TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry





מסעי

לעילוי נשמת



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Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל - *"These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael."*

On the verse (Vayikra 6:6), "An eternal flame shall burn on the altar, it shall not be extinguished," the Talmud Yerushalmi comments: "Even during the travels." What does this teach us?

R' Aharon Lewin z"l Hy"d (the "Reisha Rav"; killed in the Holocaust in 1941) writes: There is an awesome ethical lesson here. When a person is at home, he is less likely to sin. Even if the Yetzer Ha'ra tempts him, he will overcome the Yetzer Ha'ra because he knows that whatever he does will come to the attention of his friends and neighbors. Not so when a person is traveling. When he is away, he can act with impunity and it will not become known at home. This fact is alluded to in the verse (Bereishit 4:7), "Sin lurks at the door." When one leaves the door of his house, he is more likely to sin.

However, "Fortunate is one who fears Hashem, who goes in his ways" (Tehilim 128:1). Even when he goes on his way, he fears Hashem. [Note that most commentaries translate: "His ways," referring to G-d.]

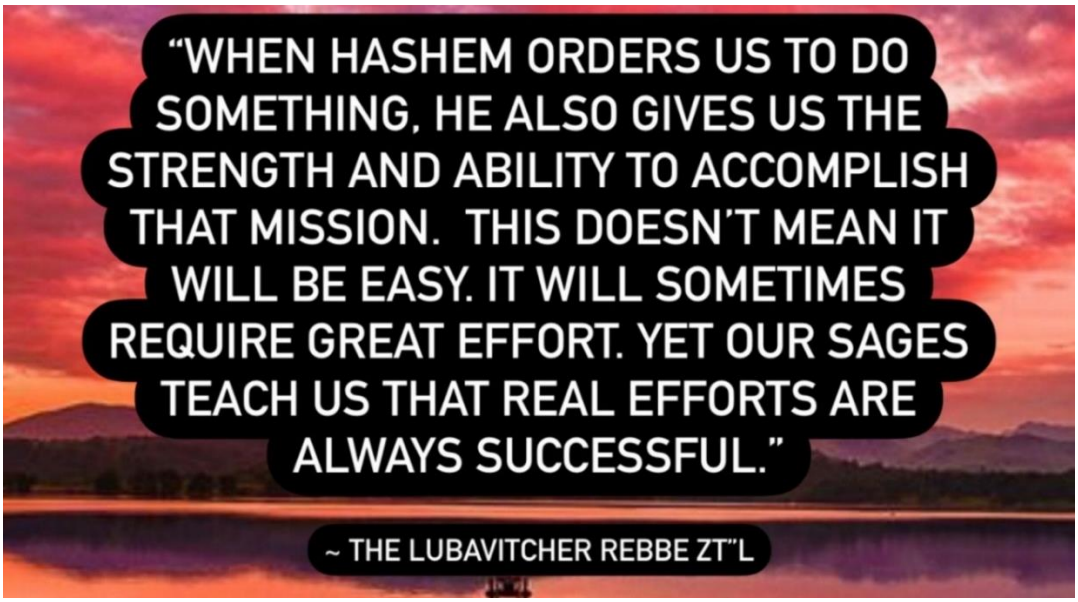
This, writes R' Lewin, is the Yerushalmi's message: The eternal flame of love of G-d should burn on the altar in a person's heart even when

he travels. As Tehilim (119:1) says, "Fortunate are those who are perfect on the road, who go with G-d's Torah." (Ha'drash V'Ha'iyun)

וְאֵת הֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֻס שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר - "***The cities that you shall give to the Levi'im–the six cities of refuge that you shall provide for a murderer to flee there, and also you shall give them forty-two cities***." (35:6)

R' Nachman of Breslov z"l (1772-1810) taught: There are 48 words in the first section of Kriat Shema, which contains the foundation of our belief–six in the first sentence and 42 in the paragraph beginning "Ve'ahavta." Paralleling this, there are 48 cities of Levi'im–six cities of refuge and 42 other cities. Our Sages teach that all 48 cities can provide refuge to a person who kills accidentally. Similarly, Kriat Shema provides refuge to one whose emunah–the essence of life–is at risk.

R' Nachman continues the analogy: From the fact that the Torah sends the accidental killer to the cities of the Levi'im to be rehabilitated we can learn that one whose emunah needs rehabilitating should travel to a tzaddik. (Likkutei Halachot)





אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל – '*These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael*.' (33:1)

The adage, "Life is a trip," has greater meaning than one might think. Each of us travels on the journey called life, and, as occurs in many instances, not all travelers have the same experience. One can travel to a wonderful, beautiful vacation spot and still have a miserable experience. The other can go to a stark, cold, uninviting place and still have a great time.

Different people have varied experiences as they go through life. For some, the trip is long and quite enjoyable; for others, it might be too short, and not much to write home about.

Once, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivat Porat Yosef, **Horav Yehudah Tzedakah, zl**, was asked to console the bereaved parents of a young yeshivah student who had lived too short of a life. He was warned that the family was beyond grief, having taken this tragedy especially hard.

The Rosh Yeshivah came to the modest home where the family was sitting shivah, observing the traditional seven-day mourning period. He entered the room, and everyone looked up. It was not a usual occurrence that the venerable Rosh Yeshivah went anywhere. Obviously, this was an unusual situation.

"Let me share a story with you," Rav Tzedakah began: "One day, a man who had lived his entire life in the wilderness visited the big city. This person had never been exposed to modern technology, having lived primitively with whatever he could scrounge together in the wilderness. Upon visiting the city, he chanced upon a large 'moving box,' on wheels, or, at least, this is what he thought the bus

was. He asked the people who were waiting in line to take their place on the bus, 'What is this?' 'It's a bus. One alights the bus, pays the fare, and takes a seat. The fare allows him to ride the bus to the end of the line, which is twenty stops.'



"It seemed like an incredible idea. Imagine buying a ticket that would allow him to travel for miles, throughout the city. It was absolutely incredible. Since he had no money, one of the kindhearted passengers gave him the necessary change. He paid for his ticket and proceeded to the nearest available seat.

After only two stops, one of the passengers got off the bus. The man was surprised, 'Why would a person pay for twenty stops and get off after two?' he wondered to himself. "Three stops later, four people left the bus. This increased the man's incredulity. Finally, he no longer could keep it to himself. He began to scream at the passengers who were leaving the bus, 'Where are you going? You paid for twenty stops. Why are you leaving prematurely?'

The people were very patient with their responses, since they were well aware that he had never before seen a bus. 'These people live near the stop. If they were to ride the bus to the end of the line, they would have to go back and do the trip over again.'

"The nimshal, lesson, to be derived from here is very simple. Every person is sent down to this world for a purpose. Once he fulfills that purpose, he has reached his 'stop,' and it is now time to return to his original source in Heaven.

Each and every one of us has his unique tafkid, goal and purpose, in life. The duration of our stay in this world is dependent upon our individual purpose. - Your son had fulfilled his tafkid. He was then called 'home.'"



בִּי בְעִיר מִקְלָטוֹ יֵשֵׁב עַד־מוֹת הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדֹל – 'He shall dwell in it until the death of the Kohen Gadol.' (35:28)

The Talmud Makkos 11a teaches that, since the fate of the rotzeach b'shogeg, unintentional murderer, was dependent upon the Kohen Gadol's longevity, there was fear that the rotzeach would pray for the early demise of the Kohen Gadol. Once the Kohen Gadol died, the murderer would be free to leave the ir miklat, city of refuge.

To circumvent their prayers, the mothers of the Kohanim Gedolim would furnish the murderers with food and clothing to keep them happy and satisfied, so that they would not pray for the death of their sons.

Why did the Kohen Gadol not personally pray for longevity? His prayer for life would certainly be as effective as the murderer's prayer for his death.

Perhaps this is why he had been elected as Kohen Gadol. He was a holy person to whom life was certainly quite important. He realized, however, that, by praying for life, he was essentially praying for the many unintentional murderers to be doomed to a life of exile away from family and friends.

I guess the Kohen Gadol was such a person that "living at the expense of another Jew's pain" was not something he felt warranted his prayer. If Hashem allowed him to live, if his personal merit outweighed the prayers tendered by the murderers – good. If not, well, that was his lot. It came with the territory. Nonetheless, he could not allow his personal prayer to have a detrimental effect on another Jew.

We derive from here the incredible power of prayer. The Kohen Gadol is a holy man. The murderer is an exiled Jew, who is in his position for a reason. True, the murder had been unintentional, but it was no accident. One is not sent to the ir miklat for an accident. He is sent for unintentional murder, which covers a gamut of ambiguous circumstances. This man is certainly not on a spiritual par with the Kohen Gadol; yet, the Kohen Gadol fears his prayers (or, at least, the Kohen Gadol's mother fears for her son's life).

קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בֶּאֱמֶת. "***Hashem is close to all who call upon Him – to all who call upon Him sincerely***" (Tehillim 145:18). Hashem listens, and, when the prayer is sincere, it achieves efficacy.

The exiled murderer is sincere (perhaps for the wrong reasons, and self-serving – but sincere). And, thus, his prayers gave the Kohen Gadol's mother reason to be anxious for her son's life.

This is the awesome power of prayer. It works because of our relationship with Hashem. He is our Father in Heaven. A father always listens. He never closes his door to his children – regardless of the offense or the duration of time that has elapsed since they had last spoken.

If this is true of human emotion, how much more so of Hashem, Who is our Creator?

While the significance of prayer cannot be sufficiently emphasized, we often (because of a lack of knowledge and awareness) ignore the significance of one mysterious word: Amen.

Chazal teach that the individual who answers Amen is even greater than the one who initially recited the blessing. Amen is related to the word emunah, faith, a derivative of emes, truth. One who recites a blessing is acknowledging that he is about to partake of Hashem's beneficence, and he offers his gratitude for this opportunity. The one who answers Amen is not acknowledging his gratitude to the Creator for the bounty, because he did not receive it. He is,

however, seizing the opportunity to express himself to Hashem in terms of pure faith – unfettered by the limits of his gratitude. When he says Amen, he is connecting with Hashem on a purely spiritual level, declaring his total subjugation to Him. In other words, he is affirming his faith in Hashem as Provider, Benefiter – even though he personally did not receive; he is affirming it based upon pure faith.

Thus, Amen is greater than the blessing, because the blessing is contingent upon gratitude, while Amen is a declaration of pure faith. When we say Amen, we declare to Hashem that we are prepared to do anything that He asks. We believe wholeheartedly in His ability to do anything. It really cannot get any better than that. Amen is effective – even if the blessing to which one responds might be unreasonable, even injudicious. Even if hope for the realization of the blessing hangs by less than a shoestring, one should respond Amen in the hope that his response may catalyze the actualization of the blessing.

The following vignette reinforces this idea: Shabbos Kodesh, Sivan 26, 5677, 1917, in Vienna's most prominent shul Khal Adas Yisrael, popularly known as the Shiff Shul. The chazzan began reciting the Yehi Ratzon for Mevarchim haChodesh, Blessing the New Moon.

Herr Goldshmidt, the elderly gabbai announced the molad, precise time at which the new moon begins to appear in Yerushalayim. (Traditionally, they announce the exact hour, minute and chelek/portion – 1/18 of a minute or 3½ seconds.) Surprisingly, the time was precisely on the complete hour – no minutes or chalakim.

The congregation continued with the recitation of the prayer with all the wonderful blessings that it engenders. The Mussaf service was concluded, and everyone began to return his siddur to the bookcase, in preparation for returning home.

Herr Goldshmidt asked everyone to wait a moment; he had something to say, "You all must certainly know that this molad is unique in the

sense that the precise time falls out on a perfect hour." Immediately, one of the congregants asked, "Does this not occur often?" "No!" replied Herr Goldshmidt. "It takes place only once every eighty-seven years! Therefore, at this most propitious time, I would like to wish each and every one of you to experience such a molad one more time in your lives!"

Most of the people smiled; some even laughed. After all, eighty-seven years was expecting a bit much. Even a brachah, blessing, should be realistic.

Standing next to the bimah, listening to the gabbai and the congregation's reaction, was a fifteen-year-old teenager, a refugee from Poland (it was during World War I) who did not react like everyone else. Perhaps it was because of his upbringing by his mother. Growing up, he was inculcated with the notion, "My child, never ignore a blessing that is given to you. Always respond with a hearty Amen!"

Today was no different. When Herr Goldshmidt blessed the congregation, this teenager, true to his mother's inspiration, responded Amen.

Fast forward to Yerushalayim, Shabbos Mevorchim HaChodesh Mar Cheshvan 5765, 2004. The gabbai of the shul announced the molad Thursday morning precisely at 2:00 am. The shul was silent. The congregants heard Reb Yosha, the oldest member of the shul, whimpering as tears slowly began to streak his face. They understood that every month was special to Reb Yosha. He had reason to be emotional. He had far surpassed in longevity the lifespan of his friends.

One man, however, took a special interest in Reb Yosha's weeping. "Reb Yosha, lama bachisa, why did you weep?" asked Gedalyah Stein. He assumed that, if Reb Yosha was weeping, he had to have a good reason.

Reb Yosha looked at Gedalyah and said, "My friend, this is the second time in my life that the molad fell on a perfect time, on a complete hour – without fractions. The last time that this occurred, I was a fifteen-year-old teenager in the Shiff Shul in Vienna. Today, I am one hundred and two years old. I have every reason to express my emotion. My Amen eighty-seven years ago was the catalyst for my longevity.

You, Gedalyah, are still young. I encourage you to take to heart and teach your children the lesson my mother taught me – never ignore Amen! Every blessing is valuable. Answer Amen with great kavanah, intention, devotion! May it be the will of Hashem that you should be there for Mevarchim HaChodesh, Tishrei 5852, 2091, in good health and welfare!"

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְצִבְאֹתָם בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן

"***These are the journeys of the Bnei Yisrael, who went from the land of Egypt according to their legions***." (33:1)

The Degel Mateh Efraim cites his rebbe, the **Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh**, who interprets the forty-two journeys that Klal Yisrael traveled as analogous to a human being's life span. - Birth, leaving the womb, is like yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt, the beginning of the Jewish nation's travels. The ensuing journeys lead onward to the ultimate destination, Eretz Yisrael, or – for the individual Jew – the eternal world of Olam Haba.

The Papa Rav, z.l., says, as a person journeys from place to place, he is confronted with challenges to his spiritual well- being. Some communities stimulate a challenge in parnassah. In others, the spiritual environment presents a challenge. This challenge can be a product of interaction with the non-Jewish population. Alternatively, it can be catalyzed by the Jewish population, if he has no friends with whom he can socialize, either as a result of their level of observance or other social issues that play a role in one's

assimilation into a community. - In every situation, one needs Siyata D'Shmaya, Divine assistance, to overcome the trials and adversities.

The Jewish nation went through forty-two journeys, forty-two ordeals, forty-two challenges. Hashem sustained them throughout the vicissitudes of their travels: He provided them with bread when they were hungry; He gave them water when they were thirsty; meat was accessible when they needed it; they also had therapy for their snake bites. Hashem dealt with Amalek, the non-Jewish anti-Semite, and He dealt with Dasan and Aviram, the Jewish enemy from within. When Bilaam enticed them with pagan women, Hashem protected them, just as He did when He dealt with the erev rav, mixed multitude, who caused the sin of the Golden Calf.

From the journeys that Klal Yisrael experienced we can derive encouragement and inspiration for our own encounters.

The Kedushas Levi teaches us that the yeshuos, salvations, that Hashem provided for Klal Yisrael became a wellspring of hope for the future generations. Every generation that will be in need can draw from the source of salvation that was created during Klal Yisrael's journeys. This is referred to as the "maaynei ha'yeshua," wellsprings of salvation.

One who walks in a desert and digs a hole and discovers a wellspring of water quenches his own immediate thirst. The well remains forever a source of sustenance for the future: **וּשְׁאַבְתֶּם־מַיִם בְּשָׂשׂוֹן מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה**; "You can draw water in joy from the springs of salvation" (Yeshaya 12:3).

During our lifetime, when the moment of need arises, we may draw inspiration and hope from the wellsprings that were created for Klal Yisrael as they traveled through the wilderness on the way to their promised land.

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיִּסְעוּ... וַיַּחֲנוּ - "***These are the journeys of the Bnei Yisrael.... and they journeyed... and they camped***." (33:1)

42 times the Torah reiterates **וַיִּסְעוּ... וַיַּחֲנוּ**

The commentators suggest reasons for the Torah's recounting each and every situation in Klal Yisrael's sojourn. One thing is clear: Each word is there for a purpose; it is there to teach us a lesson.

Horav Moshe Swift, zl, infers a meaningful lesson from this apparent redundancy. Life has its ups and downs, its moments of opportunity and success, and its periods of mistakes and catastrophe. The important lesson to remember is to take each of life's situations in mind, study it and apply it. It is important to learn from our mistakes, so that they do not return to haunt us. It is not necessary to relive all over again to correct our mistakes. We can make up for them during the same journey. All we have to do is look back, analyze our wrongs and be sure not to repeat them.

וַיִּסְעוּ... וַיַּחֲנוּ is not redundant if at each stage in our journey we derive a lesson for the future. Each "repetition" emphasizes the importance of looking back at the beginning of every stage in life and learning from past experiences to avoid repeating mistakes.

"The Arizal Hakadosh revealed that as soon as a person contemplates doing a mitzvah – the soul of a tzaddik from a previous generation who used to chase this particular mitzvah immediately appears and imparts the strength to perform the mitzvah according to its precise Halacha. Were it not for this, the evil inclination would overcome and entice him into not performing the mitzvah. Therefore, when we conceive of the notion to help a friend, we must act without delay because we are now receiving Heavenly assistance and one never knows what the situation will be like later. ~ Rav Menachem Azolai





In one of your books you write that davening with people who aren't serious about serving Hashem is compared to sha'atnez – a mixing that is unfavorable in the eyes of Hashem. But I thought that we are obligated to daven with all Jews – sinners as well?

No. We are not obligated to daven with all Jews. No. Because it is of utmost importance to be mekayem the ideal of (Avos 1:7) " **הַרְחֵק מִשָּׁכֵן רָע**." Keep far away from a bad neighbor. Far away. **אל תתחבר לרשע ואפילו לתורה** - And it is ossur to be mishtatef with a rasha even for a dvar mitzvah (Avos D'Rabbi Nosson 9:4). All the poskim say that clearly.

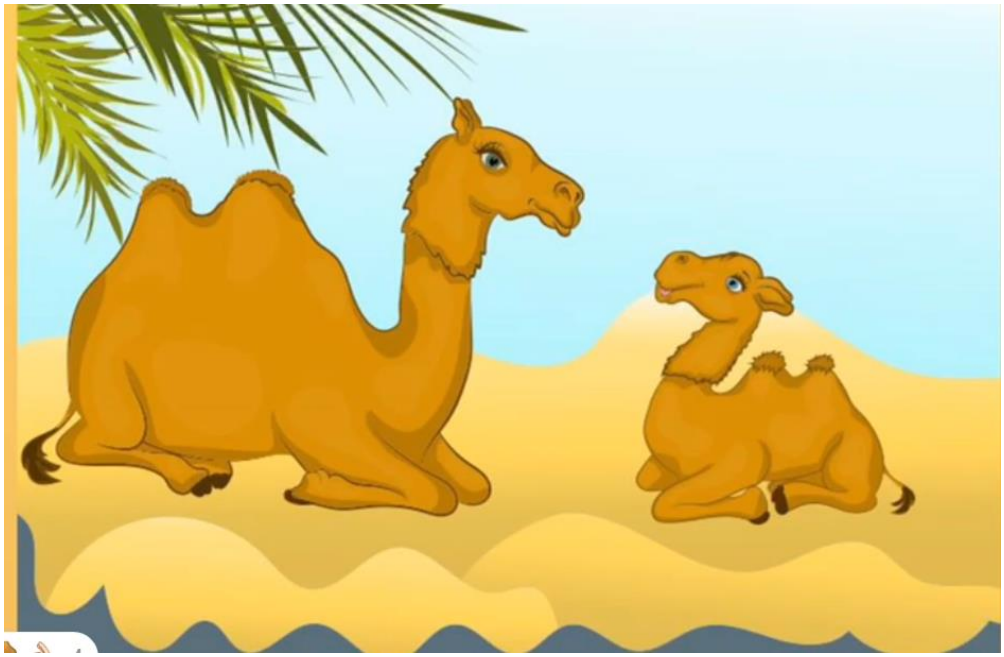
Therefore it's important not to be bribed by the fact that we are all davening the same words. You have to know that even in the best shul, if you sit down next to a person of bad character, he can ruin you chalilah. I've seen it again and again.

Once a man came into our shul. He was a baal teshuva and full of enthusiasm. Full of eagerness to learn. And he sat down next to an old man who I knew was a leitz. And the old man kept on talking to him during davening. Speaking all the time against everybody in the shul – including me.

Finally this baal teshuva became so ruined, so spoiled, that he became my enemy and he left the shul. I wanted to make something out of him but this shochein ra ruined him.

It happened twice in my history. Twice I had such an experience. And therefore, it's so important to avoid people who might spoil you. Even if it will only spoil you a little, you must beware. It's of utmost importance to seek out the best ones wherever you go.

A Lesson from a Baby Camel – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



A baby camel and a mammy camel were having a conversation. The baby looked up at its mammy and said, "Mammy, how come I have such large eyelashes?"

"Oh", the mummy camel said, "large eyelashes are a very special gift. You see, when we travel in the desert, our large eyelashes protect our eyes from sand getting in them."

"Wow", says the little one.

"Mam, I have another question. Why do I have this large bump on my back, no one else has it?"

"Ah", the mother said, "That's another special gift. Because you see, when you travel in the desert, and there is no water, your body is able to store fat and water inside the hump that can sustain you longer than most other animals."

"Wow mum."





"Mum, I have another question – How come we only have two toes?"

"Oh. Those are very special toes with extra padding. Those help us to walk through the sand and not sink in."

"Wow", the little one said. "Mammy, we really are special. It seems that we could really travel anywhere."

"Yes", the mum said.

"So Mam? –

"Yes" –

"Why are we in the zoo!!"

That question is a pivotal question that we need to ask ourselves. Hashem gave each and every one of us so many talents and so many abilities. He created us to be able to accomplish exactly what we are and what we need to accomplish.

Yet for so many of us, we keep ourselves shackled in the zoo! - Maybe we're scared to fail. Maybe we're lacking courage. But we must take the opportunity to take those talents, and to put them to good use.

Let's take a really good look at ourselves and see all the incredible talents that The Ribboino Shel Olam has given us. Let's embark upon that unique journey that The Al-Mighty has charted just for us.

What an Incredible People We Are – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



One day on my way to work, I noticed a small handwritten sign on a utility pole. Curiosity got the better of me, so I stopped to read it. And this is what it said:



"I lost ₪50 (Shekels) somewhere along this road. If anybody finds it, please return it to me at this address. My vision isn't great, so please help me."

At the bottom of the note was an address that wasn't far away, so I decided to check out the story.

I arrived at an old cottage and saw an elderly woman sitting outside. She appeared blind, and she heard my approaching steps.

She asked, "Who's there?"

I explained to her that I saw her sign and that I had found ₪50 on the road, and that I was here to return them.

Upon hearing this, she started to cry!

When she calmed down a bit, she said, "You are the 36th person who came with the same story and with ₪50 in hand! All of them claimed that they found my money and have come to return it. – And I didn't even write this note."

I assured her that it was ok, and since I was already there, I told her to keep the money. She thanked me, asked me to take down the note on my way back, and told me that she had requested the same thing from all the others.

Leaving the place, I had a million thoughts in my head. Who could have written this note? She asked everyone to take it down, but no one did.

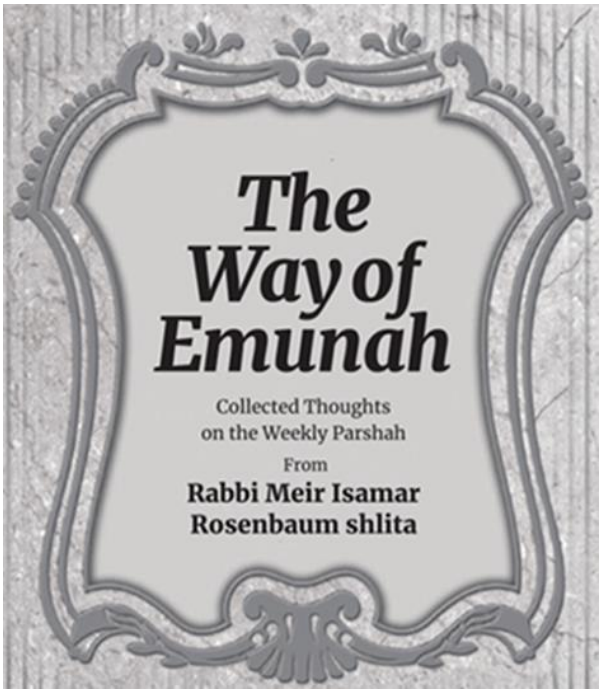
In my heart, I think I understood the person who had put up the note. I understand that people have an inner need to help others, even though they don't always know how. – There are so many ways to do it, and the person who wrote that note just found one way. They simply wanted to help a poor old woman living by herself.

On my way back, someone stopped me and asked, "Hey, can you help me with this address? I found ₪50 and I want to return them!"

How beautiful - **מִי כְּעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל**

"Everything that goes on in one's home is chessed. People think they are 'only' raising children and doing nothing more. But to nurture children in Torah and Yiras Shamayim – this is chessed! And Torah!" – R' Shalom Schwadron zt"l

"Regarding the troubles that plague Bnei Yisrael throughout history – for a true believer there are no questions, and for a non-believer, there are no answers!" – R' Yaakov of Radzimin zt"l



וַיִּסְעוּ מֵאָלוּשׁ וַיַּחֲנוּ בִּרְפִידִם וְלֹא־הָיָה שָׁם מַיִם לָעָם לִשְׁתּוֹת – *'And they traveled from Alosh and they camped in Refidim and there was no water there for the nation to drink.'* (33:14)

● If There is No Torah, There is No Water

The Shach (al Hatorah) writes that they camped in this place even though there was no water. One may ask why there was no water, as the be'er was traveling with them.

He answers by quoting the Gemara (Bava Kama 17A) that states: "There is no water other than Torah." Thus, the pasuk is saying that they were being lax in their Torah study and, as a result, they did not have water to quench their thirst.

This indicates that there was no water there, but there was water in other places. – When the people did learn Torah properly, the be'er provided water, but when they did not learn enough, the be'er did not provide water.

● One Can Learn 200 Words Every Minute

The Chofetz Chaim writes that in one minute, a person can say 200 words. This means that one can say several thousand words of Torah every day, and each word is a mitzvah in and of itself.

Through these words of Torah, one can create thousands of angels every day, which speak in his defence. Therefore, he writes, how could anyone not learn with enthusiasm? Knowing how much one loses when he wastes time, how could one not properly use each day?

● Legions of Angels Created by Each Mitzvah

In a similar vein, the pasuk in Tehillim (91:7) states: "A thousand will be stationed at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand."

The Ye'aros Devash (Chelek 1, Drush 16) writes that "left" refers to learning Torah shelo l'shma, while "right" refers to learning Torah l'shma. Accordingly, the pasuk is saying that even if one learns Torah shelo l'shma, he will still create thousands of good angels who stand on his "left side", as even such Torah has the power to create malachim that defend a person from harm.

But if one learns Torah and does mitzvos l'shma, he will have tens of thousands of angels stationed on his "right side", as he will have even protection from harm. From doing just one mitzvah l'shma, one creates legions of tens of thousands of angels to defend him!



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

כִּי בְעִיר מִקְלָטוֹ יֵשֵׁב עַד־מוֹת הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדֹל וְאַחֲרֵי־מוֹת הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדֹל יָשׁוּב הָרֹצֵחַ אֶל־אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזָּתוֹ (35:28). –The *Gemara* (Yumah 47a) teaches that Kimchis, an exceptionally modest woman, bore seven sons who all became *Kohanim Gedolim*. The function of the *Kohen Gadol* is to plead and pray on behalf of *Klal Yisroel*. Such an outstanding person is born to a mother whose impeccable *tznius* has brought her close to *Hashem*. Thus, she *davens* for members of her family and for the sick of the

nation, just as her son, the *Kohen Gadol*, davens for his family and for the needs of the people.

Chazal tell us that the mother of the *Kohen Gadol* would supply food and clothes to the inmates of the cities of refuge to prevent them from praying for her son to die so that they could return home once again (Makkos 11a). - Why did the mother of the *Kohen Gadol*, rather than his wife, do this?

R' Pesach Eliyahu Falk writes that the mother considers herself partially to blame for the fact that these people were confined to cities of exile, because when a *Kohen Gadol* is truly worthy, his powerful prayers prevent calamities, such as accidental killings from occurring. Thus, if calamities did occur, the *Kohen Gadol's* prayers were evidently not at the high level they should have been.

The mother of the *Kohen Gadol* feels that SHE is to blame for this shortcoming. Had she been a better person, her son would have developed an even deeper appreciation for *tefillah* and service of *Hashem*, and his *tefillos* would have prevented these killings from taking place. It is SHE who is indirectly responsible for having caused these people to be in exile and for endangering her son's life (as people pray for him to die). She therefore takes it upon herself to look after these people and do whatever she can to prevent them from praying for her son to die.

A wife in contrast, is not so obviously responsible for her husband's lack of devotion to *tefillah*. It was, therefore, the mother rather than the wife, who tried to improve matters. A mother has an enormous effect on her son. The more special she is, the greater her son will be.

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

בס"ד

למודי משה

Yeshuos Hashem

The *mashgiach*, **Reb Yechezkel Levenstein, *zt"l***, used to give over a *vaad* to *avreichim*. On one occasion, he related that he had heard that the ***Chofetz Chaim*** said after WWI that there will be a second war which will cause the First World War to appear like child's play. Then there will be a break and then be a third war, which will make the second war appear like child's play.

A sense of dread and gloom fell over those listening, and **Rav Shalom Schwadron** found the courage to ask the *mashgiach* why it was necessary to utter such harsh words. Wouldn't it be preferable to simply *daven* to be saved from future harsh decrees?

The *mashgiach* became very agitated and said, "You completely misunderstood what the *Chofetz Chaim* intended with these words! The *Chofetz Chaim's* main intention was that there will be a dearth of *emunah*! The dearth in *emunah* during WWI was child's play compared to the dearth of *emunah* during WWII, and the darkening of *emunah* that will be during the third war will make everything previous seem like child's play. During a war, they shoot a few guns, but this is not the essence of the war! (*She'al Avicha VeYagaidcha*)

"We must eliminate 'I can't' from our lives and believe in our potential. Each of us carries a part of Hashem, Who never says 'I can't'. This divine power resides within us all, both individually and as a nation." ~ Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein.

Story, by Rav Paysach Diskind:



Rav Mordechai Schwab zatza'l would talk to his newly-married students about the importance of helping their wives, who besides being busy caring for their children, usually had jobs.

In order to teach by example, Rav Mordechai would wait with a full garbage bag by his living room window, and when he spotted the yungerleit (young married men) on their way home, he would carry out the garbage bag specifically at that time, so they could see an example of how they should help their wives. (From Rav Mordechai Schwab; A Tzadik In Monsey, By Yehoshua Schwab)

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

When it came to the distribution of the land, HaShem instructed that Elazar the Kohain and Yehoshua ben Nun should together be the ones to oversee the division. There was not a single person put in charge, but a pair. The Torah then lists the names of the leaders who would accept the portions on behalf of each tribe and uses the letter 'vov' to mean 'and' when mentioning them. That is to say, 'and for the Tribe of Zevulun…' connected to another tribe.

Perhaps this implies that for the Jews to merit the land of Israel, they must be united. One person alone cannot inherit it; it must be together with others. Parshas Masei is read during the Three Weeks, either just prior to or at the beginning of the Nine Days. At

the end of the parsha, when we finish the Sefer of Bamidbar, we say, 'Chazak, Chazak, v'nischazek,' a phrase which prays for and highlights our strength when we are unified.

This is quite an appropriate message for this time of year as it reminds us that only by coming together can we merit the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash.

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER

Rabbi Shlomo Farhi - Life-Saving Words

As one soldier was about to enter Gaza, he met a rabbi who had come to give all the soldiers some words of strength and encouragement, alongside a *beracha* (blessing). But to this one solider, it was an experience he didn't know how to make sense of. "Listen, Rabbi, I don't really understand what you're doing. I didn't grow up with this. You're giving me a beracha, but what am I supposed to do with this blessing? I don't connect it to anything Jewish. Does your blessing even help me?"

The rabbi listened, taking a moment to collect his thoughts. "I want to tell you a story, if I may." The soldier nodded.



"There was a Minister of Education in Israel named Zalman Aran. Do you remember him? Back in the 1960s, he was active. Anyway, Aran grew up in Russia. He was a communist, then a socialist, and then a professed atheist, eventually becoming the head of the Ministry of Education in Israel. One day, he was speaking to a group of young officers in the

army and told them, 'You see me as an atheist, but I wasn't always this way. When I was much younger, I went to cheder. I went to yeshiva. I knew Tanach by heart, and I thought I knew some Gemara.'

'In 1917, during the massive upheaval in Russia, I became a communist and through that, an atheist. I don't believe in anything—not Torah, not mitzvot, not G-d. But you should know, during the war, the war came to our city. We ran away to the nearby forest, and we came under fire. As bullets whistled past me, I grew filled with incredible fear, and began running to find safety. And then, without even thinking, I started screaming. What was I screaming? All of a sudden, I realized I was screaming the words of Tehillim.'

'At that minute, I was so embarrassed. Here I was, an atheist who had abandoned G-d and Torah, and now, under fire, I was screaming the words of Tehillim. No lesson learned, no *teshuvah*, just embarrassed. I knew Tehillim once, I screamed it in fear, and I was embarrassed.'

One of the soldiers in the audience approached Aran and said, 'You know, you're a real rasha, a wicked person.' 'Why am I a wicked person?' Aran asked. The soldier explained. 'I grew up in a country where you ran the education system, and I didn't go to yeshiva. You made sure that in the secular Israeli school I attended, I never learned any Tehillim and I never learned any prayers. And now, I'm a soldier in the army, and when they fire at me and I want to scream for help, I don't know what to yell, and I don't know who to yell to. You're a wicked man, Mr. Aran, because you stole from me what to scream and who to scream to. I should have been given the choice whether or not I wanted to keep that.'

The rabbi turned to the soldier. 'And because of this, I came to give you a beracha. You asked how it helps you? I'm going to teach you what to scream if you need to scream.' Aran then took a piece of paper and wrote in big letters, 'Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad.' He read it to the soldier and told him, 'When you say

these words, you cover your eyes and call out to G-d. These are words that Jews have said in the worst times and the best times. They said it in the gas chambers, during the Inquisition, in pogroms, and in times of incredible torture. It should stand by you if you ever need to shout, if you ever need to reach out for help.'

Hearing this, the soldier was moved. He went on to give the rabbi a big hug. Then he made his way into Gaza. As far as the rabbi knew, that was the end of the story.

Later, the rabbi received a phone call from Soroka Hospital. They told him that a soldier had requested him by name and asked him to come visit. The rabbi couldn't recall who it might be, but he got in his car and drove to Soroka. When he arrived, he saw an Israeli man pacing back and forth. 'Are you the rabbi my son is calling for?' The rabbi nodded, and the man hurried him upstairs to his son's room.

There, the soldier sat, covered in bandages from head to toe. He motioned for the rabbi to come closer. And then, weakly, he said, 'We went into Gaza, and we did great work. We killed terrorists, fought hard, and achieved a lot. One day, we got into an alleyway and were under heavy fire. We saw three terrorists at the other end and managed to kill one, but the other two escaped into a building. My friends and I followed them inside. We were firing at each other at close quarters. Finally, I pulled out a grenade, threw it across the hallway, and told my guys to duck. The grenade exploded, and the terrorists fell. But then, we didn't realize there was one more hiding. In slow motion, I saw him pull the pin and throw a grenade at us. It was so close, and I knew I had just sentenced my friends and myself to death. I didn't know what to do. The only thing that came to my mind was to scream. As I thought of screaming, I covered my eyes and said, 'Shema Yisrael.'

But as I covered my eyes, my hand jerked up, and the butt of my gun hit the grenade, sending it back across the hallway. It exploded, killing the terrorist. My friends and I were badly injured, but they're

going to be okay. I had to call you to tell you that asking what good is your beracha, what good is your Shema Yisrael—it saved my life and the lives of my friends.'

The notion that a person says Shema at the end of his life is well-known. But sometimes, saying Shema marks not the end of a life, but the beginning of an entirely new one. And in a moment, a person can do something, see something, or say something that completely alters the trajectory of their life on this earth.

Sometimes, all it takes is a few words of blessing. Sometimes, all it takes six words of Shema.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל - These are the journeys of Bnei Yisroel...And they arrived to Eilim; and in Eilim there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palm trees… And they traveled from Refidim and they encamped in Sinai. And they traveled from Sinai and they encamped in Kivros Hata'ava. (Bamidbar 33)

Why doesn't the Parsha (Massei) mention that we received the Torah at Har Sinai when it lists the journeys of Bnei Yisroel? If the Torah mentioned how there were date palm trees and springs at Eilim, we would certainly expect that the Torah would mention Matan Torah at Har Sinai!

Perhaps, by not mentioning Matan Torah, HaKadosh Boruch Hu is teaching us that Torah is not associated with or attached to something specific. Torah needs to permeate everything in our lives. In other words, HaKadosh Boruch Hu is letting us know that living a Torah life is the complete life itself.

It is All From Hashem



The following story is from the Torah Wellsprings, and it happened with the rebbetzin of Reb Chaim Sarna zt'l at the beginning of the Holocaust, when she was still a young girl. When the Holocaust began, whoever could escape did so, and this young girl tried to save her life by running into the forest.

She came to a large field, and from the distance, she saw a large, beautiful house. She was very happy. The house was far from the city, and it might be safe for her to hide there. She hoped that the people in this home would take pity on her and save her. With her final strength, she rushed through the courtyard, arrived at the house, and knocked at the door, shouting, "Good people, save me! Save me!"

The appearance of the man who opened the door frightened her. The man wasn't wearing an army uniform, but his mustache was styled like those of the Nazis. This man was the Nazi commander in that area, and the girl immediately realized the trouble she had fallen into. The man laughed a rolling laugh as he shouted, "A Jew!"

She almost fainted and had to hold onto the doorpost for support. He said to her, "Foolish Jew. You ran all this way to fall in my hands... I can kill you in a moment." But suddenly, he became serious and said, "Tell me, young girl, how did you get to my door?"

She showed him the path she took to reach his home. It was through the field, at the edge of the forest, and then through the courtyard. The man said, bewildered, "I have many dogs guarding my home. Why didn't they attack you? How did you pass them and remain alive?"

The girl looked back and saw tens of dogs. All of them had murderous teeth. She hadn't noticed them earlier. She wouldn't have risked passing through the courtyard if she had seen them earlier. But the fact is that she did pass this courtyard, and she was alive and well!

The man thought that perhaps she had mystical strengths. He told her, "Look, today you can sleep here. But tomorrow morning, I will send you out of here, and obviously, you will need to pass through the courtyard where I keep my dogs. And then I will see. If the dogs do their job... nothing will remain of you. But if you survive, I will know that you are protected from above, and then I give you my word that I will take care of you until the end of the war."

The rebbetzin said, "Don't ask how I passed that night because the night didn't pass! I cried and prayed the entire night, knowing what awaited me in the morning. I saw in my imagination hungry dogs eating me alive, ripping me to pieces. When it was daybreak, I prayed to Hashem, 'Save me, Hashem. Please, Hashem, I am a young girl. I place my life in Your hands; please save me."

They sent her out into the courtyard. She walked calmly; she didn't rush. She wasn't afraid. She focused on reminding herself that there is no one in the world other than Hashem. Hashem was with her, and the dogs didn't touch her, nor even bark. The man, who was a high-ranking Nazi officer, witnessed the miracle and had no choice but to keep his promise. He protected her until the end of the war.

Even wild animals can't cause harm, if Hashem didn't decree it. This isn't solely with regards to dogs. It also applies to dogs who appear like humans. No one can harm you unless Hashem commands so. "When Hashem accepts a person's ways, He will cause even his enemies to make peace with him." As in this story, the cruel Nazi saved this girl and protected her throughout the war. She was saved because of her emunah and because of her tefillot. Tefillah can turn everything around and save a person's life.

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev באר היטב פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק.

וַיִּסְעוּ מִקִּבְרֹת הַתַּאֲוָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּחֲצֵרֹת – *'And they departed from Kivross Hatavoh, and camped in Chatzeiross.'* {33:17}

The only way to overcome passion and lust, **תאוה**, is to remember that we are encamped in **חצרות** - courtyards, an antechamber to the World-to-Come and in which we shall not reside for long.

- **Reb Yitzchok of Vorkeh**

וְאֶת הֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֻס שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר – *'And the cities which you shall give to the Levi'im shall be six cities of refuge, which you shall appoint for the slayer that he may flee there; and to them you shall add forty-two cities.'* {35:6}

The six cities of refuge call to mind the six words of the verse "Shema Yisrael", in which a person should find a spiritual refuge for his weary head which is always beset with confusion. The forty-two cities call to mind the 42 words in the first section of the Shema recital beginning with **ואהבת** through which a person can strengthen himself in the service of his blessed Creator.

- **Oheiv Yisroel, Apter Rov**

שִׁתֵּי־צִפֳּרִים- *'These are the journeys of the children of Israel.' (33:1)*

The forty-two "stations" from Egypt to the Promised Land are replayed in the life of every individual Jew, as his soul journeys from its descent to earth at birth to its return to its Source. (**Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov**)

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

As we mentioned previously, by 1935 the MH had both appointed Rabbi Feldman and acquired the necessary licences for an independent Shechitah body. To fill the office of Shochet it secured the services of a young Talmid Chochom, Reb Yosef Halpern. Having passed away only recently, he will be known to most readers. Reb Yossel, who was described as an Ilui by the Gaon, R' Meir Shapiro, fulfilled an exemplary role as Shochet. He remained in that position until 1944, when the role was taken over by R'Hershel Schneck, who in turn was succeeded by R'Chaim Katz in 1948. Although Reb Yossel had by that time become a businessman, he often still dealt with fowls in an honorary capacity when the Shochet was indisposed.

R'Chaim Katz rightly enjoyed a high reputation. He had a number of select pupils, whose services are in demand till this day, here and elsewhere. One of these, R'Yakov Yosef Weisz, was engaged as Reb Chaim's assistant in 1956. (We hope to come back to the topic of Shechitah in later issues.)

In later years, Reb Yossel's combination of extensive Torah learning, sharp intellect and forceful character played a major part in the developing Kehilla. He was to become the MH president and one of the founders, together with Rabbi Feldman and others, of the Prestwich Jewish Day School.

Since at the end of last week's column the Jewish Day School was mentioned, it is not out of place to point out here that this institution, although quite separate from the MH, was founded by virtually the same small group of MH trailblazers in 1944/5. It is now known as Yesoiday Hatorah School, which was the original name of the MH Shool). This School has always had the Rav or Dayan of the MH as its spiritual arbiter, as confirmed in a Kehilla AGM in December 1945. Its original building was in Wilton Polygon, near to

the Manchester Yeshiva, but in 1947 it moved to its present site in Prestwich, into a Victorian mansion with extensive grounds - gifted by the magnanimous Reb Isaac Wolf.

Let us return to the topic of the MH. One of the earliest innovations instituted by Rabbi Feldman for the Kehilla was the production of the first printed Jewish calendar for Manchester. In this he was assisted by his son Moshe (Moritz) and the outstanding Talmid Chochom and polymath, Reb Feivush Feingold. It has now appeared annually without fail for over 65 years.

Old Kehilla records indicate that the topic of what should and should not be allowed in calendar advertisements occupied a lot of Executive time. Some friction was occasioned when the Beth Din began to produce their own calendar, one of similar design, 19 years later, in 1954. The matter went as far as exchange of solicitors' letters regarding breach of copyright! After mediation and negotiation the matter was settled peacefully, with the Beth Din making a small payment for damages.

The tragic Nazi persecution, which began with German Jewry, brought many refugees to our town in the 1930s. Several families found their corporeal and spiritual haven in the young Kehilla and their variegated talents enhanced its growth. Indeed, the first MH butchers shop, which opened concurrently with the MH Shechita, was owned and run by such an immigrant, Mr Jonas Halberstadt. His widow later sold the business to his nephew, of the same name in 1946, who then became the MH licensee.

By the time this Mr Halberstadt relinquished his MH connection in 1955, his shop (one of thirty then in the town) was estimated to account for 9% of all Kosher meat sales. This tempestuous period will be elaborated upon in later issues.

Another Kehilla institution where the German input was paramount is the Chevra Kadisha. It was started around 1939, largely through the efforts of its first President Reb Meir Gluckstadt. Incidentally,

it may be noted that the annual membership was increased to 10/6d (about 52p) in 1945, although it is only fair to add that burial rights came later, with the opening of our own Beis Olam.



