TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry





קדושים

לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

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ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

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קדושים

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ - "***You shall love your fellow as yourself.***" (19:18)



R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005; a leading teacher of mussar in Eretz Yisrael) observes: **Ramban z"l** writes that it is nearly impossible for a person to love another as much as he loves himself. Even if a person gives another more of something than he keeps for himself, deep down, he wishes it was the other way around.

Since it is inconceivable that the Torah commanded something that is impossible, Ramban had to explain that the mitzvah merely requires us not to be jealous of others.

R' Wolbe adds: There was only one person in the Torah who saw someone have more than he had, but he was not jealous. That person was Aharon. Moshe Rabbeinu was reluctant to accept the mantle of leadership for fear that his older brother, Aharon, would be jealous.

No, said Hashem (Shmot 4:14), "When he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart."

That is why Aharon merited wearing the Choshen / Breastplate over his heart. Why was he able to do this? Because he was the ultimate man of chessed / kindness, always giving to others, as midrashim describe. (Shiurei Chumash: Bereishit 37:11)

R' Yehuda Ashlag z"l (1885-1954; Poland and Eretz Yisrael; one of the leading kabbalists of the 20th century) writes that it would be possible to love one's friend as oneself in its truest sense–giving and never taking–if everyone did it. The only reason a person can't give unendingly is because he must care for himself. But, if he could be confident that the rest of society would care for him, he could devote himself fully to caring for them.

In practice, R' Ashlag suggests, this mitzvah can be practiced to its fullest extent in small groups of like-minded people. (Matan Torah)

וְכִי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וּנְטַעְתֶּם כָּל־עֵץ מַאֲכָל - "***When you shall come to the Land, and you shall plant any food tree . . .*" *(19:23)***



R' Avraham Saba z"l (Spain and Turkey; died 1510) observes that G-d has implanted in man an inborn desire to preserve the world, as Kohelet states (3:11) **גַּם אֶת־הָעֹלָם נָתַן בְּלִבָּם** - "*He has also put the world into their minds.*"

Were this not the case, every person would say, "Why should I bother planting when someone else might end up eating my produce?"(Tzror Ha'mor)

וְכִי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וּנְטַעְתֶּם כָּל־עֵץ מַאֲכָל - ***"When you shall come to the Land, and you shall plant any food tree . . ." (19:23)***

Kohelet states (3:11) גַּם אֶת־הָעֹלָם נָתַן בְּלִבָּם - *"He has also put the world into their minds."*

The Midrash on our verse cites the same verse from Kohelet that R' Saba cites, and it notes that the word "הָעֹלָם" is spelled without the letter "vav." As a result, the verse from Kohelet can be read: "He has also put he'ellem / enigma into their minds."

Says the Midrash, Hashem has hidden man's day of death from him, for if man knew when he would die, he would not plant and he would not build.

That would be wrong. Just as each generation finds the world planted and built-up, so it must plant and build for the generations that follow.

Regarding this, Hashem says, "Take your example from Me, for I have no use for what I plant, yet it is written (Bereishit 2:8), `Hashem Elokim planted a garden in Eden'." (Midrash Tanchuma)



אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם - ***"Ish / A man–Your father and mother you shall revere and My Sabbaths you shall observe–I am Hashem, your Elokim."*** (19:3)

What purpose is served by introducing these commandments with the word אִישׁ / "A man"?

R' Yehoshua Kaniel z"l (1895-1970; Chief Rabbi of Haifa, Israel) explains, based on a comment by **R' Yaakov Kranz z"l (1741-1804; Dubno Maggid)**:

A person may say, "When I was a child, I definitely needed my parents and therefore had an obligation to honor and revere them. Now, however, I am an independent adult! Why should I revere my parents?"

To counter this, the Torah begins the commandment with "Ish." Even when you are a grown person, you shall revere your parents.

Similarly, continues R' Kaniel, a person might say: "I am an adult with responsibilities. I have a family to feed. How can I refrain from working on Shabbat?"

No! says the Torah. "Ish"–even a grown man with mouths to feed should observe My Shabbat. Why? Because "I am Hashem, your Elokim"–I make the rules, and I care for you. (*Divrei Yehoshua* II)



לֹא תְנַחֲשׁוּ וְלֹא תְעוֹנֵנוּ - *"You shall not indulge in divination and you shall not believe in lucky times."* (19:26)

The anonymous sage known only as "**a Levi from Barcelona**" (Spain; 13th century) explains: One should not say, "My bread fell from my mouth," "My walking stick fell from my hand," "An animal crossed my path," or the like, and therefore I will change my plans.

Such things, he writes, are absolute lunacy and foolishness, and it is not appropriate for the holy nation to engage in such falsehoods. Moreover, such beliefs drive a person away from believing in Hashem and His holy Torah, and they lead to heresy, for a person will think that the good or bad that happens to him is a coincidence, not Hashgachah / directed and supervised by G-d. As a result, a person will leave the faith entirely.

Therefore, because Hashem wants only what is good for us, He has commanded that we fix in our hearts the belief that all bad things and good things that happen to us are from Him, in response to a person's own actions. (Sefer Ha'chinuch #249)



"Emunah is not only believing in Hashem; it is knowing that Hashem believes in you." ~ Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (1948-2020).



לֹא־תְקַלֵּ֣ל חֵרֵ֔שׁ - *"You shall not curse the deaf."* (19:14)



Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven z"l (Spain; 1320-1376; known as "Ran") writes: Our Sages teach that one may not curse any person, deaf or not. The desire to curse another person is connected with the urge to take revenge, which is a bad character trait and which the Torah wishes to discourage.

Why then does the Torah single out cursing the deaf?

Ran explains: Had the Torah said simply that one should not curse another person, we would have assumed that the reason is that we should not cause pain to other people.

By prohibiting us from cursing even people who will not hear the curses, the Torah is teaching that the purpose of the prohibition is to improve our character traits. (Derashot Ha'Ran #12)

וְהָדַרְתָּ֣ פְּנֵ֣י זָקֵ֔ן - *"You shall honor the presence of a Zaken (literally, 'old man')."* (19:32)

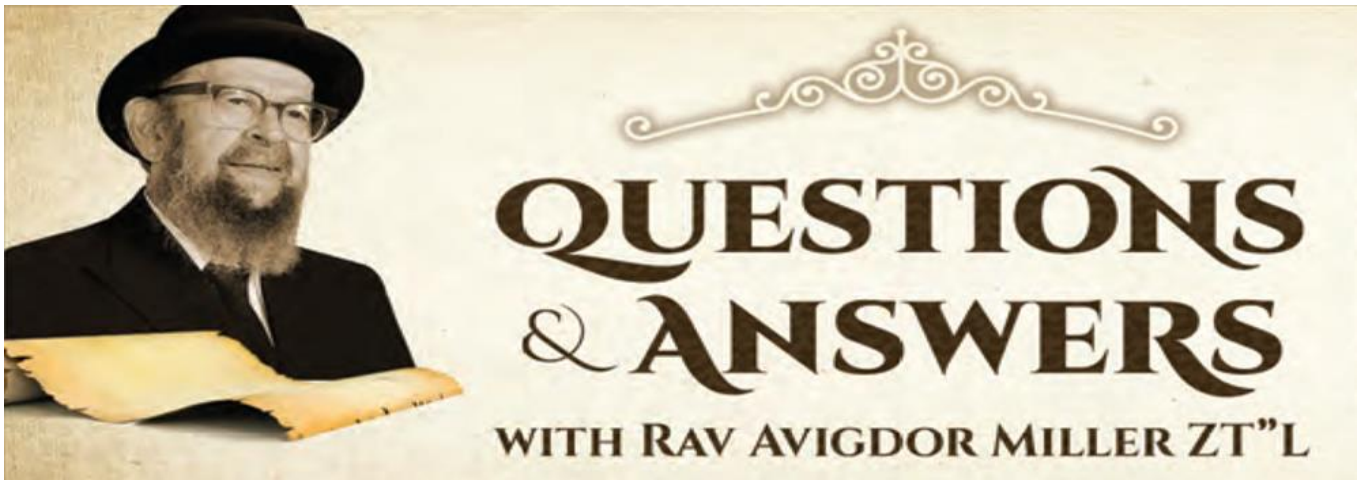
Rashi writes: **יָכוֹל זָקֵן אַשְׁמַאי, תַּלְמוּד לוֹמַר זָקֵן, אֵין זָקֵן אֶלָּא שֶׁקָּנָה חָכְמָה** 'One might think this reverence is due to any old man. The Torah, however, says "Zaken"–short for "**זה שקנה חכמה**" / "one who has acquired wisdom."

R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky z"l (1899-1985; known as the Steipler Gaon) asks: "**זָקֵן**" is only an acronym for "**זה שקנה**" / "one who has acquired"! Where is there an allusion to "**חָכְמָה**" / "wisdom"?

Maybe the Torah is teaching us to respect someone who has acquired houses or cars or stocks and bonds?

He explains: The Gemara (Nedarim 41a) teaches, "If one has wisdom, he has everything. If he lacks wisdom, what does he have?"

Why? Because wisdom is the only thing that a person can acquire that becomes a part of him. Moreover, all other acquisitions can be taken from a person, but wisdom cannot be. Thus, it is the only real acquisition. (Birkat Peretz)





Is there anything wrong with having a puppy? Someone asked me and I didn't know what to say.

Is it right to raise a dog in your house? I'm not going to answer that question directly but in most cases it's done as a form of demonstrating a certain unity with the environment; with a certain gentile attitude of having a dog.

Jews usually don't have dogs and people who like to walk with a dog in the street, or have a dog in the house, it's a sign that they're yielding to the environment. Now, I'm not paskening any halachos, but it's a matter of hashkofa that we don't want to walk in the ways of the goyim.

I once walked into a house to be menachem avel, and they knew my attitude so the dog was concealed. I heard a scratching behind the door! They were very much embarrassed! They knew I'm against it.

What business do you have, having a dog in your house? It's not because it's a watchdog; no, it's not a watchdog at all. Some people have these little dogs – tiny fragile things – and the dogs themselves need protection. These little dogs, anyone can give it a good kick and kill it. And even if it's a bigger dog, in most cases what it really means is, "I'm a goy like all the goyim."

That's what it really means in most cases. It's considered a form of yielding to the environment. That's why I say that in general I disapprove of it.



Is it okay to drink coffee all the time?

You have touched on a very important topic and that is the slavery to habit. Many people have habits.

Let's say you're a slave to smoking. Now, if you're a slave to smoking you have to know that you have lost your free will. I was once in Boro Park and across the street I saw a man who I knew who was standing with a Yerushalmi. So I went across the street and this Yerushalmi tells me that he's very ill. He came to America for treatment because his lungs are diseased. He's telling me this and he's puffing on a cigarette!

So I said to him, "Why don't you stop smoking?"

So he tells me in Yiddish, "No, don't tell me that. Anything but that."

He's an eved; an eved Canaani. He sold himself out to this habit. He's not a free man anymore; he's a slave. Some people are slaves to

drinking alcohol. I know a man who drinks and becomes inebriated. He's a shikur. Many people are like that. They drink too much; they're slaves to the bottle. They're slaves to nothing. And eating as well. People can even be slaves to eating. People overeat. Overeating is not good for your health. And it's a shibud.

Every type of being mortgaged to wrong habits means that a person giving up his freedom. You're giving up the freedom to make something out of yourself because once you're a slave to Olam Hazeh, you're already limited in your service of Hashem.

I never drank coffee. As long as I can remember I never drank any coffee. Why should I drink coffee?! It's unnecessary. To become mishubad to a habit?!

Some people are coffee addicts. They must have coffee all the time; they're slaves. And any habit that enslaves you means that you can't serve Hashem b'shleimus.



The Joyous World of Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin

By: Rabbi David Avraham Mandelbaum, son of the Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Meir Mandelbaum z"l, who was a student of the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva

A treatise on Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin, with different aspects, topics and sections that encompass all parts of his relationship to Judaism and worship of G-d, which touch each and every one of us, because indeed Rabbi Shapira was a man of many talents.

Over the years, I have accumulated many wonderful stories related to the power of music and joy that the

rabbi had. He used it on so many occasions, to blossom the spirit of life in himself and in all those around him, to forget difficulties and problems, to cause difficult moods to relax, and to amazingly continue his holy and miraculous work.



Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin z"l, the head of the Chachmei Lublin yeshiva, holding a tiny Torah

Rabbi Shapira himself, who knew his strength in the realms of singing and playing music, used to tell his students in the yeshiva how through the power of singing and playing music, he overcame enormous difficulties in times that were extremely challenging for him.

A wonderful description of our rabbi's music and songs, we find in the verses written down by his student, the gifted writer Rabbi Yisrael Dov Itzinger, may G-d avenge his blood, of Lodz (in the newspaper Das Yidisheh Tagblat in the edition marking 30 days since Rabbi Shapira z"l's passing, written under the pseudonym Alter Shneur) And these are his words:

The music of the Rabbi of Lublin, or rather, the music of his name: Rabbi of Lublin – was the most wonderful symphonic work of strictly orthodox Judaism in our generation.

The music was child's play. His extreme sufferings of being on the move, all his troubles, all found an outlet through music.

He was a man who was all music, or rather: he was the music itself…



Crowds of participants at the inauguration of the Chachmei Lublin yeshiva

When the Imrei Chaim, the Vizhniter Rebbe z"l traveled to the USA in the year 5709-5710 (1948-9), to raise funds for the construction of a housing complex for Vizhnitz, many did not want to give a donation from their hearts to help this tzaddik to fulfil his wonderful vision, to reestablish the Vizhnitz community that had drank the cup of poison in the years of terror and all the house of its glory was cut down by the wrath of the tormentors.

On one occasion when the Imrei Chaim stood on the steps of the Ark of the Covenant in one of the synagogues in the United States, and tried to convince the audience to donate for his great life's work, for some reason no one responded to his excited call, except for one woman who stood in the ladies' section and said that she was giving the Rebbe two dollars… When our rabbi returned to the hotel, his soul felt very broken for the humiliations he had gone through and had trouble finding rest and relaxation.

The owner of the hotel, who tried to encourage the Rebbe, honoured him by giving him the room where Rabbi Shapira stayed in 5687 (1926 or 1927), when he came to fundraise for his yeshiva in Lublin.

The owner of the hotel even told the Rebbe that Rabbi Meir Shapira also suffered harsh and bitter insults at the time from the misers of the USA, who did not recognize his great contribution to the Torah world.

On one occasion, Rabbi Meir Shapira stood and asked the crowd to help him, but not a single person offered. Rabbi Shapira returned to the hotel with a broken heart and was depressed by the situation, and he walked there in the hallway, and as he walked, he hummed with great emotion his famous tune. ***אִם־אָמַרְתִּי מָטָה רַגְלִי חַסְדְּךָ ה׳ יִסְעָדֵנִי - "If I said, 'My foot has slipped,' Your kindness, Oh G-d, supported me"*** (Psalms 94:18).

And so he went on and on, singing with emotion and eloquence, until his intense emotions took effect, and Jews from all over came out of their rooms and handed him substantial donations.

Upon hearing this, the Imrei Chaim became enthusiastic and said that this act of self-sacrifice for the sake of keeping the Torah at any cost is what allowed Rabbi Meir Shapira to establish his holy program of studying a page of Talmud a day, the daf yomi program. As well, it is what allowed him to have his idea accepted by all of Klal Yisrael (the Jewish community) in every place, with thousands of Jews participating in it every day, and the merit of the public depend on it.

Agudath Israel Conference

A tremor went through the hearts of thousands of Jewish people, when our teacher Rabbi Yitzchak Meir HaCohen Levin z"l, president of Agudath Israel in Poland, rose to eulogize Rabbi Shapira z"l when his coffin was brought to eternal rest (for reinternment) in Jerusalem in Elul 5718 (1958).

In his eulogy, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir HaCohen Levin z"l said:

"We will never forget the extent of his commitment with all his heart and soul to the Agudath Israel idea and the extent of his

actions for it. In particular, he inspired and instilled in Agudath Israel the spirit of learning the Torah, singing, joy, enthusiasm, and self-confidence, and we struggled to keep up to his ideals! He was a man full of joy all of his life, until his last day, and in every time of trouble, he knew how to pronounce his verse, such as 'this too shall pass.' After every meeting, it was customary to go straight down from the stage into the audience and sweep up the entire audience into dancing and joy.



A gathering for strengthening following the passing of Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin (In the photo, one can see, from right to left: Rabbi Yosef Moshe Haber – the head of the community in Kalisz, Rabbi Heshel Shetzransky, Rabbi Ysoef Koenigsberg, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin, Rabbi Yaakov Trakenheim, and Eliyahu Mazor. In the front row, the third from the right: Aaron Level, and after him the students Leibeleh Gefen, Shmerl Finsterbosch, Chaim Leibush Berglas, Aaron Heller, and Rabbi Eliezer Gershon Friedenson)

The Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva

The students of the Chachmei Lublin yeshiva remembered and lived until their last day the joy that Rabbi Shapira spread around him with the wonderful musical power in which he was gifted.

I remember a conversation with a Chachmei Lublin student, the elderly chassid Rabbi Michael Tannenbaum z"l of New York when he

was already full of in pain and suffering and confined to a wheelchair. However, when the memory of Rabbi Shapira came up on the table, Rabbi Michael forgot all about his difficult situation, recounted memories of him and the yeshiva, and cheerfully sang the tunes he remembered from the rabbi, and we saw in a tangible way, how Rabbi Shapira's tunes restored Rabbi Tannenbaum's soul even sixty and seventy years later, a most miraculous power…



Dozens of Jews, among them many students of the Chachmei Lublin yeshiva, gather to hear Rabbi Meir Shapira give a lesson in the new yeshiva building for the first time

Rabbi Shapira's great student, the genius Rabbi Pinchas Hirschprung z"l of Montreal told a typical story about Rabbi Shapira. He said that when he once spoke with Rabbi Shapira about Torah, a young man was standing on the side and singing a melody. Rabbi Shapira

commented to the young man: "If I knew this melody, I would sing it all day long." Rabbi Hirshprung was amazed at the words.

Rabbi Shapira said to him: "You don't understand what the power of music is…"



His Passing

And when Rabbi Shapira lived, a life of joy and music, so his sudden passing was wrapped in a miraculous veil of joy and dancing, and for those who followed the chain of events, they were "unbelievable", and the whole chain of events was obscure, incomprehensible, and will never be understood.

In the week between the readings of the Torah portions of Noach and Lech Lecha, Rabbi Shapira fell asleep. His students who were used to seeing him first in the study hall, for the morning prayer, were surprised when they learned that our Rebbe did come out to the study hall to pray, and they realized that things were wrong.

One of the students who was close to him approached Rabbi Shapira's residence and knocked on the door. To his question, the rebbetzin (rabbi's wife) replied that Rabbi Shapira was not feeling well; at night he felt chills in his body and the thermometer indicated a significant increase in temperature, apparently a common cold.

He entered Rabbi Shapira's room and was amazed to see him lying down, his face fallen, and his mood dampered.

From then on, this contrast dominated the entire sequence of events, to the outside it seemed to everyone that it was just a cold, while Rabbi Shapira, who knew the bitterness of his soul, felt that things were more serious.

Rabbi Shapira ordered for a Jewish doctor to be called; the doctor came and determined that it was a normal sore throat, prescribed some routine medicine and left. His diagnosis did not reassure the rabbi. To calm his spirit, additional doctors were invited from the city of Lublin, but everyone's diagnosis was the same – Rabbi Shapira had a common sore throat.

The students who were standing by his bedside in regular shifts noticed that the situation was not so good; their anxiety grew and grew, but the concealment also increased. The students felt and saw how Rabbi Shapira was lying and moaning and fighting for his life, but they did not have the courage to challenge against the doctors who stood their ground and repeated and said that it was nothing but mild inflammation…

On the fifth day, the rabbi no longer had the energy to put on tefilin. His students wrapped him in his tallit and put his tefilin on him. He closed his eyes and sank into his prayer; his lips moved and his voice was not heard. Like this, he lay immersed in his ideas and thoughts for long hours.

Rabbi Shapira's cousin, Pinchas HaLevi Heller-Bakenroth z"l told:

"The doctors spoke to each other in Latin, and no one understood what they said, but I understood Latin and listened; for some reason I had the impression that the doctors were not really aware of the nature of his illness. I decided to take the initiative, and I ran to the phone and wanted to call a Polish doctor who lived near the yeshiva. I thought he would know better and diagnose our rabbi's illness and the appropriate treatment accordingly, but suddenly the director of the yeshiva, Rabbi Heshel Shetzransky, came from behind and said to me in a loud voice:

'Did you not hear from our rabbi that he does not agree to be treated by an uncircumsized doctor?'"

Pinchas Heller-Bakenroth z"l finished:

"To this day, I do not forgive myself for giving in and not trying another option to bring the Polish doctor to our rabbi; all the time, it seems to me that I could have saved him, even though the strong belief says that everyone's days are limited and facts cannot be changed…"

The students closest to Rabbi Shapira began to make noise and went out to pray at of the graves of the great men of previous generations located in Lublin.

Urgent letters were also sent to the great rebbes in Poland to make them aware of the seriousness of the situation.

His close student, Rabbi Aaron Level, wrote a letter to Rabbi Shapira's teacher and rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael of Czortkow z"l, and in it he described the gravity of Rabbi Shapira's situation.

He showed the contents of the letter to Rabbi Shapira, but he did not want to cause grief to his rabbi and tore a part off the postcard as a hint not to send it at all.

In the evening, Rabbi Shapira had difficulty praying by himself, and he asked a number of boys to enter his room to pray out loud so that

he could fulfill the mitzvah. It clearly seemed that his agony was unbearable, but he lay still and only his face was illuminated.

In the middle of the night, the elderly Rabbi Rafael Feldsher of Lublin was called to make steam in our rabbi's room, the steam eased his breathing a little, and Rabbi Shapira asked for a cup of tea and drank it.

The rebbetzin came in and seeing that his condition had improved a little, she tried to encourage him and said:

"Well, on Shabbat I hope that you will recover completely, and we will have a happy Shabbat."

"Yes," Rabbi Shapira replied, "on Shabbat we will have real joy…"

According to Rabbi Shapira's request, his bed was moved from his private apartment to the large guest room that was next to the study hall; around the bed stood his close disciples crying and anxious, while their rabbi lay down and his face shone.

Suddenly our Rabbi wrote on a note in broken handwriting:

"Everyone, please drink a l'chaim."

In the blink of an eye, glasses of brandy were brought. The young men took a sip of the drink that was mixed with their flowing tears. And thus they went one by one to his bed; Rabbi Shapira reached out and affectionately and warmly shook the hands of each and every student and looked at each one with eyes full of love.

According to Rabbi Binyamin Mintz z"l in the Meir B'Ahava booklet:

"There was a simple Jew standing there who always sold cakes and eggs and the like to the students and he was standing on the side. He did not have the courage to approach Rabbi Meir and bless him with a l'chaim. Rabbi Meir fixed his eyes on him with great pity, hinted to him to approach him, took his hand in his holy hand and held it for five minutes."

And Rabbi Binyamin z"l finished:

"Who knows what intentions Rabbi Shapira had with this in his last moments of his life. Who knows what thoughts passed through his holy mind then, because his thoughts were higher than our thoughts."

When he finished, he asked them to start singing "In You our ancestors trusted" in a tune that he had composed.

In the middle of the song, he hinted that they should dance around his bed in a circle, adding in writing "only with joy." The students danced, with tears flowing from their eyes, danced and cried, danced and cried. The feeling was strange, a mixture of Yom Kippur night and the night of a holiday, a supreme atmosphere of a judgement day together with a joy that rises and rises. In the middle of this lay Rabbi Shapira, his eyes shining and his face beaming like the face of an angel, and from time to time he encouraged the singing and dancing with hand movements as he used to do in all times of happiness.

The dancing stopped. Rabbi Shapira lay calmly in his bed.

Next to Rabbi Shapira, only his close student, Rabbi David Weisbrod-Halachmi z"l was standing at this point, and Rabbi Shapira held his hand very tightly.

Suddenly, at about 3:15, the student saw that beads of cold sweat were covering the rabbi, his grip loosened and his hand dropped.

He let out a terrible scream:

"Der Rebbe iz nishtu!" (The rabbi is not here)

The students who were sitting in the next room heard the scream and quickly came.

This was already after his soul left him…

At that time, the yeshiva hall was completely full of students weeping and chanting, with books of Psalms their hands, as they urged Heaven to cancel the decree.

Suddenly, the director of the yeshiva, Rabbi Heshel Shetzransky, entered the study hall and in a trembling voice screamed:

"Say Barcuh Dayan Ha'Emet…" (Blessed be the true Judge)



Students of Rabbi Meir Shapira escort his coffin. In the photo, one can see Mendel Weitz, Yosef Hochberg, Moshe Okonowsky. In front of the coffin is Rabbi Shmuel Eichenbaum.

All the students immediately fell to the ground, tore their clothes, banged their heads against the wall, and their cries rose to the heart of the sky. Cries of terror pierced the space, "why?… why?…" The sound of the wails filled the entire huge building that Rabbi Shapira erected and founded with the essence of his heart until its last touches. The walls wept like water, and the whole yeshiva turned into a valley of tears…

Before the famous genius Rabbi Meir Shapira left, he asked the members of his yeshiva that before the time of his departure everyone should play a cheerful tune together, because he wanted his soul to part with him out of joy.

"Suddenly, he called out:

Master of the world, I am not asking you for anything more – just that I will be die by the kiss of death (death without suffering)."

"And he immediately added:

Only happily! I want everything to be happy! Even judgment day will be joyful! When my day comes, I will order people to drink cheers and dance."

"And so it was."

"But who among us imagined then that it would come so quickly…"

He lay down and remained like that with his eyes and mouth closed, and even after we took him down from the bed, the appearance of his face did not change, and he looked like he was sleeping. His face looked reddish. And his pure soul rose up in the storm that on the eve of Monday, the week that the Torah portion of Truma is read, the 26th of Shvat 5700 (Feb. 5, 1940)." - May his merit protect us.



וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ – '***Love your fellow as yourself***.' (19:18)

Rashi quotes the well-known dictum of Rabbi Akiva, **זֶה כְּלָל גָּדוֹל בַּתּוֹרָה**: "***This is a great principle of the Torah***."

Why is the word "**בַּתּוֹרָה**" added? It would be sufficient to have said simply, "This is a great principle."

The Chasam Sofer explains that the principle of loving one's fellow **כָּמוֹךָ**, like yourself, is specifically **בַּתּוֹרָה**, concerning Torah study and other spiritual pursuits. Regarding physical pursuits, one's personal needs precedes those of his fellow.

There is a case in Chazal in which Rabbi Akiva seems to underscore the difference between spiritual pursuits and physical pursuits regarding helping one's fellow.

Two people are wandering in the wilderness, and only one of them has a cup of water. In order for one of them to survive the wilderness, he requires that cup of water. Who gets it? Does the one who has the water drink it and watch his friend perish before his eyes, or does he give the water to his friend, so that he dies?

They have another option: They can share the cup of water, and both die. Obviously, this option does not make anyone happy.

Rabbi Akiva, who teaches that loving one's fellow as he loves himself is a cardinal principle of the Torah, surprisingly is of the opinion that the one who has the water should drink it all, because this way at least he will live.



What about the "principle" of **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ**? Veritably, Rabbi Akiva focuses on the pasuk **וְחֵי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ**, "*Your brother shall live with you*" – only if you are alive. In other words, you/I come first.

Rabbi Akiva's words appear to be contradictory. Apparently, one's love for his brother has limitations. Based upon what we said earlier (Chasam Sofer), **זֶה כְּלָל גָּדוֹל בַּתּוֹרָה** – "*This is a principle in the Torah.*" Yes – when it involves Torah study, your friend comes first. You should reach out and teach even at your own expense.

This is Torah; if you could have helped your friend learn, but you did not, due to your concern regarding your own Torah – then your Torah is of little value. You sacrifice your own growth for the sake of others. When it concerns your physical/material needs, however, your life precedes that of your fellow. The Torah's principle concerns Torah/spiritual pursuits.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, teaches that just as it is incumbent upon every Jew to give maaser, one tenth of his earnings, to the Jewish poor, it is equally important that one give up one-tenth of his time to study Torah with those who are weaker than he is.

Indeed, the **Bnei Yissachar** teaches that the greatest form of tzedakah, charity, is to teach Torah to one who is weaker than he is.

Horav Elimelech Biderman, Shlita, relates the story of a Holocaust survivor who came to a yeshivah in London (after the war) with a burning desire to learn Torah. The problem was that, as a result of his incarceration in the Nazi death camps, he had lost years of study. He was far behind the level of the other yeshivah students. What made things worse was the fact that the other bachurim, students, were themselves busy learning. They neither had the time nor the patience to learn with such a weak student.

Two students, however, "found" the time and had the patience to learn with him. They were **Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita**, the Ravaad of Yerushalayim, and **Horav Tuvia Weiss, Shlita**, the Gaavad of Yerushalayim. Apparently, the time they spent with him was not a detriment to their own learning. Perhaps the merit of helping a Holocaust survivor return to Torah stood by their side as they ascended the ladder of spiritual growth to become premier gedolei Yisrael, Torah giants.

During a recent trip, I was walking to my hotel from shul in the morning. A young man walking nearby was occupying himself with plugging in his earphones to listen to what I assumed was music. A third man, older than myself – and probably more religiously intense than I -- asked the young man to what type of music he was listening. (He assumed that with his sneakers and running pants, he was of the genre who would be listening to music – never assume.)

The young man replied that this was the only time that he could learn the "Daf" (Yomi); he was listening to a shiur while he walked to his hotel room and would finish sometime during the day.

The gentleman countered, as he looked at me, *Dos haist nisht gelerent;* This is not considered learning."

I replied that different forms of learning exist. For someone to listen to Daf Yomi while he is taking a half hour walk may not be the same as learning in the bais hamedrash, but he must be commended, because he could be doing and listening to alternatives that are far from appropriate.

Veritably, many occupy their free time with various forms and venues of learning, but what about Torah lishmah – pure Torah study, to fulfill Hashem's command? Does such study have value if it is of lower quality? Surely there is, considering the alternative, but at what point will a person say, "My learning is really not that valuable. Why bother?"

Rav Elimelech Biderman relates a lecture given by **Horav Chaim Kreisworth, zl**, that disproves this theory:

"I once presided over a din Torah, monetary litigation," began Rav Kreisworth, "where the claim was for a thousandth of a percent. The diamond broker contended that he had been promised 005% for each sale that he concluded. The merchant for whom he worked argued that their agreement had been for 004%. Their discord was over a pittance (supposedly), one thousandth of a percent." - Indeed, the crowd attending Rav Kreisworth's lecture thought this to be quite humorous. Why should people squabble over such an insignificant amount?

Rav Kreisworth said, "Do not laugh. There is nothing funny about one thousandth of a percent if the claim concerns the brokerage fee for one billion dollars of diamonds. In such a case, a thousandth of a percent equals one million dollars! This is not a small amount of money."

The Rosh Yeshivah concluded his shiur, explaining that sometimes people think that the Torah which they learn has little value, since

it is not studied entirely lishmah. They should know that due to the eternal value of Torah, it's worth is beyond comprehension. Thus, even a miniscule percentage of the reward one receives for studying Torah is far beyond our ability to grasp – beyond millions."

וְהְיִיתֶם לִי קְדֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' וָאַבְדִּל אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָעַמִּים לֶהְיוֹת לִי - 'You shall be holy for Me, for I Hashem am holy; and I have separated you from the peoples to be Mine.' (20:26)





There has to be a separation between the Jew and the gentile. This does not mean that we should not act properly. On the contrary, by acting with dignity and mentchlichkeit, we earn their respect and admiration. This also does not suggest adopting their culture and lifestyle. We are distinct, and our distinctiveness is an inherent part of our essence.

Rabbeinu Bachya writes that we are separated as a result of the chochmas haTorah, wisdom acquired through the Torah, which impels us to distinguish ourselves in what we eat, the manner that we eat, our mode of dress (and our overall demeanor).

Since we have been given the 613 mitzvos of the Torah, the nations of the world envy us, an envy that unfortunately leads to sinaah, hatred. Chazal allude to this when they ask why Har Chorev was called Har Sinai. They explain that Sinai is related to sinaah – **שֶׁיָּרְדָה שִׂנְאָה לְאֻמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם עָלָיו** - "*For from there (as a result of us receiving the Torah), hatred went out from the pagans.*" They could not

tolerate our distinctiveness, which was a direct consequence of our receiving the Torah.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, observes that every species of animal, wild beast and fowl is constantly attached to its member specie. You will not find a dog "hanging out" with an elephant, etc.

How does each individual animal know with whom to be attached? After all, the lion has never viewed itself in the mirror. How does any creature identify the members of its individual specie? Indeed, if an animal would have been raised alone on a deserted island and had never come into contact with any member of its specie, nonetheless, when set free, it will seek out and gravitate to members of its own specie. - How does it recognize its own specie?

As a result of this phenomenon, biologists have determined that every individual creature possesses in its subconscious an image of itself which is a part of its psyche from birth. It is through this innate image that the animal knows how to seek out its own specie.

Rav Zilberstein posits that this phenomenon is no different with regard to the spiritual DNA of each and every Yehudi. Every Jew has within him a spiritual component that projects in his brain an image of a Yid. He knows what a Yid looks like, what he is supposed to do and how he is supposed to act. It is this spiritual image that compels him to repent and return to Hashem.

