

The great *tzaddik*, **Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul**, was once trying to get on a bus. There was a young boy in front of him taking his time, and the driver became agitated that it was taking so long for the line of people to get onto the bus.

"Speed up! Speed up!" he yelled. "Why are you taking your time?"

Only after the boy passed did the driver realize he'd spoken harshly in front of Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul. Greatly embarrassed, he tried to apologize to the rabbi, but Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul instead pointed to the door button and reproached him lightly.

"That button you're holding should be pressed in the same mindset that you would open the *aron ha'kodesh*. You understand, that opening the *aron* is done with great awe and respect. The same is true when opening the door for a Yid. You must remember that you're doing so for 'the son of Hashem.' And therefore, it too, should be done with awe and respect."

Although it may seem like a routine act, it nevertheless has great significance and should be done with respect and the proper attention.

"The foolish person thinks that falling is proof of failure. The wise person knows that falling is part of the process of becoming great. One who never fell never truly grew." ~ Rav Hutner (Pachad Yitzchak).

Risky Move!

There's a well-known story of a gentile who once saved someone's life that is well worth repeating:



At a subway station in New York City, one of the passengers waiting for the train fell onto the tracks. All the other people on the platform stood there, staring down at the poor guy, unsure what to do. They knew that someone had to jump down and help him climb up, but there was a very real and serious risk that a train could come speeding down the track at any given moment, and there was nowhere to escape.

Suddenly, from among the crowd of onlookers, one guy jumped down, lifted the man off the tracks, and somehow climbed up with him back to the platform. Soon after, the train indeed passed where they had just stood moments before.

Of course, the heroic rescue was celebrated by everyone who witnessed it, and they congratulated the savior for saving the man's life. All the newspaper headlines the next day praised the courageous act of the man who saved a life on the subway tracks.

But the hero didn't feel he deserved any credit. "I didn't do it to save a life," he explained. "I just knew that had this man gotten hit by a train and died, there would be a several hour delay, and I would miss hours of work and forfeit my days' pay of forty dollars. So, I jumped in to save him. I don't deserve any recognition or acknowledgement for my 'heroic act'; it was a business decision!"

There's an important lesson that we can take from here. This man did a very exceptionally special act and hadn't paid attention to its value. Had he paid attention, he would have felt a greater satisfaction and accomplishment to his act. By unacknowledging his action he viewed this as a business gain overlooking its intrinsic benefit.

From morning to night, we are busy doing acts of *chessed*, learning, davening, eating, sleeping, taking care of our children, etc. By remembering that we're doing mitzvos, we'll be filled with much happiness, pleasure, and joy (Of course there's also a halachic aspect of having kavanah when doing a mitzvah).

For each one of our actions, there is endless and unlimited reward waiting for us. Recalling this, will ensure that our mitzvos will be done with great enthusiasm and eagerness.

Simchas Torah

A group of Nazis once took their Jewish inmates on a walk, though nothing like the typical "Shabbos walk" you might have imagined. It was a miles-long walk with no particular end, in which if they dare fall or stop, it would be their end. Aside from the lengthy walk, the Nazis gave everyone a heavy rock to carry as well, intensifying the difficulty and strain.

From the thirty people who joined the "walk," only one boy, Shmuel,* survived. All the others collapsed from the outrageous strain and tension.

Years later, Shmuel was asked what gave him the strength to withstand the march. Was he perhaps the strongest? Was he thinking something special?

"Yes," he replied. "What gave me the courage to continue was that I envisioned the big rock I was carrying was a *Sefer Torah*, and I was like the Rav who dances with it on Simchas Torah."

"The Rav's happiness comes from his 'doing the will of Hashem.' It brings him so much excitement and joy! I thought that as I hauled that heavy rock, I too, was fulfilling the will of Hashem. And therefore will do it willingly and joyfully, just as the Rav dances on Simchas Torah, and that's what gave me the energy to continue!"

Recap

We, *baruch Hashem* aren't faced with these exact challenges, but we can still learn an extremely important lesson from here.

The ordinary actions that we perform contain great value. Similar to holding a heavy rock knowing that it is the will of Hashem, we can do our tasks with energy and excitement. Whatever it may be, by remembering that we are fulfilling the will of Hashem, we'll feel motivated and rejuvenated to fulfil this joyous task.

The concept of "mundane" doesn't apply to Yidden. Every act that we do is serving Hashem. Whether it be taking care of His people, our children, our friends, and even ourselves, it is of infinite value. Taking care of ourselves is a commandment like any other commandment, and immeasurable reward awaits us for it.

Particularly, in regard to the mitzvos of helping others, when we help others, all the outcome from it is granted to the donor. For example, if you say a good word to someone that elevates his mood, it could affect the way he conducts himself for the entire day thereafter. All he did for the entire day afterward is attributed to the kind-hearted person.

Thank You, Hashem, for granting us reward for the "routine" things that we do. Even the things we would've done anyway will accrue for us reward. The fact that we would have done it doesn't take away the fact that it's a mitzvah. The endless reward is still going to be given to us.

Thank You Hashem!

למודי משה

A Love-ly Vort

The following *vort*, is written in a *sefer* called *Shivtei K-ah* from Rav Moshe Dovid Valle, who was a *talmid* of the Ramchal. The Ramchal is the author of the classic *mussar sefer — Mesillas Yeshorim*. He lived in Padua, Italy.

The *Shivtei K-ah* writes as follows:

In this week's *parsha* when the *Kohanim* are given the mitzvah of *Birchas Kohanim*, the *pasuk* says: **כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמור להם** - "*…so shall you bless the Children of Yisroel*, ***say to them***" (*Bamidbar* 6:23).

When the *Kohanim* bless the nation, they precede their blessing with a *birchas hamitzvah* [blessing recited prior to doing a mitzvah]: אשר קדשנו בקדושתו של אהרן וצונו לברך את עמו ישראל **באהבה** - "*who has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aharon and commanded us to bless His nation Yisroel*, ***with love***".

Therefore, it is certainly noteworthy that "***with love***" is specified in the blessing of *Birchas Kohanim*. Apparently, the *Kohanim* are required to give over their blessing with love. This emotional requirement at the time of the blessing reflects a firm requirement on the part of the *Kohanim* in their mitzvah performance. (It is *me'akev* proper execution of the mitzvah.) If there is someone in the audience that the *Kohen* hates, such that he cannot bless him "with love", then he should not *duchen*. It must be delivered "with love."

The *Shivtei K-ah*, writes: "…and the Torah, by writing **אמור להם** (literally 'say to them') implies with great focus and with complete love. And there is a hint in the *pasuk* that it must be said with love." What is the hint? "For the word **אמור** in the language of other nations means 'love.'"

How does one say Love in French? Amour

How does one say Love in Italian? Amore

Rav Moshe Dovid Valle, the Italian disciple of the Ramchal, thus interprets the Hebrew expression, **אמור להם**, as hinting at the idea of delivering *Birchas Kohanim* to the Jewish people with love.

He then says, "Do not be surprised at this 'foreign allusion' because we find parallel ideas in the words of our Sages in a number of places." This is not the first case of a Biblical word deriving etymologically from foreign languages. The most famous example is the word *totafos* (*Devorim* 6:8). The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 4b) writes that we derive the fact that the head *tefillin* are to contain four *parshiyos* based on exegesis of the word *totafos* since "*tot* means two in the Catfi language and *fos* means two in the Afriki language."

Rav Valle explains that the Torah is not suddenly speaking Swahili or Italian in describing the laws of *Tefillin* or the laws of *Birchas Kohamim*. However, the Torah sometimes uses foreign words to convey ideas. The reason for this is that our holy language (i.e. — Hebrew, *lashon haKodesh*) is the mother of all languages.

The world thinks that "Latin is the mother language of all tongues." The *talmid* of the Ramchal says, "*chas vesholam*!" *Lashon Kodesh* is the mother of all tongues! The nuances of all other languages are derived from it. There is no word in any other language that is not alluded to in some derivation from the holy tongue.

Thus, according to the *Shivtei K-ah*, the expression **אמור להם** — from the French amour and the Italian amore — is a hint at the source of, לברך את עמו ישראל **באהבה** - "*bless the Children of Yisroel **with love***." (R' Frand)

"Man is not defined by what he possesses, but by what he is becoming. Perfection is not a state — it is a direction." ~ Maharal of Prague.

A Penetrating Analysis on the Haftorah By R' Zvi Hirsch Hoffman

The Haftorah details the story of Shimshon HaGibbor, the mighty saviour who fought courageous battles on behalf of his people, who was also a nazir, a theme which coincides with the halachos found in Parshas Naso.

In the opening words of the Haftorah, an angel appears to the wife of Manoach – father and mother of Shimshon HaGibbor, and says to her, הִנֵּה־נָ֣א אַתְּ־עֲקָרָ֗ה וְלֹ֥א יָלַ֛דְתְּ "***You are infertile and have borne no children*** ..." Chazal question what the use was in informing her of her sad plight. Why indeed was it so necessary that no less than an angel from heaven needed to come down and inform her of this? Furthermore, the words of the angel, "הִנֵּה־נָ֣א אַתְּ־עֲקָרָ֗ה וְלֹ֥א יָלַ֛דְתְּ" seem superfluous. Just by saying that she was barren would have been enough.

R' Chaim Kanievsky zt"l (Ta'ama D'Kra) illuminates the words of the angel as follows: we find in the Medrash that there was a dispute between Manoach and his wife. He said she was barren and unable to bear a child, while she claimed that he was the cause of their childlessness. Thus, the angel came specifically to put peace between Manoach and his wife and inform her that she indeed was the one who was barren.

R' Chaim explains that we see from here that the one who wants to make peace between those who have a dispute should not come to the entitled person and say to him that you are right, since by doing so will further increase the dispute. Rather, he should go to the side that is at fault and explain to them that they have are mistaken and should concede.

"Man was created to break his nature." ~ Vilna Gaon.



Rabbi Eytan Feiner - What is First?

The Chiddushei HaRim writes that the lengthiest Parsha in the Torah (176 verses), along with the longest running Midrash and Zohar, is that of Parshas Naso. As it falls immediately after Shavuos, the time when we received the Torah, we fill ourselves with the most Torah that we can during this Shabbos.

Occupying centre stage are the topics of the Sotah, followed by that of the Nazir. Why is there this juxtaposition? The Gemara (2a) tells us that it is because someone who sees a Sotah in her degradation ought to remove himself from wine and become a Nazir. This famously addresses why the order of the discussion of Sotah precedes that of a Nazir in the Torah.

Rav Tzadok HaKohen (*Pri Tzaddik, Naso, #13*) asks why, in contrast, we find in Torah She'baal Peh (Oral Law) that the order of the tractates in Seder Nashim reverse this order, placing Sotah after Nazir: Yevamos, Kesuvos, Nedarim, Nazir, Sotah, Gittin, Kiddushin.

R' Reuven Margolis observes that when R' Yehudah HaNasi compiled the Mishna, he ordered the tractates with those containing the greatest number of chapters to those with the least number of chapters. However, this pattern would not help to address this question in this situation as both Nazir and Sotah contain the same number of chapters. In particular, in Seder Nashim, Yevamos has 16 chapters, Kesuvos has 13 chapters, Nedarim has 11, Nazir, Sotah and Gittin each have 9, and Kiddushin has 4. In line with this, our question remains: why not include the Tractate of Sotah before that of a Nazir, aligned with the way it is ordered in the Torah?

Rav Tzadok explains that Hashem is always sending us messages in this world. When Moshe Rabbeinu saw the bush burning, the Torah tells us that he turned to look. But who wouldn't turn to take a look? The answer, as underscored by the Midrash, is that Moshe didn't simply look, but he turned his entire body to look. He was mindful, acting in the moment, and did not take a mere, cursory glance.

Messages in our life, **R' Berel Wein** remarked, require that we entirely shift our focus to look at what lessons and takeaways we can gain.

The Bnei Yissasschar, in fact, notes that the Torah's use of Moshe "turning" (*sar*) to look at the Burning Bush equals 260 in gematria, which is the equivalent of the gematria of "ayin" (eye), which when doubled and referring to both eyes, is 130 and 130, or 260.

Rav Zusha of Anipoli, as well, would also remark when anything happened in his life which was clearly a sign from Hashem, "We must always open our eyes and ears, because Hashem is always sending us messages in the world."

For this reason, when it comes to the world in which we live (olam ha'maaseh), the Torah places the discussion of Sotah before that of Nazir. If Hashem orchestrated that a person would observe the process of a Sotah, there must have been a reason. Hashem must have been speaking to the person and sending them a message.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l commented that if a person sees someone else desecrate Shabbos, it must be sending the person the message that there is something they can improve in their own observance of Shabbos. Otherwise, they wouldn't have seen such an incident. Everything which we see and experience in our life is there for us to derive a message and lesson from.

When the Belzer Rebbe, **Rav Aharon Rokeach**, miraculously escaped Europe to Israel, he spent his first year in Tel Aviv. One Shabbos, as he was walking out of shul on Shabbos, his gabbai called out to him, "Rebbe, cover your eyes so you don't see the truck driving by and desecrating Shabbos!" In response, the Belzer Rebbe said, "It can't be that I'd be exposed to someone violating Shabbos. It must be that that truck is taking someone to the hospital." The gabbai could understand that the Rebbe would want to give someone the benefit of the doubt, but to be so sure that the one random truck in Tel Aviv that they saw would not be someone randomly driving but an emergency call would be unlikely.

In researching the matter, it turned out that the truck was actually just randomly driving by, until on the next block, a woman and her husband were waving down cars as she was about to go into labour. The Belzer Rebbe had been right. And how could he? He was confident that if he was observing Shabbos as he needed, it wouldn't be possible that he would be sent the message about Shabbos desecration.

If someone therefore witnessed the process of a Sotah in the Beis Hamikdash, it must have been for a reason. The person must have needed to take to heart the message, from which he would become a Nazir afterwards. This is why, in Torah She'bichtav (the Written Law) which outlines in concrete, observable terms and conditions how we are to live life, the discussion of Sotah comes before that of Nazir.

However, when it comes to Torah She'baal Peh, which represents the world of thought (olam ha'machshavah) as the Oral Law was originally never intended to be written down (Gittin 60b), the opposite is true. In this regard, a wise person is one who foresees the future (Tamid 32a). The Gemara (Bava Basra 12a) similarly emphasizes that a wise person is greater than a prophet. A wise person is greater than a prophet, explains Rav Tzadok, because a prophet can only pick up on the signs, cues and hints that Hashem shows him in this world. A wise person, however, through the prowess of his Torah learning and Divine inspiration in the form of ruach ha'kodesh (Ramban, ibid.), can identify invisible and imperceptible things that even a prophet cannot see.