By 1948 the necessity for the Kehilla to acquire its own burial grounds had become clearly evident. Discussion on this topic was a major item in that year's A.G.M. (In those times General Meetings of the Kehilla took place annually) In 1951 there were some discussions with the Corporation regarding the possibilty of obtaining a site in Blackley, but these came to nought. Eventually, in 1955, the contract for a section of the Whitefield Beis Olam was signed and a downpayment of £500 was made.

Around the time of this purchase Rabbi Feldman was niftar.

In accordance with his instructions, he was buried in Rainsough in a 'used' plot. A year or so earlier the earthly remains of the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Moishe Yitzchok Segal, had been transferred to Bnei Braq (this writer was present at the reinterment). Rabbi Feldman had then said that he would like to use this 'Ungevarmter Bet'.

As mentioned previously, Rabbi Feldman ZL spent his last few years in retirement. In 1947, after taking counsel from Dayan Abramsky ZL, then head of the London Beth Din, he requested the Kehilla to

look for a successor and an Extraordinary General Meeting was convened in March 1947. This is not the forum for detailing the eminence of Rabbi Abramsky. However, it should be noted that he was a consistent friend and ally of the MH Kehilla and frequently rendered practical assistance, despite holding high office in a body which was often at odds with us.

The Selection Committee formed at the 1947 E.G.M advertised the vacancy on the Continent and many applications were received. The applicants included Rabbi Yonason Rabbi Steif in Zurich, a Rabbi Aronson of Bad Gastein, a Rabbi Hirsch of Paris (formerly of Tarnow) and a Rabbi Dovid Schneebalg from Wiznitz, who was then living in Prague. Rabbi Steif was well known as the former head of Pest Beis Din and was subsequently reknowned as a Posek in Brooklyn. Because of technical hindrances his application was not advanced. Rabbis Schneebalg and Hirsch were shortlisted and the former was chosen.

In November of the same year another E.G.M. was called. Rabbi Schneebalg was warmly recommended to the members by Rabbi Feldman and by Rabbi Gedalya Rabinowitz and his appointment was approved unanimously. Rabbi Feldman was quite prepared to relinquish the title of Rav, but Rabbi Schneebalg's appointment was as Dayan of the Kehilla, despite some dissenting voices at the General Meeting.

Amongst the many conditions relating to his appointment, Rabbi Schneebalg was requested or required not to wear his Shtreimel in the street. Due to the politically tense situation at that time, with British Mandate in Palestine under attack from the Irgun and Stern Gang, the adoption of a low profile was considered prudent. He did agree to provide Hashgocho on machine Matzos. Reluctance on this last point by Rabbi Berel Rottenberg had been a factor in his not being appointed in the 1930s.

Rabbi Schneebalg's tidious consumers removed the labels together with adhering crust, it being rumoured that they were affixed with the Mashgiach's saliva!



The need for an independent MH bakery always seemed to be on the agenda in those times, but any practical plans did not achieve realisation. During the '39-'45 war and early post-war period there were strict Governmental controls on foodstuffs. 'Allocations' had to be applied for and were not easily obtained. The shorter route was to acquire an ongoing business with existing allocations and convert it to MH usage. In both 1948 and 1953 such negotiations took place, but although a limited company for this purpose was registered by the MH, the talks with the owners broke down.

Eventually, in 1966 a bakery in Bignor Street was bought. This sufficed until l974, when there was a move to premises in Back St Marks Lane. These were used until 1988, when the current bakery in Leicester Rd was opened.

Milk - Before the days of the MH, Cholov Yisroel was considered a luxury. Independent supervision from a recognised body did not appear until the 1940s. At one time an individual use to bring cans in a handcart from a farm in Agecroft. Later, a Mr Yosef Uhrmacher (Masher) ran a one-man business. He travelled each day to a farm and sold the milk at the doorstep from his three-wheeler van. The Kashrus may have been impeccable, but dissatisfaction was evident.

Although still common practice at that time, having milk ladled out from churn to jug was inconvenient, messy and, by its nature, unhygienic. Not all would be customers could be reached under this distribution system and one had to stay in until the milkman called.

When the MH pioneered the first supervised supply in this city, there were objections from the family and friends of Reb Yossef. Complaints were issued that his livelihood was being curtailed. (Ironically, he moved to London, opened a shop and enjoyed far greater prosperity.)

The initial MH supplier was a small dairy in Northumberland St, called Paul Webster. But arrangements with them were haphazard, and a properly organised supply only began in 1948 with Allied Dairies. This lasted until 1952, when Frosts Dairies in Crumpsall took over the franchise.

Incidentally, one of above suppliers tried to save on Kashrus fees by forging copies of the MH bottle caps!

By 1963, Messrs. Whitfield were the approved suppliers. They became associated with Lancashire (Hygienic) Dairies (by then suppliers to the Beth Din), with whom the MH stayed until 2002.

Mikvah - When the MH was founded, a Mikvah in Teneriffe St had been functioning since about 1900. It had been constructed in a converted house. Although primitive by today's standards it did include a 'Shvitz' in the men's section. The Teneriffe Mikvah, mainly patronised by the Charedim, was owned and run by the Broughton Mikvah Committee. (A prominent local Macher once said, "I wouldn't send my dog there!")

Its most active member was probably Reb Pinchos Mikulincer ZL, who was even known to climb on to the roof to replace slates!

This Mikvah was destroyed by bombing in 1941. The lack of an immediate alternative was very worrying. An old Mikvah in the New Synagogue, although neglected, was examined and found to be Kosher by Rabbi Feldman. This Mikvah served as a stopgap for a while. Incidentally, the New Synagogue building at 122 Cheetham Hill Rd, which was built in 1887, is still standing. Although currently

occupied by the Cheetham Hill Clothing Co., the upper storey, with its fine windows, is well worth a visit.

Meanwhile, around 1942, another Mikvah was created at 99a George St. This was the private initiative of Reb Yankel Davidson OH. Nominally, it came under the control of the independent Higher Crumpsall Mikvah Committee, headed by Rabbi Chesner ZL and the Rosh Yeshivah ZL. Its legal ownership was later unclear and this uncertainty eventually allowed some dissension, as will be explained.

The clamour for a purpose built Mikvah grew in strength. In May 1952, the MH formed the Manchester & District Mikvah Committee to this end. A plot was acquired from the Jewish Day School. Discussions, promoted by Mr Frost, President of the Holy Law, who was always a good and active ally of the MH, were held with the Shechita Board for a joint project, but agreement could not be reached.

Plans for the new Prestwich Mikvah were prepared. The estimated cost was £13,000 and a fund-raising campaign began. Two small sums came from unusual sources. The trustees of the defunct Poilishe Shool still held a credit balance of £373. Its transfer to the New Mikvah fund symbolised the historical connection between the two institutions.

At that time the Zionist Federation was trying to take control of a number of established Jewish Schools. At a London protest meeting in Grove Lane Shool, Rabbi Gedalye Rabinowitz ZL had delivered a rousing speech, which found disfavour with the Federation. Their newspaper, the Jewish Observer, libelled Rabbi Rabinowitz in its report of the meeting.

A writ was threatened or served. Eventually, Rabbi Rabinowitz settled for a published apology and damages of £50, which he donated to the Mikvah appeal.

In mid-1957 the new Prestwich Mikvah was officially opened by Rabbi Babad ZL of Sunderland. A decision had to be made about the (earlier mentioned) George St Mikvah. In order to explain this let us go back a few years.

The financing of 'George St' had always been parlous. By 1953, its committee, in which the Grosskopf family was prominent, was in desperate financial straits. The Shechitah Board had provided small sums totalling £225 over the previous 15 years, but when approached again, did not find themselves able to undertake total financial responsibility.

The MH was more receptive and in the same year 'George St' became affiliated to the MH, who underwrote its deficit, without technically becoming legal owners.

When the Prestwich Mikvah was nearing completion, certain well meaning but misguided individuals, who were not happy about the impending closure of 'George St', persuaded the aged and ailing founder, Reb Yankel Davidson OH, to transfer ownership of the property to themselves. These individuals circulated letters and changed the locks.....

Naturally, there were some counter-measures from MH activists. It was soon realised that as nobody was prepared to underwrite the running costs, it had no future. The remaining useful equipment was moved to Prestwich.

Not long afterwards the Beth Din built a new Mikvah in Tetlow Lane, near to George Street, to the specifications of Dayan Weiss ZL.

to be continued.....

"G-d's love for us is infinitely stronger than anything we may have done to weaken it." ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● **Why did Yisrael have to give forty-two cities to the Levi'im besides the six cities of refuge?**

וְאֶת הֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֻס שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר (35,6) "And the cities which you shall give to the Levi'im - six cities of refuge which you shall give so that a killer can flee there, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities."

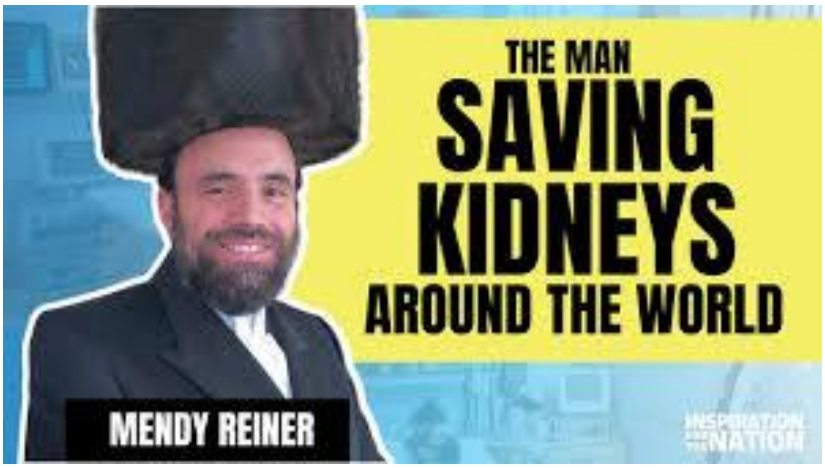
It seems to me that the reason why Hashem commanded Yisrael to give to the Levi'im exactly forty-two cities was because they made forty-two journeys in the wilderness, and thus they also made camp forty-two times. And at each of these encampments Hashem turned the desolate wilderness into a place fit for living.

Therefore, Yisrael were required to repay Hashem for His kindness, and they did this by separating forty-two cities from the lands allotted to them for the Levi'im, the servants of Hashem, one city for each encampment. By doing this they gave to the Levi'im who had no land of their own a place to live, and thus this was a fitting way to repay Hashem for His similar kindness to them in the wilderness.

"To be a successful businessman, you must have remarkable talents; and if you have such talents, why waste them on business?" ~ Rabbi Yisrael Salanter.

"Man was created to do, achieve and create. If his hand is indolently resting in his bosom, it is dead flesh." ~ (Malbim)

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner



A kidney transplant changed my mind about orthodox Jews.

"On a freezing day last March, 24 hours after my husband had a kidney transplant, I (Meryl Ain) stood in a long line waiting to get into Weill-Cornell Medical Centre in Manhattan to see him.

As I waited, I noticed two men in Chassidic garb cut to the front of the line. *I cringed.*

Why had they not politely waited their turn rather than calling attention to themselves? They were obviously Jewish. But I soon learned that calling attention to themselves was, indeed, the last thing they wanted to do.

Satmar women cook, and their men help to distribute more than 2000 kosher meals weekly to Jewish patients at all New York City hospitals.

At Weill-Cornell and 11 other local hospitals they also stock a hospitality room with meals and snacks that is open around the clock.

[This selfless service is also carried out in cities around the world, and our gratitude goes out to the numerous volunteers – each and every one of them. Dear reader, please read Mrs Ain's story].

When I left the hospital that Friday afternoon, I took a bag of food, supplied by those 'Satmar' carers, and placed it in the refrigerator in my room at the hospital guest facility, where I was staying, a block away. There was so much food, I put some in the freezer.

At sundown, I lit the battery-operated candles the hospital chaplain had given me. Then I sat down to eat Shabbat dinner by myself. I

had *challah*, matzah-ball soup, chicken, potato kugel, and other side dishes, and dessert – all courtesy of the Satmars.

The next day, I ate the lunch they had provided. These meals conveyed caring and empathy. And, in a surprising way, they soothed me. I immediately realised that this was living Judaism at its finest.

I had once believed that there were some Orthodox Jews who looked down on Jews like me who wore pants, did not cover their hair, and lived in suburbia. But, after a month spent in the hospital as my husband recovered, I quickly learned I was totally wrong.

Renewal, the organisation responsible for pairing my husband with a compatible kidney donor, was founded by Chassidim. And I later learned that Orthodox Jews donate their kidneys to others in need at a higher rate than any other group.

[Receiving a diagnosis of irreversible kidney failure can be devastating. That's where Renewal comes in. Renewal helps patients and their families navigate the complex process of kidney transplant, from finding a donor to arranging the transplant and beyond. They also support donors to make sure their incredible self-sacrifice is as simple and safe as it can be. In 2006, when Renewal began, their purpose was to support potential kidney donors through the challenging process of decision making and donation. But since then, they have become the go-to organisation for all kidney-related issues. Their service is free of charge to anyone in need.]

That alone is laudable since organs are in short supply. More than 100,000 people are currently on a transplant list and 17 people die each day waiting for one.

In fact, my husband's new kidney came from an altruistic Orthodox kidney donor whom we met several times months later. She has six children and is a *mikvah* attendant and volunteer firefighter. She said her only regret is that she doesn't have another organ to donate.

I no longer think about whether Chassidim look down on those who don't practice their brand of Judaism. It simply doesn't matter to me anymore. They are living the admonition *kol Yisroel arevim zeh lazeh* – 'All Jews are responsible for one another'.

And, while I may continue to dress as I please and practice Judaism in a different manner, I now have a soft spot in my heart for Orthodox Jews who saved my husband's life and then nurtured me during an extremely trying time."

Kol Yisroel arevim zeh lazeh. - Good Shabbos





These are the journeys of Bnei Yisroel...And they arrived to Eilim; and in Eilim there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palm trees… And they traveled from Refidim and they encamped in Sinai. And they traveled from Sinai and they encamped in Kivros Hata'ava. (Bamidbar 33)

Why doesn't the Parsha (Massei) mention that we received the Torah at Har Sinai when it lists the journeys of Bnei Yisroel?

If the Torah mentioned how there were date palm trees and springs at Eilim, we would certainly expect that the Torah would mention Matan Torah at Har Sinai!

Perhaps, by not mentioning Matan Torah, HaKadosh Boruch Hu is teaching us that Torah is not associated with or attached to something specific. Torah needs to permeate everything in our lives. - In other words, HaKadosh Boruch Hu is letting us know that living a Torah life is the complete life itself.



Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Learning Tolerance

At the end of Sefer Bamidbar we see a remarkable thing. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is talking now to the Am Yisroel about coming into Eretz Canaan. And He says like this: **כִּי אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – *For I Hashem dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel* (Masei 35:34).

It's the conclusion now of that great experience, the forty years in the Wilderness, and finally they're getting the *haskamah* of Hakodosh Boruch Hu: "You've succeeded! I'm proud of you, you're worthy now that I can dwell in your midst." Now, the question is what made them so great, so great that they deserved this praise from Hakodosh Boruch Hu?

You know, the Jewish history is like a book, and it's a book being written by the Am Yisroel even today. Whatever we are doing today; when we live virtuous lives or learn Torah or build more yeshivas; when we establish *frum* families and when we achieve perfection of character; whatever it is we're doing, we are writing sentences and chapters in that book which will someday be a great history.

● Learning to Write

But nobody can write a successful book willy-nilly, without guidance. And so, before we were permitted to set out to write our history we

were given a preface with models to follow. I don't know if you ever saw the old schoolbooks that were used to teach children how to write – it could be it's the same even today. In the beginning of the book, they had written in a nice handwriting all the letters and even some paragraphs and the rest of the book was blank pages. So you turned to the beginning and studied those printed letters and in the blank pages that followed you wrote your own letters, copying that handwriting. And after a while, you learned how to write in a beautiful handwriting.

And so Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave us the *Dor Hamidbar* so that we can look at them and utilize them as a model when we're writing the book of our own history throughout all our generations.

And therefore it's important to understand in what way the Am Yisroel in the Wilderness became especially worthy of Hashem's acclaim at the end of forty years. Because what they achieved, and the way they achieved it, we're expected to model our own lives after that.

● Savlonus School

I'm going to give the answer first with just one word, one word that will introduce our subject tonight. I'll say the word, but remember, that's not the whole story; there's a lot to say still.

What made them great? The answer is they learned *savlonus*, to tolerate. When we look back at the *Dor Hamidbar* we see that the nation was given a special training for forty years – they underwent a schooling of *savlonus*.

Now, if we're going to understand that we have to study a little bit what it means to live in the Wilderness.

First, let's imagine what happened when they heard that they were going to stay in the Wilderness for forty years. Oooh, were they disappointed! Instead of going יוֹם מֵחֹרֵב אַחַד עָשָׂר, immediately to Eretz Canaan, they had to travel around in the *midbar*. "Whoooah!

What's going on?! We thought we were traveling to Eretz Canaan!" They were thinking already of the nice juicy figs and dates and big houses with gardens, and all of a sudden they were told, "Forty years in the *midbar*." What a disappointment that was! You need *savlonus* to take that. It's a tremendous test, a terrible test!

● Tolerating Family and Neighbors

You know what it means to live in the Wilderness? They didn't live in houses like they did in Mitzrayim. Back in Mitzrayim they had houses. The Chumash says that. And now they're in tents!

You need *savlonus* if you're going to live forty years in a tent. It's very inconvenient. And they had a lot of children in those days and so it was difficult. Constantly, children were doing things. They were children, not angels. Children complain. They cry. They fight. And a mother has to listen to complaints. She has to listen to them and she has to be able to tolerate it. It's not easy.

And it's not only your own family. One of the features of the *midbar* was the crowding together of all the people. Your neighbors were right there next to you. Your tent is here and the next man's tent is right here. They didn't have any big space between them. And it wasn't houses with walls; it was cloth tents.

When you have a couple of million people camping together in one small place, one tent near another, you have to learn *savlonus*. People could get on each other's nerves all the time. Maybe you want to take a nap and the baby in the next tent is crying loud; he doesn't let you sleep. You have to have *savlonus* for neighbors like that. It's almost impossible for people to live together in such crowded conditions unless you are practicing *savlonus* day and night.

● Midbar Mashgichim

Not only your neighbors were crowding in on you. Every Jew had a *mashgiach* appointed over him. You know, in the yeshiva, let's say you have a yeshiva of a hundred boys; so there's a *mashgiach* who's

watching the boys. And they feel it's too much. He's always looking at us!

But in the *midbar*, for every nine people, there was one *mashgiach*! *Sarei asarah* means that of every ten people, one was appointed as a *mashgiach* to watch. And he had full authority over them. You realize what a straitjacket that was? It's a most uncomfortable form of existence. You had to be a big *savlon* because you were constantly being watched; somebody was always looking over your shoulders.

And for every hundred, there was another supervisor, and for every thousand another supervisor. And so the nation in the *midbar* was swarming with supervisors.

Everybody was under the strictest control for forty years. You know what that means to be under constant scrutiny every minute. It was almost impossible to tolerate such supervision! You needed very much *savlonus* to live that way.

● **Trumpet Trepidation**

They had to learn to be *soveil* Hashem too. After all He didn't allow them any *menucha*. He never told them, "Settle in. In this place we'll be staying for at least a month." Oh no; every day they had to be on the alert, maybe they'll hear the sound of the trumpets that will summon them to pull up the stakes of their tents and start moving. They never had any kind of security that they would remain in one place for longer than a day. It's true, in one place they remained for eighteen years. But the entire eighteen years, every day, they were in trepidation. Every minute the trumpet might sound and say: get moving!

And then there was the diet. Here Hakodosh Boruch Hu took us out of Mitzrayim and right away there's no water. Three days with no water – you know what that means, no water. You're thirsty. The

children are climbing the walls from thirst. You're irritated. You need *savlonus* for such a test.

● **Intolerable Food**

And food? What food? **וְהַמָּן כִּזְרַע גַּד הוּא וְעֵינוֹ כְּעֵין הַבְּדֹלַח**. The *mann* was colorless; a light color, practically colorless. It means the most dull kind of menu. It was a difficult test. If your wife would serve you every day for one week the same thing exactly, you might feel a little irritated. Suppose she served you a month the same thing, day and night the same thing, I'm afraid what would be. And here for forty years, that's all they had.

Now all of you *tzaddikim,* you know that when they wanted to have a *machshavah* of eating meat, it tasted like meat. But that wasn't so easy. It wasn't just like this, "Meat!" and it becomes meat. No, it wasn't that easy. They had to sit down and say, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu is a *tov umaitiv* and He's able to give me meat and the *mann* has all the good things in it that meat can give me and I would like to have the feeling I'm eating meat." And little by little if you worked on it, you could get a certain amount of *hana'ah* as if you ate meat.

But it was only a matter of the *seichel*. It didn't turn into meat. It was still *mann*. And any moment that he stopped using his *seichel*, it tasted like the same old *mann* again. So he had to keep his mind on it constantly.

And so even if you were from the good ones who could do that, it's a little bit tiresome! They would like to sit down to *real* meat! A red steak and some wheat bread! Ahh! To be able to chew a solid piece of bread. Real food! But the *mann*? Always, day after day, to eat something that just your mind is telling you tastes good?

● **Punished by Design**

Hakodosh Boruch Hu was creating a patient people. Day after day for forty years He was testing our tolerance and making a perfect nation from us. Whether you liked it or not, you learned to be

a *soveil*, a patient fellow. You learned to accept your circumstances. It was the most remarkable period in our history, the most unusual period.

And if you'll understand this, you'll understand a big *yesod*. You know some people think that because of the *meraglim*, that's why they were sentenced to be forty years in the *midbar*. After all, it says openly in the Chumash that reason.

But there's a *klal gadol* in history that we must learn as follows: Whatever happens was planned by Hashem beforehand. **מֵרֹאשׁ וּמִקֶּדֶם** Hashem wanted them to be forty years in the *midbar*. And so whatever your *cheder rebbi* might have taught you, it's time to get this into your head right now. It was planned; in order to make this great generation even greater, even more perfect, so that they should be worthy of the encomium of Hashem, Hakodosh Boruch Hu had in mind from the beginning they should not enter Eretz Yisrael.

● Gaining Perfection

And that's because for that great generation it was an opportunity, an opportunity for perfection of character. The Gemara says in Sanhedrin (7a) that when we were good friends, *ki rechimton aziza*, "when our love was very great," Hashem said, "we could sleep together on a very narrow place. But now, even a bed of sixty cubits is too narrow for us." It means this. When people are interested in perfecting their character, they can get along even in crowded and uncomfortable circumstances.

Subsequently when they were not so perfect, they weren't able to continue that way, so Hashem allowed them to scatter in the land of Canaan and each one lived on his own farm far away from each other. And there they had stone houses and real food and all the ordinary conveniences of life.

But in the *midbar* everything was set up to test them. They had to watch out what they said. What will the neighbors say? What will

the *sarei asarah* say? It's the same food again? It's already thirty years, every day breakfast and supper, the same thing! We're traveling? We're not traveling?

And therefore they learned to accept the circumstances and they became perfect in the *midbar*. They lacked many conveniences and they learned to grin and bear it. They learned to tolerate that strict limited diet; they learned to tolerate the scarcity of water and the inconvenience of living in tents. They learned to tolerate the necessity to travel sometimes long journeys on foot. After a while, they became accustomed to it and little by little they gained the perfection of *savlonus*.



42 Different Travels by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

This week's Parsha does a very strange thing. The Parsha lists the 42 different travels of the Jewish people in the dessert in a very thorough and repetitive manner. We must ask ourselves what the purpose is for this cumbersome reiteration.

The Ramban dwells on this point. The Ramban asserts that our specific knowledge of each of the places that the Jews camped in will instil in us a deep faith in Hashem which is integral to the success of the Jewish people during the long and bitter exile. We know that Hashem sustained the Jews miraculously in the wilderness by providing them with food and water in an otherwise barren wasteland. Yet this "miraculous" existence may have been difficult for later generations to not be sceptical of. The Torah therefore listed the exact geographical locations of the encampments of the

Jewish people so that anyone from any future generation could retrace the steps of the Jews and see for themselves that indeed, the area was completely void of any sustenance and the only way to survive would be by the direct intervention of Hashem.

We in modern times must apply this lesson to our lives by realizing every time we make a Beracha on anything we consume, even though it seems like our sustenance comes from natural sources, all of our provisions come solely from Hashem.

Rashi has a slightly different explanation for this difficulty. Rashi quotes the Midrash which gives a parable to explain the Torah's verboseness in this Parsha. "This can be compared to father whose son was sick along the way while they were traveling. On their way back, the father points out to the son all the different places they had passed and what occurred in those places. For example, where he had to carry him because he couldn't walk on his own, and where he had to fend off wild animals to protect his precious son, etc". Similarly, Hashem listed all the places the Jews had traveled in the Torah to remind them of their journey and of all the places they stumbled.

This Rashi seems very strange indeed. If you love someone, you don't go listing all of their failures. Moreover, the Gemorah in Bava Metzia (58) says that this is forbidden. "If one has repented, it is forbidden to remind them of their previous actions because this will just make them feel bad". Would Hashem do something that the Gemorah expressly forbids?

Perhaps we could explain this Rashi by using the premise of the Ramban. Although nobody likes to be reminded of their failures, in a way, this reminder is reassuring and can build a person's belief in Hashem. If one sees clearly and undeniably that every time they deviated from the straight path, they were punished severely, this realization will instill in them an unwavering faith in the abilities of their Creator.

R' Chaim Veloshiner in his commentary on Avos (2:1) explains that every person goes through good happy times and difficult times. During the "happy days", everything seems to be going your way and everything works out just the way you want it to and time flies. During the "sad days", everything seems black and dingy, and it is difficult just to make it through the day. During these times, it is hard to even remember that there were better days.

R' Chaim advises that although one might consider himself a total failure during these times, he shouldn't become despondent and give up, rather he should continue trying anyway, and if he does, he will merit seeing tremendous Heavenly aid in all that he does.

I would like to conclude by saying we all must strengthen ourselves in this arena of serving Hashem out of happiness and not just a person who is feeling despondent. The Rambam writes that the Mitzvah of Simcha is a very important one and is integral to one's service of Hashem.

The Ari z"l writes that everything he achieved was due to his Simcha that he had for performance of Mitzvos. How does one acquire this Simcha? One way is as we mentioned – to recognize how much Hashem has helped achieve to date and how Hashem will continue to help him if he keeps striving. Another way is to remember the Mishna in Avos which says that one moment in this world is worth more than all of the next world because he still has time to grow. This recognition of his potential in this world will also generate great happiness in a person's heart and help him to reach immense levels.

May Hashem help us to serve Him out of great joy always!

Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah lays out the interesting laws applicable to somebody who kills another Jew by accident. The Torah states that if one Jew kills another inadvertently, he is to seek refuge from the disgruntled relatives of the victim in one of six cities designated specifically for this purpose, and to wait there until the Kohen Gadol of that generation passes away, at which point he is free to go.

There were two things bothering me about this chapter in the Torah. First, what is the connection between the Kohen Gadol of the generation, and the accidental homicides that have taken place. This dependency seems completely random. And second, aside from being random, it seems unfair. Theoretically, there could be one murderer who enters into the city of refuge when the Kohen has recently been appointed as a young man, and the murderer will have to remain there for *seventy years*, and there could be another murderer, who goes in when the Kohen is already an older man, and only have to stay incarcerated in that city for a few short months. Where is the justice in such a system?

The Seforno explains that the Chumash is teaching us a very deep lesson in proper Torah outlook from these laws relating to manslaughter. Regarding the second question we posed, we need to point out that it was based on one faulty premise – that the events which occur in this world are as random as they appear. However, in reality, we know that every single event that happens in this world, happens only because Hashem allowed it to, and each of the far-reaching ripple effects of those events, were administered with great forethought by the Creator of the universe who is capable of making such an exquisitely complex calculation.

When a court of law decided to punish a criminal for his wrongdoings, they do not (and cannot) take into account how that punishment will affect the criminal's spouse, his parents, his close friends, his children, and all the people he may have positively affected were it

not for their punishment. They simply punish the wrongdoer commensurate with his crime. But when Hashem punishes somebody, each one of those aforementioned possibilities is taken into great account, and scrutinized with a magnifying glass, before exacting punishment on a sinner.

Bearing this in mind, the second difficulty we raised falls away on its own, but for us, this is a very powerful, and comforting lesson to always keep in mind. The world's events can seem quite random at times, with no rhyme or reason to help us explain why wonderful things, and horrible things seem to befall certain people completely arbitrarily. But after what we have explained, it is clear that each and every event, from the heaviest, to the most mundane, is well thought out by our father in Heaven, who loves us boundlessly, and knowing that, it behooves us to really contemplate why any event, or even ripple effect has befallen us.

However, we still haven't dealt with the first question, which was to understand the apparent connection between the murderer going free, and the death of the Kohen Gadol. The Rambam, in his famous work, "Moreh Nevuchim" offers a possibility to explain this correlation. He says that when we analyze what is going on inside the relatives of the murder victim's minds, we find that they are very upset that they lost somebody they were close to, and the Torah took into account the possibility that they may be unable to control themselves in exacting revenge. But revenge and retribution can be frozen by grief. When a person suffers tremendous grief, he is not really capable of planning his revenge, as his emotions are completely occupied with grief. When the Kohen Gadol of any generation passed away, the grieving period was so intense, that it assumed all control of that generation's emotions, and obviated the need to keep the murderers incarcerated.

Why specifically the Kohen Gadol. Why not the head of the Sanhedrin, or the king of the Jewish people, why specifically was the

Kohen responsible for generating the greatest amount of grief in his passing?

Today we are not fully sensitive to the damaging effects of sin, and that is why we're capable of asking this question. The Kohen Gadol was capable of atoning for the sins of every single Jew of the generation, and that atonement was so appreciated by each and every citizen, that they all mourned the tragic loss of their beloved "Mechaper". The other leaders of the generation were giants, to be sure, but didn't have that added factor that they could erase the Jewish people's sins.

The lesson for us in all this, is how seriously we have to view even the slightest of sins, and how careful we must be to avoid any action that even smells like it might lead to a sin.

There are those who would get so emotional when they would reach the word, "Ashamnu" in the confession we make during the repentance process, that they would fall down in a dead faint from the realization that they had rebelled against their creator. An additional advantage we can gain by knowing how serious even the smallest infraction can be, is in how we view the difficulties we encounter in life. When we know that each discomfort we suffer helps us to purge ourselves of some of the iniquity we may have perpetrated, we will be a lot more appreciative of the ability to cleanse ourselves.

May we all merit to always recognize how every event in life which befalls us, does so only because Hashem allowed it, and guard ourselves against even the most trivial wrongdoings!

"Even if you can't do it all, still try to do something small. A little bit goes a long way." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

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

Only a small group of Jews lived in Dorohoi, a tiny, sleepy town in a quiet suburb in Eastern Europe. The head of their little community was Rav Yechiel Mechel Tirer of Dorohoi, a holy and modest tzaddik who kept his spiritual accomplishments to himself. He was the grandson of the Be'er Mayim Chaim and the Ba'al Shem Tov, and his father-in-law was Rav Meir of Kretchinev. Yet he chose to live in a small town so that he could serve his Creator quietly and modestly.

At the time, a boy of about sixteen living in Dorohoi was suddenly afflicted with excruciating pain in his feet. This wasn't normal pain. He could barely walk; every step was excruciating. He couldn't function, couldn't concentrate on anything, couldn't relax. He was practically paralyzed with it, and it kept him confined to his bed. All he could think about was the horrific pain.

The boy despaired of finding a cure. The doctors couldn't find the source of the pain, and no medication could mitigate it. He tried herbs, and every other possible remedy, but nothing helped. Finally, the boy decided to go and see the rav, agonizing though it was to walk, and seek his brachah and advice.

When he was standing in front of Rav Yechiel, after painfully trudging to his house, he burst into tears. Between choking sobs, he told the rav about the terrible pain. Rav Yechiel gave him a brachah, and the boy felt encouraged, but the remedy didn't come.

The days passed, and Rav Yechiel passed on to the Next World, leaving the Jews of Dorohoi broken-hearted and grieving. Among them was the boy whose condition didn't change. On the contrary, it worsened with time. In the recesses of his heart, he was hurt and upset that the tzaddik's explicit guarantee never came to fruition. And now the tzaddik had passed away, and he was still left with his pain.

One day the boy was in the local shul when the pain in his feet flared up. The pain was acute and piercing, and from the depths of his soul he called out, in a voice that didn't sound like his, "Soul from the World of Truth, if you will bring me a remedy for my yeshuah, I will learn forty chapters of mishnayos for your merit."

He meant every word. He hoped that one of the souls residing in the upper realms had heard him and would bring his desperately needed yeshuah.

And so it was. Amid his pain and screams, he somehow fell asleep, and he had a dream...

In his dream he was standing in the large beis midrash of Dorohoi, and on the eastern side he saw the rav, Rav Yechiel, sitting there wrapped in tallis and tefillin. Suddenly the tzaddik stood up and turned to him, a large volume of mishnayos clutched in his hands.

"My son," the rav said, "you promised to learn forty chapters of mishnayos, and I'm asking that you do so in my merit. From now on, they are mine. And as a sign that this is true, you will see that when you wake up, your legs will be healed. The pain will be gone. But you must remember to fulfill your promise faithfully and learn the forty chapters in the merit of my neshamah."

The boy awoke suddenly, drenched in sweat. The dream was still vivid in his mind's eye, the visage of his rav who had appeared to him from the higher realms still sharp. With trembling hands, he reached out to touch his legs and feet, checking for pain, and incredulously there was no trace of it. - He was happy to fulfill his promise and learn the mishnayos for the sake of the tzaddik's neshamah.

Rav Asher Kowalsky heard this story from the Nadvorna Rebbe, who heard it from the boy himself, whose name was Mendel Shechter. The story clearly illustrates how there is no segulah like the study of Torah, and the study of Mishnah is the ultimate segulah. It is a powerful key to many yeshuos and brachos, even those that are

beyond nature. In light of this, it's a wonderful elevation for a neshamah when one learns for the merit of the deceased, since the word mishnah is spelled with the same letters as the word neshamah. The daily study of Mishnah will open the Gates of Blessing, the Gates of Torah, the Gates of Parnassah, even if not for the sake of a neshamah, but for the sake of the one who studies it.

Mishnayos is the best favor one can do for the soul of the deceased- because the letters of the word mishnah spell the word neshamah.



"Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim" by Rav Nachman Seltzer

One day, Jerry Natkin came to see Hacham Baruch. Jerry was a successful businessman, the owner of William Barthman Jewelers. At the time, he was in the process of finalizing a deal with a major shopping center in Manhattan that would give him space on the ground floor for a large retail jewelry store.

"Rabbi," he said, "I was wondering if you can help me out."

'*What do you need?*'

"I need your help in arranging a contract."

'*What kind of contract?*'

"I'm about to open a new store in the city. It's a prime location, and I'm excited about the possibilities. But there is one issue that I need to iron out: Every store in the mall must be open seven days a week. In order for me to rent the space for my new flagship store, I need to find a way for the store to remain open on Shabbat. That's why I'm here. I need the Rabbi to help me write the kind of contract that will allow me to take a non-Jewish partner just for Shabbat. The store will be mine six days a week and his on Shabbat."

'*Jerry, I don't arrange those kinds of Shabbat contracts*," Hacham Baruch told him. '*They go against my principles. But if you want, feel free to find another Rabbi who will do it for you.*'

"I don't want to go to another Rabbi," Jerry insisted. "You're my Rabbi."

'*Jerry*," Hacham Baruch said, "*can I ask you a question?*'

"Of course, Rabbi, what do you want to know?"

'*Right now, do you have enough money to put food on the table?*'

"Of course. The Rabbi knows that I'm a successful businessman."

'*Then why do you need to do this? I don't like these kinds of partnerships, and if you're already doing well and don't really need to do this, then I recommend that you back away from the deal and don't open a store that will be open on Shabbat, non-Jewish partner or not.*"

"But, Rabbi, I'll be making a lot of money from this deal!"

The Rabbi looked at his congregant. '*Jerry, listen to me. Don't do it.*' There it was. The Rabbi had spoken.

Jerry thought it over. In the end he decided to follow the Rabbi's advice and didn't sign the lease.

The conversation that Jerry had with the Rabbi took place in the spring of 2001. The following September, just a few months after his decision to back out of the deal he had almost closed with the management of the Twin Towers, terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center, destroying both towers and sparking wars with Afghanistan and Iraq. Had Jerry signed the deal, not only would his store have been completely destroyed, but there is a good chance that he would have been there when it happened as well. But he wasn't there – because he obeyed his Rabbi.

Until this day, Jerry Natkin keeps a copy of the lease he almost signed but didn't thanks to Hacham Baruch. It's a reminder of the miracle that happened to him, and a reminder of how important it is for a person to have a Rabbi and to follow his advice.

לקראת שבת לכו ונלכה- *Let us go and greet Shabbos.*

The call to "go out" and greet Shabbos is an enjoinment to participate actively in bringing Shabbos consciousness into our lives. Kiddush Hashem, Sanctifying Hashem's Name, is not exclusively reserved for giving up one's life to glorify Hashem's Name. Kiddush HaChaim, sanctifying life, living on a higher spiritual, moral and ethical plane, also sanctifies Hashem's Name.

Hashem gave us the gift of Shabbos, a day devoted to holiness through action, a day in which Hashem grants the unparalleled opportunity to experience kedushah, spending our time devoted to Him. It is a time to enjoy our family on a spiritual level – singing together, talking in learning together, even eating together.

A Shabbos seudah with family and friends is far more than a social gathering; it is a sacred gathering infused with kedushah, in which the bonds of the relationships are elevated through the divrei Torah and zemiros, unlike mundane social gatherings.

Every Shabbos table, when graced with spiritual intention, transforms the Shabbos table to a Mizbayach – and the home into a Mikdash me'at, miniature sanctuary.

We are now entering the *tekufah* known as the "Nine Days" leading up to *Tishah B'av*. The *Bais HaMikdash* was destroyed through *sinas chinam*. But the **Chofetz Chaim *zt"l*** explains that this does not refer to *sinah* – hatred per-se, but to the *lashon hara* it engendered. - How careful we must be with what comes out of our mouths!

Sefer Maalos HaTorah states that if *lashon hara* destroyed the *Bais HaMikdash*, our words of *Torah* will rebuild it. Let us be *mischazek* - both in *ameilus baTorah*, and in keeping the words that emanate from our lips. *Torah* is *emes* and our words must be *emes* and with that we will be *zocheh* to the *geulah sheleimah b'karov!*



Inspired by Time - Every Step of Galus Is Part of the Journey – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

This Shabbos Is No Ordinary Shabbos It is Shabbos Chazak, a moment of spiritual culmination and renewal, when we complete another sefer of the Torah and declare together: chazak chazak v'nischazek — be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened. It is a call to rise with renewed resolve, to deepen our connection to Torah, and to carry its light forward with strength.

We also usher in the deeply emotional and soul-stirring month of Av — a month drenched in pain and longing, yet filled with the hope that only an Av, a loving Father, can give.

Three Weeks give way to the Nine Days. The mourning sharpens. The tears flow more freely. The shadow of the churban falls heavier upon our hearts. But within that darkness, we sense something deeper — a Father's call, a path to closeness, and the quiet strength to carry on.

Every Journey Al Pi Hashem

In Parshas Massei, the Torah recounts the journeys — masa'os — of Bnei Yisrael through the midbar. Forty-two journeys. Some were long, some short. Some easier, others painfully difficult. They never knew what lay ahead — whether they would camp in a place for a single night or remain there for many years. Yet through it all, they followed al pi Hashem yisu, v'al pi Hashem yachanu — by the word of Hashem they traveled, and by the word of Hashem they encamped. - They understood that every step, every hardship, every detour and delay — was not random. It was all part of the journey, a path paved al pi Hashem, leading them slowly, deliberately, toward Eretz Yisrael, toward the Beis HaMikdash, toward their destiny.

We too find ourselves in the midst of a long and painful journey. A journey marked by uncertainty, by loss, by longing. A journey through exile, through sorrow, through generations of tears. A journey of pain, war, of terror, of heartbreak — both national and personal. - We do not know what today will bring, let alone tomorrow. We do not know how long each stage will last. We cannot see what awaits us around the bend.

But we hold fast to one truth: al pi Hashem yisu — we are moving forward by the word of Hashem. Even in the darkness. Even in the confusion. Even when our hearts are broken and our vision is blurred by tears. - We do not travel alone. Hashem is guiding us, step by step, through the midbar of history — toward the final geulah.

A Step Further

It is not enough to simply travel al pi Hashem yisu — to move forward through painful and difficult terrain, following Hashem's guidance through the darkness. - That is only the first step.

Today, as we descend deeper into the long and bitter galus, as we witness so much suffering in Klal Yisrael, we must recognize that there is something more. It is not enough to passively endure the pain. We must ask ourselves: What is Hashem telling us? What is the deeper meaning of these days?

This week, we enter the Nine Days, when the mourning for the Churban intensifies. And yet, paradoxically, the name of the month is Av — Father. Why? Why do we name the most tragic month on the calendar with a term of love and relationship?

The answer is that even within the suffering, we are being cradled by our Av, our Father in Heaven. The destruction, the pain, the confusion — it all stems from love. And the question we must confront is this: On a deeper level, what does that mean? What does it mean that these tragedies, this galus, this war and terror, are from our Father? Which father would do such things? How can this

be an expression of fatherly love?

Rav Dessler's Letter

Famously, Rav Dessler zt"l was forced to leave his family and settle in England during the turbulent years leading up to the Holocaust. It was a time of chaos and devastation. A time when Am Yisrael trembled beneath the weight of unfolding catastrophe.

From England, Rav Dessler wrote deeply emotional letters — michtavim — to his family, filled with spiritual clarity, longing, and insight. These letters were later compiled into Michtav MeiEliyahu, a sefer that continues to inspire generations.

In a letter written to his son, Rav Nachum Zev Dessler, in the year 5701 (1941), Rav Dessler shared a heart-wrenching insight that continues to ring with terrifying relevance:

"Today," he wrote, "I believe that because people have stopped learning mussar, Hashem has transformed the entire world — and our very lives — into a terrifying Sefer Mussar."

And now, more than eighty years later, Rav Dessler's words speak directly to our world. Are we not living inside that same Sefer Mussar? Barely a week passes without news that makes our hearts tremble. If not in Eretz Yisrael, then elsewhere. If not terrorism, then war. If not war, then fear and tzaros. Am Yisrael continues to bleed. We hear of more of our brothers falling al kiddush Hashem. More families shattered. More korbanos whose names are now engraved in eternity.

But Rav Dessler didn't stop there. In that very same letter, he turned to the question that haunts us all: Why? What is the purpose of all this suffering? What is Hashem trying to teach us?

And there, Rav Dessler quoted a teaching from the Chassidim — a teaching that opens a window into the heart of our times, into the era of chevlei Mashiach.

We are all familiar with the term chevlei Mashiach — the birth pangs of redemption. The final, painful contractions before the arrival of geulah. Usually, we associate this term with pains, of anguish that precedes new life. But Rav Dessler offered a deeper interpretation.

He noted that the word chevlei does not only mean labor pains. It is also related to the word chevel — a rope. Before Mashiach comes, Hashem sends these "pains" — not to cause suffering chas v'shalom — but to send us a chevel, a rope. A lifeline. An opportunity to tie ourselves to Him more tightly than ever before.

That is what we are going through today. These tragedies, these moments of terror and heartbreak, are not meant to push us away. They are meant to pull us closer. To awaken us. To remind us that there is nothing and no one else to hold on to — except Hashem. The chevlei Mashiach are not only the labor pains of redemption. They are the ropes that pull us back to our Father in Heaven.

This Shabbos, as we stand at the crossroads of Chazak, we are being invited into something deeper. We are being reminded that even here, even now — in this painful stretch of history, amid headlines soaked in grief and fear — we are not forgotten. We are still being held. We are still being guided. We are still being loved by our Av, our Father in Heaven, who whispers through the sorrow: "Return to Me. Tie the rope tighter. I am waiting."

So let us take that rope — that chevel — and hold on with all our strength. Let us respond to the Sefer Mussar of our generation not with despair, but with teshuvah. With tefillah. With acts of achdus and chessed and heartfelt longing for the Beis HaMikdash.

In a world trembling with pain, our response must be stronger: more tefillah, deeper teshuvah, greater achdus. Because even now — and especially now — our Av is near, waiting for us to take the first step. Bimheirah v'yameinu. Amein.

A Message from the Kalever Rebbe - Humility brings a life of Unity and Nachas



The Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz in Marienbad

מֵהֹר הָהָר תְּתָאֲוּ לְבֹא חֲמָת וְהָיוּ תּוֹצְאֹת הַגְּבֻל צְדָדָה - "From Mount Hor to the approach of Chamat, and the border extends to Tzidah." (Bamidbar 34:8)

Shlomo HaMelech wrote (Mishlei 3:34), "But to the humble He gives grace..."

R' Pinchas from Koretz explained the meaning of this pasuk in Imrei Pinchas (Sha'ar Toras HaAdam, 42), just as everything a baby does is endearing and well-received — because it's done with pure innocence and no ulterior motives — so too, when a person acts without self-interest, even their unusual behavior is met with approval and acceptance.