We see, however, that so many of our brethren have no idea, are totally clueless, about their heritage and noble pedigree. If they are unaware of their past, how could they ever return? Surely, they must have some force, some reason that motivates their return. In order to have a desire to serve Hashem, one must generate within himself a feeling that acknowledges how truly wonderful it is to serve the Almighty.

How does someone who does not possess a Jewish identity (does not identify with Judaism) develop this feeling?





Horav Nissan Yagen, zl, employs a powerful parable to explain this: A hunter once passed a farm and noticed a large chicken coop. He looked inside and saw a large eagle alongside the many chickens housed there. This took him by surprise. Eagles are not found in chicken coops, and certainly not with chickens. After inquiring in the nearby village concerning this unusual spectacle, he discovered that the farmer was to be credited – or blamed.

Apparently, one day the farmer, whose breadth of knowledge concerning the various species of fowl was very limited, found a small, grey chick lying on the ground. The kind-hearted man picked up the "grey chicken" and placed it alongside the other chicks in the coop.

As the eagle grew to "maturity," its knowledge of fowl was limited only to chickens. As a result, it did everything like a chicken. It did not attempt to fly, because chickens do not fly. Thus, it lived its life as if it were a chicken.

The visiting hunter knew his birds, and he saw before him a magnificent eagle, capable of flying high in the sky, its power unsurpassed by other birds. As the king of birds, the eagle was the most powerful of its specie. Yet, this eagle was living a "chicken's life," cock-a-doodle-doing all day when it could be flying high and mighty.

Taking pity on the eagle, the hunter asked the farmer if he could sell him the "grey chicken." "Yes," replied the farmer, "but you must pay me according to its weight (which is the "currency" for selling chickens). The hunter agreed. A mature eagle was well worth its

weight. As far as the farmer was concerned, the eagle was nothing more than an overweight chicken.

The hunter left with his newly-found project. Even when allowed out of the coop, the eagle did not soar, did not fly. It flapped its wings like a chicken and walked along with its new master.

The next morning at sunrise, the hunter took the eagle to a high mountain peak. He then promptly threw the eagle off the mountain. Shocked to suddenly be in the air with nothing to stand on, the eagle began flapping its wings wildly. It flapped and flapped until it picked up enough thrust to fly. - At last, the eagle was back home, in the sky where it belonged.

Many of us have been raised – or have allowed ourselves – to live like chickens (in relationship to our noble, Jewish heritage). Our lives revolve around fun, frivolity, aimless activity which takes us nowhere. We have lost our Jewish identity and sadly do not even care.

Each and every Jew must be made aware of his/her noble heritage. We are not chickens. As children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov Avinu and the Imahos ha'kedoshos, holy Matriarchs, we are different. We have been designated by the Almighty to be distinct, to be set apart, to set an example for the world to emulate. - We are to be spiritual eagles, not chickens.

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ – '***Every man: Your mother and father shall you revere***.' (19:3)

Reverence and fear (which is the literal translation of tirah) are closely related. I think fear born of reverence is unlike fear which is the result of retribution. Thus, one is to fear his/her parents through the lens of reverence and esteem in which he holds them. This mitzvah prohibits anything negative, such as sitting in a parents' seat, contradicting or interrupting them. One should act toward a

parent in much the same manner in which he respects a monarch. The Torah should have simply written: Your father and mother shall you revere. Why does the Torah add אָ֫יִשׁ, every man?

The K'sav Sofer explains that אָ֫יִשׁ refers to an adult who has achieved independence, who is no longer supported by his parents. He is an אָ֫יִשׁ on his own.

One should not think that this mitzvah is incumbent only upon the younger generation. Indeed, it is probably more vital when one is older and thinks that he is on his own. Parents remain parents, regardless of their age and the age of their children.

When we were younger, our parents addressed our every need. Later in life the tables are quite possibly turned, and the parents might require the assistance of a child. This (perhaps unwelcome) circumstance should not alter the reverential attitude a child manifests toward his/her parent.

The Imrei Emes (as a youth) was taking a train trip with his mother and a number of family members. He sat toward the back of the carriage, while his mother sat in the front with other members of the family. During the trip, he washed his hands to eat a quick sandwich (meal) after which he bentched. He then walked up front to say something to his mother, who was unaware that he had just eaten. She said to him, "You must eat. It is too long of a trip to go without food."

He immediately took a slice of bread, washed, ate and then bentched again. He did all this to satisfy his mother and to fulfill the mitzvah of honoring her. It never entered his mind to say, "I have just eaten," because it was his mother's idea that he eat, and he would not deprive her of her motherly satisfaction of attending to her son's needs.

A woman came with her teenage son to the Baba Sali. Her son, sadly, was sporting shoulder length hair and the garb reserved for the

more "creative" members of the (then) hippy generation. The boy manifested all the obvious signs of one who was seriously depressed.

Women did not speak to the Baba Sali. The gabbai, secretary of the Chacham, read the mother's request concerning her errant son: "Will the Chacham, please bless my son that he return to Torah observance and that he respect his parents?"

The Baba Sali listened but said nothing. Suddenly, it became evident that tears began to flow down the cheeks of the holy tzadik. He said, "Oy! If I could only have my mother (alive), I would carry her on my shoulders and dance from great joy!"

When the boy heard these words emanate from the saintly Baba Sali, he turned to his mother and said, "Ima, slichah, I ask your forgiveness. I apologize for the pain that I have caused you."

When the tzadik heard this, he said to the boy, "Leave your sinful behavior, and all of your (past) sins will be absolved."

Hearing the sincerity in the Baba Sali's voice, as he described his intense love and longing for his mother, brought the boy back to religious observance.



קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ. אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם – '***You shall be holy… every man: your father and mother shall you revere and My Shabbasos shall you observe. I am Hashem***.' (19:2,3)

It was 1945 and **Horav Moshe David Tenenbaum, zl**, who was then head of the Vaad HaYeshivos in the Holy Land, went for a vacation in a small village in the north. As he was walking one day, a member of a nearby kibbutz approached him and asked if he could serve as the tenth man for a minyan.

At first, he thought the fellow was teasing him, since it was a non-religious kibbutz and tefillah b'tzibur, davening with a minyan, was

uncommon (to say the least). How surprised he was when he arrived at the kibbutz to meet the other members of the minyan. His surprise increased when he discovered that they were not davening, but rather, performing a Bris Milah, circumcision ceremony.

The mohel, ritual circumciser, was a fellow in shorts, who did not appear to be observant. Nonetheless, the mohel recited the blessings fluently and performed the circumcision flawlessly, with apparent skill.

Immediately following the ceremony, Rav Moshe David approached the mohel and asked him where he had practiced becoming such a specialist in Bris Milah.

The man explained that he used to be a Vishnitzer Chasid and had for years been a mohel in Vishnitz. Upon arriving in Eretz Yisrael, his relationship with Hashem had waned, and once he joined the kibbutz, he had naturally become estranged from Jewish observance. Nonetheless, he still retained his skill as a mohel, which he employed when needed.

They finished their conversation, and Rav Moshe David was about to leave when the father of the infant came over and made a request: "We have an elderly grandfather who – due to his failing health – was unable to attend the ceremony. I am sure that it would mean the world to him if you could visit with him a moment and extend a bircas mazel tov."

Rav Moshe David was only too happy to hearten an elderly Jew. He went to the home and met the grandfather, who was confined to a wheelchair. He sat down next to him and began a conversation. He introduced himself as hailing from Yerushalayim where he was a chasid of Karlin.

As soon as he mentioned his connection with Karlin, the grandfather's eyes perked up, and he said, "I must tell you a story. "I emigrated to Eretz Yisrael from Germany, where I had lived an

assimilated lifestyle (as did many German Jews who had fallen under the influence of the scourge of Haskalah, Enlightenment.)



One Friday night, my friend informed me that a Chassidic Rebbe – **Horav Yisrael Perlow, zl** (known as the Yenukah and Der Frankfurter, because he was buried in Frankfurt, Germany), had arrived in Germany for health reasons. [The Rebbe became ill at a very young age and traveled back and forth to Warsaw. When his condition became serious, he was taken to Baden Neuheim in Germany. The Rebbe was well respected by the Yekish community there and the last Shabbos before he entered the hospital, the Rebbe asked if he could deliver a Drasha and the community consented.]

Chassidic Rebbes were not common in Germany and certainly not in Berlin. We felt it would be an interesting sight (a Rebbe conducting his Tish, festive Shabbos meal, surrounded by his Chassidim around a large table). I already owned a car, so we drove over to where the Rebbe was conducting his Tish (on Shabbos).

"We entered the large room to see the Rebbe about to speak. 'I rarely speak Torah thoughts at the Shabbos Tish,' the Rebbe began. 'Since I am a guest visiting Berlin, however, I will change my custom and say divrei Torah.'

That Shabbos was Parashas Kedoshim. It has been quite some time, and I have gone through much since that time. Nonetheless, I was so impacted by the holy Rebbe's words, I remember them as if they were today.

The Rebbe began with the opening words of the parsha, קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ, 'You shall be holy.' He quoted the rest of the pasuk and the next; the Torah's enjoinment to revere parents, followed by the commandment to observe Shabbos, with the closing words – 'I am Hashem.' "

'What is the relationship between these statements?' the Rebbe asked. 'It all depends on to whom one is speaking. To my Chassidim (G-d-fearing Torah-observant Jews), it is sufficient to simply say to them – "You shall be holy." However, there are Jews for whom this is almost too much to ask (being that they are no longer religiously connected with Hashem). To them, the Torah says, "Every man: your father and mother shall you revere."

If you are no longer observant, then at least do what your parents did. Surely, there must have been a semblance of Jewish observance at home. Attempt to maintain old family practices (as a way of holding onto Judaism). As long as one holds on, there is hope. Sadly, there are Jews who have distanced themselves, so that they are not prepared to observe all the practices that were part of their life growing up at home. To them the Torah admonishes: at least keep My Shabbos. That much you do remember.'

"I thought it was over, when, suddenly, the Rebbe raised his voice, banged on the table and declared, 'From you, Jews of Berlin, even that we cannot expect. (You have gravitated away so far, distancing yourselves from ritual observance, parental customs, even the basics, like Shabbos.) You should at least remember, "Ani Hashem, I am Hashem! Remember that there is a Creator Who guides this world!'"

"The Rebbe's pounding on the table set off a pounding in my heart. At that time, I had a daughter who was engaged to marry a gentile (that was Berlin in those days. Sadly, it was not uncommon). I did not need more. The Rebbe's pounding continued to pound in my chest. I dropped everything, and within a week, I was on a boat to Eretz Yisrael.

If you saw today a grandchild of mine receive a Bris Milah, it is only because I attended the Rebbe's Tish. That night's pounding of Ani Hashem has been my conscience throughout these years."

The casual spectator who sees such a non-observant man does not take the time to wonder if there is another side to the story. He might easily disregard the many grandfathers we all often see. Do we ever stop to think: Why? Why is he like this? What was his background: Who turned him off? Was he ever turned on? What kind of life did he have?

I meet such people every week in various settings. Some never had a chance. Some were even raised Orthodox but assimilated when they went off to school. For some it was financial, peer pressure, ignorance, lack of interest, but everyone has a story. We must never forget this. We must never judge – because, who knows, if given similar circumstances, whether we would have acted differently – or even worse?



לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ – '*You shall not stand aside while your brother's blood is shed*.' (19:16)

Rashi explains that one may not stand idly by witnessing his friend drowning in the river and not save him. Likewise, if a wild animal or a robber is chasing his friend, he must take action to save him.

In the secular world, one who reaches out to his fellow is considered a kind person. One who acts maliciously to hurt his fellow is considered a cruel person. The one who does nothing, acts normally, does not want to get involved, is neither good nor bad. - No laws enjoin us to be kind.

The Torah has a different view. Torah life leaves no room for neutrality or apathy. It is not enough simply not to be cruel; one must be kind. Not taking positive action is tantamount to taking negative action. Standing by while one's fellow suffers is an act of cruelty.

While at certain times we are unable to lend a hand, when the individual in need is beyond our ability to help – we should at least develop a sense of empathy. It should hurt. - A Jew feels pain even if he is unable to solve the problem, to help the person.

Yaldei Tehran, the children of Tehran, had immigrated to the Holy Land through Tehran. They had become victims of the secular government that was poisoning their minds and severing their relationship with Judaism.

Upon hearing of the tragedy befalling these children, the **Brisker Rav, zl**, wept bitterly as he lamented their fate.

He was questioned concerning his reaction: "After all, what good is weeping? It does not alter the course of events."

The Rav responded, "*Az es tut vei – veint men*. When it hurts, one weeps."

The Rav continued with an insight concerning the punishment which Iyov sustained. Chazal teach that Pharaoh's debate concerning Egypt's "Jewish problem" included his three wise counselors: Bilaam, the wicked pagan prophet; Yisro, the Priest of Midyan, who later converted and became father-in-law of both Moshe Rabbeinu and Elazar HaKohen, son of Aharon HaKohen; and Iyov, the pious man who became the all-time symbol of suffering.

When Pharaoh asked his council for suggestions regarding ridding Egypt of its Jews, Bilaam, acting according to his reputation, advised killing them. He had no problem with an Egyptian holocaust, so intense was his hatred of the Jews. Yisro's reaction was classic: he fled Egypt. Knowing full well that he was up against rabid antiSemites, he had no recourse but to run – or to join the Jews in their fate. Iyov surprisingly remained silent; his response was silence.

Chazal teach that each one received his Heavenly due. Bilaam wanted to see the death of the Jews; he was killed. Yisro ran away; Hashem

rewarded him with two outstanding sons-in-law and the eternal respect of the Jewish People. Iyov was destined to experience a life of pain, misery, affliction and deprivation that has become the sad benchmark of troubles visited upon a person. - Why? How does his punishment correspond with his reaction? What did he do?

The Brisker Rav explained that his silence "earned" him his pain. When it hurts, one weeps. True, he could not help the Jews, but this was no excuse for silence. Neutrality does not become our People. Apathy defines the rest of society – not the Jewish population. We are a nation of doers; people who do not remain silent when our fellow is suffering. Our inability to actualize salvation does not preclude our empathy and sensitivity. We care because we are Jewish. Caring defines the Jew. I will leave the rest unsaid.

Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, asserts that the prohibition against standing idly by as one's brother is experiencing a life-threatening travail extends to what I feel is an unfortunately too common occurrence: indifference as one's fellow is being humiliated.

When one's friend is accused of a misdeed, the issue is not concerning the veracity of the accusation; it might even be true. He is shamed publicly, while we stand by and do absolutely nothing. True, one is afraid that by involving himself, he might be the next one to be sacrificed on the altar of public embarrassment, but is this a reason to allow the blood of one's fellow to be shed publicly?

People get carried away and often their claim is justified, but, regardless of the justification, one may not shame a fellow Jew in public. It is tantamount to murder. One who witnesses a public murder and refuses to get involved is no less a murderer than the actual offender.

Furthermore, suggests Rav Gamliel, the prohibition, **לֹא תַעֲמֹד**, applies not only to an instance in which one's life hangs in the balance. Whenever we witness our fellow suffering, going through a period of travail, being the subject of public scorn, undergoing a personal

tzarah, trouble, we must not stand by and do nothing. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to take a moment the next time we go to shul to look around, peruse the congregation, take a penetrating look at the attendees. How many are suffering? How many need a yeshuah, salvation? How many could we personally help? For how many should we empathize? - **לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ**.



וְשֶׂרֶט לָנֶפֶשׁ לֹא תִתְּנוּ בִּבְשַׂרְכֶם. אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ וּמִקְדָּשִׁי תִּירָאוּ אֲנִי ה׳. אַל־תִּפְנוּ אֶל־הָאֹבֹת וְאֶל־הַיִּדְּעֹנִים – *'You shall not make a cut in your flesh for the dead…My Shabbosos you shall observe and My Sanctuary shall you revere. I am Hashem. Do not turn to (the sorcery of) the Ovos and Yidonim (those who claim to speak with the dead).'* (Vayikra 19:28, 30, 31)

There is no way of getting around it: the death of a loved one is one of life's most crippling experiences. This is especially true for the death of a parent – regardless of his or her age.

Respect for parents and the deceased has long been one of the hallmarks of Judaism. When a parent passes on to the World of Truth, the surviving family reacts with grief, followed by public displays of reverence.

The family observes shivah, the seven-day mourning period. Sons recite Kaddish for eleven months following the death of a parent. It is a time when one is able to attend to his/her emotional needs, as well as to acknowledge an intellectual appreciation of the deceased both in general and, in particular, his/her own personal relationship.

The Kaddish prayer is a form of sanctifying and affirming that the Torah ideals which had been so much a part of the life of the deceased continue unabated in his/her offspring.

The Torah decries over-excessive mourning and displays of grief. This was a practice employed by the pagans, who either venerated death or considered it the very end to everything. Judaism is life-

oriented and encourages mourning practices that are restricted and life-affirming, such as Shabbos observance, Torah study and praying in a shul.

This explains the juxtaposition of the above pesukim.

The Bostoner Rebbe zl, relates that in America, circa 1930 through 1950, the only Jewish observance which Jews kept religiously, the only contact they had with their local shul, was to recite Kaddish for the passing of a parent. They kept very little to nothing else, but Kaddish for a parent was different.

Jews in those days had respect for parents. They represented an old world from which the children had divorced themselves. In some instances, their parents represented their last ties to Judaism.

The Rebbe relates that once on a long, hot summer Shabbos, he was giving a shiur in Pirkei Avos in the Bostoner shul. In the middle of the shiur, a young man dressed in work clothes entered and asked the Rebbe, "Can I ask the Rabbi a question?"

The Rebbe promptly responded in the affirmative. Obviously, the young man did not understand that one does not interrupt a shiur. Apparently, he had just lost a parent a few days earlier, and he was still in the middle of shivah.

Just before Shabbos, someone had mentioned to him that shivah is not observed on Shabbos, since it is inconsistent with the joy inherent in Shabbos Kodesh. The Rebbe confirmed this.

The fellow looked at the Rebbe, and, in all seriousness born of naiveté, he asked, "Can I go to my Saturday job as usual, or must I sit at home?"

The question bespoke an innocence which was the consequence of ignorance of his own religion and was heartbreaking. He had heard of shivah, even Yizkor, but Shabbos – one of Judaism's staples – was foreign to him. He had not the vaguest idea what Shabbos was all about. He typified members of the American Jewish community, an

entire generation of Jews lost to their heritage. At least this generation was aware of – and understood – the significance of sitting shivah. Regrettably, the generation which followed was clueless about shiva as well.

That was "then." What about "now"?

Decades ago, Jews, regardless of their affiliation and preferred mode of Jewish observance, made a point to remember parents. Shivah and Kaddish were Jewish fundamentals which they remembered and to which they adhered. After all, it was for their parents.

It is for this reason that I wonder how we have strayed so far, so quickly, from these basic rituals. Yes, the family aspect which was so prevalent, the togetherness of family which was the symbol of reverence for the deceased parent, is something of the past. We are living in a time when death creates a vacuum – a leadership void – which creates the opportunity for sibling rivalry.

The greater position, the more lucrative the material bounty, the more covetous and grudgingly the various family members become of one another. Sides are taken, positions are carved out and the love and harmony which reigned for a lifetime have suddenly been torn asunder. All for a couple of dollars and a little kavod, glory.

The neshamah, soul of the deceased, cries out, "What about respect? Where is your Kibud Av V'Eim, respect for parents?" Is this what a parent deserves to witness while he/she is in the Olam H'Emes, World of Truth?

This is what I mean: Life was much simpler then. They did not know Shabbos, but they understood the significance of shivah. Today, we are aware of Shabbos, but have lost the true meaning of shivah. -- Well, it is all part of the same Torah. One does not go without the other.

לֹא תִגְנֹבוּ וְלֹא־תְכַחֲשׁוּ וְלֹא־תְשַׁקְּרוּ אִישׁ בַּעֲמִיתוֹ - "*You shall not lie to one another*." (19:11)

One day, a number of the prominent householders of Brisk came to their rav, **Horav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, z.l., the Bais HaLevi**, complaining that the kefirah, heresy, spouted by members of the Haskalah, enlightenment movement, was rampant.

These people were being successful and making serious incursions into the observant community. Regrettably, this was the scenario in many Jewish communities. Why were they succeeding? After all, everything they were expounding was founded in falsehood.

Rav Yosha Ber turned to them and queried, "Why are you surprised? Truth always prevails."

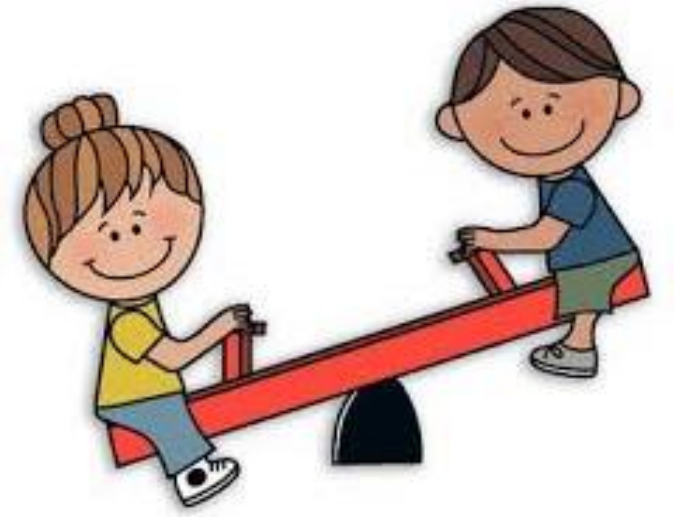
"Rebbe, how can you say that? How can you refer to apostasy as emes, truth?" they asked, somewhat incredulously.

The Bais HaLevi explained, "The kofrim, heretics, are battling for their sheker, false ideals, with emes. They are devout atheists. They truly believe in what they are doing. This is why they are successful."

Unfortunately, we cannot say the same in regard to our level of observance. We demonstrate a lack of integrity in our adherence to mitzvos. Moreover, quite often when we battle for the emes of Torah, it is for the wrong reasons. Even when one fights to preserve the truth, it must be based upon virtue and principle.

"When someone walks the street and thinks words of Mishna or Tanya or sits in his store with a Chumash or Tehillim – that is more valued today than it was when the streets were bright with the light of Torah. We must not go about in the street with a vacant heart. We must have some Torah memorized, to take with us into the street." ~ R' Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn zt"l.

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ - "***You shall love your fellow as yourself***." (19:18)



This pasuk has become the global standard-bearer for defining human inter-relationships. Love your fellowman as yourself.

What does it mean to care about someone else as well as we care about ourselves?

Horav Yosef Zundel Salant, z.l., explains that the word kamocha, like yourself, applies to an individual who has the same vocation or position as you.

It once happened that a Jew opened a grocery store on the same block as another Jew. One can imagine that the resulting competition brought about ill will. When the man who had been there first complained to Rav Yosef Zundel, the rav told him, "We are told to love our fellow as ourselves. This means that if he is a storekeeper like me, or a shoemaker like me, or any profession similar to mine, I must love him, even though his chosen vocation infringes on mine."

In another instance, the **Gaon m'Vilna**, while yet a young child, went out to play on a sea-saw with other boys his age. After a few moments, he returned home.

His father asked, "Why did you finish playing so quickly? Why do you not continue playing with your friends?"

"I cannot go against the Torah's command to love a fellow Jew as we love ourselves. I cannot play on a plaything whereby in order to raise myself, my friend must be lowered!"

If this is the sensitivity of a young child, we can only begin to imagine what levels of sensitivity he eventually reached. Obviously, he was a gaon in middos, character traits, as well as all aspects of Torah.

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ - "***You shall love your fellow as yourself.***" (19:18)

In his Nusach HaAri Siddur, the **Baal HaTanya** writes that it is proper and correct that one say before davening, "I accept upon myself the positive commandment, 'You shall love your fellow as yourself.'"

The mitzvah of ahavas Yisrael is the entranceway to be able to stand before Hashem in prayer. **Pardes Yosef** interprets this idea into the pasuk in Bereishis 37:26, מַה־בֶּצַע כִּי נַהֲרֹג אֶת־אָחִינוּ, "***What gain will there be if we kill our brother?***" The letters of the word **בֶּצַע** – bais, tzaddik, ayin, form an acronym for: boker, morning; tzaharaim, afternoon; erev, evening, the three Tefillos, prayers, that we recite daily.

Pardes Yosef explains Yosef's brothers' statement homiletically: "What do we gain by praying to Hashem thrice daily, if we do not care for our brother, if we let his blood flow without caring about him?"

Horav Menachem Mendel, z.l., m'Varka added that when one prays to Hashem, he should also concentrate on the needs of Klal Yisrael. If he davens only for himself – it is tantamount to stealing!

בס"ד
Menucha
A Shabbos table companion for the whole family
לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

The Admor Rav Avraham Yeshoshua Heshel of Kopichnitz, z''tl was one of the the Gedolim of the past century. He was close with **Rav Moshe Feinstein, z''tl**, who lived in his neighborhood - the lower East Side. He also became close with **Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahanaman** when Rav Yosef once traveled to America to raise funds for his Torah institutions in Eretz Yisrael. This friendship eventually resulted in Rav Kahanaman matching up Rav Avraham Yehoshua

Heshel's granddaughter with the son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z''tl.

When the Admor of Kopichnitz arrived in Eretz Yisrael to attend the wedding, he met Rav Shlomo Zalman for the first time, and developed a warm connection with him.

After the wedding, when he was ready to return to America, the Admor went to Rav Shlomo Zalman to bid him farewell. When they heard a honk from outside, Rav Shlomo Zalman accompanied the Admor to the car. However, it turned out that it wasn't the car which was taking the Admor to the airport. Meanwhile, Rav Shlomo Zalman sent someone to bring a chair for the Admor and urged him to sit. However, the Admor refused to sit down.

The Admor explained, "When I was young, I once heard a wonderful yesod from my father, my teacher, the **Admor Rav Yitzchak Meir of Kopichnitz**: "Before you take any action, imagine that a photographer is standing opposite of you, and photographing your every move. Take out the pictures and examine them. If you are satisfied with your appearance, you can carry out what you intended. If not, refrain!"

"I carried out this cheshbon and said to myself. "How will I be able to look at a picture of myself sitting, with Rav Shlomo Zalman standing next to me!?"

"This is the entirety of man: Not for himself was man created, but instead to help others to the extent of his ability to do so." ~ R' Chaim of Volozhin zt"l.

"When I pray, I talk to Hashem; When I learn, Hashem talks to me." ~ The Rogotchover Gaon, R' Yosef Rosen zt"l.

The Weekly Vort

● ואהבת לרעך כמוך – ***You shall love your neighbor as yourself*** (19:18). - Isn't that against human nature? And if so, why does the Torah command it?

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Meislik explained: The way to learn to love is to give to others. A newborn knows only how to take. His mother loves him more than he loves her. For she gives to him, while he only takes from her. The one who gives loves the taker far more than the taker loves the giver. A mother gives her baby so much that he seems to have become a part of herself, for whatever he has comes from her. To love your neighbor as yourself, give him so much that you feel he has become a part of you, and then you cannot help but love him, any more than you can refuse to love your own self. (Voices in the Silence)

● איש אמו ואביו תיראו – ***Every man: Your mother and father shall you revere*** (19:3).

The Ksav Sofer asks why it is necessary for the Torah to include the word "Ish" – why not just state that a mother and a father must be feared? This teaches us that a person must revere his mother and father not only when he is dependent on them, but also when he is an "Ish" – an independent person.

"Rabbi Akiva taught: Love your fellow as yourself - This is a great principle of the Torah." (Yerushalmi, Nedarim 9:4)

When Yidden get up after learning Torah, they should be more compassionate and kinder, with more room in their heart for others. If that doesn't happen, then they didn't learn it properly, and should sit back down and learn it again. ~ Rabbi Dovid Feinstein (1929-2020)

זכרו תורת משה
לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

The Wagon Ride



Due to the extreme poverty in his family, Shmuel went to work at an age when all his peers were still in *cheider* just to help his family meet the bare minimum. He made numerous attempts to set himself up in business, in the end, he found his talents were in importing and exporting. This was of great benefit to him, for besides being able to support his immediate family and his parents, he was able to travel in luxury with his own horse and buggy as he made deliveries from city to city.

Munkatch was known for its great *tzaddik*, the **Minchas Elazar**, and young Shmuel sought ways to associate with him and get his guidance and *chizuk*. One of the best times to meet the Rebbe was when the Rebbe had to attend a gathering or a *simchah* thus needed to be taken to it. Shmuel would offer the Rebbe a ride, allowing him the chance to speak with the Rebbe uninterrupted. Although the Rebbe learned most of the time on the journey, Shmuel was still able to get in some time to discuss his pertinent matters.

Shmuel would pay off the boys in the Rebbe's yeshiva to tell him when the Rebbe was traveling. Still, Shmuel didn't always get the opportunity, as it was snatched up by someone else, or sometimes he was unavailable when the Rebbe needed a ride.

One day, Shmuel was informed that the Minchas Elazar would be going to a faraway bris and needed to be transported all the way there. Shmuel excitingly jumped at the opportunity, chartering a special chariot for the occasion.

When the Rebbe saw the luxurious chariot, he was taken back. "Is this for me?!" he exclaimed. "You're going to sit on the bench by the rider while I sit in the comfortable leather? Not at all." He headed to the other side of the chariot to the driver's entrance. "I'll be sitting with you on the bench," and so he did.

Years passed, and Shmuel endured much suffering as WWII came and uprooted everything he'd built up and everything he knew. He was confronted with many challenges. During the war the Nazis took everything he had. There was one thing that he managed to hide, and that was a picture of the Rebbe.

He explained to his grandchildren that the support he got from the picture was the kind respect that the Rebbe administered to him on that ride, and that picture reminded him of that episode. If not for that encouragement the Rebbe showed him at that time, he wouldn't have the courage to withstand the challenges. (Heard on *Stories to Inspire*, from Mr. Charly Harari, relaying this about his very own grandfather)

The Wrong Child

A positive word can positively affect a person, even if it was not intended. When a person hears positive words, they fill them with energy and enthusiasm. This story is relayed by **R' Elimelech Biederman**, who says that this story was told to him directly from the *rebbi* who it happened to.

There was a child with many challenges. He didn't get along with his friends and was misbehaving in all areas. Whatever he did went sour. At home, he didn't listen to his parents, only causing them stress and

tension. When his father questioned him on what he was learning, he couldn't recall anything, and he didn't understand anything his father tried to go over with him. In short, things weren't going well for him at all.



When the time came for the fathers to meet the *rebbi*, the boy's father expected the worst: how his son disturbs the class, how he doesn't listen, and how he must get him help…

When it was this father's turn, he sat down at the *rebbi*'s desk and introduced himself as the father of Shlomie. The *rebbi*'s face lit up. "Shlomie! Shlomie is one of the best boys in my class. He is such a pleasure to have and a pleasure to deal with. He understands everything that I teach him, and when there are boys that don't understand, he's the go-to boy that all the boys turn to. I'm so privileged to have Shlomie in my class."

The father assumed that the *rebbi* was giving him the standard introduction before he dropped the bomb on what Shlomie was really like, but the *rebbi* just continued praising Shlomie to no end.

Understandably, the father was shocked. "Is he sure that he's talking about my son?" the father thought. "I hadn't known this about him. All I know about him is that he is such a troublemaker."

"Are you sure you got the right Shlomie?" the puzzling father asked the *rebbi*.

"Of course," the *rebbi* replied. "Shlomie is my pride student."

Well, the father was assured that there was no mistake, and thus he went home very happy to have been spared the embarrassment

he had been expecting. But what made him even happier was the fact that the son he thought was a failure was essentially succeeding. By far, this was more exciting than anything else.

Upon returning home, his son anxiously approached him, asking what his *rebbi* had said about him. To Shlomie's surprise, his father repeated his *rebbi*'s unending praise and accolades. "Your *rebbi* said that you're the star of the class, and that the entire class benefits from you. He is very proud of your excellence, and he just wants to see you continue growing and exceeding."

Hearing this, Shlomie thought to himself, "If that is how my *rebbi* views me, then I must not be as bad as I think. If he views me so, I must live up to my reputation." From then on, he turned over a new leaf in his life. He started putting in his all, trying to stand to his name.

The end of the story doesn't have to be told, but as you probably guessed, the *rebbi* had indeed confused the two Shlomies in his class. Nonetheless, the mistake turned out to be exactly what Shlomie had needed to hear, and it was what turned his life around.

This recalls a question that came to the desk of the *mashgiach*, **R' Chatzkel Levenstein**. Boys in the yeshiva came to question the custom of the friends of the *chosson* making a *sheva brachos* for him, where they get up and praise him. Many times, they get up and exaggerate with praises that are far from the truth, showering the *chosson* with traits he's never exhibited, and they were concerned about *m'd'var sheker tirchak*. They thus approached the *mashgiach* for his opinion on this matter.

R' Chatzkel replied with sharp words: "This generation has a sickness. No one praises anyone else. People don't express to each other how they are respected. The only time they do so is by a *sheva brachos*. And now you're coming to uproot that too? It is the only thing left over from the days in which compliments were given freely, and we must not get rid of it."

From the words of R' Chatzkel, we see a powerful thing. We need inner pride, and he was not going to let it go, however much it may have been over-exaggerated when delivered.