In the world of wisdom and the Oral Law, the Nazir takes precedence, as a Nazir is looking toward the future of bettering himself before ever needing to see a Sotah (akin to the tractate of Nazir coming before Sotah). The Nazir, in the realm of the Oral Law, doesn't need to see a Sotah in order to place his life on a higher plane of holiness and purity. Even without ever needing to see a Sotah, such an individual exercises wise judgment (represented by the Oral Law) to embark on a process of a Nazir.

The Torah, in Parshas Shelach (15:24), refers to such wise individuals as "Einei ha'eidah," the eyes of the nation. The Gemara (Bava Basra 4a) similarly refers to such wise individuals as the "eyes of the world," which the **Maharal** elaborates to mean that the enlighten us and guide us.

R' Akiva Eiger (Parshas Ki Savo) also writes that before we recite the Shema, we ask Hashem to "enlighten our eyes in His Torah," which is a reference to our Torah leaders. In this prayer, we ask that Hashem grant our leaders the wisdom and perception to guide us in the right direction in our lives. Shlomo Hamelech in Koheles (2:14) echoes the same when he writes that a "wise person has his eyes in his head."

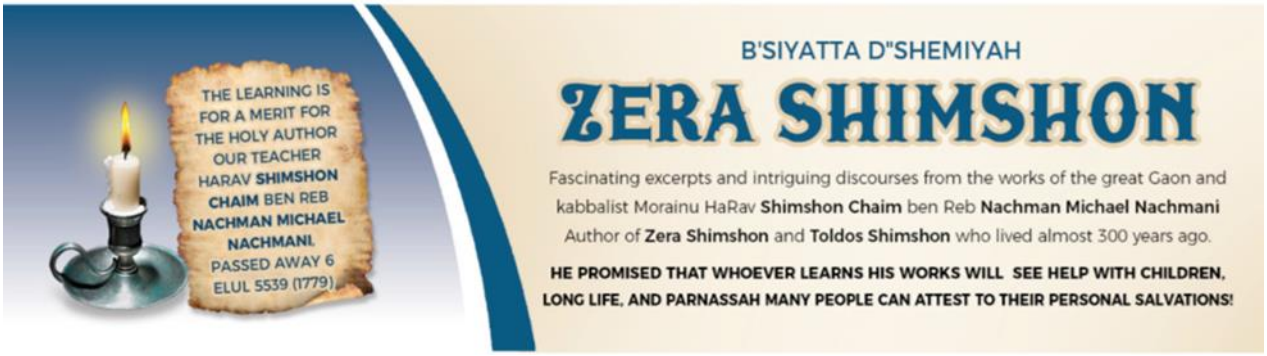
The Ben Ish Chai (Parshas Lech Lecha) interprets the words spoken to Avraham by Hashem that he should travel to "the land which I will show you," as referring to the Land of Israel, which is saturated with the power of sight. The Gemara (Bava Basra 158b) refers to the Land of Israel as a land whose air infuses its inhabitants with wisdom. The Land of Israel is a land of clarity, of wisdom, of transparent sight. Where did this capacity come from?

Rav Tzadok explains that before his passing, Moshe Rabbeinu gazed with his eyes upon all the Land of Israel. By doing so, he infused into every part and particle of Israel the holiness and wisdom of Torah. The Sifri (Parshas Eikev) highlights this by emphasizing that "there is nothing like the Torah of the Land of Israel."

This is moreover why, explains the Ben Ish Chai (Parshas Lech Lecha), the Babylonian Talmud utilizes the terminology when introducing a discussion, "Ta Sh'ma — Come and hear," whereas the Jerusalem Talmud (and similarly the Zohar) employs the phrase "Ta Chazi— Come and see." This is because in the Land of Israel, the capacity of sight, of lucidity is at its best.

This captures, explains Rav Tzadok, why such a distinction exists between the Written Law and the Oral Law between the placement of Sotah before Nazir (former) and Nazir before Sotah (the latter).

"A person has no share in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu until he believes that everything that happens to us is through miracles — there is no nature and no chance in the world at all. Whether it appears public or hidden, everything is the will of Hashem. From the great, open miracles, a person comes to acknowledge the hidden miracles that occur every day, which are the foundation of the entire Torah." ~ Ramban – Emunah in Daily Life.



בַּכָּתֵף יִשְׂאוּ They carry (the articles of the Mishkan) on their shoulder (7:9)

The Mishna says (Avos 6:3), that one who learns from his friend, even one letter, must act towards him with respect - as one would act towards his Rebbe. This is learned from Dovid Hamelech who learned only two things from Achitofel and regarded him with a great level of respect on account of these two things that he was taught by Achitofel.

The Yerushalmi says that one of the things that Achitofel taught Dovid Hamelech was that the Kohanim had to carry the Aron with their shoulders.

The Zera Shimshon writes in the name of the **Kli Yakar** (from Rav Laniado on Nevi'im) that this is the Halacha that the Mishna refers as 'one letter'. Obviously, it was not a letter that Dovid Hamelech was taught by Achitofel rather it was a Halacha that was learned out of one extra letter in the Torah and it was this that Achitofel taught Dovid Hamelech.

When the Aron was brought back (Shmuel II 2), Dovid Hamelech made a new chariot for the Aron to be carried on. He understood that although the Torah writes that it should be carried on the shoulders of the Levi'im, he thought that this was simply the Torah writing the natural way that things are carried, but not that it was a Halacha that it must be carried specifically on the shoulders.

The fact that the Levi'im had until now carried it only on their shoulders, Dovid Hamelech thought was merely a stringency that

they had adopted on themselves. This is why, in honour of the returning of the Aron, he had the Aron brought back on a chariot.

Achitofel taught Dovid Hamelech that the word **ישאו**, it should be carried, is in fact a commandant - that this is the way it should be carried and no other way. This is stressed by the extra **י** at the beginning of the word. As opposed to writing **בכתף שאו** which would imply that the Torah was simply telling us how the Levi'im carried the Aron, the Torah added a **י** - **בַּכָּתֵף יִשָּׂאוּ**. This implies that this is a commandment as to how the Aron should be carried - only on the shoulder and no other way.

Since this Halacha is learned out from the addition of one letter and Dovid Hamelech did not know this Halacha, the Mishna refers to it as though Achitofel only taught him one letter. The correct understanding though is that Achitofel taught Dovid Hamelech a Halacha that is derived from the fact that that there an additional one letter in the Torah.

Thoughts that Count for Our Parsha

כֹּה תְבָרֲכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ***So shall you bless*** (6:23)

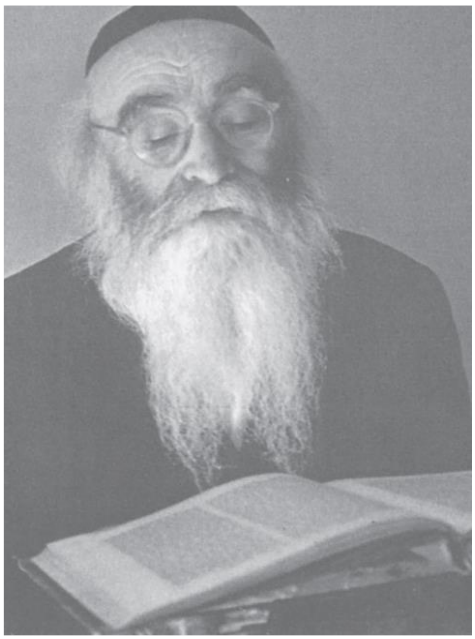
The Torah's commandment to the kohanim was not meant as a command to bless the Jewish people but as an instruction how, i.e., in such and such a manner shall you bless them. For kohanim are by nature loving and giving; there was no need to order them to bless, merely to tell them what form it should take. (***Imrei Emes of Gur***)

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ ***May the L-rd bless you and keep you*** (6:24)

The priestly blessing is in the singular tense, directed to each individual Jew. For the most important blessing they can receive is unity, that they join as one person with one heart. (**Olelot Efraim**)

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Hosting Guests





There are costs to hosting guests. There is the financial burden of buying extra food, as well as the emotional strain and lack of privacy. The effort takes its toll. Nonetheless, the Gemara (Shabbos 127a; Shevuos 35b) reveals that hosting guests is greater than greeting the Shechinah. Certainly, this sublime mitzvah is a worthy investment, an opportunity worth grabbing.

Rav Aryeh Levin, the tzaddik of Yerushalayim, once approached **Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman** and asked if he knows anyone who sells "Rav Nesanel Sofer" retzuos, tefillin straps. Rav Nesanel's retzuos were reputed as the absolute finest, and Rav Aryeh's had become torn.

Reb Yaakov Yosef asked Rav Aryeh how much money he was willing to spend, and Rav Aryeh responded, "Up to two lirot," a large sum in those days. Impressed, Reb Yaakov Yosef told him he would procure the retzuos for him. A short while later, Reb Yaakov Yosef brought the retzuos to Rav Aryeh, and Rav Aryeh handed him the money.

Rav Aryeh was curious as to how Reb Yaakov Yosef had managed to procure such rare retzuos on such short notice.

Reb Yaakov Yosef explained, "I, too, owned retzuos from Rav Nesanel Sofer and I know how precious and rare they are. Yet I also know the value of the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim. Throughout my life, I was able to provide for my guests, but lately, our funds have been depleted and, because of this, I am concerned I won't be able to continue having guests. "So I sold you my own retzuos. I can buy less costly retzuos and use the extra money to host guests for the next month."

One month of guests versus a lifetime of the best retzuos. Reb Yaakov Yosef chose the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim. Rav Aryeh was amazed by Reb Yaakov Yosef's commitment and sacrifice for his guests, and grateful that the money he spent on his retzuos would serve a worthy cause.





Hiding Under His Armpits

Pre-war Europe



The wave of anti-Semitism was spreading. Threats intensified daily. **Rabbi Shmuel Krauz** knew the time might come when he might be taken and his *avodas* Hashem would be compromised. His painful dilemma? Figuring out which *mitzvah* he would hold onto come-what-may that would offer him protection at such a perilous time.

Deciding which one was not simple. It would have to be a *mitzvah* he could conceal from the Germans. There were several possibilities, but Rabbi Shmuel had a burning passion to continue wearing his *tefillin* — a small set, written by a *yarei Shamayim*. Bringing them along, however, would clearly endanger his life.

Suddenly, Rabbi Shmuel remembered something. A smuggler had once shared with him how diamonds were transported across borders without detection — under one's armpits. If diamonds could be hidden there successfully, perhaps *tefillin* could be as well. He took his *tefillin* and experimented — carefully, deliberately, he hid them beneath his armpits.

It worked.

(Rabbi Shmuel would later joke to his grandchildren, "It's not hard — try it yourself!")

For days, he practiced this — maneuvering about freely while keeping them hidden. And when the Nazis entered his town, he took his small pair of *tefillin* with him — unnoticed.

Each day, while marching to forced labor, Rabbi Shmuel would don them when no officers were in sight. Eventually, seventy other men joined him in the *mitzvah*, *davening* together in quiet defiance.

But this tactic yielded more than one benefit.

In the summer of 1940, Rabbi Shmuel began wondering how he might manage to light a Chanukah *menorah*. His thoughts were not consumed by survival alone, but by what more he could still do for Hashem.

A friend of his worked in the camp kitchen. Rabbi Shmuel pleaded with him to smuggle out a meager amount of oil. His friend nearly collapsed at the request. It was deep summer — months before Chanukah — in a place where people lacked even basic nutrition. And yet Rabbi Shmuel was worried about oil for the *menorah*!

Not only that, but as meager as everyone's rations were, Rabbi Shmuel had even less. He would give away his Shabbos portion to a non-Jew who performed forbidden labor on his behalf. He was certainly not overnourished.

Yet something about Rabbi Shmuel's request stirred him deeply. After repeated pleas, his friend finally complied. "And where are you going to keep all that oil?" the friend asked.

"It is for that very reason," Rabbi Shmuel replied, "that Hashem gave me two armpits — one for my *tefillin*, and one for the oil."

Miraculously, Rabbi Shmuel survived, sustained through every trial by the protection of his *tefillin*. There were moments when he stood

a hair's breadth away from death. Yet wherever he went, they never left him.

Before liberation, many prisoners were taken from the concentration camps on brutal Death Marches. Rabbi Shmuel was forced to join thousands of others on one such march — an exhausting ordeal in which a single stumble could mean certain death.

After hours of walking, Rabbi Shmuel collapsed to the ground in despair, convinced he could not go on. At that moment, his late *rebbi*, the **Gelanter Rav**, appeared to him in a dream and urged him forward. "You are not among those upon whom death has been decreed. Get up and move forward." Those words gave him the final strength he needed to rise and continue. And continue he did.

That particular set of *tefillin* did not last much longer.

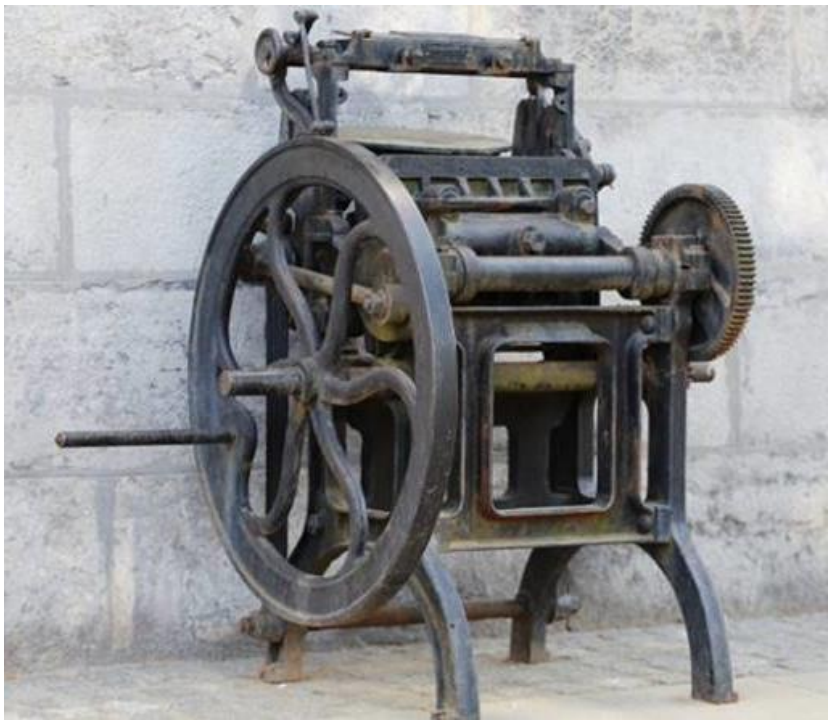
When liberation finally came, first response teams tended to the survivors. They washed them, treated their wounds, and issued clean clothing. The old garments — suspected of carrying disease — were gathered and thrown into a burning fire.

Sadly, into that fire went Rabbi Shmuel's most precious possession: his *tefillin*.

They had been carried beneath his arms through hunger, fear, and death itself. And when their protection was no longer needed they were taken from him.