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe from Monsey, zt"l, told me the following story that he heard from the R' Shlomo Eliezer Weisel, zt"l, Av Beis Din of Tarnowa, who in turn heard it from the person involved:

This person was the melamed of the holy R' Shalom of Skohl, zt"l. After marrying the daughter of the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz, zt"l, the melamed was sent from Belz to Vizhnitz to continue learning with the Rebbe. Before Rosh Hashanah, he returned home to Belz. When he came to take leave of his Rebbe, the Belzer Rebbe, zt"l, before traveling back to Vizhnitz, the Rebbe asked him to wait a moment. The Rebbe then performed an elaborate netilas yadayim (ritual hand-washing), and afterward said, "Please give my regards to my mechutan in Vizhnitz."

When he recounted in Vizhnitz how the Rebbe of Belz had prepared himself before sending greetings by washing his hands, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe responded, "It makes sense that I love him—because he learns Torah lishmah (for its own sake). But I don't understand why he loves me!"

When the melamed returned to Belz and conveyed this, the Rebbe replied, "That's exactly why I love him—because he doesn't understand what there is to love about himself."

This is why the Torah was not given on the highest or most majestic mountains, but rather on the lowly and humble Mount Sinai. The taller mountains are seen as flawed, for arrogance is considered a spiritual blemish. A person who is arrogant finds no favor in the eyes of Hashem or people—and as a result, cannot truly connect to Hashem through the study of Torah.

As the Gemara (Megillah 29a) states on the verse "Why do you leap, O lofty mountains?"—a heavenly voice proclaimed: "Why do you seek to contend with Sinai? You are all blemished compared to Sinai." The word "lofty" used here is the same as the term for certain physical defects listed elsewhere in Torah. Rav Ashi said: From here we learn that a haughty person is considered blemished.

This explains why the Shechinah does not rest upon someone who is arrogant. This trait makes someone disliked and disrespected. The person feels frustrated and angry, and his relationships are riddled with strife, making it difficult to live peacefully with others. And peace is a prerequisite for the Shechinah to dwell.

Thus, the Torah warns us: "From Mount Hor"—if one acts with arrogance like a towering mountain—"you will turn toward Chamas (rage)"—you will be drawn into anger and fury. "And the border will extend to Tzidah"—your descendants will be drawn off the straight path, swerving away from the boundary of holiness, Heaven forbid.

Therefore, one must make a sincere effort to overcome arrogance. By doing so, he will merit a life of inner peace, lasting fulfillment, and genuine connection with others.



We are now nearing the end of a Zman – although Torah never ends. I had major Hashgacha Pratis because I found a *remez from* ***Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank*** **זצוק"ל** in the Parsha of how we can save ourselves from having any yerida Chas V'shalom during Bein Hazmanim.

The pasuk says: **וַיִּסְעוּ מִמִּדְבַּר סִינָי וַיִּחֲנוּ בְּקִבְרֹת הַתַּאֲוָה** 33:16.

The remez is that if one "leaves" Midbar Sinai [i.e his Torah] so he will end up camping in "kivros Hataiva" – he will fall into his taivos!

R' Tzvi Pesach explains that the only way we will not fall is if we stay connected to the Torah, since without Torah one will fall into a rut.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - A Reminder Of Love

In Parshas Masei, the Torah tells of the death of Aharon **וימת שם** which was in the month of Av. Why does the Torah repeat Aharon's death, as it already told us in Parshas Chukas **וימת שם אהרן** - ***Aharon died there***.

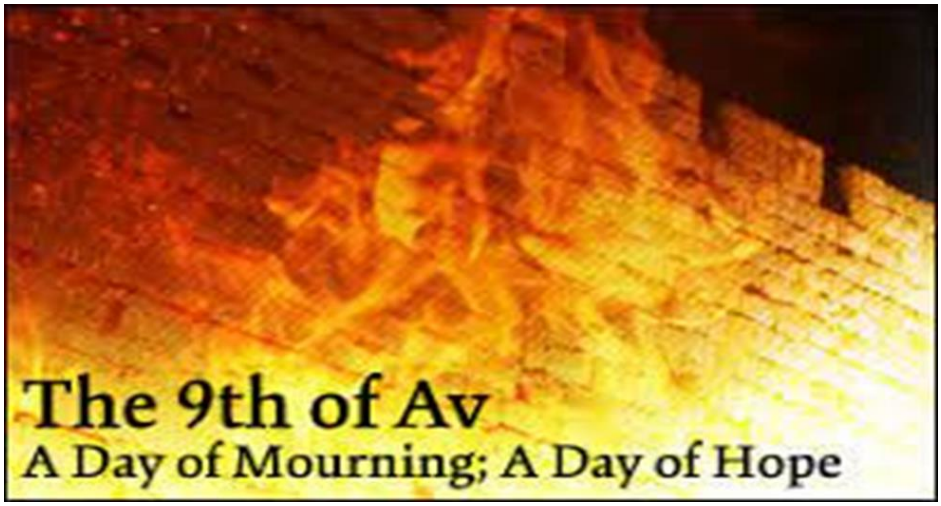


In Parshas Masei the Torah reports the encampments without going into detail on what happened there. Even when it mentions Sinai, it makes no mention of the great event of receiving the Torah, rather it just says **ויסעו מרפידם ויחנו במדבר סיני**, ***they journeyed from Refidim and encamped in the Wilderness of Sinai.*** However, when it comes to the death of Aharon, it relates what happened as it says they encamped in Mount Hor…Aharon went up to there and died on Rosh Chodesh Av. Why does the Torah do this? Why is Aharon's Yartzheit (The Torah makes note of the date of his death—Rosh Chodesh Av) the only one mentioned in the Torah?

The Sefas Emes explains that the only Yartzheit stated in the Torah is Aharon's because he died in Av. The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, which occurred at this time, was due to **שנאת חנם**. Since Aharon was an **אוהב שלום ורודף שלום** - loving and pursuing peace, we must learn from him because that is the rectification that is needed. This also explains why Aharon's death is repeated in Masei because Masei comes out in most years Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Av or Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av.

In order to rectify the tragedies of the month of Av, we need to remove **שנאת חנם**.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Turning darkness into light



Tisha Bav is known to be a day of tragedy. During this mourning period we observe certain restrictions such as not taking a haircut, refraining from this month is called **מנחם אב** as it a consolation for us knowing that in the future when the Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt, these will be days of happiness.

This idea is shown to us in Megilas Rus where **נעמי** said **המר ש-די לי מאד** - Hashem has dealt bitterly with me. Taking the first letters of these words **המר ש-** די **לי מאד** -, we notice it spells **שלמה**, since what appeared to be bitter was setting the way for the birth of Shlomo who would build the Beis Hamikdash. So, it all turned out for good. With this we can grasp מעם ה' **שלמה** משכרתך - may your payment be full from Hashem, which can also be interpreted as referring to Shlomo.

We should merit to see the building of the Beis Hamikdash speedily in our days.

Torah Tavlin

The Skulener Rebbe, R' Yisroel Avraham Portugal zt"l (Talelei Oros) would say: "Parshas Maasay is always read during the Three Weeks before Tisha B'av. Just as all the journeys were for the purpose of enabling the Jews to reach Eretz Yisroel, the journeys of our exile are to enable us to merit and reach the **גאולה שלימה**.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Shabbos Relief

The Gemara says **כיון ששבת ווי אבדה נפש** - ***once one has completed Shabbos, woe, he has lost the soul***.

R' Moshe Kobriner gives us a novel interpretation and says the nefesh removes (**אבדה**) the woe and pain through Shabbos. Indeed, we sing in the Zemer on Friday night in **יום זה לישראל - לנפש מצרה תסיר אנחה** - ***for a troubled soul, it removes moaning.***

The **מתוק מדבש** says that 'one needs to accept Shabbos with happiness and delight in it.' Included in delighting in Shabbos is to distance oneself from sadness. With our eyes, we saw many people that a certain instance of pain happened on Erev Shabbos and through accepting Shabbos with happiness and diverting from the pain, the situation reversed from **יגון לשמחה מאפילה לאורה** - 'darkness to light.'



The story is told of the **Levush's** (1535-1612) only son that was found murdered near Horodna, where the Levush was Rav. When the mayor arrived, he ordered that the body be kept in a nearby inn until it was ready for burial. The body was then placed in a room and then locked. Although the Levush heard the tragic news just prior to Shabbos, he resolved that he would make every effort to ensure that the spirit of Shabbos would not be compromised by his personal misery.

To escape his intense grief, he began composing the Friday night Zemer of **מה יפית**. He became so engrossed in expressing the lofty

ideas and emotions of the song that he calmed himself. In heaven, this made a profound impact.

As the Levush composed the final stanza **חי זקף** - ***O living G-d raise up***, it was decided that his deceased son should be raised up and brought back to life. That Friday night his son awoke and attempted to leave the hotel room but found the door locked. He then climbed out of the window and arrived home at the conclusion of Shabbos just as his father was removing his shoes to commence the mourning period for his son. Upon seeing his beloved son, he was overwhelmed with joy. He assumed that the account he was told of his son's death was a fabrication until his son informed him that it was all true. He had died, and because of the merit of the great Zemer, he was revived.

This story spread to even the non-Jews of the city. The non-Jews began referring to the Jews living there as "the Jews, singers of **מה יפית**.

The following story was told over by R' Chaim Zaid shlit'a, Rav of Pardes Katz in Bnei Brak, and a prominent speaker for the Arachim organization:

"A few summers ago (5773), I was invited to speak at a Shabbaton for older single girls, in the old city of Jerusalem. There were 26 unmarried women in attendance, the youngest of whom was thirty years old. I understood the fragility of their situation, the discouragement of being single for so long, and I wished to give them chizuk."

The day before he travelled to Jerusalem, R' Chaim went to visit **Chacham Rav Dovid Abuchatzeira shlit'a**, in Nahariya. He was seeking advice and guidance on what to say to these girls, what message he should deliver to this group who have been in the "parsha" of shidduchim for so many years.

R' Dovid looked at him and said, "Tell these single women that they must rid themselves of their contaminated devices (handheld electronic phones), if they wish to become engaged!" R' Chaim was stunned. He knew that these girls were not overly religious, nor were they the type to whom he could make such a statement and they would accept it no questions asked. They were older, many were professionals, and most would consider his request to be somewhat juvenile, if not downright insulting. How was he to explain this to them?



That Friday evening, R' Chaim spoke at the Shabbaton and although he really wanted to tell them the words that the Chacham told him, he couldn't bring himself to say it just yet. He was afraid to alienate them so soon after Shabbos began. The following day as well, he conducted the prayers and ate by the seudos, speaking words of Torah on the parsha. The girls looked up to him and were quite appreciative of his prepared words. Many engaged him in discussions, and he spoke about topics pertaining to marriage and shidduchim, although he hadn't found the right way to present the ultimatum of R' Dovid.

Finally, Shabbos was over and he made havdala for the women. At that moment, R' Chaim thought to himself, "It's now or never!" He cleared his throat. "There is one more thing I would like to add before we conclude this beautiful Shabbos. I believe it is something that will be quite beneficial." He had caught the rapt attention of all 26 women.

"On Thursday, I went to speak to Harav Dovid Abuchatzeira shlit'a, and I asked him what message I should give over to you over the

course of the weekend. He told me to tell you that if you would be willing to get rid of your phones and 'contaminated devices,' he assures you that you will see great yeshuos (salvation) in your quest to become engaged."

The room went silent. R' Chaim feared that these older girls would ridicule and reject his words outright. He was concerned that the good feelings he had built up over Shabbos would dissipate into thin air. What he didn't expect was their reaction. After a moment of thick silence, one women stepped forward and placed her iPhone on the table next to R' Chaim. Immediately, more and more of the women came forth and carefully put their devices down on the table. Their faces registered pure emunah in the words of a Chacham and they actually looked relieved to be doing something worthwhile to help themselves.

A pitched battle raged between those that believed and those that wished to hang on, but after more than an hour, 25 women had given up their smartphones - and their joy and happiness was permeating. All but one girl had done what R' Chaim thought was the impossible - this lady resisted the temptation insisting that she cannot live without her phone.

R' Chaim placed all the phones into a shopping bag, blessed the women with mazel and hatzlacha, and took leave of the group. He had just loaded his family and belongings into his car when the final woman - number 26 - came running out to the car. "Here," she said with a smile, "count me in!" He took the phone from her and added it to the collection in his shopping bag. It was an amazing event and R' Chaim felt that he must share it with the Chacham.

He travelled to Nahariya and brought the bag of smartphones to R' Dovid who was literally moved to tears at the sight of it. He was so emotional that he immediately announced, "I wish to bless these girls that they will all become engaged by Tu B'av!" (15th of Av) A

Tzaddik's words cut straight through to Heaven and one by one, the girls all got engaged.

By Tisha B'av, 25 girls became kallahs! The only one who had yet to become engaged was the last young lady who needed a bit of extra time to give up her phone. As a result, she required a bit of extra time to become a Kallah - five more days to be exact. On the night of Tu B'av, she too became engaged to her basherter!

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיִּסְעוּ מֵחַצֵרֹת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּרִתְמָה 33:18



Parshas Maasay begins with a list of the 42 encampments of Bnei Yisroel in the midbar. One of the stops along the way was a place called Rismah.

Rashi says the real name of this place was Kadesh, from where the ill-fated journey of the Meraglim was launched. The name Rismah is a reference to the wood of the Rosem tree (Tehillim 120), **חִצֵּי גִבּוֹר שְׁנוּנִים עִם גַּחֲלֵי רְתָמִים** which when burned into charcoal remains different than other types of wood. Most burned wood, when the fire is extinguished, cools off at the same time. However, the coal created from Rosem wood is different. Even when it appears to be extinguished on the outside, it continues to burn from within for a very long time.

Our Sages compare this Rosem wood to one who speaks Lashon Hara. He appears harmless on the outside but on the inside his slander can cause destruction to its intended target for years to come.

This Shabbos as we read about Rismah, let us take to heart the evils of Lashon Hara so that we may merit to see the Geulah speedily in our days!

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - The Mission For Av



The Gemara tells us how far **כבוד אב ואם** extends to from a story of **דמא בן נתינא**, a non-Jew. Why from a non-Jew?

It is because of Esav that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed. It of course is no coincidence that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed in the month of **אב**, as Esav is the one who excelled in כבוד **אב** ואם. In fact, Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel remarked that no one honoured his father more than him besides Esav.

The Maharal teaches us we are commanded to respect our parents since they brought us into this world. Honouring parents is more related to non-Jews since they have **עולם הזה** and as the Midrash tells us Esav took **עולם הזה** and Yaakov **עולם הבא**.

This is why Esav honoured his father more, since this world is his portion, and his father is the one who brought him here. It is for this reason that we learn the extent of **כבוד אב ואם** from a non-Jew.

The Gemara highlights the **כבוד אב** of **אבימי** to his father **ר'אבהו**. It comes as no surprise that the letters of **אבימי** rearranged spell **ימי אב** - the days of the month of **אב**.

Another connection we see of parents to children in context with the month of **אב** is the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza which caused the Churban - destruction of Yerushalayim - since **קמצא** and **בר קמצא**, as the Maharsha tells us, could be a father and son, as **בר** means the son of.

In light of what we said, we can understand why the Mitzva of **כבוד אב ואם** is in Parshas Vaeschanan, as it falls out in the month of Av. We should all strengthen ourselves in **כבוד אב ואם** , thereby causing the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל 33:1



The parsha of Maasay always come out during the weeks of Bein Hametzarim. Rashi tells us that the Torah records all the "journeys" of Klal Yisroel in the desert, "to inform us of the kind deeds of the Omnipresent, for although He issued a decree to move them around and make them wander in the desert, you should not say that they were moving about and wandering for all forty years, and they had no rest."

The Kozhnitzer Maggid zt"l in sefer avodas Yisroel points out that there are 21 days of Bein Hametzarim. If we count the 21 days plus the 21 nights, we have 42 This corresponds to the 42 journeys of Am Yisroel!

They are called "**מסעות**" (journeys) rather than "places" because the Torah is teaching us that every place we go too in life, physically or spiritually, must be a travel! It must be an experience that takes us somewhere new. We must pick ourselves up at every station in life and grow from wherever we happen to find ourselves.

Specifically at this time, Bein Hametzarim, which is the saddest time of the year, we must take the message of the "**מסעות**" and not stay in a bad place. These are days when our mood is dampened. The tzaar HaShechina is in the air and the days are melancholy in nature.

The Gemara tells us very clearly, when one enters the month of Av, his simcha is diminished. This is natural. The Koznitzer Maggid is warning us: Don't stay in a bad mood for too long. Being depressed leads to being unproductive. We need to keep picking ourselves up and travelling to a place where we can come closer to our destination - which is kirvas Hashem.

Even sadness can be a tool for growth, as long as one realizes that it is only part of the journey and not the final destination. 42 days and nights of Bein Hametzarim are the 42 "**מסעות**" of Klal Yisroel in the midbar. Have a safe and meaningful journey!

L'Maaseh

Late in World War II, the tide had turned against the Germans. Towards the end of 1944, as the armies of Great Britain and the United States approached Nazi concentration camps from the west, forces from the Soviet Union were advancing from the east. The Red Army was heading straight for Poland and the Nazis needed to hide their crimes, moving or destroying evidence of the various atrocities they had committed there. Mass graves were dug up and evidence was burned. Numerous slave and labour camps were evacuated. Documents were destroyed. The Jewish prisoners that were taken from the camps were sent on what became known as the

terrible "Death Marches." Although the prisoners were already weak or ill from enduring the routine violence, overwork and starvation of concentration camp life, they were marched for dozens and dozens of miles in the snow and bitter temperatures to railway stations, then transported for days at a time without food, water or shelter in freight carriages originally designed for cattle.

On arrival at their destination, they were then forced to march again to a new camp. Any prisoner who was unable to keep up and fell to the ground out of sheer fatigue or illness, was shot on the spot. As the exhausted, desperate Jews trudged along, one of the men recognized his surroundings and realized that the trudging column of skeletons was passing the city of Lizhensk, a city made famous by virtue of the holy Rebbe, **R' Elimelech (Noam Elimelech) of Lizhensk ZT"L**, who had lived there and was buried there.



What an opportunity! As exhausted and distressed as he was, he could almost feel the charge of just being in the environs of the tzaddik. He knew he had to act, to do something. Feeling that he really had very little to lose, he somehow managed to slip away undetected from the walking column and took off in a dead sprint to the cemetery and kever of R' Elimelech. He knew he didn't have much time, for patrols were everywhere and in his prison garb and emaciated condition, there was no way he could conceal himself.

Arriving at the grave of the great Rebbe, he silently began to pray. His mind raced wildly trying to recall even a small prayer, something from Tehillim. When he finished his short, but meaningful prayer,

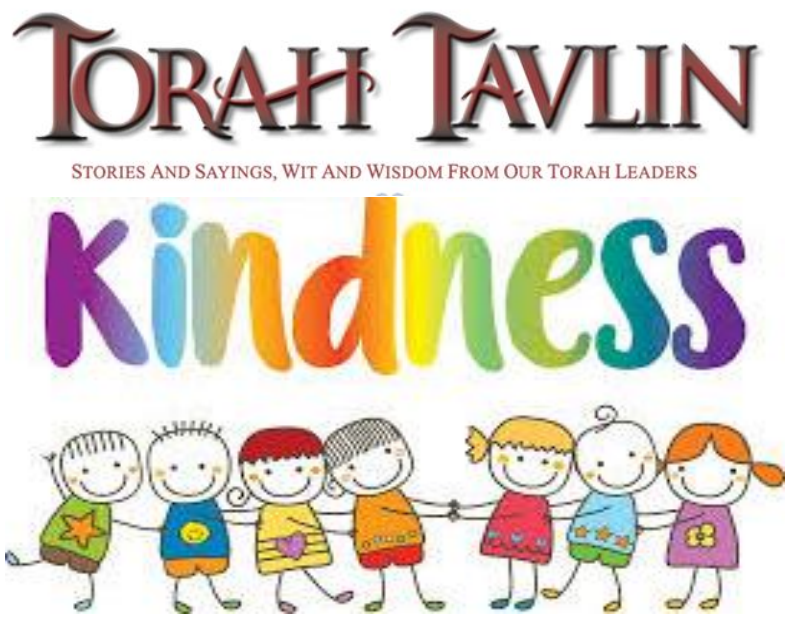
he bent down and scooped up a piece of earth from the gravesite. "This," he thought, "will protect me over the coming days. It will be as if the Rebbe, R' Elimelech himself, will be with me all throughout these difficult times." He slipped the clump of earth into the pocket of his prison uniform and slowly withdrew from the kever. He could just barely make out the column of prisoners trudging down the road, and he decided that rather than risk getting caught by a German or turned in by a Polish informer, which he knew meant instant death, he clung to his newfound source of hope and quickly ran back to walk alongside his fellow Jewish inmates. With the Rebbe's protection, he knew he would survive.

Wherever he went, he took with him the piece of earth from Lizhensk and survived one crisis after another, witnessing miracle after wondrous miracle, until the war finally came to an end. He was liberated near the Hungarian border, and he was absolutely certain that he had survived only due to the protection of the great Tzaddik from Lizhensk.

Soon after his liberation, the man had a dream. In his dream, he saw a short man with a glowing red beard appear to him. He had never seen this man before. The short man spoke in a soft voice and said, "Now that the war is over and you no longer need this protection, please put back the missing clump of earth."

A strange dream indeed. When he awoke, he dismissed the dream as meaningless, but when it recurred for several nights, he realized that the man in his dream was none other than R' Elimelech himself, who wanted him to travel back to Lizhensk and return the earth to his gravesite.

It was dangerous to return to Poland after the war, but mindful of his obligation, the man persevered. As soon as he replaced the earth, the dreams ceased.



אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְצִבְאֹתָם בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן 33:1 Rashi writes ***למה נכתבו המסעות הללו, להודיע חסדיו של מקום*** "***These are the journeys of Bnei Yisroel ... Why are these (42) journeys written here? To inform us of the חסד (kindness) of the Omnipresent*** - for although He issued a decree to move them about and make them wander in the desert .... you will find that throughout the thirty-eight years they made only twenty journeys."

Rabbi Dovid Gurwitz Shlit'a, says something amazing. Each one of the forty-two journeys that Bnei Yisroel made are preceded and succeeded with the words "**ויסעו /// ויחנו**" - ***"They journeyed ... and they camped."*** The gematria of "**ויסעו**" is 152, and "**ויחנו**" is 80. The difference is 72 - the value of the word "**חסד**" - kindness!

Penninim Al Hatorah

כי בעיר מקלטו ישב עד מות הכהן הגדל He shall dwell in it until the death of the Kohen Gadol. (35:28)

The Talmud Makkos 11a teaches that, since the fate of the rotzeach b'shogeg - unintentional murderer, was dependent upon the Kohen Gadol's longevity, there was fear that the rotzeach would pray for the early demise of the Kohen Gadol. Once the Kohen Gadol died, the murderer would be free to leave the ir miklat, city of refuge.

To circumvent their prayers, the mothers of the Kohanim Gedolim would furnish the murderers with food and clothing to keep them

happy and satisfied, so that they would not pray for the death of their sons.

Why did the Kohen Gadol not personally pray for longevity? His prayer for life would certainly be as effective as the murderer's prayer for his death. Perhaps this is why he had been elected as Kohen Gadol.

He realised, however, that, by praying for life, he was essentially praying for the many unintentional murderers to be doomed to a life of exile away from family and friends. If Hashem allowed him to live, if his personal merit outweighed the prayers tendered by the murderers – good. If not, well, that was his lot. It came with the territory. Nonetheless, he could not allow his personal prayer to have a detrimental effect on another Jew.



We derive from here the incredible power of prayer. The Kohen Gadol is a holy man. The murderer is an exiled Jew, who is in his position for a reason. True, the murder had been unintentional, but it was no accident. One is not sent to the ir miklat for an accident. He is sent for unintentional murder, which covers a gamut of ambiguous circumstances. This man is certainly not on a spiritual par with the Kohen Gadol; yet, the Kohen Gadol fears his prayers (or, at least, the Kohen Gadol's mother fears for her son's life).

קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בֶּאֱמֶת ***"Hashem is close to all who call upon Him – to all who call upon Him sincerely"*** (Tehillim 145:18).

Hashem listens, and, when the prayer is sincere, it achieves efficacy. The exiled murderer is sincere (perhaps for the wrong reasons, and self-serving – but sincere). And, thus, his prayers gave the Kohen Gadol's mother reason to be anxious for her son's life.

This is the awesome power of prayer. It works because of our relationship with Hashem. He is our Father in Heaven. A father always listens. He never closes his door to his children – regardless of the offense or the duration of time that has elapsed since they had last spoken.



In 1974, Rabbi Asher Wade, a U.S. Army chaplain, befriended a Jewish American officer named Stuart. Cadet Stuart did not strike him as being the religious type and so Rabbi Wade was surprised one day to see Stuart wearing a yarmulke on his head. Upon questioning Stuart's reasons for donning this unconventional attire, Stuart told Rabbi Wade the fascinating story behind it.

As part of their training and first year studies, cadets were enrolled in a course called, "History of Military Tactics and Field Strategies," taught be a Three Star Lieutenant General with a Ph.D. in military strategy. The course surveyed the major battles in history and detailed many of the tactics employed to defeat the enemy. These battles included those of the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Middle Ages, down to the latest battles of our modern era.

During the final two weeks of the course, which were devoted to reviewing the material, Cadet Stuart raised his hand with a question. "Sir, we have discussed so many various wars and battles, yet, not once did we survey any of the battles fought by the Jews, either of ancient times (Roman-Jewish wars) or of modern times (Arab-Israeli wars)? It would seem that those wars would give us much to learn from."

Cadet Stuart was surprised and dismayed by the General's reaction. "The normally friendly general snapped back with an order for me to see him in his office after class," he remembered. It was most unlike him to react this way and Stuart was apprehensive as he later approached the general's office. Stuart knocked and was ordered to enter, close and lock the door. He did so with mounting concern, which was further heightened when the general began by informing him that he would only answer the question he had posed earlier, in the privacy of his office.

"Do not think that the staff here at West Point has left the Jewish wars unnoticed?" asked the general sharply. "As a matter of fact, we have examined and analysed each and every war, battle and military combat, however, we have made the decision not to teach them here at West Point. You see, according to military strategy and textbook tactics, the Jews should have lost in almost every instance. The Jews should have been swept into the dustbin of history long ago. But they were not. They won those wars against all odds and against all military strategies and logic.

"This past year, we hired a new junior instructor. During a private staff meeting, the Arab-Israeli wars came under discussion. We puzzled at how the Jews won those wars. Suddenly, this junior instructor chirped up and jokingly said, 'Honourable gentlemen. It seems to be quite obvious how they are winning their wars: G-d is winning their wars!' You know what? Nobody laughed. The reason is, soldier, that it seems to be an unwritten rule around here at West Point that G-d is really winning your wars, even though G-d does not fit into any of our military textbooks!"

"I had never been so humiliated in my life. I felt about two inches tall. But it wasn't because of how he spoke to me. It was because I saw the unique irony of the situation. Wouldn't you know it, that I would have to come all the way to West Point just to find out how

great my G-d is from a non-practicing Presbyterian Three Star general!"

Cadet Stuart finished his story to Rabbi Wade with the following: "I went right back to my dorm room and dug down in my sock drawer to find that 'flap of cloth' that I threw on my head once a year. I said to myself: This thing is going on my head, because, in essence, I found, who I was and where I came from."

Yedidye Hirtenfeld- Why I Matter

וְאֵת הֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֻס שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר: ***"The cities that you shall give to the Levi'im--the six cities of refuge that you shall provide for a murderer to flee there, and also you shall give them forty-two cities."*** (35:6)



R' Nachman of Breslov z"l (1772-1810) taught: There are 48 words in the first section of Kriat Shema, which contains the foundation of our belief--six in the first sentence and 42 in the paragraph beginning "Ve'ahavta." Paralleling this, there are 48 cities of Levi'im--six cities of refuge and 42 other cities.

Our Sages teach that all 48 cities can provide refuge to a person who kills accidentally. Similarly, Kriat Shema provides refuge to one whose emunah--the essence of life--is at risk.

R' Nachman continues the analogy: From the fact that the Torah sends the accidental killer to the cities of the Levi'im to be

rehabilitated we can learn that one whose emunah needs rehabilitating should travel to a tzaddik. (*Likkutei Halachot: Hilchot Techumin 5:37)*

Ohr Somayach -Ohrnet

Journeys אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי **"These are the journeys…"** (33:1)



Every ba'al teshuva has a moment of epiphany. A moment which seems to be sent directly from Heaven to help him on his journey. At a reunion of a group of ex-secular Israelis organized by a leading outreach organization, one of the Rabbis happened to be passing by an older group. One member of the group picked up a piece of watermelon, and before eating it said with great concentration, "Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bid'varo!" Said the Rabbi, "Ilan, bidi'avad the beracha you made is sufficient, but the correct text of the beracha is "Borei p'ri ha'adama".

"Listen Rabbi", said Ilan, "I was on the Golan Heights in a tank in '73. We were surrounded by Syrian tanks. No one was getting out of there alive. Someone came over the radio and said, 'Doesn't anyone know a prayer or something?' Silence. Then someone said, 'I once heard something, and it goes like this: Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro! So we all shouted in unison down the radio: Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro! And 'Boom!' — we took out one of the Syrian tanks. So I shouted again: Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro! And 'Boom!' — another

Syrian tank! Baruch Atah Hashem… shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro! — and another one. …shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro! — another one; "…shehakol nihiyeh bid'varo! — and another one.

"So listen Rabbi, if it's good enough for the Syrians, it's good enough for watermelon." (It's a wonderful story, but of course the proper beracha for watermelon is as the Rabbi had instructed.) • Source: Heard from Rabbi Dovid Kaplan.

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

[לה:לא] ואל תקחו כפר לנפש רצח ***You shall not take atonement money for the life of a killer*** (35:31)



The Chasam Sofer explains by way of a hint that which Chazal have said that during the second Bais HaMikdash, Kohanim Gedolim were appointed because they bought their honourable position by bribing the king, and as punishment for this they did not live out their year. The direct result of this was that killers who had killed accidentally did not have to live long in an Ir Miklat – a City of Refuge – as every year the Kohein Gadol died and another was appointed in his place.

This is what the Posuk states: "You shall not take atonement money", that is, do not take a bribe to appoint Kohanim Gedolim, for if you do this, you will cause "the life of a killer" to return improperly to his home. (*Umatok HaOhr*)

Parsha Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport

והשיבו אתו העדה אל עיר מקלטו אשר נס שמה וישב בה

עד מות הכהן הגדל אשר משח אתו בשמן הקדש (35:25)



An accidental murderer is required to flee to a city of refuge and remain there until the death of the Kohen Gadol. The Mishnah in Makkos (11a) teaches that in order to ensure that they wouldn't pray for the death of the Kohen Gadol, which would free them to return to their homes, the Kohen Gadol's mother would send them food and clothing. This is difficult to understand.

As much as the accidental murderers appreciated the parcels, they surely valued their potential freedom even more. If so, in what way did sending them "care packages" prevent them from eating the food and then proceeding to pray for the death of the Kohen Gadol? Must the two activities be mutually exclusive?

Rabbi Shlomo Eisenblatt derives from here a beautiful lesson in the importance of sincere and genuine prayer. He explains that the goal of the Kohen Gadol's mother was to make sure that her son remained alive and did not die prematurely through the prayers of the accidental murderers for his death. In other words, her focus was not to guarantee that nobody would pray for the death of her son, which would have been unrealistic, but rather to ensure that even if they did pray, their petitions would be denied. How did she accomplish this?

Rabbi Eisenblatt explains that the power of a pure and truly heartfelt prayer is so great that even if it is uttered by somebody whose carelessness resulted in the death of another Jew, and even

if his request is for something as audacious as the death of the Kohen Gadol, if he cries out to Hashem with all of his heart, he may well be answered.

Although the feelings of gratitude that the accidental murderers felt toward the mother of the Kohen Gadol may not have been sufficient to stop them from praying altogether, they were enough to ensure that they would be unable to pray with their entire hearts, and the smallest reduction in the purity and intensity of their petitions was enough to prevent them from being answered.

Many times, in life we call out to Hashem with tremendous passion and fervour. When doing so, we should remember the lesson of the Kohen Gadol's mother and examine whether we are indeed doing so with all of our hearts, for the small disparity between 100% and 99% concentration can mean the difference between having our prayers accepted or not.

Pardas Yehuda- Rabbi Yehuda Z. Klitnick- Forty-two Journeys

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל These are the journeys of the Children of Israel (33:1)



The Sedrah recounts forty-two journeys through the wilderness. One should be aware that the very names of these stations convey hidden messages. Seforim teach that great secrets are contained in the exalted travel, and "the 42 places" allude to the mystical 42 Letter Name of Hashem." This alludes to the prayer of **אנא בכח**.

As an example of one amazing secret/remez, throughout the list of encampments we do not find the letter **זיין** occurring in any of the toponyms. The letter **זיין**, expressing the number seven, alludes to the day of Shabbos, the Seventh Day.

This teaches us that the journeys were taken only during the six days of the week. Therefore, there is no mention of the letter **זיין** during the journeys because it would convey an erroneous message. Its absence teaches a lesson to the discerning about the sanctity of Shabbos. (*Sefer Ahavas Torah*)

Pardas Yehuda- Rabbi Yehuda Klitnick- Hakaras Hatov

וְאֶת הֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֻס שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר:

"And the cities which you shall give to the Levi'im - six cities of refuge which you shall give so that a killer can flee there, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities." (35:6)



It seems that the reason why Hashem commanded Yisrael to give to the Levi'im exactly forty-two cities was because they made forty-two journeys in the wilderness, and thus they also made camp forty-two times. And at each of these encampments Hashem turned the desolate wilderness into a place fit for living.

Therefore, Yisrael were required to repay Hashem for His kindness, and they did this by separating forty-two cities from the lands allotted to them for the Levi'im, the servants of Hashem, one city for each encampment.

By doing this they gave to the Levi'im who had no land of their own a place to live, and thus this was a fitting way to repay Hashem for His similar kindness to them in the wilderness. (*Reb Shlome Kluger*)

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick- A lot of 'wasted' words?

Every letter and word of the Torah is precious- but a bulk of Masei seems superfluous! When the Torah summarises the journeys Bnei Yisrael undertook through the desert, it says (one example 33:18) וַיִּסְעוּ מֵחֲצֵרֹת וַיִּחֲנוּ בְּרִתְמָה ***They journeyed from Chatzeiros and camped in Rismah. They journeyed from Rismah and camped in Rimon Peretz.***

'Why does it repeat the place they started off in- we know that if they journeyed to Rismah then the next journey obviously started from Rishmah? And it is like this for every journey that is recorded in Massei; why repeat the same place as the destination for one journey and the point of origin of the next journey?

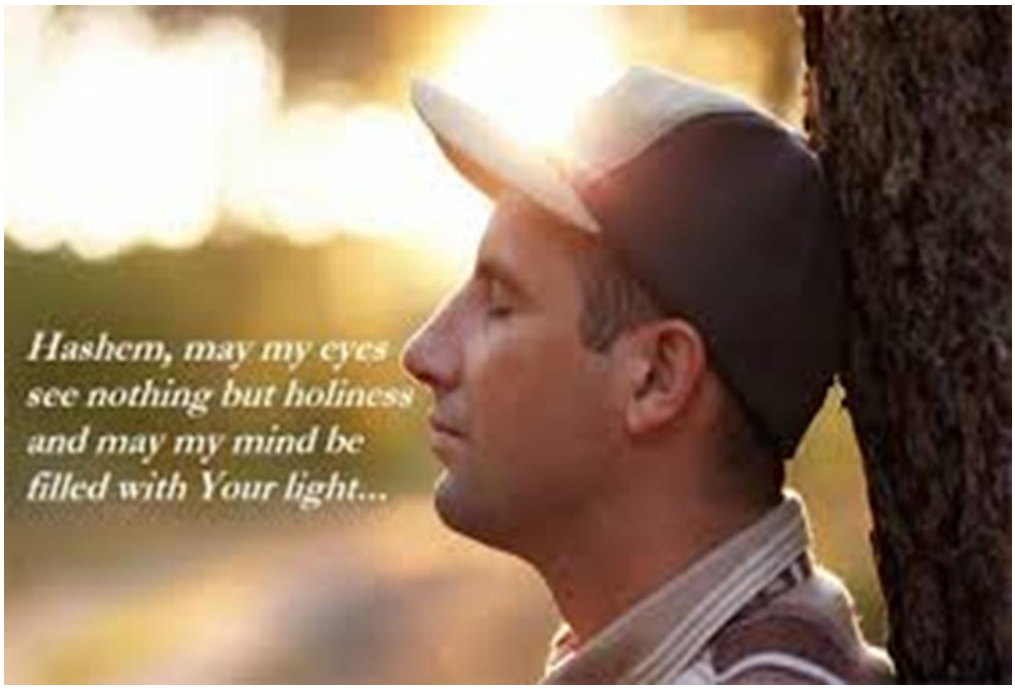


An answer given is that this is a message in life. The journey of the Bnei Yisrael throughout the desert represents our spiritual journey in life (**R' Tatz**). Whenever we make a spiritual journey to achieve growth, we must be sure to know:

1. Where we are coming from.
2. Have a goal/destination point.

This is why the Torah repeats the destination & origin; to teach us that whenever we are making our personal journey then we must be conscious and sure of the point of origin & goal.

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick- Let Hashem Dwell Among Us כִּי אֲנִי ה' שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ***For I am Hashem, Who dwells amidst the children of Israel*** (35:34).



The **Imrei Aish** tells us that if we take the name of Hashem and put it between the words Bnei and Yisrael, reading it "Bnei Hashem, Yisrael," these words have the gematria of Ruach [spirit] and Kedusha [holiness] (they both equal 629).

In other words, if we as a nation allow Hashem to dwell amongst us, then our lives will be filled with His spirit and His holiness. Let us hope that we will be zoche to have our lives filled with the ruach and kedusha of Hashem.

Living Jewish- Chabad of Cardo -Aharon Schmidt

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל ***These are (Eileh) the journeys (masei) of the Children of Israel (Bnei Yisrael)*** (Num. 33:1)

The first letters of these Hebrew words (Eileh, Masei, Bnei, Yisrael) allude to the four exiles of the Jewish people: alef/Edom-Rome; mem/Madai-Persia; beit/Bavel -Babylon; and yud/Yavan-Greece. (*Nachal Kadumim*)

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick- Free Cookies

"*Along with the cities that you shall give to the Levites shall be the six refuge cities, which you shall provide as places to which a murderer can flee … You must designate cities which shall serve you as refuge cities to which a murderer, who killed a person accidentally, can flee … The killer is thus obligated to live in his refuge city until the High Priest dies. After the High Priest dies, the killer may return to his hereditary land*" (BeMidbar 35:6,11,28).



The Torah teaches that accidental killers were to be exiled to refuge cities, where they would live among the Levites. The Levites, who were the teachers and preachers among the Israelites, played a crucial role in the killers' rehabilitation. Interestingly, the killers would go free only when the Kohen Gadol would die. The Mishnah (Makot 2:6) states: "Therefore the Kohen Gadol's mother would bring gifts of food and clothing to the accidental killers living in the refuge cities, so they would not pray that her son should die!"

But how did these gifts work as bribes? Or, as **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky** puts it: Were the Kohen Gadol's mother's cookies really worth exile in the refuge city?

Rabbi Aryeh Levine used to visit Jewish inmates, mostly members of the Irgun, held under British rule prior to Israel's statehood. He became like a father to those prisoners, bringing them food, clothes, and love. Once, during a Shabbat service, a messenger called him out of the prison. Reb Aryeh's daughter had become paralysed, and the doctors were helpless. He was needed for support at home, immediately. After Shabbat, a messenger was sent by the concerned inmates to inquire what tragedy interrupted the weekly visit.

The following Shabbat, despite the enduring tragedy at home, the Rabbi went to the prison as usual. Normally during the Torah reading, prisoners would pledge a few coins to charity. This week the donations were far different. "I will give up a week of my life for the sake of Reb Aryeh's daughter," the first convict pledged. Another prisoner announced that he would give a month from his. One prisoner cried out: "what is our life compared to Reb Aryeh's anguish? I will give all my remaining days for the sake of the Rabbi's daughter!"

At this unbelievable display of love and affection, Reb Aryeh broke down and wept. Miraculous as it may sound, that Saturday night Reb Aryeh's daughter began to move and within days was fully recovered.

Rabbi Kamenetzky explains that the refuge cities were neither jails nor mere detention camps. They were environments in which reckless people became aware that careless actions have serious ramifications. They were constantly under the influence of their neighbours, the Levites. They would observe them pray, learn, and teach others. They would see the epitome of awareness and care for fellow beings.

The mission of the Kohen Gadol's mother was not just to distribute food. It was to develop a bond with those people whose carelessness

brought about a death. They saw the love a parent had for her son as she pleaded with the inmates to spare her child. They saw how a total stranger, would make sure that their needs in the refuge city were cared for. After developing an awareness of life, they would never be able to pray for the death of anyone, even if it meant their own freedom!

The Torah cannot punish without teaching and rehabilitating. It infuses a love for life and spirituality into former careless killers. Its goal is to shape a new person whose attitudes will cause him to be kinder, gentler, and more careful.

The Number Ten - Maharal

The number ten in Jewish tradition symbolizes sanctity, as seen in the fact that a minyan [prayer quorum] is formed with ten men, and there are many other examples: Abraham was tested through ten trials until he ascended to his lofty rank; the Torah was condensed into Ten Commandments; one separates a tenth of his income for charity, etc. As such, the number ten is heavily associated with the Jewish people who strive to infuse all aspects of life with holiness. The ten tragedies that occurred represent the overpowering of our special rank earned through the fulfilment of our mission, perpetrated by those who sought to destroy us and all that we represent in the world.

"Tzaddikim advised saying Tehillim, even when everything is good and fine. The Tehillim you say now is deposited in your spiritual bank account, and when a need arises, the prayers are already there to help you." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

Rabbi Yossi Goldberg

וְהֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתֵּנוּ שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי מִקְלָט תִּהְיֶינָה לָכֶם 35:13

"And of the cities which you will designate, there will be six cities of refuge for you."

Rashi brings from Chazal that even after Moshe had designated the three cities on this side of the Yarden to be **עָרֵי מִקְלָט**,they were not to be used until later. Only once Yehoshua had led Klal Yisroel into Eretz Yisroel and had designated three more **עָרֵי מִקְלָט** there, all the six cities became active as cities of refuge.

Why did the three cities that Moshe set aside have to wait for the three cities of Yehoshua?

The Meshech Chochma answers with a powerful lesson. We know that when a murderer would run to the **עָרֵי מִקְלָט** for safety, he had to remain there until the Kohen Godol died. His only hope for freedom from his "prison" was the thought that the Kohen Godol would die soon. This gave him hope.

Earlier in this Parsha, Eliezer the Kohen Godol had been promised by Hashem that he would still be alive when the land of Eretz Yisroel was divided out. This means that if a murderer during this period of time would be able to run to an **עָרֵי מִקְלָט**, he would know that the Kohen Godol was not going to die just yet. His only hope for freedom would therefore disappear and he might feel broken and depressed.

In order to avoid causing a Yid to fall into despair, explains the Meshech Chochma, therefore the cities of Moshe were not opened before the cities of Yehoshua. So that all the cities would open only after the land had been divided and Eliezer was not anymore guaranteed to live by Hashem's promise. All this, so that a Yid (who was a murderer by the way), should not give up hope. This important message should be with us always. However tough and however hard things might be; a Yid does not lose hope.



As we begin the month of Av and Tisha B'av looms up closer, this should help to give us some perspective on the right approach to our mourning over the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh. Mourning means to realise our loss. But we should never despair.

It was on a hot day in Bnei Brak some years ago. Thousands had gathered to attend the Levaya of the Gadol Hador, the **Chazon Ish**. His death was a big loss to Klal Yisroel and especially to the Torah world, as they had always looked to him for guidance and direction.

After attending the Levaya for a few hours, one boy was feeling tired and thirsty. So he made his way to the nearest Shul to rest a little. When he opened the door to the Beis Hamedrash he found another person already sitting there. It was a young man and he was learning Torah with great intensity.

When the young man noticed the boy, he beckoned for him to come and sit next to him. "Aye," the man sighed. "Today we lost such a Gadol!" "But you know what?" the man turned to the boy with fire in his eyes. ***כִּי־לְכֶלֶב חַי הוּא טוֹב מִן־הָאַרְיֵה הַמֵּת "Better the dog that is alive, than the fearful lion that is dead."*** (Kohelet 9:4)

"The Chazon Ish was a lion," explained the man. "We are only like dogs in comparison to him." "But we mustn't become discouraged. We must carry on and do what we can." This passionate young man grew up to be none other than the great Rosh Hayeshiva and Gadol; **Harav Shach of Yeshivas Ponevezeh**.

We should live too by this message. Even when we mourn, we don't lose hope.

Hamaayan by Shlomo Katz

וַיִּסְעוּ מֵחָרָדָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּמַקְהֵלֹת "They journeyed from Charadah and encamped in Makhelot." (33:25)

Literally, this verse describes the travels of Bnei Yisrael from a place called "Charadah" to a place called "Makhelot" – two of the 42 stops that Bnei Yisrael made in the desert, as our parashah describes. Many commentaries, in particular those by chassidic authors, search for lessons in these place names, for why else would the Torah relate them to us?!