The Essence of Rebuking

לֹא־תִשְׂנָא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בִּלְבָבֶךָ הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא - *"Do not hate your friend in your heart; rebuke your friend"* (19:17).

When you rebuke your friend, **Reb Leib Mochi'ach** explained, don't do it out of hatred. Don't hide your hatred under a veil of reproval! - In any event, a rebuke should be an act of love (with the intention of bringing the sinner back to the Shechinah), not of hatred.

Stories are told of great men who would refrain from rebuking as long as they felt the slightest upsurge of anger towards the sinner. It was only after that anger abated (sometimes as much as a day or two later) that they fulfilled the Mitzvah of rebuking.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Yisroel Hersh Steif would recall how **Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt"l, the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah**, had no conflict between his learning and the urgent phone calls he would receive. For Rav Yehuda Zev, there was no such thing as an interruption.

Rav Hersh said, "He would give advice or help for half an hour, then, with the phone still in his hand, he would continue learning with the exact word he had left off with. This happened all the time!"

"In America there is a popular expression, "I've got plenty of time." - I wish they could donate some time to me, since I never have enough." ~ R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l.

whY I **M**atter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

The Significance of a "Jewish" Brother

לֹא־תִשְׂנָא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בִּלְבָבֶךָ - "*Do not hate your brother in your heart.*" (19:17)

There are many different words to describe the next person. Your friend, a person, a neighbor, a stranger – are some of the ways we can describe an individual. In this pasuk the Torah uses the word brother.

The Torah is telling us - that when a person does something bad to you - you might not consider him your friend. You might not want to consider him your neighbor. You might not even consider him to be a person. But remember he is your brother.

Just like one cannot disown a brother, one cannot disown a fellow Jew. (**Rabbi Samshon Refoel Hirsh**)

Living or Making a Living – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



Rav Benyomen-Zev Yakobzon (b. 1896)

He was born in Hamburg, Germany. He was an active leader of Agudat Yisrael in Germany and in Switzerland. He served as rabbi in various communities, among them in Copenhagen, Denmark, until 1943. When the Germans seized Denmark during WWII, he escaped to Sweden and was active there in Vaad Hatzalah Rescue Committee in Stockholm. He was single-handedly responsible for saving most of Copenhagen's Jews by helping them escape to Sweden.

In 1961 he visited the United States. He walked into a hat store in New York and tried on a hat. He liked the way that it looked, so he went over to the woman behind the counter and asked her how much the hat would cost? – She replied, "$34". At that time, that was a lot of money.

He said to her, "Thank you very much, but I have never spent so much on a hat before, and it's more than I'm prepared to pay."

She replied, "You are not obliged to buy it."

"He said, "Ok,", and was about to walk out when the woman looked closer at the customer and said, "Harav Yakobzon is that you Harav Yakobzon? You saved my life! – "I was living in Copenhagen. The Nazis would have killed me like they did with most of the rest of Europe's Jews, and you helped me escape to Sweden."

"You know, we don't usually give any discounts, but I'm going to ask my husband who is in the back of the store, if we can make a special exception for you, so that you can walk out of here with this hat."

Harav Yakobzon said, "That's so kind of you. Ok, I'll wait here."

She goes into the back of the shop and comes back shortly after with a big smile on her face. – "Rabbi, I want you to know something, because of what you did for us by saving our lives during the war, we are willing to give you a $5 discount! – All you have to pay is $29." - Harav Yakobzon smiled and thanked them.

This story is mind boggling! This man saved their lives! They wouldn't even have a store if not for him. They wouldn't even be alive if not for him. And all the hakaros hatov to show for this is $5? That's it? How do we understand this? What's the psychology behind this?

The answer is very simple; There are some people for whom making a living is the most important thing in their life. And there are others for whom living is the most important thing in their life.

And we need to ask ourselves this simple question – 'What's our priority in life, - living or making a living?' Is making money what drives us? Or is money just a medium to enable us to live our lives in the way that we are supposed to?

If our priority is our life, hakaros hatov for saving our life would override everything else on such a scale, that it would be impossible for this story to have taken place. But if money is what drives us, that overtakes everything. – What is your priority?

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

A Torah Mantra – Rabbi Michael Skobac

קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם -"***You shall be holy for I, G-d, am Holy.***" (19:2)

There is a fascinating Midrash on this verse in which G-d says, "Yachol kamoni – Do you think you can be like Me?! Talmud Lomar – so we are taught in the verse, "ki Kadosh Ani – for I am Holy" (to a level of exaltedness that you can't reach.)"

The Rizhiner Rebbe, however, has an amazing spin on this Midrash. He says: Don't read the words 'yachol Kamoni' as a rhetorical question. Rather, see them as a positive statement where HaShem is telling us: "Yes! You can be like Me! You can achieve exalted levels of holiness."

How can one achieve this? "Talmud lomar" – train yourself to constantly say, "ki kadosh ani, I am holy! I am a reflection of the image of G-d with which I was created. Therefore, I can attain great levels of holiness."

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER

Rabbi Yoel Gold - Downstairs, Upstairs

Mark Handelman's flight was from O'Hare International in Chicago to LAX in Los Angeles. But as he arrived at the airport, he was met by a surprise. Besides there being a self-check-in for your boarding pass, there was also a scale where you could self-check-in your luggage too. You put your suitcase on the scale and it gives you a read-out of how much it weighs. If it's the right weight or slightly under, you're good to go. If the bag is overweight, you're charged an extra twenty-five dollars. From there, you drop your bag onto the conveyer belt, which transports it to the plane.

When Mark dropped his suitcase on the scale, the computer indicated that it was 52 pounds—two pounds overweight. He'd need to pay an extra twenty-five dollar fee. But what could he do? He couldn't negotiate with a computer. So he told himself that it was worth standing in line and negotiating with one of the employees behind the counter. Perhaps when speaking with a person, they'd waive the fee. Dragging his suitcase, he headed to the line and began to wait.

But the woman behind the desk was just as stern as the computer. "Sir, your bag is two pounds overweight. You'll need to pay a twenty-five-dollar fee." Mark's attempt to generate the woman's compassion fell flat, and there he was in the same spot he had been just minutes before. So he did what he needed to do.

Opening his suitcase, Mark took out a few items—a pair of shoes and an undergarment—and slipped it into his backpack. He then placed the suitcase back on the scale.

It was now 50.5 pounds—still half a pound overweight. "You'll need to take something else out, sir," stated the woman behind the

counter, her tone biting and icy. At this point, Mark began wishing he had stayed at the computer check-in.

Taking his suitcase off the scale again, this time he took out a pair of pants and a belt and stuffed them into his backpack. Now, the suitcase was 49 pounds. Mark could finally head upstairs.

When he arrived upstairs at the gate, he noticed a huge commotion. "What's going on?" he asked someone nearby. "The flight is overbooked, and they're looking for people to be bumped to a later flight." Mark, thinking to himself, started considering it. What were they offering? Making his way to the woman behind the counter, he inquired what he would get if he chose to fly the following morning instead of that night.

"You'll get $500, extra leg room on your flight, and a free hotel tonight." To Mark's ears, it sounded well worth it. "Sign me up!" he said. "Okay, great," said the attendant, as she began typing in his information. "But just one thing… I need my suitcase for the night. Could I get it?" The attendant raised her eyes from typing and looked at Mark. "Oh, your suitcase... Your suitcase is already on the plane. We'll save it for you at LAX in a private room, and when you get there, it'll be waiting for you. But I'm sorry, we won't be able to get it to you now. Is that a problem for you, sir?" Mark didn't like the answer. He needed a change of clothes.

And then it hit him… No, he didn't. There had been someone downstairs who had given him a hard time. And he had to take out a pair of shoes, an undergarment, and a pair of pants and belt. He was good. "Actually," he said, with a relieved grin, "I'll be fine."

In this world downstairs, sometimes we go through a rough time. People give us a hard time, unfortunate and inexplicable things happen to us, and we have no idea why it all needed to take place. But the truth is, we just need to wait until we get upstairs, to Heaven, to discover why we needed to go through everything we did.

When we take note of the simple *Hashgacha Pratis* (Divine Providence) in our life, and we all have them, it's a different world.

Talk to Hashem. Look out for His hand. Because when you do, you'll start generating some feeling, some emotion, of wanting to be close to Him.

And He'll turn to you just the same way.

Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l - Precious Time



The most precious commodity we have is time. You can live without breathing for two minutes, you can live without eating for two minutes, and you can live without drinking for two minutes. Even love, there are many people who go through life without feeling loved. But one thing a person cannot live without, for a minute, for a second, is time. When our time is up, we're not here anymore.

It's the greatest asset Hashem gave us. You woke up this morning and Hashem gave you the biggest present in the world. It doesn't make a difference what we are personally going through. If we have time, we can fix a lot of things because time is potential. Time is life. And when there's no time, there's no life.

So if you are breathing right now, thank Hashem. And make the most out of it right now.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rabbi Moshe Sherer Z"L (1921-1998) was a remarkable individual whose skills and abilities helped shape the Torah world in America, as we know it today.



His selfless devotion to Bnei Yisrael and to Agudas Yisrael of America fashioned the organization into a champion of Torah values, respected by the highest offices of American government for its influence and integrity. In addition, Rabbi Sherer was also known as a man who personified integrity. He would often help individuals who faced difficulties and challenges and he would never accept any remuneration for his assistance.

There was an individual who wanted to obtain an export license from a foreign country to bring goods into America. Rabbi Sherer helped him contact the right person in Washington D.C. to assist him. The individual received his export license and was very grateful. The man asked how he could show his appreciation to Rabbi Sherer. He responded that he did not need or want anything for his assistance.

Suspecting that the man may donate more than he had in the past to Agudas Yisrael to show his gratitude, he added emphatically that he would be checking the books of Agudas Yisrael and if he discovered that the man gave a penny more than he had given last year, he would return the difference. (The Jewish Observer – 1998)

"Hashem's love for us is so great that He created 613 ways to spend time with us." ~ Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein.

בס"ד



ACTIVE EMUNAH

True Kindness



This Shabbos Iyar 3 being the Yortzeit of **Rav Yeshaya ben Rav Moshe from Kerestir Zt'l,** I would like to write about his holy path. The Gemarah says, "H-shem saw that there are few Bnei Aliya (Tzaddikim on a very high level) so he planted them in every generation." The simple meaning of this is that H-shem places Tzaddikim in every generation to assist Clal Yisroel. But there is another way of explaining this: Tzaddikim who are already in the next world are "replanted" in this generation. Although many years may have gone by when very few people knew or spoke about them, in this generation they suddenly become well known, and many people see miracles by either learning their sefarim, davening by their graves, or going in their ways.

In this generation, there are a few clear examples of this. The Zera Shimshon, who guarantees whoever studies his sefer will see all kinds of bracha. This was only discovered a few years ago. The Zviller Rebbe, Rav Gedalia Moshe ben Rav Shlomo, is another one of them. People see open miracles by davening by his gravesite near Gan Saker three times in a row, Monday, Thursday, and Monday. People whose prayers were answered publicize it by posting a paper near the grave – the walls are full of notes of all sizes thanking H-shem

for the miracles done in the zechus of the Tzaddik. Rav Masya Ben Cheresh, from the times of the Gemarah, became "famous" in the past few years from the segula of lighting 18 candles in his memory and saying chapter 86 with each lighting of the candle.

In this generation, we can clearly see that Rav Yeshaya ben Rav Moshe is one of these Tzaddikim. Although the segula of having his picture up to keep away mice was always famous, he wasn't so spoken about until a few years ago.

One reason for this might be the following. H-shem told Avraham Avinu – "becha chosmin" – the simple meaning of this is that although all of the Avos are mentioned in the first Bracha of Shmeneh Esrei, it ends off only with "Magen Avraham" – the final seal is only with the name of Avraham Avinu. But the Tzaddikim explain this in another way as well. In what path will we merit to the "final seal" of the galus and arrival of Moshiach? "Becha chosmin" – we will finish off the galus with the path of Avrhaham Avinu.

Avraham Avinu had a tent with four entrances, so whichever side a hungry person came from he would be able to go right in. Through feeding hungry people, he was able to teach the whole generation about H-shem. And it is this path that the Tzaddik said will be followed to leave the galus and enter into the era of Moshiach.

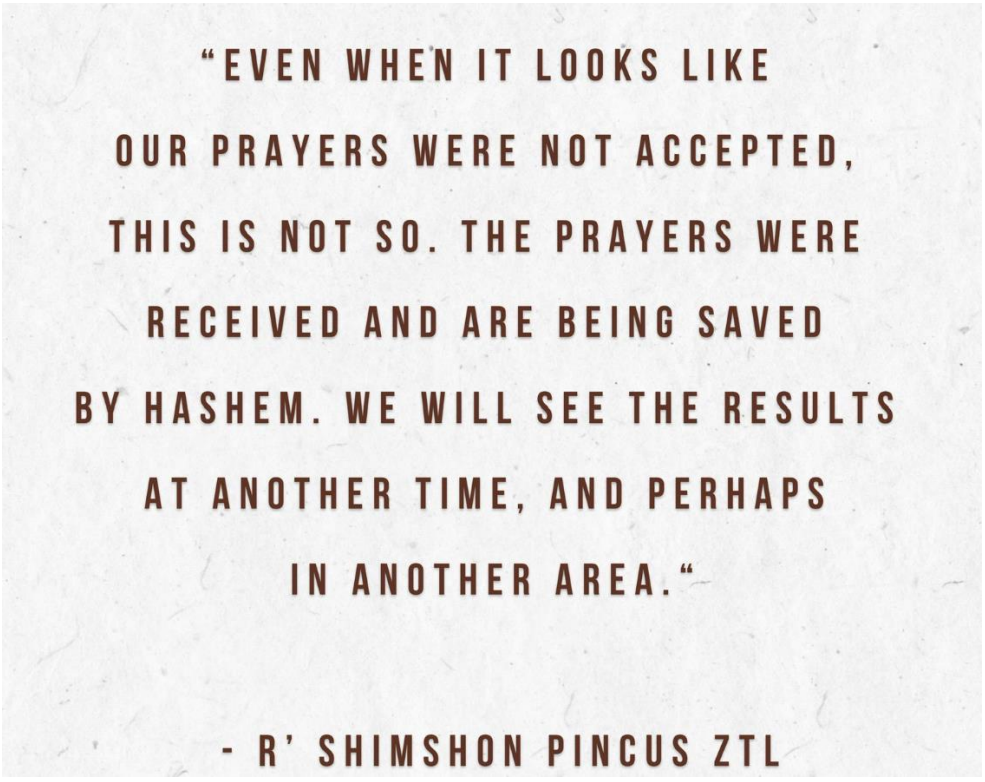
Rav Yeshaya ben Rav Moshe was a Tzaddik who embodied this path. He was constantly occupied with giving out food, money, and brachos. He was able to detect if someone was in need of a certain delicacy, or lechaim, and would give it to them even without being asked. It makes perfect sense that such a Tzaddik would again become "famous" in the time right before Moshiach.

Rav Yeshaya told his son that if he continues in his ways, he will be able to do the same miracles as his father. This is taken as the "will" of Rav Yeshaya. Anyone who tries to help the hungry and needy will be able to receive the same kind of brachos that were seen in his lifetime.

To do this, you don't need to part of any organization. You just need to open your eyes and look where you see something lacking, and try to help out! "Hungry" doesn't only mean for poor people – sometimes there are times and places where a coffee and a danish would come in handy but there are none to be found! Many Shuls now have "Rav Yeshayas kitchen" where they have food available at all hours. Some people started giving out Shabbos or Yomtov foods.

Part of the deeper reason why this works might be because there is a way of becoming attached to the Neshama of a Tzaddik by doing the same kind of avoda that he used to do. When this happens, his Neshama has direct benefit by the Mitzvos that you are doing. Once he has more zuchuyos (once a person is in the next world they aren't able to generate more zechus by themselves) they are able to daven for the person who did the Mitzvah – everyone benefits!

May H-shem help us to find the opportunities to help those around us and "raise our standard of giving" – and in the zechus of all the chesed being done, may we merit to the Geula Sheleima Veamitis!





Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein ZT"L 1 Iyar

For over 30 years, Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein ztl was a popular educator, speaker and fundraiser with a "heart of gold." His hundreds of classes were delivered with a fiery passion and a deep love for all Jews. For many of his classes he never took a fee. He went above and beyond to reach out to numerous young men and women regardless of their religious affiliation. He even paid to send kids to yeshiva.

If a student came to him with a problem, the rabbi would stay up to the early hours of the morning to try to find out how he could help that student to find a solution to the problem, while at the same time, showing the student the beauty of a Jewish lifestyle. He saw these troubled youth as one of his own children and approached donors as if he were a parent asking for his own child.

He was often successful in raising significant amounts of money for his many lifesaving projects for them, perhaps due to his sincerity and for feeling that he was doing this for his own child.

If it weren't for Rabbi Wallerstein ztl, so many young people would be lost, lonely and miserable.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein ztl was the founder of Ohr Yitzchak, Ateres Naava Seminary for Girls, and Ohr Naava Women's Institute in Brooklyn, NY.

Treat every person you meet as if they were Mashiach in disguise. ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994).

Remembering My Brother-In-Law Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein Zt"L On His Yahrtzeit - Rabbi Moshe Elefant



What can I say that has not been said?

The message that I've been saying when discussing my brother-in-law Zachariah is that when people are going to leave this world and we're going to have to speak to Hashem, Zechariah Wallerstein is going to be our biggest problem. everyone is going to have an excuse as to why they couldn't do anything. They say "Who am I [to do something]?

Zechariah Wallerstein taught us that that excuse is meaningless, and when something has to be done, it has to be done. He didn't take the approach of saying "who am I [to step up] when there are more talented people, wealthier people, more powerful people that will do it." Instead he said, "There are things to get done and I will do them." And he did. And that's why he was able to accomplish [what he did] in a life that was unfortunately cut too short.

He was niftar on Parshas Kedoshim, a parsha that has 64 pesukim, and Zechariah lived for 64 years. Rashi on this parsha actually starts off by teaching us that this is the parsha that "behakel nemra," meaning this was the parsha that was read when all the Jews were together.

I think that it's no coincidence that Zechariah was niftar that week. Zechariah was a person that cared for every Jew; There's no difference between who they were or where they came from. That sums up his 64 short years.

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER

Rabbi Yehuda Stern - The Ultimate Rebbe

Let me share with you what, in my reflection, epitomizes a rebbe whose impact and imprint on a student will last for a lifetime.

Before **Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein *zt"l*** even opened Ohr Naava in 2004, he had been a rebbe for thirty years at the Crown Heights Yeshiva in Mill Basin. The version of Rabbi Wallerstein during those years is something to particularly appreciate. He was not in the limelight, he was not known, and he was doing many things in a quiet way. His closest friends knew that he was a rebbe and what he was about, but for the most part, people in his neighborhood and community associated him with just being a very successful businessman and philanthropist. But before he started his workday, he drove into Mill Basin and taught eighth grade boys.

I had the *zechus* of having him as my eighth grade rebbe in 1988-1989, and to this day, I think about several anecdotes which truly personify who he was at his core.

Imagine a school which did not have any students who were Shomer Shabbos or kept Kosher. As our Rebbe, Rabbi Wallerstein's job was, in any which way, to inspire the students and turn them on to Yiddishkeit. He had very unique and creative ways of doing so. Every day, he was in the gym with us playing basketball. And every Friday, he would take us to the park to play tackle football. He put a bounty on his own head that if anyone was successful at tackling him—he played as the quarterback for both teams—the boy would get $100. Just picture a bunch of eighth grade boys coming after him. Rabbi Wallerstein invited that kind of interaction, and in fact taunted us to come and get him. "You don't want the hundred dollars?" he would say. "How come nobody's touched me yet?" After every Friday, we'd come back with mud and bruises, but that was a highlight.

Every day, Rabbi came in with bags of food. "We don't learn until our stomachs are full," he'd say. As students, we'd run and open bags of cookies and potato chips, though we all knew we needed to save him the burnt potato chips. There were all these creative rules of association, which were aimed at pampering us and drawing us in to an engaging, personal and exciting relationship with him and what he represented as a rebbe.

One day—though this 'day' really happened more than once—we were very hungry, and we knew that if we begged him enough and pushed his buttons, he'd take us out to eat. He'd pile ten boys into his car and we'd just take off. I don't know how we fit in, though I do remember having a twenty-minute ride with someone's knee to my cheek. But we knew it was worth it. Rabbi Wallerstein had no rules as to where we sat, and all he said was, "Guys, figure it out. Let's go. Let me know when I can put the car into drive."

When we arrived, we all began scanning the menu overhead and then asked, "Rebbe, what can we get?" "What do you mean?" he said. "You don't see up there, the whole menu is listed. You can get whatever you want." The guys lost their minds. "I'll take three of those, four of those," they'd say. We thought that he would stop us, but instead he said, "Only three, only four? Maybe you want to take more?" It was a party. Every single day it was a party.

None of this was because he was looking to get some positive social media tweets or anything. This was just him and us, his eighth-grade boys, every day.

Once, somebody got really hurt playing tackle football, and word got back to the executive director of Crown Heights Yeshiva as to what happened. Due to the incident, Rabbi Wallerstein was being made to feel that we couldn't go to the park and play football anymore because it was an insurance liability.

So came that Friday, and we all had our things ready to go. Tackle football on Friday with Rabbi Wallerstein was our highlight of the

week. He had a saying, "In the snow we go, and in the rain, we remain." That day, there was no snow or rain, so we knew that we'd be going. Until he broke the news that we wouldn't be able to go that week because word had gotten back to the school. But among us students, there were a couple of loud, outspoken boys who were not having this. And they started trash talking Rabbi Wallerstein.

"Rebbe, I thought you told us, 'In the snow we go, and in the rain, we remain.' We thought you own this school. Don't you own this school? People are bossing you around? C'mon Rebbe!" They were pushing him. Believe it or not, you could see that Rabbi Wallerstein was actually enjoying this back-and-forth. For him, he was not necessarily into playing by the rules. It was about finding different ways to get things done, because if you are very passionate about something, you push and find a way to get it done. So essentially, albeit not in the most respectful way, these boys were pushing Rabbi Wallerstein to get it done. And Rabbi Wallerstein's essence was all about finding ways to go beyond nature.

I couldn't believe he was actually being affected by what the boys were saying. He then left the room and came back about five minutes later. His eyes were popping out of their sockets as he looked at us all. "Okay guys, huddle in." We all looked at one another, wondering what was going on. "This is the plan…" he said. He devised a plan that he'd stand by the end of the hallway, and wave one of us at a time to run from the eighth-grade classroom to the top of the stairs. "But you have to listen," he cautioned us. You could see that he was standing near the steps, just hanging out, secretly motioning to us one by one to make a dash to the stairs. Then, each eighth-grade boy would make a run for it down the hallway until they made it down the stairs. It was like a bank robbery.

Now, Rabbi Wallerstein was standing on East 63rd Street, and staring up at the window of the executive director. He was watching to see if she was watching. And every time she turned away, he'd

wave another one of us onto the street. I kid you not, I was face-planted on the pavement behind a parked car until he told me I was permitted to get back up and run onto Avenue U. This happened for each and every single one of us.

We played football that day.

That was Rabbi Wallerstein at his core. He was such a fun, loving, passionate personality.

All of us had our parents meet with Rabbi Wallerstein during eighth grade, something which he insisted on. One time, Rabbi called each and every parent into an emergency meeting and said to them, "I'm going to prevent you from having an excuse after one hundred and twenty years that you couldn't afford yeshiva tuition. I'm committing to pay for four years for yeshiva tuition for all of you. I want your kids to be in yeshiva for high school." A lot of us were not frum, and were excited to go the public school route after eighth grade. But because of him, a large majority of us—myself included—ended up in yeshiva. And he funded the tuition for all the parents who couldn't afford it.

I ended up spending those four years of high school at a yeshiva. When I had finished, I met with Rabbi Wallerstein. This was a full four years after he had been my rebbe, which says something about the kind of relationship he built with his students. We all wanted to meet with him. Imagine non-frum guys wanting to meet a rabbi. Why? Because he was a larger-than-life celebrity. You just wanted to be in his presence. You just wanted to say, "Hey, Rebbe." We'd see him on the court, and we'd want to shoot around, and he'd want to know how we were doing. I was playing on the basketball team at the time, and he wanted to know how the team was doing. There was a lot of great camaraderie between us all.

In June 1993, I had planned on going to a university in upstate New York, but then Rabbi Wallerstein caught wind of it. He begged me to reconsider and said, "Yehuda, if you say the word 'Yes,' I will pay

for your yeshiva tuition, I will pay for your flight, and I will get you a year of college credit. I'm talking to you like a father talks to a son. I'm begging you, please, reconsider." I couldn't sleep that night, and I called him the following day. I had already paid my tuition for the university, already had my roommate, and already went to the orientation. "Okay, Rebbe," I said. "Yes."

The rest is history. I spent a year-and-a-half in Israel, and I'm frum today because of that. I got back, went to law school, and after my first year of school, Rabbi Wallerstein had a quick meeting with me where he told me that he thinks I should become a rebbe. This was in 1999, and I had just recently become frum. "You're a young guy, you weren't frum, you're now frum, and that's what these teenage boys need." I didn't want to become a rebbe, but Rabbi Wallerstein pulled me into an interview at ZDR Academy of Yeshiva Rambam, kicking and screaming. I had no resume, no experience and I tried to sabotage the interview. I really did. They asked the typical questions, "What makes you want to be a rebbe?" "I don't want to," I replied. "What's your experience?" "I don't have any experience. This is not for me. Please tell the man outside." All the while, Rabbi Wallerstein was craning his neck, peeking through the window in the door.

They hired me, because Rabbi Wallerstein did whatever salesman job he needed to do. That was twenty-four years ago, and I've been a rebbe ever since.

All the things I have in my life that are good are all attributable to Rabbi Wallerstein. And none of them made sense; they all defied the rules of nature. But Rabbi Wallerstein truly lived with Hashem in his life, and Hashem is above nature, so Rabbi Wallerstein acted in sync. The Torah tells us, "*V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha Ani Hashem*—You shall love your fellow as yourself; I am Hashem." If Rabbi Wallerstein looked at me and really loved me, and believed that G-d is in charge of everything, then he believed that he needed to do

whatever possible to not play by the rules of nature and to get me to become what he saw in me.

In one lecture he gave, Rabbi Wallerstein mentioned that the biggest obstacle to *V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha* is that many people are not capable of loving themselves properly. Rabbi Wallerstein had that unique ability and keen sense to see what another person's potential was and bring that out, and he was willing to break all the rules of nature to do so. In his eyes, I had a potential to be a rebbe which I was not seeing, he loved me perhaps even more than I loved myself, and he also knew that Hashem could go above and beyond nature. When you put that together, anything was possible.

In 1999, when the New York Knicks were in the NBA Finals, me and another close friend of me, Howie Hershkovich, came to Rabbi Wallerstein at his office and tried some old, eighth grade antics. "Rebbe, we know you have connections with NBA tickets. Tonight, there's a Knicks Finals game. Rebbe, hook it up." He looked back us. "No, I don't have any of those connections anymore. I'm sorry, I used to be able to get tickets back then, but now now." Howey and I remembered what buttons to push to get things done, so we started saying, "Rebbe, wait, maybe there are bad acoustics in the room, but I think we heard you say the words 'You can't do something.' Are we hearing properly, because we don't know that Rebbe. Is this a watered-down version of the Rebbe that we know, because our Rebbe can get anything done..."

You saw Rabbi Wallerstein's insides completely spinning. Obviously, we softened the blow a little bit after. "We're just messing with you, Rebbe... The game is tonight, and it's anyway a sold-out arena for the Finals. It's fine." And then we left.

My cell phone buzzed about an hour later. It was Rabbi Wallerstein. "Yehuda, come back to my office." "What's going on?" I asked, uncertain. "Come back, don't worry. I want to speak to you for a

minute." Maybe I pushed a little too much, I began thinking to myself. I showed up at the office, feeling a little nervous.

There, Rabbi Wallerstein handed me an envelope. "What's this?" I asked. "Open it up," he said, looking straight at me.

It was two tickets to the Knicks Finals.

I called up Howie. "Where are you?" I said, trying to reel in my shock and excitement. "I'm on the Prospect Expressway." "Make a U-turn right now, and get back to Brooklyn!" We showed up to the game, and Donald Trump sat behind us. That's how close we were to the court.

That was Rabbi Wallerstein. Rabbi Wallerstein didn't understand the words, "I can't." Rabbi Wallerstein didn't understand the words, "I don't know how." His essence—who he was for thirty years as a rebbe and who he was to so many others—was about loving every single person with his whole heart and going above and beyond the realms of nature to help them. - May his *neshama* have an *aliyah*.

More Powerful than Iron Dome – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



A Kolel yungerman from Richasim went into the local grocery store. He collects all his items, but when he presents his card to the cashier for payment, it is declined. He tries to present it again – declined. He is getting flustered, so he tries a different card – declined.

All of a sudden, the fellow behind him says to him, "Here, I got you, I will sort it out and pay for your groceries." – He takes out his credit card and pays for the entire order!

The Avreich looks at him and thanks him, "But why would you do that? It's a lot of money."

He says, "Listen, it's a zechus to be able to do something for a Kolel fellow, for an avreich.

"Wow, that's so kind of you."

"Let me just pay for my stuff, and I will explain…"

They go outside to the car park, and he shares with the avreich the most incredible thing.

He said, "I work in a very high security industry in Haifa in a massive complex. Just a few days ago, we had a simulation in case chas v'sholom we would have a multiple rocket attack from Hezbollah. The simulation was that 3000 rockets were fired simultaneously from Hezbollah. We had the fire and police department there, and all the security forces. It was a real simulation."

"At the end of the simulation, they went through all the findings and details. – They said like this –'Listen, if they shoot 3000 rockets simultaneously, Iron Dome will be capable of taking down 2700 rockets. It's the other 300 that we have to be worried about.'"

"They tried to present scenarios of what they would do and react in those situations. Ultimately, I wasn't satisfied, and I went over to the commander running the simulation, and said, '300 rockets is a lot that will get through – this will have massive potential for damage and huge loss of life. What are we going to do? There is no way any rescue or security force could deal with this.'"

"The commander reaches into his pocket, and retrieves a *kippah*, and puts it on his head to say the next thing – He says, 'Don't worry about it, those 300 rockets, they are never going to hit us!'

"But why, Iron Dome can't handle this sort of quantity? It's not able to protect us?"

The commander said, 'That protection is being created by the Kolel avreichem and the yeshivah students! – The guys sitting and learning Torah! – No worries, their Iron Dome will take care of the other 300!'"

Yes, we need to be thankful to everyone who protects us and provides security for us, putting their lives on the line all the time, they're heroes. But we can't forget about the other heroes – the ones that are able to go above and beyond, when natural defences fail us, we will still have supernatural defences.

Let's appreciate those that are learning Torah. Let's respect them, and maybe let's pay for their groceries!



דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ – ***'Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy . . .'*** *(19:2)*

The easiest thing is to hide from the world and its follies, seclude oneself in a room and be a holy hermit. What the Torah desires, however, is that a person should be part and parcel of "all the congregation of the children of Israel"—and be holy. (**Alshich**)

קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ – ***'You shall be holy . . .'*** *(19:2)*

The first dictum we heard from the Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi) was: "What is forbidden, one must not; what is permitted, one need not." (**Rabbi Mordechai of Horodok**)

הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ - *'Rebuke, rebuke your fellow.' (19:17)*

Our sages have said: "Words that come from the heart enter the heart." It therefore follows that if you seek to correct a failing of your fellow and are unsuccessful, the fault lies not with him but with yourself. – Had you truly been sincere, your words would certainly have had an effect. (**The Lubavitcher Rebbe**)

הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ - *'Rebuke, rebuke your fellow.' (19:17)*

● Why is the word "rebuke" repeated? Because first you must rebuke yourself. (**The Chassidic Masters**)

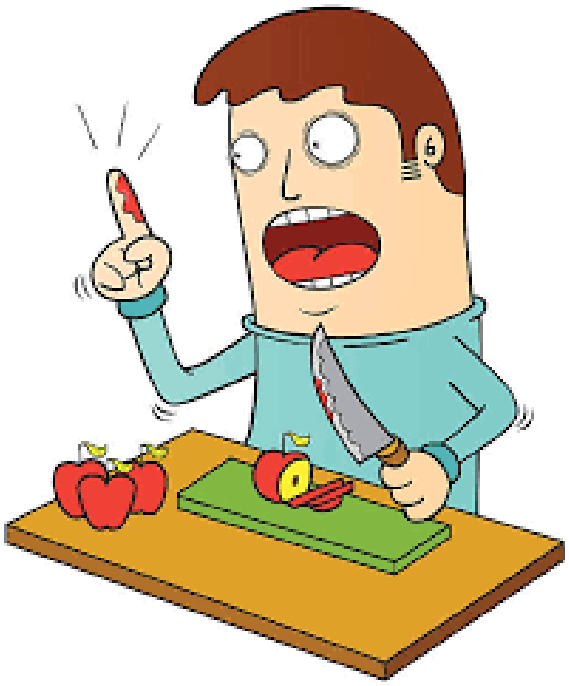
● Your fellow is your mirror. If your own face is clean, the image you perceive will also be flawless. But should you look upon your fellow man and see a blemish, it is your own imperfection that you are encountering—you are being shown what it is that you must correct within yourself. (**Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov**)

הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ - *'Rebuke, rebuke your fellow.' (19:17)*

On one occasion **Rabbi Aharon of Belz** was informed that one of the town's residents had desecrated the Shabbat. He immediately ordered both the informer and the Shabbat violator to appear before him.