"The path of growth is paved with failure. The greatest mistake a person can make is to believe that his failures define him. On the contrary — they are the very tools through which greatness is built. A fall does not contradict ascent; it creates it. One who has never struggled has never truly lived a life of avodas Hashem." ~ Rav Hutner – (Pachad Yitzchak, Igros).

Meet the Non-Jew Who Revolutionized the Talmud



Daniel Bomberg capitalized on the disruptive new technology – printing, understanding the potentially huge market for books amongst Jews.

People are familiar with Rabbi Meir Shapiro, who initiated the *Daf Yomi* worldwide phenomenon where Jews around the world learn the same page (*daf*) of Talmud. But does anyone ever think of Daniel Bomberg, the Christian who literally put the "*daf*" in Daf Yomi?

Rabbi Shapiro's brainchild was born in 1923, a time much like our own. As powerful political, social and economic forces exerted a centrifugal force on the Jews of that era, Rabbi Shapiro understood that the shared study of the Talmud, a core Jewish text, was a powerful way of bringing the fractured Jewish people together under the umbrella of our long intellectual and spiritual tradition. Since then, his innovative program, as boldly ambitious as it was elegantly simple, has united Talmud enthusiasts from Lakewood to London, from Hebron to Hong Kong – literally anywhere in the world, one can find a class that is literally keeping Jews around the world on the same Talmudic page, every single day.

Rabbi Shapiro's brilliant idea, however, could not have occurred without the signal contribution of one Daniel Bomberg.

Born in Antwerp in the late 1400s to a middle-class family of printers, Bomberg received a decent liberal arts education that even included a smattering of Hebrew. This served him in good stead when

he went to make his fortune in the bustling metropolis of renaissance Venice, home to a mercantile Jewish population that was recently restricted to the Ghetto.

Printing was in its infancy, but Jews were among the early adopters of this disruptive new technology. The Soncino family were producing beautiful editions of individual Talmudic tractates, confident that the lower production costs of printed Judaica would place books in the reach of average families. Known for their scholarship, the Soncinos took great pains to produce works of lasting quality – but they simply couldn't print their tractates fast enough to meet the demand.


חמשה חומשי תורה

אנוירשה

The title page of a 1525 Chumash printed by Daniel Bomberg.

This is where Bomberg saw his opportunity. Assembling a group of Jewish scholars, beginning with Jews who had converted to Christianity, Bomberg rapidly churned out printed versions of Jewish classics such as the encyclopedic *Mikra'ot Gedolot* edition of the Torah. The early editions were plagued with errors, and many readers resented the use of apostates in their preparation, but Bomberg had accurately judged the market: the people of the Book wanted lots more books, especially the Talmud, and the demand far outpaced the leisurely supply of the Soncino family of printers.

Bomberg soon replaced his early staff of Jewish Christians with well-regarded Rabbinic scholars straight out of the ghetto. As a Christian, he was also able to negotiate favorable terms for his

business, including the right for minimal Church censorship, arguing that ancient texts required preservation in their original state. He even secured rare privileges for his Jewish staff, such as an exemption from the requirement to wear the humiliating Jewish hat.

In a spurt of remarkable productivity, the Bomberg printing house produced a fantastic number of Hebrew books, including the first full printed edition of the Babylonian Talmud. He shamelessly copied the Soncino design, with the commentary of Rashi on the side closest to the spine and Tosafot on the outside of the page, and added many innovations of his own, including one especially important change: page numbers.

Yes, page numbers. As text-oriented as Jews are, we simply never got around to inventing basic pagination (we also lagged behind in punctuation, and as anyone who struggled to learn modern Hebrew knows, we weren't so hot at vowels, either). Looking at the rapidly evolving conventions of 15th-century printing, Bomberg added a letter "*bet*" to the first page of text in Tractate Berakhot of his second edition of the Talmud – and the *Daf* was born.

Since then, much rabbinic and scholarly ink has been spilled in vain, struggling to understand why he didn't begin with "*aleph*," the first letter of the alphabet. The simple explanation is that Bomberg considered the title page as the first folio, or page one.

Although it seems obvious in retrospect, Bomberg's brilliant introduction of page numbers ultimately set the standard for every single *Daf* in virtually every single printed edition of Talmud for the next half-millennium. If a given word is on a Bomberg page, it should be on the same page in every future Talmud. Future printers adopted this standardized allocation of precise passages to every page, and there was no messing with Bomberg: even the great contemporary scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz was roundly excoriated in certain circles for altering the traditional page layout in his award-winning edition of the Talmud.

Yet by standardizing the Daf, Bomberg made possible the notion of an international, coordinated study of the Talmud. Rabbi Shapiro literally couldn't have done it without him.

There's one basic takeaway message to this story: when tens of thousands of Jews crowd together in January 2020 to celebrate another cycle of Daf Yomi – last cycle, nearly 100,000 Talmudists packed Met Life stadium, and this cycle will likely be bigger – we should recall not only the phenomenal dedication of the Daf Yomi students and teachers, and not only the inspirational message of unity through study proposed by Rabbi Shapiro's vision, but maybe we should give some credit to the blessing of a philosemitic Christian from Antwerp, Daniel Bomberg.



Who Said The Following Line? "There Is No Sadness In The World."

These joyful and optimistic words were written by none other than the leading Lithuanian Torah authority of his generation, a man whose life was marked by hardship and suffering: **the Chazon Ish**.

The letter was written to a Breslov chassid, and its tone carries something of that world. But the author himself was very far from Breslov thought and style. The line appears in a personal letter he wrote, offering strength and encouragement.

In his own words:

....ועיקר העבודה בשמחה כי באמת אין כל עצב בעולם למי שמכיר אור האורות של האמת - "...***And the essence of avodah is with joy, for in truth there is no sadness at all in the world for the one who recognizes the light of truth***."

This letter became one of the most quoted texts of the Chazon Ish - a quiet sentence that lit a generation.

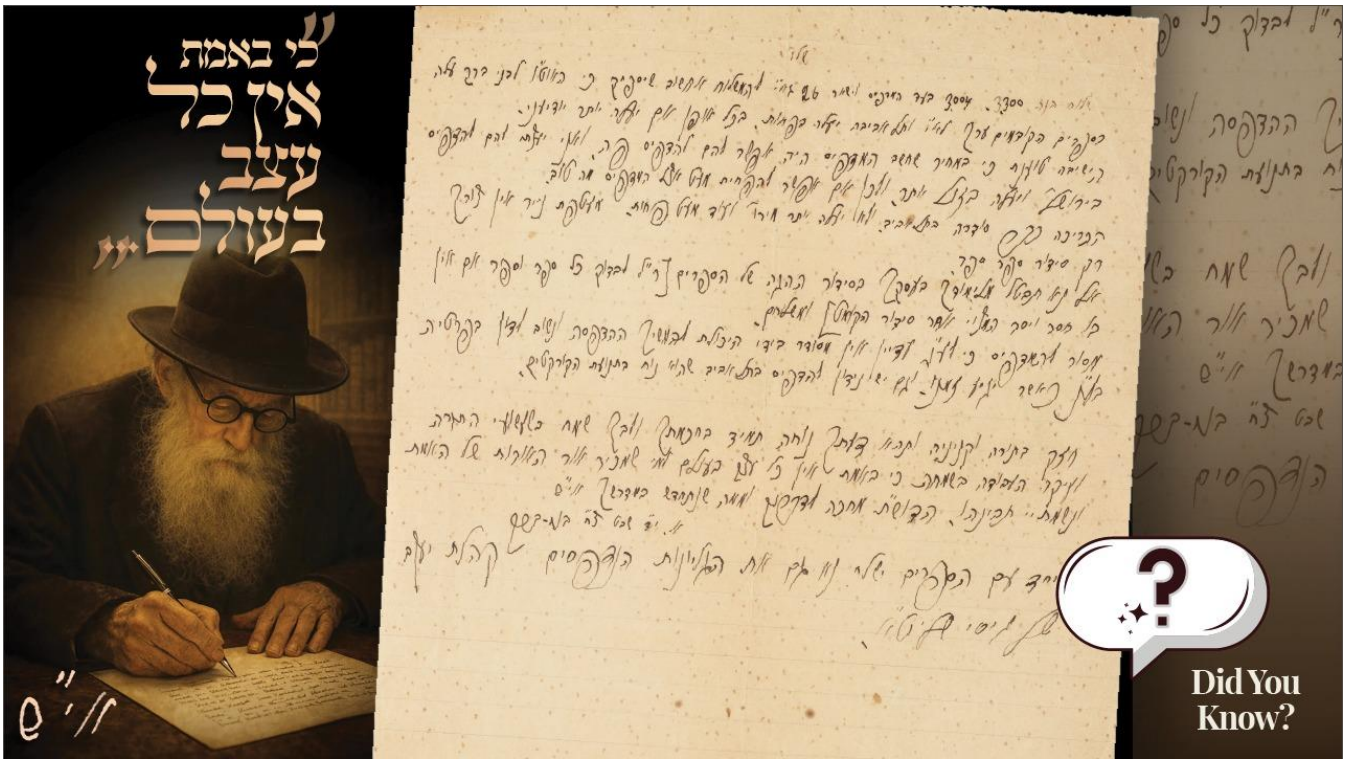
This letter is the most famous of all the letters of the Chazon Ish. Its words are repeated by thousands of bnei Torah, cited in countless sefarim of mussar and chizuk, and they have even been composed into several tunes.

These words — "There is no sadness at all in the world" — which came from the mouth of the Chazon Ish, take on extra meaning in light of the fact that his entire life was one of suffering and hardship. He testified regarding himself: "I was broken and crushed all my days; I did not merit any enjoyment from the pleasures of life" (Igros Chazon Ish I, Iggeres 153).

Although the main focus of the letter concerns the publication of his sefarim, it contains within it a precious gem which, from the moment it became known, won the hearts of countless readers and became etched into their consciousness, forming a core foundation of pure hashkafa and of emunah that is both clear and real.

"אין כל עצב בעולם"

Letter of the Chazon Ish in his Holy Handwriting



These are his remarkable words:

"Strengthen yourself in Torah and its acquisitions, and let your mind always find satisfaction in your wisdom, and your heart rejoice in the delights of Torah. And the essence of avodah is with joy, for in truth there is no sadness at all in the world for the one who recognizes the light of truth."

With this powerful statement, coming from the depths of his heart, the Chazon Ish captured the essence of his teachings on emunah and bitachon. It is no wonder that this statement became a blazing beacon, igniting the flame of emunah in recent times.

The remarkable letters of the Chazon Ish constitute an entire body of his contemplative thought and encapsulate the essence of his philosophical and pedagogical approach. Hidden between their lines is a complete structure of pure hashkafa and practical guidance in comprehension of the Torah, the approach to learning, fear of Heaven, middos, and emunah and bitachon.

Without doubt, the most famous of all his letters is Iggeres 36 in the first volume — the very letter before us, written and signed in his own handwriting.

• • • •

The Chazon Ish, Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (1879–1954),
the foremost leader of chareidi Jewry after the Holocaust, was not only of great spiritual stature but was unique in his melitzah-laden, poetic style of writing. He enriched Klal Yisrael with gems and aphorisms filled with faith and wisdom, suffused with the aura of earlier generations. Yet this particular gem, as mentioned, is the best known and most celebrated.

As mentioned, the primary subject of the letter is the printing of Chazon Ish (that year he published his sefarim on Demai and Ma'asros, Nega'im and Parah). Still, much Torah guidance emerges between the lines, such as the instruction: "Do not neglect your

learning through your involvement in arranging and sending out the sefarim."

At the end of the letter he requests that the printed sheets of Kehillos Yaakov (second part) of his brother-in-law, shlita (the Steipler), be sent to Bnei Brak.

"The essence of avodah is with joy, for in truth there is no sadness at all in the world."

This remarkable statement also merited an explanation from the great thinker, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, as transmitted in his name by Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron:

"I heard from Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, zt"l, that he explained the meaning of these words as follows: There are two types of light in the world — the light of 'HaTov VeHaMeitiv' [recited at joyous occasions] and the light of 'Dayan HaEmes' [recited at times of mourning and tragedy]. One who recognizes that at their root, these two lights are in truth one light — the recognition of the 'Light of Lights of truth' — understands that even the light of 'Dayan HaEmes' is entirely an expression of 'HaTov VeHaMeitiv.' - Such a person can attain avodah with joy, for there is no sadness for one who recognizes the Light of Lights of truth, that even 'Dayan HaEmes' is all 'HaTov VeHaMeitiv' (Zman Simchaseinu, p. 205).

"Every movement in the world is guided by Divine providence. A leaf does not fall, nor does a blade of grass grow, without a decree from Heaven. When a person truly lives with this awareness, nothing feels empty, nothing feels accidental, and even the smallest moment becomes filled with meaning." ~ Baal Shem Tov – Hashgachah Pratis.

Story of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh - The Shabbos Lion



The **אור החיים** had always yearned to ascend to **ארץ ישראל** and settle in **ירושלים**. In the year 5499 (1739), The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh decided to realize his life's dream: to make Aliyah to Eretz Yisroel.

As he writes in the introduction to his sefer Ohr HaChaim, "Since Hashem has enlightened me, there is nothing else to do but to arise and go to the place I've thought of - the place of the Shechina [Divine Presence], the exalted, beloved city… I girded my loins, endangered myself greatly, until Hashem brought me…"

He made his way to **ארץ ישראל** in a caravan of camels in the desert. Rav Chaim's trip was fraught with travail, and more than once he was suspended between life and death. But he also experienced great miracles every step of the way.

Shabbos was approaching and the Ohr Hachaim asked the leaders of the caravan, who were Arabs, to stop and rest where they were so that he would not have to desecrate the Shabbos. They refused to stop their journey for the day, and thus forced him to remain alone in the wilderness. - He chose not to travel further with the caravan to avoid desecrating the Shabbos, opting instead to stay behind and observe the day in his place, despite the inherent dangers. - He

desired to fulfil the words of the posuk, "Abide every man in his place, no man may go out of his place on the seventh day" (Shemos 16:29) with self-sacrifice.

According to the story, a ferocious lion approached him [in a threatening manner] as Shabbos began. The Ohr Hachaim went on to show the lion his Bris Mila which caused the lion to become subdued. Instead of attacking, the lion lay down calmly beside him and remained there throughout the entire Shabbos, protecting him from any potential threats. Obviously, no robbers or murderers wanted to come near the Ohr HaChaim and his ominous friend.

Upon the conclusion of Shabbos, the lion rose and, in a manner resembling a bow, signalled to Rabbi Chaim to mount its back. The lion allowed Rabbi Chaim to sit on its back, and then carried him out of the desert and towards the city of Tunis.