R' Mendel Hager z"l (rabbi of Oyber-Visheve, Romania; died 1941) observes that "Charadah" means "fear." Our verse teaches: How can a person overcome ("travel away from") the fear that his prayers will not be accepted? By journeying to "Makhelot," as we read in Tehilim (68:27), **בְּמַקְהֲלוֹת בָּרְכוּ אֱלֹקִים** "In Makhelot / gatherings bless Hashem."

This relates to our Sages' teaching that G-d does not reject prayers that are offered with a congregation. *(She'airit Menachem)*

"Integrity is the most valuable and respected quality of leadership. Always keep your word."

Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin- End Results

וַיִּסְעוּ מֵאֵילִם וַיִּחֲנוּ עַל־יַם־סוּף ***And they travelled from Elim and they encamped by Yam Suf"*** (Bamidbar 33:10)



Elim hints to the word alimut, which means violence. Yam Suf hints to the word sof, the end. They travelled from the trait of violence. How? By coming to the trait of looking at the end of a person. Violence induces both actions and words. There is the physical violence of hitting or pushing someone, and there is the verbal violence of shouting at someone or putting him down. Any form of violence not in self-defense is against the principles of the Torah.

What is the main cause of violence? Frustration and anger! When you become frustrated or angry, you are likely to lash out at someone. When you remember your true purpose in this world, most things that get other people angry will not affect you very strongly.

The more you appreciate life and the more joyous you feel, the less angry you will become. By remembering the end of each person, you will gain a greater appreciation for life. You will value your time and utilize every opportunity for growth. This awareness will keep you far away from any form of violence.

"The same boiling water that softens the potato hardens the egg. It's what you're made of. Not the circumstances."

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



This week is **שבת חזק** when we declare **חזק חזק ונתחזק**. (Go upwards, onwards and stronger) Why do we proclaim this when we finish a book portion of the Torah, yet when we finish a Masechta in Shas, we say "**הדרן עלך**" (Go back, return) ?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe says that the Torah is **תורה שבכתב** and is unexplained on its own. We require the **תורה של בעל פה** to understand it. So, when we finish the Torah, we need to go further and to be **נתחזק** to understand it. However, when we learn **תורה של בעל פה**, we can keep on returning to the **תורה שבכתב** to understand it better.

Reb Yoel On the Parsha

פרק לג פסוק א אלה מסעי בני ישראל *"These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael…"*

This *parashah* is always read during The Three Weeks. It is specifically read then to comfort us during this difficult period. All the trials and travails that *Bnei Yisrael* endured in the desert were sent to prepare them to ultimately reach *Eretz Yisrael*. So too, all the trials and travails of this long and bitter exile are meant to purify us for the final and complete *Geula*, may it come speedily in our days. (**האדמו״ר מסקולען**)

Jewish Education Program Queens -The Secret is Out!



וְאִם־לֹא תוֹרִישׁוּ אֶת־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר תּוֹתִירוּ מֵהֶם לְשִׂכִּים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם וְלִצְנִינִם בְּצִדֵּיכֶם

"When you enter the Land of Israel you should drive out all its inhabitants… for if you don't then those who remain will be pins in your eyes". (Bamidbar 33:55)

There is a fable from the 1800's describing what happens when you put a frog into boiling water. The premise is that if a frog is put suddenly into boiling water, it will jump out. However, if the frog is put in warm water which is then brought to a boil slowly, it will not perceive the danger. The frog will then be cooked to death.

Sun Tzu was a Chinese general and military strategist who lived in the sixth century, before the common era., His book, *The Art of War*, was the most important military treatise in Asia for the last two thousand years. Sun Tzu wrote, "The clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him". What enables the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men? It is knowledge of the enemy's dispositions, and what he means to do.

We are in a battle, every second of our lives, with the Satan- the Evil Inclination. He never rests but is always thinking of strategies to ensnare us. If we know some of those strategies in advance, we can help protect ourselves from sinning.

One of his strategies of the Evil Inclination is to slowly chip-away at us-like the frog in the fable- until we fall into sin. He will entice us to do a very small sin by saying, "It's not such a big deal…. Everyone is doing it… You are a good person; this little thing won't matter-

Hashem will overlook it". Then the Evil Inclination will entice us to do a slightly bigger sin – almost imperceptibly. Before we know it, he gets us to do a very big sin, without our even realizing it.

Had the Evil Inclination tried to get us to do that big sin right away, we would have been able to withstand the temptation. However, since he worked on us, in small steps, we succumbed. - It's like water constantly dripping on a rock. After a long time, it bores a hole into the rock.

Hashem told the Jewish people, "When you enter the Land of Israel you should drive out all its inhabitants… for if you don't then those who remain will be pins in your eyes".

The Ramban explains, they will be like a bribe that blinds the wise. They will cause you to err and eventually you will serve idols and turn away from Hashem.

The Rosh haYeshiva of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, Rav A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l, asked the following: The people we are speaking about were great and righteous. A bribe to a judge may blind his partiality in a court case. But what is the comparison here? How can it cause the Jews to serve idols?

The Rosh haYeshiva explained the **Ramban**. In this case, we aren't speaking about monetary bribes but the influence of environment and society. If the Jews ignore Hashem and don't send out the inhabitants, then the inhabitants will have a corrupting influence on the Jews. It will happen subtly and slowly. It will not be noticeable at first. Then it will spread and eventually lead these great people to serve idols.

An awareness of the Evil Inclination's strategy can protect us. As soon as we feel a slight slipping, we should be on guard, quickly stopping it before it "snowballs".

Don't let the Evil Inclination make a frog out of you!

Yedidye Hirtenfeld- Why I Matter

וְאֵת הֶעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֻס שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר: *"The cities that you shall give to the Levi'im--the six cities of refuge that you shall provide for a murderer to flee there, and also you shall give them forty-two cities."* (35:6)



Why 42 cities? **R' Shlomo Kluger z"l** (1783-1869; leading Galician rabbi) explains: Our parashah list 42 encampments where Bnei Yisrael camped in the desert. Each of these was a desolate place, but Hashem turned it into welcoming, habitable place. To show our gratitude, we must give Hashem's servants, the Levi'im, 42 places that they can call home. (*Imrei Shefer*)

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The Gemara teaches (Megilah 6b), "If someone says 'I have tried, but I have not achieved anything,' do not believe him." Why is this?

The Kotzker Rebbe answers that simply trying to do something is achieving and is an accomplishment. It is the effort one puts forward that counts, not necessarily the results!

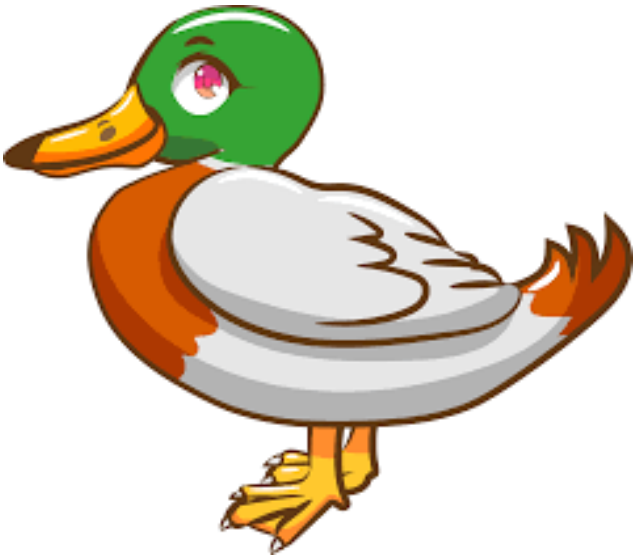
From The Chassidic Masters



Why is this month referred to as Menachem Av?

Av is made up of the letters, Aleph and Beis and symbolizes the idea that the sacred letters of the Aleph Beis, which make up all the mitzvos of the Torah, comfort us and reassure us that so long as we adhere to them, we have nothing to fear. This is also the reason that most of the scroll of Eichah is written in the order of the Aleph Beis, as the first letters of the verses follow the order of the Aleph Beis. (***R' Simchah Bunim M'Pschischa)***

Duck



Some people came to inform **Rabbi Chayim Halberstam** of Tzanz that the wife of a recipient of charity was seen buying expensive duck meat.

"I am much obliged for you having told me," said Rav Chayim. "I had thought that this man's wife was able to manage with a small amount of money. Now that I know that she requires duck meat, I'll have to increase the weekly stipend of that family." ~ **Haadmor Mitzanz**

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ויחנו בחצרות לג:יז *They encamped in Chatzeiros* (33:17)

What happened here that they named the placed "Chatzeiros" (lit. courtyards)? ***Rashi*** in the beginning of *Devorim* (1:1) explains that this refers to the argument of Korach. How does the name "Chatzeiros" hint to the argument of Korach?

The *Admor*, the *Chidushei HaRim* of Gur explains: When people make an *'Eruvei Chatzeiros'* for Shabbos [a device that joins courtyards together, thus allowing carrying on *Shabbos* from one courtyard to another], all the courtyards are converted into one large courtyard, and when everything is one domain, everyone joins together and there is no argument.

The *Torah* named the place "Chatzeiros" because of the argument of Korach, since there was argument there, all the courtyards remained separated and they were not joined together into one large courtyard. (*Umatok HaOhr*)

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Masei in a Nutshell - Bamidbar 33:1–36:13

The name of the Parshah, "Masei," means "Journeys."

The forty-two journeys and encampments of Israel are listed, from the Exodus to their encampment on the plains of Moab across the river from the land of Canaan.

Also in Massei: The boundaries of the Promised Land are given, and cities of refuge are designated as havens and places of exile for inadvertent murderers. The daughters of Tzelafchad marry within their own tribe of Manasseh, so that the estate which they inherit from their father should not pass to the province of another tribe.

Massei Haftorah in a Nutshell - יִרְמְיָהוּ 2:4–28; 4:1–2.

This week's *haftorah* is the second of a series of three "*haftaros* of affliction." These three *haftaros* are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

The prophet Jeremiah transmits G-d's message to the Jewish people, in strong tones chastising all the sectors of the people, including the leadership, for their abandonment of G-d. "What wrong did your forefathers find in Me, that they distanced themselves from Me, and they went after futility and themselves became futile?"

He reminds them of the kindness G-d did for them, taking them out of Egypt and leading them through the desert and settling them in the Promised Land, yet they repaid kindness with disloyalty. "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters to dig for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water."

G-d asks them to view the actions of their neighbouring nations, the Kittites and Kedarites, "and see whether there was any such thing, whether a nation exchanged a god, although they are not gods. Yet My nation exchanged their glory for what does not avail."

Jeremiah then goes on to foretell the suffering the Jewish people will suffer at the hands of their enemies, and also their erstwhile allies: "Your evil will chastise you, and you will be rebuked for your backslidings; and you shall know and see that your forsaking the L-rd your G-d is evil and bitter."

The *haftorah* ends on an encouraging note, assuring the people that if they return to G-d with sincerity, they will be restored to their full glory.

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ואת הערים אשר תתנו ללוים את שש ערי המקלט אשר תתנו לנס שמה הרצח ועליהם תתנו ארבעים ושתים עיר "*The cities that you shall give to the Levites: The six cities of refuge that you shall provide for a murderer to flee there, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities.*" (35:6)



In contemporary times, where are the cities of refuge?

In the verse "Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem echad" there are six words, and in the paragraph of "Ve'ahavta" — "You shall love [G d your G d]" —

till "uvisharecha" — "and upon your gates" — there are a total of forty-two words. The verse of "Shema Yisrael" accentuates "kabbalat ol malchut shamayim" — accepting the yoke of heaven — and the paragraph of "Ve'ahavta" deals with absolute love of Hashem.When a Jew, G-d forbid, commits a sin, he is killing part of his *nefesh* — spiritual existence (see *Igeret Hateshuvah*, 4). The spiritual cities of refuge of Jew are the forty-eight words of "*Shema Yisrael.*" Through prayer and absolute submission to the yoke of Heaven and love of Hashem, a Jew achieves His forgiveness for his iniquities. (**אוהב ישראל**)

"Impossible is just an opinion."

כי בעיר מקלטו ישב עד מות הכהן הגדל ואחרי מת הכהן הגדל ישוב הרצח אל ארץ אחזתו

***"For he must dwell in his city of refuge until the death of the Kohen Gadol, and after the death of the Kohen Gadol the murderer shall return to the land of his possession."* (35:28)**

According to the *Mishnah (Makkot* 2:6), "The mothers of the *Kohanim Gedolim* would supply the residents of the cities of refuge with food and clothing so that they would not pray that their sons should die."

Why did the mothers donate supplies and not the *Kohanim Gedolim* themselves?

Life in a city of refuge was comfortable. The unintentional murderer was given safety and sustenance. If the *Kohen Gadol* himself would have been the provider of the food and clothing, it would have encouraged a poor person to flee to the city of refuge claiming to be an unintentional murderer so he could remain there with guaranteed room and board until the *Kohen Gadol* died.

Therefore, it was not the *Kohen Gadol* himself who provided for the residents, but his mother. Consequently, it was possible that the *Kohen Gadol's* mother would die shortly after his arrival and the *Kohen Gadol* would survive her by many years, thus leaving the refugee without a guaranteed source of income as long as the *Kohen Gadol* was alive. Hence, it would not be beneficial for him to pretend to be an unintentional murder because he could end up living many years in a city of refuge without financial aid. (**פון אונזער אלטען אוצר**)

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us." — Helen Keller

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אלה מסעי בני ישראל אשר יצאו מארץ מצרים לצבאתם ביד משה ואהרן
***"These are the journeys of the Children of Israel, who went forth from the land of Egypt according to their legions, under the leadership of Moshe and Aharon."* (33:1)**

The word *"eileh"* — "these are" — seems superfluous. The *pasuk* could have just said, *"masei b'nei Yisrael"* — "the journeys of the Children of Israel"?

In addition to the Egyptian exile, the Jewish people suffered additional exiles under four Monarchies: Edom-Rome, Media-Persia, Babylon and Greece-Syria אדום, מדי, בבל, יון. The first letters of the words *"Eilah masei b'nai Yisrael"* — "These are the journeys of the Children of Israel" (**אלה מסעי בני ישראל**) are a hint to the four exiles which will come after the redemption from Egypt.

In addition, the opening words of the *parshah* not only alludes to the exiles, but also to the redeemers and the ultimate redemption through *Mashiach*. The first letters of the words, *"Eileh masei"* (**אלה מסעי**) are an "**א**" and a "**מ**" and suggest our redeemers. The redemption from Egypt was through Aharon and Moshe **אהרן** and **משה**.

The saving of the Jewish people from annihilation in the days of Achashveirosh was through Esther and Mordechai **אסתר** and **מרדכי**, and the ultimate redemption, after which there will no longer be any exile, will come via Eliyahu and *Mashiach* **אליהו** and **משיח**
(**נחל קדומים ועי' פרדס יוסף החדש**)

"If you believe it'll work out, you'll see opportunities. If you don't believe it'll work out, you'll see obstacles."

והקריתם לכם ערים ערי מקלט תהיינה לכם ונס שמה רצח מכה נפש בשגגה
"*You shall designate cities for yourselves; cities of refuge shall they be for you, and a murderer shall flee there, one who takes a life unintentionally.*" (35:11)

Undoubtedly, there were more people making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year, than slayers running to cities of refuge. Why were there signs on the crossroads showing the way to the cities of refuge (see *Makkot* 10b) and no signs showing the way to Jerusalem?



One of the reasons why crime has become rampant in our times is that the media continuously reports it. The constant publicizing of crimes plants in some people's minds the idea that crime is glamorous and exciting. If a "gag order" were imposed on reporting crimes and violence, and if the media would only report good deeds, our society might be safer.

Similarly, it is inappropriate for an unintentional murderer to continuously ask for directions while fleeing to a city of refuge, since people might begin to talk about having met a murderer. Talking about crime can encourage some feeble-minded people to perpetrate crime. Therefore, signs are put up to eliminate the need for the murderer to talk to people and the possible consequences which such conversation might produce.

Making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year, by contrast, is a very important *mitzvah*. Our rabbis intentionally did not instruct the mounting of signs so as to make it necessary for people to stop and ask for directions and, thus, get into conversations about

the *mitzvah* of *aliyah leregel* — pilgrimage. In turn, the people they had spoken to would relay to their family and friends their pleasant conversations with travellers going up to Jerusalem in order to be close to Hashem. Such reports would arouse in the hearers the desire to also perform *mitzvot* and come closer to Hashem. (**ושננתם** ח״א)

Parshah Thoughts - *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

A regular occurrence, especially in these summer months, is getting stuck in traffic. Our immediate reaction is to get frustrated or upset, usually at someone else, and then to think, if only we had chosen a different route.

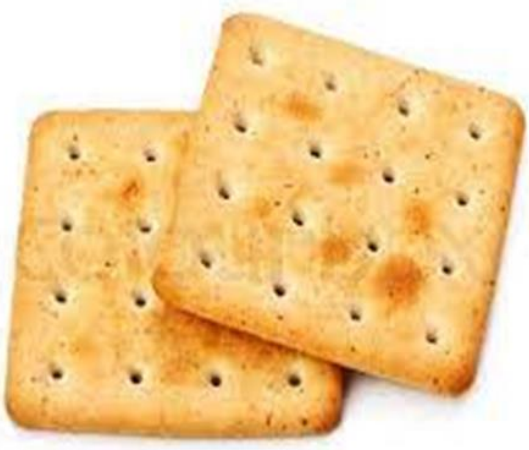


Rav Meilich Biderman, *Shlit"a*, explains that *Parashas Masei* is the response to those thoughts. Everywhere we end up, is entirely because *Hashem* wants us to be exactly there and to go through that experience right then!

Before You Are Permitted to Speak

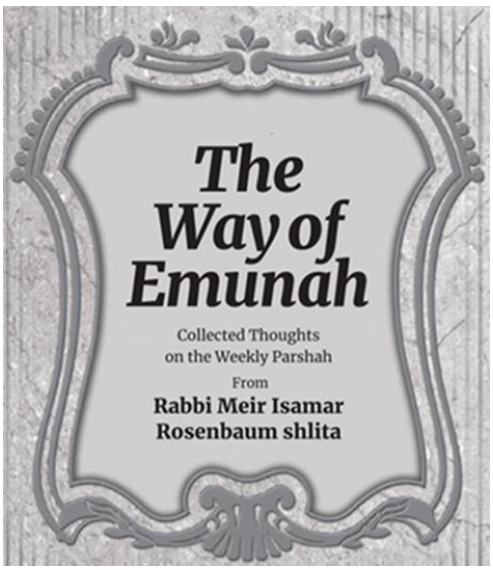
Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer related that on numerous occasions **Rabbi Yisroel Salanter** would abruptly stop speaking and consult the **Chofetz Chayim's** book on loshon hora to see whether it was permissible for him to continue. ~ **Aitzah Vesoshiya**

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz, *Shlit"a*, related once that he used to learn *BiChavrusah* every day with the *Gaon*, **Rav Zundel Kroiser, *zt"l***, and their main topic of learning was *Gemara*. He said, "With the help of *Shamayim*, whenever we finished a *Masechta*, Rav Zundel would take out two crackers from his pocket, one for me and one for him, for the *Simchah* of making a *Siyum*.

He would say, '*Hadran Alach*', on whichever *Masechta* we had just finished, and then, with great concentration and joy, he would say the *Brachah* of '*Borei Minei Mezonos*', and he would eat the cracker. Immediately after, he would start learning the next *Masechta*. Rav Zundel simply did not waste any time, not even for a long meal, like for a *Seudas Mitzvah* for a *Siyum*!



אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה' אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אִסָּר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה

When a person makes a promise…to forbid something to himself, he should not break his word. Whatever comes out of his mouth he should do. (30:3)

Make Sure to Keep Your Word: The major importance of keeping one's word can be seen from how seriously our Gedolim took this matter. **Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l**, Rov of Slutzk, once visited the home of **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik zt"l**, the Rov of Brisk. As the two great rabbanim were sitting at the table, they heard a knock on the door. Whenever someone would knock on his door, Rav Chaim would quickly jump up

and run to see who it was. He knew that it often would be a poor man asking for tzedakah, and he wanted to help him as quickly as possible.



This time was no exception. Rav Chaim ran to the door and saw a ragged pauper, with his hand outstretched. Rav Chaim reached into his pocket to take out some money but found that he had none on him. "Please wait here for one minute," he told the man. "I will get you some money from inside the house."

Rav Chaim went into his study, where he had some money put away inside his desk drawer. He hurried back to the door but was dismayed to see that the poor man had left. Apparently, he had gotten tired of waiting and had gone on his way. When he saw that the man was gone, Rav Chaim turned white and began to tremble. When his children saw how upset their father was, they also got very scared. The entire family ran outside to search for the poor man and didn't stop looking until they found him and gave him the money.

Rav Isser Zalman would recall this incident many years later and say, "Decades have passed since that day, but I could never forget the

look on my rebbi's face. He was overcome with fear because he was afraid that he may not be able to keep his word. He had told the poor man that he would give him a donation and thought that this might be considered a promise. He was terrified that he would not be able to find the man and he would have to break his promise, which is forbidden by the Torah!"



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings - Peace

It states (*Masay* 33:38), **ויעל אהרן הכהן אל הר ההר על פי ה' וימת שם בשנת הארבעים לצאת בני ישראל מארץ מצרים בחדש החמישי באחד לחדש**, ***"Aharon HaKohen Hashem's command and was niftar there, in the fortieth year after Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, on the first day of the fifth month."***

Aharon was *niftar* on *rosh chodesh Av.* Aharon is renowned for his love of his fellow men. As it states in *Avos* (1:12), **הוו מתלמידיו של אהרן אוהב שלום רודף שלום אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה** ***"Be from Aharon's students: love peace, chase peace, love people and draw them to Torah."***

His *yahrtzeit* is *rosh chodesh Av*, the month that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. We rebuild the Beis HaMikdash by following Aharon's ways of seeking peace.

There's a rav in Bnei Brak who travels to a nearby city every erev Shabbos to answer halachic questions in the beis din of the community. He travels there by taxi. One week, the taxi driver was a new *baal teshuvah*, and he was listening to a religious radio station.

The rav liked to use this traveling time to study Torah, and the radio disturbed his concentration. But he figured that the taxi driver might need the *divrei chizuk* that was being played over the radio, so he decided not to ask the driver to turn off the radio.

He heard a listener call in, and say, "Today is **כ"ד טבת**, the *yahrtzeit* of **Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zt'l***, and I want to share a

wonderful story of *ruach hakodesh* and of *middos tovos* that I heard with my own ears and saw with my own eyes."

When the rav heard this introduction to his story, he put down his *sefer* and focused on what the person was saying.

The man said, "I was present at Rebbe Moshe Mordechai's Friday night *tish*, and someone new came in; someone who was never before at Reb Moshe Mordechai's tish. The Rebbe called him over immediately and whispered something in the man's ears. And then the man rushed out of the beis medresh.

"I was a *bachur* at the time, and my friends and I wanted to know what this was all about, so we followed this man, and we asked him to tell us what the Rebbe told him. He didn't want to say. But we insisted, and this is what he told us:



"'My wife and I have an old debate regarding where to light the Shabbos *lecht*. I say that it is better to light the *lecht* on a shelf in the dining room (because then there is more room on the table and there will be fewer halachic *shaalos* related to the *lecht* and *muktzeh*). But my wife wants to light the *lecht* on the Shabbos table because that's where her mother *tzinds lecht*.

"'Every week, I prepare the *lecht* on the shelf and then I go to shul. And every week, she takes the *lecht* off the shelf, places them on the table, and lights them there. It makes me very angry.

"'This week, before I left, I told her that if I come home from shul and find the *lecht* on the table, I won't make Kiddush, and I won't eat the *seudah*.' (Obviously, by doing so, he will only be hurting himself: no *seudah*, no Kiddush. But that is the nature of *machlokes;* one harms himself more than he harms anyone else.)

"'Tonight, I came home and saw the *lecht* on the table. I immediately left the house and went to a beis medresh.

"As I sat in the beis medresh, I heard *zemiros* coming from Reb Moshe Mordechai of Lelov's beis medresh. I decided to go there. I anyway didn't have a place to be. The Rebbe immediately called me over and whispered in my ear that the purpose of lighting the Shabbos candles is for the sake of peace. If you make a *machlokes* over it, the purpose is forfeited. I'm stunned by the Rebbe's ruach hakodesh, and now I'm going home to bring peace to my home.'"

The taxi reached the destination, and the rav left to go to the beis din. He was glad that he heard this inspirational story of *ruach hakodesh*, which teaches us to avoid *machlokes*.

That day, as the rav sat in the *beis din*, a man came in and said, "I have an old debate with my wife regarding where it's better to light the Shabbos candles. I say that it's better to light the candles on a shelf attached to the dining room wall, and my wife wants to light the candles on the table, just like her mother does. What does the rav say? Where should we light the candles?"

The rav was astounded by the *hashgachah pratis*! It was the same question that he heard in the taxi! He told the man that he doesn't know the answer regarding where it is better to light the candles, but of one thing he is certain:

The purpose of Shabbos *lecht* is for peace, and therefore that factor should be given great consideration.

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ויסעו ממתקה ויחנו בחשמנה (לג:כא) ***And they travelled from Miskah and encamped in Chasmonah.*** (33:21)



The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* (21b) asks the question, **מאי חנוכה**, what is *Chanukah*? The *Gemara* explains that when the *Chashmonai* kings defeated the Greeks on the 25th of *Kislev*, they searched for pure oil and were only able to find one flask with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol*. This should have lasted only one night, but a miracle occurred, and it lasted eight nights.

However, the *Gemara* does not explain why these days are called *Chanukah*. The *Rishonim* (*Ran*, *Tur* and *Avudraham*) explain that the word **חנוכה** is a contraction of the words **חנו כה** - they rested on the 25th, meaning that the war ended on the 25th day of the month.

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim, zt"l, the *Rav* of Baghdad explains that this is hinted in our *pasuk*. The 25th encampment of the *Bnei Yisroel* in the desert was in a place called **חשמנה** alluding to the *Chashmonaim*.

Additionally, the 25th word in the Torah starting from the word **בראשית** is the word **אור** , light, which hints at the light of the *menorah* which we commemorate on the 25th of *Kislev*. (*Chaim shel Torah*)

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS MASEI

An Audacious Promise By Yerachmiel Tilles



Immigrants at Ellis Island

Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, the rebbe of Kopischnitz (1888–1967), followed the ways of his predecessor and namesake, the **Apter Rov** (1748–1825), as an *ohev yisrael*, a lover of his people. In post–World War II America, he carried the pain and suffering of countless individuals on his weak and frail shoulders. Indeed, often when he heard the problems of others he would break down in

uncontrollable weeping. The grief of his fellow Jews tormented him much more than his own afflictions, and countless times the rebbe put his name and honor at risk in an attempt to help others.

Once, a broken survivor of the Nazi inferno showed up at the rebbe's door. He had just arrived from Europe and was hoping to settle in America. His wife, however, had been refused entry due to her ill health, and was on Ellis Island awaiting imminent deportation. The man was inconsolable, and indicated that if his wife was indeed deported, he wouldn't think twice about taking his own life.

"Don't worry, please don't worry," implored the rebbe. "I promise you that by next week your wife will be here together with you!" Upon hearing the rebbe's words, an immediate feeling of calm overtook the distressed man. Greatly relieved, he went away a new person.

Rabbi Morgenshtern, one of the rebbe's disciples who had witnessed the scene, gathered up his courage and asked the rebbe how it was possible for him to make an outrageous guarantee like that with such ease. It was no less than promising a miracle!

"You saw how desperate the poor man was," the rebbe replied. "My first concern was to calm him down, and thank G-d, I succeeded. At least for the next week he will feel better. If after a week he sees that I was wrong and his wife was deported, he will say, 'Avrohom Yehoshua is not a real rebbe, Avrohom Yehoshua is a liar.' But at least for a week I succeeded in bringing some peace into his life."

With that the Rebbe took his Tehillim and began to recite its verses with intense emotion. As the tears were streaming down his face, he could be heard pleading, "Please, G-d, please, see to it that Avrohom Yehoshua didn't tell a lie. I was only trying to help a Jew in a pathetic situation. Please don't let me be a liar. Please help this poor woman into the country . . ." In this fashion his prayers continued long into the night. - The Almighty heard his prayers. The woman was granted permission to stay in America and was reunited with her husband.

Biographical note: Rabbi **Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Kopischnitz** (1888–1967) was named after his paternal ancestor, the Apter Rebbe. After World War I he moved to Vienna, and after World War II, to the Lower East Side of New York. Wherever he lived, he was renowned for his supreme kindness and great *ahavat yisrael*. His dedication to refugees of the wars was especially extraordinary. He opened an orphanage in Petach Tikvah, Israel, called Beit Avraham, which exists until this day.

An All-Purpose Kadish by Yerachmiel Tilles

Pressburg was one of the most important cities in the Austro-Hungarian empire, and its *yeshivah* was among the largest and most respected in all of Europe.

In the mid-1800s, there lived a wealthy merchant who had a large store in the center of the city. He was well-respected and active in the Jewish community and also known for his generosity. One charitable custom of his was remarkable. Each day he would count the proceeds of his business, calculate how much was profit, and from that separate 10% for *maaser* (tithe), which he would deliver daily to the *yeshivah*.

Tragically, this outstanding man suddenly took ill and passed away at a relatively early age, leaving behind a widow and five young daughters. His wife was a clever and energetic woman who had always helped her husband in the business and knew it well. After his death, she took it over and maintained its prosperity. She was also careful to continue in her late husband's generous ways, and each day would deliver the *maaser* from the profits to the *rosh yeshivah*, the illustrious Ketav Sofer.

Immediately upon her husband's passing, as she had no sons, she asked the *rosh yeshivah* to arrange for Torah scholars to say *kaddish* for her husband for the entire eleven months, and also each

successive year on the *yahrzeit*. She also requested that a second *kaddish* be said each day, having in mind all those souls who have no one saying *kaddish* for them.



This went on for nearly ten years. Sometimes the *maaser* would be as much as hundreds of kroner a day. However much it was, she would always inquire to make sure that the *yeshivah* was keeping its side of the bargain.

But then the wheel turned. Instead of daily profits, there began to be losses. Even so, the widow maintained her schedule of appearing daily at the *yeshivah*, except that she would inform the *rosh yeshivah* that today, unfortunately, she had nothing to give. Still, she would persist to ask if they were still saying the *kaddishes* even though she was no longer able to contribute financial support. They would assure her that of course they were, and she should not worry.

Day after day her situation got progressively worse, until finally she had to start selling some of her jewelry and other valuables in order to put food on the table for her daughters. No one was aware of her deteriorating situation, except for the senior students and staff of the *yeshivah*, who knew that her business was virtually bankrupt.

One day a matchmaker came to her house and, after some pleasantries, said, "My dear lady, your daughters have all matured nicely and grown quite pretty. Perhaps because of your extensive involvement in the business, you haven't noticed that it is time for them to get married. I am confident that I can find many outstanding *yeshivah* students that would be interested in them for

you to choose from; just tell me how much dowry you are willing to provide for each one."

She wisely decided not to admit her true situation to him, and instead merely said that she would think it over and then get back to him about his offer. He left, and she burst into tears. Afterwards, she dressed and hurried to the *yeshivah*. She poured out her misery to the *rosh yeshivah*. Sobbing, she said, "I just don't understand why my situation deteriorated so." Again, she asked if the *kaddishes* were still being said, and he comforted her that they were.

Suddenly the door opened. A distinguished-looking older man entered, turned to the widow, and asked her why she was crying. He told her that he knew of her desperate situation and that he was prepared to help. He then requested of the *rosh yeshivah* that they all go into his office, and that two scholars of the *yeshivah* join them. The *rosh yeshivah* acceded and summoned two of his five great disciples present that year: his son, **Rabbi Shimon Sofer, and Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**.

When they were all assembled, the mysterious guest said, "I know you have five daughters of marriageable age. Let's figure. Each one needs a thousand kroner for dowry money, and another thousand kroner each for the expenses of the wedding and for buying furniture and setting up a household. So, that is two thousand for each of the five, or ten thousand altogether. Plus, to put your business back on its feet, you need another ten thousand kroner, so that makes twenty thousand altogether.

"All right, then," he said, "I'll write you a cheque." Whereupon he took a chequebook out of his pocket, tore off a cheque, wrote the woman's name on it, inscribed it for twenty thousand kroner and signed it! Before handing it to her, however, he asked the two young scholars to sign on the back as witnesses to the transaction. He also asked them to take out their personal notebooks so he could sign in

each a sample of his signature, in case the signature on the cheque would be challenged. Turning back to the woman, he told her that she should present the cheque at the government bank when it opened at nine o'clock, and they would honour it. Then he left as suddenly as he had come.



All present were shocked still in disbelief. It was as if they were sharing a dream. Then one of the young rabbis jumped up. "A man like that could really help the *yeshivah*," he said excitedly. "Let's go ask him." The two ran out and searched, but they couldn't find him or anyone who had seen him.

At nine the next morning, the widow was at the bank. The guard at the door directed her to one of the tellers, to whom she showed the cheque. He looked up the records and told her there was sufficient funds in the account to cover the cheque, but for such a huge sum he has to first get permission from the manager. He asked her to wait and went to the administrative section. There he presented the check to the head of the bank, who took one look at it and fainted!

Pandemonium broke loose. People were running this way and that. The police came, and after questioning a few employees, confined the astonished businesswoman in a security room and locked the door, pending further investigation.

The doctor that was summoned quickly revived the bank manager. As soon as he gained consciousness, the manager asked that the woman who had brought the cheque be shown into him. When told she had been locked up by security, he said that he must go to her; a great mistake had been made, to lock up such a righteous woman. He went

quickly and, after apologizing, invited her to accompany her into his office.

"Tell me, please," he opened, after they were seated, "how did you get this cheque?"

She told him of her difficulties and the sudden appearance of her unknown benefactor. She explained about her deceased husband and his practice of daily *maaser*, and of the *kaddishes* she had arranged through the *yeshivah* for him and for those souls who had no one to say *kaddish* for them.

He asked her: if she saw her benefactor again, would she recognize him? She said yes. She added that two rabbis from the *yeshivah* were official witnesses to the whole episode, and that their signatures are on the back of the check, and that the man had also signed in their personal notebooks. The manager was excited to hear this, and after looking at their signatures, contacted the *yeshivah* to ask that Rabbi Sonnenfeld and Rabbi Sofer come to his office.

They came and confirmed all that the woman had said. The bank manager then told the three of them that he would personally honour the check, as it was drawn on his own family account, but that his wife had to endorse it too. He then sent for his wife with the message that she should come quickly, because people were waiting for her, but first she should collect all the family photographs in the house and bring them with her.

Although the bank manager was a Jew, his wife was not. When she arrived, he asked the widow and the two rabbis to wait in a different room. He told his wife what was going on, and said, "Let's see if the woman can identify the man who signed the check from among these photographs." She declared that if it all turned out to be true, she would convert to be Jewish.

The manager then spread out all of the photos on his desk. He asked each of the three to enter separately and see if the man who gave

the check appeared in any of them. Each one confidently picked out the same person.

The bank manager called everyone in. "Do you know who this man is who gave the cheque?" he asked. "It is my father, the manager of the bank before me. But he has been dead for ten years!

"I must confess," he told them, "that I never said *kaddish* for him. Last night he appeared to me in a dream. He said that he had been saved from Gehinnom by the *kaddishes* that she had arranged for the *yeshivah* scholars to say for those souls for whom *kaddish* was not being said, and now that she was in difficulty, we must help her. He said that he would give her a check for twenty thousand kroner, and that if I didn't pay it, he would strangle me in my sleep.

"I woke up, frightened. In the morning I told my wife the dream, and she was disturbed too. When the cheque was shown to me at the bank, I fainted. I knew then that the dream was true.

"I will pay the twenty thousand my father promised, for it is certainly a deserving cause. Not only that," he added, turning to the woman, "I will add another twenty thousand of my own, because you fulfilled my obligation for me, and helped my deceased father's soul with the *kaddish*-saying you arranged."

He addressed the three of them again. "I fully regret my lapse from Judaism. I see now that our G-d is the one true G-d, and He gives to all their just reward. I resolve that from now on I will fulfil His commandments as revealed in our Torah. My wife, too, has reaffirmed her promise to convert and to live in accordance with Jewish law. Please guide us to understand what we have to do."

He instructed the teller to give the woman 40,000 kroner. The first thing she did was to give 10% of it to the *yeshivah*. Soon thereafter, her business waxed prosperous again, and her five daughters made good marriages with G-d-fearing young Torah scholars.



Saved by a Match From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



Towards the end of 1930s, Poland was under rule of a semi-fascist clique called the "Government of Colonels." During this period the Jewish community, which constituted approximately ten percent of Poland's total population, was in an extremely precarious position. New edicts were being issued daily, edicts which were strangling the economic and cultural life of the Jewish minority.

After Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, the Poles were only too happy to step up their acts of anti-Semitism. One very popular ploy was to accuse a Jew of insulting the Polish people or the Polish government. The accused would be brought before a judge, usually an anti-Semite himself, who would almost always sentence the Jew to a lengthy prison term.

The Polish Treasury Department also had a hand in reducing the Jews to financial ruin. Its officers routinely interpreted the laws in a manner which served to economically break Jewish merchants and artisans. When, as often happened, a Jew was unable to meet the excessive taxes, a tax collector would come to his home or place of business and confiscate his merchandise and household furnishings.

In 1935, in the tiny village of Kreszowice, near Cracow, there lived a Jew by the name of Israel Weiner. It happened that he fell behind with his tax payments, and his home was visited by the tax collector,

accompanied by a policeman. They had come to requisition his belongings in lieu of the unpaid taxes.

Among Israel Weiner's possessions was his greatly valued sewing machine. When not in use, it was draped with a linen cover adorned by an embroidered white eagle, the Polish national emblem. The tax collector ordered Weiner to lift this cover so that he and his companion could inspect what was beneath it.

When they were through, Weiner lowered the cover back onto the smooth surface but, in his nervousness, did not take care to center it properly and one side hung down lower than the other. Within a few moments the cover began to slip and soon, unnoticed by Weiner, it was on the floor.

The tax collector ordered Weiner to show him another piece of furniture. As Weiner began to cross the room, followed by the two men, his foot caught hold of the crumpled cover on the floor, and he stepped on the cloth.

"Aha!" cried the policeman gleefully. "See how this Jew treats they symbol of his country!" Despite Israel Weiner's pleas and explanations, despite his pointing out that he used the cloth decorated with the Polish national symbol to cover his most prized possession, charges were drawn up and he was summoned to court.

A day was set for the trial, and a magistrate appointed. To Weiner's dismay, the judge was a notorious anti-Semite, and he knew that the probability of a severe sentence was high.

On the eve of the trial, the nervous and depressed defendant went to the **Bobover Rebbe, Rabbi Bentzion Halberstam**, for a blessing. Weeping profusely, he told the rebbe his woeful story. The rebbe gave his blessing, expressing his hope and belief that G-d would help the desperate man, and then added some very strange instructions.

"Tomorrow, when you go to court," the rebbe said, "take with you a matchbox containing only one match. Then, when you notice a

member of the court taking out a cigar or a cigarette during the proceedings as someone inevitable will you, Israel, will step forward and offer him your matchbox."



Weiner was puzzled until the rebbe explained the rest of the plan and advised him to inform his lawyer about it. "You have nothing to lose, and much to gain," said the rebbe.

The next day at court, as expected, the public prosecutor released his venom on the trembling Jew.

"Would you dare tread upon your Holy Scroll?" he challenged, his voice full of thunder. "For such a disrespectful act against his country, this man deserves the maximum sentence under the law!"

As the prosecutor continue to rant, the judge, becoming excited at the prospect of meting out a harsh punishment to this helpless Jew, began to fumble in his pocket for a cigarette. Israel, alert to such a move as he had been instructed, quickly stepped forward and offered his matchbox containing only one match to the judge.

Absent-mindedly, the judge accepted the matchbox, lit his cigarette, and tossed the empty matchbox into the waste basket. However, in those days all matches were distributed solely by the Polish government, so every matchbox bore the emblem of the Polish national eagle.

The defense lawyer, who had been waiting for this moment, jumped out of his seat. "Your honour," he cried, "I must bring a very urgent matter to your attention!"

All eyes were on him. How dare he interrupt the proceeding with such an outburst? In a ringing voice, the lawyer for the defense continued his bid for attention. "The honour of our national symbol,

the Polish white eagle, has been insulted in this very room, only a moment ago!" he boomed.

As everyone stared at him in astonishment, he continued. "Look into the waste basket! You will see the image of the Polish white eagle imprinted on a matchbox, amidst the refuse. The honour of our beloved country is at stake! And it is His Honour, the magistrate himself, who is guilty of this violation!"

Stifled laughter was heard from the back of the courtroom, and then the laughter became louder, and the audience began to applaud.

The defendant then sprang up, wringing his hands, and cried out, "Your Honour, I am the father of small children! Please have mercy on me! I am a devout patriot; I cover my most cherished possession with our beloved national symbol. My stepping on the while eagle emblem that was on my sewing machine cover was no more an act of disrespect than was your casting an empty matchbox into the garbage!"

The room was silent for a moment; the judge shifted in his seat. "Case dismissed!" he said.

R' Shlomo Kluger ZT"L (Imrei Shefer) would say:

"The Levi'im received as their heritage forty-two cities, including the six cities of refuge (**ערי מקלט**).

Why 42 cities? The parsha lists 42 encampments where Bnei Yisrael encamped in the desert. Each of these was a desolate place, but Hashem turned it into welcoming, habitable place.

To show their gratitude, Bnei Yisroel were told to give Hashem's servants, the Levi'im, forty-two cities that they can call home."

הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

On June 24, 2021, at approximately 1:30 a.m. **Champlain Towers South**, a 12-story beachfront condominium building in the Miami suburb of Surfside, Florida, United States, partially collapsed.



At least nine people have been killed and eleven others have been injured as a result of the collapse. Two people have been rescued from the rubble, and 152 people remain missing as rescue operations continue.

I want to share a story.

I believe a shidduch has a time and place but never had I heard it so dramatically as in this story today from my brother-in-law just now.

Rav Chanmanya Greenwald's oldest daughter just got engaged to a boy from Flonda. If he hadn't gotten engaged in Eretz Yisroel, he would have been inside his apartment in Florida, yes, the building that collapsed.

The kallah had to wait 32 years to get married to save her Chosson!

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The Surfside tragedy: A request to daven and a personal story.

19 years ago, my father got a really good and exciting job at an international advertising school in Miami. This was a big deal for an art director over 60; it's an industry that values youth both behind and in front of the camera. He was so grateful for this opportunity.

He was about to sign the contract, about to sign the contract on their new condo, and the agency told him last minute the job required him to travel and work on Shabbos.

So the deal was off. This was always a painful moment for my father, even though ultimately it was a lesson for him in how committed he was to being Jewish and keeping Shabbos. It was one of those stories he always shared about what we do for Shabbos, what we do for our Judaism.

Well, the story has a strange ending today. This was the condo they had almost signed. Not only that, but the apartment was also in this wing, overlooking the pool.

Sometimes we are privileged to discover Hashem's ways...19 years later.



May Hashem show us miracles today! [Beverly Beard/ Keir Beard

Partners in Torah – Rabbi Elazar Meisels

The month of Av is also called Menachem Av, because the word Av means father, and Menachem means comfort. As tragic as the month has been for us, we are comforted by the knowledge that the source of our difficulty was none other than our "Father in Heaven" who loves us deeply and although He is compelled at times to rebuke us, He will never desert us or allow us to be totally destroyed.



Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein

This is a story that just happened to a girl that I am involved with. A girl that I deal with and know very well called me about ten days ago and said that she is very worried because she is not feeling well. Her whole body was full of black and blue marks. No one hit her or anything, she just suddenly came out with these marks. I didn't want to tell her that this is a sign of Leukaemia – a type of blood cancer.

I said that you need to go to the hospital immediately for tests. She went to the local hospital, and the test results came back "uch". She had virtually no blood in her body. Her blood cell count was practically non-existent. They pretty much came to the conclusion, that she has Leukaemia. Her kidneys weren't working well and many of her vital organs were shutting down. They said you are going to have to start chemo and radiation treatment as soon as possible.

This is a girl that self-harms and always told me that she wants to die. She says, "Rabbi Wallerstein, it's Leukaemia, I don't want to really die. Rabbi, do something!"

I said to her, listen, it is a small hospital, let's go to Columbia to the top hospital with top specialists there for a second opinion.

In Columbia, they take the first blood test. They said that the results show that the chances are 95% that you have Leukaemia. We will do a second blood test tomorrow to confirm the results.

She cried to me, "can you call someone in Israel, please do something. I really don't want to die." I told her that Hashem can do miracles,

you are not going to die. Don't get so worked up. – Easy for me to say.

The hospital didn't even know how she was living. The results were so bad that they said that it is a miracle that you are still alive.

I called up a mekubal in Eretz Yisrael. I didn't tell him what is wrong with the girl. I just told him, that I have a girl, and this is her name and her mother's name ……. He told me that she has something very wrong in her blood!