"I order you to donate two pounds of candles to the synagogue," said Rabbi Aharon to the informer, "in order to atone for the fact that you spoke negatively of a fellow Jew.

"And you," said the rebbe to the second man, "I fine one pound of candles, for being the cause of your fellow Jew speaking negatively of another Jew."



לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ – *'You shall not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against any of your people; and you shall love your fellow as yourself.' (19:18)*

How does one avoid acting vengefully?

One should think: If a person were cutting meat, and the knife cut his hand, would that hand cut the first hand in return? (**Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 9:4**)

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ – *'Love your fellow as yourself.' (19:18)*

● A soul might descend to earth and live seventy or eighty years for the sole purpose of doing a favor for another—a spiritual favor, or even a material favor. (**Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov**)

● When two people meet, something positive must result for a third. (**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch**)

● One must love the lowliest of men as much as the greatest Torah scholar. (**Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov**)

● I learned the meaning of love from two drunks whose conversation I once overheard.

The first drunk said: "I love you."

"No, you don't," replied the other.

"Yes, yes, I do. I love you with all my heart."

"No, you don't. If you love me, why don't you know what hurts me?" (**Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**)

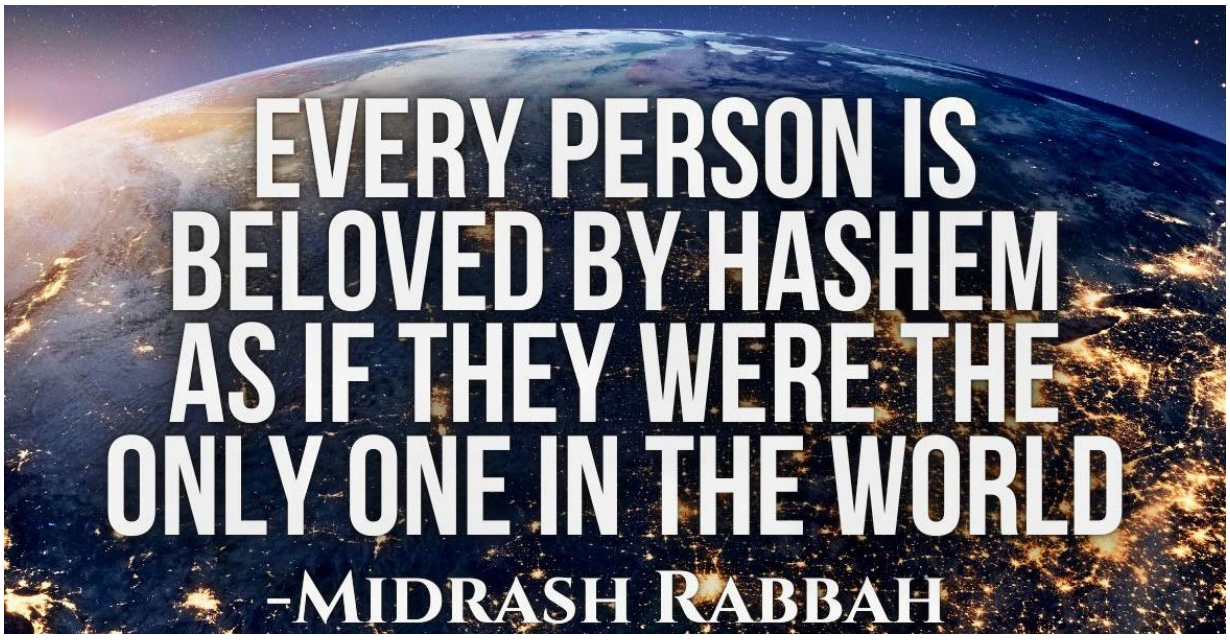


● When I was four years old, I asked my father: "Why did G-d make people with two eyes? Why not with one eye, just as we have been given a single nose and a single mouth?"

Said Father: "There are things upon which one must look with a right eye, with affection and empathy; and there are things upon which one must look with a left eye—severely and critically. On one's fellow man, one should look with a right eye; on oneself, one should look with a left eye." (**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch**)

● The Torah commands to "love your fellow as yourself." Why only as much as yourself?

Indeed, chassidim have always maintained that the meaning of the verse is the very opposite of how it is commonly understood. Despite all that you know about yourself, the Torah is saying, you should try to love yourself as much as you love your fellow . . . (**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch**)





◣ Socially Engaged - Chasam Sofer

דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם - "***Speak to the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy, Hashem, your Gd.'***" (19:2)

When the Torah tells Klal Yisrael: "**קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** - You shall be holy," it is a commandment that requires them to elevate themselves spiritually. However, unlike the doctrines of other faiths, when Jews wish to grow in sanctity and purification, they don't run away to faraway mountains or seclude themselves behind forbidding walls with locked gates to protect them.

This law was spoken to the public (Rashi), and it was meant to be carried out within the framework of the kehillah, socially engaged and productive, to better the individual as well as the community.

◣ Jewish Pride - Divrei Sha'arei Chaim

קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ -"***You shall be holy***..." (19:2) - This section was proclaimed in full assembly. (Rashi)

Don't be holy only in the privacy of your home but ashamed of your faith in public. Don't be, "A Jew at home and a person outside." Be holy "in full assembly," in public, in society. Among your own people or in the midst of strangers, wherever you may find yourself, don't ever be ashamed of your character and sanctity as a Jew.

◣ Once A Child, Always A Child - Kesav Sofer

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם - "***Every man shall revere his mother and his father and keep My Shabbosos - I am Hashem, your G-d.***" (19:3)

You must honour your parents not only while you are still dependent on them for your food, clothing, and support, but when you are a "man," i.e., an adult and no longer dependent.

◣ Heavenly Assistance - Sefas Emes

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳ - "***And you shall love your fellow as you love yourself, I am Hashem.***" (19:18)

It is not easy to carry out the commandment "and you shall love your fellow as yourself" in the fullest sense of its meaning. Therefore, immediately after this command, G-d declares: "I am Hashem" - I, G-d, stand ready to help you to fulfil My commandment provided that you sincerely wish to keep it.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

I recently heard of a ferry ship that went sailing full speed into port crashing into the landing station, causing considerable damage to both the ship and the pier. The story sounded so bizarre and crazy, that I dismissed it out of hand.

However, I then read a story, which in itself, was interesting, but putting two and two together – we know that there is Someone controlling events, even when we don't see the whole picture.

Maurice Zalta had a job working in a jewellery store right off Wall Street. Living in Deal, New Jersey, he was reluctant to face the logjam of Manhattan's morning rush hour, and train and bus options were very limited as well.

Instead, he opted to commute by ferry. A company called Seastreak operated a high-speed ferry with daily services from the Jersey Shore to lower Manhatten, and Maurice developed a consistent schedule. He would go to an early *Shacharis minyan* and then head straight to the ferry terminal, where he would board the boat and take a seat on the quieter second floor. There, he would relax or look in a *sefer* for the 45-minute trip. Three minutes before the ferry was due to dock in Manhatten, he would head downstairs and stand right near the exit to avoid the crush of his fellow commuters disembarking. Maurice was a disciplined person; he stuck to his routine every day, and the other passengers got to know him so. This became Maurice's routine each working day.



One day, Maurice was at work when he suddenly felt excruciating pain in his back and leg, like nothing he had ever experienced before. Panicking, he called his son. "You have to come to the city to pick me up," he said. "I need to go to the hospital immediately."

Maurice's son dropped what he was doing and sped over. Soon they were in Monmouth Hospital's emergency room. Maurice was expecting a prescription for pain medication and perhaps a referral to an orthopaedist, but he was surprised when the doctor finished examining him. "We need you to stay overnight," he was told.

An overnight stay for back pain was unusual but not too crazy, so Maurice went with it. He was given medication and injections, and the pain subsided. At around 8.45 the next morning, the doctor

returned. Maurice was pronounced fit for release and doctor signed the discharge paperwork.

As the doctor left the room, Maurice's phone rang. It was one of his buddies from the ferry.

"Maurice, how are you? Is everything Okay?"

Maurice was touched. "Yes, thank G-d, I'm feeling fine. It was just some back pain; I've been released from the hospital."

"You don't understand," his friend said. "Our ferry, the boat that we take every day, crashed into the dock this morning when it pulled into Manhattan. The people standing near the front door were hurt the worst. I saw EMS carrying them out on stretchers. It's a miracle that you're okay!"

It was January 9, 2013. At 8.45 am, the Seastreak Wall Street ferry was nearing the end of its usual route with 326 passengers and five crew members on board when the captain lost control of the navigation. Out of control, the ferry smashed into the concrete terminal at full speed, injuring over 80 people, some of the critically. Maurice had been discharged from the hospital seconds after the crash. If not for the back pain the day before, he would certainly have been among the injured.

Maurice called his son. He was crying so hard he could barely get words out. "I just saw the Hand of G-d," he managed to say.

The back pain, out of nowhere, had sent him to the hospital. The emergency room doctor on duty had taken the precaution of keeping him overnight. Clearly, Maurice had been destined to endure some degree of pain that day – but he was not meant to be among those with life-threatening injuries. Hashem disrupted his routine and gave him inexplicable back pain, then forced him to stay away from the ferry until after the accident.

Nothing in our lives is arbitrary, and all of our pain, everything we experience, is weighed and measured out by Hashem.

Even in what seems like a bizarre and crazy piece of news, Hashem is the orchestrator and ultimate saviour. We are not to speculate as to why things happen, but we can put our trust in Him to keep us safe.

Good Shabbos



Rabbi Dr. Avrohom Twerski zt"l tells of how he, as a young boy, once played a game of chess on Rosh Hashanah with a guest who was visiting his parents' home. When his father, a Chassidic Rebbe found out that young Avrohom played chess on such a holy day (a technically permitted activity that he felt was unbecoming for his child), he called him into his study.

He did not reprimand him. Rather, he gently admonished him by saying in Yiddish that "*ess passt nisht…*" — "I expect more from someone special like you." - At the same, his father, lovingly said to his son, "Tell me, did you at least beat him?"

Once, when the Beis Avraham of Slonim was in the town of Kamenitz, he surprised the chassidim who were accompanying him when he attended the shiur of Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, sitting together with the bachurim of the yeshiva. Afterwards, he explained to them, "I wanted to watch Rav Baruch Ber as he said the words 'zogt der heiligeh Rashba' (the holy Rashba says). - Just observing his sense of awe as he says those words is a lesson in yiras Shamayim."

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Loving the Beloved - Imitatio Dei

One of the outstanding features of the Torah ideology and a big guide to success in life is the great principle of הֱוֵי דּוֹמֶה לוֹ, imitation of Hashem (Shabbos 133b). It's a fundamental principle that every *frum* Jew lives with, achieving perfection in this world by means of imitating his G-d.

Now the truth is that even among *goyim, lehavdil,* it was always an ideal. It makes sense after all; if you're seeking perfection then what's the best model to follow? Your god of course. And so among the gentile religions they say the same thing; they call it 'imitatio Dei,' to imitate their god. Only that what they're imitating, it's nothing godly.

I could tell you stories about the Greek gods, the Egyptian gods, the Christian ones too, but I don't want to be accused of insulting the *goyim*. But it's worth knowing that all the *ovdei avodah zarah* are corrupting their minds because of their gods.

I could tell you very many things; I've studied the subject. Take it from me, there's no perfection they'll acquire by emulating their gods.

But the Jews, they emulate a Hashem that is perfect. Jews emulate Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the Holy One Blessed Be He, and that's why they became a holy people. We have the real thing, the Original; we have the true 'Dei' to imitate and that became the ideal of our nation, to emulate our perfect G-d.

● Emulating Perfection

Now, this ideal, this way of living, is so important that it's repeated in various ways in the Torah. But one of the most prominent ones is found in the opening of this week's *sedrah*.

קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם - *You should be holy because I, Hashem your G-d, is holy.*

It's a command: "Make yourselves perfect – that's what *kadosh* means, perfection – by emulating Me." But it's also the ultimate guide for perfection of our character, our thinking, our behavior.

כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי means that I, Hashem, am shaleim betachlis hashleimus, the epitome of perfection, and therefore, **קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** – *I want you to be perfect by using Me as your model.*

And so why should we be such superficial people? After all, we come across that verse sometimes when we're studying, don't we?

At least when the baal korei reads the Torah we hear it: 'Make yourselves holy, because I am holy.' And it's not a recommendation, an eitzah tovah; it's an obligation, and therefore shouldn't we think about that sometimes? 'What are the ways of perfection of Hashem that I should try to emulate?'

● Loving the Beloved

It's a big *chiddush* you're hearing now. What's the foundation of *ahavas Yisroel?* It's not what people think, merely a mitzvah of allegiance to our people, like the black man who identifies with his fellow black. *Ahavas Yisroel* means we're trying to imitate the

thoughts, the emotions, *kavayachol,* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **הֱוִי דּוֹמֶה לוֹ** – *Be like Him!* **קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** – Be ambitious to emulate His love. We have to love our fellow Jews *because* Hashem loves them.

And don't say you do. Yes, you have a certain patriotism but that's nothing. I'm talking about love, about genuine affection, not empty platitudes.

Love means love! Did you ever see a mother holding her little baby? She kisses him on one cheek and then the other cheek and then back again and back again. She considers him so delectable. 'I love you so much,' she says, 'I want to eat you up'. And she means it.

● A Burning Love

That's nothing yet because Hashem's love is much greater than our puny little emotions. A mother's love is only a faint semblance of **אָהַבְתִּי אֶתְכֶם אָמַר ה'**. Hashem loves every *frum* Jew with an intense love, a fiery love; **רִשְׁפֶּיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ**, like burning coals of fire.

But not like regular coals; it's a love that burns like a nuclear fire. Like the sun, it'll burn forever and ever that fire of love that Hashem has for every Jew. That's what it means Hashem is **אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל**.

Now, we'll never be able to love like He does, with a nuclear fire of love, but **תִּהְיוּ** means you should keep working on it. **תִּהְיוּ** – *You should become*! You loved a little bit yesterday? Today you'll love them even more. Tomorrow, you'll start from where you left off and **תִּהְיוּ**, you'll become even more. It's a man-sized job; an obligation that never ends.

● But How?

Now, how to do it, that's the question. How to be an **אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל**? How do you gain a real attitude of loving your people?

The first step is to say it. "I love Your people, Hashem. Ribono Shel Olam ich hob leib dein folk – Hashem, I love Your people."

You never said it yet? Not once in your whole lifetime? You might have to come back again to this world and do it over again, in a *gilgul* maybe. You didn't live correctly. You didn't even start.

Say it now. You should be *yotzei* at least once. Don't be ashamed; Hashem agrees with you. Say it now quietly, "I love my people."

● Once In A Lifetime

Even if you never do it again, it's something. After a hundred and twenty years when your time is up and you'll come to the Next World, they're going to ask you, "Did you ever say those words in your life, 'I love my people'?"

"I think I said it once in Flatbush. I was in Rabbi Miller's shul and I said it. Once."

"Ooh ah!" the *malach* will say. "He did it! This man did it!'

So even one time is something! But don't stop now. You're on your way! So now you keep going. Let's say you're standing at the bus stop or you're walking to the shul. Ah! An opportunity to fulfill this mitzvah of קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ, to love our fellow Jews just like He does. "Hashem, I know that You love the Am Yisroel and so I'm going to do it too. I'm going to say it at least. *I love Your people, Hashem.*"

● Long Distance Love

Say, "I love the people in Bnei Brak." Imagine people in Bnei Brak; they all have big black hats, long beards. They walk in the street with Jewish dignity. The truth is they're better than we think they are, much better, and Hashem loves them very, very much. "And so I'm going to love them too. Right now, I'm standing at the bus stop in Flatbush and I'm loving all the Bnei Brak'ers."

Tomorrow, love the Yerushalmi Jews too. They're so holy, so beloved by Hashem. 'I love them too'. Say it. Say it a few times. Little by little you'll begin to mean it. If you can help them out when they come

to America and give them some money, certainly you should do so. Or send money to them. If you love them, you'd do that.

● **Local Love**

Practice loving people in Boro Park. The fact that you don't mind them? No. It's not enough that you tolerate them. Hashem wants you to love them. When you walk in Boro Park, a side street, outside you see children and children and children. Love those children! They're *zera kodesh*. Love the children today.

When you see a crowd of girls from a *frum* school, *frum* girls walking in the street it's *mamash* a *machaneh Elokim*. There's nothing like it in the world. Nowhere will you find such girls like the Beis Yaakov girls, the Beis Rochel girls.

Love the *yeshivos*. Ah! What a wise thing to do! "I love the yeshivah." You know some people walk by a yeshivah and they walk by the same as if they're passing a public school. They're not thinking anything. When you pass by a yeshivah say "I love the yeshivah. I love the yeshivah boys."

● **Loving the Neighborhood**

It's such an opportunity when you live in a *frum* neighborhood. Don't just say, "It's nice, it's so nice a *frum* neighborhood." Nooo! Get excited with *ahavah*. "I love Hashem's people!" You have to say it constantly and put in as much emotion as you can. *Say it until your eyes flow with tears.* "I love my people. I love my noble people. I love my holy people. I love my people." Again and again. Say it constantly. And little by little, **הַמַּחְשָׁבָה נִמְשֶׁכֶת אַחַר הַדִּבּוּר** – *your thoughts begin to follow your words.* You actually become filled with love. You appreciate them. You admire them. You care about them. You want only good for them. You'll see, your eyes begin to flow with tears of emotion.

Now I don't say that you should run over and embrace every Jew you see – we're not such hypocrites; we can't do that. They'll take you to

the *meshugeneh* house. But you should learn to have a certain feeling that the *frum* Jews are beloved by Hashem and therefore, just because of that, I'm going to love them too.

● Love Comes Easy

It's not so hard. A Jew is a pleasure to look at. A Jew is a kosher face, with a kosher stomach. A Jew has a mind, a kosher mind. A Jew is a different kind of a *briah*. It's a pleasure to look at them. Look at their faces and fall in love with those faces.

I look at you right now, all of my friends sitting here, and it's so easy to fall in love with you. The *temimus*, honesty, *kedushah* I see on your Jewish faces. Some traveled a big distance to come here. It's a pleasure to see such idealists, honest people, *temimim, tzenuim*. I love you.

That's how it should be because Hakadosh Baruch Hu is like that. He loves you! **אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל**! He loves you very much and I'm going to love you too.

● Taking Good Advice

So I'll tell you an *eitzah* of one of the *gedolei mussar* of Europe, one of the biggest *balei mussar* in the world at that time. I heard this from him sixty-two years ago. Pay attention because this *eitzah* is worth money. It's an *eitzah hagunah*, it's worth millions, but you have to do it. Otherwise it's worth zero.

"Start with one person," he said. "To love all people all of a sudden is not easy." **תָּפַסְתָּ מְרֻבֶּה לֹא תָפַסְתָּ**

– *If you take hold of too much at one time you can't do it;* it's too heavy; you'll drop it. Pick one Jew and work on him. Make up your mind you'll specialize in him. Whether he's a *chaver* or one of your *rebbeim* or that person you see on the street every day, say "I love that man." Say the words *baal peh*, "I love that man."

At first it's *min hasafah el hachutz*, it doesn't mean a thing. Keep on saying it anyhow. You see him on the street far away – "I love that man." He doesn't have any especial love for you, but you ignore that. You're worried about yourself now, so try to think about him in terms of the Torah.

● Strategic Love

It shouldn't be empty, hollow words. You should think of reasons to love him. **וּבְתַחְבּוּלוֹת עֲשֵׂה מִלְחָמָה**

– *With strategems you make war* (Mishlei 20:18); it means war against the *yetzer hara.* So think of things to love about him. If he has a nice smile, grab onto that. If he has a nice way of talking, nice manners *al achas kamah v'kamah;* you can imagine all good things about him. - When you see his face from a distance, say, isn't he a nice-looking man? Every Jew, every *frum* Jew is a *tzelem Elokim;* no question, every *frum* face is a *tzelem Elokim.* If he has a nice face, love him for his nice face.

● Looking for an Excuse

Even his necktie. He wears a nice necktie? Love him for that. You say it's nothing? So it's nothing. You know there's such a thing as *sinas chinam;* but there's *ahavas chinam* too – it's no sin to love him for nothing. So imagine that you like him because of the way he dresses. Why not? A nice looking face, a pleasant face and a pleasant tie.

If he's a plumber, love him for that; we need Jewish plumbers. If he's a doctor, he's a valuable personality; we should love him for that. If he's a *melamed*, he teaches Jewish children, we should love him for that. Find excuses for loving him. These are good excuses.

● The Best Excuse

Now all these things are true calculations, they're cheshbonos shel emes; but you have to know that the biggest cheshbon, the overriding thought as you continue to concentrate on that person, is

that Hashem loves him. That's the reason for everything! 'Hashem loves him and therefore I love him too.'

You're hearing something now that's very important because there can be a very great error in this program. When people undertake a career of loving their fellow Jews, whether they mean it superficially or seriously, they sometimes make a very great error. Because what is a Jew really? He is nobody. He's a human being. **הַיּוֹם כַּאן וּמָחָר בַּקֶּבֶר**. Here today, gone tomorrow. What's so important about him? He's 170, 180 pounds of protoplasm. He's a mountain of protoplasm, that's all.

● Hashem's Beloved One

The answer is only one reason why he's so important. Because Hashem is with him. Because Hashem loves him. No question about it. This man, this plain Jew who sits all the way in the back of the shul, if he believes in *Torah min haShomayim,* if he believes in *Hashem Elokei Yisroel* then Hashem loves him.

After all, he's a man who keeps Shabbos. He's a *shomer Torah u'mitzvos*. He has a *frum* family, *frum* children. He *davens* every day, he talks to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. He wears *arba kanfos*, he puts on *tefillin*, eats kosher. He's careful not to do what's an *aveirah*. He's making a living, I suppose. He's paying tuition. He's behind in the payments maybe but he's paying. He gives *tzedakah* too. "That's what I love," Hashem says. "I love a Jew who keeps *mitzvos*. I love every single Jew, each one on his own, more than I love the whole *briyah* with all the stars, all the nations, all the billions of worlds in space."

● Aim High

And that's what we're aiming for. Like I said before, we'll never love him like Hashem does but more and more, every little bit is an achievement. Think about him always. Keep him in mind every day and little by little, you'll find that you're loving him more and more.

I did it once. Years ago when I used to work on *mussar*, I did this. I was staying in a country with a certain family in Europe, a butcher family, plain ordinary people. I made it my business to fall in love with the butcher. Every day I walked behind the dunes on the beach, I was thinking how I could love him. I was thinking about what words I could say to him that would encourage him, words that would make him feel happy. That was in the olden days when I still had a *shaychus* to the *mussar* of Slabodka.

● Pray For Him

I *davened* for him too. That's a good idea by the way. The one that you chose to start with, *daven* for him. Instead of thinking only about yourself – that's the true love of your life – or about your family, maybe try to also think about this Jew across the street. Think about him too.

Of course I want to be healthy but I'm practicing up now **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** and I'm going to think about him too. He should have a healthy heart. He shouldn't get any headaches. He shouldn't catch any colds. Think about that.

By the other *brachos* too. He should have good *parnassah.* He should get a raise and he should get along with his boss. He should have *shalom* in his house and with his neighbors.

● Slowly but Surely

That's the way to do it; think about him always, when you see him in the street and in the *davening* and whenever else you remind yourself. And little by little the *ahavah* increases in you until you finally have a real affection for him. You love him.

Nobody knows about it but you have a diamond, a gem, that's growing bigger and bigger every day. Continue to work on your love for that man. It's a big accomplishment. At least with one Jew you're *mekayem* **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ** in your lifetime; at least one Jew.



וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

In this week's parsha we learn about the famous mitzvah to "love your neighbor as yourself." Although many may view this mitzvah as beyond the call of duty and only for the most pious, loving another Jew like one's self is just as obligatory and expected from a Jewish person as putting on *tefillin*.

Rebbi Akiva was emphatic about the implementation of this statute, claiming it to be a primary principle of the Torah. The gemara (Shabbos 31a) illustrates the fundamental importance of loving others as well. The gemara relates the story of how a convert once came to Hillel requesting to be taught the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Despite the dubious intent of the questioner, Hillel proceeded to teach the convert, "That which is hateful to you, don't do to your friend. That is the entire Torah. The rest is the explanation. Go learn!!!"

The immortal concept of loving one's neighbor changed not only the Jewish people, but the entire world. However, it still needs to be understood why this principle is so important in the eyes of Chazal. How could Hillel have asserted that the entire Torah is almost a symbol of this idea and every law is in truth just another expression of loving other people? What about G-d, and all the mitzvos that do not relate to other people? Moreover, the Torah contains much diverse subject matter and a lot of the content doesn't seem to focus on the subject of loving others at all! How could Hillel say that loving other people is the foundation of the entire Torah?

Rav Chaim Friedlander teaches us that in essence, the obligation of loving others as oneself really requires one to extend beyond

himself. The natural disposition of a person is to only think about his own needs and to only act in the way he sees fit.

Man by nature is very self-centered and self-absorbed. However, the Torah was designed in order to refine us. The Torah encourages us to extend beyond our selfish natures and to outgrow the little world that we have made for ourselves.

For instance, if one wishes to perform any mitzvah, he must have the intent that he is doing so solely for the sake of G-d. If one lacks such intent, by definition, he is unable to keep the Torah. In order for one to fulfill the Torah, one is forced to think about something besides himself. Therefore, when Hillel was asked to explain the entire Torah while standing on one foot, he told the convert that the Torah was simple. To appreciate the Torah one must care for the other.

Every single detail of the Torah brings us to a greater love either of other people, the creation, or Hashem Himself. If one doesn't care about the world around him, whatever wisdom the Torah tries to bestow upon him will seem meaningless and irrelevant. A person has to develop a love external to himself in order to embrace what the Torah is all about.

So what is the best way a person can develop a love of others? I believe that we can find an answer to this question in the **Rambam**. The Rambam writes in Hilchos Deos 6:3 that since one is expected to love every Jew like himself, it logically follows that one must care for their honor and money as if it were his own. In other words, the Rambam is claiming that basic love of another person involves caring for both his spiritual and physical needs.

If we train ourselves to become sensitive to a person's most fundamental needs, we are exercising an incredibly deep love and concern for another human being. We are giving to others in the intimate way that we ourselves would love to be given to. This is truly extending beyond one's self and touching another person's heart. If

we can train ourselves merely to behave this way and act with these lofty intentions in mind, we will evolve into the loving people that Hashem wants us to be. Exhibiting such tender loving care for others will ultimately plant a love for them in our hearts.

Rav Shimon Shkop has another piece of advice to help us cultivate a love of other Jews. He claims that we just need to shift our perspective a little bit. The reason many find it so hard to love others as themselves is simply because others are not themselves. To feel abundant love for a separate being in a separate body who lives a life with different challenges, tastes, hopes, dreams, etc., is naturally foreign. However, if we can relate to other Jews as extensions of ourselves, which is the real truth, loving them can be a lot easier than we may think.

A human being is very capable of developing incredibly powerful feelings of love for his spouse, children, and friends. Why is this? The answer is that the closer one is to a person, the more he feels a unity with them. We should realize that the Jewish people are one big family and that we are all members of Hashem's Chosen People. Moshe Rabbeinu teaches us in Devarim 14:1 that "You are sons to the Lord your G-d." That makes us all brothers! If one can look at his wife as an extension of himself, then his children as an extension of himself, then his neighbors, and then the entire Jewish People as just an extension of himself, of course he will love them as himself! The more a person pushes himself in this direction, the bigger he becomes. One can ultimately one's self to a point of realization that the entire world is really just a part of himself.

When witnessing another's success, we can and should immediately grasp the moment as an opportunity to rejoice.

May we all be *zoche* to love others as we do ourselves!!!

The Meaning of Kedushah

In Parashas Kedoshim we are commanded (Vayikra 19:2), "You shall be kadosh (generally translated as holy), because I, Your G-d, am kadosh." The last chapter of Mesillas Yesharim is dedicated to teaching us how to acquire kedushah, as it is the highest level that a Jew can reach, enabling him to experience Divine inspiration. Being kadosh is the greatest aspiration of every Jew. What precisely does kedushah mean to us, and how can we achieve it?

In Toras Kohanim, Chazal tell us that "You shall be kadosh" should be translated as "You shall be separate." The Midrash adds that just as Hashem is separate from the world, so too, we must be separate. At first glance, this seems problematic. Does Hashem want us to live apart, like hermits? Even our greatest tzaddikim did not live in caves or on mountaintops like monks. Moreover, even if we did live this way, we would still not be separate from the world in the same way that Hashem is. We are physical beings, and He is not! What could this midrash mean?

Rav Aharon Kotler explains that we do not have a mitzvah to separate ourselves from the rest of society. Hashem wishes that we engage in worldly matters whenever necessary. To survive, we must eat, drink, and take care of ourselves. However, a Jew utilizes the mundane activities to get closer to Hashem. By having in mind that everything we do is purely for the sake of Heaven, we achieve holiness.

Even while partaking of necessary material pleasure, a Jew does not indulge. While most of humanity pursues pleasure as an end in itself, we make use of the world only for the sake of Hashem. By living this way, we truly emulate our Creator. Just as the physical world doesn't affect Hashem, we too are unaffected by the world around us when we keep the mitzvah to be kadosh.

However, Rav Aharon cautions, transgressing the mitzvah to be holy is easier than we think. The Ramban rules that overeating,

overdrinking, and even excessive talking are prohibited activities. These are unnecessary in the service of Hashem. We should eat only as much as we need to have strength to do mitzvos, and we should say only what needs to be said. Properly gauging the balance that we must achieve requires reflection, and avoiding the trap of indulgence demands alertness. We must constantly work on this mitzvah in order to become the holy beings Hashem wants us to be.

Additionally, even if we are precise when partaking of the material world, we can still lose out on the mitzvah of kedushah. If we become wrapped up in the taste of the food, we can easily lose focus on why we are eating. Suddenly, instead of eating for Hashem's sake, we may be eating because we want to satisfy ourselves, thus wasting the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of being kadosh.

In truth, the more we aspire to get closer to Hashem, the less appeal physical pleasure has to us. Rav Shimon Green would say that whenever a person has any sort of goal, he checks for those things that prevent him from reaching it. For example, if a person wishes to be fit, he foregoes things that he enjoys, such as ice cream, cake, and soft drinks. He also adopts new behaviors that may not be comfortable for him, like exercise. He may not enjoy his new routine, but if he wants to be in good shape, he concludes that his previous behavior is no longer for him. So too, if we want a constant and intimate relationship with our Maker, we can't afford to get caught up in this world's pleasures. The more dedication and thought we put in to our service of Hashem, the more we will see the necessity of being holy, and the easier separating from excess becomes.

Holiness is not acquired in a minute. The Mesillas Yesharim says that it is impossible for a person to act only for the sake of Heaven every moment of the day. Nevertheless, we must make efforts to achieve it as much as possible.

We can start with small steps. Regarding food, there are many different ways to begin internalizing this ideal. **The Ra'avad** would

advise people to leave a little food on their plate uneaten, in order to achieve a bit of holiness. (This is not a waste of the food, as it is serving a holy purpose.) Rav Baruch Ben Chaim would add that if this is too difficult, one can delay consuming the food for a few minutes, as this too expresses separation from gashmiyus. Rav Shlomo Brevda has a different idea: no matter how much you fill your plate, refrain from having seconds. These approaches apply to food, but they can be applied to many other areas in which abstinence brings kedushah.

Rav Moshe Mandel was always careful to eat very little. When he was eating, he would act with restraint, putting down his fork between bites. He wasn't trying to torture himself; he just wanted to make sure that pleasure would not become his primary focus. He wanted Hashem to be his primary focus at all times.

One time, he was served soup. After one spoonful, he pushed away his bowl. His family asked if there was something wrong with the soup. "Yes," he replied. "It's too good." For Rav Moshe, it was better to forego the soup than to be distracted from Hashem.

May we be zocheh to more and more kedushah!

"We are so careful with our tefillin, that even if we were to knock an empty tefillin pouch to the ground, we would rush to pick it up and give it a kiss as a demonstration of our love and respect. - How much more so does this apply to the person donning the tefillin! When he falls, we must rush to pick him up, kiss him, and demonstrate our unconditional love and respect." ~ The Imrei Emes, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter (1865-1948)

"A rebbe who is not willing to descend into hell in order to rescue his followers from destruction, is not a rebbe!" ~ Rabbi Klonimus Kalman Shapira, the Piaseczner Rebbe.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Be Holy

דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם – '*Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd, your G-d, am holy.*' (19:2)

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ – '*Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and you shall observe My Sabbaths.*' (19:3)

What is the juxtaposition of **קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** to **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ** ?