News of this extraordinary event spread, and when the caravan reached Tunis, the city's inhabitants spoke of a holy man, a Rabbi, who had recently arrived in their city riding on the back of a fearsome lion. The travellers were astonished and, realizing that the description could only be referring to Rabbi Chaim, they eagerly sought him out and found him in the city. - The companions of Rabbi Chaim were overjoyed to find him and learn that he had arrived safely.

Rabbi Chaim and the travellers recounted their experiences, highlighting the miraculous protection and transportation provided by the lion. They all thanked Hashem for their miraculous escape. Rabbi Chaim, witnessing the lack of Jewish knowledge in Tunis, decided to stay and teach the community about Judaism.

Once again, this story of the Ohr HaChaim and the lion is often interpreted as a testament to the power of Torah study and the righteousness of the Tzaddik. The lion, symbolizing strength and kingship, recognized the spiritual greatness of Rabbi Chaim and

submitted to him, protecting and serving him. It signifies that even nature bows before those truly connected to the Divine.

Tzaddikim explain the story logically: Since the Ohr HaChaim never sinned, he had never damaged his physical being and the tzelem Elokim in which man was created, was retained in him completely, so that even the king of the beasts was afraid of him.

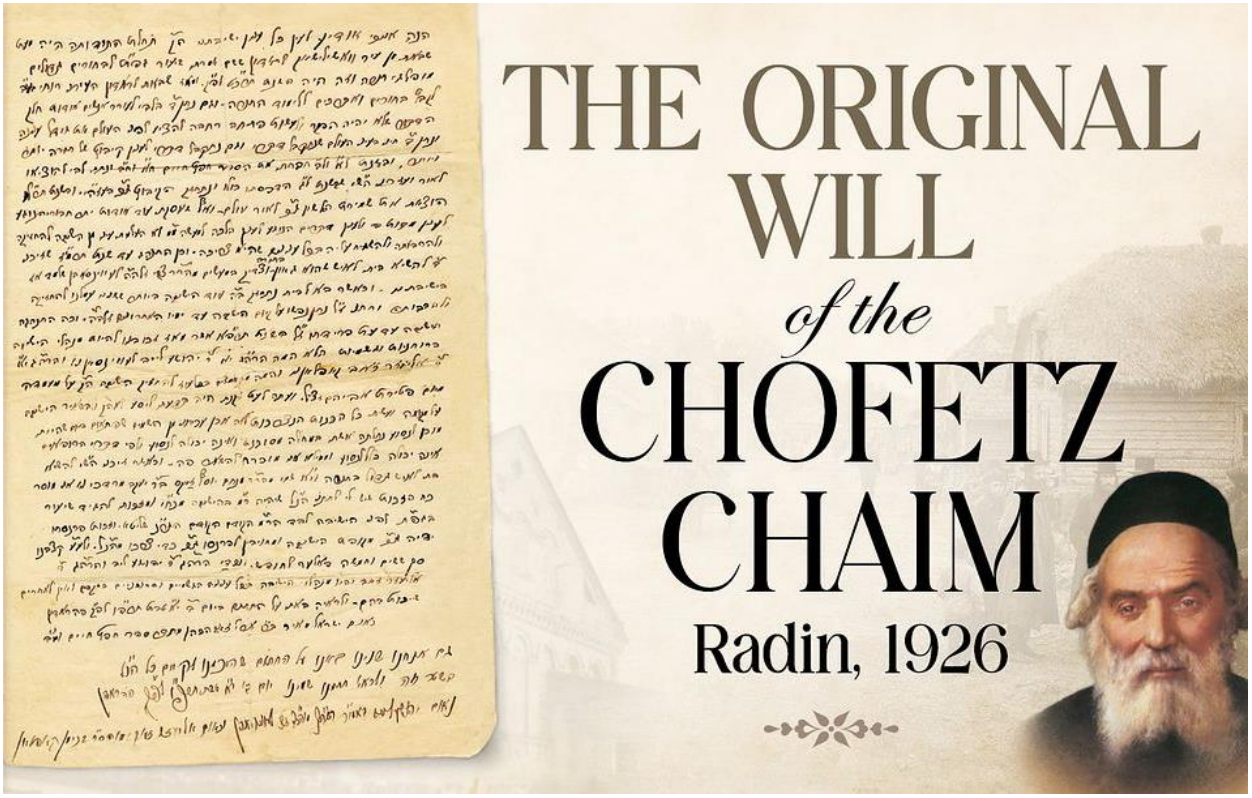
The story also illustrates a concept found in Jewish thought, that animals are more attuned to divine decree. It emphasizes themes of divine protection, and how even the most fearsome creatures can be instruments of Hashem's will. If a person is truly innocent and protected by the divine, animals will not harm them, a point the Ohr HaChaim himself made in explaining why Yosef's brothers didn't kill him themselves but threw him into a pit hoping an animal would do the deed, thereby proving his guilt or innocence.

Furthermore, this story serves as a reminder of the importance of honouring the Shabbos and adhering to its sanctity, even in challenging circumstances.

This story, along with others attributed to the Ohr HaChaim, emphasizes the extraordinary spiritual level of Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar and the miracles that can be wrought through unwavering faith and dedication to Torah and mitzvos.

"Bitachon is not the belief that everything will turn out according to one's wishes. Rather, it is the inner calm that comes from knowing that whatever happens is the result of Hashem's perfect wisdom. Even in uncertainty, even in pain, the heart can be tranquil, because it rests in the knowledge that nothing is random and nothing is meaningless." ~ Chazon Ish – (Emunah u'Bitachon).

Historic Will of the Chofetz Chaim zt"l.



Fascinating Handwritten Document Addressing His Life, His Mission, and the Future of the Radin Yeshiva Radin, 1926

The will of the Chofetz Chaim zt"l, in which he sets forth the defining milestones of his life and his lifelong activities on behalf of the public, and instructions regarding the future of the Radin yeshiva and its leadership after he passes away.

It is written in its entirety in his own handwriting with his full signature: ***"Here in Radin, the words of Yisrael Meir HaKohen, son of Rabbi Aryeh Zev HaKohen, author of the sefer Chofetz Chaim and Mishnah Brurah."***

In his will, the Chofetz Chaim, with his characteristic humility, composes an emotional summary of his life — an autobiography — and gives thanks to Hashem for the merit of his activities on behalf of the public.

He begins by setting forth the idea that profoundly impacted his generation and continues to do so to this day — awakening people to the severity of the prohibition of speaking lashon hara.

He writes: "Hashem placed it in my heart to arouse people regarding the aspect of speech [shemiras halashon], that it not be treated as hefker (ownerless), and to make a broad framework for presenting to the world the great significance of this matter. Hashem granted me favor in the eyes of the world, and my words were accepted…

In the years 1871 and 1872 I composed the sefer Chofetz Chaim, parts I and II, and I set my heart to bring it to print, and Hashem helped me that in the year 1873 I printed it in its entirety… and in the year 1876 I also published Shemiras Halashon."

He recounts the founding of the yeshiva upon his arrival in Radin in 1869: "From the time I came to Radin, my spirit was aroused, with Hashem's help, to gather young men and married scholars for the study of Torah."

He testifies about himself that despite being busy with the writing of his sefarim, "I did not avert my eyes from the yeshiva, to sustain it, to expand it, and to oversee it in all matters that it required."

He writes of his yearning to move to Eretz Yisrael in his old age, and reveals that he was prevented from doing so by Heaven: "In my old age, it was my intention to travel to the Holy Land and to leave the yeshiva in its place, and I made all the preparations necessary for this; however, I was prevented by Heaven, for suddenly, on the very day I was prepared to depart, my wife fell ill with a dangerous illness… and consequently I am compelled to remain here."

Out of his deep concern for the future of the yeshiva after his passing, he appoints his son-in-law Rabbi Menachem Mendel Zaks (later the Rosh Yeshiva of Chofetz Chaim in New York) to serve after his passing as a maggid shiur and to deliver shiurim "by my power and by my right, " alongside Rabbi Naftali Trop. He entrusts the administration of the yeshiva, both in material and spiritual matters, to his grandsons, Rabbi Yehoshua Heshel Levinson and Rabbi Eliezer Zev Kaplan.

In this will, the Chofetz Chaim summarized sixty years of devotion to Klal Yisrael, marked by these milestones:

. The founding of the yeshiva in 1869;

. The composition of the sefer Chofetz Chaim in 1871–1872;

. The printing of sefer Chofetz Chaim in 1873;

. The printing of sefer Shemiras Halashon in 1876;

. The addition of his son-in-law Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Levinson to the leadership of the yeshiva in 1887;

. The passing of the above mentioned son-in-law in 1921 and the inclusion of his grandsons in the yeshiva's leadership;

. And, in 1926, the writing of the will itself and the transfer of his task of delivering shiurim to his son-in-law Rabbi Menachem Mendel Zaks, together with the appointment of his grandsons to lead the yeshiva.

***

A sense of sacred reverence envelops whoever holds this extraordinary will. This is not a regular letter or document, but a holy testament, written from the depths of the heart of the great tzaddik, as he expresses his profound concern for the fruit of his labors of over nearly sixty years and entrusts his most precious asset — the great yeshiva — to the hands of future generations.

One can attempt to imagine the great tzaddik, the Chofetz Chaim, at his advanced age of eighty-seven, secluded in the Holy of Holies — his small room in his modest home in Radin — sitting and setting down in writing, with the humility and simplicity that so characterized him, carefully choosing his words as he records the essence of his life and his work — the dissemination of the prohibition of speaking lashon hara and the safeguarding of the tongue, and the spreading of Torah to the multitudes.

At the end of the will, on the day it was written, 11 Teves 1926, are the signatures of the grandsons of the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yehoshua Heshel Levinson and Rabbi Eliezer Zev Kaplan, both figures who devoted themselves to the existence of the yeshiva during the lifetime of the Chofetz Chaim and afterward, until they were murdered in the Holocaust in 1944.

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Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan of Radin (1839-1933), universally known as the Chofetz Chaim after his famous sefer, was "Rabban shel Yisrael" in every sense of the word. He was regarded as the most most brilliant, humble and pious of the Achronim, and there are few sages whose legacy impacts the conduct of the contemporary Torah world as much as the Chofetz Chaim, whose landmark sefarim, including Mishnah Brurah, Chofetz Chaim and Shemiras Halashon, are studied universally.

The legendary Radin Yeshiva was founded by the Chofetz Chaim in 1869 and it was his constant concern and devotion; despite his involvement in composing his many sefarim, he testifies about himself at the beginning of the will, "I did not avert my eyes from the yeshiva, to sustain it, to expand it, and to oversee it in all matters that it required."

A person should not say: 'When I have time, I will serve Hashem properly.' For one who waits for free time will never serve Hashem at all. Rather, a person must serve Hashem within the pressures of life itself. This is his test and this is his greatness — to sanctify the mundane, to turn regular actions into avodah, and to recognize that every moment was given for this purpose." ~ Pele Yoetz – Avodah.

How A Gadol Silenced a Rumor—and Saved a Bakery

In 1978, two brothers, Moisha and Tiba Rosenberg, immigrated from Czechoslovakia and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. They purchased Unger's Bakery, located in the heart of Cleveland's frum community. The brothers brought with them traditional baking recipes from Europe, and the bakery was warmly received. Business flourished, and everything seemed to be going beautifully.

After a few months, something troubling occurred. On one Shabbos, members of the community noticed a truck pull up to the bakery. A non-Jewish worker stepped out and climbed onto the roof to repair the air conditioning unit. Understandably, people were shocked and disturbed.

After Shabbos, several askanim went to **Rav Gifter**, the Rosh Yeshiva of Telz, and reported what they had seen. Rav Gifter immediately cautioned them not to jump to conclusions. He said he would meet with the brothers personally to clarify the situation.

When the brothers met with Rav Gifter, they explained that they were completely unaware of what had happened. Weeks earlier, during a particularly hot spell, the bakery had become unbearable. They contacted the service company and asked them to send a worker at a time when business was slow. They never specified a day and had no idea the company would choose Shabbos.

Rav Gifter accepted their explanation but went a step further. To verify the facts, he personally contacted the company that had sent the worker. The company confirmed the brothers' account. They had not been instructed to avoid Shabbos and chose the day on their own.

Rav Gifter was satisfied that the brothers were completely innocent. Despite this, the damage had already been done. Rumors spread, and business at the bakery began to suffer significantly. The brothers returned to Rav Gifter and asked if he would issue a letter

publicly clearing their name. Rav Gifter declined. He told them they had done nothing wrong and advised them to wait patiently. Everything, he assured them, would work out.

The very next morning, Rav Gifter appeared at Unger's Bakery and purchased a single pastry. Those familiar with Cleveland know that Telz Yeshiva is a good twenty-five-minute drive from the bakery. Rav Gifter made the trip just to buy one item — and then drove all the way back. He did this again the next day. And the next. For an entire month, every single morning, Rav Gifter made that round trip.

The message was unmistakable. The Rosh Yeshiva of Telz trusted this bakery completely. The effect was immediate. The rumors vanished. Business rebounded and soon soared higher than before. Unger's Bakery went on to become one of the most successful and respected bakeries in Cleveland, eventually expanding far beyond its original scope.

Rav Gifter had silenced the rumors not with words, but with actions.

There are powerful lessons here. First, never rush to judgment. But perhaps even more importantly, we learn the responsibility each of us has to help another Jew in need. Rav Gifter gave up an hour of his precious time every day for a month to restore someone's livelihood.

Our time is no more valuable than his. When we see someone struggling, when we can help restore dignity, livelihood, or reputation, we must be willing to give of ourselves. That is how rumors are silenced, and that is how lives are rebuilt.

"A person can learn much Torah and perform many mitzvos, yet if he does not guard his speech, he tears down in minutes what he spent years building." ~ Chafetz Chaim.

The First Yes

At age thirteen a boy becomes obligated in mitzvos. This naturally raises the question: What is the first mitzvah to which a bar mitzvah boy becomes obligated?

The Chidushei Harim (1799–1866) teaches that the first mitzva a bar mitzvah boy becomes obligated in is Krias Shema shel Arvis, the evening Shema. This, he explains, is why Rebbe opens Mishnayos with this very mitzva as the first Mishna begins **מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין** , "*From when can we fulfil the obligation to recite shema in the evening?*"

The Chassam Sofer (1762–1839) however teaches a different view. In 1833 at the bar mitzva of his son, **R' Shimon Sofer** (1820–1883), he said that the first mitzvah a bar mitzvah has is simcha, to be happy that he merited to receive the yoke of mitzvos.

Serving Hashem with joy is a biblical commandment as it says **בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרוב כל**, amid gladness and goodness of heart, when everything was abundant.