Tell her, that if she takes on keeping Shabbos for the rest of her life, (she doesn't keep Shabbos, kosher or anything), that on the next blood test, she will see miracles. I said," that's it!" He said "yes, tell her to keep Shabbos." I called her up, and I said, "listen, if you take on Shabbos, you will see a miracle."

"I Can't. Rabbi, I can't do Shabbos. I just can't do Shabbos. Tell the mekubal that I will take out all my piercings and I will keep kosher." I called him back to tell him this. He said to tell her that this will not help. She has to keep Shabbos. I called her back, and said, "sorry, but shamayim wants Shabbos. You have to keep Shabbos."

"Ok, I will keep Shabbos, but you have to help me."

The hospital takes the second blood test, and the results came back that there is no cancer in the blood! However, there is a possibility that it is still in the marrow and bones. So, we are adjusting the chances of having cancer down from 95% to 60%. We need to carry out an operation to take bone marrow to carry out further tests.

The bone marrow tests came back yesterday. – **No Cancer cells! Zero!**

What's going on? They diagnosed that she had a condition called "Aplastic anaemia." It is a disease of the blood which can be very serious but is extremely curable. You have to get a blood transfusion

once in a while and follow up tests. Worst case scenario is the necessity for a bone marrow transplant, and you will be fine.

I said to her, "Shabbos!, Shabbos! Did you keep this past Shabbos?" "She said yes."

Today I spoke to her, and she is like a different person. I said to her, "Do you want to live, get married and have children?" She said, "I don't want to die Rabbi. I cannot thank you enough."

I said, "Don't thank me, but don't mess Shabbos up."

She is fine and home. She just has to go for regular blood tests.

KEEP SHABBOS AND SHABBOS WILL KEEP YOU!

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

Ability of Disability



Many people we consider successful in this world aren't happy. And many people who we wouldn't consider successful are the ones who are truly happy. This is dependent on one being happy with his lot. Happiness doesn't depend on what we have rather it depends on our outlook on whatever there is. If one is unhappy with what he has, he won't be happy with what he gets. The Gemara says **אין עני אלא בדעה** , a truly destitute person is one who is impoverished of **דעת**, knowledge. The word **שמח** is a contraction of **שם מח**, focus your thoughts, because happiness depends on where your thoughts are, where you place your mind.

In the 1980s, a man named Jerry Long—who was paralyzed from his neck down since a driving accident at age 17—wrote, "I view my life as being abundant with meaning and purpose. The attitude that I adopted on that fateful day has become my personal credo for life: I broke my neck, but it didn't break me. I am currently enrolled in my first psychology course in college. I believe that my handicap will only enhance my ability to help others. I know that without the suffering, the growth that I have achieved would have been impossible."

R' Yitzy Hurwitz, who is completely paralyzed with the disease ALS, recently wrote thoughts that were shared in his name by his son at a convention, in 2019, of over 5,800 people: One thing I have learned from my experience is that there is hardly a person who doesn't have struggles. Whether it be health, money, shalom bayis, shidduchim, children, or something else. In my case it's open and impossible to hide, so I am on display. But that doesn't mean that your struggles are any less.

You need to know that whatever you are dealing with, it's directly from Hashem. That means that He wants something from you that can only be realized through your difficulty. It doesn't mean that your mission and purpose has to end, rather that there is something else being asked of you, a new stage of your purpose and mission. You don't have to fight it, rather, you should find a way for your struggle to take you to the next level…This is positivity in the face of any challenge, not only to deal with your challenge, or to learn from your challenge, but to use your difficulty to lift you and your family to heights previously unimaginable, and even more, to use your difficulties as a platform to lift others up. Because there is nothing better than lifting the spirit of a Jewish person.

When I went for the first round of tests, I was given a devastating diagnosis, "You have bulbar ALS." I didn't understand what it meant, so I asked him to explain. He said, "It's very serious, you are going

to lose your muscles and you will be paralyzed, it's the most aggressive form of the disease, you have two years to live." As you could imagine, I was shaken to the core. When I left the office, I was all alone, walking into the empty hallway I broke down in a fit of bitter tears. When I composed myself, I exited the building, and I saw a man falling on the ground having a seizure and I ran to help him. At that moment, I realized that there is still a lot that I can do. I resolved right there and then that no matter what the results of any further "tests," I am going to remain positive and find a way to make a difference. I couldn't imagine how high that way of thinking would take me.

The word **מַדּוּעַ** is a contraction of **מַה דַּעַת** , meaning to say when we ask why something happened, we must ask ourselves what we can learn from it. We can learn to be more vigilant next time, attain more knowledge in a given area and so on. Similarly, the word **לָמָּה** - why, can be read as **לְמַה** , for what. That is to say, for what purpose did this happen. How can I grow from this?

We must realize that problems are opportunities. If you have a difficulty in your life, don't miss the opportunity rather make it purposeful.

From The Chassidic Masters

Although our joy must be diminished during these weeks, that should be limited to areas in which we experience personal pleasure. In areas of Divine service such as prayer, mitzvah observance, and Torah study, we must overcome our inclination to be gloomy and perform them with great joy for during these weeks, the Almighty still seeks our company and delights in our service. Avodas Yisrael [***Maggid of Koznitz***]

פנינים על התורה – Peninim on The Torah

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת

Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes. *(30:2)*

It is good to digress once in a while to gain insight into the eminence of those individuals who have ascended the ladders of Torah erudition sufficiently to be called *Roshei ha'mattos*, heads of the tribes.

Someone asked ***Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita***, how many times the word "Moshe" is mentioned in the Torah. He replied, "614 times." The questioner countered that he had checked with a computer, and the total was 616. *Rav* Chaim disputed this, claiming that the computer had erred. "Moshe" appears in the Torah exactly 614 times.

The man was shocked. How could the computer be wrong? *Rav* Chaim explained that while the name Moshe is written 614 times, the spelling – *mem, shin, hay* – comes up two times, **וְאִם יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת** (spelled *mem, shin hay*). (*Shemos* 12:4) and **שָׁמוֹט כָּל־בַּעַל מַשֵּׁה יָדוֹ** (spelled *mem, shin, hay*) (*Devarim* 15:2).

Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita, quotes *Midrash Tanchuma* (*Beshalach* 16) that *talmidei chachamim*, Torah scholars, are called *sofrim*, since they are *sofer*, count, every word in the Torah (because it is so precious to them).

The *Rosh Yeshivah* of Mir, ***Horav Nochum Partzovitz***, walked into the *bais hamedrash* and noticed two *bachurim* talking about anything but learning. When they saw him approaching, they suddenly changed their discourse and quickly transitioned to a debate concerning a passage in the *Talmud* (*Nedarim*). One of them pretended to be reading: "*Tanu Rabbanan;* "The Rabbi taught." *Rav* Nachum walked by and, in his inimitable muted tone, said, "The phrase *Tanu Rabbanan* is not found anywhere in *Meseches Nedarim*."

When this vignette was related to *Rav* Chaim Kanievsky, he closed his eyes momentarily (as if he were quickly reviewing the entire folio

of *Talmud*), and then he remarked, "It is true that *Tanu Rabbanan* is not to be found, but ***d'tanu Rabbanan*** is found" (27a).



This incident was shared with ***Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl***. He commented, "Why are you so impressed? This is his *makolet*, grocery store. Every grocer knows exactly where every item in his store is situated, its price and how many of each item is available. He *lives* his *makolet*. It is his very life. To *Rav* Chaim, the *Gemorah* and its commentators are his very life. They are his *makolet*."

Parshah Thoughts - *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

In this week's *parshah* the Torah recounts the travels of *Bnei Yisroel*. Why doesn't the Torah include the giving of the Torah at *Har Sinai*?

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that the giving of the Torah wasn't a one-time occurrence to commemorate. It is an event that must be relived every single day. Therefore, the Torah does not give an accounting of it in this summary.

ונס שמה רצח מכה נפש בשגגה ***And a murderer shall flee the one who takes a life unintentionally.*** *(35:11)*



The word *rotze'ach*, murderer, followed by *makeh nefesh*, one who takes a life, is seemingly redundant. Why does the Torah repeat itself? ***Horav Chaim Toito, Shlita***, employs the following story as a means for distinguishing between the two terms. A devout, G-d fearing Jew lived in a small village not far from Sanz. He earned a living by using his house as an inn and restaurant. It was a lucrative business. One day, a poor man dressed in tattered clothes appeared at his inn. Being a kind-hearted man, the innkeeper gave this man a decent, nourishing meal, after which he took out some money and gave it to him. The poor man refused the donation. Thinking that it was too paltry a sum to cover the poor man's needs, the innkeeper doubled his donation. The poor man explained, "I do not require your financial assistance. I am, *baruch Hashem*, quite wealthy and not in the need of money."

Obviously, the innkeeper was taken aback. The man clearly appeared destitute. He certainly did not dress like a wealthy man. He ate his meal in a manner that indicated that his last meal had been some time ago. "Let me explain," he began. "I live in Fist (a suburb of Premishlan) where I own fields, vineyards, and a number of businesses. Let it suffice that I am quite comfortable. A few years

ago, a considerable amount of money was missing from my house. Immediate suspicion was focused on an orphan girl who had been working for me as a maid. I brought her to the judge in the community, where she was put under corporeal pressure in order to obtain a confession. She suffered beatings, but remained adamant in her claim of innocence. As a result of the beatings she sustained, she became ill and succumbed to her illness.

"Two weeks after the girl's passing, the lost money was discovered. Apparently, it had been misplaced. I realised that I was guilty of *chosheid b'k'sheirim*, wrongful suspicion, which inadvertently led to the untimely death of a poor orphan girl. I was miserable.



In my attempt to seek atonement and learn what was the proper form of *teshuvah*, I travelled to the *tzaddik*, ***Horav Meir, zl, m'Premishlan***. "The *Rebbe* told me to choose one of three punishments: to die immediately, which would allow me to enter *Olam Habba*, the World to Come; to be gravely ill for three years; or to go into *galus*, exile, as one who is guilty of *retzichah b'shogeg*. I was unable to cope – neither with immediate death, painful illness, or banishment to a life of exile. I bid the *Rebbe*, 'Good day,' and left.

"Two weeks passed, and I developed a headache. At first, it was a dull ache, but, after a few days, it became devastatingly painful, preventing me from functioning. My family sent for a doctor, who, after giving me a thorough check up, said that I had no hope. My body was shutting down. He was at a loss to prevent the illness from

advancing further. He gave me a few days to live. I felt that this was the work of the saintly *Premishlaner*, who had selected death as my atonement.

I immediately dispatched a letter to the *Rebbe* asking for his blessing that I regain my strength. I would then travel to Premishlan to meet with him once again.

"When I entered the holy *Rebbe's* home, he said, 'You have time to die, and, veritably, you have already been ill. I select for you the punishment of exile. However, I will teach you the meaning of exile. First of all, whatever you have with you – clothes, money – you will leave with me. I will give you old, tattered clothes to wear. You should always be on the move. In other words, never sleep in the same place two nights in a row. Never beg for food. If someone gives you – good; if not, you will just have to wait. No donations. Only if someone gives you a meal out of the goodness of his heart may you partake. You may not return for three years, except, once each year, you may come to the outskirts of the city and request that your wife bring you the books to your business to determine if you are losing money. Only if you are in sad financial shape may you end your exile prematurely. I guarantee you, however, that this will not be the case. You will do well, despite your absence. All your travels must be on foot. After three years, you will return to me, and I will return all of your belongings to you."

"I accepted the *Rebbe's* guidelines and his blessings and set out on my imposed exile. Two years passed, and I discovered that the saintly *Premishlaner* has passed from this world. I did not know what to do. I heard that a holy *Rebbe* is in the city of Sanz (***Horav Chaim, zl***). It is to him that I am now traveling. Perhaps he can guide me concerning what to do."

When the innkeeper heard the incredible story, he elected to accompany the man to Sanz in order to find out the end of the story. They waited in the home of the *Sanzer* to be greeted with, "You

shall go home by way of Premishlan, stop at the grave of the *Premishlaner* and inform him that the *Rebbe* of Sanz has determined that two years of exile are sufficient punishment, since you did not in any way deviate from his guidelines. Your *mesiras nefesh*, self sacrifice, in seeking atonement earned your place among the worthy penitents."

Wonderful, inspirational story – with a frightening message. One does not have to commit murder with his two hands in order to be deserving of *galus*. Even if his inadvertent error caused another Jew to suffer and succumb – he is guilty. He must be exiled. This is to what the Torah is alluding when it writes *rotzeach b'shogeg* – an unintentional murder and *makeh nefesh*, one who takes a life. There is the individual who might use his hands – direct action – albeit unintentionally, to murder a person. There is also the *makeh nefesh*, who does not outright use his hands, but, by virtue of his actions – or inactions – brings about a person's untimely death. He is also included. It goes without saying that the latter is much more frightening, and a situation concerning which we must be *constantly* vigilant.

The Power is in Your Lips:

In a cemetery in Petach Tikvah, there is a grave with the date of 19 Tishrei 5649. The name of the nifter is etched on the gravestone, followed by the words: "Bris krusah l'sefasayim. A covenant is made with lips." These words are found in the Gemara (Moed Katan 18a) and are used to mean that the words one says influence future events. Why were they written on this man's gravestone?

On Erev Yom Kippur 5649 (1889), a field was dedicated to serve as the cemetery of Petach Tikvah. As is customary, this was done with a ceremony that included the recital of Tehilim and walking in a circle around the field. When the ceremony was completed, one of the

people there grinned and said, "I wonder which one of us will be the first to be buried here?" His friend answered back, "I wouldn't mind being the first. It would be an honour to be the first man buried in Petach Tikvah's new cemetery."

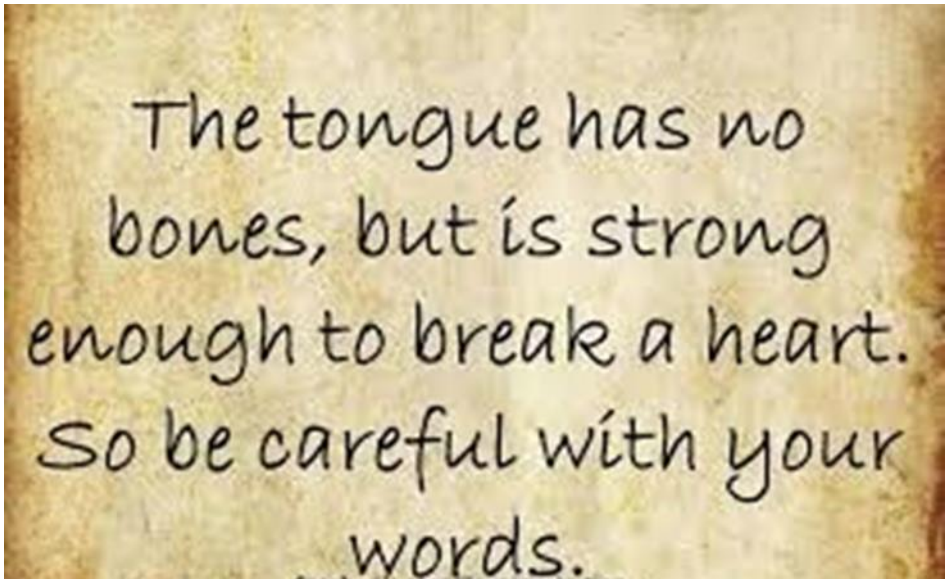


This man was young and healthy, but just a few days later he died suddenly! He was, in fact, the first person buried in this cemetery. On his grave, the words "A covenant is made with lips" were written, to remind people to watch what they say and not to speak the way this man did.

Talk Leads to Action:

Rashi explains the posuk that says "You should not break your word" to mean that "one should not make his words ordinary". **The Arizal**, in Sefer Likutei Torah (Parshas Eikev) learns from this that one should not treat his words as if they are unimportant. A person should treasure every word that comes out of his mouth because every word is very powerful and has great consequences. Words can be used to accomplish tremendous amounts of goodness or terrible amounts of badness.

In fact, good words create good angels that protect us and help us, and bad words create evil forces that could, chas veshalom, harm us. This is why one must be careful with every word he says.



The Shedlitzer Rov zy"a also writes in Sefer Aron Eidus that every word one says creates a Malach. When one uses his words for good things, he creates a good Malach that protects him and defends him. When one uses his words for bad things, chas veshalom, he creates a destructive angel that can harm him.

The posuk is teaching us that one should not use his words for mundane, inappropriate speech, because every word is powerful and a person should make sure that he only uses words in a way that will create good, holy angels. Words have great power, as is seen from the following stories:

The Chofetz Chaim would often travel to towns far and wide to spread Torah to local Jews and encourage them to improve in their avodas Hashem. He once was traveling by train, accompanied by his son-in-law. When the train stopped at a station, the Chofetz Chaim began saying Tefilas Haderech with intense kavanah.

A secular Jew who had abandoned Torah and mitzvos watched him saying the tefillah in annoyance. When the Chofetz Chaim finished, he told him, "Rabbi, this train runs on gasoline! It doesn't need your prayers to drive safely!" The Chofetz Chaim looked at him and responded, "First of all, haven't you ever heard of a train that crashed or went off the rails? Why do you think that can't happen to this train? Secondly, how do you know that you will arrive safely at the next station? How do you know that you will still be healthy by the time we get there?"

Just a short while later, this man began feeling unwell. He looked so sick that they made an emergency stop to take him off the train and transport him to the nearest hospital. He never made it to the next station – just like the Chofetz Chaim had said could happen!

There is another story related about a Rov who was travelling to a city near Vilna. On the way back, he stopped to visit **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky zt"l**. Rav Chaim Ozer greeted him with a warm smile and spoke with him for a short while.

While they were speaking, Rav Chaim Ozer asked his guest why he was traveling. "Do you need my help with anything," Rav Chaim Ozer asked. The man told him that he was on his way back from a nearby town where the Rov had just passed away. He had gone to attend the levaya and pay final respects to the Rov.

When Rav Chaim Ozer heard that the Rov of the nearby town had died, he became very upset. He asked, "Did the Maggid of the city deliver a hesped on the Rov?" The man answered, "They prepared a small stool for the Magid to stand on as he spoke. When he stepped up onto the stool, he slipped and fell. He landed hard on the ground, and they had to call an ambulance to take him to the hospital!"

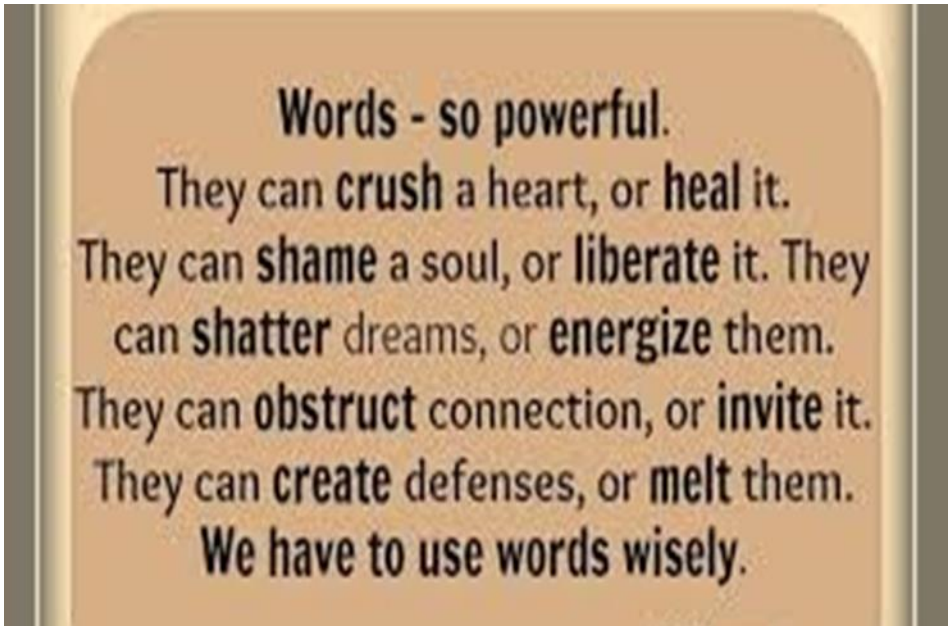
Rav Chaim Ozer listened to his answer in silence. The man then left and went on his way. A relative who had been present later asked Rav Chaim Ozer, "Why did you ask if the Magid gave a hesped? And why did you look so serious when you heard that the Magid didn't speak?"

Rav Chaim Ozer replied, "Over ten years ago, there was a disagreement between the Rov who was just nifter and this Magid. Unfortunately, they became involved in a bitter argument and began yelling at each other. The Magid got so mad that he screamed at the Rov, 'When you die, I won't say a hesped about you!'"

Rav Chaim Ozer then declared, "Words have a real impact! The Magid declared that he would not give a hesped - so he could not give

one. Even though he didn't mean it seriously, and only said it out of anger, he still was bound by his words. Hashem made him fall of the stool and break his leg so that his words should be fulfilled!"

What You Say Has an Impact Above:



The Mishnah states (Avos 4:3): **וְאֵין לְךָ דָּבָר שֶׁאֵין לוֹ מָקוֹם** "There is no thing that doesn't have a place."

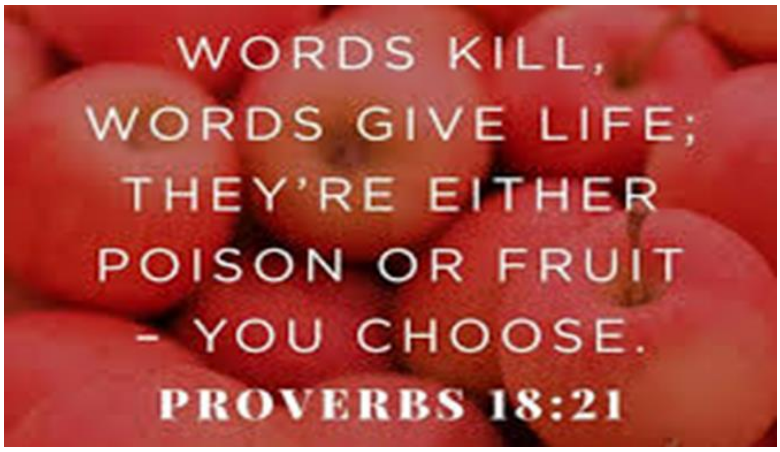
Rav Chaim Volozhiner zt"l, in his Sefer Ruach Chaim, explains that the word "davar", thing, can also mean "dibur", word. In this way, the Mishnah can be read to be saying that every word creates its own place.

What does this mean? As **Rabbi Chaim Vital zy"a** explains, every word creates an impression somewhere in Shomayim. This is hinted at in the words of the posuk, "*Everything that comes out of your mouth, you should do.*"

The posuk can also be read to be saying, "Everything that comes out of your mouth will do something." This means that every word you say will do something in Shomayim. Our words reach the Heavens and have an important impact in the highest places.

From this we see how valuable our words truly are. Every one of them reaches Shomayim and has a genuine effect.

Be Careful Not to Cause Damage:



The Gemara says in Maseches Bava Kama (36B): "One who wants to be a righteous person should be careful with things of damages."

The Ben Yehoyada explains that our words have consequences and what we say can often cause damage to others. Therefore, we are told to be careful with "things of damages", which can be understood to mean "words that can cause damage." We are told to be careful about every word we say, to make sure that nothing that comes out of our mouths ends up hurting someone else.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

Nedarim

This story is told over by **Rabbi Meir Shapiro, the Lubliner Rav**. When he became the rav in Lublin, one of the first things that he did was to find the ***Pinkas*** of the town.[**פִּנְקָס**, record book of Jewish archives. The *pinkas* contained minutes of meetings, bylaws, lists of officers elected at the annual meetings, records of disciplinary actions against recalcitrant members, of tax assessments and fines, of trials, of unusual historical events, and an endless variety of other entries reflecting the life of the local community.]

He wanted to check and get a feel as to what the history of the kehilla was, prior to taking over leadership.

Within the archives of the kehilla, he found an envelope sealed with the seal of the **מהרש״ל -Marhashal**. [Rabbi Shloime Luria 1510-

1573] over 300 years ago. He opened it, and found a story written by the Maharshal, which Reb Meir told over to his talmidim, to understand the koach of Torah.

The story begins with the unfortunate case of a young couple who were married, and the woman became extremely ill. Her health kept deteriorating to the point where her husband was trying to encourage her and boost her morale. One of the things that he said to her was that " you have to live, I make a ***neder*** that I will never marry anyone else." Unfortunately, she succumbed to her illness, and she passed away. Time passed, and the Maharshal met this man, and saw that he was extremely distressed.



The Marhashal, being the rav of the town, took him aside, and started talking to him. He said to him, that I can see that there is something bothering you much more than would be normal after such a loss. Please tell me what it is.

The man opened up his heart, and said that before my wife passed away, I made a neder to her, that I would never marry anyone else. So now, I am in a pickle. I am still a young man, but I am unable to move forward and get re-married.

The Marhashal told him that according to halacha, your neder is void and was not valid. לָשֶׁבֶת יְצָרָהּ -The world was created to be inhabited. I am paskening that you can get married again.

Sometime later, the young man got engaged and was preparing for his upcoming wedding. People in the town were gossiping about him and the psak of the Mahashal. During the week before the wedding, the man dropped dead!

Of course, all the people of Lublin said that this happened because he was about to break his neder. The marhashal called in the chevra Kadisha, and he said to them that they should take the niftar to the beis hakvoros with no-one else present and leave him there in a certain place. He gave them a piece of paper and told them to place it upon the body. On the paper, he had written, "I Rav Shloime Luria, the Av Beis Din and Rav of Lublin have paskened that this man's neder is null and void. If so, then Beis Din Shel Maaloh must conform to my psak, as ***Torah Lo Bashomayim He***. I command you to return this man's soul so that he should return to the living."

The next day, the man was walking around Lublin! You can imagine that people were a little freaked out and kept well away from him. The thing was that he only had a few days left until his upcoming wedding. His kalloh was petrified and did not want to marry a man that had just returned from the dead.

He came back to the Maharshal, and told him that it is an amazing miracle, but le'maaseh, what are we going to do?

So, the Marshal writes, that he summoned the **מלאך הממונה על השכחה** – He summoned the angel in charge of making people forget things. He commanded the angel to make the whole town of Lublin to forget all of this ever happened. The couple got married, and The Marhashal wrote the story of this episode, put it in an envelope, sealed it with his *shtemple*, not to be opened until over 300 years later.

When Reb Meir Shapiro opened it up, he said, "this shows the power of Torah." Firstly, we must be very careful in regards to making a neder. As it says in this weeks sedra 30:3 **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה** ***he shall not violate his word; according to whatever came out of his mouth, he shall do.*** This Pasuk is repeating itself. **The Heilige Berditchever** says that someone that doesn't make his words Chulin – The Riboino Shel Olam will fulfil whatever that person says.

When we go to a Tzaddik and ask for them to daven for us or for a bracha, why are we doing that? What special power do they have?

One of the things is that - **לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ** their word is their word. And because they keep their word, **כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה** their words will be fulfilled.

Peninim on The Torah – The Arei Miklat

והקריתם לכם ערים ערי מקלט ..ונס שמה רצח מכה נפש בשגגה (35:11) ***You shall designate cities for yourselves… and a murderer shall flee there – one who takes a life unintentionally.***

The Arei Miklat, Cities of Refuge, served as home to two groups of Jews: Shevet Levi, the spiritual exemplars of our nation; and the rotzeach b'shogeg, one who committed unintentional murder. The relationship between these two groups seems to be a bit of a stretch. They are quite the opposite of one another.



The Bostoner Rebbe zl, was one of the founders of the baal teshuvah movement in the USA. The Rebbe was called to address the annual Agudath Israel convention. He used his time at the podium as an opportunity to exhort observant Jews to reach out to their not-yet-observant brothers and sisters.

Many of his addresses were later published in the Jewish Observer. I take the liberty of citing various passages from his addresses which will conclude with an explanation of why the rotzeach b'shogeg was remanded to live together with Shevet Levi, specifically, as the nation's spiritual role models. They should share their community with people who were spiritually distant from them.

"We are faced with a generation of young people who lack the knowledge and understanding of what living Jewish means, and we must declare ourselves partners in their guilt…They have ignored Judaism because of misconceptions, a lack of interest, and their own struggle for identity and meaning in life… It is our responsibility to give them the spirit and pride in being a Jew

"We are often too preoccupied with our own growth and spiritual problems to spare time and attention for others. This must not deter us from providing the necessary help to the stranger or, even at times, to our children who desperately need our attention.

The Amshinover Rebbe zl, pointed out that even one who had committed unintentional murder had a place where he could go and be welcomed: the Arei Miklat.

Who lived in these cities? They were home to Shevet Levi, whose very lives were dedicated to the service of Hashem. It was their duty to help those who had committed such a terrible deed and to provide housing for them.



How much more so does the obligation rest upon us to help our fellow Jews who are desperately in search of the truth?" (The Rebbe gave this speech at the Knessiah Gedolah in Yerushalayim in 1980!

How much more relevant it is today when we see so many of our brothers and sisters drowning in the murky waters of life outside the Torah camp.)

Torah Sweets



"One who rests in order to have the strength to do Mitzvos is doing a Mitzvah then."

The first Pasuk in Parshas Masei writes (Bamidbar 33:1):אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל "***These are the travels of the Jews***."

However, the Pesukim all talk about where they camped in between the travels. There is a big lesson here. When one has to go somewhere, he may have to rest, fill up on gas, buy lunch, or check into a hotel; it's all considered as part of the travel. Businesses pay for the employees' expenses while on the road because it's part of the trip. If we work here in This World for Hashem, then all the "extras" are on the house.



One of the forty-two stopovers that the Yidden made was (mentioned in this week's parashah) in Marah, which means bitter. Over there, they didn't have drinkable water (see *Shmos* 15:23). They might have thought that the reason there wasn't anything to drink was because they came to Marah. Hashem wanted to test them with the bitter waters, which is why they came to Marah.

Later they came to Eilam, and there were twelve wells there. Hashem could have brought them first to Eilam, but it was Hashem's will to test them in Marah.

Hashem's will chooses the place and not the place that creates the circumstances.



When **Reb Eliyahu Meir Bloch *zt'l*** was living in Telz, Lithuania, he would go to the stores on erev Shabbos to encourage them to close. Once, he smacked a non-religious Yid for keeping his store open on Shabbos. That person eventually was promoted and served in the government. Reb Bloch feared that now that he was a high-ranking official, he could take revenge on him, so Reb Eliyahu Meir and his family fled to Cleveland, Ohio, where he re-established the Telz Yeshiva.

At the *chanukas habayis*, Reb Eliyahu Meir said, "I thought I was fleeing from the government official, but I discovered that Hashem sent me here to save my family from the Holocaust and so I can establish a yeshiva in America."

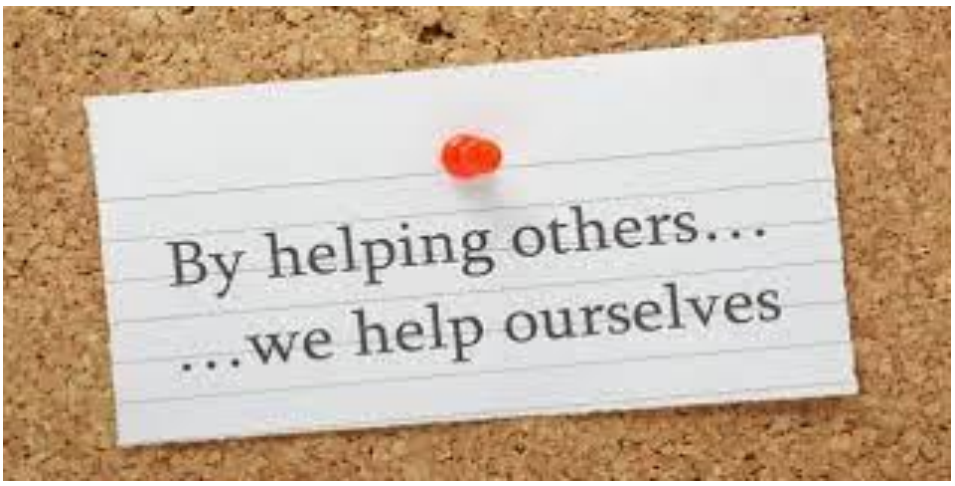
He thought he was fleeing from the government official, but that was just the tool Hashem used to get him to travel. Ultimately, he travelled because this was Hashem's will.

Sterling Character

Do not be overly joyous or light-hearted, nor sad and down. Rather, one should always be happy and pleasant all his days. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 29:2)

What You Do for Others You Do for Yourself

People say, "What you do for others, you do for yourself." This means if you act kindly to others, kindness will come back to you.



The source for this concept is from the Pasuk (*Tehillim* 121:5) **ה' צלך** , "Hashem is your shadow." *Chazal* explain that just as a shadow mimics the movements of man, **ה' צלך** Hashem *keviyachol* mimics a Yid's behaviour. When a Yid performs kindness with others, Hashem does kindness to him.

In parashas Vayeshev, Yosef does kindness with the Sar HaMashkim, and he interprets his dream well. The Arvei Nachal explains that Yosef did so because he wanted to receive Hashem's compassion. Therefore, he purposely acted with compassion towards others, so Hashem would act kindly and compassionately with him and free him from jail.

The Arvei Nachal writes that Mordechai and Esther were kind to one another, which is why Hashem did kindness with them and the entire nation. **ה' צלך** Hashem is your shadow, and the way we act is the same way that Hashem will treat us.

Mordechai heard Bigson and Seresh plotting to kill Achashveirosh, so he told Esther about it. Mordechai wanted Esther to earn the credit and be rewarded for saving Achashveirosh's life. However, Esther wanted Mordechai to earn the credit, so she told Achashveirosh **בשם מרדכי**, in Mordechai's name.

Because they were devoted to helping one another, Hashem saved them and the entire Jewish nation.

Chazal teach from the passuk **ה' צלך** 'Hashem is your shadow,' for how man acts, is how Hashem acts toward him. Whereas, when people aren't united with perfect love – even if they don't hate each other, but each person is only thinking about himself, and he doesn't strive to help his fellow man – Hashem will similarly not seek their benefit, *chas veshalom*.

Therefore, whenever a person is going through a hard time, *chas veshalom*, the counsel is that he should befriend someone or befriend many people. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will seek to do goodness with him and he will be saved.

In summary, ***"Help others, and Hashem will help you."*** This happened to Yosef HaTzaddik, and Mordechai and Esther, and this happens to every individual when he cares about someone else and strives to help others.

Seek opportunities to do *chesed;* you will only gain.

This Date in Jewish History

By the late 13th century, the synod passed laws forbidding social interactions between Jews and Christians, forcing Jews to wear identifying badges, imposing church tithes on them and banning them from certain professions. They were also forbidden from building new synagogues. Further measures forbade Jews from owning land and passing on inheritance to their children. Hundreds were arrested, hanged or imprisoned.

On the 2nd of Av, 5050 (1290), King Edward I of England issued a proclamation to expel all Jews in the country (about 3,000 people) — just for tax purposes. After returning from his Crusade, Edward was deeply in debt. He called his knights and told them that he planned on collecting a huge tax. He knew it would be unpopular with the citizen of his country, so he offered them a treat to sweeten the deal — he would also expel all the Jews!

The heavy tax was passed because the expulsion order was very popular. It was met with little resistance and was quickly carried out. It was not reversed until 1656 when they were invited to resettle by Oliver Cromwell.

A Trip to Vilna – R' Sruli Ginsberg



We have all heard of the great **Vilna Gaon**, and many of us are familiar with the saying **וויל - ווילנא גאון נאר גאון.** If you want it strong enough, then you will be able to be a gaon and a talmid chacham.

The Heilige Chofetz Chaim once had to travel from his hometown of Radin, to Vilna. As he gets onto the train, he notices another Yid getting on the train. The Yid asked the Chofetz Chaim, "Where are you travelling to?" The Chofetz Chaim says, "To Vilna." The Yid says, "Great, I am travelling to Vilna too." So the Yid sits himself down next to the Chofetz Chaim.

At the first stop, the Chofetz Chaim notices that the Yid is getting together all his belongings and getting ready to leave the train.

The Chofetz Chaim said to him, "I thought you said that you were going to Vilna?"

The Yid answered, "Correct, I am going to Vilna.", so the chofetz Chaim said, "But Vilna is in another ten stops from here. Why are you getting off now?"

The Yid explained that he hasn't got enough money to purchase a ticket to go all the way to Vilna, but only enough money to buy a ticket for one stop. At the next stop, I will collect some more money, and I will purchase another ticket for another stop. I will repeat this exercise until I eventually reach my destination at Vilna.

The Chofetz Chaim says, that we can learn a tremendous lesson from this.

We all want to reach *Vilna*. Every Yid wants to reach greatness, but we don't have the means to reach greatness in one go. So Hashem gave us life.

Every single day is like another station, and we have to ensure that we gather and collect as many mitzvos and Torah as we can, to get us through to the next day, to reach even higher. And slowly day by day and station by station, we will reach greatness and Vilna.

The Chofetz Chaim says that in this week's sedra, we list the 42 travelling's that the Yidden went through in the midbar. Could Hashem not have taken us out of Mitzrayim and taken us direct to Eretz Yisrael?

We went through many experiences in the midbar. Some of them we reached tremendous heights like Matan Torah. And some of them, we had tremendous downfalls, like korach and the eigel.

All those experiences together, shaped us into a people who were now ready to go into Eretz Yisrael. We needed those experiences to enable us to enter Eretz Yisrael.

Mattos and Masseh always fall out during the three weeks. **Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano - Rema MiPano (רמ"ע מפאנו)** (Italy 1548 – 1620) writes that the Roshei Teivos of **אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל** spell out all the four exiles that the Yidden went through – **אדום מדי יון בבבל.** We are going through galus and many experiences with tremendous pain. But we need to understand, that just like the Yidden had to experience 42 travellings, to be able to shape them

into a people, similarly, all the experiences that we go through, shape us into becoming a people in order to reach Vilna! – Eretz Yisrael with the Beis Hamikdash bimhaira v'yameinu Amein.

R' Avigdor Miller Zt"l - Learning Tolerance

At the end of Sefer Bamidbar we see a remarkable thing. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is talking now to the Am Yisroel about coming into Eretz Canaan. And He says like this: **כִּי אֲנִי ה' שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – ***For I Hashem dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel*** (Masei 35:34).

It's the conclusion now of that great experience, the forty years in the Wilderness, and finally they're getting the haskamah of Hakodosh Boruch Hu: "You've succeeded! I'm proud of you, you're worthy now that I can dwell in your midst."

Now, the question is what made them so great, so great that they deserved this praise from Hakodosh Boruch Hu?



It's important to understand in what way the Am Yisroel in the Wilderness became especially worthy of Hashem's acclaim at the end of forty years. Because what they achieved, and the way they achieved it, we're expected to model our own lives on that.

I'm going to give the answer with just one word, one word that will introduce our subject tonight. I'll say the word, but remember, that's not the whole story; there's a lot to say still. What made them great? The answer is they learned **savlonus** - to tolerate.

When we look back at the Dor Hamidbar we see that the nation was given a special training for forty years – they underwent a schooling

of savlonus. Now, if we're going to understand that we have to study a little bit what it means to live in the Wilderness.

First, let's imagine what happened when they heard that they were going to stay in the Wilderness for forty years. Oooh, were they disappointed! Instead of going immediately to Eretz Canaan, they had to travel around in the midbar. "Whoooah! What's going on?! We thought we were traveling to Eretz Canaan!" They were thinking already of the nice juicy figs and dates and big houses with gardens, and all of a sudden they were told, "Forty years in the midbar." What a disappointment that was! You need savlonus to take that. It's a tremendous test!

You know what it means to live in the Wilderness? They didn't live in houses like they did in Mitzrayim. Back in Mitzrayim they had houses. The Chumash says that. And now they're in tents! You need savlonus if you're going to live forty years in a tent.



It's very inconvenient. And they had a lot of children in those days and so it was difficult. Constantly, children were doing things. They were children, not angels. Children complain. They cry. They fight. And a mother has to listen to complaints. She has to listen to them and she has to be able to tolerate it. It's not easy. And it's not only your own family. One of the features of the midbar was the crowding together of all the people. Your neighbours were right there next to you. Your tent is here and the next man's tent is right there. They didn't have any big space between them. And it wasn't houses with walls; it was cloth tents.

When you have a couple of million people camping together in one small place, one tent near another, you have to learn savlonus. People

could get on each other's nerves all the time. Maybe you want to take a nap and the baby in the next tent is crying loud; he doesn't let you sleep. You have to have savlonus for neighbours like that. It's almost impossible for people to live together in such crowded conditions unless you are practicing savlonus day and night.

Not only your neighbours were crowding in on you. Every Jew had a mashgiach appointed over him. You know, in the yeshiva, let's say you have a yeshiva of a hundred boys; so there's a mashgiach who's watching the boys. And they feel it's too much. He's always looking at us! But in the midbar, for every nine people, there was one mashgiach! Sarei asarah means that of every ten people, one was appointed as a mashgiach to watch. And he had full authority over them. You realize what a straitjacket that was? It's a most uncomfortable form of existence. You had to be a big savlon because you were constantly being watched; somebody was always looking over your shoulders. And for every hundred, there was another supervisor, and for every thousand another supervisor. And so the nation in the midbar was swarming with supervisors.



Everybody was under the strictest control for forty years. You know what that means to be under constant scrutiny every minute? It was almost impossible to tolerate such supervision! You needed very much savlonus to live that way.

Trumpet Trepidation. They had to learn to besoveil Hashem too. After all He didn't allow them any menucha. He never told them, "Settle in. In this place we'll be staying for at least a month." Oh no; every day they had to be on the alert, maybe they'll hear the sound

of the trumpets that will summon them to pull up the stakes of their tents and start moving. They never had any kind of security that they would remain in one place for longer than a day.

It's true, in one place they remained for eighteen years. But the entire eighteen years, every day, they were in trepidation. Every minute the trumpet might sound and say: get moving!

And then there was the diet. Here Hakodosh Boruch Hu took us out of Mitzrayim and right away there's no water. Three days with no water– you know what that means, no water. You're thirsty. The children are climbing the walls from thirst. You're irritated. You need savlonus for such a test.

And food? What food? The *mann* was colourless; a light colour, practically colourless. It means the dullest kind of menu. It was a difficult test. If your wife would serve you every day for a week the same thing exactly, you might feel irritated. Suppose she served you a month the same thing, day and night the same thing, I'm afraid what would be. And here for forty years, that's all they had.

Now all of you tzaddikim, you know that when they wanted to have a machshavah of eating meat, it tasted like meat. But that wasn't so easy. It wasn't just like this, "Meat!" and it becomes meat. No, it wasn't that easy. They had to sit down and say, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu is a tov umaitiv and He's able to give me meat and the mann has all the good things in it that meat can give me and I would like to have the feeling I'm eating meat."

And little by little if you worked on it, you could get a certain amount of hana'ah as if you ate meat. But it was only a matter of the seichel. It didn't turn into meat. It was still mann. And any moment that he stopped using his seichel, it tasted like the same old mann again. So he had to keep his mind on it constantly.

And so even if you were from the good ones who could do that, it's a little bit tiresome! They would like to sit down to real meat! A red

steak and some wheat bread! Ahh! To be able to chew a solid piece of bread. Real food! But the mann? Always, day after day, to eat something that just your mind is telling you tastes good?

Punished by Design. Hakodosh Boruch Hu was creating a patient people. Day after day for forty years He was testing our tolerance and making a perfect nation from us. Whether you liked it or not, you learned to be a soveil, a patient fellow. You learned to accept your circumstances. It was the most remarkable period in our history, the most unusual period. And if you'll understand this, you'll understand a big yesod.

You know some people think that because of the meraglim, that's why they were sentenced to be forty years in the midbar. After all, it says openly in the Chumash that reason. But there's a klal gadol in history that we have to learn; a very important rule as follows: Whatever happens was planned by Hashem beforehand. Hashem wanted them to be forty years in the midbar. And so whatever your cheder rebbi might have taught you, it's time to get this into your head right now. It was planned; in order to make this great generation even greater, even more perfect, so that they should be worthy of the encomium of Hashem, Hakodosh Boruch Hu had in mind from the beginning they should not enter Eretz Yisrael.

And that's because for that great generation it was an opportunity, an opportunity for perfection of character.

And therefore they learned to accept the circumstances and they became perfect in the midbar. They lacked many conveniences and they learned to grin and bear it. They learned to tolerate that strict limited diet; they learned to tolerate the scarcity of water and the inconvenience of living in tents. They learned to tolerate the necessity to travel sometimes long journeys on foot. After a while, they became accustomed to it and little by little they gained the perfection of savlonus.



Chizuk

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin ZT"L (1818–1898) was a leading Rav of the Torah community in Eretz Yisrael. Prior to moving to Eretz Yisrael in 1878, he served as the Rav in Łomża, Mezritch, Kovno, Shklov, Brisk, and finally, Yerushalayim. When he was a Rav in Brisk, his enemies falsely accused him of engaging in illegal activities against the Tsar of Russia. The case went to trial and a non-observant Jewish lawyer was appointed to represent Rav Diskin.

At the trial, Rav Diskin explained to the court that the allegations against him were false and fabricated to discredit him because of his efforts to uphold the strict standards of Jewish law. After Rav Diskin pleaded his case, the court proceeded to hear the evidence against him. During the course of the trial, it became apparent that Rav Diskin would not look at his own lawyer who represented him. Taking notice of the odd behavior, the judge inquired about Rav Diskin's behavior and was told that Rav Diskin disapproved of the lawyer's rejection of the traditions of Judaism and therefore did not want to look at him.