The Yerushalmi Kiddushin 1:7 tells us that the mitzva of **כִּיבּוּד אָב וְאֵם** is extremely difficult to keep. **וּמִצְוָה חֲמוּרָה שֶׁבַּחֲמוּרוֹת זוֹ הִיא כִּיבּוּד אָב וְאֵם** – '*The most difficult commandment is honouring one's father and mother.*'

The gemara Yerushalmi Peah 3b then proceeds to tell us how Rabbi Tarfon's **כִּיבּוּד אָב וְאֵם** was exemplary. The gemara then says, "*Rabbi Tarfon's mother went to her courtyard to take a walk on Shabbat [and her shoe tore and she could not continue to wear them]. Rabbi Tarfon went and placed his two hands under her feet, and she walked on them until she reached her bed.*

One time Rabbi Tarfon became ill, and the sages came to visit him. His mother said to them, "Pray on behalf of my son, for he conducts himself with exceptional honor towards me." - They said to her, "What does he do for you?" and she relayed the occurrence to them. They said to her, "Even if he were to do this thousands upon thousands [of times], he would not approach one half of the honor that is stipulated in the Torah."

The question is that if the demands for carrying out **כִּיבּוּד אָב וְאֵם** are so great, how can the Torah possibly expect us to fulfil it in a fitting manner?

Rabbi Pinchos Roberts says that the key to fulfilling this apparently illusive mitzva is contained in this juxtaposition. How can you achieve **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ**? The answer is - **כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם**. Each one

of us has got a chelek of Hakadosh Baruch Hu within us. We each have a certain kedusha – holiness that can help us to achieve things that are seemingly beyond us.



Rabbi Roberts tells a story about **Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Unsdorfer** (1888-1944 - murdered by the Nazis in 1944) [his late wife's grandfather]. He was a maggid and Rav in Pressburg, Hungary. He yearned all his life to go and visit Eretz Yisrael, but his communal responsibilities and the expenses involved prevented him from realising his dream. A trip like this was very challenging at that time.

Finally, he managed to save up the money over a long period of time and managed to purchase a ticket to go by boat. He informed his community about his intentions to go. He also wrote a letter to his parents who lived in Guta (Hungary) telling them of his impending journey and that this was a dream of his to go and visit Eretz Yisrael, and he had purchased a ticket to go.

He said farewell to his community on Shabbos and planned to leave on Sunday. On Motzei Shabbos, he opened his post, and he sees that there is a letter from his mother. His mother wrote, "Enjoy your trip, but please will you send me a telegram when you arrive, as I am nervous and anxious and very concerned for your welfare."

He immediately took his ticket and ripped it up!

He said, "If this trip is going to cause my mother anxiety, then I'm not going."

זֶה כְּלָל גָּדוֹל בַּתּוֹרָה :Rashi says 19:18 – וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳

The gemara Shabbos 31a says: *There was a gentile who came before Shammai and said to Shammai: Convert me on condition that you teach me the entire Torah while I am standing on one foot. Shammai pushed him away. The same gentile came before Hillel. He converted him and said to him:* דַּעֲלָךְ סְנֵי לְחַבְרָךְ לָא תַּעֲבֵיד *– 'That which is hateful to you do not do to another'* [The Marharsha explains that this is another application of וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ]*; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study.*

The Kli Yakar says: He taught him the verse, "You shall love your fellow as yourself" because Chazal said (Makos 24a): "Chabakuk came and reduced the Torah to one principle: וְצַדִּיק בֶּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה – '*A righteous man will live in his faith.*'" It's all down to having Emunah.

This seems to contradict our gemara, which says that when you reduce the Torah to its basic element, you are left with וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ. – So, which one is it?

Says the Kli Yakar: *This does not contradict Hillel's words, for all the Torah's commandments are one of two types: One is the commandments between man and Hashem, and the foundation of them all is faith in Hashem. The second is the commandments between man and his fellow man, and the foundation of them all is, "You shall love your fellow as yourself" … On this foundation he stood up for him the commandments between man and his fellow man. Additionally, he taught him the end of the verse as well, "I am A-donoy," which is the foundation upon which Chabakuk stood all the Torah's commandments, that is, faith in Hashem.*

This idea is displayed in the pasuk itself: וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ - אֲנִי ה׳ – Both bein adam l'chaveiro, and Emunah in Hashem! These are two foundations on which Yiddishkeit rests.

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

The Kidnapped Driver

Avraham Silam, a mohel from Netanya, related the following amazing story.

It was summertime, about six years ago, and I'd been hired as the mohel at a number of brissim in one day, kein yirbu. This would require not only quick pacing, but significant agility and skill. Baruch Hashem. Only for good things.

The month of Elul brought with it a heatwave. The second-to-last bris took place in a hall in the northern industrial area of Netanya at seven p.m. Sunset was at 7:15. The last bris would be in Kiryat Nordau, a neighborhood on the other side of the city, in the Eliyahu Hanavi Shul. We had less than fifteen minutes to get there.

We-my faithful assistant, Reb Yaakov, and I-dashed to my car, and headed toward the road along the coast, the fastest route to Kiryat Nordau. But before we got onto the bridge that would take us to the coastal road, I suddenly realized that the steering wheel was unresponsive. I suspected we had a flat.

I pulled over to the shoulder, got out of the car, and a quick glance confirmed my suspicions. The front right wheel was smoking due to the friction resulting from the puncture.

I looked at my watch, and my heart started pounding so hard it felt like it was going to burst out of my chest. I had barely ten minutes to get to Kiryat Nordau. My car had a flat, and by the time I ordered a taxi, and by the time it got here, precious minutes would have ticked by. Once the sun set, it would be prohibited to perform a bris, and it would no longer have taken place on time, on the eighth day.

An image of the disappointed expressions on the faces of the baby's parents and their guests flashed through my mind. In those

stressful seconds, I desperately racked my brains for a solution. But it was clear to me that the Angel Gavriel wasn't going to descend from Heaven to fly me on wings to the Eliyahu Hanavi Shul. I was going to have to find my own angel.

There are angels in Heaven, but there are also angels on the road. I stood in the middle of the highway, and a car heading toward me started honking long and loud. He probably thought I was mentally unbalanced, standing in the middle of the road like that. I signalled to him that he should stop, and he did. Reb Yaakov and I jumped into his car, and I begged him to help.

"You have to help us! We need a ride!"

The driver was confounded. "Who are you? What do you want from me? Who do you think you are, getting into my car without my permission? Get out of my car!"

I didn't have time for lengthy explanations. "Drive!" I roared. "Step on the gas. I'll explain everything on the way."

Too startled to think twice, the man began to drive. Relieved, I gave him directions.

"Please turn right off the bridge, and drive south along the coast for seven kilometers. We need to get to Kiryat Nordau right away. I'm a mohel, and I have a bris to perform there. It's only nine minutes to shekiah, and my car has a flat. Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent you to me. You're my angel..."

The driver, who wasn't religious but possessed a kind heart, gave a small smile and his eyes twinkled.

"You're a mohel? Well, then, it would be an honor for me to drive to perform a bris milah!"

He stepped on the gas and sped us to our destination. As he drove Reb Yaakov and I murmured chapters of Tehillim, imploring Hashem to help us succeed in our mission and arrive there before shekiah to

circumcise the newborn who awaited us.

The sun slid to the western horizon and turned orange. I was afraid to look at my watch. I closed my eyes and whispered, "Ribono shel Olam, I didn't ask for the Angel Gavriel to appear, but I have no doubt that this lovely Jew behind the steering wheel wants to earn the merit of a mitzvah, and the sweet baby awaiting his bris deserves to have it performed at the right time. His parents are certainly feeling the intense pressure. Please, let us get there in time, if not for my sake, then for theirs."

Suddenly a shriek from the brakes. I opened my eyes and saw that we had pulled up to the Eliyahu HaNavi shul. I looked at my watch. Four and a half minutes until shekiah. Reb Yaakov and I leaped out of the car. It took a moment to quiet the complaints from the parents and guests as I rushed into the shul, and another minute and a half to perform the bris in accordance with the halachah. As the mazel tovs rained down on us, I felt like someone who had merited the Final Redemption.

We emerged from the shul and left the family to their celebration. I was about to order a taxi when I noticed our "driver," the one we'd "kidnapped," waiting at the curb.

He leaned over to open the door on the passenger's side for me. "Get in. I'll take you back to your car, or wherever you want to go." I got in, and Yaakov climbed into the back.

I gave our driver a kiss on the forehead before he started driving. "My friend," I said, "you have no idea of the mitzvah in which you took part. In your merit, another child has entered the bris of Avraham Avinu. - Ashrecha!"

The driver was silent for a few minutes. When he finally spoke, his voice was choked with emotion.

"My name is Shimon. If I've really done a big mitzvah, and you are a rav and mohel, then please give me a special brachah. Maybe this is

an auspicious time for it to come to fruition. I'm forty-five years old, and I still haven't married. I want to get married, but I just haven't found my soul mate. It's depressing. And, of course, since I haven't married, I haven't merited having children either. Please, Rabbi, bless me that I should get married very soon."

I took a deep breath, placed my right hand on his head, and blessed him with all my heart: "May you merit finding a pious woman and establishing a bayis ne'aman b'Yisrael, and may I merit serving as mohel for your son on his 8th day!"

A year to the day I received a phone call.

"Hello, this is Shimon. Do you remember me? I was your driver. Your angel who drove you to a bris four minutes before sunset... Rabbi Abraham, two months after you blessed me, I got married, and we have just had a son. I am calling to fulfill my promise to you that you will be my son's mohel."

Since then, I have circumcised Shimon's next two sons as well. Needless to say, Shimon has become Torah observant and relates his story to bolster the faith of others.



 ואהבת לרעך כמוך – ***...love your neighbour as yourself...*** (19:18).

If you take a long, hard look at yourself, you will no doubt find many flaws and shortcomings. Nonetheless, you love yourself intensely.

Similarly, you should find it in your heart to love your neighbor, with equal fervor, in spite of the faults and shortcomings you detect in him. [**R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev**] (Torah Treasures)



"A person should be like the sun - shining its light on everyone, without asking who is deserving of it." ~ The Chozeh of Lublin, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz (1745-1815).



Beneath the Surface - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמרו אני ה' אלקיכם (יט:ג) - ***Every man shall revere his mother and his father and you shall observe my Shabbosos, I am Hashem, your G-d***. (19:3)

What is the connection between the two topics of honoring one's mother and father and Shabbos?

The Mitzvah of honoring parents is a Mitzvah that a person can understand on his own with common sense, and one would have fulfilled this without a command from the Torah. However, keeping Shabbos, a person does not understand why there is a need for this Mitzvah, and therefore, the Torah placed the two Mitzvos together.

This teaches us that the fulfillment of Mitzvos is only because Hashem commanded it, and not because of our understanding or common sense. (Siach Aharon)



Rav Shimon Finkelman shared that in 1981, when **Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l**, suffered a painful back condition, a Bachur who would often attend to Rav Moshe asked him something concerning the Gemara he was learning. When he realized that Rav Moshe was in agony, the boy felt terrible. He apologized and said, "Please forgive me. I will ask the Rosh Yeshivah another time."

Rav Moshe exclaimed, "No! We can continue talking now. Ki Heim Chayeinu V'Orech Yameinu! The words of Torah are our life. This is what I live for!"

Insightful Torah Thoughts on the Weekly Sedra by Rabbi Moshe Gelb

19:2 דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ



In this week's *parsha*, the *Torah* tells us **קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** - that we should be a holy people. The **Ramban** famously explains that this means **פרושים תהיו** - a new understanding of the *posuk* that we must separate ourselves as much as possible from the material pleasures of this world. One who indulges in his base desires, even when technically permitted to according to *halacha*, is called, in the words of the Ramban, a **נבל ברשות התורה** - a religiously observant "degenerate."

It seems that today, this charge has been all but forgotten, as the rampant materialism in our society just gets worse and worse. **R' Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*** once said that every country has its own special *yetzer hara*, an evil inclination, and the *yetzer hara* of America is *taavos*, indulgence in material pleasures. Indeed, we see that in recent times every pleasure imaginable is now available in a glatt-kosher version. This is so that we should have the ability to experience every *taavah* in the world. This is the *nisayon* of our generation.

And perhaps the saddest part of this culture is that everything is camouflaged under the veneer of a *mitzvah*. We must have a meat-board the size of a small table at a *kiddush*. Why? *Oneg Shabbos*, of course! A simple piece of *kugel* doesn't do it for us anymore. Twenty-

piece bands and celebrity singers at weddings are necessary. Why? *Simchas chosson v'kallah*, of course! - Luxury tours of Iceland because ... witnessing *Niflaos HaBorei*, of course! And the list goes on and on.

This is not to say that one has to be an ascetic. It's not a sin to enjoy a good steak. But to make an *inyan* out of it?

The *posuk* is telling us that the focus of a *Yid's* life has to be his *avodas Hashem*, his *ruchniyus*, not on making sure he hits every restaurant in Manhattan before he dies. - *Rabbosai*, we can't fix the entire world, but we can work on ourselves!

Hashem should grant us the wisdom and *siyata dishmaya* to reclaim our status as the *Mamleches Kohanim* and *Goy Kadosh*!

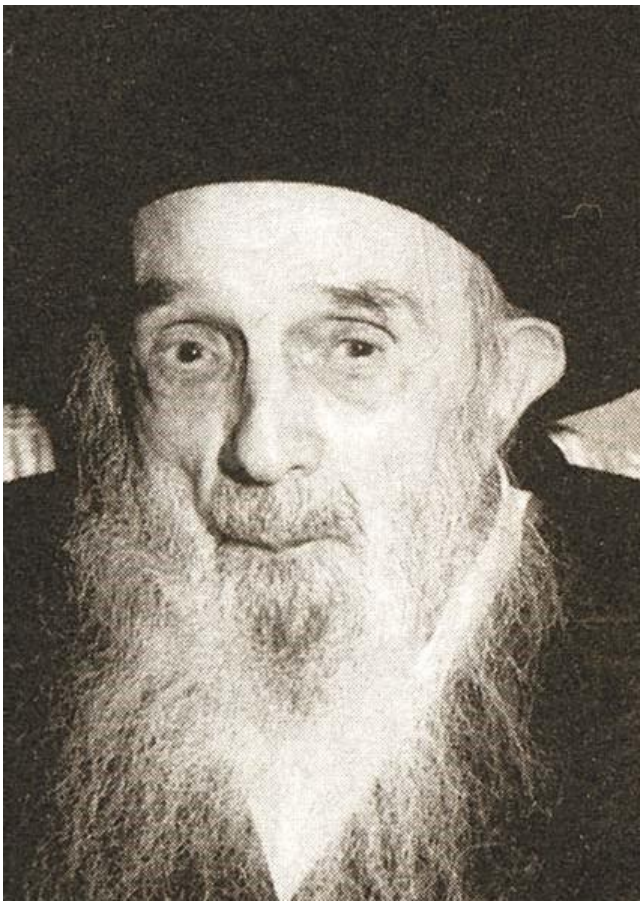
Rabbi Aharon Karliner zt"l once said that the biggest tragedy is when a prince believes that he is a peasant.

Our forefathers and other ancestors were great, beyond human comprehension. They were the like the most distinguished royalty. We are children of royalty. We have inherent greatness and must act like royalty. We must recognize that each of us is special and comes from forefathers who were special!

At an advanced age and in frail health, **Rav Elya Lopian, zt"l**, made the lengthy journey from Kfar Chassidim to Jerusalem to attend the Knessiah Gedolah of Agudas Yisrael in 1964. -This was surprising since he was not identified with the organization and always avoided anything that took him away from his yeshiva.

He explained that he had come so that he could rise in honor of **Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l**, and recite the blessing that one makes when seeing an extraordinary Torah Sage.

Temimus



Rav Chaim Moshe Mandel *zt"l*, was a venerated *mekubal* known as the "*poel yeshuos*" of Bnei Brak. R' Moshe was a quiet, unassuming man, never trying to draw any attention to himself or his actions. As a young boy, he was already completely devout in his prayer and his studies, and wherever he went, he was always scrupulous about every aspect of Halacha and clinging to Hashem, regardless of any ridicule or mockery he would incur. He would regularly walk through the streets, completely immersed in his studies, as the Shulchan Aruch instructs, paying no mind to the potential disdain he may have incurred.

One day, there was a boy on his block who had joined the "enlightenment", and who felt so enlightened, that he could not stand to see R' Moshe so involved with his "backward" ways and his naiveté in believing in the primitive laws of yesteryear. So this boy decided he was going to teach R' Moshe a lesson. He went into his house, and came out with a sack of rotting tomatoes, which he began to lob on to R' Moshe in rapid fire succession.

As the tomato puree was raining down on him, R' Moshe merely stood there, with a pleasant look on his face, and waited calmly for the Gazpacho barrage to finish, firmly believing the entire time that this was a direct decree from Hashem and was therefore not subject to change or interpretation. He didn't even bother asking the boy what he had done to deserve this delectable feast.

At a certain point, this lovely boy got completely frustrated that his ambush was an utter failure and turned around with a defeated look and went back into his house, mortified by the fiasco that had just ensued. R' Moshe calmly removed the debris of tomato paste from his body and clothes and continued on in the piece he was studying.

Later on in his life, when he was around 40, R' Moshe contracted a rare disease, and was confined to his home for nearly *50 years*! During this time, the people that were closest to him testified that never once, in all fifty years, did they hear a sigh or a word of complaint about his situation. He merely accepted it as a given, and went on with his life, trying to do the best he could with the circumstances he was presented with.

Toward the end of his life, R' Moshe became well known, quite against his will. People used to come from far and wide to receive a coveted blessing from R' Moshe Mendel, which were known to have miraculous and almost instantaneous results.

R' Shach, the renowned Rosh Yeshiva of the Ponevich Yeshiva, believed that R' Moshe was the leader of the generation in piety, and indeed, whenever he needed something, he himself would come to R' Moshe's house for a blessing and a direct shot of pure faith in Hashem.

Rav Mandel was considered a holy man who performed wonders that healed thousands. People say he had only to utter the words "*ye'alem, ye'alem* [disappear]" and the illness would disappear.

Thought of the Week

The Jewish Nation is not called Reuvenim or Shimonim, rather Yehudim (from the word to thank) because we are a nation that expresses our gratitude. (Bereishis Rabbah).



Wait For 3 Years To Correct Adam's Sin Of Not Waiting 3 Hours

In Parshas Kedoshim, the Torah introduces the mitzvah of "Orlah" for the first time. "When you come to the Land and plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as orlah; for three years it shall be orlah to you, they shall not be eaten." [Vayikra 19:23] The halacha is that if one plants a tree and the tree produces fruit during the first three years of its growth, those fruits are forbidden to be eaten. They are known as "orlah".

A rationale for this mitzvah is suggested by the **Rambam** in his Guide to the Perplexed [Moreh Nevuchim]. As the Rambam notes in explaining the rationale for many mitzvos, the Rambam comments that in Biblical times, it was common for sorcerers and priests to come and bless newly planted trees so that they should produce good and bountiful fruit. The first fruits produced were in turn offered to idols as an expression of thanks to the gods for a successful crop. The Rambam writes — to pre-empt such pagan practices, the Torah says that for the first 3 years, we are not even allowed to use these fruits.

The Ramban, in his Biblical commentary, writes that the reason for the mitzvah of Orlah becomes evident in light of the companion mitzvah of Neta Revai – the growth of the plantings on the fourth year. The halacha is that following the three years of forbidden Orlah fruit, the fruit of the fourth year is taken to Jerusalem and eaten there. Only in the fifth year and beyond is the farmer allowed to consume his fruits himself at home.

The Ramban explains that typically it takes a while for a newly planted fruit tree to produce robust fruit. For the first three years,

more often than not, the fruit – if any – that grows on trees is of inferior quality. Since the Torah wants the first fruits which are eaten in Jerusalem (with the sanctity of 'Neta Revai') to be good and delicious fruits, in order to give those forth year fruits the status of "first fruits," it is necessary to forbid the produce of the first three years.

The Medrash offers an entirely different reason, like neither that of the Rambam or the Ramban. The Medrash notes that immediately following the prohibition of Orlah (and the related laws of the fourth and fifth year fruits) [Vayikra 19:23-25], is another prohibition – that of "Eating upon blood" [ibid. 19:26].

Literally, the words "Lo Sochlu al haDam" mean, "do not eat on the blood" but there are actually a variety of different prohibitions that are learned out from this pasuk. One such prohibition that Rashi brings is that we are not allowed to eat from an animal until its blood is completely drained out. What is the significance of the juxtaposition of the laws of Orlah and the law of "Lo Sochlu al haDam"?

The Medrash states that the mitzvah of Orlah is trying to teach us something that is very important in life – patience. Sometimes we are chomping at the bit to do something. We want it right away. This is the significance of the prohibition of "Lo Sochlu al haDam". It is addressed to those people who cannot even wait until all the blood is drained out before wanting to eat the meat. The Torah tells them to slow down – do not consume the meat while there still is blood within it.

In order to instill in us this concept that we need to be patient and that we cannot always get what we want as soon as we want it, the Torah writes the prohibition of Orlah here.

The Ohr HaChaim haKodosh – both in this Parsha and in Sefer Bereishis – makes note of the Almighty's command to Adam: You may eat of any tree in the Garden. But then the Torah says that

Adam was not allowed to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (Eitz haDaas). How does that fit with the explicit permission to eat "from any tree of the Garden"?

The Ohr HaChaim (based on the Medrash) says an amazing thing. Adam COULD have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge as well. However, the permission to eat from that tree was only on Shabbos. In fact, the Ohr HaChaim says he was supposed to go ahead and make Kiddush on Shabbos from the wine made from the grapes of the Eitz haDaas. His sin was merely that he jumped the gun. The world changed forever and ever because of that hastiness on his part.

A student of the Ari z"l points out that the prohibition to eat from the Tree of Knowledge was given on the ninth hour of the Sixth Day of Creation. Rather than waiting just 3 more hours, Adam ate from it right away. The Kabbalistic works explain this is why Orlah is prohibited the first 3 years. Since the first man could not wait three more hours, the Torah gives us a lesson in waiting – 3 years to atone for the sin of Adam not waiting 3 hours!

The Chasam Sofer asks, "What was his rush?" More to the point, if in fact on Shabbos, this same tree would have been permitted, how could it be so terrible if he ate it a couple of hours earlier? The Chasam Sofer explains that when Adam was created, he did not have an Evil Inclination (Yetzer haRah). There was no "fight". There was no struggle with conscience. Adam just naturally did that which was good. He knew that when he would eat from the Eitz haDaas, life would change: "You would be like Elo-him who knows good and evil." He would have free choice and could choose good or evil, which is ultimately the purpose of human beings in this world – to choose the good.

Adam's attitude was "I so much want to do the Will of G-d out of my own free choice that I cannot wait for this opportunity." However, the Almighty Knew better. He knew that in order to choose the right

decisions and to choose good rather than evil, Adam still needed another element – that was the sanctity of Shabbos. Had Adam waited those three extra hours and had gone into Shabbos suffused with the sanctity that Shabbos provides, he would have been able to withstand the temptations of life. This is what the Almighty wanted. That is why the Tree of Life suddenly became permitted on Shabbos.

We asked, "What changed (after those 3 hours would have passed)?" What changed is that Adam still needed a component – Kedushas Shabbos. He did not have that yet. He was not strong enough to resist.

By analogy, when one pours concrete to set a beam that will hold up a building, one must wait until the concrete dries and hardens in order to rely on its strength. If one starts putting weight on the beam before the concrete settles, the structure will collapse. This is just an example, but it helps us understand the situation with Adam at that moment. He was almost perfect. The Almighty wanted to be able to give him Bechirah Chofshis [Free Choice] to choose good over bad, but he needed for the concrete of his personality to set. Adam needed to become stronger and that strength was going to be given to him through Kedushas Shabbos. However, Adam could not wait. It was for the best of reasons, but he did not wait. He ate from the tree prematurely and unfortunately, the world changed forever for the worse.

As a 'tikun' [correction] for that, as a way to learn the lesson of "A thing in its proper time – how good" [Mishlei 15:23], the Torah gives us a prohibition called Orlah. For three years, WAIT. The lesson of Orlah and the lesson of "Lo Sochal al haDam" is WAIT. Not everything needs to be enjoyed or taken as soon as it is physically available. As a 'tikun' for Adam, for the three hours he could not wait, we keep the mitzvah of Orlah for three years.

Every Stoning Has A Silver Lining

The last words of Parshas Kedoshim are "And any man or woman who becomes involved with Ov and Yeedoni [people who attempt to bring back the spirits of the dead] shall be put to death. They shall pelt them with stones, their blood is upon themselves (demeihem bam)" [Vayikra 20:27].

What happened to the generally accepted principle that a Torah Portion does not end on a negative topic? We usually do not even end an Aliyah on a sour note. However, Parshas Kedoshim, which begins with the glorious words "You shall be holy…", ends with the stoning of people involved in this form of witchcraft – demeihem bam!

The Imrei Shammai makes an interesting observation. He says that the words "demeihem bam" are in fact a positive note. If a person is punished for his sins in this world – even via a violent death of stoning – at least he will then face the prospect of being eligible for Paradise in the World to Come, rather than facing the spectre of having to experience Gehinnom. - This should be considered positive. "Demeihem Bam" indicates he has achieved atonement in this world. His slate will be clean as he approaches the World of Truth.

Sometimes people suffer terribly before their death. It is extremely painful even to witness such suffering. We must bear in mind that sometimes this experience can be a 'favor' for the person. This is the lesson of the end of Parshas Kedoshim. 'Demeihem Bam' is not a sour note!

The Baal Ov and Yeedoni do have to die – but at least this execution will serve as an atonement and their ticket into the World to Come.

"There is no depth a person can fall to that Hashem's love does not reach." ~ Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

Rabbeinu Dovid Abudraham: What's In A Name?

The pasuk in the parsha says, "You shall not steal, and you shall not deny falsely, and you shall not lie to one another." [Vayikra 19:11] Rashi points out that the theft mentioned in this pasuk refers to monetary theft, while the prohibition "Thou shall not steal" in the Ten Commandments refers to the capital offense of kidnapping. This fact is not widely known in the world at large. The average person who is not versed in the traditions of the Oral Law, believes that "Thou shall not steal" in the Ten Commandments refers to monetary theft.

I would like to relate an incident which teaches how careful a person must be to avoid stealing money (or property). There is a famous Sephardic commentator known as Rabbeinu Dovid Abudraham. Rabbeinu Dovid wrote a commentary on the Siddur, which is one of the classic commentaries on Jewish liturgy. How did he get the name Abudraham? This is not a common name, even among Sephardic Jews. There is a story that goes with the name.

Rabbeinu Dovid was a merchant. I do not know exactly what he sold, but whatever it was, people would give him their money and he would measure out the commodity he was selling and give them what they purchased, based on weight. In those days, the scales were far more primitive than today. Also, they did not weigh in pounds or ounces, kilos or grams. The unit of weight in those days in his country was something called the dram. However, when someone ordered 10 drams of merchandise, Rabbeinu Dovid would not put 10 drams on the scale and measure it all at once; he would put one dram at a time on the scale. With each dram that he would sell, he would give a little more than the exact measure, to be sure that he was not near the borderline of possible theft. He would repeat this slight perk for the customer with each dram he weighed out.

One day a Gentile entered the store and told Rabbeinu Dovid that he wanted 9 drams of merchandise. So Rabbeinu Dovid went through

his ritual and weighed out a dram nine times, wrapped up each dram, and gave the package to the customer. However, when the customer left the store, Rabbeinu Dovid began to think, "Maybe I only wrapped up 8 packages, not 9. Maybe I short-changed the customer on this order!" He ran out of the store to catch the customer before he got too far down the block, to tell him he might have only received part of his order." The truth is he probably gave him 9 drams worth of merchandise even if it was only in 8 packages because of his practice of giving extra; and most likely, he had given him the full number of packages anyhow.

At any rate, the Gentile was so impressed with the honesty of Rabbeinu Dovid that he converted to Judaism.

In Arabic the name preface "Abu" means "father of" (similar to the Hebrew word Aba). That is why he had the name "Abudraham" – it meant in Arabic "Father of the Dram," because he was so meticulous in his business dealings that he measured out each order dram by dram.

Tochacha: The Hardest Mitzvah to Properly Fulfill

The Torah states "You shall surely chastise your fellow man." [Vayikra 19:17] There is a positive Biblical mitzvah to rebuke one's fellow Jew and set him on the correct path if one sees him doing something wrong.

The Kesav Sofer in his responsa [#57] writes that this is the most difficult mitzvah to fulfill properly. The person delivering the rebuke must use all of his intelligence to measure what to say carefully and to consider the possibility that saying nothing at all may be the most appropriate thing to do.

I would venture to say that 99 times out of 100, it is better not to say anything in these situations. I am not speaking about a parent to his child or a Rabbi to his congregation, but it is usually better not

to say anything to one's fellow man. **The Chazon Ish** makes this point in Hilchos Shechitah. One has to weigh his words so carefully if he wants them to be effective that most people are simply not capable of giving appropriate "tochacha".

The Chofetz Chaim was once traveling and he came into a Jewish inn. He sat down and saw another person enter the inn. The person was apparently an extremely boorish individual. He sat at a table and shouted at the innkeeper to bring him some food. He asked for fried goose and vodka. When the food was brought to him, he gobbled it down without making any blessings and was totally abusive to everyone around him – a truly disgusting individual. The Chofetz Chaim was about to go over to him and tell him that such behavior was inappropriate and unacceptable. The innkeeper saw that the Chofetz Chaim was about to approach the man and quickly went to the Chofetz Chaim and said, "I must tell you something about this person."

In the time of the czars, the Russians drafted Jews into the czarist army. They actually took young boys and drafted them into Czar Nicholas's army. When they took these children, it was not for 2 or 3 years – it was for 35 years. It was a living hell. The innkeeper explained to the Chofetz Chaim that this individual was grabbed away from the Jewish community at age 7 and was forced to remain in the czar's army in Siberia and elsewhere for 35 years. He does not know the shape of the letter Aleph. He has no manners because he never had any type of Jewish upbringing. He has no Torah learning because he never had the opportunity. He is, in fact, a person without any spiritual characteristics other than the fact that he still remembers that he is a Jew.

The Chofetz Chaim went over to the individual and told him "I am jealous of your portion in the world to come. For you to remain a Jew after all you experienced and not to convert to Christianity is amazing. Your 'test' (nisayon) was greater than that of Chananya,

Mishael, and Azarya." [Daniel Chapter 3] The man started crying. From that day on, he became very attached to the Chofetz Chaim and became a complete Baal Teshuva.

Every person has some redeeming value, no matter how degenerate or spiritually low he has sunk. If, when addressing the person, you zero in on the person's faults and negative traits, you will not have success in correcting the person's ways. The result will be that the person will hate the one who chastised him. However, if you zero in on the person's value and positive characteristics and see the "wise man" in him, then you will connect with that person and will eventually be beloved by him.

This is exactly what the Chofetz Chaim did with that Jewish Russian soldier who was so rude and abusive. Had he focused in on his boorishness, the fellow would have remained a boor and would have hated the Chofetz Chaim. However, on the contrary, the Chofetz Chaim was able to find the righteousness in the person and thus was able to establish a connection, which eventually brought him around to true righteousness.

The Role of the Spouse in Loving One's Neighbor

This week's parsha contains the famous pasuk, "You shall not take revenge, and you shall not bear a grudge against the sons of your nation, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Hashem." [Vayikra 19:18] The mitzvah of loving one's neighbor is the "great principle of the Torah" [Jerusalem Talmud Nedarim 9:4].

The Rambam writes that "we are commanded to love one another like we love ourselves." However, according to the Ramban, the Torah is not necessarily asking us to develop an emotion of love. Rather, the demand is that we treat people in a manner as if we loved them. According to either opinion, this mitzvah requires us to worry about people, be concerned about them, show them warmth and comfort,

and provide them what they need — be it financial help, spiritual help, physical help, or emotional help.

A very basic question can be asked. How does a man fulfill the mitzvah of "loving his neighbor" with a woman? Half of all people are members of the "opposite sex." A woman is certainly considered "one's neighbor" in regard to this mitzvah. So very simply, one should ask, how are men able to fulfill this mitzvah of loving our "female neighbors," if there are obvious problems in providing the amount of concern and care and comfort one is supposed to provide in fulfilling this mitzvah, to a member of the opposite sex? The same question can of course be asked regarding how women can fulfill this mitzvah with regard to their male "neighbors."

Rav Shimon Schwab suggests that the only way that a person can safely fulfill the mitzvah of loving one's neighbor with members of the opposite sex is through one's spouse.

We are all obligated to fulfill the 613 mitzvos. However, I, as a member of one of the non-Priestly Tribes, can obviously not offer sacrifices in the Bais HaMikdash. As a non-Levi, I cannot accept Ma'aser. There is a concept in Judaism that we as a nation are a unit. Some of the mitzvos are fulfilled through Kohanim, descendants of the High Priest Aharon. Some are fulfilled through Levites, and so forth.

Rav Schwab wants to extend this concept. He argues that the mitzvah of "loving one's neighbor" as it applies to the universe of Jews can only be fulfilled as a husband-wife unit. The husband must serve in the role of "Avraham drew near to him the men" and the wife must serve in the role of "Sarah drew near to her the women."

Rav Schwab quotes a Zohar, which refers to the fact that "man without a wife is like half a body." This means that a person cannot reach full spiritual fulfillment in this world without a spouse. Part of the reason for this, Rav Schwab argues, is because the mitzvah of

"loving one's neighbor like oneself" cannot be fully fulfilled without a spouse. This is a mitzvah that is assigned to the "couple." The man fulfills his part with other men, and the woman fulfills her part with other women.