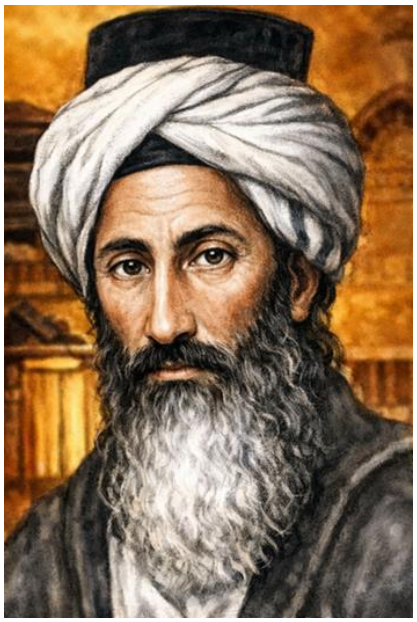
There are many pipes that bring water to your home, what if one would remove only one pipe? Only one! - The water will not come to your house. So too, there is no such thing as missing a day of learning Torah.

Rav Yisroel Salanter explained this is the meaning of the pasuk וָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן וָאֶהְיֶה שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים יוֹם יוֹם – '*I was a nursling beside Him, and I was [His] delight every day*'. (Mishlei 8:30)

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Whisperer of the Wordless

Jacob Rodrigues Pereira (1715–1780), a Portuguese converso who ultimately returned to Judaism, was a pioneer in the field of deaf education. He developed an innovative system of sign language to help communicate with the deaf. This was spurred by his relationship with his deafmute sister, as he began developing a system of signs for numbers and punctuation to enable communication.



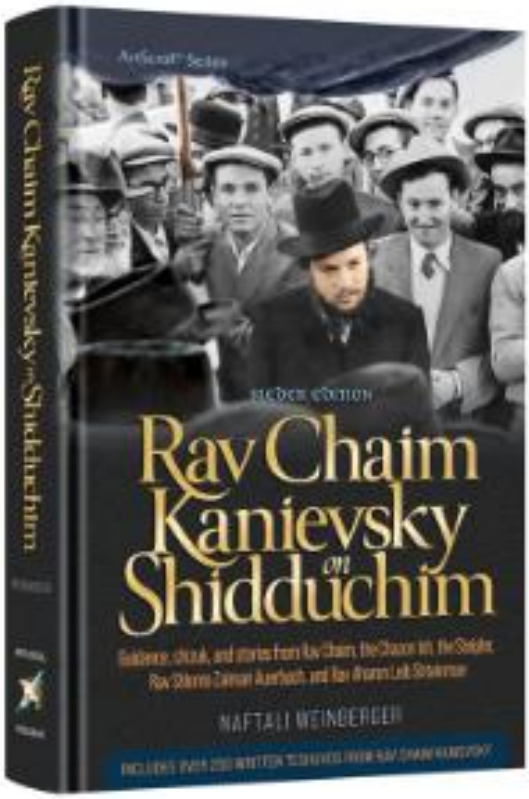
In 1746, Pereira achieved a breakthrough when he used his method of finger-spelling to teach the deaf and mute son of a prominent French family to speak. Pereira demonstrated the effectiveness of his techniques before Louis XV, who, in recognition of his achievements, awarded him an annual pension of 800 pounds.

On July 20, 1755, Pereira was visited by none other than the great **Chida**. The Chida was deeply impressed by his unique educational techniques and he concluded his account of the visit with **בָּרוּךְ חוֹנֵן לָאָדָם דָּעַת** - *blessed is the One who grants knowledge to human beings.*

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The Rebbe of Tchortkov zt'l and other tzaddikim said that שבת נאך שבועות איז נאך שבועות, "Shabbos after Shavuos is still Shavuos." (The Yiddish word נאך has two translations: It can mean "after" and it can be translated as "still".) So שבת נאך שבועות איז נאך שבועות means, "Shabbos after Shavuos is still Shavuos."

Basic Decency with Shidduchim



Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l, was once asked, if someone had agreed to a certain Shidduch and a better prospect came along, would it permissible to cancel the original date with the first person and pursue the second person that came along?

Rav Chaim answered, "This is absolutely not allowed to be done."

Rav Chaim related, "There was once a case like this and a Bochur cancelled a date with a girl he agreed to out with in order to go out with someone else, and the Shadchan called him later and told him that the second date had cancelled on him.

Just as you do to others, so will happen to you. There was also another case where someone wanted to take revenge on a Bochur, and pretended to set him up on a date, while in reality there was never a date arranged. The boy showed up at the girl's home at the 'prearranged time', and the girl's father asked him what he was doing there.

He responded that he was there for the date with his daughter, and the fathertold him that no such date was ever set up. Seeing how confused and embarrassed the boy was, the father felt bad for him and invited him inside. They had a conversation and spoke in learning and shared a few Divrei Torah.

The boy was unaware that the man's daughter happened to have been in a different part of the house listening to the conversation, and she was impressed by how the boy spoke with her father, and she told her father that she was interested in dating this boy.

In just a short while, the Shidduch actually went through, and this couple became engaged! The "Shadchan" was playing a nasty revenge trick and Hashem 'paid him back' by making the Shidduch work out. The "Shadchan" had the audacity to ask for Shadchanus, and he wanted to get paid for setting this couple up!" Rav Chaim said, "His Shadchanus should be two slaps across the face, but not money!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5786 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Torah.

Bless And Be Blessed – Rav Avigdor Miller

There are very many ways of accomplishing in avodas Hashem in this world, all types of opportunities, and most need a great deal of effort.

There are a lot of important things and they're all worth working on — each one is a very big achievement that you'll have forever — but they're not easy, and sometimes people are looking for an achievement that comes a little bit easier.

I get phone calls sometimes from people: "What can I do to make progress in life, something that's not going to require too much time?" A man asked me that last week. "I'm a busy man in the office, and besides, my spare time is occupied by learning," he says. "What can I do that will take only a minute or so and I'll be able to make headway all my life?"

Cadillacs for Sale

Now, that's a big order to ask. What can you get for a minute? You're going shopping for a Cadillac and you only have nickels in your pocketbook. So we're going to speak tonight about a subject that's easy to accomplish and it's open to everyone; it's a Cadillac that you can buy for nickels — for less than nickels. It's something that is immensely easy and the profit is immensely great. Of course, you'll

have to keep it in mind and make it into a regular practice, but it's quite easy as we'll soon see.

And so we begin with a Gemara in Mesichta Chullin. If you're interested in knowing, it's daf mem-tes, amud alef; and Rabbi Akiva is dealing there with a question.

The possuk (Bamidbar 6:23) says: **כֹּה תְבָרְכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** - The kohanim should bless the Bnei Yisroel, and then (ibid. 27): **וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם** Hashem will fulfill their words:

וַהֲרֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְבָרֵךְ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל יְדֵי כֹּהֲנִים Hashem blesses the Bnei Yisroel because of the *birchas kohanim*.

But the question is: **מְנַיִן לַכֹּהֲנִים בְּרָכָה** How are the kohanim blessed?

So Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says we learn it from somewhere else. Way back in the beginning of Bereishis, in Lech Lecha, it's stated that Hakadosh Baruch Hu declared to our father Avraham: **וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ** "I will bless those who bless you" (Bereishis 12:3).

And so Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says that it's because of this promise that the kohanim receive their blessings from Hashem. A kohen gets up in a little shtiebel somewhere and blesses the Jews in his congregation, and now he's automatically blessed by Hashem because of that promise made to Avraham.

One Jew Under Contract

But it's not only a national promise, and it's not only a tzibbur, like the kohanim blessing the community. Tosfos (ibid.) comes along and tells us that even if you bless one Jew, you activate the contract that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with the world.

Tosfos brings a story, a Yerushalmi in Mesichta Brachos (8:8). There was a goy who was on the road and he encountered Rabbi Yishmael. So the goy said *shalom* to Rabbi Yishmael.

What did Rabbi Yishmael answer?

He said: **כְּבָר אֲמוּרָה מֵילָתָךְ** "Your word is already said."

It means, "My answer to you is already established. I don't have to say anything because your bracha is written in our Torah; it says: "וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ"

Hashem loves the Jews so much that anybody who goes out of his way to bless a Jew, even one, so Hashem is on it right away. He'll bless that person.

It's a contract written in the Torah, a covenant that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with our nation. Not only with Avraham personally; it's a contract with Avraham's seed forever.

And so we're learning here a subject of very great benefit. By loving Jewish people and blessing them, you're invoking an especial covenant that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with our forefather.

It's a big and easy career, blessing Hashem's people: "I will bless those who bless My children."

Shake Off the Dirt

You came here to hear Torah, so let's shake off, at least for a little while, all of our prejudice and listen to what the Torah has to say. It's a steadfast rule, a Torah principle: **וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ**

Those words should ring in your head always, no matter what someone else will tell you.

Anybody — Jew or gentile, man or woman, boy or girl — who takes the trouble to say words of blessing to a Jew must know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu now is mortgaged to them. And He's going to deliver.

Superficial Blessings

Now, you have to know that even if you didn't put much into your blessing, it'll come back to you.

This gentile who passed by Rabbi Yishmael on the road probably said it just as a formality. Maybe there was some sincerity; I can't tell you. But I imagine he was alone on the road and a big entourage of

Jews was coming his way, so he thought it would be most prudent to bless Rabbi Yishmael. And even so, that caused the contract with Avraham Avinu to go into effect.

It doesn't mean that the gentile will be a ben Olam Haba. It doesn't mean he'll become a millionaire either. But there are a lot of blessings beneath that — blessings that we would like to get too.

Don't Say "Hello"

So if you meet somebody in the street, instead of saying "hi" or "hello," which is meaningless, say: "Shalom aleichem." - That's the old Jewish greeting.

There is a rosh yeshiva in America, **Rav Gustman** — he should be well — who once heard somebody say, "Hello."

"Vus epes 'hello'?" he said.

Hello doesn't mean anything. Say *shalom aleichem*, a greeting!

Even a mere *shalom aleichem* is a tremendous achievement if you're saying it to a person who is descended from Avraham Avinu, a member of the Am Hashem.

And even if you say it superficially, you already have done a wise thing. You made a good investment, because the plan of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is that it's going to come back to you.

At minimum, it will come back in the smallest manner — you'll be greeted by others.

Does it ever happen that you pass people on the street and you're offended because they aren't interested in looking at you even though they are acquaintances? And you think, "What's wrong with these people that they don't greet me?"

Well, maybe it's because you didn't greet them.

And so if you greet others and make them happy, at least that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will bless you with: others will greet you and

make you happy. Because that's the very lowest level of compensation.

Adding Peirushim

However, there's much more opportunity available. It all depends how much you put into it.

If you're *mechaven peirush hamilos*, "Shalom aleichem" means much more than a superficial blessing. It means that he should be in peace, that he shouldn't fight with his wife. They should live in harmony and have nachas from their children.

So now you're adding some meaning to the words.

He shouldn't fight with his landlord. He should get along with his employer or his partner.

You can think these ideas when you're saying *shalom aleichem;* you can say some of them too. You can tell him, "You should have bracha v'hatzlacha in the kollel today," or in the office, whatever it is.

It takes a few more seconds — a half minute?

It's worth it. Because according to what you put in, that's what you'll get out.

Kosher Exercise

Now, what difficulty lies in this exercise of good character?

It's one of the easiest things in the world to do — to bless your fellow Jew — and you have to know you are doing something that's a shleimus in you. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to love you for that.

And it's so easy, you can do it always; you can't do it enough. There's no such thing as blessing frum Jews too much.

And the truth is that as much as you do it, it's very far yet from the interiority of your heart. It's mostly *min hasafah v'lachutz;* it's just lip work.

However, by dint of constant, thoughtful repetition, we gradually become impressed by the ideal of blessing somebody. And therefore, on the contrary, the more you practice, the better.

And so if you say "Gut Shabbos," "Gut Yontif," or "Good morning" to somebody — if you put a little thought into it — then it's going to bounce back not merely with the same words, but in the words of that great prophecy: **וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ**

Vision Restored

The following story was related by Rav Yechiel Yehoshua Rabinowitz shlit"a, who is a rav and a ram in Antwerp:

One morning Reb Binyamin, an esteemed talmid chacham in our community, awoke and opened his eyes only to discover a frightening phenomenon: His vision was blurred; his right eye seemed to have stopped working. He quickly put his hand over his left eye to be sure, and, yes, the world turned black. His vision in his right eye was lost! It was frighteningly sudden, and he had no clue of what could have caused it to happen.

He went to the doctor, who examined him and then sent him for an X-ray, the results of which revealed that there was a blood clot behind his right eye. It was impossible to see, based on the X-ray, what was really happening behind the eye. The only thing to be done, as the doctor explained, was to schedule surgery, to clean out the blood in the area, and then to check what was causing the loss of vision and perhaps repair the damage.

Reb Binyamin sought a second opinion from a top specialist, who confirmed that surgery was the only option for possibly restoring the vision in his eye.

They scheduled the surgery for two weeks later, and in the meantime, Reb Binyamin kept to his vigorous daily schedule of learning. At some point during this period while he was waiting for

his surgery, Reb Binyamin learned a gemara that relates the following story: **A Roman nobleman named Artivon sent Rav Yehuda Hanassi a precious jewel and requested that he send him back a gift of similar value. Rav Yehuda Hanassi sent him a mezuzah. "I sent you a jewel worth a fortune, and you send me back a parchment worth a small sum?" Artivon asked. "You sent me a gift that one needs to protect, to ensure that it isn't stolen or lost, while I sent you something that will serve as protection for you, even when you're asleep!" Rebbi replied. Soon Artivon saw the truth of Rebbi's words, His daughter was inflicted with a sudden malady for which the doctors had no cure. In desperation, the Roman suddenly recalled the simple parchment that Rebbi had sent him. He placed the mezuzah in his daughter's room, and lo and behold, she was miraculously cured of her illness.**

The Ha'amek She'eilah states that this gemara teaches us that if someone is stricken with a sudden illness, he should check the mezuzos in his home. Even though only four years had passed since he'd last had his mezuzos checked, Reb Binyamin decided, after learning this gemara, that he would have his mezuzos checked.

He gave his mezuzos to Reb Yehoshua Lipshitz to check them, and Reb Yehoshua found that the letter yud in the word "einecheim" – your eyes – was missing! That day was a Friday. Reb Binyamin hurried to put up a fully kosher mezuzah on the door of his room.

When he woke up on Shabbos morning, he was able to see normally in his right eye. On Tuesday he returned to the specialist for a final examination before surgery. The professor re-examined and x-rayed his eye, and he was totally astounded by the results. The new X-rays were perfectly normal. He kept looking back and forth between the previous X-ray, which clearly showed a blood clot behind the eye, and the new X-ray, which showed nothing, unable to believe what he was seeing.

"This is an obvious miracle, Rabbi," he said. "An obvious miracle."

The Tefilah That Saved His Business

Rabbi David Ashear tells over a story from the sefer He'emanti Va'asaperah Rabbi David Ashear shared a remarkable story about the unbelievable power of heartfelt tefilah.