The judge was duly impressed. The lawyer was there to protect Rav Diskin when his very future and freedom hung in the balance. And yet, because of the integrity of his convictions to Judaism, he would not look at the very person who was appointed to protect him. Ultimately, the judge said that there is no way that a person with Rav Diskin's integrity and strength of conviction, even at the risk of his own freedom, could be lying. He dismissed the charges against him and Rav Diskin was exonerated.

The Siddur Speaks



Rav Chatzkel Abramsky, zt"l, the Av Beis Din of London, was once approached by an irreligious professor. The professor told him that he was interested in starting to put on Tefilin, but he wanted Rav Chatzkel to first teach him all about Tefilin, and why it is so important for a Jew to wear them.

Rav Chatzkel told him that he would be glad to teach him everything there is to know about Tefilin, but on one condition, that he would first commit to putting them on every day for a complete month, and only then would he teach him about Tefilin.

The professor agreed, and Rav Chatzkel taught him how to put them on, and to have in mind that he is wearing them to fulfil Hashem's Mitzvah.

When he saw that the professor knew how to put on the Tefilin, he gave him a pair to wear for the month. After two weeks, the professor came back to visit Rav Chatzkel. The professor said, "I would like to buy these Tefilin from you. I enjoy the Mitzvah so much that I am not willing to give them back!" And then he added, "And by the way, you don't have to explain anything about Tefilin to me anymore. I already fully understand how special this Mitzvah is, and I don't need to investigate them anymore!"

Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.

Chizuk In The Parsha

ויכתוב משה את מוצאיהם למסעיהם במדבר לג:ב

Many of the **מפרשים** explain why it was necessary to record all the various journeys and resting places that **כלל ישראל** undertook on their way to **ארץ ישראל**. After all, the **תורה** could have simply written that the **איזן** travelled to **ארץ ישראל** "making various stops along the way".

The **שפת אמת זיע״א** writes that the purpose of these recordings is to provide us with **חיזוק**. The collective journeyings of **כלל ישראל** at that time were a forerunner of what each and every **איד** would experience in the future. Life is full of journeys.

Sometimes a **בחור** is on the way up and is doing very well both **בגשמיות וברוחניות** . He's **מצליח** in his learning, he's able to daven with **כוונה**, he has good friends and generally everything is great. But it never stays like that. There then follows a period of time when he's struggling a bit with his learning and his davening and might even have a bit of a fallout with a friend.

The important thing to remember though is that life is a journey and good times will come again.

This alone is an essential message. But the **שפת אמת** adds that even the "down times" are valuable if a person can find a way to get through them. On the contrary, challenges can serve to strengthen a person as the **פסוק** says: **מן המצר קראתי י-ה** , *davka from* the pain, one is able to call out to **ה'**

Therefore, all the various ups and downs are recorded, in order to convey these vital lessons: firstly, to remember even in difficult times that it doesn't have to remain that way, and secondly, that the difficulty itself can present an opportunity for improvement…

זכרו תורת משה

Emotional Support!

Have you ever seen a child fall and cry, but once his mother picks him up, he stops crying and settles down? What changed that suddenly being picked up caused him to calm down? Did his mother give him pain medication? What's the reason?

His primary pain is the emotional one. Beside for whatever physical trauma he experiences, there is also an emotional pain that accompanies it. Once the emotional aspect subsides, the rest of his pain can easily be resolved.

Once we know we have emotional support, our discomfort can then diminish.

This applies to all of the unpleasant situations in our lives. There are times that we may have various discomforts and distresses. Yet, when we know that Hashem is on our side, and is emotionally with us and supporting us, this subsides a substantial part of the pain.

Knowing that Hashem loves us and is at our side all the time and seeks our best will give us impassioned support and comfort.

Booboo

This thought was taught by the great *mashgiach*, **R' Elya Lopian**. He was once not feeling well and asked for a doctor. When the doctor arrived and asked how he was doing, he replied, "I'm doing fine."

"Is there something that's hurting you?" asked the doctor.

"No," R' Elya replied. "Nothing is hurting me."

The doctor got very upset, "Why then did you call me if you are feeling well? I don't come to just have a schmooze. Why are you wasting my time?"

R' Elya replied: "I'm feeling fine, but nevertheless, if you would heal my pain, I would feel even better." And with that, he showed the doctor the source of pain. The doctor did what he had to do and then left the house.

When the doctor left, his family members asked him to explain his behavior. R' Elya replied with the following explanation:

"In every pain, there are two primary parts:

1) The physical pain.

2) The emotional pain that comes along with the physical pain.

"If we'd analyze it," continued R' Elya, "we would find that most of the pain is the emotional aspect of it, and I'll prove it to you. If a child with a 'booboo' gets a sugar cube, we find that his whining will subside. Is there anything in that sugar cube that cures the wound? How did the sugar cube calm him down?

"The answer," he continued, "is that 90% of pain is the emotional pain that one experiences, while only 10% is the actual physical pain. Therefore, by solving the 90%, the other 10% is very easily calmed and resolved.

"I too," said R' Elya, "was in a lot of pain, and therefore I called for the doctor. But soon after, I caught myself and remembered from Whom my pain was coming. Once I reminded myself that it was coming from Hashem and that He's taking good care of me, and that everything is being taken care of, well, my emotional distress had been resolved, and the rest of the pain didn't bother me that much.

"Therefore, I told the doctor I was feeling all right because, in truth, the rest of the pain didn't bother me."

We can learn an incredible lesson from here. Going through life, one can either live with Hashem and find all the problems taken care of, or a person cannot pay attention to His control of our lives and find every challenge that he's faced with troubling. Knowing that Hashem

is there with us in every situation gives us great emotional support where we'll be able to find serenity in every situation.

"It's Up To You!"

A grandchild of **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** conveyed the following story about his grandfather:

"A Rosh Yeshivah once came into the room of my grandfather and complained that he's living a life of *Gehenom*, that his life was completely dysfunctional. 'The Rosh Yeshivah's life is a life of *Gan Eden*,' he stated, 'but mine…'"

R' Shlomo Zalman didn't respond, but listened and showed him sympathy and support. After he left, R' Shlomo Zalman told his grandson the following: "It appears that Hashem gave me a life of *Gan Eden* and him a life of *Gehenom*. But that's not true! He is MAKING his life into *Gehenom*!

"It all depends how you view your surroundings. By living with Hashem, you see things in a different light.

"This was not decreed upon him; this is what HE is decreeing upon HIMSELF! He's the one responsible for making himself miserable. So, it's up to you," continued R' Shlomo Zalman. "You can make your life a *Gan Eden* on this world, or you can make this place a *Gehenom*."

Hiding

Once, the *mashgiach* **R' Gadol Eisner** was asked how he withstood and faced the challenges that he encountered, such as all he experienced in the war, and on top of that his one and only daughter being taken away. What kept him strong?

He told the questioner to look at a bottle of wine that was in front of the *mashgiach*. Then he covered it with his hands.

"Where is the bottle?" he asked him.

"Under your hands."

"What would be if someone walk into the room? Would he know where it is?"

"No."

"And if you told him that there was a bottle of wine under my hands, would he start looking for it?"

"No! Once he knows it's there, then there's no point in searching for it."

"The same is true with me," continued the *mashgiach*. "I knew that Hashem was with me throughout my journey. I knew that He was hiding himself, and so I had no need to search. I knew that He was clearly at my side. That gave me such comfort, security and relaxation knowing that I was secure and that I was being taken care of. I thus had no worries and no complaints."

Recap

Remembering that we are supported and embraced by Hashem gives us great relief and tranquillity. He loves us unconditionally and seeks our good at all times. We can thus feel comfort and ease with the best reassurance, comfort and support of Hashem.

Never Ready for Shabbos

Someone once came to **Rabbi Yechezkail Levenstein**, the *menahel ruchani* of Ponevez Yeshiva, and complained that his wife did not complete Shabbos preparations early enough. He said that although he keeps admonishing her for her lateness, nothing seems to help. "What should I do?" he asked.

"Take a broom and assist your wife," was R' Yechezkail's laconic reply.



I Mean Business!

There are people who look around for opportunities of zikui HaRabbim. For example, I know of people who look around their Shul and see what they can donate to their Shul to benefit the Tzibbur.

Rav Shimshon Pincus used to talk about being a good businessman also when it comes to mitzvos.

Reb Moshe Reichman besides for being a tremendous businessman monetarily, even more than that, had this exact mindset (mentioned above) of being a businessman in mitzvos.

Reb Moshe Ahron Auerbach would collect money for many different causes. Because of this, he would frequent the home of Reb Moshe Reichman. Once, when he went to Reb Moshe Reichman and asked for a donation, he received a check of $1000. Reb Moshe Ahron, however, boldly asked for a larger donation. Reb Moshe Reichman told him that he comes pretty often and the next time he comes he'll give him another donation.

R' Moshe Ahron did not give up and he proposed a 'business deal'. He told Reb Moshe Reichman that he takes care of the Mikvah towels in Toronto. He takes them home, washes and dries them, and returns them to the Mikvah freshly laundered. He calculated that he must wash about ten thousand towels a year.

He then offered to sell Reb Moshe Reichman the **זכות** of one year's worth of towels for a dollar each. Without batting an eyelash, Reb Moshe Reichman pulled out his checkbook and wrote out a ten-thousand-dollar check!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

Each of the places that Klal Yisrael journeyed to had a name. The meforshim explain that the names of these places had relevance as well, hinting to different facets of avodas Hashem.

Ben Porat Yoseph says on the Pasuk **וַיִּסְעוּ מִבְּנֵי יַעֲקָן וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּחֹר הַגִּדְגָּד** (33:32) that **יַעֲקָן** is from the root **עקה** - distress, adversity, hardship, stress, need, misery. **גד** equates to **מזל**. **חר** equates to splitting or burning. This means that a person is distressed with the splitting of his mazel.

He explains this with a story about Shloime HaMelech: Somebody once came to Shloime HaMelech and asked him to teach him the chachma of being able to hear what the birds are saying. So, Shloime HaMelech taught him the chachma. He went home happy.

He was outside, and he heard the birds say, "This fellow is going to have thieves break into his house tonight."

So, he hires two guards, one at the front of his house and one at the rear of the house to prevent the theft. Sure enough, a thief comes, but they prevent him from entering the house, and they beat him up.

A few days later, he hears the birds talking, and they said, "This fellow is going to have a fire tonight in his house." So, he stays up all night, and he sees a burning candle fall and begins a small fire. He quickly extinguishes the small fire and the candle.

A few days later, he hears the birds talking, and they said, "This fellow is going to die tonight." So, he quickly runs to Shloime HaMelech to ask him what he should do.

Shloime HaMelech said to him, "You have learnt this special chachma, but you must know that you can't outsmart Hashem. Hashem has His plan. Hashem is **"הוֹדוּ לַה׳ כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ"** Hashem is only good, and He is always only giving us **חסד**.

Even times that we think are challenging and difficult, or don't appear good to us, is actually Hashem's master plan and chesed.

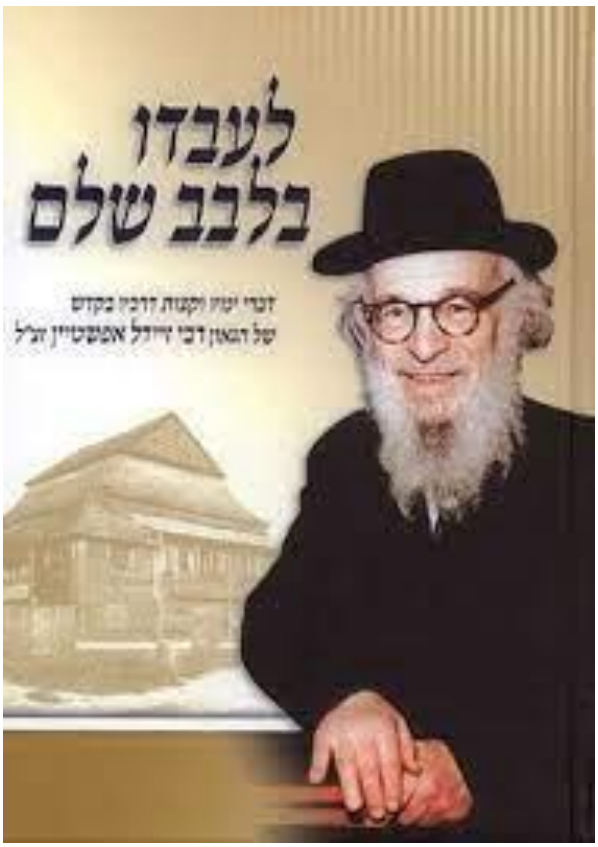
The Ben Ish Chai says **חוב** is gematria 16, and **טוב** is gematria 17. If you add 'one' – Hashem, when things look like a **חוב** it is really a **טוב**.

This idea is hinted to in our Pasuk. They tried to outsmart Hashem by attempting to flee from their troubles. So, חֹר הַגְּדֵדָה -it made a hole in their mazel. We can't run away from Hashem – So, we must run back to Hashem and do teshuva.

Indifference

ולארץ לא יכפר לדם אשר שפך בה כי אם בדם שפכו The land will not have atonement for the blood that was spilled in it, except through the blood of the one who spilled it. *(35:33)*

Why does the land require atonement? Did it sin in any way concerning the murder? Is it guilty of some form of murder?



Horav Zaidel Epstein, zl, explains that the strictures of the complaint against the land is in its passive response to the murder. It acted with indifference, with cool detachment, as if the murder were nothing at all. The land should have cried out and made demands.

Who ever heard of the land expressing its emotion with regard to a wanton act of murder? The Mashgiach refers us to Hashem's curse of Kayin's act of murdering his brother. The Torah writes, "Therefore, you are cursed more than the ground which opened wide its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand" (Bereishis

4:11). Rashi comments: "The earth, from which man was formed, had already been cursed for the sin of Kayin, just as parents are accountable (if they were responsible) for the miscreant actions of their children. When it swallows the blood of a murder victim, it will be punished even more." It opened up its mouth to receive Hevel's blood…" We see that Hashem expected all of Creation to cry out against this outrage.

Whoever complacently accepts evil with calm and indifference is filled with disdain, and even animus, towards the victim. One who cares about someone cannot tolerate his pain; he must at least cry out. If he does not, then it is an indication that he scorns him.

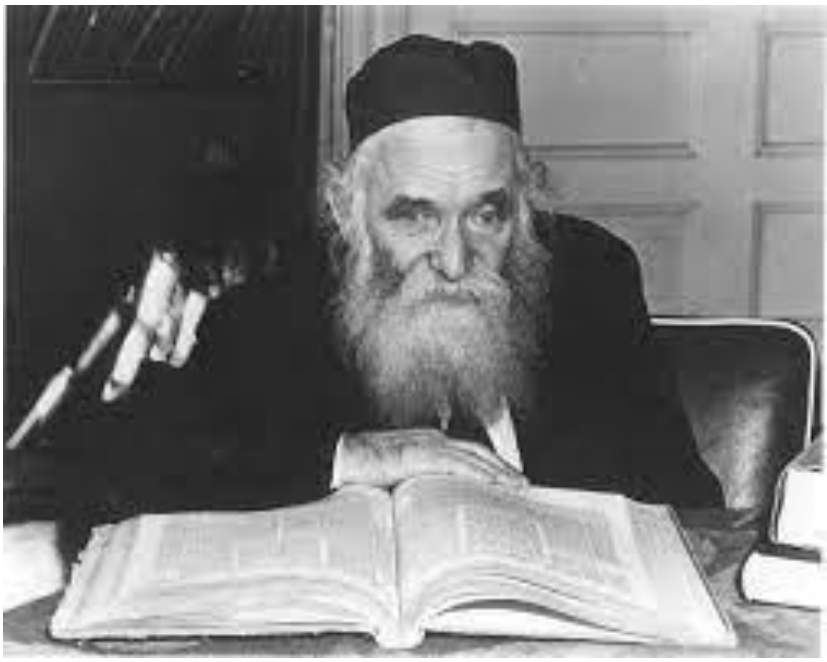
The beginning of hatred starts where love ends. Nothing is in between. One does not necessarily have to hate actively. If one has no love, if he manifests indifference, it is tantamount to hate.

Even the horeg b'shogeg, one who kills unintentionally, must go to the City of Refuge. He is different than the overt enemy. He was not careful, and someone was killed. Why was he not careful? He simply did not care. Not caring is a manifestation of hatred.

We now understand, says the Mashgiach, why the Second Bais HaMikdash was destroyed, despite the peoples' involvement in acts of gemilus chassadim, lovingkindness. Hashem punished them for sinaas chinam, unwarranted hatred, among brothers. How could they hate when, in fact, they were so kind to one another?

We see from here that one can carry out acts of chesed and still harbour hatred for his brother. This hatred is not overt. In fact, superficially, it could be viewed as love. However, love exists only when it is active. If one is indifferent, he is demonstrating sinaah.

Indifference is a choice. One decides to turn his head away, either because he does not care, or he does not want to get involved. He is too busy.



A story is told about **Horav Aharon Kotler, zl**, who was a public figure and the individual who introduced the concept of Torah lishmah, Torah study for its own sake, to the USA. He was also involved in Vaad Hatzalah, Chinuch Atzmai and Torah U'Mesorah. All of this was in addition to his being a gaon, brilliant scholar, whose lectures captivated and guided the minds of thousands.

One evening, the Rosh Yeshivah entered a shul and passed by a poor man sitting by the door with his pushke, asking for alms. Rav Aharon immediately dropped money into the pushke. On his way out of shul, he stopped and once again placed money in the pushke.

When he was later questioned why he twice gave the person money, he replied that he feared someone might see him passing the poor man and conclude that the man was unworthy of being helped.

The Rosh Yeshivah modelled sensitivity and empathy at its apex. He had every reason to pass by the man. After all, he had already given tzedakah. He was concerned, however, that perhaps someone might err in judgement, and, as a result, the poor man would suffer. So, he made certain to stop once again and give tzedakah. It would have been so easy to turn away, but that might cause harm to the dignity of that man. That would be indifference.

One does not become a gadol b'Yisrael unless the dignity of his fellow Jew is paramount in his eyes.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker



אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - ***'These are the journeys of the children of Israel who left the land of Egypt.'***

The pesukim then go on to list all 42 locations. Why is this necessary?

Rashi answers that it was a display of the Kindness of Hashem - **לְהוֹדִיעַ חֲסָדָיו שֶׁל מָקוֹם** - Throughout the thirty-eight years they made only twenty journeys. Rashi also brings a Medrash that says that this was a method of remembering all that occurred at every stage of their journey during their travels.

Rav Nissan Alpert says that not all locations were positive (Mara, Paran, Pe'or) but don't re-write history, every journey has its own unique challenges and bumps along the way. None of the 42 stops were the destination, each was a stop on the way to Eretz Yisrael. So too in Golus, there have been many stops, with bumps along the way, but the ultimate destination is Eretz Yisrael.

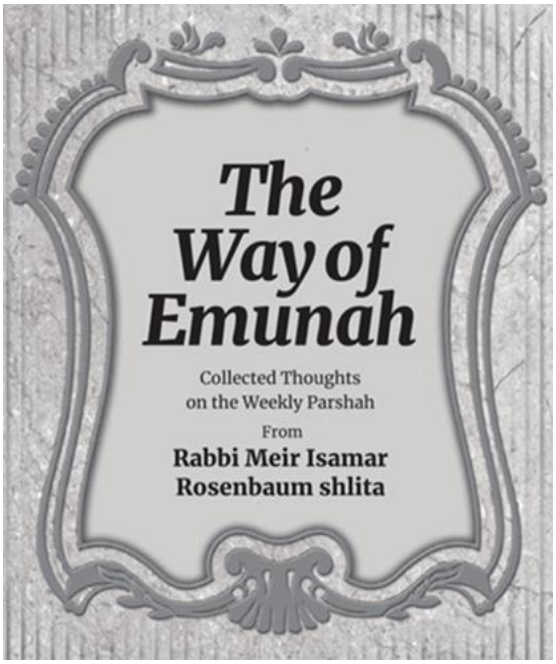
Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev. באר היטב פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק.

בס"ד פרשת מטות מסעי תשפ"ג

PARSHAS MATOS MASEI 5783 Vol. 14 No. 40

וַיִּסְעוּ מִקִּבְרֹת הַתַּאֲוָה וַיִּחֲנוּ בַּחֲצֵרֹת ***'And they departed from Kivross Hatavoh and camped in Chatzeiros.'*** {33:17}

The only way to overcome passion and lust, **תאוה**, is to remember that we are encamped in **חצרות** - courtyards, an antechamber to the World-to-Come and in which we shall not reside for long. • **Reb Yitzchok of Vorkeh ZY"A**



The Beginning of The Journey

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְצִבְאֹתָם (33:1) '***These are the journeys of the children of Yisroel who left the land of Egypt in their legions***…'

The pasuk in Yirmiyahu states (2:2): **זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד נְעוּרַיִךְ אַהֲבַת כְּלוּלֹתָיִךְ לֶכְתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה** - "***I remember to you the chesed of your youth… your following Me in the desert, in a land that does not grow.***"

Sefer Tiferes Banim asks: In the desert, they had whatever they needed. All their needs were sent to them directly from Heaven, including the mann, the be'er, the clouds of protection, and their clothes did not wear out. If so, why are they praised?

He answers that they are praised for the first steps of their journey, when they did not yet know that all of their needs would be provided for, but they still went out unquestioningly to fulfil the will of Hashem. They trusted Him, even though they were headed into a desolate wasteland where wild animals, snakes and scorpions were prevalent.

Klal Yisroel are glorified for the beginning of the journey from Egypt into the desert because at that time, they showed their true emunah in Hashem. This is why the pasuk says (33:2) that Moshe wrote "*the starting points of their journeys.*" He wrote the start of the travels because those were with mesiras nefesh. All 42 travels in the desert were undertaken with complete emunah in Hashem, without knowing how He would provide for them. But once they started traveling, He gave them whatever they needed.

The Yahrzeit of Rav Moshe Leib ben Rav Tzi Hirsch Zt"l Teitelbaum Rov of Ujhel and Author of Yismach Moshe 28 Tammuz 5601

Hoping For The Geulah



The Yismach Moshe zy"a would constantly yearn for the geulah and wouldn't stop thinking about it for a moment. Until his old-age, he never doubted for a second that he would live to greet Moshiach.

The tzadikim of his generation said that his neshama contained a spark of the soul of Yirmiyahu Hanavi. Some even say that he said of himself, "Don't be surprised by how much I mourn the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh because I witnessed it myself. Therefore, I cannot forget it for a moment, and I hope to Hashem every day for it to be rebuilt."

Before his *petirah*, he sighed and said, "If I had known when I was young that I would grow old and Moshiach would still not be here, I would have been so full of anguish that I would have been unable to live. My soul would have left me. Only because of my great bitachon and hope that I would see the redemption was I able to survive until today!"

Whenever he would hear a loud noise from outside, he would hurriedly ask, "What's that commotion? Is it Moshiach?"

One of his chasidim once approached him and advised him to purchase a house that had large rooms, was near the shul and had many other benefits. The Yismach Moshe told him, "Why should I buy a house in Chutz La'aretz? Moshiach will be here soon, and I hope to have a house in Yerushalaim to live in. So why do I need a house here?"

The Shefa Chaim of SanzKlausenberg zy"a related that the Yismach Moshe would go to sleep at night during the months of Tishrei, Cheshvon and Nissan while fully dressed so that he would be ready to get up and go out to greet Moshiach as soon as he arrived. He told his attendants to wake him up right away if they heard Moshiach coming. Whenever any noise was made outside, he would wake up, jump out of bed and ask, "Is he here?" This would occur many times during the course of a single night.

A Special Clock by Rabbi Sholom Ber-Dov Avtzon



After the histalkus (passing away) of the **Chozeh of Lublin**, his children divided his belongings amongst themselves. One of them received his clock. On the way home he was delayed and was in an inn for an extended period of time.

The problem was he did not have enough money to pay for his lodging, so he offered to give the innkeeper the clock as part of the payment. Seeing that his guest was an honest person who was forced to remain at his inn longer than he anticipated, he accepted it and placed it in one of his rooms.

Time passed and many people used his inn. One evening he had a guest who used to be a student of the Chozeh. In the morning he asked him about the clock. After hearing how a son of the Chozeh gave it to him, he exclaimed, "I knew it was the Chozeh's clock!"

"A clock is a clock," replied the innkeeper, "how did you know this one belonged to the Chozeh?"

The student replied, "Every clock chimes. The chime reminds us that an hour of our life has passed and questions us what did we

accomplish in this hour? This is a sobering thought. However, the chime of this clock has a different message. It is telling us that we are an hour closer to the Geulah. That is an invigorating and upbeat approach, and that is how my Rebbe the Chozeh lived his life. Therefore, I knew it was his clock."

The Humble Ones By Rabbi Yechiel Spero



The Al-mighty detests those who are haughty. He has no interest in sharing His universe with them (Sotah 5a). Conversely, humility plays a critical role in our receiving of the Torah (Bamidbar 12:3; Midrash Tehillim 68:9).

Make no mistake. Anivus does not dictate that we deny our ability and potential. It is crucial to possess a strong self-awareness and healthy self-esteem. Without them, we will never be able to grow and maximize our potential.

As a young man, Rav Elyakim Schlesinger of London, a disciple of the Brisker Rav, served the Chazon Ish (Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz). One time, he built up the courage to ask the Chazon Ish if he was fully aware that he was the gadol hador.

The Chazon Ish thought for a moment and then replied that he was cognizant of his role and responsibility as the gadol hador.

When young Elyakim asked how the Chazon Ish balanced that awareness with the middah of anivus, the Chazon Ish explained that humility does not entail a denial of one's abilities. Rather, one must

appreciate the talents Hashem has given him and realize what he has. Anivus helps one ascribe those gifts to the Al-mighty.

The Chazon Ish concluded, "I am certain that if someone else would have been given the gifts I was given, he, too, would have become the gadol hador."

A Mitzvah Path to Protection by Yerachmiel Tilles



"*Rabbeinu*, please help us! Our brother is a soldier in the army, and he suddenly went missing!"

The Baba Sali listened carefully as the soldier's distraught family poured out the story to him.

"The army sent out search parties for him, but they haven't found anything. And now so much time has gone by, the army generals are talking about stopping the search. We suspect that our brother was kidnapped by terrorists, and that maybe he's not alive anymore!" They broke down in tears.

To everyone's surprise, Baba Sali did not look saddened. To the contrary, his face shone with light! He signaled to his attendant, and then instructed him to please set the table with all kinds of pastries, fruits and drinks.

"Come, eat something," he told the family members. "And don't worry. Everything will be all right with HaShem's help."

Having no choice, the family joined Baba Sali at the table and took something to eat. Just as they were beginning to relax, a strange

thing happened, Baba Sali raised the cup in this hand and announced loudly, - וְנַקֵּהּ לֹא יְנַקֶּה! [G-d will cleanse those who do *teshuva* and will not cleanse those who do not do *teshuva*. The 13th of the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy see Ex. 34:7.]

The family looked at each other in puzzlement. What did Baba Sali mean? What was this all about? No one dared ask the question aloud.

After a while, Baba Sali turned to them. "You can go back home, *l'chaim tovim u'l'shalom* ("to a good life and peace"). With HaShem's help you will see salvation." Then he repeated the same words as before: loudly וְנַקֵּהּ לֹא יְנַקֶּה!

With lighter hearts they returned home, waiting to hear good news.

Two weeks passed, two weeks of tension and fear. Then one morning they received the joyous news from the army, their brother was alive! He indeed was kidnapped by terrorists and held captive in a secret hideout, but he managed to escape. He was currently being checked out by a doctor and debriefed. After that, he would return to his family.

The same day he came home, the family, together with their newly-found brother, came to Baba Sali's home for an emotional *seudat hoda'ah* (meal of thanksgiving).

"My son," Baba Sali said to the soldier, "tell us about the good deed that you do in secret, which no other person knows about."

At first the soldier tried to avoid answering, but when Baba Sali continued to urge him to tell, he revealed that every *Erev* Shabbos, he would clean the *shul* in Petach Tikvah where he lived, without anyone knowing about it.

Baba Sali's face lit up. "You should know, it was this *mitzvah* that protected you," he told the soldier. וְנַקֵּהּ לֹא יְנַקֶּה! In the merit of your cleansing the shul, you were watched over!"

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

33:2 **וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מוֹצָאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל־פִּי ה' וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצָאֵיהֶם**

As *Sefer Bamidbar* draws to a close, the *Torah* lists the forty-two encampments where the Jewish people rested on their ultimate journey into the Holy Land. In fact, writes the **Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh *zt"l***, not only was it listed in the *Torah*, even *Moshe Rabbeinu* kept a personal list of their travels in his own "**פינקס**" - his own private diary of sorts. Thus, the *posuk* states: *"Moshe wrote their goings forth* (**מוֹצָאֵיהֶם**) *of their travels* (**לְמַסְעֵיהֶם**)." He wrote it down in his own diary.

What is unusual, though, is that the very same *posuk* concludes with different words: *"And these are the travels of their goings forth."* At the end of the *posuk*, the word "**מַסְעֵיהֶם** " comes before the word "**מוֹצָאֵיהֶם**". Why are these words switched around and what are we to learn from this?

R' Pinchos Hoffman *shlita*, gives a wonderful analysis based on the words of the **Chid'a (Chomas Enoch)**, who quotes in the name of **Chacham Vidal Tzorfati *zt"l*** that the word **וְאֵלֶּה** - (42) is a reference to the forty-two encampments in the desert. However, as we know, when *Aharon Hakohen* passed away and the Clouds of Glory protecting *Bnei Yisroel* were withdrawn, the Jews panicked and ran backwards, tracing their steps a full eight encampments back.

They finally halted at a place called **רִתְמָה** and from there, they proceeded forward again. As a result, there were not just forty-two stops along the way; there were actually fifty stops in total.

The word **וְאֵלֶּה** teaches us that only the forty-two *"goings forth"* - **מוֹצָאֵיהֶם**- were deemed worthy of being considered *"travels"* - **מַסְעֵיהֶם**.

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* transcribed the travels in his own diary, he listed the total amount of times the people travelled – fifty in all. He wrote down all their "**מוֹצָאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם** ". However, *Hashem*

insisted "**וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצָאֵיהֶם** " - only those 42 encampments in which the people went forward, not backwards, are worthy of being mentioned in the *Torah*.

L'Maaseh



Rav Sholom Schwadron, zt"l, would tell over an amazing story: A Rav in America became a Jewish Chaplain in a hospital. One day, he was called to the ICU for a young Jewish man who had been in a terrible car accident, R"L. The doctors told the Chaplain to call the man's family, because he didn't have long to live.

A sister arrived and said that they had an elderly father who lived in a retirement home. The Rav went to pick up the father and brought him to say goodbye to his son. The father looked at his son who was hooked up to numerous machines, yet he seemed quite calm!

The doctor told the father that the situation was severe, and these were his son's final hours.

The father turned to the Rabbi and asked to be driven home. On the way home the Rav couldn't contain himself and asked the elder father for an explanation for his behaviour.

The father replied, "I come from Radin, the city of the **Chofetz Chaim**. When he printed the Mishnah Brurah, he wanted to see how people would react to his Sefer. He gathered together a group of working men, and I was one of those people in the group, and he began learning the Mishnah Brurah with us.

My participation in the Shiur must have pleased him, because the Chofetz Chaim gave me a double Brachah. He said that I would live a long life, and that none of my children would die in my lifetime. Therefore, I am certain that I have more years to live, and my son will recover. I have a firm Emunah in the Brachah of the Chofetz Chaim, and my son will not die as long as I am alive!"

When the Rav heard the father's incredible story, he also went home and didn't return to the hospital until the next day.

The following day when he checked on the patient, the doctors told him that they had been certain that he would pass away overnight, but he didn't, and in the morning, he had even opened his eyes! They couldn't understand what had happened!

Just two weeks later, the young man got out of bed, and was released from the hospital.

Rav Schwadron would say that the fact that the Chofetz Chaim's Brachos were so powerful was not the amazing thing. It was the pure Emunah that this father had in the Brachah of the Chofetz Chaim, and his ability to remain calm and unshaken while staring at his son's imminent death, that was really special!



R' Abraham J. Twerski would say: "At home, we were told never to utter any unkind words at anybody, no matter how deserving they were.

When my Bubby was provoked to anger at someone, she would say, ***'May he have fresh, soft bread and hard butter!'***



"Nature is bound by limitations, but prayer changes nature." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.





There is a mishna in **תענית כו** that says that when the month of Av comes one is meant to be **ממעט בשמחה**.

Rav Shimshon Pincus זצוק"ל says that in this week's sedra the only Yahrtziet mentioned in the Torah is mentioned. The Yahrtziet of Aharon HaKohen who was niftar on Rosh Chodesh Av. "It happens to be" that this day is also the exact day, that the Mishna mentioned before, tells us to be mema'et in simcha. Could there be a connection?

We know the famous Mishna in Avos that says how WE should all be students of Aharon. How do we become a student? By being Ohev Shalom V"Roidef Shalom!

In Masechta Kala Rabasi it says that after the mitah of Aharon HaKohen, there were eighty thousand bochurim whose names were Aharon! Their parents gave them the name as a remembrance that it was Aharon HaKohen who brought Shalom between them.



Rav Moshe Aron Stern זצוק"ל adds that if there were eighty thousand bochurim with the name Aharon at that time because they had hakaras hatov to Aharon for restoring peace between them and, so it must be that Aharon HaKohen brought Shalom to at least five couples every single day!

Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman זצוק"ל Asked: What exactly were these couples arguing about in the midbar? What did they have already? They were lacking nothing! They had their parnassa come down from Shamayim. They had clothing. What were the arguments and fights about?

Rav Shteinman answered, from here we see that the arguments in marriage come from petty silly disagreements, such as she wants the chair here and he wants it somewhere else. And for this Aharon had to constantly work to bring back the Shalom.

Rav Pincus explains that the second Bais Hamikdash was destroyed because of Sinas Chinam. So, yes, there is a big connection to the halacha of memaet B'simcha and the fact that the shpitz Rebbe of Shalom was niftar on that day. We are mourning the loss of shalom in the world, and it is our job to bring that back and that will be the key to also bring back the everlasting Beis Hamikdash Hashlishi!

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

A Special Rescue

At the beginning of the Communist control in the Soviet Union, many Jews tried to flee to Romania. Once in Romania, the possibility existed of escaping to other countries, and even to Eretz Yisrael. However, the risk was not minimal - anyone caught trying to escape from the Soviet Union was either executed or exiled to Siberia, a fate sometimes worse than death. Russian soldiers were posted on the border to minimize the chances of anyone escaping.

During this era, **R' Eliezer Zussia of Skulen** lived in Chernowitz which was close to the border, and he constantly risked his life to help Jews who were caught escaping from Russia. The colonel in

charge of the border guard was visited more than once by the Rebbe to beg for his intervention in releasing these Jews.

Once, when R' Eliezer visited the colonel once again on a mission of mercy, the colonel blew up. "I've had enough of you and your pleas! If I see you here again begging for these criminals, I'll kill you!"

Shortly later, a large Jewish family was caught trying to escape across the border. This time, R' Eliezer tried to utilize other means to release them, including bribing other officials in power, but to no avail The colonel was the only one with the power to release the family. R' Eliezer's family was afraid for his life and reasoned with him that he wasn't obligated to risk his life. But the Rebbe did not agree. The colonel had threatened him, but it was not a certainty that he would carry out his threat. However, the fate of the family was certain death or exile if nobody interceded for them.

R' Eliezer approached the colonel once again, and the colonel's reaction was not a calm one. He became furious and threw the Rebbe down a flight of steps. The Rebbe was injured but managed to pick himself up. Unbelievably, he did not despair and decided to brave the colonel's wrath once again.

He gingerly dragged his aching body up the steps and knocked on the colonel's door again. The colonel was astounded to see him again, and this time, he actually remained calm. The hardened colonel could not help but be moved by the Rebbe's courage and sacrifice, and he agreed to release the family.

Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt'l taught that when a Yid learns Torah, he isn't in galus. This is why one may eat meat and drink wine at a siyum during the Nine Days. Where there is Torah, there is no galus.

R' Chayim of Tzanz zt"l

Rabbi Chayim of Tzanz used to give all his money away to the poor. One of his sons suggested that he should at least keep enough money to buy books for himself.

"You're mistaken," said Rav Chayim. "Whenever I need a book, I can easily borrow it from someone else. But the mitzvah of tzdakah cannot be fulfilled by borrowing.

~ Maigadolai Hachasidus – Ha'admor MaiTzanz

Simcha Shel Mitzvah

A close *talmid* once observed **Reb Shlomo Freifeld** putting on his *tefillin*. After winding the *tefillin shel yad* around his arm, he stopped and closed his eyes, lost in thought. Only after a lengthy period of reflection did he continue with the *tefillin shel rosh*.

Later on, the *talmid* asked him why he had delayed placing the *tefillin* on his head.

Reb Shlomo related the story of the *gemara* in Brachos, in which one *Amorah* asked another one why he was smiling. "*Ana tefillin kamanichna*, I am putting on *tefillin*" was the reply.

Explained Reb Shlomo, "The act of putting on *tefillin* should fill the heart with joy. Today, I didn't feel it, so I paused to reflect upon what was preventing me from feeling happy, and only once I felt the *simcha shel mitzvah* did I continue." **~ The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld zt"l**

"The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one."

"Even a Sigh" + Something New Going Forward

A wealthy and learned man once came to the ***Chafetz Chaim*** to buy some *sefarim*. He asked for a copy of all his works, except for one. It seems that he did not want to buy *Shemiras Halashon*, which deals with the sins of forbidden speech.

He explained that "I have extensive dealings with many people in the course of my business…. I am convinced that I could not possibly adhere to all the laws involved in guarding my speech, and this *sefer* would be of no use to me."

The *Chafetz Chaim* told him that he had gone to **R' Yisroel Salanter** not long ago with this very problem. "I told him that I doubted whether my *sefer* would be of much value since businessmen would find it too difficult to abide by the laws of careful speech."

"R' Yisroel replied: 'Even if you don't succeed in evoking more than a sigh from a man who is aware of his sins, your toil in writing and publishing this work will have all been worthwhile.' "

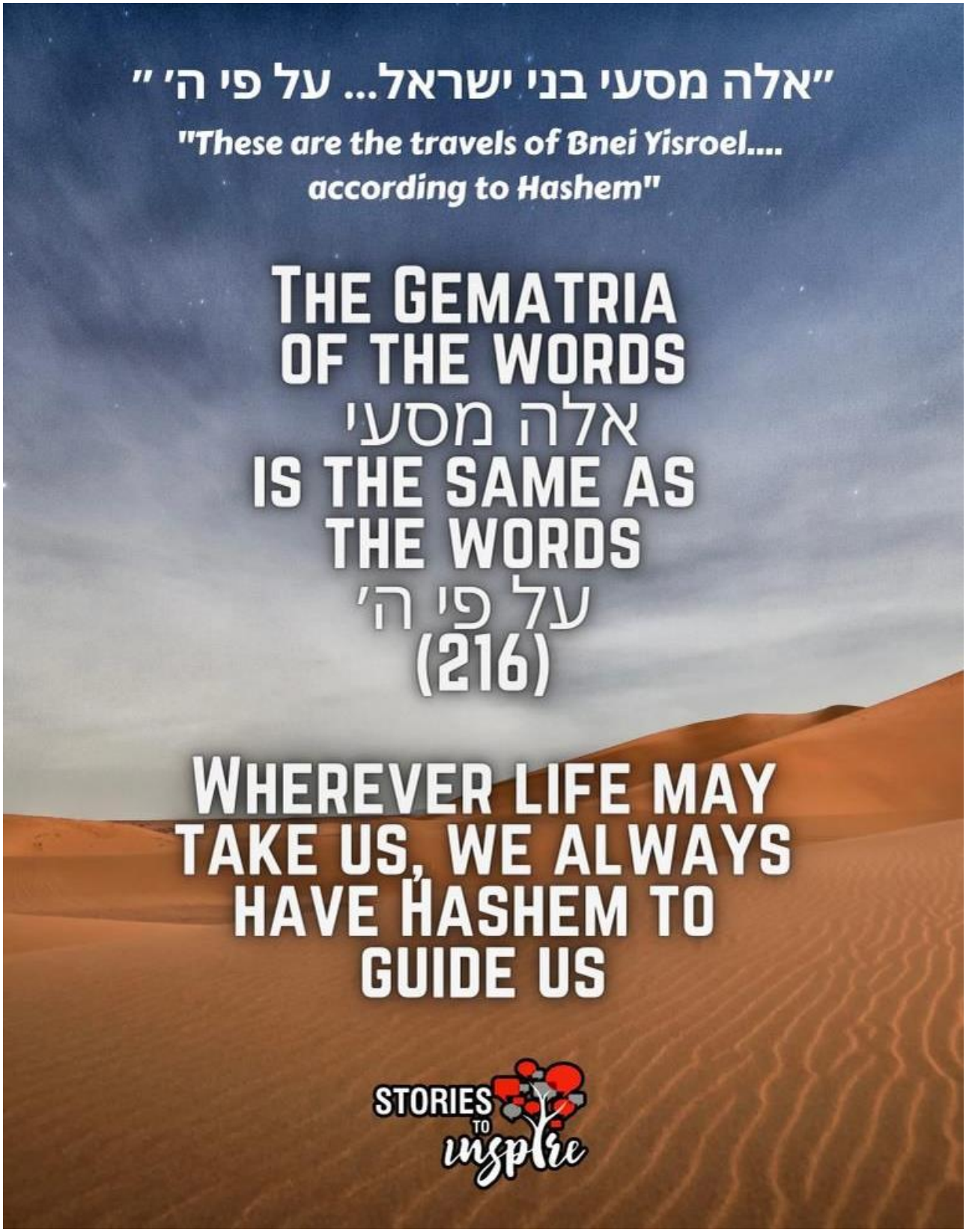
As Long as the Candle is Burning

Late one night, **R' Yisroel Salanter zt"l** chanced to enter a shoemaker's home. The shoemaker was sitting and doing his work by the flickering light of a candle that was about to go out. "Why are you still working?" asked R' Yisroel. "The hour is late. Besides, your candle will soon go out and you won't be able to finish."

"That's no problem," answered the shoemaker. "As long as the candle is burning, it is still possible to work and to repair."

R' Yisroel was deeply impressed by these words, for if one must work for his physical needs as long as the candle is lit, how much more so must a person work for his spiritual improvement so long as the soul – "G-d's candle – is in him.

For many days after, R' Yisroel was heard pacing his room, chanting with great fervor, "As long as the candle is burning, it is still possible to work and to repair." ~ **Sparks of Mussar**





For the Shabbos Table

כִּי הַדָּם הוּא יַחֲנִיף אֶת־הָאָרֶץ *'For the blood will bring guilt upon the land.'* (Bamidbar 35:33)

In condemning acts of murder the Torah describes it as "chanifa" - flattering of the land. In what sense is murder considered to be flattery?

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that although murder is considered immoral by every nation, this is not in all instances. Especially in more recent times, the tolerance for assisted suicide, unrestricted late-term abortion, etc. demonstrate that the difficulty they associate with murder is merely the threat is poses to society.

Following this thought process, when other factors are considered and depict murder as being better for society, killing becomes acceptable. The Torah however values life itself, in any form, and we violate almost any mitzvah even to save the life of an elderly person, etc.. The Torah describes these acts of murder as pandering to the land and to society instead of recognizing the value of each moment of the life of a Jew.

"Hashem is not distant – He is intimately involved in our lives. Every challenge that we face is an opportunity to draw closer to Him." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

וַאֲנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ בָטַחְתִּי יָגֵל לִבִּי בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ (Tehillim 13:6)

"When I fully trust that Hashem is looking after me, I can truly live with happiness, because happiness is a direct consequence of trusting in hashem." ~ Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman.

Rabbi Avrum Mordche Malach - Speed Bumps Ahead





Sometimes when you're driving on a road, whether it be next to schools or in a neighbourhood, you have speed bumps.

There was once a person living in a small city and he had never before seen a bump on the road. As such, the first time this man was driving with his friend, and they came across a bump, he began to laugh. "The city here is crazy!" he remarked. His friend asked him to explain what he thought was so insane about having speed bumps.

"Look," explained the fellow, "when you drive on the street, you first see a sign that there will be a 'Bump in a thousand feet.' Then, you continue onward, and suddenly, you have a new sign: 'Speed hump ahead'. You continue further, and now you have another sign, 'Speed Hump.' Then finally you come to the bump itself. The bump has three white lines of paint on the floor in the shape of the letter 'V.'

"What is going on with this city?" asked the man. "Isn't this taking taxpaying money and throwing it in the garbage? Tons of money is spent on these signs. They need to be printed, paint them, and then have people put up the signs. Every year also, the city needs to refresh the paint, again and again and again. For half of the price,

the city could just straighten out the bump. There would be no bumps and no problems whatsoever."

Now it was the friend's turn to start laughing. "Do you really think that this bump just came to be by itself? This bump was planned to be there by the city. There is a good reason why the bump is here. But the same city which decided to place the bump there will provide you with enough signals and support that you can move over the bump without sustaining any damages."