I mention this idea every once in a while because in American society — especially today in the secular world — there are absolutely no boundaries between the mingling of the sexes. People are in offices, in jobs, in social situations where they constantly have to mingle. There is absolutely no thought given to the time-honored Jewish value that the sexes should be separated. Unfortunately, many problems — which I do not have to elaborate upon — come about when there is too much intermingling between members of the opposite sex. Countless people have paid the price because they have not been judicious and careful in this area.

People assume that they are just being 'normal'. But biology and human nature being what they are, the Torah warns us that we have to build boundaries and fences for ourselves. If not physical boundaries and fences, there must at least be a certain "distance" and limitation — all within the context of civility and politeness — which allows us to constantly be on guard for the inherent dangers in socialization and the establishment of relationships between members of the opposite sex.

The Command To 'Be Holy' Was Given In A Mass Gathering

Parshas Kedoshim begins with the words "Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel (kol adas bnei Yisrael) and say to them: 'Kedoshim Tihiyu – You shall be holy…'" [Vayikra 19:1-2]. Rashi points out that the uncommon inclusion of the phrase "the entire assembly of the Children of Israel" in the standard formula "Speak to the Children of Israel…" teaches us that this mitzvah was specifically given in the presence of the entire assembly of Israel (b'hakhel).

There is a famous disagreement among the early commentaries as to exactly what is meant by the mitzvah "You shall be holy." Rashi interprets the mitzvah as one of abstinence — "You shall be removed from arayos and from sin." The word "Kadosh" literally means: "separate." When we say "Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh" about Hashem, we are emphasizing his separateness and uniqueness. Thus, the meaning of "You shall be Kedoshim" is "You shall be separated – from forbidden sins."

The Ramban, in a famous argument with Rashi, says that "You shall be Kedoshim" is referring to perfectly permissible activities. The concept is "sanctify yourself by withdrawing from that which is permissible to you". The level of sanctity required by this pasuk is that achieved by restraining oneself somewhat from even those physical pleasures that the Torah permits.

The Chasam Sofer points out that whether we accept Rashi's interpretation or the Ramban's approach, the message of this mitzvah is one of abstinence. One could perhaps erroneously come to the conclusion that the only way to achieve this level of sanctity would be to lock oneself on the top of a mountain in a monastery. One could think that one should ideally have nothing to do with people; one should not get married and have nothing to do with the opposite gender at all. The Torah therefore makes clear that the "holiness" of a monk is not desirable. This section was specifically delivered "b'hakhel". Everyone was present – the men, the women, and the children.

One must be a Kadosh [a holy person], but one must be a Kadosh in the context of the congregation and the community. One must get married, and one must raise children. One must play with his kids and spend time with his family and be a part of the community. The Torah wants the holiness of complete human beings.

The Kotzker Rebbe used to stress "MEN of holiness you shall be to Me" [Shemos 22:30]. "G-d is not looking for more angels." The Torah

was not given to angels [Brachos 25b]. It was given to human beings who have wants and desires and are social animals. In that context we are commanded to develop holiness.

Therefore, specifically Kedoshim Tihiyu, of all mitzvos, was relayed in a mass public gathering to emphasize that despite our obligation to achieve holiness through a certain degree of abstinence it must be in the context of the community, together with one's wife, one's children, and one's neighbors.

Making Gods Out of Gold and Silver

The verse says [Vayikra 19:4] "Do not turn toward idols; nor should you make a graven god for yourselves".

Rabbi Yeruchum Levovitz, zt"l, the Mir Mashgiach, pointed out an inconsistency in this verse. The verse begins by speaking of idols (elilim), which are worthless pieces of stone or metal or rock. Then in the same verse, the Torah continues and calls, that which, just moments ago, was a worthless inanimate object, a graven god (Elohei Masecha). How does a worthless stone become a Deity?

On the verse "You should have no other gods (Elohim Acherim) before Me" [Shemos 20:3], the Medrash says 'Does that imply there are other gods? Rather, it means others (Acherim) make them into gods (Elohim).'

This Chaza"l is telling us an unbelievable thing: We can take and make a god out of anything. That which yesterday we created out of our own hands and was merely an idol (Elil), if we glorify it and praise it and give it honor, then we have made it into a god.

Don't turn to the Elilim — because once you stray and give prominence to even the Elil [idol], that Elil turns into an Eloha [God]. It can be Deified. Our own actions can turn even the lowest of objects into gods.

Two or three thousand years ago, when people were primitive, they believed in such nonsense. They took items out of stone, out of metal, out of gold, and out of silver and they turned them into gods. They were stupid, backward and ignorant. But we are modern men!

We are just like them. We also take gold and we take silver and turn them into gods! Except, instead of turning the gold into a god in the form of a little man or a little eagle, we turn the gold into a god, in the shape of a coin.

We also Deify inanimate objects. That which was an Elil yesterday, becomes an Eloha today.

Recently, when I was out of town, on my way home from shul, I noticed a fellow washing his car. But this fellow was not merely washing his car — he was scrubbing the tires! He was sitting on his knees, with the brush and the water and the soap, scrubbing — not the car, but the tires! Two minutes after he starts driving the car, what are those tires going to roll over? What will they look like? But you can make a god out of a tire.

The next day, which was Shabbos, I took a walk around Lake Washington, where I saw the pleasure boats in the water. (Pardon me. Calling them boats is not doing them justice.) There was a fellow sitting on his yacht, enjoying Olam HaZeh [the pleasures of this world]. What was he doing? Polishing his chrome. It was a hot day and he was making sure that the metal shined.

This fellow has his tires. This fellow has his yacht. Have we at all changed? Have we advanced any further from the "gods of metal you shall not make for yourself?" It is the same gold. It is the same silver. It is the same inanimate objects that we know are just inanimate pieces of wood and metal and rubber. But unfortunately, we have the power of turning them into our gods.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Rabbi Akiva's Students Were Punished for Something Worse Than Lack of Mutual Respect

Parshas Kedohsim contains the famous *pasuk* "You should love your neighbor as yourself." [Vayikra 19:18], about which Rabbi Akiva stated: *Zeh Klal Gadol b'Torah* (This is the fundamental principle of Torah). This *pasuk* teaches the positive Biblical command of loving every Jew, or as the Ramban explains it more precisely, treating every Jew as though you love him. Do unto him as you would want to be done to you, and don't do to him what you would not want to be done to you.

As we all know, we are now in the days of *Sefiras HaOmer*, in which we commemorate the death of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. One of the great ironies of Jewish history is that Rabbi Akiva, who used to preach *V'Ahavta L'Reyacha Ka'mocha,* had 24,000 disciples who, *Chazal* say, died because *lo nohagu kavod zeh b'zeh* (they **did not** treat each another with proper respect).

Imagine this tragedy—24,000 Torah students dying in a relatively short timeframe. We cannot even imagine it! There are large Yeshivas in the world today. There are six or seven thousand *talmidim* in Lakewood. There are an equal number in the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim. *Chas v'Shalom*, can we imagine one of those Yeshivas suddenly not being here? It would be a tragedy of major proportions! And as a punishment for what sin? Because they did not have proper respect for one another! That is something we cannot fathom!

There are different theories advanced as to why Rabbi Akiva's students were punished so severely for something which is certainly not a capital offense. One classic answer is that their high spiritual level magnified the significance of their actions inasmuch as *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* has a higher standard for *tzadikim*. "He weighs out retribution for them according to a thin strand of hair." [Bava Kama 50a]

I saw an interesting explanation from the **Chofetz Chaim**, who asks this question: What crime or sin did they commit that they should be subject to death? He advances a novel idea: They were not punished for the sin of disrespecting their fellow man, but for the sin of *Chilul HaShem* (Desecration of the Name of G-d). The lack of mutual respect manifested by Rabbi Akiva's disciples spread the impression in the world at large that *Talmidei Chachomim* fight with one another.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the "lack of respect" stemmed from terrible *machlokes* and divisiveness that existed among Rabbi Akiva's students. For *Talmidei Chachomim* to be arguing with one another, said the Chofetz Chaim, is a *Chilul HaShem*. *Chilul HaShem* **is** a sin that can in fact be punishable by death!



Rabbi's Message

***Rav Moshe Twersky hy"d**, was one of the Holy Martyrs that we remembered a few days ago on Yom HaZikaron. He was killed in the attack on the Shul in Har Nof about 18 months ago. The following Dvar Torah is something he shared with his students in Yeshiva Toras Moshe in Jerusalem:*

The *Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'Avodah* avers that the mitzvos of *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* and *b'tzedek tishpot amisecha* (*19:15, 18*) comprise the backbone of *avodas Hashem*. He explains that Hashem feels every Jew's joy and suffering. By alleviating someone's pain, or by giving them joy, one does the same for Hashem, as it were.

Why does that make them, though, the backbone of all avodas Hashem? Don't all mitzvos bring Hashem nachas ruach? Why should these two particular mitzvos be any more significant?

The following *mashal* can help us understand this idea (*in fact, everything in this world is a mashal for avodas Hashem*). Two people need help. One individual is a penniless pauper who lives in a mud hut and he dreams of one day living in an opulent palace. The other is a man whose child is suffering from an extremely life-threatining illness. Who do you think should take precedence? In which one of these two situations will there be a greater transition "from darkness to light"?

We are the children of *Ha'Kadosh Baruch Hu*. True, He gets *nachas ruach* from every mitzvah that we do, but He gets a unique *nachas ruach* when His children love each other and are happy. Learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvos indeed creates "castles and palaces" in *Shamayim*, but the *nachas ruach* of helping a fellow Jew is still unique.

Adapted from Ascent of Safed: R' Yerachmiel Tilles

19:11 לֹא תִגְנֹבוּ וְלֹא־תְכַחֲשׁוּ וְלֹא־תְשַׁקְּרוּ אִישׁ בַּעֲמִיתוֹ

R' Avraham Abish Lissa zt"l, one of the outstanding scholars of his generation, was the Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt-au- Main until his passing on 11 Tishrei 5529 (1768). Aside from the many hours he spent occupied with rabbinical duties and scholarship, he was greatly involved with deeds of kindness, especially helping to provide food and clothing for the poor. It was his custom to make the rounds of the wealthy citizens of the city, as well as successful merchants who came to Frankfurt to conduct business, to solicit charity which he later distributed to the poor, to widows and to orphans. One day as he made his rounds, he stopped in one of the local inns and approached a visiting merchant who was in Frankfurt on business. "Excuse me, sir," began the Rabbi. "Can you please make a contribution to help the poor with food and clothing?" The merchant didn't so much as raise his eyes to gaze at the supplicant standing before him. R' Abish, for his part, was too unassuming to announce

his name, and stood before the merchant patiently waiting. He made his request one more time. The merchant was in no mood to be troubled by solicitors and ordered, "Get out of here and stop bothering busy people." Without another word, R' Abish turned and left the inn, never insisting and never imagining to use his identity to coerce the unwilling donor.



A few minutes later, the merchant rose to leave and reached for his cane, but to his surprise it was not there. His stick, with its silver embossed handle, was his prized possession, and he was quite upset to find it missing. It didn't take him long to link the pauper who had been collecting to his missing stick. The man must have stolen it out of revenge. He dashed out of the inn in hot pursuit of the thief. A few hundred yards away he caught up to the thieving collector. "Hey," he yelled, "How dare you? Give me back my walking stick, you no good thief!" R' Abish looked at the man and answered truthfully, "I'm sorry, but I have not seen your cane. I would certainly never take anything from you." But the merchant's anger, rather than being assuaged, only grew in ferocity. He continued to harangue the man he mistook for a thief and when R' Abish continued to calmly deny everything, he began to beat the elderly Rav. Still, the chief rabbi of Frankfurt did not respond with anger; despite the pain, R' Abish remained steadfast in his humble demeanour. "Please believe me. I did not steal your cane!" Finally, the man realized he was getting nowhere and left R' Abish in disgust. The Rav, bruised and beaten, picked himself up, dusted himself off, and continued on his mission.

The following Shabbos, as was customary in Frankfurt, the chief rabbi delivered a Torah lecture in the afternoon before a large crowd of Jews. The merchant decided to join the shiur, finding a seat in the back of the large hall, for he had heard that the famous scholar, R' Avraham Abish would be speaking and he was interested in hearing the great man in person. Indeed, the Rav's two-hour complex dissertation was quite impressive. Yet the man could not shake the feeling that this awesome scholar's voice sounded familiar.

At the rabbi's concluding words he stood and raised his eyes to the podium to catch a clear glimpse of the great man. To his great shock and dismay, he recognized him at once - here was the impudent beggar that he had beaten a few days before!

The episode flashed before him in a horrible new light. Horrified, he cringed in his seat, panic-stricken at the unspeakable way he had treated the man. "What shall I do? Can the Rav ever forgive me for what I did?" he thought. Unable to bear the shame, he attempted to sneak out of the shul. But then he realized that his sin was too great to ignore. "I doubt if the great Rabbi will ever forgive me for treating him the way I did," he thought, sadly. Nevertheless, the merchant realized that he had no choice but to make an attempt. When R' Abish had finished speaking, he walked through the crowd, greeting everyone graciously. The quaking merchant stood off to the side, speechless with embarrassment.

Just then, R' Abish approached. The great Rav looked up and recognized the man instantly. Although he was in the midst of an admiring audience of hundreds, most of whom were still overcome by his erudition, he gave no thought to his own dignity. Before the merchant could stutter an apology, R' Abish cried out to his former persecutor, "Please, believe me. I didn't take your cane. I promise you on my word of honour!"



Motherhood & Shabbos Pie - Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ

"One must revere his mother and father and observe my Shabbos, I am Hashem your L-rd" (19:3)



By combining the mitzvos of respecting parents, the Torah begins the first of the myriad commands between both man and his fellow man, and man and his Creator, that fill Parshas Kedoshim.

Rashi notes this curious combination of Shabbos observance and parental respect. It interprets the juxtaposition to mean that Shabbos observance is so important that it overrides parental request for its desecration. But in addition to the halachic directive inferred by the proximity of the two laws, perhaps there is a moral lesson, too.

Dr. James David Weis had been attending **Rabbi Berel Wein's** classes for a while, and though he was not committed to Yiddishkeit in all its aspects, he was truly fascinated by the amazing insights and the spiritual impact that Torah study had made on his life. In fact, although he was a shiur regular, and his wife was committed to Torah observance as prescribed by the Shulchan Oruch, the doctor had not yet made the commitment to observe Shabbos.

Towards the summer, Dr. Weiss mentioned to Rabbi Wein that shortly he would be visiting Israel. The doctor had heard Rabbi

Wein's stories of his experiences, as the Rabbi of Miami Beach, having chauffeured **Rabbi Yosef Kahanamen**, the Ponovezer Rav on his fund-raising missions in the United States. In many of his lectures, Rabbi Wein had related his close relationship with Rav Kahanamen, and Dr. Weiss excitedly told Rabbi Wein that he would soon visit the Ponovez Yeshiva. Dr. Weiss did not know that the Rav had passed away a decade earlier, so he enthusiastically offered to send Rabbi Wein's regards to the Ponovezer Rav. Not trying to discourage the visit, Rabbi Wein smiled and said, "you could try."

Dr. Weiss arrived at the Ponovez Yeshiva and after marveling at the beauty of its gilded Aron Kodesh and nearly 1000 swaying Talmudists, he asked a boy to direct him to the Ponovezer Rav. Since the Rav had passed away a decade earlier, they directed him to the Rosh Yeshiva, **Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Shach**.

Dr. Weiss waited for the sage to lift his head from the large tome. The old sage looked up and greeted the doctor. Dr. Weiss stuck out his hand, and with the remnants of the Yiddish he had salvaged from his youth, he addressed Rav Shach.

"Sholom Aleichem! My name is Dr. Weiss I study with Rabbi Wein and I come from America with warmest regards from him."

Rav Shach looked at him quizzically. "I don't know a Rabbi Wein."

"Don't you remember?" asked Dr. Weiss in shock. "Rabbi Berel Wein," he repeated. "He would often drive you when you visited Miami on behalf of the Yeshiva."

Rav Shach smiled.

"I don't know Rabbi Wein, and I have never been to Miami. My name is Shach. I think you meant to see Rav Kahanamen, but unfortunately he has passed away."

Dr. Weiss looked embarrassed.

But Rav Shach quickly dissolved the discomfort by holding the doctor's hand and blessing him warmly.

"Dr. Weiss, you are a good Jew and you should be a gebenchta (a blessed) Jew. But remember, Shabbos observance is an integral part of Yiddishkeit. Do not forsake the Shabbos!"

Dr. Weiss was astonished. How did Rav Shach know about his wavering about commitment to Torah-observance?

It did not make much of a difference, because from that day on Dr. Weiss affirmed his committed to Shabbos with the same intensity that he had always committed to his fellow man

Perhaps the Torah juxtaposed the most basic tenet of any society with the highest form of our spiritual expression to teach us that the two are inseparable.

Many people feel that Judaism entails all that is mom and apple pie. But there is more to Yiddishkeit than what we, as Americans, Europeans, Asians, Africans, and even Israelis feel good about or think is morally correct. Judaism entails the essence of our spirituality that is encompassed and represented by Shabbos observance. Judaism is more than Mom and Apple Pie.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - Behind the Scenes

דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל And speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel… (Vayikra 19:2)

Allow me to take you behind the scenes of some of the work done at Ohr Naava.

It was just two weeks before Ohr Naava's 11th Shabbos of Inspiration that the staff at Ohr Naava approached me with a major concern. "Rabbi, there are only two weeks left, and we have only 32 out of 250 rooms booked." From both a logistical and financial point

of view, it only made sense to entirely cancel the Shabbaton. But I had other plans.

The next morning, I entered the Ohr Naava offices, only to be encouraged once again to call off the Shabbaton. "In the contract, we agreed to booking 250 rooms, but we reserve the right to use only 225 of them and be reimbursed for the others," one of the staff members said. "Do you want us to call the hotel to arrange that?"

"Call the hotel and see how many more rooms they have available in addition to 250," I replied. Unsure how that made any sense whatsoever, the staff had nothing to say. "Just ask them," I said.

A short while later, the staff re-joined. "They have ten more rooms available." "Book them," I said. With no idea how they would ever pull off filling the now 260 rooms when only 32 were currently reserved, I went on to explain.

"Every morning after davening, while wearing my Rabbeinu Tam tefillin, I learn a Mishnah from Pirkei Avos. And guess what I learned today? The Mishnah said, 'Any gathering which is made for the Sake of Heaven will be successful; and any gathering which is not made for the Sake of Heaven will not be successful' (Avos 4:14). If we make this Shabbaton with the right intentions, we will have all those rooms full."

And indeed, for the 48 hours between February 3rd to 5th, 798 men, women and children filled the Parsipanny Hotel in New Jersey. Not only was every room in the hotel booked, but the phone kept ringing with requests from dozens of people asking if they could stay in other nearby hotels and simply drop in to hear the fantastic lectures. It is not coincidental that the theme of the Shabbaton was "Dare to Dream," and that is exactly what happened here. We dreamed big and the dividends it paid were tremendous.

On various occasions during different Shabbatons, people have come to me and asked, "Why so lavish? Why do you make these Shabbatons at such beautiful hotels with stunning rooms and delicious food?" And I remind myself of what my Rebbe, Rabban Gamliel Rabinowitz, said, "Always treat Hashem's daughters like your own." When the girls come out of this, they say, "Wow! I never had such a bed, such a hotel and such food!" And I know that Hashem is smiling.

At a Shabbaton a few years ago, a girl approached me and said, "Rabbi Wallerstein, something is wrong. I left my room in the morning to go to shul and my bed wasn't made. When I later returned, though, my bed was made. But I don't know who made it?" Staring back at her with a smile, I said, "It is a hotel. There is a maid." "What?" she said. To my surprise, she had never been in a hotel before. "In a hotel," I explained, "they make your bed." "That's amazing!" she said. That is why we make the Shabbaton like we do.

Every person is asked three questions when they come to the Next World, yet a Rebbe or anyone in chinuch has one other question: did you treat My children like they were yours? I am asked every question I can imagine. Whether it is questions relation to raising children or shalom bayis or anything else. How though can I make such a big and important decision for somebody? It is a life decision. Yet I look at that girl who asked me that question, who is crying or who is depressed and I say, "That's my daughter Malkey. What would I answer my daughter?" And I know what I would answer my daughter regarding any question she would ask me. And therefore, that is the answer I give that girl. And if that girl is in pain, then it is my daughter Malkey who is in pain. That is all Hashem wants from the people in chinuch. Treat My children like your own.

When I started Ohr Naava, some girls said they would like to have a basketball league on Motzei Shabbos. But I didn't have a gym. Some girls said they would love to go swimming and have a library, but I

didn't have the financial means to afford any of that. 'We come from college,' they said, 'and if we could do our homework at Ohr Naava, we could come earlier and be there longer.' There are also many girls who through Ohr Naava have become religious, but otherwise cannot return to a home where there is kosher food. And they don't have a place to stay for Shabbos either.

The girls therefore said to me, 'If you could give us a dorm, we would have somewhere to stay, and we could enjoy a real Shabbos. We could belong to a shul and to a community.' The only way I could do that, though, would be through building dormitories for them. All of a sudden, this little idea of a program for eighteen girls and a budget of $20,000 was now 2,500 girls with a budget of $700,000. But now to have a building with a library, pool, gym and all the rooms, it would cost 5 to 7 million dollars.



People told me, "You are a dreamer; you cannot do this!"

But I told them, "I am not doing this. Hashem is doing this. It is His daughters. And I am sure He wants them to have a gym, and He wants them to have a pool and a library. I am therefore confident that when there is a need to provide for them, Hashem will grant people the siyata dishmaya to understand the need and open up their hearts."

I was thinking that the dream of Ohr Naava is sort of like Sarah Schenirer's dream. Her dream was that every city in which Jews live should have a Bais Yaakov. Our dream at Ohr Naava is that every city in which Jews live in should have a night program for girls. I can just imagine if many years ago Sarah Schenirer would have knocked

on someone's door and asked for financial help and they would have known what would happen from her dream. Everybody would be running after her to support her.

Or take Daf Yomi. What if we would have known what would happen from Daf Yomi? If Rav Meir Shapiro would have said, "To get the Daf Yomi started, I need a couple of dollars," the whole world would have jumped at the opportunity. But no one dreamed his dream.

Throughout life, we need to become people who have this same outlook and understand that with just one little dream, the greatest aspirations can become reality. And that dream begins today.

Pirkei Avos



It is customary to study Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers) during the six weeks between Pesach and Shabuot, one chapter every Shabbat. "Everything is foreseen." (3:15) **הַכֹּל צָפוּי**

Instead of Tzafui, foreseen, it should have said "known" or "seen".

The word Tzafui can mean floating. When one floats on the water, he makes an effort to keep his head upwards. The Mishnah is teaching that throughout his lifetime in this world, a person should imagine himself as floating in the ocean, so that to survive he must look upwards, look to Hashem and be attached to Him. *(Vedibarta Bam)*

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

וְלִפְנֵי עִוֵּר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכְשֹׁל You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person (19:14)

The Torah commands us not to place a stumbling block before the blind. Rashi explains that this prohibition doesn't only refer to causing a person who is literally blind to trip and fall, but it also applies to anybody who is "blind" in a certain area, as we are exhorted not to give him bad advice which could cause him to stumble. However, Rashi adds a word and emphasizes that this prohibition is transgressed by offering advice which is not suitable for him. What lesson is Rashi coming to teach us?



The Brisker Rav, Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, was once approached by the director of a prominent organization, who wanted his assessment about whether he should offer a leadership position within the organization to a certain individual. The Rav replied that he thought that the person in question was well-suited for the job and encouraged the director to hire him. When the individual was offered the position, he went to consult the Brisker Rav to solicit his opinion about whether he should accept the opportunity. He was advised to turn it down.

When the director heard that the prospective hire was declining the position at the recommendation of the Brisker Rav, he was shocked and astounded. He immediately returned to the Rav's house to ask him why he had changed his mind after initially maintaining that this individual was qualified for the job.

The sagacious Rav replied, "My opinion did not change at all. When you originally approached me, you asked whether it was in the best interests of your organization to hire this person, and I responded that it was. However, when he came to ask for my guidance, he didn't ask what would be best for the organization, but rather what would be best for him, to which I responded that it was not a good idea for him to accept the position.

The Torah requires us to give advice that is in the best interests of the advice-seeker, and if I would have told him to accept the job, which would be good for you but not for him, I would have transgressed this prohibition," a lesson that we should bear in mind when our opinions are solicited and we are tempted to respond in the way that we would like the other person to act, even though it may not be the best advice for the questioner.

Drush V'Chiddush

19:11 לֹא תִגְנֹבוּ וְלֹא־תְכַחֲשׁוּ וְלֹא־תְשַׁקְּרוּ אִישׁ בַּעֲמִיתוֹ

The gemara **יבמות סג.** recounts a remarkable incident. Rav was constantly tormented by his wife. If he asked her to prepare him lentils, she would prepare him small peas. If he asked for small peas, she prepared him lentils.

When his son Chiya grew up, he came up with an idea. He began to give over his father's requests to his mother in the reverse order. Suddenly, Rav was getting exactly what he asked for! Rav took notice of this and told his son, "It seems, your mother has improved." Chiya could not withhold the truth from his father and told him, "It was I who reversed your orders to her."

Upon hearing this, Rav said, "This is what people say: Your own offspring teaches you sound reason." However, Rav did not permit Chiya to continue this practice. Rav apparently admires his son's clever strategy, and yet he instructs Chiya to cease misreporting to

his mother. The question is why? After all, the Sages cite numerous sources in the Talmud regarding the accepted halachic principle that one is permitted to lie for the sake of Sholom Bayis! Why couldn't Chiya employ the same principle?



The Maharsha, R' Shmuel Eidels ZT"L sees the posuk cited from Yirmiyahu as the key to the answer. The prophet there speaks about learning to evade the truth. A situation in which Chiya would constantly lie to his mother would train him for a life of deceit. While the occasional lie to protect someone's feelings will not have a negative educational impact, an ongoing pattern of falsehood will. Therefore, Rav directs his son to stop for this is one of the most important principles that every father, mother and educator of children must recognize: Children become what they are taught to become. If misrepresenting the truth as a normal way of life is what they see at home or in school, you can be sure that this is how they will deal with truth for the rest of their lives!

"If a person wants to see something he must open his eyes. If he wants to see an object off in the distance, he must close his eyes halfway and squint.

But if he wants to see really far and understand things that are greater than the normal comprehension, he must close his eyes entirely and use his mental capacities to a greater level." ~ R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

A Cause of Salvation

Kiddush Hashem has the power to bring about salvation. We are taught **אם מקדשים אתם את שמי אף אני אקדש את שמי על ידכם** - ***if you glorify My name, then I will cause My name to be glorified through you.*** So, if we create a Kiddush Hashem, then Hashem will provide us a means of creating yet another Kiddush Hashem. For example, if the doctors despaired on one who was ill, but then through Tefilos he recovers, this is a Kidush Hashem.



About 45 years ago, the well-known philanthropist Ruby Schron bought a house in Brooklyn. One day when his children were jumping on the bed, they discovered a safe containing jewellery and bonds worth about $40,000. The sale contract clearly stipulated that the purchase of the home applied to everything in the home including all of the furniture and any belongings left behind.

The Schrons met with **R' Moshe Feinstein** who told them they should return everything because people usually don't include valuables in a sale. As a result, Ruby Schron called the previous owner, who related the following:

"My parents left us the money in the house, but we were unable to find it. We knew that a religious Jew such as yourself would return it to us if he found it."

At that time, Ruby Schron was just starting out in real estate. Hashem blessed him with great wealth, allowing him to perform even more Kidush Hashem's with all of his charitable endeavours.

In light of this, we can grasp **ישלח עזרך מקדש** as it can be understood that Hashem sends us salvation because of the Kidush Hashem we create.

R' Meisels, a renowned lecturer, was invited to speak in Melbourne, Australia. At the airport, in Los Angeles, where he was flying from, he met a Jew from Eretz Yisrael who would be on his twenty-hour flight. R' Meisels learned that this man was flying to Australia to raise the funds needed to marry off his eleventh child.

As the men passed through security, they were instructed to remove their shoes and put it through the conveyor belt, in accordance with standard security measures. After passing through the metal detector, they went to retrieve their shoes. While R' Meisels found his shoes, his counterpart didn't. The security staff looked around and noticed shoes in a corner, but it was two sizes too small.



They told him, "Apparently there was a mix-up and someone mistakenly took your shoes." They offered a $100 voucher to buy new shoes in Melbourne. The man remained calm and continued to the gate without shoes. While on the plane a non-Jew told this Jew, "I was just behind you in the airport when your shoes went missing and I have never seen such self-control. If it was me, I would have been screaming, 'Get me shoes!' I couldn't believe you just accepted going to Australia barefoot, along with a smile."

Since this Jew didn't speak fluent English, R' Meisels acted as the translator. The non-Jewish passenger then inquired as to why this man was travelling to Melbourne. When he discovered it was to raise money for his daughter's wedding, the non-Jew was shocked as he

said such a refined person shouldn't go knocking on doors asking for money. How much does he need? was his next question. Upon being told $25,000, this non-Jew wrote a check for 25,000 Euros, the equivalent of $33,000! When they arrived in Melbourne, they went to the bank to cash the check, which was entirely covered! After thanking Hashem, he took the next flight home to Eretz Yisrael.

Torah Tavlin - Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

19:18 וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ

On the posuk of לְאׇ־תִקֹּם וְלׇא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ, the helige Tanna Rabbi Akiva gives over his famous dictum: **זה כלל גדול בתורה** - This is a great rule of the Torah. Perhaps the greatest rule.



As we know, this halacha is applicable at all times and to all people. But specifically, during the days of Sefirah, it becomes extremely relevant.

I had two revelations in the posuk that are worth sharing. The first is that the juxtaposition of the two halves of the posuk seem to

teach us an important lesson. **לא תקום ולא תטר את בני עמך** - do not take revenge or hold a grudge against another Yid, is quickly followed by **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** - love every Yid. The Torah is teaching us that the real test of a human being is when you have someone you'd like to take revenge on, perhaps an enemy or a **שונא** who may have wronged you - don't hate him; rather **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** - love him. Because it's not a kuntz to love a tzaddik. The kuntz is to love an enemy!

A second idea is based on the **Baal Rokeach** who writes: **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ – זו אשתו כגופו** - as Shlomo HaMelech says in Mishlei, **אל תחרש על רעך רעה** which refers to a wife as **רעך** - a friend (see Gittin 90a). In the footnote there, it states that perhaps the Rokeach means **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** is the same gematria (820) as **אשתו כגופו** (when you include 2 more for him and his wife - total of 822).

The lesson is that if we recognize that our wives are truly our best friends, our shalom bayis would greatly improve, the Shechina would reside in our homes and our children would give us great nachas. Thus, **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** means to love your not-such-good friends and neighbours like you love yourself, because it's a bigger kuntz to love them over your dear friends, and treat your wife - your **רעך** - as you would like to be treated. By doing that, we will B'ezras Hashem be zocheh to the binyan Beis HaMikdash which was destroyed because of sinas chinam.

R' Dovid'l of Lelov ZT"L would say

"People say I am a tzaddik but I know that I am not. How do I know? Because the Torah teaches us that we must love every yid like we love ourselves. But I find that I cannot help loving my son more than I love other Jews. This is proof that I cannot be a tzaddik!"

Torah Tavlin



R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l (Alter from Slabodka) would say: **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** - People think that the Torah wants a person to love his friend the same way he loves himself, the same way he pampers and takes care of himself. But this is not what the Torah means. The Torah wants a Jew, who is careful to fulfil the halacha of **חייך קודמין** - your life comes first, to treat others the same way. Thus, **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** does not mean that you must love your friend the same way you love yourself, but rather, you should love your friend the same way you are **מחייב** by halacha to love yourself. What is required by halacha for yourself, that is what you must do for your friend."

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ZT"L would say:

"When the Almighty created the world, He took into consideration even the smallest of creatures. He did not give life to any being for which no provision was not made in this world. The thought that no creature is insignificant should make every person aware that living on Earth deserves respect because it itself bears the stamp of the Almighty. Thus, we too, ought to respect ourselves as creatures of the Almighty."

וְכִי־יָגוּר אִתְּךָ גֵּר בְּאַרְצְכֶם לֹא תוֹנוּ אֹתוֹ ***When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not taunt him. 19:34***

The Beis Din of R' Yisroel Belsky zt"l once conducted the geirus (conversion) of a young woman who eventually married and settled with her husband in the Philippines. When this couple was planning



their daughter's Bas Mitzvah party, they called Rav and Rebbetzin Belsky to invite and personally request that they fly to the Philippines to join them for the celebration. The Belsky's graciously agreed.

A week before the Bas Mitzvah, R' Belsky's daughter gave birth to quadruplets - three boys and one girl - in Eretz Yisroel. The next day, R' Belsky's daughter-in-law gave birth to a boy, also in Eretz Yisroel. The Rav now had the opportunity to serve as mohel for four grandsons within a span of two days. However, these simchos conflicted with the Bas Mitzvah in the Philippines for which a grand celebration had been planned and which could not be postponed.