There was a man named Eliezer whose housewares business was collapsing. Every evening, he would lower the metal shutters on his store feeling crushed by anxiety and worry. Customers were disappearing. Sales were shrinking. And deep down, he knew the painful truth: His business was slowly dying.

One night, after another terrible day, Eliezer stood alone in his darkened store preparing to close up. Then suddenly, a memory came flooding back from forty years earlier. As a young man living in London, Eliezer had desperately wanted to go learn Torah in Eretz Yisrael. But his family simply could not afford it. One night he walked into a room and saw his father crying while saying Tehillim. The next morning, his father explained why. "I was begging Hashem to help me somehow send you to Eretz Yisrael." Then something unbelievable happened. The very next day, completely out of character, his father bought a scratch-off lottery ticket. And he won exactly the amount of money needed to send Eliezer to yeshiva. Within days, Eliezer was on his way to Israel.

Now, forty years later, standing alone inside his failing store, Eliezer suddenly realized something. Hashem was reminding him of that lesson. Back then, the salvation came through heartfelt tefilah. And now Hashem wanted him to remember that once again. He realized that worrying would not save his business. Stress would not help him. Sighing would not bring parnassah. Only tefilah.

So instead of going home, Eliezer took out a Tehillim and began pouring out his heart to Hashem. Not rushed words. Not distracted prayers. Not lip service. Real tefilah. - For over an hour, he cried. Pleaded. Spoke honestly to Hashem from the depths of his heart.

Then suddenly, there was a knock at the door. A stranger stood outside insisting he urgently needed to come in. At first Eliezer was frustrated. He almost sent him away. "How could someone interrupt such a powerful moment of tefilah?" But the man begged him to listen. He explained that he managed a brand-new hotel that was about to open. Originally, he planned to spend several weeks meeting different wholesalers and suppliers to purchase dishes, silverware, and housewares. But unexpectedly, he now had to fly overseas immediately. So he urgently needed to place the entire order that very night.

Eliezer showed him the merchandise in the store. The man quickly made his selections. Then he placed an order for seven hundred complete sets of dishes, cups, silverware, and everything else he needed.

It was the single largest order Eliezer had ever received in his entire life. In one night, he made an entire year's worth of revenue. The profits from that deal completely saved his business.

And suddenly everything became crystal clear. Why did the customer arrive specifically then? Why did he come to that store? Why not another supplier? Because every other store was already closed. Eliezer was only there because he stayed behind to daven. The yeshuah had already been prepared. The customer had already been sent. The order was already waiting. But Hashem wanted Eliezer to remember something first. To remember the power of tefilah. To remember Who truly sends parnassah. To remember that salvation comes from Hashem alone.

Rabbi Ashear explained that many times people become so consumed with worrying, calculating, panicking, and searching everywhere else that they forget the greatest power they possess. The ability to stand before the Ribbono Shel Olam and pour out their hearts. The yetzer hara works overtime to weaken a person's belief in tefilah. Because once a person truly believes that Hashem is listening, their

tefilah changes completely. It becomes alive. Real. Powerful. Transformative.

And Rabbi Ashear concluded with a powerful message: Hashem is here. He is listening. He is arranging. Preparing. Orchestrating every detail. Sometimes the salvation is already on the way. The only thing missing is for us to remember Who we are speaking to.

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

וַיְהִי בְּיוֹם כַּלּוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְהָקִים אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו

Chazal say that the word "**כלות**" is written with a pasach under the "**כ**", and not the expected sh'va. It hints to the word "**כלה**" - a bride. Upon the culmination of the building of the Mishkan, Klal Yisroel was likened to a kallah going to her chuppah. Yet, obviously, this wasn't the end. Rather it was just the beginning of the **עבודת הקרבנות**.

Says **R' Elazar Menachem Mann Shach zt"l**, by a yid there's no such thing as an end. Life is one continuous project of avodas Hashem. And that is exactly the connection to the kallah. Just as a kallah "ends" her childhood years as she stands under the chuppah; that end is but a stepping stone to the next level of her growth. So too was the Mishkan the stepping stone to our next level in **עבודת ה'**. For a yid, every seeming conclusion is really Hashem opening the door to a higher, deeper, and more refined stage of serving Him.

R' Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l, the famed Mashgiach of pre-war Mir, would cringe when he heard a chosson exclaim, "Now I'm starting my life anew." He would say: woe is to such a life that can just end like that. It might be a new chapter or page in your life but essentially it's one continuous life as an eved Hashem.

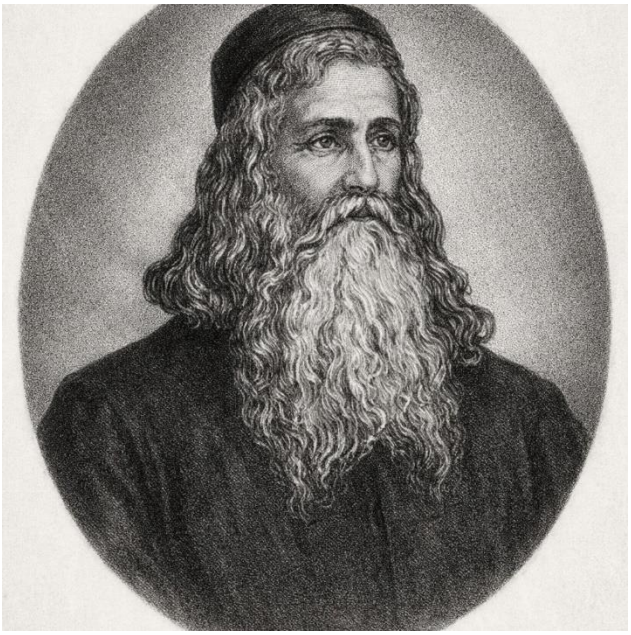
Each Shabbos we proclaim "**ויכלו השמים .. ויכל אלקים**" - Hashem completed the creation of the world. But obviously that was not the

end. It was the beginning of the world! The universe, in its entirety. That was a timeless lesson for all.

We just completed counting Sefiras Ha'omer, culminating with the Yom Tov of Shavuos, when we received the Torah. But we must realize that the "**תמימות**" of that mitzvah didn't end anything! Rather we began the next chapter as avdei Hashem, being a **מצווה ועושה**; becoming truly committed bnei Torah.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

In the city of Pozna, long before his greatness became known to the world, lived the holy **Maharsha, R' Shmuel Eliezer Halevi Eidels *zt"l***.



In those early years, he was not recognized as a towering *Torah* scholar. In fact, many people regarded him with suspicion and even degradation. The reason was simple and, to them, inexplicable: he looked like a *nazir* and grew his hair long. His unusual appearance made him seem strange in the eyes of the townspeople, and they whispered about him, wondering why a man who appeared so ordinary - and perhaps even odd - would choose to look that way.

Only his wife knew the truth, and she guarded the secret faithfully. The *Maharsha's* diligence in *Torah* study knew no limits. Night after night, he sat alone, writing his commentary on the entire *Shas*. He feared that sleep might steal precious moments from his learning, and so he devised a method to keep himself awake. He tied his long hair to a rope fastened to the ceiling. If exhaustion overcame him and his head began to fall toward the table, the sudden pull of the

rope would wake him instantly. In this way, he ensured that he would not sleep through the night until his work was complete. Only during the day would he allow himself a brief rest - no more than three hours at a time - before returning to his sacred labour.

In the same *shul* where the *Maharsha davened*, another hidden *tzaddik* served quietly as the *shamash*. No one suspected the depth of his devotion. Every midnight, he would enter the *shul*, lock the door behind him, and begin to recite the entire *Sefer Tehillim*. When he finished one of the five sections, he would walk in a circle, making a *hakafah* around the *bimah* and then continue on, until he had completed the entire *Tehillim*. This was his nightly practice, carried out in silence and secrecy.

One night, fatigue overtook him and he fell asleep inside the locked synagogue. Suddenly, he felt a hand shaking him awake. Standing before him was a tall man dressed in royal garments, his bearing noble and imposing. "Excuse me," the stranger asked, "where does the *Maharsha* live?"

Still groggy, the *shamash* rose and led him through the quiet streets to the *Maharsha's* home. When he returned to the synagogue, he discovered that the door was still locked exactly as he had left it. Confused, he told himself he must have imagined the whole thing, for he was still tired, and resumed his recitation.

But he fell asleep again. And again he was awakened - this time by a man with red hair, also dressed in royal clothing. The stranger asked him the same question: "Where does the *Maharsha* live?"

The *shamash*, bewildered but obedient, led him as well. Returning once more, he locked the door tightly, checked the windows, and continued saying *Tehillim*.

A third time he drifted into sleep. And a third time he was awakened, now by a man dressed in leather garments and a breastplate. The stranger repeated the same question.

This time the *shamash* could not contain his astonishment. "Who are you?" he demanded. "And how did you enter the synagogue when the door was locked?"

The stranger looked at him gravely.

"I will tell you who we are," he said, "but know that if you reveal this before the proper time, you will die."

The *shamash* nodded, trembling. "The first man you saw," the stranger said, "the tall one in royal clothing, was *Shaul Hamelech*, as it is written, *'From his shoulders and upward he was taller than all people.'* The second, handsome and ruddy, was *Dovid Hamelech.* And I," he continued, placing a hand upon his breastplate, "am *Eliyahu Hanavi*. We are going to the *Maharsha* because in the heavenly court they did not know how to rule in the matter of Shaul persecuting Dovid. I come as a witness, and they come as the litigants. In Heaven it was decided that only the *Maharsha* can judge between them." –

And then, he vanished.

The next day, the *shamash* gathered the sages of the community and told them everything he had seen. When he finished, he added, "Know that the *Maharsha* is a hidden *Tzaddik*. And know also that, as Eliyahu told me, I will die. But I die with joy - for the holiness of *Hashem* and for the sake of the *Tzaddik*, so that no one will ever again cause him pain or despise him."

Within moments, the *shamash* passed away.

From that day forward, the *Maharsha* was no longer regarded as strange. Word spread of the heavenly visitors who had sought his judgment, and his greatness became known throughout the land. Students flocked to him, eager to learn from the man whose *Torah* was cherished not only on earth, but in the courts of Heaven.

משל למה הדבר דומה

Baron Shimon Zev Rothschild was a generous and steady supporter of the **Chofetz Chaim's** *yeshivah* in Radin. After being impressed by the *Chofetz Chaim's* integrity regarding the pricing of his *seforim*, the Baron began sending an annual contribution of 5000 marks to be distributed among *Torah* scholars.



However, when the Baron passed away, his heirs ceased this practice, leaving everyone disappointed that his noble support had come to an end. Many people wondered why a man who was such a friend to *Torah* scholars did not leave some of his vast wealth to the *yeshivos* in his will.

The *Chofetz Chaim* understood the true reason behind this. He noted that such overwhelming generosity is actually prevented by Heaven. *Hashem* wants every single Jew to have the opportunity to buy a share in *Torah*. If a millionaire who appreciates *Torah* is permitted to do as he wished, he would purchase the entire merit of *Torah* support with his fortune. - The *Chofetz Chaim* concluded by asking, "How then would the poor cobbler or tailor have a chance to merit anything?"

Parshas Naso details the gifts brought by the 12 *Nesi'im* (princes) for the *Mishkan's* dedication, meticulously repeating the exact same list of items for each prince.

There are two lessons we learn from this repetition. First, *Hashem* deeply cherishes every individual's contribution, recording each as a unique, precious act. Second, by ensuring every prince gave the exact same amount, the *Torah* prevents any single group from monopolizing the dedication. *Hashem* desires collective participation, ensuring that every individual, regardless of status, has an equal opportunity to build and support holiness.

Baron Simon Wolff de Rothschild was an upright and G-d-fearing man. His wealth did not prevent him from conducting himself with discretion and modesty. His numerous affairs did not consume all his time: the three daily prayers and Torah studies were part of his daily life!

Jealous people exist everywhere; the baron obviously had enemies who tried to cause him trouble whenever possible.

In his immense mansion, the baron possessed a room into which no one was allowed to enter. He was the only one to obtain the key, and this secret chamber remained locked.

One day, the baron's enemies heard about this room. Obviously, no more than a few hours passed before three policemen arrived at the baron's house and handed him papers ordering him to allow a search of his home.

"You are accused," they told him, "of hiding money in your secret room. You are using this money for illicit activities, secretly evading taxes!"

The baron absolutely refused to open the room. He offered instead to pay exorbitant sums to the tax authorities, but to no avail: the police had received a clear order to solve the mystery of the secret room!

Finally, the baron had no other choice and reluctantly opened the door…

The police entered the room and were astonished to find it empty! Only a tombstone stood in the center of the room, with a simple inscription: "Here lies buried Shimon Wolff Rothschild *zal* "

After the police verified that the stone concealed nothing, the baron explained: "I fear that my wealth and my business dealings may make me proud and prevent me from feeling the need for the poor. The material world in which I live can influence me and make me forget what is essential."

"So, every day, I go into this room and meditate before the tombstone. I remember that one day my soul will leave my body and take with it only its *mitzvot* . I will not take money or other fleeting 'values,' but the good deeds I have performed. I hope that revealing this secret will not prevent me from drawing closer to the King!" (source: Bénoam Sia'h)



Short and Sweet Story of the Week by Yoni Schwartz

On his way to the wedding of one of his talmidim, **Rav Shneur Kotler, ZT"L**, told his driver to be ready to leave right after the chuppah because he had a very important meeting that he could not miss. After the chuppah, the Rav came out to tell the driver that he would be staying a little while longer. Normally, the Rav would stay at most half an hour to an hour at weddings because he was very busy. However, this time, he stayed for hours until the end, which was unheard of.

As they were driving back, the driver, bursting with curiosity, asked Rav Shneur why he stayed so long. He replied, "In truth, cancelling that meeting was not such a simple thing, and I really wanted to go to it, but when I saw that they didn't give me any kibbud (honor) under the chuppah, I realized that if I were to leave early, it might give the impression that I was upset because of this. What probably happened was that one of the in-laws had an extra person they needed to give a kibbud to, which meant that the other side had to give one up. If I gave the impression that I was upset, it could cause friction between the in-laws. Friction between the in-laws can easily spill over to the newly married couple. When it comes to peace, we don't take any risks."

In this week's parsha, Naso, we learn about Birchas Kohanim, which is a blessing primarily for peace. How often is Shalom Bayis disturbed because someone's ambitions or desires get in the way?

We may be rushing off to something important when someone asks us for help, or we want something but are told we cannot have it. In moments like these, it is far too easy to forget that shalom is a primary value in Judaism and instead hyperfocus on our own desires. It's not easy, but Rav Shneur taught us that sometimes we must sacrifice a bit of what the "I" wants to focus on what truly matters.





Our Celebrities: The Adirei HaTorah

An accomplished talmid chacham once approached **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l** and poured out his heart before the gadol. He had always hoped that his children would follow in his path and become Torah scholars, but his aspirations had not been fulfilled.