Sometimes we have a feeling, "Hashem, why should serving You be so hard? Just take away the *yetzer hara*. Why can't I wake up in the morning and only be exposed to appropriate and holy things? Why can't I go to *shul*, earn my living and go about my life in a way that doesn't lead me to so many tests and challenges with the internet? Why can't I be surrounded by holy people?" We ask why.

Hashem tells us, "I put these bumps in the road. They are preplanned. There is a reason for them. But I want to tell you one thing: Your grandfathers and your great grandfathers were not faced with these tests like you are. I gave them to you."

Hashem trusts us with such tests in our life and did not trust to test our parents and grandparents with them. We are Hashem's army; we are His soldiers. And he tells us, "My dear children, 'I will give you these bumps in your life but remember one thing. If I've given you the bumps, that means that I have given you the strength to withstand the damage from these bumps. I am granting you the potential to not succumb and fall because of these bumps. I will give you enough signals. Open your eyes and see how close I am to you.'"

An incredible piece of advice whenever you are on the street or elsewhere and face a test, and you look away, is to maximize the moment. At that moment when you overcome the temptation and test, you have incredible potential in Heaven. Use that time. Use the moment. Daven for someone who is sick or pray for the success of your children. Every time someone looks away and refrains from

looking at something inappropriate, for those minutes, you are the *tzaddik ha'dor*. You have tremendous power at that moment. Take advantage of the opportunity. Close your eyes when you turn your eyes away and say a chapter of *Tehillim* for someone. You won't believe what this can accomplish.

We are all Hashem's children, and He wishes to grant us only good. We can create the means to have those blessings rain down upon us.



נצור לשוני מרע "*Guard my tongue from evil*" encompasses so much more than just safeguarding, protecting, watching ever so closely the words that escape our precious and sacred lips. It's about words because words matter. And it's not just about preventing ourselves from speaking the wrong words, mis-speaking. It's also about turning the spotlight on the importance of the words that we emit from our mouths every single moment of our lives.

If I can share with you an unbelievably powerful story.

Somebody from my shul was visiting Lakewood for Shabbos and spending the Shabbos by a neighbor of a tremendous Bas Yisrael with a very choshuva yichus living in Lakewood. And this is soon after she lost her talmid chochem tzaddik of a husband. Someone who was already great, but destined for even a loftier state of greatness. But HaKadosh Baruch Hu in his infinite wisdom took him away prematurely at a very young age. And left this Choshev bas Yisrael, with many young children.

And this individual from our shul spent Shabbos by a neighbor, and it was for this Shabbos that the Ammonah traveled to the west coast for a family simcha, and she entrusted the neighbor with her two youngest children. It was too difficult to travel with all the children to the West coast to make such an arduous journey so instead she said you know what I'll leave the two youngest by my neighbor.

They already know her, they're familiar with her. And she gave her clear instructions, how to go ahead and wish them a good night, put them to sleep.

And it came Friday night. And this individual from my shul was walking with the neighbor into the bedroom where the two young children were about to go to sleep. And the neighbor turns to the young child, will call him Yaakov, and says to Yaakov, 'Okay, your mother is having a wonderful Shabbos of simcha, and we're spending Shabbos here in Lakewood. And she told me that before you go to sleep at night, we have to say Shema. We have to say and sing Hamalach HaGoel. That's precisely what she set out to do. And she says, Shema Yisrael Baruch Hashem, the first part of Shema.

And she sings it together with the child. And then she gives the child a kiss on the forehead and walks out of the room. But before she makes it out the door, Yaakov perks up and says, no, no, you forgot something.

And she turns back and says, Yaakov, what did I forget?

'You forgot to tell me that Hashem loves me!' Every night before I go to sleep, my mommy reminds me Hashem loves me. Hashem loves me more than I could ever imagine.

She turns back. 'Yaakov, Hashem loves you. Now we're ready to sing. Now we're ready to say Shema.'

And it's so because words matter. Every precious word matters.

The Greatest Protection by Rabbi Yisroel Brog



Rabbi Yisroel Brog once shared a remarkable story about the power of charity and trust in Hashem — and how they can serve as a person's greatest protection.

There was once a great rabbi named **Rabbi Chaim Kreiswirth**, the chief rabbi of Antwerp. He was known as an extraordinary scholar and a tireless collector for charitable causes. At one point in his life, Rabbi Kreiswirth became deathly ill. The doctors had already given up hope. It seemed there was no way he would recover.

He went to seek guidance from the **Steipler Gaon**, who told him something unexpected. Instead of focusing on his illness, the Steipler advised him to throw himself completely into collecting charity for others. - Rabbi Kreiswirth followed that advice. He devoted himself to raising money for people in need — and miraculously, his health returned. He lived many more years.

Once, while visiting New York to raise funds, Rabbi Kreiswirth approached a wealthy man and said something unusual. "I would like to offer you something for sale," the rabbi said.

The wealthy man looked confused. "What are you selling?"

"A very great merit," the rabbi replied. "There is an orphan girl who has no father and no mother. I want to help marry her off. I would like to give you the opportunity to take part in this great mitzvah."

Instead of accepting the opportunity, the wealthy man responded arrogantly. "I already have plenty of merits," he said. "I don't need

any more." - When Rabbi Kreiswirth heard this, he began trembling. He quietly walked away.

A short time later, the rabbi was shocked to hear tragic news. That same wealthy man had boarded a flight from New York to Chicago — and the plane crashed. Everyone on board was killed.

Rabbi Kreiswirth later said that hearing those words — "I have enough merits" — caused him tremendous pain. Who knows, he said, what might have happened if that man had accepted the mitzvah? Perhaps the merit of helping that orphan could have saved him — and even the entire plane. Because our sages teach that charity saves from death.

Rabbi Brog then explained that this message is especially relevant in times of danger. When rockets are flying and people feel afraid, many ask: What should we do to protect ourselves?

Rabbi Brog says there are two powerful protections. The first is giving charity. Before going to sleep each night, put something into a charity box and say: "**רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם**, let this act of charity be a protection for me tonight." The second protection is trust in Hashem. Say sincerely: "I trust completely that You are watching over me." Because ultimately, the only true protection comes from Hashem.

Rabbi Brog shared another story that illustrates this idea. There was a man who worked in air conditioning repair in the Israeli city of Holon. One morning he and his wife both woke up after having a frightening dream. Still unsettled, he went to pray and placed his trust in Hashem.

Later that day he suddenly remembered something important. He had forgotten to separate tithes from his income — the portion of his earnings that should be given to charity. Immediately he calculated how much he owed. It was a significant amount of money.

Without hesitation, he set the money aside and gave it to the local charity fund. Then he went to work.

That evening, while driving home on a narrow road near the Jordan Valley, something terrifying happened. A large military vehicle was coming toward him at high speed. The driver had fallen asleep at the wheel. The truck was barreling directly toward him. The road was extremely narrow. On one side was a steep mountain. On the other side was a deep valley. There was nowhere to go.

At the very last second, the man made a split-second decision. Instead of colliding with the truck, he turned his steering wheel and drove off the road into the valley, placing his trust in **הקב"ה**.

What happened next was nothing short of a miracle. His car went down the hill — yet somehow he survived. He walked away unharmed. To this day, he cannot explain how he lived. After climbing back up to the road, he thanked Hashem for saving his life and went home.

When he arrived, his phone rang. It was his mother calling from America. She sounded panicked. "What happened to you today at this exact time?" she asked. - He tried to calm her down. "Nothing happened. I was just driving home." - But she insisted.

Finally, he told her the story. She explained why she had called. While she was sleeping, she had a vivid dream. Her late husband — the man's father — appeared to her and said: "Our son was just saved from death today because he gave money to charity." And then he disappeared.

Rabbi Brog concluded with a powerful message. In life we purchase many kinds of insurance: Health insurance. Life insurance. Protection for our homes and our cars. But the greatest protection a person can have is spiritual protection. Acts of kindness. Charity. And trust in Hashem. These are the protections that can save a person when nothing else can.



Every individual comes into this world with a purpose, which fundamentally includes the ethical responsibility not to hurt others' feelings.

There's a famous story from **Rav Shach**.

There was a bocher who came from a regular family, and he wanted to enter Ponovitch yeshiva. He was turned down, but he was determined. I want to learn this yeshiva, and so he came to Rav Shach.

Rav Shach noticed his heilige neshama, who is a very good-natured fellow, and he took him in. He grew up to be a nice guy. He got married. A few years passed by, and he had no children. He came to Rav Shach asking for a bracha, he wants children.

Rav Shach gave him a bracha with the full heart. A year later he had twins, two boys. Naturally, the simcha was very big. He asked Rav Shach should he invite his parents as his parents lived in Chutz Laeretz.

Rav Shach encouraged him to do so, acknowledging the parents' past worries and sacrifices. Rav Shach said, of course. Your parents were worried for you so much, every day they davened for you. No question, definitely go bring them. The following two days, they were there. A day before the bris, the man asked Rav Shach if he could be the sandek for one of the twins and give the other role to his father, honoring both Rav Shach and his parents.

Rav Shach insisted firmly that he would only serve as sandek if he could be so for both children or none at all. The man reluctantly agreed.

You said yourself, they invested in me so much money. So he says, give both of them to anyone you want. I'm not going to take it, only if you're giving me both.

Naturally, Rav Shach was tzanddik for both children.

At the bris seuda, overwhelmed by emotion, the man asked Rav Shach why he was so insistent on being the sandek for both children.

Rav Shach explained that since a person does not live forever, when the children grow up and recount who was their sandek? One will say, Rav Shach. Then there's the second boy, who was your Sandek? So he says... my grandfather. - He will feel inferior. So, because of that, I did not want to only be sandek for one child.

We see from this example, that a person must consider the emotional impact of their actions, not only in the moment but also in the future, even after they are no longer alive.



אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל... (וַיִּסְעוּ... וַיִּסְעוּ... וַיִּסְעוּ... (לג/א

Why is it necessary for the **תורה** to list all the places to which the **אידן** traveled? - **The Alter of Kelm** gives a marvelous answer.

The effort which one extends to achieve a goal in **גשמיות** is not considered significant. Only the achievement itself is important. For example if someone wants to go to London, the goal is to be in London but the journey itself is only a way of getting there. The ride has no significance of its own. If a person spends ten hours stuck in traffic and then has to turn back he will have wasted his day.

Not so with regard to **רוחניות**. Every step and every bit of effort for **רוחניות** is itself an amazing achievement and deserves recognition. That's what the **תורה** is teaching us. Since the goal of the **אידן**'s

journey was to reach **ארץ ישראל**, we must not make the mistake of thinking that all the traveling, to get there was unimportant.

The **תורה** is teaching us that each and every part of the journey, each step, is a worthwhile and valuable **רוחניות** accomplishment.

שֵׁשׁ עָרֵי מִקְלָט, תִּהְיֶינָה לָכֶם (לה/יג)

רש"י tells us that the **פסוק** is teaching us that even though **משה רבינו** had set up the three **ערי מקלט** in **עבר הירדן**, nevertheless they were activated only when the three in **ארץ ישראל** were up and running. [This was 14 years later]

The **גמרא** points out that we see from here how **משה רבינו** treasured every **מצוה**, even though he knew that these **ערי מקלט** would not function in his lifetime, nevertheless he said, "A **מצוה** THAT I CAN DO NOW I WILL FULFIL NOW".

The **רמב"ם** points out; if **משה רבינו**, who was so great, still had such a desire to add to his immense greatness another half **מצוה**, all the more so we should try to fulfil every **מצוה**. **(טללי אורות).**

In the following story we see the greatness of one single **מצוה**.

At the outset of World War 2, everyone who had the necessary papers attempted to cross the border from Poland to Russia. **Reb Aharon Kotler זצ"ל** successfully managed to cross the border with the rest of his family. Shortly after he arrived, however, he realized that in all the commotion, he had left his **תפילין** behind.

Despite the danger and the pleas from his family Reb Aharon was determined to get his **תפילין**. That night, he crossed the border, successfully reached the **בית המדרש**, and found his **תפילין**. By then it was beginning to get light, so he decided to remain in Poland that day, and wait until nightfall before trying to return to Russia. He headed to one of the border villages to find a place to stay during

the day and knocked on the door of one of the farmhouses. "May I stay here until nightfall?" he asked. "Certainly, Rabbi," the owner replied.

After speaking to the host he discovered that the man was Jewish, but he knew nothing about yiddishkeit. By then it was fully light, and Reb Aharon took out his **תפילין** to daven. When he finished he asked his host, "Have you already put on **תפילין** this morning?"

"I've never put them on in my life," the man confessed. - Reb Aharon was shocked. He immediately gave the man a brief introduction to **תפילין** and explained to him that one who wears **תפילין** is rewarded in the world to come. The man agreed to put on the **תפילין** and Reb Aharon helped him.

In the dark hours of the night Reb Aharon successfully crossed the border into Russia.

Years later Reb Aharon had a dream. A polish farmer appeared and asked, "Do you remember me? You stayed in my house in Poland, after retrieving your **תפילין**." He then went on to say, that after he died, he was called before **בית דין של מעלה**. "The evidence against me was overwhelming." The Jewish peasant continued. "I was sure that I was doomed. Just then, one defending angel came forward and recounted that I had once put on **תפילין**. For that one **מצוה** alone, I was granted a share in **עולם הבא**. Thank you, Rabbi!"

כִּי-אַתֶּם בָּאִים, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן (לד/ב)

Did you know...? The reason **ארץ ישראל** is called **ארץ כנען** is because when the **כנענים** heard that **בני ישראל** were coming, they left the land so that the **אידן** could take possession of it. - **הקב"ה** said, 'Since you left the land for the **אידן**, I will call it after you. Also, I will give to you another piece of fine land in which to live. That is Africa. (**מדרש רבה ו/לקח טוב - שו"ד**).

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - In the Zechus of Emunas Chachamim

100,000 shekels," I read aloud slowly from the letter on the table. "You're not serious, are you?"

The letter remains there, staring at me in silence. "It can't be," I say to myself. It just can't be.

The letter, the gleaming new walls, my nice house, the ticking grandfather clock — they all look at me in silence.

Little by little, like a long, twisty snake, the chilling realization dawns on me. - It can be.

My story began several months earlier, when we bought an apartment in Pardes Katz, which had gradually become a chareidi neighborhood in Bnei Brak.

For years, we lived in a rented apartment because we wanted to remain in Bnei Brak but were unable to afford to buy an apartment. In Pardes Katz, the prices are still relatively low, and this apartment was cheaper than others because it was in very bad condition. No one had lived in it for years, and it was not in livable condition. It was clear that we needed to fully renovate it before moving in. But baruch Hashem, we had an apartment in Bnei Brak, something we didn't allow ourselves to even dream about, and that was a reason to rejoice.

Unfortunately, our happiness did not last long. On the first day of the renovations, an elderly man was waiting for me beside the door, very angry.

"Tell me," he said, skipping the pleasantries, "what's this noise here?"

I looked at him. His face was red, his eyes were shooting arrows, and a vein protruded on his forehead. The truth was that I felt bad for

him — I really did. On the other hand, I had bought the apartment in order to renovate it. The kitchen looked like it was a hundred years old, the plumbing was rotted, the cabinets were decaying, and the walls were completely black. There was no way we could live in the apartment in that condition.

"I'm terribly sorry, sir," I said to him, trying my best to appease him. "Naturally, we'll clean up the mess, but I have to do some renovations. We can't live here otherwise."

"The noise your workers are making is insufferable."

I had no problem hearing his loud voice, even with the machines working. I remained silent. When you renovate, there's noise. What could I do?

The old man said that it was wrong. Until then they had quiet, and who needed us anyway? He added a few more general expressions about people like me and went home, slamming the door angrily. I tried to breathe a sigh of relief, but it was premature. The old man did not for a moment consider dropping the matter, and in the evening, when I stopped by to check on things, he came up again. I tried to speak to him nicely. I told him that maybe we could put our heads together to see what we could do to make it easier on him. I tried to ask him to be considerate of us, but it was for naught. The noise was bothering him. How could people allow themselves to do such things?

Each time, when he felt the noise was too much, he came to yell at me. If I wasn't there, he didn't hesitate to call. The last time we met in my apartment, he raised his voice and yelled and yelled. I asked the old man, "What do you want me to do?"

"If you want to renovate, go live in a private home," he responded with unconcealed fury.

Just then, the contractor was pressuring me to decide what I wanted done with the wall in the children's bedroom, and my wife

called to say that our preschooler wasn't feeling well. Someone wanted to borrow money from my gemach, and I could barely hear what anyone was saying.

"Listen, this story will not end quietly. You're really going to regret your actions. I'm going to inform on you to the tax authorities."

He left, very upset, and I hoped he'd calm down. I got busy and forgot about him and his threat. The problem was that he didn't forget about me. The bigger problem was that he'd meant every word he said.

That day, he called the tax authorities and told them that there was someone doing renovations for tens of thousands of shekels, and they should come investigate from where the financing is coming from.

It's a well-known fact that the tax authorities don't dally when they have information about a yungerman from Bnei Brak who must be hiding diamonds under his floorboards. They reviewed my bank statements and saw deposits of very large checks. They asked me what those checks were, and though I wasn't sure they'd understand, I tried to explain to them that I have a free-loan gemach. The deposits they were seeing were the checks of people repaying their loans to the gemach. They didn't really understand, and it seemed like they didn't really believe me.

"Your wife runs a kindergarten at home?" the clerk asked.

"That's right," I answered, and a second later, I understood his train of thought. They thought the large deposits were my wife's earnings. I found that amusing, but they did not, at all.

I summoned all my powers of persuasion and tried explaining to the clerk that I have a gemach. I lend money to people, and these checks were the repayment of the loans. He nodded his head, but I knew I hadn't convinced him.

In the meantime, our apartment was ready, and we moved in. Peace and quiet returned to the building, and our neighbor was no longer so angry. One day, I came home from kollel and found an envelope from the tax authorities in the mailbox. I took it upstairs, and I couldn't believe I was seeing correctly.

The tax authorities decided that we hadn't been reporting all our income, and my wife was earning much more than we reported. They were demanding that we pay one hundred thousand shekels.

One hundred thousand shekels! I couldn't believe my eyes. I had just bought an apartment. I was heavily in debt from the purchase and renovations. I had a daughter who I hoped would get married in another year or two. Where was I supposed to find one hundred thousand shekels? The pain cut into me. I had told the whole truth. Those checks were not income. What was I supposed to I do?

I turned to a well-known tax advisor who helped people in similar situations. He believed my explanation but told me there was not much he could do. "The most I can help you with is ten thousand shekels, and you'd have to pay me five thousand. It's not worth your while to hire me," he told me candidly.

I turned to another tax advisor. He also felt very bad for me, but he too claimed he was unable to help. "My advice is to pay the tax authorities all the money they want from you." He looked at me. "They don't forget debts, and if you don't pay it, they'll quickly move on to taking action."

"Action?" I asked. The word had a threatening ring to it.

"They can freeze your bank account. Drop it. Just pay it, and that's all."

Pay it, and that's all. Easy to say... When you're talking about a yungerman whose wife is a kindergarten teacher, and who's heavily in debt, there's no way whatsoever to do that.

I called my wife's uncle, a wise, kind-hearted man who often had connections in the right places. He listened and sighed. "I have a friend in a very senior position at the income tax authorities, but the problem is that he hates people who are learning in kollel." He paused and sighed again. "If I tell him you're a yungerman, he'll tell me that the parasite should pay — down to the last shekel. I don't think there's any point in speaking to him at all."

I ended the conversation with the feeling that I was doomed. I had no idea what I was supposed to do. After a few hours of wondering, I decided to go to Rav Dovid Abuchatzeira and ask him for a brachah.

The next morning, I took the train to Nahariya. In the waiting room, I met many good Jews from all over the country who came for a brachah from the tzaddik. I went into his room and briefly explained my predicament. The tzaddik's gaze rested on me, soft and reassuring.

"In the zechus of my holy ancestors, you'll see that not only won't you be harmed, but you'll yet gain from it," he said to me.

I felt a stone roll off my heart. The tzaddik had given me the best brachah I could have hoped for.

I returned home. My wife heard the brachah and wondered. "Okay, we won't lose, but how is it possible that we'll gain?"

She didn't understand, and the truth was that neither did I. However, I implored her, implored myself, "Let's believe that Hashem can do anything, and only He can help us. Let's strengthen ourselves in our emunas chachamim, and with Hashem's help, it will be good." She nodded. In the face of the oppressive debts and the astronomical fine, the only thing left for us to do was strengthen our emunah.

The next morning, my uncle called. "Hashem is helping us," he said emotionally. "That clerk in the tax authorities needed my help. I did him a big favor, and I told him that in exchange, I'm sending him my

nephew so he can help him. He agreed. Go to the tax offices right now."

I grabbed the forms and went. The senior clerk examined my forms intently. Afterward, he went over to the clerk handling my file and said, "Something here doesn't make sense. There's a contradiction between the forms."

The clerk wasn't willing to let me off so easily. "Okay," he said, "there's a contradiction, but we also can't erase the debt. Let him pay five thousand shekels, and we'll freeze the rest of the debt. We'll put his file into a stay of proceedings."

I went home happy. My wife was happy too, but she said, "We had a giant miracle, but we still haven't gained anything."

"Not yet," I said. "Let's continue to believe that whatever the tzaddik decrees, Hashem will fulfill, and we'll wait."

A few weeks passed, and Covid broke out in full force. People ended up in lockdowns, and businesses were closed. My wife's private kindergarten closed too.

The government compensated business owners. The amount they said my wife was earning was two and a half times her true income.

The government money was deposited directly into our bank account. With that money, we not only repaid our debts, we also married off our daughter, who got engaged a short while later.

The tzaddik's brachah was completely fulfilled. My neighbor can't understand why I give him such a hearty greeting when passing him in the stairwell. I don't know which of the favors that he did for me was greater — the money I received because of him or the good lesson in pure, unquestioning emunas chachamim.



It was a brisk November Shabbos afternoon in 1940, and Irving Bunim Z"TL, one of the foremost lay leaders of the American Orthodox community, and the Vaad Hatzalah, had just sat down to a relaxing Shabbos meal. Suddenly, his front door burst open and two Jews ran in breathlessly. "Mr. Bunim, quick, there is no time to waste," they said. "R' Shlomo Heiman (ZT"L) just received a telegram from Vilna (which was then under Russian control) saying that if we don't raise $50,000 immediately for visas, permits and passage for over 1000 Yeshiva bochurim and Roshei Yeshiva who are holed up there, the Russians will kill or deport them! We still have a little time. We can get them out to Japan, but the Russians will not let them leave Vilna safely without the cash."

Irving Bunim was stunned. It was Shabbos - what could possibly be done today? The man gestured to the waiting cab at the curb. "R' Heiman, R' Moshe Feinstein (ZT"L), and R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz (ZT"L) sent us saying that we must immediately get to work. Every minute wasted can mean lost lives!"

Irving jumped into the cab and began knocking on the doors of the wealthiest and most philanthropic Jews, coaxing, pleading and explaining the gravity of the situation in a way that moved all those he approached. By the next morning they had what they needed; $50,000 in pledges, donations and loans.

Boruch Hashem it worked and the yeshiva refugees began their journey through the Soviet Union, across the Sea of Japan and into the port of Tsuruga, Japan. To their dismay, however, the refugees quickly discovered that they were stuck. Their Japanese visas were temporary and would soon expire and they were in jeopardy of being sent back. On top of that, Japan was an ally of Nazi Germany and the Germans were pressuring them to alter their policy of allowing

Jews through their country. Finally, the Japanese convened top-ranking military leaders to interview representatives of the Jewish community, including the Amishenover Rebbe, R' Shimon Sholom Kalish ZT"L. While the others were told to remain outside, the interview with the Rebbe went on for some time. When they finally emerged, both the Rebbe and the Japanese were smiling. "What happened inside?" they asked impetuously. "What did they say? What did you say?" The Rebbe looked amused. "Don't worry, everything is all right." But the group pressed him on.

"They asked me why the Germans hate us so much," explained R' Shimon. It was a legitimate question, one upon which the fate of thousands depended. "What did you say?" they asked. The Rebbe's eyes twinkled. "I told them the Germans hate Jews because they consider us Orientals too!" He laughed.

Among the rescued gedolim from that fateful Shabbos ride, were the Amishenover Rebbe; R' Aharon Kotler ZT"L, Lakewood Rosh Yeshiva and his son and successor, R' Schneur Kotler ZT"L; R'

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

אלא מסעי בני ישראל וכו' (לג-א)

It was well known throughout the city of Kotzk, that the great Rebbe, **R' Menachem Mendel ZT"L of Kotzk**, would remain constantly secluded in his own private room, learning Torah and Davening. He would only emerge from his room on special occasions and even then, only for a short period of time.

The story is told that R' Menachem Mendel once surprised all those waiting in the side room when he suddenly opened the door to his room. He looked around for a moment and then summoned his Shamash. Turning to the bewildered Shamash he said, "Tell me, R' Feivel, how does the Velt explain the statement in the Mechilta that

says that the Torah was only given to those who ate the Manna? Is this the literal meaning?"

The Shamash nervously answered his Rebbe. "Rebbe," he said, "this statement is explained to mean that the Torah was given to Bnai Yisroel in the desert because of the reason that the people then had no worries about how to support themselves - all their wants and needs were seen to

by Hashem himself. The fact that they received the מן from heaven is proof of this."

The Kotzker looked at him sternly and said, "No, that's not what the Mechilta means at all. In fact, it means the exact opposite. This statement is referring to those Jews who barely eke out a living, the people who don't know from where their next meal will come and yet do not worry about what they'll eat tomorrow. That was exactly the case with the מן - the amount which fell every day was only enough for that day (except, of course, on Friday). Yet, they were never worried about what they would eat the following day. It is for such special yidden the Torah was given."

His point made, the Kotzker, returned to his room and locked the door.

Timeless Truths by Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

When Rabbi Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtza was young, he raised funds for charity. One person he approached for a donation lashed out at him with invectives.

"The curses — those are for me," R' Meir Yechiel said. "Now, what about the charity?"

THE MAHARSHAM PROJECT



שו"ת מהרש"ם

A Fire That Does Not Burn

The electric light comes to the town, and into the shul itself. One of the first poskim to face the question asks something startling: is switching it on even a fire at all?

A new power station has brought electric light to a town in the **Maharsham**'s world, lighting the streets, the homes, and the shul and beis medrash. The questioner, a Rav in Munkatch, asks how the light may be used around Shabbos: the generator that feeds it is stoked with fire hours ahead, sometimes on Shabbos itself. May one benefit from the light afterward, and may a gentile turn the shul's light off on Friday night? And beneath it all, a deeper question: is an electric light a fire in the eyes of halachah?

The Question

A Rav in Munkatch wrote to the Maharsham about something his grandfather could not have imagined. A company had built a machine, a power station, that produced electric light for the whole town, the streets and the houses, and the shul and beis medrash as well. He set out what the technician had explained to him, so the Maharsham could rule on the facts as they were.

The fire that drives the machine, the technician said, is stoked many hours before the light is needed, and the more people draw on the light, the more the fire must be fed. That burning sends an electric force through iron wires that run from the station into every building. When the time comes to light, a switch joins the wires, and the light appears until the appointed hour, when it goes out. So the fire for Friday night's light is stoked already on Friday; the light

itself is brought on in a single instant before Shabbos. And the fire for Motzaei Shabbos light is stoked on Shabbos night itself.

That last point is the heart of the she'eilah. May a Jew use the light on Motzaei Shabbos, when the fire that prepared it was stoked during Shabbos? And if there is reason to wait after Shabbos, must one wait the long time it takes to stoke the fire, or only the brief moment it takes to bring the light on?

The questioner added a second case: on Friday night, may a gentile be asked to turn off the shul's light, so the kehillah is not charged for it burning all night long?

The Maharsham's Analysis

1. For Whom Is the Light Made?

The Maharsham begins with the people drawing on the light. The town is mostly gentile, and a melacha a gentile does for his own gentile town is not the Jew's concern. But here the Jews pay for their share and benefit from it, and if their use means the fire must be fed more, that share is being done for them. So the simple answer does not settle it.

✦ Even so, he notes, the Jews never tell the workers to stoke the fire on Shabbos. The arrangement is a standing contract, and the Jews would gladly have the work done before Shabbos. This is like the cases in Shulchan Aruch where a Jew hires a gentile for a job without specifying Shabbos: even though the gentile will end up working then, the Jew has done nothing forbidden. The remaining question is only whether the Jew may benefit from what was in fact done on Shabbos.

2. Does the Jew Benefit from a Shabbos Act at All?

Here the Maharsham brings his own way of looking at the machine. The fire that is stoked does not travel into the home. It burns at the station and is spent there. What it leaves behind is a force resting in the iron wires, and those wires give no light at all until the

moment a switch brings them together. Only then does the force become light. If so, the light a Jew enjoys on Motzaei Shabbos is not the fire that burned on Shabbos. That fire is gone. The benefit comes from joining the wires after Shabbos, drawing on a force that lay waiting in them.

The Maharsham weighs whether the Jews' small share might simply be nullified within the gentile majority, but sets that argument aside: a share that is due to become permitted after Shabbos cannot be nullified that way, and one may not arrange such a nullification on purpose when it is done week after week for Jews.

What actually decides the matter is that the fire itself is entirely spent. Nothing of the Shabbos act remains for the Jew to benefit from, so there is no real ground to forbid using the light on Motzaei Shabbos. He then adds a second, independent reason to permit. Even if one still worried that paying for the service is like having the work done on one's behalf, the Jews deal only with the company's management, never with the laborers who stoke the fire.

Drawing on the Shevus Yaakov, the Maharsham notes that when a Jew contracts with the one in charge, and the workers act only on their employer's authority, the Jew has asked no one to labor on Shabbos at all. Here too the kehillah simply buys light from the company; the stoking of the fire is the company's affair.

3. Turning Off the Shul's Light

As for asking a gentile to turn off the shul's light on Friday night, the Maharsham permits it. Asking a gentile to do a melacha is itself only a rabbinic matter, and turning off this light is a melacha not needed for its own sake, a lighter category still. Where money would otherwise be lost, the poskim are lenient, all the more so when the loss falls on the funds of a shul and beis medrash. And if the kehillah were told they could not turn the light off, they would simply stop lighting it, dimming the honor of the shul. The halachah does not push people into that corner.

4. Is Electric Light a Fire?

Then the Maharsham says something he calls his own hesitation, and will not hide. He is not sure, he writes, that turning an electric light on or off is a melacha from the Torah at all. His reason is a principle of the Chasam Sofer: a melacha of the Torah is measured against the work of the Mishkan, and there was nothing like electricity in the Mishkan. And even if it is forbidden, he continues, electric light may still not be fire in the Torah's sense. It is not real fire. It does not consume the iron wire the way our fire feeds on wood, a fire that, in his words, "eats and does not drink." It is closer to a higher kind of fire, like the burning bush that Moshe saw and wondered at, a flame that gives light and yet does not destroy what it rests on.

The Maharsham adds that elsewhere he showed how the force of electricity is hinted in a verse in Mishlei, "iron sharpens iron, and a man the face of his friend," for there is nothing in the world that is not hinted somewhere in the Torah. He does not turn this into a ruling. He writes plainly that he cannot decide the matter, only that he is deeply unsure. But that very uncertainty becomes a reason to be lenient in the case before him, where the question touches the honor of the shul and a real loss to holy funds.

The Maharsham died in 1911, which means this teshuvah was written as electric light was first reaching the towns of Galicia and Hungary. He was among the very first poskim anywhere to be handed the question, with no earlier ruling to lean on and only a technician's description of wires and a distant fire to work from. What a posek does at such a moment is exactly what this teshuvah shows.

The P'sak

The Maharsham rules leniently in the two cases before him. A Jew may use the electric light on Motzaei Shabbos, even though the generating fire was stoked during Shabbos, because that fire is spent at the station and the Jew benefits only from the force later

drawn through the wires. And a gentile may be asked to turn off the shul's light on Friday night, to spare the kehillah a needless loss.

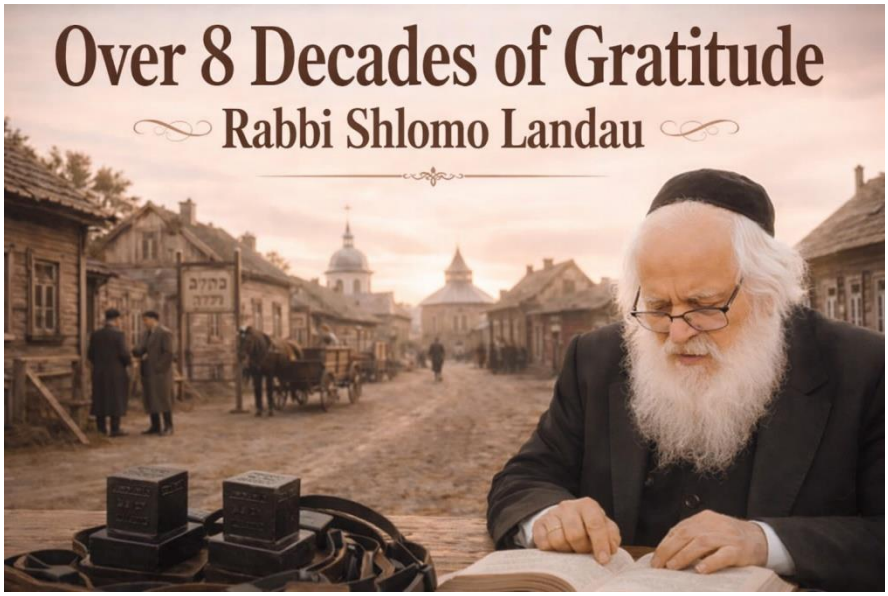
His leniency rests on the specific circumstances: a town that is mostly gentile, a contract made in advance with no instruction to work on Shabbos, and a loss that would fall on the funds of a shul and beis medrash. It is not a general permission to turn electric lights on or off on Shabbos. Woven through the ruling is his striking hesitation, which he is careful to leave as a hesitation. He cannot decide whether kindling electric light is a Torah melacha, since nothing like it existed in the Mishkan and it is "not real fire." He writes only, **אני חוכך מאוד בזה**, "I am deeply unsure of this," and leans, in this case, toward the lenient side.

Historical Context

The Maharsham died in 1911, which means this teshuvah was written as electric light was first reaching the towns of Galicia and Hungary. He was among the very first poskim anywhere to be handed the question, with no earlier ruling to lean on and only a technician's description of wires and a distant fire to work from.

What a posek does at such a moment is exactly what this teshuvah shows. He does not reach for a quick yes or no. He listens to how the machine actually works, then measures it against the oldest sources he has: the melachos of the Mishkan, a fire that feeds on wood, the bush that burned and was not consumed. He even finds the new force hinted in a verse in Mishlei. And when the sources do not give him certainty, he says so.

A gadol of his standing was willing to write, about the most modern thing in the world, that he simply could not decide, and to rule narrowly and humbly on what was actually being asked.



For decades and even when he was well into his nineties, the *Rosh Yeshiva* ***Harav Shach Zichrono Livracha*** used to travel to Tel Aviv to visit a seemingly insignificant elderly gentleman. Rav Shach, who never wasted a second, would make the commute all the way to Tel Aviv, spend a significant amount of time in this fellow's home, and then travel back to the *Ponevezh Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak. It was somewhat perplexing, but here is the remarkable backstory. When Rav Shach was a young boy, he went to learn in *Yeshiva* away from home.

He didn't go home for his *Bar Mitzvah*, so when it came time for his *Bar Mitzvah*, he needed *tefillin*. This elderly gentleman was a young boy at that point. He happened to have been traveling from Rav Shach's hometown to *Yeshiva*, and he was the *shaliach*, he was the messenger that brought Rav Shach his *tefillin* for his *Bar Mitzvah*. For over eight decades, Rav Shach continued to show his *hakaras hatov*, his gratitude to this fellow for the simple act of bringing him his *tefillin*.

The kid was going anyways, so he took one extra thing. How hard is it to take one pair of *tefillin*? But to Rav Shach, he was indebted and he never felt that he had adequately repaid that debt of gratitude. This story makes us pause for a moment. Look at the people in our lives, our spouses, our coworkers, the people in life who do so much kindness for us.

Do we take a moment even to express *hakaras hatov*? And if we do, how often? And even if it's often, how do we show our gratitude? And then it just gets us thinking like *Hashem*, who gives us

everything, He gives us life, *Mechalkel Chayim B'chessed*, shouldn't we also be taking time out of our busy schedules and genuinely expressing our *hakaras hatov*? Something to think about.



102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Gates of Gan Eden Opened

There was loud knocking on the door of the shivah house. It was early in the morning, and the family was surprised.

"Your father came to me in a dream," the man at the door said to the deceased's son. "I couldn't wait any longer, so I came here immediately."

Rav Yaakov Koppel Berminka was one of the pillars of Moshav Komemiyus. As one of the leaders of the community, he was trusted by the rabbanim on the moshav — Rav Benyamin Mendelsohn and his son and successor, Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn.

R' Yaakov was one of those who created the special character of the kehillah in that agricultural settlement in the southern lowlands of Judea. One of the things unique to him was his regular shiur every morning. Two other moshav residents participated in the shiur, and it went on for many years.

R' Yaakov would park his bike in the shul yard. R' Simcha Ausch would turn off his new blue tractor, and R' Yosef Prager would get off his old orange tractor. They would leave their work, put on their reading glasses, and dive deep into Torah.

Their regular shiur at that hour was quite unusual. There were many shiurim in their beis midrash. The sound of learning could already be heard at 4 a.m., from a shiur on mishnayos with the Bartenura. Later, there were other shiurim. But after that, the men went out to their day's work, and the sound of Torah only returned to the beis midrash toward evening.

During the morning hours, the moshav bustled with economic and agricultural activity. The clinic and grocery, the office and the truck with feed for the chicken coops and cowsheds were active during those hours. Worldly activities on the moshav were at their peak. It was only in the afternoon or evening that calm descended on the moshav, and spiritual life once again thrived.

Having a set learning session in the mornings was by no means easy for the participants. They worked hard for a living and were incredibly busy. Even so, the three friends stuck to their regular learning session, insisting on holding their shiur at a time when the shul was rather empty.

One evening, 17 Iyar, 5748, the moshav was shaken by the news of a horrific accident. R' Yosef Prager was killed while cutting down thorns with the lawn mower attached to his tractor. R' Simcha Ausch, his mechutan and partner in the shiur, was the one who found him lying in the field, after hours of frantic searches.

The entire moshav was in shock, and everyone grieved. R' Yosef, who had gone through the Siberian camps, a pleasant, kindly person, one of the most beloved people on the moshav, had met his death in such a tragic way.

The children on the moshav were also pained by his loss. They liked him. He didn't get upset when they jumped onto the wagon attached to his tractor, enjoying a free ride and the wind in their faces.

The family sat shivah, and the stream of visitors didn't stop. However, the knocking on the door so early in the morning was unusual. R' Yosef's son went to the door and saw R' Yaakov Berminka, his father's friend from his daily shiur. He stood in the doorway, his face white as a sheet.

R' Yaakov was a restrained person. He feared no one and nothing. He was generally taciturn and always wore a serious and composed

expression. He didn't have a tendency to get excited, and certainly not to turn pale.

R' Yosef's son invited him in. R' Yaakov sat down and said quietly, "A few minutes ago, I woke up from a chilling dream. Your father appeared to me in my dream. I remembered that he had passed away, so I immediately asked him, 'What are you doing here?'

"Your father began telling me what happened to him when he arrived in the Olam Ha'emes. He told me that he stood before a door, with his portion in Gan Eden on the other side of it. All he had to do was open the door and enter.

"However, when he tried to open the door, he met with difficulty. Someone on the other side was preventing him from entering. A struggle began. He tried with all his might to open the door, while someone else put in serious effort to prevent him from doing so.

"Your father added, 'I summoned all my strength in an attempt to overcome the force in front of me. I did not relent. Eventually, I managed to open the door and go into my portion in Gan Eden. There, I was told that my persistence in opening the door only met with success because of my insistence on holding our regular learning session under all circumstances, middah k'negged middah.'

"And your father concluded, 'R' Yaakov, my friend, I came to tell you this so that the two of you continue to maintain set times for Torah learning.'"

R' Yaakov told this story to the son of the deceased. R' Yaakov was not a dreamer. He continued to maintain his set learning session until his final day, in Adar 5776 (2016).

R' Gedaliah Meir ZT"L would say:

"Don't be so humble - you are not that great!"



Let me share with you what a great **מחנך** would do when it comes to something where you, a person, a child, a student is in pain. And how you dislodge that needle instead of pushing harder and creating a revolt and a rebellion. One of the greatest **מחנכים** we had was **רב שלמה פרייפלד**, the **ראש ישיבה** of **שער ישוב**. Let me share with you a story.

It was the beginning of the **זמן**, new semester. And in that semester they were learning **מסכת בבא בתרא**.

בבא בתרא is the largest **מסכת** in **176 ,שס** pages. All the **גמרות** were given out to all the students and then they went back to their dorm room. One student went back to his room, he's sitting on his bed and he's flipping through the pages. He says out loud to his roommate, "This thing is bigger than the New York telephone book. I'm never going to be able to learn this. I'm going home. - This is not for me."

His roommate hears this, he feels bad. He's going to leave because of a thick **גמרא**? He didn't even try it yet. The roommate goes down to Rabbi **פרייפלד**'s office and he tells him that his roommate is upset about the thick **גמרא**, he's discouraged. Rabbi **פרייפלד** says, "I have an idea.

Do me a favor, go to the bookbinder of the **ישיבה** and tell him to find two covers, two **גמרא** covers, and in the **שמות** try to find **דף ב** of **בבא בתרא**. And then take the two **גמרא** covers, bind them together with the one page, **דף ב** of **בבא בתרא**. Bind it and on the front cover write **ב ב בבא בתרא** and give it to me."

And that's exactly what he did. Rabbi **פרייפלד** then told the roommate, "Do me a favor, call your roommate down."

The roommate comes down. Rabbi **פרייפלד** invites him in, he says, "So tell me, I hear you're bothered. I hear you want to leave the **ישיבה**. What's the matter?"

He says, "Well, the **גמרא** you gave out, **בבא בתרא, 176** pages, it's very thick, very large, this is not something I can handle."

Rabbi **פרייפלד** says, "You know something, you're right. Let me give you your **בבא בתרא**." And pulls out the drawer and he hands him the handmade **בבא בתרא**.

He says, "This is yours. One page. You and I are going to be **חברותות**. We're going to learn **בבא בתרא** together, just **דף ב**. And when we complete **דף ב**, we are going to make a **סיום**."

And that's what they did. And this boy stayed and he became a very successful person.

That's **חינוך**. That's education. That's dislodging the needle in the throat. That is trying to figure out what's the pain, what's the discomfort, and creating success.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

There once was a Jew who was an unbelievably stingy man. He was so miserly that he wouldn't even give his own children a spoon. His children ate with their hands and drank from the water barrel. He simply couldn't bear to spend anything on them—a terrible miser.

One day he said to his nine-year-old son, "Tomorrow we're going on a trip."

"A trip?" The boy thought to himself, *What kind of trip could possibly be free?* His father was taking him on a trip, but he knew his father would never spend any money.

And that's exactly what happened. The next morning his father took him out—not by bus, of course, because paying bus fare was out of the question. They walked all the way to a large shopping street. Among the stores was a bakery.



Now, a bakery usually leaves its windows open so that people outside can smell the wonderful aroma of the fresh bread and pastries. The little boy began breathing it in... smelling and smelling the beautiful aroma. - Of course, the child didn't even think of asking his father to buy him something. He knew what kind of miser his father was.

Then his father, in an extraordinary display of "generosity," turned to him and said: "Yankele... if you're a good boy..."

The child looked at him eagerly. "What happens tomorrow?"

"If you're a good boy..."

The father saw how deeply the boy was enjoying the smell.

"If you're a good boy, and you listen to Mommy and Daddy... then tomorrow..."

"What tomorrow?"

"If you're a good boy, then tomorrow we'll come back here, take another walk, and smell it again!"

"Just smell it again?"

Naturally, that was all there was to it. The child got nothing from the smell itself.

And that's how it is every year. These days come around, and we keep smelling. A week goes by—we're still just smelling. Then come the Nine Days, and we smell even more. Then comes Tisha B'Av—a really strong smell.

Enough with just smelling!

Go inside and start eating. Understand what we once had in the Holy Temple. How do we rebuild the Temple?

Stop standing outside smelling! Go inside.

We've been saying, "Tomorrow we'll come back and smell it again." Sadly, year after year, that's exactly what happens—we smell, and then the next year we smell again. But it's time to stop merely smelling. It's time to go inside and eat—to truly understand what we're missing and what we want.

To understand the verse, מָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ - "***What does Hashem ask of you?***" - **אהבת חינם** - To increase selfless love.

To become more forgiving and more willing to give in to others. - Because that is exactly what these days are about.

One Shabbos afternoon, the **The Rebbe of Kretchnif** walked into the beis midrash and saw a chassid learning Gemara with his son. The Rebbe approached and looked into the Gemara, as if checking where they were up to.

Later, the Rebbe asked the chassid if he had merely been learning with his son, or if he had been testing him on the material of the previous week. The Rebbe explained his question. "If you wish to test him, then it's better to do it on Erev Shabbos or Motza'ei Shabbos, but not on Shabbos — because if the child doesn't know the material that well, he might have agmas nefesh, and you can't cause another Yid distress on Shabbos!"