Rebbetzin Belsky expressed the feelings of both her husband and herself. "The Torah says in more than one place that it is a mitzvah to love a ger. How could we disappoint them and not come? We already told them that we are coming!" And so R' Belsky and his wife missed the brisos of four grandsons in order to attend this Bas Mitzvah in the Philippines. His daughter later reflected, "Perhaps my father was granted four more years of life after his esophagus

ruptured as a reward for the four brisos that he gave up for the sake of a ger." Chazal tell us that Hashem put us on this world to perform mitzvos and sanctify His Name. This is not always easy to do and often we are required to give up something important to us in order to fulfil a mitzvah. Even a mitzvah like loving a ger, which normally would not require a person to forfeit anything from his personal life, can be fulfilled in a superior fashion. We must learn from our Gedolim and leaders who lead with action and show us the way to live.

R' Moshe Sternbuch shlit'a (Taam V'Daas) would say: לֹא תִגְנֹבוּ 19:11



The Ibn Ezra points out that this command is plural because even those who see a theft and keep silent are also considered thieves. In the Ten Commandments, this is said in the singular, **לא תגנוב** to personally warn each individual Jew not to steal. Here it is plural to teach that each Jew is responsible for his fellow - Kol Yisroel arevim zeh lazeh.

It is worth noting that **גניבה** (stealing) connotes cheating or stealing in secret, while the mitzvah **לא תגזול** two posukim later refers to robbery. Our posuk is plural to warn the many people who would be inclined to imitate thieves not to steal. But robbery is mentioned singular and addresses the lone individual, since few people dare to imitate highway robbers."

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

מִפְּנֵי שֵׂיבָה תָּקוּם וְהָדַרְתָּ פְּנֵי זָקֵן 19:32



As you walk onto an Egged Bus in Yerushalayim, the first words that greet you in the front row are **מִפְּנֵי שֵׂיבָה תָּקוּם**! One must stand up for elderly people. This is not just good manners - it's a mitzvah in the Torah!

The Chid'a gives us a deeper insight into these words: "M'pnei Saiva Takum" - it means that one must get up before he gets old! Before one has no more strength to sin, he must pick himself up and do Teshuva!

We have already passed the half-way point of Sefiras Haomer. Didn't we just start counting? The days seem to fly by - this is why we need to count them! We need to stop every day and realize that time is passing us by, and we must make the most of it. When you wake up in the morning, you need to tell yourself, "Today is the first day of the rest of my life."

Every day is a new opportunity, a fresh start! If yesterday wasn't that great, you can definitely make today better. Don't let yesterday's problems ruin today's potential. Every day in Shacharis we say that Hashem renews the entire creation of the world every single day. If so, then we must believe that we too, can surely renew ourselves! We must pick ourselves up before it is too late, and we are too old to change!

In Pirkei Avos, Hillel teaches us the secret to achieving our potential. **Rabbi Moshe Goldberger shlit'a** interprets his famous words brilliantly: **אם אין אני לי מי לי** - If I am not all that I can be then who am I? **וכשאני לעצמי** - And when I do live up to my potential, **מה אני** - How great am I? How great is the power of **אני** - the individual who truly raises himself up to be everything he can be!

Rabbeinu Yonah explains the end of the Mishna: **ואם לא עכשיו אימתי** - If not now then when? Don't procrastinate! Don't wait until you're too old and have no desire to sin. Make a list of the spiritual accomplishments you want to achieve and go do them! "M'pnei Saiva" - Before you get old, "Takum" - Raise yourself up and be the best you can be!

Torah Gems

19:17 לֹא־תִשְׂנָא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בִּלְבָבֶךָ... וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא

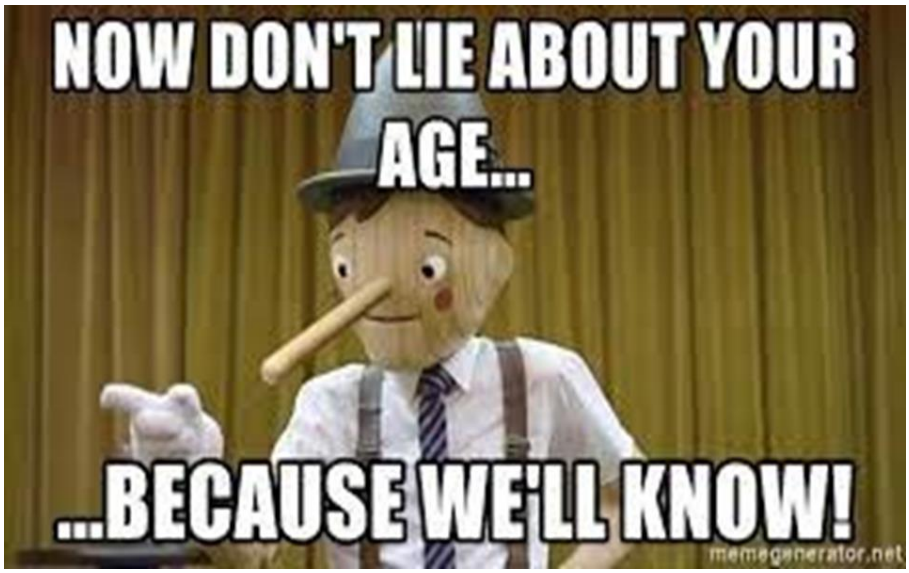
The Michtav M'Eliyahu, R' Eliyahu Dessler ZT"L writes in the name of the **Mahara'l M'Prague**, that a person who has a ***"Lev Tov"*** - a good heart is one who wishes good upon his friend. He is happy for him and hopes his friend succeeds in every aspect of life.

However, one who has an ***"Ayin Tov"*** - a good eye, is not satisfied with merely wishing happiness and success upon his friend. He will do whatever it takes to ensure that his friend receives what he wants and will not rest until he makes it happen.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Shimshon Pincus said, "When we *Daven*, we are talking to Hashem. When we learn Torah, Hashem is talking to us. Let's keep the conversation going!"

Shidduchim



In the area of Shidduchim, there are numerous rules and regulations that are adhered to in the matchmaking process. For example, it is prohibited for either party in a prospective match to provide false information or to withhold pertinent information, for doing so could result in the actual invalidation of the marriage (Igros Moshe, E.H. 1:79-80).

Information regarding serious physical or mental illness, infertility, lack of religious observance, and other such serious issues, may not be withheld. However, one is not required to divulge a deficiency which most people do not consider an impediment, including a minor illness or physical weakness, and there is a dispute between contemporary Poskim as to whether it is permitted to "adjust" the age of a boy or girl, when declaring their age. Often, older singles will answer vaguely when asked about their age, and according to some, there is legitimacy to this practice.

When a 36-year-old bochur learning in the Mir Yeshivah in Israel, was offered a shidduch with a girl nine years younger than him, he was unsure how to relay his personal information to her. Having been spurned a number of times due to his "advanced" age, he believed that perhaps in this situation, he should "adjust" his age to be closer to that of the prospective mate, so that she will feel more comfortable and amenable to go out with him. On the date, if she were to ask him his age, he was hesitant to say he was 36-years-old, for that might turn her away.

He inquired of his Rosh Yeshivah (one of the Mir Roshei Yeshivah) and explained the entire situation. He was told that if she asks him this question, he may answer vaguely and give a lower number, since people are not so makpid in this and do not always scrutinize.



Although armed with his Rosh Yeshivah's psak, the bochur nevertheless decided to use this opportunity to ask his query to the Gadol Hador. He drove to Bnei Brak and when he had a private moment, he presented his question to **R' Aharon Leib Steinman zt"l**.

The elderly Rav looked at him closely and replied, "She already knows about one of your deficiencies (advanced age); do you think it's worth it for her to think that you're also a liar?" The bochur was shocked at these words and recoiled in shame.

R' Aharon Leib softened his gaze and explained matter of-factly, "If she will ask you how old you are on a date, it is not because she does not know your age. Of course she knows your age. In today's day and age, she no doubt checked up on her computer and found out precisely how old you are. Why then is she asking you this question? Because she knows that many older singles are not truthful when declaring their age so the fact that she is asking you is for one reason only: to see if you will tell the truth or if you are a liar!" The date did materialize and just as he suspected, the girl asked him how old he was. He replied truthfully that he was 36-years-old.

With Heavenly assistance, the two went on a few more dates and eventually were engaged to be married. A date for the wedding was set and at one point during the engagement period, the ecstatic kallah divulged to her chosson that when she asked him how old he

was on their first date, it was not because she didn't know his age. She had looked him up and knew all his personal details. She just wanted to see what level of honesty he was on - and he had passed the test!

When the bochur went back to his Rosh Yeshivah to give him the news about his engagement, he also shared his conversation with R' Aharon Leib, and how the Rav told him to be precise with the truth. The Rosh Yeshivah was so happy for his talmid, but his reply to R' Aharon Leib's comment was even more telling.

"Believe me," he said, "the fact that R' Aharon Leib has Ruach Hakodesh and can see the future, does not impress me. I knew that already. What I am amazed by is the fact that he understands the minds of young people so well and that he knows how people use their computers to acquire knowledge in this day and age. I wonder if he can even describe what a computer looks like! "I use computers quite a bit and I thought I knew what they were all about, but it didn't occur to me that this girl would use hers to find out information. R' Aharon Leib, on the other hand, has a much broader view and he knows exactly what people use their computers for!"

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

Imagine a king was coming to visit your house. Picture all his royalty, chariots and musicians. Wouldn't you spend time working to clean every room by washing the floors, making the beds, and making everything neat and organized? The house would be sparkling clean from top to bottom. The windows would be shining as you looked outside awaiting your important guest.

All the more so we should clean and prepare our house for the *Shabbos Queen* who is coming to spend the day with us in our house! (*Mishnah Brurah* 250:3)

Torah gems - 19:3 אֵישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ



The Ohr HaChayim, Chacham Chaim ben Attar ZT"L, explains that the use of the singular term, "A man shall revere his mother and father," is a portrayal of the nature of parental honour; if children see their parents honour and revere their own parents, they will in turn honour them. The posuk, thus, teaches that one singular parent can cause both he and his child to revere their respective parents.

19:35 לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ עָוֶל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט בַּמִּדָּה בַּמִּשְׁקָל וּבַמְּשׂוּרָה



The baker used to buy butter from the milkman for his baking. One day he suspected that the lumps of butter that the milkman sold him were under a kilo - even though the milkman insisted that each was exactly one kilo. The baker weighed every lump of butter that he bought from the milkman and discovered that it was in fact less than a kilo. Sometimes it was 950g or 900g, and once even 850g. Furious he called the milkman to court. The milkman was trembling the day he stood before the judge. "I

assume you have a very accurate scale in your dairy," said the Judge. "You don't just guess that it is one kilo, do you?" he chided, while the baker guffawed loudly. "No G-d forbid, your honour," said the milkman. "I built myself a scale.

Every morning when I come to weigh the butter for the baker, I place a kilo loaf of bread that he gives me on one side of the scale and this way I know that the butter that I will give back to him will be exactly one kilo." "So the amount of butter that you give the baker is exactly the weight of the loaf of bread he supplies to you?" "Yes, exactly!" said the milkman. The baker's face fell.

The Torah issues strict guidelines regarding our weights and measurements. A person must be honest in business; that is absolute. But the deeper message is that before we set out to judge others, we must first check that our own house is in order. No one is perfect and everyone has failings. Often, we have the same failings that we accuse others of. It is important to remember the words of Chazal: "Straighten yourself first and then straighten others."

הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא 19:17

A family in White Russia once had trouble with their young son, Mordechai. He never wanted to study or pray; all he cared about was to play outside. He also had a penchant to get himself into trouble and cause untold mischief. It was a source of tremendous anxiety for his parents and they were at their wits end, not knowing how to deal with their son.

One day they heard that the great rebbi, **R' Aharon of Karlin ZT"L**, would soon be visiting their town. They decided that they would bring their son to meet the rebbe. Maybe he would be able to straighten young Mordechai out.

After much effort and many tries with the gabbaim and other influential people, they were able to secure an audience with R' Aharon. The rebbe listened intently as they told him their story. R' Aharon sat quietly for a few moments and then responded in an unexpectedly rough manner. "I'll have a few words with him and set him straight! Leave him to me, I'll teach him how to behave." The parents, a bit unsettled by his roughness, yet assured by his confidence, let R' Aharon bring Mordechai into his private room.



R' Aharon took a good look at the youngster, leaned back on the couch and in a gentle fatherly voice called the boy to come over. He held out his arms and motioned for him to come nearer. Then he pulled Mordechai close and held him against his chest for a long time. Not a word was spoken out of the rebbe's mouth, but the beating of his heart and the love and concern that flowed out from the rebbe and into young Mordechai, stirred something deep inside the boy and left a lasting impression. Afterwards, they went out together to the anxious parents. Not revealing his special method of persuasion, R' Aharon again spoke roughly to the parents. "I had a word with him. I expect him to shape up now!"

Indeed, the boy did change, and became the well-known tzaddik, **R' Mordechai of Lechovicz ZT"L**, the father of the Slonim dynasty. He always told his chassidim that whatever he accomplished in Torah, he first learned from R' Aharon of Karlin, who taught him Torah and how to serve Hashem, literally, from the heart.

Newspapers

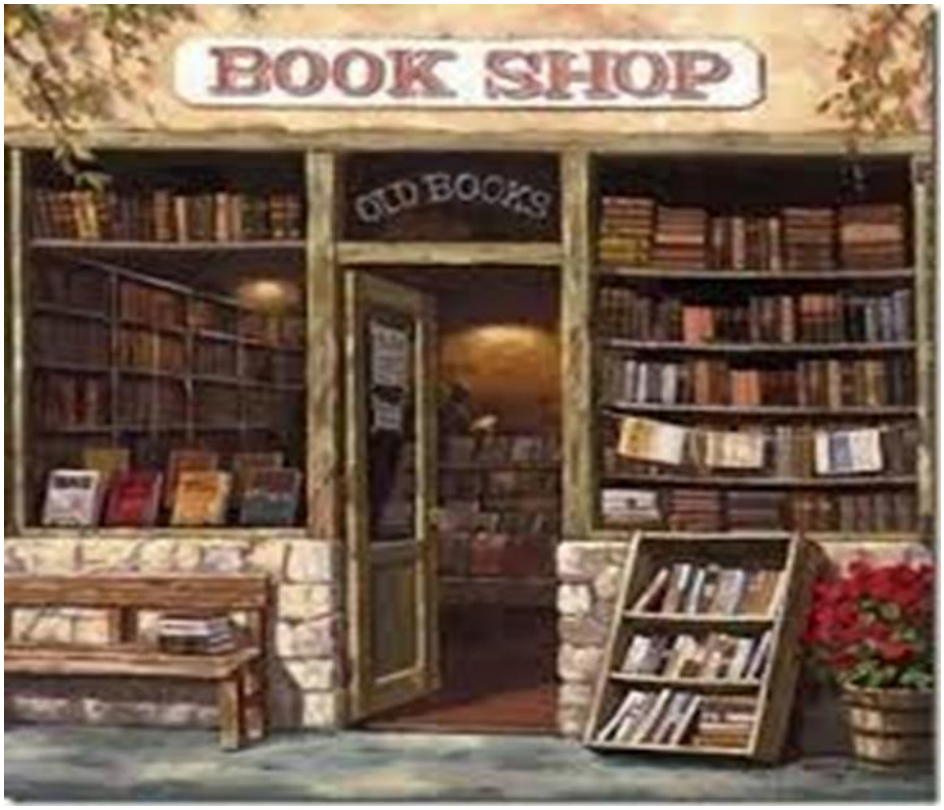
The great people of recent generations were well aware of the dangers of secular books, magazines and even newspapers (and this was at a time when the newspapers may have been less threatening than they are today).

The Kamenitzer Rosh Yeshivah, R' Boruch Ber Leibowitz ZT"L, never read a newspaper in his life. Once, he found a newspaper on his table. He called his rebbetzin, and asked her, "Who brought this into our house?" She said, "No one really brought it in. I sent the children to the store to buy butter, and it was sent home wrapped in this newspaper." R' Boruch Ber exclaimed, "We must get rid of the newspaper at once! Have one of the children ... no, I do not want them to handle the newspaper; they may become influenced by touching it!" He personally took the newspaper to the garbage, and then proceeded to wash his hands for the next ten minutes, exclaiming all the while, "Another cup! Another cup of water! What kind of Torah will I be able to say? What kind of Torah can I give over? My hands are impure!"

The great Rov, **R' Chaim Ozer Grodzensky ZT"L** was known to quickly scan the newspapers regularly since he was the posek hador who rendered halachic decisions on all and every issue pertaining to his generation. As a result, he felt that he must be familiar with world events in order to rule on everyday issues. He never read a newspaper, however, in the presence of **R' Boruch Ber.**

R' Avrohom Wolf ZT"L, founder of the seminary in Bnei Brak that bears his name, would not allow any book to be brought into the seminary unless he had ascertained that it was "kosher." Once, he was unsure about a certain book; he did not know whether or not it contained ideas which are unacceptable. He brought the book to the **Steipler Gaon, R' Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky ZT"L**, and asked him to look at it in order to check its contents.

The Steipler recoiled, saying, "I have never in my life read a newspaper or such a book, and therefore I do not wish to check through this book for you." "Non-kosher" books and newspapers do not pose a danger to yeshivah bochurim alone. Every Jewish soul can be tainted by the subtle, insidious effects of the printed word.



The Chofetz Chaim was adamant in his rejection of questionable reading material. He absolutely refused to let any such material in his town. In Radin, there was a G-d-fearing Jew who was a bookseller of various types of reading material. People came to the Chofetz Chaim with complaints that this person was selling books filled with heretical writings. The Chofetz Chaim told them to bring all the books in the store to him so he could examine them. The next day, a huge wagonload of books pulled up in front of the Chofetz Chaim's small house. Load by load, they were brought inside for the Rov's inspection. When he saw that the books were indeed Treif, the Chofetz Chaim immediately tore them up and demanded that the man close down his store.

The bookseller was a decent man and this thought devastated him. He pleaded with the Rov. "How then will I support my family?" he asked. The Chofetz Chaim assured him, "I will look for a job for you."

Three days later, the R' Yisroel Meir came to the man exclaiming, "Reb Shmuel! Reb Shmuel! I have a job for you! I found out that the

man whose job it was to summon the gentile peasants to the place where they hold religious services has died. I convinced their leader to let you have the job. All you have to do is stand outside and call all the goyim to their services every day."

The man was grossly insulted, and asked in wonder, "Rebbi, how can I, a religious Jew, earn a living by calling goyim to alien beliefs?" The Chofetz Chaim responded sharply, "It is better to call the goyim to alien beliefs than to call Yidden to alien beliefs. This job is better than your previous one. When you sold books, you were calling Yidden to alien beliefs!"

R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel ZT"L (Alter from Slabodkah) would say:



"The gemara relates that the holy Rava would place his hand over his eyes when reciting 'Shema Yisroel,' and the Shulchan Aruch cites this custom as the proper thing to do. The main reason it is done is to aid one in his concentration. But also, when a person concentrates deeply, he is apt to grimace, and a look of pain may come over him. Someone who is watching him may find this offensive and upsetting. To spare others this unpleasantness, Rava would cover his face and we do the same."

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא "…You shall surely rebuke your friend and do not bear a sin because of him" (19:17)



There is a famous story told about Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaCohen Kagan, the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l**. Once, when traveling from city to city, he came to an inn. While he and his traveling companion were sitting, he noticed a Jew whose behaviour was very crude and uncultured. The Jew banged on his table, demanding food. When he got his food, he gulped it down without washing his hands or saying a bracha. Then he took a long drink of whiskey, drinking directly from the bottle.

The Chofetz Chaim asked the innkeeper who the man was. The innkeeper told him that there was no point in speaking with him. He had grown up among the Russian peasants and was ignorant about Judaism. He had been kidnapped by the officials of Russian Czar Nicolas when he was only seven years old. He was forced to remain in the Russian army for twenty-five years. The army continuously tried to convince him through beatings and other methods to denounce Judaism.

The Chofetz Chaim ignored the advice of the innkeeper and went over to speak to the Jewish soldier. The Chofetz Chaim greeted him warmly, commiserating with him about his hard life and the fact that he did not have the opportunity to learn any Torah. The Chofetz

Chaim told hm that he truly experienced Purgatory in this world. The Chofetz Chaim then praised the soldier for retaining his Jewish identity despite the tortures he had gone through when they had tried to convince him to renounce his Judaism. The Chofetz Chaim said that he was jealous of the merits that this man had and that he would occupy a very high place in Gan Eden. The soldier began crying. The Chofetz Chaim continued to tell him that he would receive an even greater reward if he lived the rest of his life as an observant Jew. Deeply touched, the man fully repented and changed his life.

Chastising someone for his misdeeds is a mitzvah. However, there are guidelines on how to do it. If you do it the wrong way you may be considered a sinner. The Chofetz Chaim's actions can serve as a guide for us. He found something to commend the man about. He did not criticize him. Instead, he said that the soldier would benefit even more if he could act a little differently. Then Chofetz Chaim spoke to him from a source of sincere love. His goal was not to criticize but to inspire and instruct.

Harav Henach Leibowitz zt"l points out based on Sefer HaYashar written by the **Rabbeinu Tam,** as well as from the **Sforno** (16:24) that you must purify yourself first before purifying others. To succeed in your reproof, you must be sincere. If you are remiss in the same area that you are criticizing in others, you will not be successful. There will be a lack of sincerity in your heart that the other person will sense. In addition, in order to succeed, you must feel true love for a fellow Jew. You must also sincerely feel that the sinner is hurting himself by not performing the mitzvos. If your speech is motivated from the heart, it can be successful!

Compliment before criticizing! If you are sincere and your words come from a source of love, your efforts will be more likely to succeed.

The Siddur Speaks

A fascinating story appeared on Tiv HaKehilah, related by a father, who says that the Shidduch for his daughter was about to be complete, when it fell apart just before it could be finalized. This is not unusual, except that it kept repeating itself several times, until he realized that something out of the ordinary was happening. This man said, "I felt as if Shamayaim was hinting to me that I needed to correct something. I remember learning from my **Rebbe, Rav Gamliel Rabinovich**, that even though the ways of Hashem are hidden, the reality is that there is no real concealment, and everyone can scrutinize his actions and see the reason for why things happen. I began to examine my actions and I requested of Hashem to please open my eyes so that I could see what I needed to work on, and what it was that I was doing that may be causing this, a Shidduch beginning, but not being completed.



I searched and inspected my deeds, but I could not find the answer, until a young man in the Kollel approached me and commented, 'You should know that many people stumble with their drinks over the course of the day. They say the Brachah of Shehakol with great concentration before drinking, yet they forget to recite the Brachah of Borei Nefashos afterwards. These people start the Mitzvah, but they do not finish it with a Brachah Acharona!'

I immediately realized that I inadvertently did this as well, and it suddenly made sense to me that this was the cause of all the Shidduchim falling apart. Just like the drink I take start with a Brachah but do not end with one, the Shidduchim start but do not finish. I immediately accepted upon myself to be careful regarding the Brachah of Borei Nefashos, and as I started to pay attention to this, I was very surprised to see how many times I actually neglected to recite this Brachah, because I was distracted! Just a few weeks had passed from when I accepted this on myself, when Baruch Hashem we were able to arrange a wonderful Shidduch for my daughter, without any complication!"

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Don't Hit the Mailman!



לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ ***"Don't take revenge or bear a grudge against your fellow Jew; You should love your neighbor as you love yourself; I am Hashem." (Vayikrah 19:18)***

The Torah instructs us not to take revenge or harbour any feelings of ill will towards anyone who refused to do us a favour.

Why doesn't the Torah focus on the first individual-the one who refused to do us a favour; who refused to help us in our time of need? He didn't act nice, in the first place while the second person's act of revenge is somewhat justified.

The reason is, the first person doesn't have the proper appreciation of kindness- he can't part with his property to share with you. You,

on the other hand, do appreciate the level of kindness one should have. You would be willing to share your possessions were it not for the hatred you feel in your heart towards the one who couldn't share with you. That hatred poisons your desire to act with kindness. The Torah is emphasizing that the root of this problem is hatred between Jews, and that must be eradicated.

One can't be fully blamed for not recognizing the true value of kindness to others. However, one can be blamed for harboring hatred and resentment to a fellow Jew, even if it appears justified.

How can we control our automatic feelings of animosity towards one who did not act appropriately towards us?

One way is to realize that everything that occurs to us is from Hashem. There is no reason to have anger at Hashem's "messenger". Would we hit the mailman if he brought us a letter containing terrible news?

Another way is indicated by the seemingly extra words of the pasuk, "I am Hashem". If you just won the Mega Millions Lottery, you would be so happy. In the midst of this joy, would it bother you if your friend didn't repay the money he owed you? Hashem loves us and provides all our needs. Everything comes from Hashem. If we focus on that, why should we feel anger towards another person for refusing us a favour. Maybe Hashem felt we didn't need that particular favour. Or, if we did, Hashem would arrange for someone else to give it to us.

In these days of Sefiras Ha'Omer, let us realize that all we receive is from Hashem and let us remove any traces of hatred from our hearts.

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l said, if you feel anger towards someone and are able to control yourself from talking back, yet you don't talk to that person, that is stilled called hating a fellow Jew. That causes a delay in the building of the eternal Bais HaMikdash.

Let us help hasten the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash. We can remove any traces of anger in our hearts towards a fellow Jew and replace them with love.

(Based on a dvar Torah by Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim)

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

The Secret to Help Others Succeed!

טְלוּ מַקְלֵיכֶם וּמַגַּלְכֶם וּצְאוּ עָלָיו בְּשְׁעַת הַצָּהֳרַיִם וְאִמְרוּ, שֶׁלָּנוּ נִצַּח שֶׁלָּנוּ נוֹצַח

"…The townspeople should come to the well… with their sticks and scythes. They should call out, 'Ours [Our Spirit] will be victorious…'" (The Midrash Tanchuma 9)



As a group of frogs was travelling through the woods, two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs crowded around the pit and saw how deep it was, they told the two frogs that there was no hope left for them. However, the two frogs ignored what the others were saying, and they proceeded to try and jump out of the pit. Despite their efforts, the group of frogs at the top of the pit were still saying that they should just give up. They would never make it out.

Eventually, one of the frogs took heed to what the others were saying, and he gave up, falling to his death. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made

it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, **"Did you not hear us?"** The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought **they were encouraging him** the entire time.

The Midrash Tanchuma on this week's parsha brings a beautiful story. There was a friendly Spirit that lived in a well of a certain town for many years. A Spirit from elsewhere came and wanted to kick out the Spirit from this town. The good Spirit approached a pious man from the town, asking for help. The good Spirit told him that he had lived in this town for many years and did not harm anyone. He said that an evil Spirit came and wanted to kick him out of the town and cause harm to the townspeople.

The pious man wondered how he could help. The good Spirit told him to do the following: "The townspeople should come to the well in the afternoon, with their sticks and scythes. They should call out, 'Ours [Our Spirit] will be victorious, ours will be victorious.' That will cause the bad Spirit to run away."

The townspeople followed the instructions of the good Spirit. They remained at the well until they saw a drop of blood floating on the water. That was an indication that they had succeeded, and the bad Spirit left town. The townspeople really didn't do anything. They weren't involved in the actual battle. It simply appeared as if they were helping (*Eitz Yosef*). However, their moral support and encouragement to the good Spirit helped him succeed. The townspeople's encouragement made the difference between victory and defeat.

We learn an important lesson from this story. If we can actively help someone in need, we certainly should. However, there are times that we are unable to help. In those circumstances, ***our words of encouragement can uplift the spirits of the person in need. The good feelings generated by knowing that someone wants him to succeed can spell the difference between success and failure.*** If

a person is ill, encouraging words or even a smile can uplift his spirits and help him recover.

As we see from the story with the frogs, encouraging words can spell the difference between life and death.

Why I Matter



לֹא־תִשְׂנָא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בִּלְבָבֶךָ הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא – "You shall rebuke your fellow" (19:17)

Knowing when and how to deliver rebuke is always a difficult task. The following story relates to this dilemma. **R' Moshe Yosef Teitelbaum z"l was Rabbi of Zabarov**. Once, during his derashah, he said, "You might wonder, `Who is this rabbi that he should rebuke us?' Let me explain with a parable: "There was a town which had a fire chief, whose job it was to sound the alarm whenever a fire broke out. Once, a visitor to the town saw a fire breaking out, and instead of notifying the fire chief, he sounded the alarm."

The fire chief was very upset that his job had been usurped, but any right-minded person would laugh at this fire chief. When the fire is raging, every able-bodied person must rush to fight the blaze.

"So it is with me," concluded Rav Teitelbaum. "When I see that the city is on fire, so-to-speak, I must do what I can to quell the flames." *(Tamar Yifrach)*

לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳ "You shall love your fellow as yourself." (19:18)



R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005; a leading teacher of mussar in Eretz Yisrael) observes: **Ramban z"l** writes that it is nearly impossible for a person to love another as much as he loves himself. Even if a person gives another more of something than he keeps for himself, deep down, he wishes it was the other way around. Since it is inconceivable that the Torah commanded something that is impossible, Ramban had to explain that the mitzvah merely requires us not to be jealous of others.

R' Wolbe adds: There was only one person in the Torah who saw someone have more than he had, but he was not jealous. That person was Aharon. Moshe Rabbeinu was reluctant to accept the mantle of leadership for fear that his older brother, Aharon, would be jealous. No, said Hashem (Shmot 4:14), "When he sees you he will rejoice in his heart." That is why Aharon merited wearing the Choshen / Breastplate over his heart. Why was he able to do this? Because he was the ultimate man of chessed / kindness, always giving to others, as midrashim describe. *(Shiurei Chumash: Bereishit)*

"It is our duty to give thanks to Hashem for every good thing that happens to us, even if it is a small matter." – Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

Parha Pshetel- Rabbi Yankie Shechter



ואהבת לרעך כמוך, אני ד'– ראש דוד

Chazal say that if a husband and wife live together in peace, then the Shechina - the Shem Havayah - rests amongst them. The "friend" referenced in the Posuk here refers to one's wife. If one loves his wife like himself, and is at peace with her, then **אני ה'** - "Hakodosh Boruch Hu will rest amongst them.

19:18 ואהבת לרעך כמוך, אני ד' – Drush 13 - כסא דוד



Rishonim explain that by one having **אהבה**, love, for his friend, and his friend returning that **אהבה** – two times **אהבה** is the Gematria of the Shem Havayah **אהבה . י-ה-ו-ה** is also the Gematria of **אחד**-, the Oneness of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

If one loves his fellow man, it brings oneness, which causes the Shechina to rest upon them **אני ה'** - "If one is truly one with his fellow man, then I, Hakodosh Boruch Hu, will reside with them.

איש אמו ואביו תיראו

Another mitzvah, stated in this week's parashah is **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ** ***"One must fear his mother and his father" (19:3).***

The Chinuch (33) explains, "It is proper that one recognize all the goodness that others do for him. He shouldn't act as though he doesn't appreciate it, because this is a bad and a disgraceful attribute, both before Hashem and before man.



One should recognize that he is in the world because of his parents, and therefore, it is proper that he should honour them and help them in any way possible…" In addition to the reward that will be given to him in Olam HaBa for honouring and for fearing his parents, the Torah promises that in the merit of kibud av ve'eim, one will live long (**למען ואריכון ימיך**).

The Leiv Simchah of Gur zy"a explained it the following way: Everyone is born with an allotted number of years to live. The years and the hours that one honours his parents aren't included in the cheshbon. Honouring parents can be time consuming. The Torah promises that all the time invested, will be added to his life.

Chazal tell us that Reb Chalafta excelled in kibud av ve'eim. He would understand, on his own, what his father desired, and he would serve it to him. So his father never needed to ask for anything. In this merit, Chazal say, Reb Chalafta was awarded midah keneged midah: Hashem would also give him all of his requests, even before he asked for them.

The Chazon Ish said, "Every madreigah that I attained, and every good middah that I have, is in the merit of kibud av ve'eim. Reb Moshe Turk shlita would daven Shacharis every day with the Chazon Ish.

Once, Reb Moshe Turk brought along his students (from Tel Aviv) so they could also daven together with the Chazon Ish. When they were in the Chazon Ish's room, one of the students wanted to whisper something into Reb Moshe Turk's ear, but Reb Moshe didn't permit him to ask his question. "Here, before the Chazon Ish, we must be silent. This is derech eretz" he explained.

After the tefillah, the students filed by the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish stopped the child who had a question, and asked him, "Did you want to ask something?" The student quickly looked up towards his Rebbe, Reb Moshe Turk for permission, and Reb Moshe told him, "If the Chazon Ish asks you to speak, you may." In the innocence that only children have, the student asked, "How did the Chazon Ish become the Chazon Ish?" The Chazon Ish replied that it was because of two factors: (1) I never wasted a moment (2) I was careful with the mitzvah kibud av ve'eim.

The Damesek Eliezer of Viznitz would be maavir sedrah every Friday morning. When he would do this, he would say the entire parashah without stopping, and he wouldn't speak out in the middle. Once, as the Damesek Eliezer was reviewing the parashah, his father, the **Ahavas Yisrael zt"l,** asked him a question. The Damasek Eliezer stopped reading the parashah, and he answered his father. When his father was satisfied with the answer, the Damesek Eliezer began being maavir sedra again from the beginning. He started over again, because he wanted to read the entire parashah, without interruptions.