At the same time, his neighbor, who was not a talmid chacham himself, had raised an entire family of Torah scholars. He asked Rav Shlomo Zalman why his neighbor had succeeded where he had not.

Rav Shlomo Zalman replied:

"I will tell you why there is such a difference between your two families. Every Shabbos, you and your neighbor would hear the same divrei Torah in shul from the Rabbanim, and then return home and share them with your families.

But then the difference began.

You, with your own wealth of Torah knowledge, would critique the dvar Torah you heard, and at times even challenge or refute it. Your children learned from you that talmidei chachamim are often subject to criticism, and that their words are not valued. - Why should they aspire to become talmidei chachamim themselves?

Your neighbor, on the other hand, was fortunate if he simply understood the dvar Torah. He did not have the ability to analyze or

critique it, so at his Shabbos table he simply repeated it and praised its beauty. His children grew up hearing that talmidei chachamim are people who bring forth beautiful chiddushim and are worthy of admiration and respect. That is why they themselves aspired to become Torah scholars."

Rabbeinu Yonah writes in Shaarei Teshuvah (Shaar 3, siman 148) that when people speak positively about talmidei chachamim, they are publicly declaring that Torah is the center of Jewish life. Honoring talmidei chachamim is a profound Kiddush Hashem. It proclaims that Torah is the highest value, that those who dedicate themselves to it are the spiritual backbone of Klal Yisrael, and that Yiddishkeit cannot exist without them.

Gedolei Torah and talmidei chachamim are the "celebrities" of the Jewish people, and the way we speak about them should consistently reflect that reality.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

Each Levi had a special role. Some carried the beams and structural components of the Mishkan. Some carried the various holy vessels. Still others carried the Aron, the Holy Ark. They had specific ways of packing and moving everything, and each Levi was assigned his task, down to the very item he would carry.

The Sforno adds that not only did they have to know what they were supposed to do when they were setting up camp, or what they were to carry when they traveled, but they even had to know the name of the item they handled.

In Shmos (38:21) the Sforno says that the various vessels had specific names, and they were not merely called by the type of item they were.

Why was it so critical for the Levi'im to know the names of the objects?

Adam was Divinely inspired to name each animal, because a name conveys its essence. There is depth and purpose behind each item and the Levi'im, in order to treat the Mishkan with proper respect, had to understand this.

When King Shaul was upset at Dovid HaMelech, he couldn't bring himself to call him by name and referred to him as "Ben Yishai." - This concept reminds us how much depth and value there is to each person, each animal, and each item in the Universe. We should take the time to learn all their names and try to uncover the secrets within.

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

וזאת תורת הנזיר



A nazir is a person who voluntarily accepts upon himself three restrictions: not to cut his hair, not to come into contact with the dead, and not to consume wine or other grape products. At the conclusion of his nazirite vow, which lasts thirty days unless he specifies otherwise, he must bring several offerings: a Korban Olah (Elevation-Offering), a Korban Chatas (Sin-Offering), and a Korban Shelamim (Peace-Offering).

The need for the Korban Olah is understandable, as the nazir accepted upon himself additional holiness to bring himself closer to Hashem, which fits the theme of the Elevation-Offering. Similarly, the Ibn Ezra explains that the Peace-Offering connotes satisfaction

and happiness, so the nazir brings it to express his joy at successfully completing his vow. How-ever, the requirement to offer a Korban Chatas seems puzzling. What sin did the nazir commit for which the Torah obligates him to bring a Sin-Offering?



The Ramban posits that the reason the nazir must offer the Korban Chatas is for the "sin" of ending his term as a nazir. After elevating himself by voluntarily relinquishing physical pleasures, he should have elected to maintain his lofty state, and it is for the "sin" of choosing to leave this sanctified atmosphere and re-entering the world of mundane earthly pleasures that the Torah requires him to bring a Sin-Offering.

As fascinating as the Ramban's explanation is, it seems to contradict the explanation given by Chazal. The Gemara (Nedarim 10a) also questions why the nazir must offer a Korban Chatas, and it answers **שציער עצמו מן היין** – the sin he committed was his original decision to cause himself suffering by abstaining from wine. After the Gemara states clearly that voluntarily refraining from physical enjoyment is considered sinful, how can the Ramban write that the nazir's sin is his decision to return to those pleasures?

Rav Simcha Zissel Broide, who was the head of the Chevron yeshiva, explains that when the person initially elected to become a nazir, he was an average person, and as such, his decision was painful for him and was therefore viewed as sinful. However, during his time as a nazir, he became uplifted. At the conclusion of his nazirite vow, he is no longer the same person who began it.

The Torah's criticism of ordinary people who deny themselves items that Hashem per-mitted no longer applies to him in his new, elevated

state, in which it is appropriate to abstain from physical enjoyment to live a more spiritual existence and bring oneself closer to Hashem. He has grown so much that the Ramban says it is now a sin to return to the level at which it was originally a sin to leave, and leaving this lifestyle of heightened sanctity to revert to being an ordinary person requires atonement.

Most of us will never become a nazir or even meet a nazir. Nevertheless, the lesson of the nazir is still relevant to each of us. As we go through life, we are expected to grow and strive to reach higher levels of spiritual accomplishment.

As we do so, we may find that certain activities or interests that we used to enjoy no longer seem appropriate for our new levels. When the power of our ingrained habits tries to pull us back, it is important to be cognizant of the Ramban's message that as we grow and become more spiritually sensitive, we are judged according to our new state and more is expected of us.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - In the Merit of Shabbos

Simchas Torah morning, 5784 (2023).

The first rays of sunlight had barely appeared when we woke up to a horror scene. Screams, confusion, and chaos cut into our sleep. We listened in silence. This terrible clash of noise sounded like a terrible nightmare. We didn't really understand what was going on. Screams mixed with cries in Arabic. The voices - sounded too close for us to believe they were real. It couldn't be that they were coming from our yishuv. Something strange was happening.

I wanted to go downstairs and check things out, but a scream in Arabic passing right below prevented me from doing so. "Something strange is going on," I said, feeling how my entire body was suddenly shaking.



That strange something was frightening me terribly.

We were not the only ones in our house. A young couple was with us for Yom Tov. Only last night we had celebrated with them, and now they were looking at us in terror.

"We didn't know that Arabs just walk around here like that," they said, their voices dying out. Their facial expressions revealed that they understood that no one just walked around here like that, that we too were frightened, terrified.

We tried to think rationally, to the best of our ability under the circumstances. What do we do now? There was no point in running away. Not now, when the street was crawling with dangerous beasts. Lock ourselves in our house? That didn't seem like a good option either. Through the slits in the shutters, I saw how those wild animals were breaking into locked houses. Little by little, I started to realize that these were probably our final hours - perhaps our final moments. I looked with compassion at our guests who didn't have to be here. Their house was calm and protected in the center of the country.

The sealed room now looked to us so pitiful, almost like us. A poor joke for the inflamed mob rushing through the streets, but we didn't have a better idea. We went inside and closed the door tightly, but we couldn't block out the terrible voices filtering in. Screams in Arabic, shouts - they were coming closer. Very soon they'd reach our house. There was nothing for us to do other than sit with our arms folded and wait for the epitome of cruelty to visit

our house. We closed our eyes and waited for the worst, but the terrible torture continued. They were already very close, but they didn't get to us.

Wait a minute. I listened carefully. Was it possible that the voices were a little further away, or was my mind playing tricks on me? Was it possible that those beasts of prey were no longer there? Could it be that they skipped our house? We were speaking in whispers. Yes, everyone thought that the voices were now further away.

We didn't dare leave to check things out. We didn't dare to do anything. We sat in the room, frozen. Our hearts were already empty of thoughts and feelings. The passing time allowed a thin ray of weak hope to penetrate us. Maybe, maybe we would actually be spared.

Eventually, we heard Jewish voices. Our brothers had arrived. Through the chessed of Hashem, they managed to overcome the contemptible, vile enemy and chase them away. Only then did the magnitude of the tragedy hit us. Death both inside and out. There was no house untouched.

Only Another day passed, and a sketch of our yishuv was found in the pocket of one of the monstrous terrorists. All the houses were marked. There was an x on our house indicating: not home on Shabbos. Our house was spared, in a strange way. - Not home on Shabbos. The terrorists didn't come.

We couldn't believe it.

We had begun observing Shabbos less than a year ago. Little by little, like a baby tasting something new, we tasted the beauty of it. Suddenly, we stopped using our car on Shabbos. We stopped answering the phone, and we didn't warm up food. We sat together as a family and didn't hurry anywhere.

You can't keep Shabbos on our yishuv. Secularism rears its head from every corner, and the winds wafting into our home were not ones of holiness. Our first steps were not sure enough, not

protected enough, so every Erev Shabbos, we packed ourselves up and went elsewhere, to yishuvim that keep Shabbos. We benefited from both the guidance in Shabbos observance we found there and the ability to keep Shabbos without disruptions. The atmosphere was one of shemiras Shabbos, the air was clean, and it was possible and expected to observe the holy day, which had become close to our hearts, on our hosts' yishuvim.

We were unsure what to do before Simchas Torah. Due to various considerations, we stayed home, after several consecutive weeks of not being home for Shabbos. We didn't just stay home; we even invited guests. The night passed relatively calmly, but in the morning, the world came crashing down on us and on our entire yishuv.

With animalistic, calculated malice, Arabs who worked on the yishuv had drawn a map. They knew everything in each house. They also knew that we went away each Shabbos, every turn, where everyone lived, and how many people lived, and it would be a pity to waste time on our house.

There was one thing they didn't know - that on that specific Shabbos, we stayed home.

That's how we were saved. That's how we were slated to live. That's how we felt the wind whispering to us, "More than Bnei Yisrael guarded Shabbos, Shabbos protected them."

Every person we encounter is fighting battles we may never hear about. Today, you could be standing next to someone who is trying their best not to fall apart. Be the kindness that makes the weight they carry feel a little less heavy. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Alter of Kelm, Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv (1824-1898).

Project Mesorah - Rabbi Paysach Krohn

A gut erev Shabbos my dear friends of Project Mesorah. This is your friend Rabbi Pesach Krohn speaking to you **ערב שבת פרשת נשא**. Of course in Parshas Naso we have the Birkas Kohanim that the Kohanim give to Klal Yisrael and that's a brocha that I give to you every single week and I just want to show you something very interesting.

The brocha is in three psukim:

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה׳ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ - יָאֵר ה׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ - יִשָּׂא ה׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

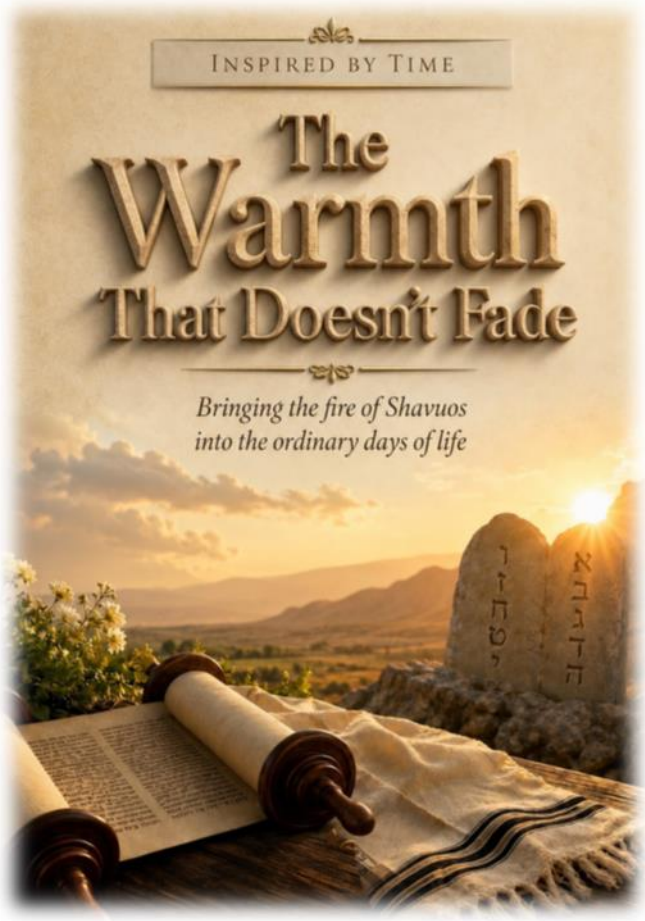
The first pasuk talks about gashmius, anything that you need in material possessions and finances. The second thing is about Torah and Yiras Shamayim and Hashem should give us light in ruchnius. And the third thing is Hashem should give us forgiveness in case chas veshalom we did any aveiros. But I find it remarkable that after each brocha in the beginning it says Hashem.

Why does it say Hashem?

I believe the answer is because no matter who the Kohen is or who anybody who gives you a brocha, even me, nobody knows exactly what you need. Only Hashem knows what you need. So the brocha that we're giving is that Hashem should give you what you need, whether it's in materialism or whether it's in ruchnius or whether it's in forgiveness. And so therefore I just want to say a brocha to all of you - **יְשִׁימְךָ אֱלֹקִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה: יְשִׁימֵךְ אֱלֹקִים כְּשָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה יְבָרֶכְךָ ד׳ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:יָאֵר ד׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ:יִשָּׂא ד׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם:**

Hashem should give you the gashmius that you need, Hashem should give you the ruchnius that you need, and Hashem should give you the forgiveness in case chas veshalom any of us did any aveiros. And that's the brocha to all of us and that's why when you daven Shmoneh Esrei, please be so careful, daven slowly because you're davening to Hashem and Hashem is the only one who knows what you really need and He's the only one who could give it to you. So that's why by each brocha it says Hashem: **יְבָרֶכְךָ ה׳ - יָאֵר ה׳ -יִשָּׂא ה׳**

And so my brocha to all of you is I hope you had a gut Shavuos, I hope you had a gut Yom Tov, and I hope as well that you'll have a lichtige and freiliche Shabbos.



This Shabbos Is No Ordinary Shabbos – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Shavuos: From Receiving to Living the Torah

These are precious times because we take what we received at Matan Torah and implement it into practice. Let me share several key insights about how to make Shavuos meaningful.

The Minhag of Dairy Foods

First, let's examine one of Shavuos's most significant minhagim. What's the biggest, most well-practiced custom? Eating dairy—cheesecake, blintzes, milky meals.

There was this young boy who, after davening, it was morning, had his piece of cheesecake for kiddish, and then he went to the shtiebel next door for a strawberry cheesecake, and he went to the other shtiebel for a cappuccino cheesecake, and he went to the next stop for blintzes, and to the next. And his friend said to him, "what's going on? I've never heard of this minhag."

'It's a Mefurashe Remah - נָהֲגוּ בְּהַרְבֵּה מְקוֹמוֹת לֶאֱכֹל מַאֲכָלֵי חָלָב! "In many places, people have the custom to eat dairy foods!"