Our Journeys In Life

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* desired very much to go to Eretz Yisrael, saying that if he would meet the holy **Rav Chaim Ben Attar**, author of the famed *sefer*, the *Ohr HaChaim*, that together they could bring *Moshiach*. Unfortunately, in *Shomayim* they had other plans and the journey did not succeed.

There are many stories regarding the journey that the *Ba'al Shem Tov* undertook together with his daughter Adel; here is one example:

On *Chol HaMoed*, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* hired a boat to take them to Eretz Yisrael from Istanbul, Turkey. The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* relates how the *Ba'al Shem Tov's Rebbe* and spiritual mentor, Achiya HaShiloni, appeared to him and demonstrated to the *Ba'al Shem* where his journey corresponded to the forty-two journeys and encampments of *Bnei Yisrael* in the *Midbar*.

While they were at sea, a great storm struck the ship, the tempest waves tossing it to and fro. According to some versions of the story, his daughter Adel was cast overboard and the ship itself was almost lost; according to other versions of the story, it was shipwrecked and smashed to smithereens, leaving only planks.

Throughout all this chaos, the sailors turned to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* to save them. Heaven decreed, however, that all of the *Ba'al Shem's* powers would be taken away and his spiritual capabilities were reduced to naught! He could remember no *tefillos*, no Torah- not even the *Alef-Bais*!

The *Ba'al Shem* was sorely distressed, until his *Rebbe*, Achiya HaShiloni, reappeared to him and showed him through which supernal worlds he was now traveling and which Divine names corresponded to his current place and journey. The *Ba'al Shem Tov* was comforted and Heaven began to sweeten the harsh decree.

Just then his son Rav Tzvi (others say it was Adel) turned and cried in distress that he too could remember nothing but the *Alef-Bais*. "Quick!" responded the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, "say them with me now!"

Attaching his soul to the power of the Hebrew letters of the holy *Alef-Bais*, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* repeated them after his son, "*Alef*, *Bais*, *Gimmel*, *Daled*," until slowly his powers and knowledge returned and he was able to save the travelers.

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* never did make it to Eretz Yisrael; rather, he returned safely to Europe.

The *Degel Machane Ephraim*, grandson of the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov*, writes in his grandfather's name in this week's *parsha* on the following *Pasuk* : עַל־פִּי ה' יַחֲנוּ וְעַל־פִּי ה' יִסָּעוּ (*Bamidbar* 9:20):'According to Hashem they encamped and according to Hashem they journeyed forth.' . . .Surely all these trips and journeys were recorded in the Torah to teach us how to conduct ourselves on our life's journey on the proper path, for each Jew to know the correct way to go all the days of our lives from journey to journey, from destination to destination."

The *Degel Machane Ephraim* is teaching us in the name of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, that just as *Bnei Yisrael* traveled and journeyed forty-two times in the *Midbar*, each of us has to correspondingly also journey and travel to forty-two camps and destinations in our lives.

May Hashem guide us on the proper path during our journeys through the lessons of His Torah, Amen!

The ocean kisses the shore thousands of times before it changes the coastline. Never underestimate the power of quiet consistency. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Avigdor Miller (1908-2001)

Treasures Locked And Hidden Away

Rav Naftoli Tzvi Horowitz

In his comments to the *Haftora,* the *Ropshitzer* points out that when a person has precious treasures and valuable secrets, he locks them up using the best locks and means to prevent their theft and abuse by others. So too did Hashem take the goodness hidden within the twenty-one days of the three weeks we call *Bein HaMetzorim* and locked them up behind the strongest lock and barrel, hidden away within a period of time that appears on the outside to be a time of pain, mourning and sadness.

The *Ropshitzer* says that this is hinted at in the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 73:1, אַךְ טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל – that *ach* is really good for Bnei Yisrael. *Ach* is spelled *alef kaf,* which equals twenty-one in *gematria,* hinting at the twenty-one days of *Bein HaMetzorim,* which are actually as good and joyous as the twenty-one days between *Rosh HaShana* and *Shemini Atzeres.* However, these twenty-one days are so good that Hashem locked them up and hid them away until in the future we will deserve and benefit from them.

The *Ropshitzer* also tells us that the month of *Av* is so named because *Av* means a merciful and loving father, alluding to the mercy a father has for his children. In addition, *Av* is spelled using the *alef bais* in order, another hint at mercy (when letters are straightforward this alludes to mercy, when backwards, to harsh judgment).

"Everyone needs a certain measure of stress and difficulty in life. A ship without a load, drifts aimlessly, capsizes easily and will never arrive at its destination." ~ Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Komarna. (Chassidim Mesaprim, Rabbi Y.L. Levin, z"l)

Steipler Gaon - Buying Seforim In The Three Weeks

The Rema *paskens* (OC 551:2) that the *issur* of building and planting in the three weeks and even during the nine days does not apply if it is for a Mitzva. The Mishna Berura (14) says that if someone does not yet have children and is scheduled to get married after Tisha B'Av, they may buy clothing for the wedding even in the nine days.

The Piskei Teshuvos (10) says that based on this *halocha,* you may buy *seforim* in the nine days if you need the *sefer* to learn from. However, he mentions that the Steipler Gaon (Orchos Rabbeinu) was *machmir* not to allow new seforim into his home in the three weeks.

One time, when a box of *seforim* arrived during the nine days, he instructed his family members not to open it until after Tisha B'Av. So great was his *simcha* in learning new *seforim* that he was *makpid* for himself, since for him it was a much too joyous event.

The Upset Rebbetzin



A certain Rav was having a hard time taking on a particular issue that was affecting many people, and he was trying to get people to change. People did not take well to this, however, and they would degrade and belittle this Rav. Worse than this, though, was that these people began insulting, embarrassing, and cursing this Rav's wife.

It reached a point where the Rebbetzin could not handle the harsh treatment anymore, and she asked her husband to leave his position as a Rav. The Rav responded that before they did anything like that,

he wanted them to go ask Rav Elazar Shach, zt"l, what he thought they should do. When they met with Rav Shach, the Rebbetzin tearfully told him all the abuse and terrible treatment she had been enduring lately. Rav Shach said to her, "You are bothered by mere words?" Rav Shach got up and walked over to his closet. He took out a big pile of letters that were written in protest of him, that he had accumulated over the years.

He said to the Rebbetzin, "If I took to heart anything that is written in these letters and listened to them, I would not be a Rosh Yeshivah today, and I certainly wouldn't be able to help manage the struggles that the Yiden are facing."

The Rebbetzin said to him, "If I may ask, why does the Rav keep all these letters in the closet? Don't they cause pain to even see them?"

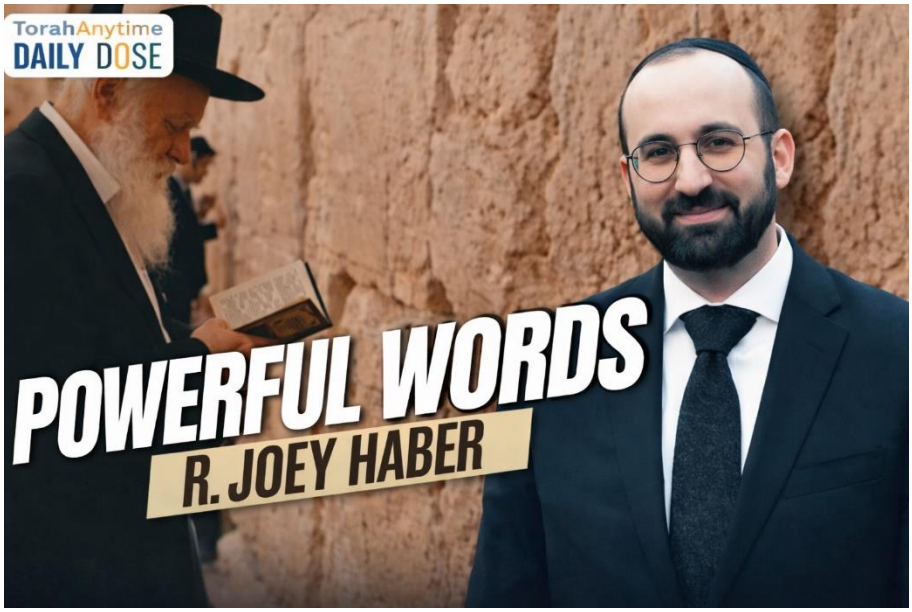
Rav Shach replied, "I have requested in my will that after I pass away from this world, that all these letters be placed in my grave, because all of these disgraceful letter that have come to me over matters that I am pursuing L'Sheim Shamayim, for the sake of Hashem, should stand as a Zechus, a merit for me when I stand trial in the Bais Din in Shamayim!"

The Power of Your Words

A distressed Yid came to R' Shlomke of Zvhil zt"l, speaking with pain and repeatedly cursing the person who had caused him so much suffering.

The rebbe told him:

"Your curses tell me that you believe in the power of your words. So instead of cursing, start blessing yourself with abundant parnassah, nachas, and everything else you desire. Why use your mouth to curse when you can accomplish so much more?"



So there was a boy. He lived in a *frum* community somewhere in the tri-state area. And he went off the path, severely off the path, like totally not. Went to Israel, went to a place called *Kesher* in Israel, which supposedly is for boys that are tremendously struggling.

He managed to get kicked out of that place also. And then he went to some place called the Heritage House. And he was there for a while, and at some point, he turned his life around and started to become a *Torah* Jew like his family is, like his parents, wonderful parents are, and he became a *ben Torah* again. And he's in Israel now in a regular *yeshiva*.

And one of his friends told him it's *Tu B'Shevat*, there's this man in Israel, Rabbi Septimus, and he's like a grandson of the *Baba Sali* or something, and you go to him on *Tu B'Shevat* and he gives blessings, he plays the guitar and it's a special place.

He walks into this Rabbi Septimus's house, and right when he walks in, this Rabbi Septimus says, "I know you. Where do I know you from?"

Boy says, "You know me? I never saw you before in my life."

He says, "I recognize you."

He says, "How do you recognize me? I never saw you before."

He says, "I'm telling you, I recognize you." And all of a sudden, Rabbi Septimus says, "Ah, I know what it is." He says, "Three years ago, you were off the path."

He says, "Yeah, I was." "And you went to the *Kotel*."

He says, "Yes, I did." "And there was a famous rapper at the *Kotel*. I think the guy's nickname is something with Puff.

Okay? And you had this famous rapper at the *Kotel*."

He says, "Yeah, I remember."

"And you went over to the rapper and you started repeating all his rap songs because you knew all the songs."

He says, "That's true. I started singing to him his songs."

He says, "And then afterwards there was a *Lubavitch* person at the *Kotel* putting on *tefillin*. You didn't go over to put on the *tefillin*, you went over to take some of the food."

He says, "Yes, I did."

He says, "Well when you left the *Lubavitch* person, I went over to the *Lubavitch* person and said, 'Do me a favor. Find me that boy's name.' And he gave me your name, **יעקב יוסף בן מרים**.

And I took your name, and every single day since that day, I have been praying for you to find your way. And now you're walking into my house a completely different person."

So there's two powerful things in this story. First of all, the idea that a Jew sees another Jew struggling and says, "There's nothing I could tell this boy in this position, but I could use my mouth in its silence and in its power. I'm not going to say anything to him, instead I'm going to take my words and pray for him." And obviously he wasn't just some list.

He obviously was holding it in his heart if he could now recognize the boy who's dressed and looks completely different. He went from totally off to totally on. Nothing about his haircut looked the same probably, nothing about his shoes, his pants, his shirt, nothing about his hair probably, everything looked different. But he held this boy

in his heart and knew the right words not to say and the right words to say.

And the second thing that's incredible about this story is that *Hashem* somehow made this boy walk back into his house so he could see the results of his *tefillah*.

Today this boy is back in America, he's a *rebbi*, he's a beautiful *Torah* light, a beautiful *Torah* home. And the father told me, he says, "When my son came back, I said to myself, I said to everybody, it's only because of the power of the *tefillah* of our people." He said, "I didn't even know that there was this random person in Israel who found my son's name from a *Lubavitch* man at the *Kotel* and prayed for my son with his heart every single day."

The Reward of Silence by Rabbi Joey Haber

Rabbi Joey Haber shared a remarkable story that took place in Yerushalayim just a few years ago.

A man had taken out a bridging loan on his home. He had managed to make the first large payment, but now the second payment was due, and it was enormous—$10,000. No matter how hard he tried, he simply could not come up with the money.

On Friday afternoon, he came home and admitted that he had no way of making the payment. His wife was terrified. Fearing they could lose their home, she broke down in frustration. "You're a failure," she cried. "You never get anything done. How could you take out a loan like this and not have the money to pay it back? What kind of husband are you?"

Their children stood nearby, listening to every word. The husband remained completely silent.

Throughout Shabbos, his wife continued expressing her fears. "I can't believe this... what are we going to do?"

Still, he never answered back.

After Shabbos, he went out hoping to borrow money from different people, but despite all his efforts, he returned home empty-handed.

Once again, his wife became upset. "You still couldn't come up with the money? How are we ever going to pay ten thousand dollars?"

Again... He said nothing.

The next morning, realizing he had exhausted every other option, he walked into Zichron Moshe, one of Yerushalayim's busiest shuls, where people come and go throughout the day. He made a difficult decision. He would collect tzedakah.

Going from person to person, he quietly asked for help. Most people gave very little. Then one man handed him a single shekel.

The man smiled warmly and said, "Thank you so much."

The donor looked surprised. "What did you say?"

"I said, 'Thank you.'" T

he man shook his head. "I've been giving a shekel to people who ask me for help. The last ten people I gave to became upset with me. They accused me of being insensitive and asked if I thought their problems were worth only a single shekel."

He paused. "So I made a decision." "I'm not giving anyone more than a shekel until someone sincerely thanks me for it." He looked at the man and asked, "What are you collecting for?"

The man explained everything. "I have a bridging loan payment due today. I need ten thousand dollars."

Without saying another word, the donor reached into his pocket, took out his checkbook... ...and wrote him a check for the entire $10,000.

The stunned man hurried home and told his wife everything that had happened. She burst into tears. Again and again she apologized. "I'm

so sorry," she said. "I was frightened. I let my fear get the better of me. Please forgive me."

The husband answered gently, "I understand." Then he explained why he had remained silent through the entire ordeal.

"**The Shlah HaKadosh** teaches that one argument can drive away a hundred opportunities for parnassah."

"I wanted those opportunities, so I chose not to argue."

Rabbi Joey Haber concluded with a powerful lesson. When we are insulted or criticized, our natural instinct is to defend ourselves. But sometimes, the greatest strength is restraint. Sometimes, remaining silent creates blessings we could never have imagined. The reward of silence is often far greater than winning an argument. Sometimes, the greatest yeshuah begins with the words we choose not to say.

Secret From Eliyahu HaNavi - R' Yaakov Rahimi



I want to share with you a *midrash* from *Eliyahu Hanavi*. Who's better than *Eliyahu Hanavi*? *Eliyahu Hanavi* writes the following: **אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא** says *Hashem*, **הרי אני מודיעך מקצת דרכי**. '***I want to share with you some of my secrets***.'

These are powerful words. We're talking about *Eliyahu Hanavi* and he's saying that *Hashem* shared with them a secret. What is that secret?

כל זמן שבן אדם מתפלל anytime a person prays **ומתחנן אל השם** and begs *Hashem*, **הקדוש ברוך הוא משנה את מזלו**. *Hashem* can change his whole reality. And he writes that let's say you need something from a king

or something from a president. You can scream all you want from the top of your lungs; you cannot get inside the king's palace. You cannot get inside the president's office.

But he writes, **אצל הקדוש ברוך הוא** says *Eliyahu Hanavi*, **בן אדם יכול להיכנס פתאום** a person can enter suddenly **ועומד לפני השם** and you can stand in front of *Hashem*.

This reminds me of a story of the *Baba Sali*, the holy *Baba Sali*. One time somebody came to him, and he was crying that he needs a certain *yeshua*, a certain salvation. So as the *Baba Sali* is sitting there with this fellow, he tells him, "Did you really *daven* to *Hashem*? Before you come to me as a rabbi, did you turn to *Hashem*?"

He says, "Yes, yes."

Suddenly, the door opens to the *Baba Sali's* room and his son-in-law, the *Baba Sali's* son-in-law, walked in. As soon as he walked in, the *Baba Sali* told him, "Hey! Who let you open the door? Who do you think you are walking into the rabbi's office without knocking?"

His son-in-law was stunned. What just happened? How many times in my life did I walk in and out? Many times.

How many times did his son-in-law, can you imagine, walk in the door without knocking? Suddenly the *Baba Sali* is screaming at him, "You don't just walk in without knocking!" - The son-in-law didn't know what hit him.

What is the rabbi trying to say?

And he tells him, "Answer! What did you walk in without knocking?"

He tells him, "*Abba*," he used to call him father because it's his father-in-law, he says, "What do you mean? I'm your son-in-law. I'm like your son. I'm a *ben*."

He tells him, "Ah! You see that? A son, a son-in-law, doesn't have to knock to walk in his father's office. He's always could just open the door and walk in."

Said the *Baba Sali* to the person sitting in front of him, "You know how you *daven* to *Hashem*? Really turn to *Hashem*! Because you are a son, and a son of *Hashem* and a daughter of *Hashem*, you don't need to knock.

You don't need too much preparations. You want to talk to *Hashem*, *Hashem* is listening, but be aware that He's really there. You don't need to knock. Just go scream to *Hashem*!" And that's what *Eliyahu Hanavi* is saying over here.

Eliyahu Hanavi said that *Hashem* told him a secret. This is a big deal! *Eliyahu Hanavi*! You know what the secret is? That the *Yehudim*, anytime you want to talk to *Hashem*, you don't need to knock, just scream to *Hashem* and *Hashem* is listening.

And he goes on, that *Hashem* doesn't need to send *Malach Gavriel* or *Malach Raphael* or *Michael*. *Hashem* does not need to send any angels in order for him to do and listen to your prayer.

***Hashem* himself listens to every person's *tefilla*.**

Working on our Middos

Rav Mordechai Rogov, zt"l, Rosh Yeshivah of Bais Medrash L'Torah in Skokie, Illinois, was a distinguished Talmid Chacham, and following World War II, he moved to Chicago. During his time as Rosh Yeshivah, he reached out to many Talmidim, instilling in them a love of Torah.

What his Talmidim recall about him most was the love and respect that he demonstrated towards them. He was warm and caring, making every student feel comfortable in his presence. Rav Rogov never turned his back on a Talmid. After speaking with a student, whether it was in the Bais HaMedrash or in a classroom, he would always back away when he had finished. He did not turn around and leave with his back to the student.

This taught the Talmidim to respect and show reverence to those who study Torah.

He once announced to his class that since a student was expected to inform his Rebbe if he could not attend class, it was only right that the Rebbe should notify his Talmidim if he was going to miss Shiur.

He explained that his grandson was becoming Bar Mitzvah that Shabbos in Detroit, and he would like to attend, only if his Talmidim did not mind. If anyone had objected, he would not have attended his grandson's Bar Mitzvah!

After being assured that no one minded if he would miss Shiur, he only then agreed to go with his family to the Simchah!

The Siddur Speaks

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

One of the special Tefilos that we say on Shabbos is Nishmas Kol Chai. There are many reasons for saying this, but one of them is because on Shabbos we have a Neshamah Yeseirah, an extra Neshamah, and this Tefilah starts off with the topic of Neshamos (Ziv HaShabbos, p.144).

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

R' Yaakov Yosef ZT"L of Polnoye would say:

"If a person does not appreciate himself, how can he possibly be expected to appreciate others!"

L'Maaseh

At the end of World War I, Rav Baruch Ber Liebowitz, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Kamenetz and the primary student of the Brisker Rav, zt"l, traveled by train with his family to Poland. Travel was very difficult, since the roads were full of troops returning home, and the trains were overflowing with soldiers too.

Along the way, the train stopped in the middle of a vast, open wasteland under Russian control. While more soldiers boarded the train, a few passengers got off, just to get a breath of air, and Rav Baruch Ber noticed that a young Jewish girl had done so as well.

When the train was about to resume its journey, the soldiers who had just boarded would not let the Jewish girl get back on the train, claiming that there was no room for her.

When Rav Baruch Ber saw this, he said to his family, "I cannot travel on this train any further. We can't leave a young Jewish woman alone in a place like this!" Immediately, he and his family got off the train to stay with her, and the train pulled away.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a military truck appeared, and halted abruptly right in front of them. The driver looked at them and asked where they were headed, and when the driver heard where they needed to go, he told them that he just happened to be going to that exact place!

It was a miracle that a truck passed through that deserted area, just at that moment when they were stranded. But it was an even greater miracle that the driver was headed to the same place they were, for their destination was an enormous distance away.

When Rav Baruch Ber's sons-in-law would relate this story over, they would always say that the driver was Eliyahu HaNavi, and the lifelong lesson they learned from this was that Hashem never causes one to lose out when they are doing a Chesed for another person!

הואהית אמר

R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk ZT"L would say:

"One must study Torah with devotion so that his sons will follow his example. For if not, then his sons will request that their sons study with devotion while they occupy themselves with other matters."

R' Yaakov of Radzimin ZT"L would say:

"As far as the troubles that plague Bnei Yisroel throughout history go - for a true believer there are no questions, and for a non-believer, there are no answers!"

R' Boruch of Mezhibozh ZT"L would say:

"One who is truly G-d-fearing does not become weary and exhausted. You may think that I am an old man of 96. Well, there you are mistaken. I am three young men of 32!"

R' Yerucham Levovitz ZT"L would say:

"If a man tells me that he is unable to study Torah because he does not have any Seforim available to him, I am simply unable to remain in his presence. The reason being, that Hashem gave each person a mind - use it and think!"

R' Mendel of Vitebsk ZT"L would say:

"Now that I've reached Eretz Yisroel, the only thing I miss is the great longing I used to have to go up to the Holy Land!"

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - An Old Man Appeared to the Father in a Dream

A couple went to a kiruv seminar held in Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim with their son and daughter. The father, mother, and daughter all listened to the talks and participated in the lectures, but the son, who had long hair, did not want to hear lectures. He spent the entire week in his room with a big radio.

A talmid chacham there, who noticed that the boy didn't attend the lectures, tried to speak to him, but to no avail. The days passed, the seminar ended, and the family went back home. The father and mother slowly embarked on a new path, growing in their mitzvah observance. They asked their son to jump onto the bandwagon and grow at least a little, but their requests fell on deaf ears.

One day, his parents turned to him and said, "Listen, if you agree to go to a seminar that will be held in the coming days and just listen to the lectures, without promising to begin keeping mitzvos, we'll pay for a trip abroad for you to Italy and Cyprus."

"Okay, fine, I agree," he said. He packed his bags and went to participate in a Chanukah seminar. He listened to the lectures, while his mind was in Italy the entire time.

It is common practice to hold a symposium at midnight on Motza'ei Shabbos at the end of a weeklong seminar. The participants gather for the symposium and some participants go onstage. Some share their impressions and feelings after a week full of spirituality. Others tell their personal stories, and still others tell of being inspired and making a serious change. At this symposium, the boy sat beside his friend, listened a little and daydreamed a lot. His friend bent toward him and asked, "Nu, what's with you? Are you leaving here with any decisions?"

"Me? I'm leaving here with a ticket to go abroad."

"But you heard the lectures. How can you remain so cold?"

Very inspired, the friend talked to the boy's heart until he showed some signs of being moved. His friend continued to try and arouse him, until the boy suddenly announced, "You know what? Listen! If a miracle happens now that my father and mother will be here in the middle of the night — after all, they live in Yerushalayim — then I'll become a ba'al teshuvah. Finished! That's it!"

A half hour passed, and suddenly, his parents appeared at the entrance to the hotel! - The boy walked over to them and the three kissed each other, in a storm of emotions.

The participants in the hall didn't understand the significance of the meeting, but they saw that something special was happening. Those were very emotional moments. The boy spoke to his parents and cried. After that, he left his parents and hurried toward the microphone. On the way, he managed to borrow a yarmulke from someone, put it on his head, attached it with a clip, and then said into the microphone, "From now on, this kippah is not leaving my head."

What happened? How did they come?

This is what happened:

That night, the father dreamed that an old man with a white beard (perhaps his grandfather) came to him and said, "Why are you sleeping here? Go to Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim, to your son."

He woke up and told his wife about his dream.

"Ooh, that's interesting," she said. "It's an amazing dream. Maybe we should go."

"No, I want to sleep," her husband said, and lay back down and went back to sleep.

Once again, the old man appeared. "Why aren't you going to your son? Why are you sleeping now?"

He woke up, somewhat frightened, and told his wife, "I dreamed about the same old man again."

"If so, maybe we really should go?" she suggested.

"But I want to sleep."

"Listen, I believe in dreams. Don't worry. You won't go alone. I'll join you."

The two dressed and got into their car, but it wouldn't start. The father, standing outside their home with the vestiges of sleep still in his eyes, couldn't get the car to start. (Of course! The Satan works in overdrive at such times. Do you think the yetzer hara is sleeping at 2 a.m.?)

"If the car isn't working, I don't have the strength. We're done. I'm going back to sleep now."

"If we already got dressed and came outside, we'll call a taxi," his wife ventured to say.

"No way!"

"Yes! We'll go at all costs."

His wife won. They called a taxi to take them from Yerushalayim to Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim. Naturally, they paid a pretty penny for the trip. What a miracle.

(story from the maggid, **Rav Yaakov Galinsky, zt"l**.)

The GPS doesn't get frustrated when you take the wrong turn. It simply recalculates and immediately starts looking for another way forward. Imagine how different life would feel if we treated ourselves and others with the same patience. ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.



✦ The Forty-Two Journeys — A Spiritual Map

Parshas Masei lists the Mem-Beis Mas'os, forty-two encampments of Klal Yisroel in the midbar. Chazal teach that these travels are not mere history; they form a spiritual roadmap for our own avodas Hashem.

The **Magen Avraham**, quoting the **Tzeror HaMor**, explains that the forty-two stops correspond to the forty-two letters of Ana Bekoach, revealing deep mystical meaning. The **Zevach Tzedek** records that **Reb Shimshon Ostropola** taught that simply reciting the names of these journeys is a powerful segulah for protection, especially during epidemics. He received this teaching from Eliyahu HaNavi, and some Haggados even print these tefillos at the beginning.

✦ Holy Sparks Lost Through Aveirah

The **Ohr HaChaim**, the **Maggid of Koznitz**, and the **Maggid of Mezritch** describe the **Arizal's** concept of Birur HaNitzotzos: holy sparks scattered throughout the world, waiting to be redeemed.

Why do sparks fall into dark places? The yetzer hara makes aveiros feel tempting by stealing pleasure from kedusha—from our own neshama. He embeds sparks of holiness into the aveirah, making it seem sweet even though it is inherently repulsive. When a person sins, that spark falls into captivity, scattered across the world. This is why we daven for Hashem to "gather us from the four corners of the earth"—to reunite the lost fragments of our neshama.

✦ Why Klal Yisroel Traveled Through the Midbar

The **Ohr HaChaim** explains that the forty-two travels were a mission to redeem these lost sparks. Before entering Eretz Yisroel, Klal Yisroel had to reclaim the holiness scattered during their years in Mitzrayim.

They stayed in each location according to how many sparks were trapped there—sometimes a day, sometimes twenty years. By living, learning, davening, and making brachos in each place, they released the sparks and restored their spiritual wholeness.

This is why reciting the forty-two journeys is such a potent segulah: it helps us reclaim the parts of our neshama that the yetzer hara has taken captive.

✦ Bein HaMitzarim — Forty-Two Days of Redemption

The **Kozhnitzer Maggid** notes that Bein HaMitzarim contains 21 days and 21 nights—forty-two periods, mirroring the forty-two travels. These weeks of mourning are spiritually dark, yet they offer extraordinary opportunity.

By strengthening ourselves in learning, tefillah, tznius, and shmiras halashon—especially when joy is restricted—we wage the same spiritual battle Klal Yisroel fought in the midbar. **לפום צערא אגרא**: the difficulty itself releases sparks.

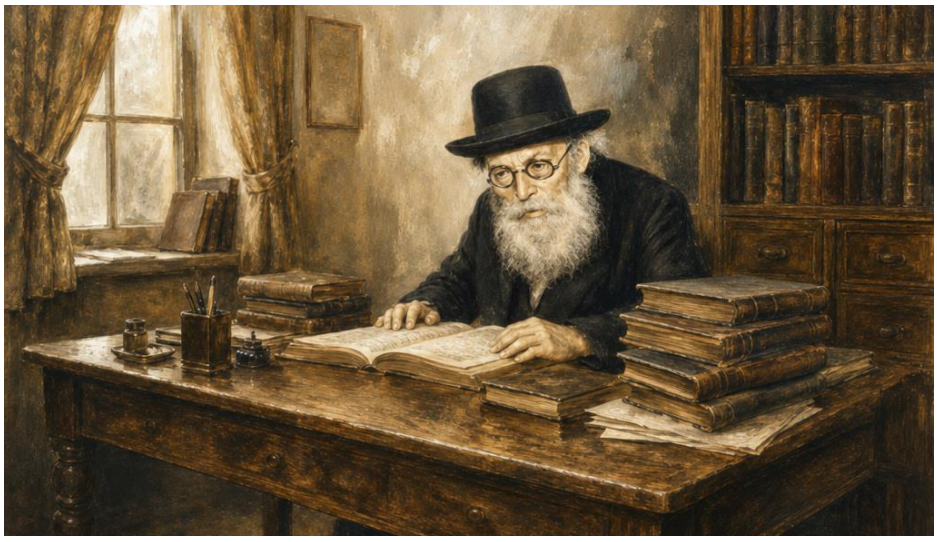
This is why Tishah B'Av, after forty-two periods of intense avodah, is described by **Reb Pinchas Koritzer** and the **Kozhnitzer Maggid** as holding a spiritual light even greater than Simchas Torah. After reclaiming so many sparks, a person becomes whole again and receives a profound shefa.

The Path to Miracles

The Maggid of Zlotchov teaches that when a person needs a miracle beyond nature, he should perform a mitzvah beyond his own nature.

As he rises above his limitations, Hashem responds with blessings beyond the limitations of nature.

The Chazon Ish: The Key to Success



Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (1878–1953) - The *Chazon Ish* is revered throughout the world, renowned for authoring the profound *sefer* that bears his name - a work found in nearly every *Yiddishe* home. Many assume that his brilliance alone led to his greatness, but that was not the case. The Chazon Ish once shared with Rav Wosner that he would review a single topic forty times before developing a new insight.

This serves as a powerful lesson. We often mistakenly believe that our gedolim were simply born with effortless intelligence, failing to appreciate the immense effort they invested.

The *Chazon Ish* once spent three months studying a single *Mishnah* in *Maseches Mikvaos*. Similarly, his *talmid*, Reb Shrage Faivel Steinberg, recounted that the *Chazon Ish* spent an entire winter semester studying only the first *perek* of *Maseches Eiruvin*, dedicating fourteen hours a day to his learning schedule.

True prosperity is not achieved through intellect alone. The Chazon Ish's tireless dedication demonstrates that growth is possible for everyone, provided we are willing to dedicate ourselves fully.

With consistent effort, we can, **בְּעֶזְרַת הַשֵּׁם**, overcome challenges like speaking lashon hara, find deeper focus in our tefillos, lead more joyful lives, and truly experience Kedushas Shabbos. - Everything depends on our willingness to invest. While we may not reach his level, we can certainly emulate his toil and diligence.

Dead First by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Masei discusses the sojourns of Klal Yisrael through the desert. It focuses on the many stops that the Jewish nation made, hinting at the ensuing incidents that occurred with each stop.

But one verse seems to divert attention from the Jews' travels and chooses to focus on a scene occurring miles away. The Torah tells us that "the Jews journeyed from Ramses on the fifteenth day of the first month and went forth with a Yad Ramah to the eyes of all Egyptians" (Numbers 33:3).

The Torah then inserts a seemingly irrelevant detail, one that seems to be insignificant if not anticlimactic in proportion to the great tragedy that befell the Egyptians and the miraculous Exodus of the Jews. It reverts to a scene that takes place back in Mitzrayim as the Jews were a few days into their escape from Egypt. "The Egyptians were burying their dead and in their gods Hashem meted justice" (ibid.v.4).

Isn't that a mere detail in history? Why even mention it? In fact if we were to mention anything, the Torah should write "and the Egyptians were mourning their first born-dead whom Hashem miraculously smote on the prior night."

It seems that the Torah placed this posuk in this place as a significant lesson a part of the lessons of the Exodus.

In the famous work, *A Tzaddik in our Times*, Simcha Raz relates an amazing story about **Rabbi Aryeh Levin**, the tzadik of Jerusalem:

It was mid-May 1948, bombs were raining on central Jerusalem, no street was safe and no home a haven. Yet it was during a bomb attack that Samuel Weingarten, a bank cashier who volunteered for civil defence, spotted the holy sage Rabbi Aryeh Levin, manoeuvring his way, dodging craters below and bombs from above, in a desperate effort to get somewhere. His steps were careful and calculated and he strode with confidence with a clear destination in mind.

"Rabbi!" he shouted above the din. "Where are you going? A Jew must guard his soul! They are shooting at us! Get inside a shelter!"

Rabbi Levin was not fazed. "I am on my way to do the greatest mitzvah. There are forty deceased souls in the Bikur Cholim Hospital, with no one to guard them. The only watchmen are the human jackals who cut their finger to remove their jewellery. I am rounding up volunteers to guard them. The bombs will have to find different addresses."

In addition to exacting every detail of how a Jew should live their life, the Torah is also a guidebook to an entire world on what is ethically correct. The foundations set in the Torah of myriad principles found the core of ethical behavior even to the basest of people.

Murder, incest, and other abominable acts are deplored in the Torah. Some are denoted with the words toaivah, abominable, others with depictions of Heavenly retribution, whether it be the Flood or the destruction of S'dom. Those stories are lessons for civilization. They are standards required for every inhabitant of planet Earth. Those aspects of the Torah serve as a moral compass. They come together with the ethos of kindness and compassion that can be surely garnered by those who are students of the Torah.

So if we take a step back in time and understand what was going on in the minds of the Egyptians, and what the Torah deems important to mention, perhaps we can garner another moral lesson that may better inspire our generation of proper values.

Imagine! For 210 years the Jews were captive in Egypt. Despite miraculous plagues, never heard of or seen before in the history of civilization, the Egyptians held on. They were not letting go!! Not a threat of disaster, nor its execution cracked their resolve nor diminished the Egyptians' desire to maintain their hold on the Jews. Not blood, boils, locust or any other plague, shook their resolve. Even when the Jews finally left, the Egyptians chased after them. But not

immediately. The Torah tells us that something else was more important. Something was worth giving the Jews an enormous head-start. Something was worth losing the very nation that their first-born gave their lives to keep all for one staid principle. The honor and burial of the dead.

Perhaps the Torah talks to civilization. It tells the world what was important, even to a nation that had no qualms about the indenture of another people. No matter how long it took., no matter the financial ramifications, no matter the loss of power and prestige in giving the Jews a long head-start. It did not matter. Honor the smitten. Bury the dead.

And so the Torah tells us that despite the political ramifications that occurred with the Exodus, something else was on Egypt's mind. Maybe the actions of that primitive nation should give the world a perspective about what really matters. If an ancient nation was willing to give up its century-old national pride, the loss of the largest single work-force in history for the honor of the dead, shouldn't every nation give thought about their priorities as well? Shouldn't they keep the honor of those buried instead of a shopping mall, a new roadway, or even the prestigious honor that a place in a museum bestows? We may not learn many great moral lessons from the Egyptians, but this one we all can.

Even if in the war of wits you come in dead last, in the war of morality make sure it's dead first.

A butterfly doesn't escape the cocoon because it is strong; it becomes strong because it has to battle its way out of the cocoon. Sometimes the struggle isn't preventing your transformation – it's creating it. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein (1957-2022).

Rabbi Dovid Kimche - The Power of Our Surroundings



So, the final **עליה** of the **ספר**, and we are introduced to a surprising **מצוה**, of **ערי מקלט**. These were to be certain towns dotted throughout **ארץ ישראל** and **עבר הירדן**, as we'll see, where any accidental killer would run to and be safe from revenge.

So the **פסוק** tells us that there were supposed to be three **ערי מקלט** in **ארץ ישראל** and three **עבר הירדן**, Transjordan, where the two and a half tribes were to make their home. And **רש"י** asks a very, very simple question and he says that the ratios don't really line up.

If for nine **שבטים** there were to be three **ערי מקלט** in **ארץ ישראל**, why would there be three **ערי מקלט** for two and a half **שבטים**? The ratios do not line up. Why do two and a half tribes need three **ערי מקלט**?

So **רש"י** quotes the basis of his words on the **גמרא** in **מכות**, and **רש"י** says is because **עבר הירדן** in Transjordan there are more murderers, and that's why they needed more **ערי מקלט**.

So **מהר"ל** in his **גור אריה** here asks the question that we are all wondering and you're wondering right now. And he asks, one second, if there are more murderers, well **ערי מקלט** do not deal with murderers, but with intentional murderers, it deals with the accidental deaths. What's an accidental killer got to do with a murderer? Surely those two do not have any bearing on each other.

So he answers that actually indeed they do. And this is a fascinating insight that he offers, psychological, **רוחני** insight, probably both.

And he says, when you're living in an environment where there are more murderers or indeed any **עבירות**, the chances of you committing that **עבירה** even by mistake, that is increased.

And that's a fascinating insight about the environment that we live in. The **רמב"ם** writes, that in fact we have to do **תשובה** for even in **רמב"ם** in **הלכות תשובה** he says we have to do **תשובה** for **מצות** even though that we do by mistake. I mean we are responsible for them.

When you live in an environment where **עבירות** are being committed, your sensitivity to these **עבירות**, to doing them, to committing them, even by mistake, perhaps we are not as careful as we should be. The chances of us committing even accidental **עבירות** are increased and we are responsible for that.

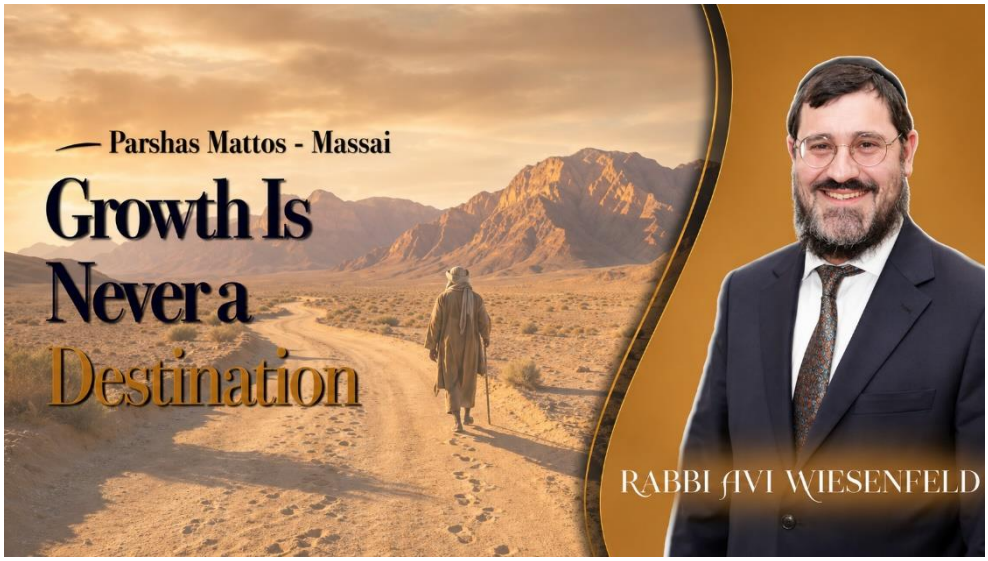
This is surely a charge for us. We must be aware of our surroundings, of how our surroundings affect us even on a subconscious level.



Once a young man learning in kollel was very pressed financially. Somebody approached him and offered to make a "Yissachar & Zevulin Deal" with him. This person would support him financially, and in return he would receive half of the reward for learning Torah, that this young man learned.

So, he went to the Chazon Ish and asked what he should do. On one hand, he will lose half of his reward for his hard work. On the other hand, if he doesn't take it, he would continue to receive his full reward, but there is a good chance that he would have to leave the kollel to support his family.

The Chazon Ish replied that, yes, it is true, he will give up on half his reward. Yet, he will NOT have to give up on the reward he gets for the exertion and effort he puts into his learning. THAT will always remain his.



Have you ever watched a skyscraper being built? If you walk past the construction site every day, it barely seems to change. One day there's another beam, the next day another floor. Progress feels almost invisible. But leave for six months, come back, and suddenly there's an entire building standing there where once was an empty hole in the ground.

That's exactly how spiritual growth works. At the beginning of this week's *parsha*, *parshas Matos* and *Masei*, the *Torah* recounts all of the forty-two journeys that *Klal Yisrael* did in the desert. Curiously, the *Torah* repeats itself. The places from which they came to the destinations to which they traveled and the destinations to which they traveled according to the place from which they came.

Why the repetition? The message is profound. Every journey becomes the starting point for the next one. Growth isn't about reaching a destination and settling there. It's about making today's accomplishment tomorrow's launching pad.

The danger is that after an inspiring *shiur*, an uplifting *Shabbos*, or a meaningful *Yom Tov*, we pause. We admire how far we've come. But in *ruchnius*, standing still isn't really standing still. It's like trying to walk up a downward-moving escalator.

The moment you stop climbing, you're already being carried backwards. The *Torah* is teaching us that every departure must lead to a journey, and every journey must become another departure. Never let yesterday's inspiration become today's memory; turn it

into tomorrow's growth. When Walt Disney died, someone was touring the nearly completed EPCOT Center project.

The visitor remarked, "It's such a shame Walt never got to see this." One of Disney's longtime colleagues replied, "He did see it. That's why it's here."

Growth in *Yiddishkeit* is just like that. You don't build a life in one giant leap. You see the vision and then you lay one brick at a time.

One *tefillah* at a time. One *brocha* at a time. One *chesed* at a time. And one day you'll look back and you'll realize that *Hashem* helped you build something you never imagined.

Like the journeys mentioned in this week's *parsha* are slow but continuous, it's a message to us that every moment and every day we need to continue growing. Small steps, but ones that lead to the ultimate goal. *Gut Shabbos*.

Mitzvos During The Exile

R' Moshe Cordovero would say the following parable: A king was banished from his kingdom and wandered about in exile. Whoever dealt with him kindly and gave him food - even if only just water and a piece of bread - was regarded as in the king's eyes as though he had fed the king the fattened fowl that he was accustomed to eating in the palace. This is how Hashem regards our mitzvos while the Shechinah is in exile.

R' Yitzchok Blaser ZT"L would say:

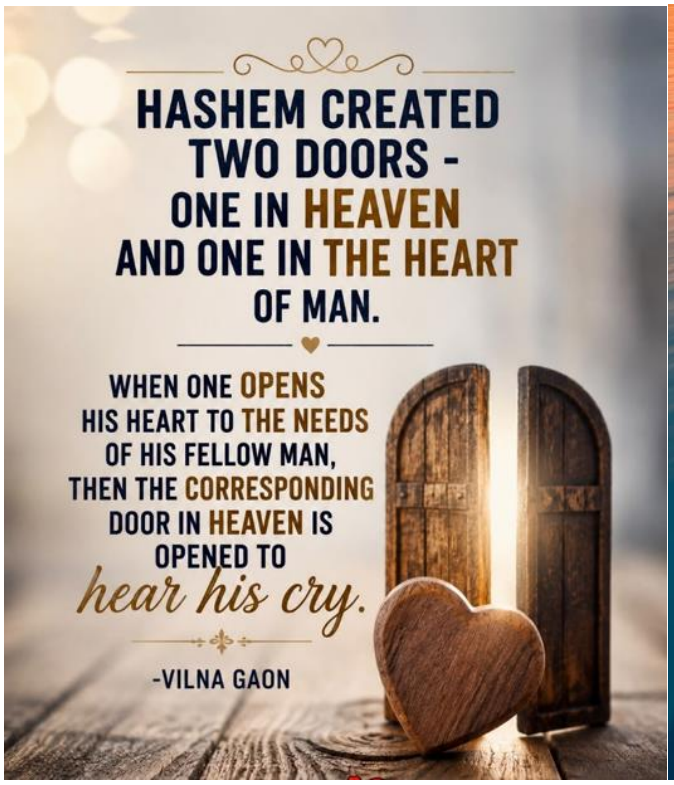
"The Yetzer Horah is like an annoying fly. Even though one tries constantly to chase it away, it just keeps on returning!"

Parshas Masei

Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l quotes the **Zohar Hakodosh** which states that the remedy for a person in this world is reading Shema properly. This is especially true during difficult times.

Rav Schwab adds that the first posuk of Shema has six words. Baruch Shem, the second line of the shema, also contains six words. In Eretz Yisroel, there were six Arei Miklat - cities of refuge, to which an accidental murderer could run and seek refuge. When we say Shema Yisroel and Baruch Shem, we can feel secure that Hashem is protecting us.







Two Gan Edens

A person's Gan Eden is in Heaven. Hashem's Gan Eden is in the heart of a Yid. ~ The Avodas Yisrael zt"l.