When the Jewish people received the Torah at Sinai, they didn't know how to keep Kashrus. The first thing they did was eat only dairy

to maintain Kashrus—no concern about meat and milk mixing. But here's the deeper point: on Shavuos, the entire world stood still. The birds weren't chirping. The lions weren't roaring. There was thunder, lightning, darkness—And what do we focus on? The cornflakes and milk they ate afterward!

Shavuos is about what you do when you come home. It's about taking what you received from Matan Har Sinai into your daily life. Shavuos is not just one day—it's the post-Shavuos experience. The amount we learn and invest in our ruchniyus today determines how meaningful and real Shavuos actually becomes.

Building Slowly Toward Our Goals

Does this mean we should immediately jump into intense learning—18 hours a day, achieving huge targets? Yes and no. We must hold onto our aspirations and build toward them slowly, step by step.

I heard a beautiful mashal of a classic World War II-era satirical joke. It was told across Europe to mock the arrogance and brute-force nature of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, while celebrating the patience and cunning wit of Winston Churchill.

The Three Leaders and the Fish Pond

During a temporary truce, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Winston Churchill find themselves walking together in a beautiful garden. They stop at the edge of a small, decorative pond, watching a single, prize-winning fish swim around the bottom.

Hitler looks at the others arrogantly and says, "I bet I can catch that fish faster than either of you, using nothing but my bare hands."

Mussolini accepts the challenge: "Go ahead, let's see it."

Hitler's Attempt

Hitler steps up to the edge of the pond. He screams a series of aggressive commands at the water, clicks his heels, and plunges

his arm in with brute force, trying to snatch the fish. The fish easily darts away to the deep end. Frustrated, Hitler draws his revolver and fires a few shots into the water, but the fish swims away unharmed. Hitler steps back, furious and empty-handed.

Mussolini's Attempt

Mussolini scoffs and steps forward. "You have no finesse, Adolf. Watch how a true Roman does it."

Mussolini begins shouting a grandiose, dramatic speech to the pond, waving his arms and trying to hypnotise the fish with his charisma. When the fish ignores him, Mussolini jumps straight into the pond, splashing wildly, kicking up mud, and tearing through the reeds. Despite making a massive mess, the fish slips through his fingers every time. Mussolini climbs out, soaked, muddy, and defeated.

Churchill's Turn

Churchill calmly takes a sip of his whiskey, draws a puff from his cigar, and walks over to the edge of the pond. He doesn't yell, shoot, or jump in. Instead, he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small teaspoon.

He dips the teaspoon into the pond, scoops up a tiny bit of water, and pours it out onto the grass next to him. Then he dips the spoon in again, scoops another tiny bit of water, and pours it onto the grass.

Hitler and Mussolini watch him, completely baffled. Finally, Hitler explodes: "Churchill, what on earth are you doing?! That is going to take you years!"

Churchill looks up at them with a calm, patient smile, dips the spoon back into the pond, and says:

"Yes, it will take a long time... but eventually, I will empty the pond, and then the fish will be mine."

That's our approach. We came out of Shavuos with incredible aspirations. We can't let go of that she'ifa. But how do we achieve it? We take out our little spoon. It might take forever, but with consistency and bite-sized steps, we'll get there. We sit down the week after Shavuos and work out, step by step, how to move toward our goals. It doesn't have to be this year or next year—but eventually, we'll get there.

Post-Shavuos: A New Year for Ruchniyus

This is all true on a regular day. But post-Shavuos, this becomes profoundly important. We believe Hashem runs the world. Once a year, He decides our gashmiyus—how much life, parnassah, health, shefa in shidduchim and children. That's Rosh Hashanah. And if someone didn't have success one year, after Rosh Hashanah they try again, because maybe this year they were granted parnassah. We know Sarah Imeinu was barren. Yet on Rosh Hashanah, she was granted a part of the body she never had before.

When is the year for ruchniyus decided? Shavuos.

The Unopened Gift

There's a mashal from Rav Malach: A child loved electronic toys. When he heard his Uncle Avi was coming from America, he got excited and called: "Uncle, there's one model remote control car. It's amazing, rare, hard to find. You have to find it."

The uncle searched store to store. Finally, he found it in a specialty shop—but it cost $800. He fought to get it, paid the money, and brought it home in his suitcase.

When he arrived, the kids ran to greet him. The uncle said, "I have something very special for you." He took out the remote-control car and gave it to the child.

The child said, "Thank you," put it aside, and went back to playing with his clicks and magnetic tiles.

The uncle said, "Aren't you even going to open it?" - The child replied, "No, not today. Maybe another day."

How did the uncle feel? Is this what you begged me so hard for? Something you can't even be bothered to open?

On Shavuos. We sit and beg Hashem: **אָבִינוּ הָאָב הָרַחֲמָן הַמְרַחֵם רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וְתֵן בְּלִבֵּנוּ לְהָבִין וּלְהַשְׂכִּיל** —"Please, please. Our Father, Merciful One, have mercy on us. Please place in our hearts understanding and discernment."We beg Hashem for Torah, for yiras Shamayim. Then the next day comes. Hashem says, "Okay, here you are - Open it up.

And we say, "One second. I'm opening it. But I'll put it aside for now. I'll continue with my magnetic tiles. Maybe another day."

These days after Shavuos are when we truly show Hashem—and ourselves—that we value what we received. Not by putting it aside, but by opening it. By living it.

Among the laws in Parshas Naso are the laws of the nazir, who takes a vow not to drink wine, eat grape products or cut his hair for a certain period. These laws are introduced by the pasuk, "A man or a woman who will 'yafli' to take a vow…" While some understand the word "yafli" to mean "disassociate himself," **Ibn Ezra** understands it to be from the root "pele," meaning "to do a wondrous thing."

Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l (the Mirrer Mashgiach) explains: Many people claim that they can readily change any of their habits, but that they just don't want to. This pasuk says that this is not so; it truly is a "wonder" when a person makes a fundamental change in his habits. [Therefore, a person who wants to change cannot expect to work on himself casually. Rather, supreme effort is required.] (Da'as Torah Vol. IV, p.41)



After the inspiration of *Shavuot*, after the late nights, the learning, the connection, and yes, after all the cheesecake, life slowly settles back into routine. The *Yom Tov* tables are cleared. The extra pounds may still be hanging around, and the uplifting moments begin to feel like memories. And now comes the real question: what happens after the inspiration? Because anyone can feel elevated on *Shavuot*.

Anyone can feel connected when surrounded by *kedusha*. But *Yiddishkeit* was never only about the moments of greatness. It's about what we bring back with us into our ordinary lives, into the regular mornings, the busy schedules, and the simple routine of everyday life. And that's where this week's *parsha* begins to speak directly to us.

Chaim was a Holocaust survivor who after going through the fires of *Gehinnom*, rebuilt his life with remarkable strength, surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. He cherished each one. They were his pride and *nachas*. When he turned 90, his large four-generation family decided to surprise him with a birthday celebration.

There's going to be food, music, but most importantly, each child and grandchild would prepare him a personal gift to present to him. *Chaim* was deeply moved by the surprise, especially when they lined up to offer their gifts, each one lovingly prepared. Near the end of the line stood a young boy *Yanky*, holding a small watch box he had made by hand. But when he saw his older cousin had made nearly

identical box, only more polished and beautiful, his excitement turned into embarrassment.

By the time he reached his grandfather, he was hiding the gift behind his back. "What are you hiding?" his grandfather asked gently. "I'm embarrassed," *Yanky* said. "You already got this one, and his is better. You don't need mine." His grandfather took the box and held it to his heart - "I may have a box, but I don't have your box." This is the secret of *Parshat Naso*. *Hashem* doesn't need silver bowls or *ketoret*. He doesn't need *korbanot*. What he wants is you.

The gift is not valuable because it's different from others, but because you brought it. And that's why in this week's *Torah*, the *Torah* repeats each *korban* in full detail again and again, because each one came from a different heart. The fact that 11 *Nesiim* had already brought the exact same offering didn't diminish even slightly the significance of the 12th. Each gift was unique, not in its form, but in its giver.

Perhaps this is the message right after *Shavuot*. *Shavuot* was great, we were all uplifted and inspired. But when we come back into regular life, the recognition that every effort, every *mitzvah*, every piece of *Torah*, every *chesed*, every kind remark, every time we close our eyes at what we're not meant to be looking at, or a small *tefillah* from the heart that we try to do, is so precious to *Hashem* and it's valued above everything else. Not because of how grand they are, but because of who they come from: from us, from people trying, struggling, growing, and still choosing to serve *Hashem* in the middle of an ordinary day.

It may seem small to us, but to *Hashem*, it's priceless. The thunder of *Har Sinai* may have faded long ago, but the relationship never ends. *Shavuot* may be over, but we're still here, trying to still serve *Hashem*. And every bit is cherished by *Hashem* more than we can possibly imagine. - Wishing you all a wonderful *Shabbos*.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ולבני קהת לא נתן כי עבודת הקודש עליהם בכתף ישאו וכו' (ז-ט)

In the year 1868 (**תרכ"ח**), the city of Warsaw was known for its medical prowess and reputable doctors. For this reason, the Rebbe, **R' Menachem Mendel of Vorka ZT"L** came to the city to seek medical treatment for his numerous ailments. However, no treatment that was administered was successful and soon after his arrival in the city, his weakened body succumbed to his sicknesses and on **ט"ז סיון תרכ"ח** the Rebbe passed on to the **עולם האמת**.

The custom of Warsaw in those days was that the Aron of every **נפטר** was to be placed on a wagon and driven out to the cemetery followed by the funeral procession, instead of individuals carrying the Aron all the way to the **בית הקברות**.

One of the great talmidim of the Rebbe of Vorka, **R' Yechiel Danziger ZT"L** of Alexander, was opposed to this method of transporting his Rebbe's Aron to the cemetery for he felt that this was displaying a lack of proper **כבוד** as befitting the great Tzaddik. He quickly ran to the house of the Rov of Warsaw and tried to impress upon him the importance of allowing him and his fellow talmidim to carry their Rebbe's Aron on their shoulders.

The Rov well knew of the Vorker Rebbe's greatness, however, he still maintained that such was the **מנהג המקום**, for the Aron to be driven on a wagon, and was hesitant to allow an exception even in this case. He then added, "Besides, where does it say anywhere in the Torah that by carrying the Aron on one's shoulders, he is extending extra respect and glory to a great Tzaddik who has passed on to the next world?"

"We find it clearly in this week's Parshah," cried R' Yechiel, the Rebbe of Alexander, without hesitation, "By the **בני קהת**, the Possuk tells us "**כי עבודת הקודש עליהם בכתף ישאו**" - *For the holy work is upon them, on their shoulders should they carry it.* This Possuk is teaching

us a great lesson **בדרך רמז** - in a hidden manner. **כי עבודת הקודש עליהם** - A Gadol Hador who takes upon himself the **עול** of Torah and Mitzvos, the **עבודת הקודש**, for him "**בכתף ישאוי**" - He should be carried on shoulders even after his death!"

The Rov of Warsaw was astounded by this insight and allowed the Vorker Rebbe to be carried, by his pupils, to the **בית הקברות**.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

דבר אל אהרן ואל בניו לאמר כה תברכו את בני ישראל וכו' (ו-כג)

In the year 1933, the city of Johannesburg, South Africa, hired a new Rov, **R' Yitzchok Kosovsky ZT"L**, to lead the congregation. It soon became painfully clear to R' Kosovsky that many of the city's Jews, including some of the "prominent" members of the community, were not entirely observant in Torah and Mitzvos, including public Shabbos desecration, not keeping kosher, etc. Some of them were even Kohanim and they would make an occasional appearance in Shul on Yomim Tovim to Duchen - to bless the people with the priestly blessing.

The Rov was somewhat at a loss as to what to do regarding these Kohanim and he turned to his prominent brother-in-law, **R' Chaim Ozer Grodzensky ZT"L** for advice.

Should he be firm regarding these overt sinners and disallow them from exercising their priestly right to bless the people, on the grounds that a **מחלל שבת בפרהסיא** - a public desecrater of Shabbos, is comparable to an idol-worshipper, and therefore, obviously not worthy to perform this Mitzvah. Or maybe, he should go easy on these people due to the fact that their intentions are good, however their knowledge of religious matters is severly limited and they were to be considered **תינוקות שנשבו** - captured children (never being provided the ability to learn Torah)?

R' Chaim Ozer, the Posek Hador, sent back his reply. "Of course, by the strict letter of the law, a Kohen who is publicly defiling Shabbos is unworthy of Duchening and blessing the people. Even so, I still rule that these "prominent" Kohanim should be allowed to continue and go up to bless the people.

The reason for this is that, sadly, they are on the verge of losing all knowledge and vestige of their priestly stature, and they may come to marry a woman who is unfit for a Kohen, or be **מטמא למת** – defile themselves from a dead body – something which a Kohen is strictly prohibited from doing. However, by being allowed on Yom Tov to stand in the front of the congregation and perform their priestly duties, this will entrench the idea inside of them, that they are **כהנים**, the holy sons of Aharon, and important in the tradition of the Jewish people, and this realization will bring about in them a **תשובה שלימה**."



מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

חמץ יין וחמץ שכר לא ישתה וכל משרת ענבים לא ישתה וכו' (ו-ג)

There were numerous occasions in history when prominent Rabbonim and Jewish community leaders were required to come into contact with leaders and clergymen of other faiths.

As far as the Jews were concerned, dialogues were generally avoided, whenever possible, because they were felt to be useless. They were invariably sought by the church, however, which wished to prove the validity of their faith, on the basis of the scriptures. In truth, though, all recorded dialogues showed that just the reverse occurred, with Jewish scholars demonstrating gross errors in translation from the original texts and other distortions in interpretation on the part of the "learned" clergymen.

Such debates were not initiated by the Jews, who had no desire to prove others wrong and were content to be left alone, free of the

threat of inquisitors and pogroms. Many times, however, looking after the interests of the Jewish community necessitated a meeting between great Rabbonim and the leaders of the church.

R' Yonason Eibeschutz ZT"L, a Rov and scholar whose extraordinary genius and brilliance in all aspects of knowledge, both Torah-related and secular, was held in high esteem by the local clergy in his city. On more than one occasion, R' Yonason was required to appear on behalf of his congregation, and he never failed to save the day, always besting his opponents in religious debates.

At one of these meetings, the priest representing the church ordered wine to be served. Of course, R' Yonason declined to partake of it and when he explained that Jews were not permitted to drink such wine, the priest gave an exasperated sigh, and said, "Rabbi, your laws are much too restrictive. Will there never be a time when you can drink with us?"

R' Yonason, all too aware of the church's position on marriage amongst the clergy, smiled knowingly and replied, "Sure, of course there will be. - At your wedding feast!"