A chassid saw this and asked, "You were almost finished reviewing the parashah when your father asked you the question. You could have signalled to your father that you are in the middle of reviewing

the parashah, and that you will answer him in a few moments. Why did you speak out? Now you have to say the entire parashah again." The Damasek Eliezer replied, "Honouring parents is a mitzvah from the Torah. I didn't want my father should wait for me, not even for a short moment."

How does one fear his parents? Rashi writes, "What is fear? One mustn't sit in his father's place…" We are also obligated to fear Hashem.

The Sfas Emes said, just as we fear our parents by not sitting in their place, we fear Hashem by not sitting in Hashem's place. This means, one shouldn't think that he can sit in Hashem's place and run the world better than Hashem does. In simpler terms, this means that one shouldn't say, "It would have been better had such and such happened." We must believe that Hashem is leading us in the best way possible.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

לא תעשו עול במשפט You shall not do wrong in justice (19:35)



The Meshech Chachmah explains: Sometimes a person knows that someone has stolen from him, and when the opportunity presents itself, he allows himself to steal back from that individual. This is an inappropriate approach, and this is what the Posuk is warning about: *"You shall not do wrong in justice"*, even when the wrong is done justifiably, as you know for certain that you are in the right, still, it is prohibited for you to do this!

Love Thy Neighbour as yourself? Written by Rabbi Jonathan Guttentag

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ And you shall love your friend like yourself (19:18)

The commandment to have love for fellow human beings is one of Judaism's most famous legacies to all mankind. The great Rabbi Akiva referred to it a major principle of the Torah. His teacher Hillel, when confronted with a potential convert who wanted to be taught the whole Torah "while standing on one leg", responded with a variation on the theme: "that which is detested to you, do not do to your friend." The difficulty in the command of loving a neighbour comes with the word kamocha, "like yourself".



Are we indeed supposed to give him everything that we have? Surely no love can approach the natural elemental power of self-love. How, then, can the individual be expected to love someone else as much as him or herself?

A recent commentary Ktav Ve'Hakabalah suggests that the command needs to be understood in a different way, as follows: The love that we have to have for our fellow, is defined by kamocha, "like you". This means the same sort of devotion that we expect from others towards us. The amount of devoted care and concern that we naturally expect from others, that must serve as a yardstick of how much love we are to display for them. Loving our fellow does not extend to giving him everything that we have; because that is not

what we expect from him. Ktav v'Hakabalah enumerates, in an non-exhaustive list, the actions of love and care that we would expect from others. We expect others to:

(1) Be sincere and not devious in their approach to us.

(2) Treat us with respect.

(3) To enquire about our welfare.

(4) To empathise with us in times of distress.

(5) To receive us at all times with a smiling countenance.

(6) To judge us and our actions favourably, not negatively.

(7) To be prepared to put themselves out for us.

(8) To lend us items from time to time when we need.

These expressions of love, or even common courtesies, are what we expect other people to grant to us. They serve as an indicator of what we are expected to do for others in fulfilment of the Torah's command to love our fellow.

A summary of the points in the Parashah

- The Mitzvot of Hashem: To behave with holiness. Fear of mother and father. Keeping Shabbat. Prohibition of delving into matters of idolatry (like reading books on idolatry). Regarding sacrifices, prohibition of Pigul - eating rejected sacrificial meat because of improper thoughts during the sacrifice and leaving over (meat left over after the time of eating has finished).
- Gifts to the poor in the fields and orchards: Leaving the corners of the fields for the poor and leaving pieces of the harvest that fall out of ones hand when collecting the harvest for the poor. Prohibition of stealing and lying. Prohibition of false swears and desecrating the name of Hashem.

- Prohibition of not paying a worker right away. Prohibition of cursing a Jew. Prohibition of giving bad advice to another in order to make them stumble or sin. The obligation to judge righteously and to judge others favorably. Prohibition of Lashon Hara (speaking badly about others). "Do not stand on the blood of your friend".
- Prohibition of hating other Jews. The obligation to rebuke a friend who has sinned. The prohibition of taking revenge or bearing a grudge. "Love your friend as yourself".
- The prohibition of mixtures: With animals, with fruit trees, with clothes (mixing linen and wool). The sacrificial offering brought for one who sins with a Canaanite slave (illicit relations).
- The laws of Orlah: When you plant a fruit tree, you cannot use its fruit for three years, and in the fourth year, you take the fruit to Yerushalayim and you eat it there. "You shall not eat over the blood" (not eating from an animal until its dead). The prohibition of looking into the future – be complete with Hashem.
- The prohibition of shaving off sideburn and shaving your beard with a razor. Prohibition of scratching your body and tattoos. The obligation to keep guard our holiness and Shabbat. Behaving with holiness in the Beit HaMikdash and in the Beit HaKnesset. Prohibition to go to psychics. The obligation to honor Torah scholars. The prohibition of causing anguish to a convert and the Mitzvah to love a convert. Prohibition of deceiving others with weights and scales and the Mitzvah to have scales that measure properly when selling items.
- The punishment for sins: A. The punishment for one who gives his child to the Molech (an idol), punishment for cursing one's parents. B. Punishment for illicit relations (20, 8-22). C. The punishment for being a sorcerer, being stoned.
- Praise of the Jews who stay holy in all their deeds and with this they merit to have Eretz Yisrael – a land of milk and honey.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Ahavas Yisrael



The Torah says, **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** ***"Love your friend like yourself"*** (19:18). Rabbi Akiva says, "This is a great principle of the Torah" (Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:4). Ahavas Yisrael should be so sincere and genuine, that one actually feels the pain and plight of his fellow man.

When the **Vilna Gaon zy'a** was a young child, he was on a seesaw with friends. But he didn't play for long. His father asked him why he stopped. The Vilna Gaon replied that he doesn't want to go up, by causing a friend to go down.

Reb Yisrael Salanter once saw two children debating who was taller. One child pushed the other one off the curb, and shouted, "I win. I'm taller." Reb Yisrael Salanter rebuked the child and said, "It's terrible middos to make oneself greater, by making his friend smaller."

The Last Word A One-Liner Worth Remembering

"The purpose of the world is for people to recognize that Hashem is the Creator. If someone doesn't want to recognize this, he doesn't belong here." — Harav Moshe of Kobrin

נפלאות הבורא -Hashems Amazing World - Alligator Tooth

The alligator pushes together a mound of dirt and lays eggs in it.



These eggs have moderately hard shells. Inside each one is a baby alligator which will grow to a length of about 8 inches [20.32 cm]. Then it is time to come out. But how can it do that? The egg case is too hard to break. So, the alligator has a special "tooth" on the tip of its nose. Striking it against the egg case causes it to split open and out the baby alligator emerges. Shortly afterward, the tooth drops off. Where did that tooth come from?

To put it there would require thousands of DNA changes. But by the time "random evolution" would have accomplished them all, all the alligators in the works would be dead, having not been able to get out of their egg cases. This is yet another example of plan & purpose by the Almighty Creator of the universe! *(Rabbi Eliyahu Tobal)*

"Imagine if you once received a personalise gift from the king of the world. How honoured and thankful would you be?

In truth, Hashem sends us gifts at every moment of our lives – Many of which we are unaware of.

If only we focused on these gifts, we would be filled with gratitude and love for Hashem." – Rabbi Zamir Cohen.

Stories of Gedolim



The young man approached the Rav nervously. He had laboured over his Torah manuscript and came to **Horav Yaakov Meshulem Orenstein zt"l**, The Famed Yeshuos Yaakov for his haskoma. R' Yaakov asked the young talmid chochom, Reb Aryeh Leib to spend the night in the town so he could review his work and would then let him know what he thought. Anxiously, the man spent the night in a nearby inn. He hoped his manuscript would find favour in the Rav's eyes. It took him longer than usual to fall asleep that night as he kept wondering about the fate of his writings.

The next morning, the town was alerted by the Rav of a Hachnosas Sefer Torah that would take place that day. Though the community had not heard about any Sefer Torah being written, they dutifully obeyed their Rav and set up the chuppah and the procession that would escort it. The Yeshuos Yaakov himself dressed in his Special Shabbos clothing appeared and the procession began without a new Sefer Torah, much to the town's bewilderment.

Reb Aryeh Leib heard the music and went out to see what was happening in the town. It seemed the procession was heading his way when suddenly he noticed, under the chuppah, the Yeshuos Yaakov lovingly clutching his manuscript, and dancing devotedly with it.

The chuppah had been set up in honour of the talmid chochom, **Reb Aryeh Leib Heller zt"l**, and his heiligeh manuscript, the famous **Ketzos Hachoshen**. Not only did the Yeshuos Yaakov give his Haskoma, he also gave his town a lesson on how far one must go for kavod haTorah.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh The Rosh's Guide to Life 15. שֶׁלֹּא יְדַבֵּר בִּקְרִיאַת הַהַלֵּל, וְלֹא בְּעוֹד שֶׁשְּׁלִיחַ צִבּוּר קוֹרֵא בַּתּוֹרָה *One should not talk during Hallel or while the Torah is being read*.



Rav Moshe Shternbuch notes that the directive to not talk during Hallel applies not only to one who is Davening and saying Hallel with the Shul, but even to one who has already Davened and is in a Shul when Hallel is being said, he should not talk at that time. **Rabbi Eli Mansour** once said that talking in Shul is not only against the Halachah, but it is also detrimental to one's health. He relates a story that Rabbi Shlomo Bussu, a grandson of the Baba Sali, was once the Baal Korei in Shul, and while he was reading the Torah, he heard some murmuring of people talking during the Laining. Before the next Aliyah, he turned around to face the congregation and said, "I have to tell you something right now, and we cannot continue reading from the Torah until you know this.

We have a tradition that when we read from the Torah, it is a duplication of Matan Torah, when we received the Torah on Har Sinai. The Bimah that the Torah is on represents the actual mountain

of Har Sinai. The Torah is like the Luchos and the one reading it is, so to speak, like Hashem saying the Aseres HaDibros, and he went on to list other similarities between Laining and Har Sinai.

The Torah says and we learn in the Medrash that by Har Sinai, all the sick and injured people were cured. Those who were deaf or blind got their hearing and vision back! All diseases were healed!" Rabbi Bussu continued, "We further have a tradition that every time we read from the Torah, and there is decorum in the Shul, it is a Segulah to cure all the people that are present in the congregation! Therefore, I ask you, who is going to be so selfish that you are going to talk during Laining?

Maybe someone came to Shul specifically today to hear the Laining, just so he can merit a Refuah!" He continued and said, "this has been tried and tested by congregations, where they all accepted on themselves to not speak during Laining from beginning to end, in order to help certain sick individuals merit to recover from their illnesses, and I can attest that miracles have occurred from this, where doctors have given up hope and the patients have still recovered! We don't know what is doing by other people, and we can't be so selfish to take this opportunity of being cured away from them."

Rabbi Mansour said, "Not talking during Laining is a tremendous Segulah for Refuah, and keeping the proper decorum is not only a Refuas HaNefesh, a healing of the soul, but a Refuas HaGuf, a healing of the body as well!"

Thought of the Week

If only I could love the greatest tzaddik like Hashem loves the greatest Rasha. – R' Yisroel Baal Shem Tov

Rabbi Yosef Richtman - Priorities



The Chasam Sofer points out a contradiction between two statements made by Rebbi Akiva. On one hand, R'Akiva said "A fundamental concept in Judaism is 'love your neighbour as you love yourself' (Toras Kohanim). He also said, "Your life comes before your brother's life." (Baba Metizah 62a). These two statements seem to stress two opposite lessons. On the one hand, we see your life comes before your fellow man's life. On the other hand, we see that you should love your neighbor like yourself, which implies perhaps his life is at least of equal importance to your own.

The Chasam Sofer answers that, when it comes to Olam Hazeh, this world, your life is first. A person has to keep himself alive before he worries about someone else's life. When it comes to Torah, which is eternity, Olam Haba'a, then your friend comes first. Even if it means he will miss out on some of his own learning. That is why R'Akiva said it is a fundamental concept, because the concept applies specifically to the area of Torah.

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ

And you shall love your neighbour as yourself (19:18)

The Holy One, Blessed be He, loves every single Jew with the same intensity as elderly parents love an only child born to them in their old age. [**The Baal Shem Tov**]

And You Shall Love Your Friend Like Yourself Written by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ
And you shall love your friend like yourself (19:18)

The Mitzvah to love someone else as one loves oneself is a very difficult concept to grasp. Surely it is against everyone's nature to love someone else in the exact same way as we love ourselves, especially if it is a stranger?

The **Ramban** understands that the Mitzvah to "Love your friend like yourself" is not that we must actually literally love him in the same way as we love ourselves. Rather, the Mitzvah is to desire for our friend everything that we would want for ourselves, in the same proportion. For instance, just like we want to be wise and wealthy, so we should want our friend to be ***as*** wise and ***as*** wealthy. The focus of this Mitzvah, is to negate from our hearts all jealousy and the need to be in a better position than everyone else.

Someone who achieved this lofty goal was the **Brisker Rov** as illustrated by the following story which took place his home. One evening, the community leaders came to the Brisker Rov's home to discuss an urgent matter with him. After they were welcomed in, they immediately sensed that his home had no form of heating and was unbearably cold. Upon leaving the house, the men decided to organize for chopped wood to be delivered to the Brisker Rov so that their stove could be heated and their home be warmed.

The following night the men returned for further discussions and as they walked into the home, they once again felt the cold. They turned to the Rebbetzen and asked why her home was not warm. "Yesterday, so many poor people came to our home. They all complained about the cold and said they had no money to buy wood," she explained, "the Rov was not able to give them money, but he allowed them to take as much wood as they needed, until all the wood was gone" she said in earnest.

When the men left, they once again arranged for the wood supplier to fill up their storehouse with wood, but realizing that this would happen every day, this time they added a lock to the door. They gave the key to the Rebbetzen and with great empathy said to her, "We are giving you this wood for your home only. If the Rav gives it to poor people instead, we will consider it theft!"

The follow day, the men returned to the Brisker Rov's home, and it was once again freezing. "Why isn't your home warm?" they questioned the Rebbetzen. "Because my husband said, 'if the poor people are going to be cold, then we too are going to be cold!'"

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS KEDOSHIM

The Debriciner Rov And the Unhappy Couple

Rabbi Mordechai Twerski related that he once met up with family members of the **Debriciner Rov, O"BM**, and they shared with him the following incident. They went to the grave site of their holy relative, the Debriciner Rov and saw a youngish couple praying. Not recognizing them as family members they were curious as to why this couple was there. They asked them what it was that brought them to this place. The couple told the following story:

"Twenty-two years ago, we were young kids who got married to each other. After a short while it became clear to us that we didn't know what we were doing together. Every day was a different

disagreement and another fight. We were not getting along at all. "After trying and trying we were thinking about divorce. My wife was expecting, so we stayed together in the meantime. Having a child did not make married life easier – it complicated matters. We decided it was time to get divorced. We didn't know exactly how to go about getting a Jewish divorce, so we went to the Debriciner Rov.

"After hearing about our struggles in marriage he agreed to help us with the divorce. He instructed us to come back the next day and to bring our son. We thought this was part of the process. When we came back the next day with our son, he asked to see the child. He motioned that we hand him over. We did. "He sat with the child, a little baby, in front of us, and he spoke to the child, stroking him affectionately all the while.

"From this day forth your life is going to be very difficult," he began. "You will be bounced from house to house. You'll spend one Shabbos with your mother and another Shabbos with your father. Most of the kids in school won't understand your situation. They might not be eager to play by your broken home. Growing up as a happy child will be a steep challenge for you.

"Getting married will be difficult as well. It is not your fault. This is the lot that has been handed you. I want you to know that you will need extraordinary strength and courage and tremendous help from heaven to attain a normal life."

"After his little talk with the child he handed the baby back to us. We were both crying. We looked up at each other and decided then and there, for the sake of the child, to give it another try. That was twenty years ago we had that encounter with the Debriciner Rov. We eventually worked out our differences. We are now happily married, Baruch Hashem. Tonight, that child, our son is getting married and we wanted to come here today to express our deep feelings of gratitude to the Rav."

Rabbi Daniel Glatstein - Holiness for Every Jew

קדשים תהיו *You shall be holy (Vayikra 19:2)*

At the opening of this week's Parasha, we are struck by a very unusual expression. The Pasuk says, "Speak to the entire congregation of the Jewish people." While generally the Torah uses the phrase, "Speak to the Jewish people;" in this context, the Torah adds that the whole assembly of Klal Yisrael is to be present without exception. What was so special about Parashat Kedoshim which called for every single Jew to be in attendance?

When President Dwight Eisenhower met with the Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, at one point he said, "It is very difficult to be the President of 170 million people." Ben-Gurion responded, "You think that's hard? It's a lot harder to be the Prime Minister of two million prime ministers."



There is something very important to be learned from what Ben-Gurion said. There is no such thing as a "simple Jew." Although bumper stickers may announce, "I'm a *pashute yid*!" that refers to the fact that a Jew should be humble, eschew honour and bear insults without allowing it to derail him. However, when it comes to keeping mitzvot, learning Torah, spiritual growth and attaining holiness, there is no such thing as a "simple Jew." Every Jew can achieve greatness and is expected to achieve greatness.

When youngsters are spoken to about striving for greatness, they are usually very attracted to the idea. Possessing much ambition, envisioning extraordinary goals and yearning for outstanding

achievements, they recognize the relevance and meaning of high aspirations. But as one grows older and begins to raise a family, oftentimes the ambition of achieving greatness in spirituality begins to wane. We become jaded and feel complacent with our station in life.

Consciously or subconsciously, we make a decision to be what the **Chazon Ish** termed a "*Beinoni b'shitah*," someone who deliberately settles for mediocrity. "What are we?" we ask ourselves. "An average Jew. I am going to remain the way I am. This is the extent of my spiritual goals and accomplishments, and I am content with staying this way."

But the Torah tells us otherwise. "*Kedoshim tihiyu*," you shall be holy. This passage was said to the entire Jewish nation because every single Jew, no matter their past or present situation, can achieve greatness. "Don't sell yourself short. Don't be average, don't be mediocre and don't be good enough. Be great. Strive to be a great Jew who is proficient in all areas of Torah, davens with focus and meaning and lives an elevated life undeterred by all physical and worldly constraints." That is what we are meant to strive for.

In this vein, we can borrow the line employed by Ben-Gurion, "We are all prime ministers." We are all a part of a "*Mamlechet kohanim*," a priestly nation (*Shemot* 19:6). We are not average. We are more than a "Pashute yid."

The Gemara (*Berachot* 50a) speaks to this very idea:

"One should make requests of Hashem humbly as a poor man begging at the door (Rashi). But doesn't the Pasuk say, "[I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of Egypt;] open your mouth wide and I will fill it"? (Tehillim 81:11) That refers to Torah study."

As clearly illustrated by the Gemara, when it comes to spiritual matters, there are no limits. It is not unreasonable and out of any

Jew's reach to become a Torah giant and attain exceptional heights in spirituality.

This is what the aforementioned Pasuk in Tehillim is aimed at emphasizing – "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." Our enslavement in Egypt led us to an abyss whereby we sunk to the lowest of spiritual levels. Had we remained any longer in such a spiritually filthy environment, we would have fallen to a point of no return. Yet Hashem raised us out of our exile and elevated us to become His pristine nation which lives a sublime existence. How did that happen?

It was because we yearned to live a life infused with holiness and G-dliness. When Hashem saw our deep-seated yearning to live this way, we were redeemed and brought close to Him at Har Sinai with the Giving of the Torah. The same is true of Torah study. Never should we limit our yearnings and high aspirations to become knowledgeable and proficient in all areas of Torah.

Rav Yaakov Neiman zt"l, renowned author of *Darchei Mussar*, further observes that in the world at large sanctity is typically relegated to clergymen and spiritual leaders. The average individual does not generally anticipate great levels of *kedusha*.

But that is not the case for a Jew. In Parashat Kedoshim, Hashem told Moshe to gather every single Jew to hear his words for every Jew is in position to attain *kedusha*. It is not merely for the rabbis. Hashem, so to speak, picks up the Jew by the lapels and tells him, "*Kedoshim tihiyu*! ***You are not a simple Jew; you are an extraordinary Jew. Never be satisfied with mediocrity. You can become as great as you wish to become. Not even the skies are the limit."***

Do not be wise in words – be wise in deeds.

Take Action! - Written by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ . . . Every man shall revere his mother and his father. . . . (19:3)

Explaining these words, the Gemora teaches, "What constitutes reverence [of a parent]? Not to sit in his parents' place and not to speak in his parents' place, and not to contradict his parents' words."

Rav Yerucham Levovits asks why the Gemora was not satisfied with the simple meaning of the words — "revere" - means to feel reverence! Why does the Gemora answer the question of, "What constitutes reverence?" by stating a list of small respectful actions that a child must perform?

Rav Yerucham answers that from the strength of this question we learn a fundamental understanding in the performance of a mitzvah. Namely, one cannot fulfil a mitzvah by simply "feeling," it must come together with an action — even a small one. Therefore, when understanding the mitzvah of "feeling" reverence, the Gemora had to ask what *actions* are involved which lead to the feeling of reverence, for without a complimentary action, the feeling has no lasting substance.

Someone asked the Chazon Ish to define ללמוד על מנת לעשות, "To learn Torah with the intention to keep it."

The Chazon Ish replied, "It means never to cause distress for another Yid, not even with a slight word, and not even for a short moment."

What is Holiness?? Written by Ben Rose

קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ ... אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ Be holy, fear your mother and your father and safeguard my shabbos!!



While we don't understand the impact and the reward of one mitzva versus another, there are some mitzvos that are put on pedestals by Chazal. From the many mitzvos, certain ones are associated with Kedusha, holiness. Off the top of most people's heads comes the Mitzva of Shabbos. "Kedushas Shabbos" is a familiar term. When Shabbos comes around the atmosphere is tangibly different. We bask in the glow of Shabbos. We are uplifted by our honoured guest, the holy Shabbos HaMalka.

Kibbud Av V'Eim on the other hand can sometimes be a test of endurance and tolerance. We know we must honour our parents but the demands are trivial and we are not always enthusiastic to accommodate. But we know it is a great mitzva if not always a spiritual lift. Do we ever think of the mundane acts we do to please our parents as "holy"?

It seems that the pasuk in Kedoshim (19:2) is coming to correct this serious miscalculation. The pasuk tells us **קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** , be holy. Immediately after that is says **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ** - fear your mother and father. Only after that does it say **וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ** keep Shabbos.

Therefore, if Shabbos is so holy and so important even more so is the honour of your parents!!

Love Your Neighbour As You Love Yourself I AM HASHEM - Written by Moshe Kormornick



וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳ And you shall love your friend like yourself (19:18)

There are so many questions we can ask on this line in Parshas Kedoshim but I'd like to focus on one.

Why does the verse end with "I am HaShem" – It seems a bit out of place?!

In order to answer this I'd like to loosely quote Medrash I heard by **Rav Noach Weinberg zt"l:**

The year is 471 AD. Two Jewish businessmen are best friends and trade goods to each other. One lives in Rome and the other in Syria. One day the man from Syria was stopped at the Roman port and accused of spying. There was no trial and although he was innocent, he was sentenced to be hanged. The man asked that he be set free in order to travel back to Syria to say goodbye to his wife and to tell her who owed him money and where, so that she could continue to support the family.

Of course, the Roman judge said no for fear that he would not return. However the man insisted that he had a very good friend that would stay in jail in his place and even be killed if he didn't return. Because this was such a strange request, it was put before the Emperor who was so intrigued by what would happen. And so he allowed the man exactly 40 days to go back to Syria sort out his affairs and return to Rome with a warning that if he didn't, his friend would be hanged in his stead. So he left Rome and his friend who was more than willing to stand in his place.

Now boat travel in those days relied on there being decent winds, and at that time of year there was barely any wind. It was very touch and go as to whether he would make it back to Rome or not and it turned out that he landed on the day of the public hanging. He knew he had to be there before noon and he raced to get there. He arrived a few minutes after and got there just in time to witness his friend being led to the gallows.

He ran to the front and shouted "Wait! I'm here! Let's swap!" but as the guards were untying the Roman Jew, he said "What are you doing? We had a deal! If you weren't here by noon, I'm taking your place?!!" In front of everyone present the two friends with tears in their eyes were trying to persuade the other one to let him take his place. The guards didn't know what to do and so they brought the matter back before the Emperor.

The Emperor listened to each friend speak… "We had a deal"…

"But I was only a bit late…The winds were bad"…

"This is what was agreed…"

Until the Emperor cut them both off and said:

"I'll tell you what, I'll let you both go free on the condition that you make me the third friend !"

So we see in this analogy that if we have a true positive connection with someone else, then HaShem also wants to be a part of that relationship…and who better to have as a best friend!

The words ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני י-ה-ו-ה "love your fellow as yourself I am G-d" and ואהבת את י-ה-ו-ה א-ל-ה-י-ך — "and you shall love G-d your G-d" — both have the same numerical value, 907.

Fear Your Parents, And Picture Them Standing Before You! Written By Benjamin A Rose



Ohr Hachaim says that when one is overcome by impure thoughts and his Yetzer HaRa (Evil impulse) threatens to entice him to sin, there is one powerful preventive device. the Ohr HaChaim says that one should project a mental image of his parents because when one sees his parents stood before him, the forces of sanctity and holiness are within him, and he will find it within himself to overcome such a temptation.

We see in the story of Potiphar's wife and Yosef where She almost succeeded in seducing Yosef until the moment the image of Yaakov came before him to help him overcome his passion. This explains the ordering of the verses of the Torah. In Vayikra 19:2 we are told "**קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** – be holy!" And immediately after comes the verse and the command "every man of you shall fear his mother and his father" as if to say, if you wish to safeguard yourself from the Yetzer HaRa, fear your parents, and picture them standing before you!

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Yisroel Salanter would try to visit the sick on *Motzaei Shabbos* and serve them hot drinks, because the *Gemara* says (*Shabbos* 119b) **חַמִּין בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת — מְלוּגְמָא** - hot drinks on *Motzaei Shabbos* cures illnesses!

Loving Your Fellow Jew Like Yourself



The Parsha of Kedoshim contains the Mitzvah of VeAhavta LeRayacha Komocha. We provide the following two essential points regarding the all-encompassing nature of this great Mitzvah:

(A) **HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita**, teaches that one fulfills the Mitzvah not only with friends and strangers, but with family members, as well, including by showing proper attitude and behaviour to one's own spouse -- so start cashing in! (See Kiddushin 41a)

(B) The Mitzvah can be fulfilled by thought alone in two different ways:

(1) spending time thinking about a Shidduch for someone, how to help an individual in need of emotional or physical support, or on how to give constructive criticism in a way which will have a real effect too -- and other thoughts unique to the people and situations that you are aware of [after all, Hashem made you aware of them, and it is for a reason];

(2) actually "feeling together" with the other person -- feeling their pleasure and pain,their dejection and their joy. By doing so you unite with your fellow person -- and he becomes Komocha -- like you, as the Torah adjures. As a starting point, you can try to develop this feeling with one person (who, once again, can be a relative), and witness for yourself how your "I" and "Me" has so beautifully grown!

"הֲרֵי אַתְּ מְקֻדֶּשֶׁת לִי בְּטַבַּעַת זוֹ כְּדָת מֹשֶׁה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל" - Behold you are consecrated unto me in accordance with the law of Moshe and Israel" (Kiddushin 5a-6a) Shulchan Arukh (Even HaEzer 27:2)

Shuki and Tzvika Greenfield are two brothers who grew up in the Holon neighbourhood in Israel and already from a young age they dreamed about the millions of dollars awaiting them in the United States. Their father kept Shabbat and was a simple honest man who tried to convince his sons to stay in Israel, but after the boys finished serving in the army and after they unsuccessfully tried their hand at business, they decided that they were going to travel to the United States and nothing was going to get in the way of their plans. They landed in New York and they were determined to show their father that they were going to succeed in a big way.

From a young age, the boys were drawn to zionism and little by little they stopped keeping Shabbat and Mitzvot. Their father was not able to do anything about this. America did not roll out the carpets for them and the two brothers had to wander from place to place in order to make a little money for their expenses. They washed dishes in restaurants and made connections with the non-Jewish workers. They began to dine with them and in the end they married non-Jewish wives. Every dollar they made gave them hope to continue onwards.

Their parents, on the other hand, were busy praying for them from the bottom of their hearts. They prayed that their sons would return to their Judaism and return to Israel. The years went by and the brothers would call their parents from time to time just to say, "We feel good and we are making good money. Everything is okay".

This went on for five years and the parents were heartbroken. They missed their sons very much. The mother, who became sick, finally told her husband, "Go to America and buy a few gifts and see how the boys are really doing".

Mr. Greenfield agreed to her request and decided to travel to New York. He wandered the streets looking for a shul to pray Minha. He noticed on the street corner a small shul, Shaarei Rahamim, so he entered. He saw many Israelis there. After they finished the prayers, he went over to one of the people and asked, "Do you by any chance know the brothers Shuki and Tzvika Greenfield"? The man smiled and replied, "Of course. They are my good friends".

They walked together to Shuki's house, who was his firstborn. He knocked on the door and waited for an answer. The door was opened by a young lady who was wearing a silver necklace and on it was a cross and even her face testified to the fact that she was not Jewish. His son was sitting on the couch watching television.

"This is your wife"? he asked his son.

"Yes, Abba", the shocked son asked. The father was totally shocked. He turned around and left. He decided to go to Tzvika's house. The scene repeated itself. His second son had also married a non-Jewish woman.

Mr. Greenfield did not wait for his son to return from work. He asked his son's wife to give over a message to his son, "Tell him that Abba came to visit…" After being in New York for only 24 hours, Mr. Greenfield got on the first plane out and returned to Israel very hurt and broken all the while mumbling to himself, "I am a bereaved father. I am a bereaved father".

The two brothers were shaken up by their father's surprise visit. They were very careful not to tell their parents about their marriage, but in the end, they were found out. The brothers were broken. What are they going to do now?

Their friend who accompanied their father to their houses told the boys to meet a Rabbi. "Go get advice from the Rabbi. He will tell you how to get out of this situation". The met with Rabbi Shemaryah Gross, a young, smart Rabbi. After the Rabbi heard their story, he

told them, "There is no way to compromise here. You need to leave your non-Jewish wives! This is a very severe prohibition and every moment that you are with them is a sin". The brothers trembled. They were so used to the situation of living sinfully. Shuki was the first to react.

Two days after the meeting with Rabbi Gross, he packed his bags, left his wife, kissed his brother goodbye and flew to Israel. Pangs of conscience started to eat away at him and he decided to go to Yeshivah and completely repent. Six months later, he married a Jewish girl who had also gone through the process of repenting.



Mrs. Greenfield was ecstatic, at least one son had been saved. Tzvika, on the other hand, had a very hard time as he was very attached to his wife and his sinful ways. Rabbi Gross gave him hope and encouragement, but it was too hard for him to detach from his ways.

After a year, he finally got the courage to get on a plane and go back to Israel. His brother Shuki was waiting for Him at the airport. His parents cried all night. Their second son had returned home. The two brothers learned diligently in a Kollel in Holon. Shuki was already married, but Tzvika was having a hard time finding his significant other and so strong feelings were pulling at him to go back to America and his former wife. He went out with one girl, the second, the third, the fourth, but for whatever reason his heart was in the

West. Four years of learning went by, but he had no luck as far as wife was concerned. The head of the Kollel who tried to understand him heard him saying, "Rabbi, I am not able to marry anybody. I am heartbroken".

Another year passed until the Rabbi turned to him and said, "My friend, I have an interesting match for you. She is a convert who is learning in Jerusalem. Try going out with her". Tzvika waited in the hotel lobby for his date while he was sitting and learning Path of the Just. At the appointed time, she entered the lobby modestly dressed. "I am Tzvi". "I am Sarah Malkah".

The voice was very familiar to him and even the face. Hashem had brought them together again in a permissible way. They did not need a date. They just sat and thanked Hashem for bringing them back together. She told him all about what she had gone through and about her conversion process. Now he understood why he had to wait five years. With tears in his eyes and a trembling voice he said the words, **הרי את מקודשת לי בטבעת זו כדת משה וישראל**

Rav Avigdor Miller on Being Kind Hearted to Gentiles - Is it permitted to hate goyim?

This is a question that never comes up among Jews. Jews never talk about hating goyim. And I'll explain that.

It's true that there's a mitzvah of **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** – you have to love your fellow Jew. It means that there's no command to love somebody who is a non-Jew. To love non-Jews, there's no mitzvah at all. But certainly, nobody is told to hate anybody! Because hate is a boomerang. You just cannot hate and hate and hate without becoming a hateful person. Your nature changes. If a person is always muttering imprecations on goyim for nothing, then he becomes a low character.

Decent Jews are kind hearted and polite to everybody! **אמרו עליו על רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שלא הקדימו אדם שלום מעולם** – It was said about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai that nobody ever said shalom to him in the street before he said shalom to them. He was the first one to greet a man. **ואפילו נכרי בשוק**– even gentiles in the street; when he encountered a gentile, he was the first one to greet him. That's politeness. That's how a Jew behaves.

The Chofetz Chaim was like that. In Radin, there were very small sidewalks – there wasn't enough room for two people to walk side by side and so whenever somebody was walking on the sidewalk, he walked off the sidewalk to let the person walk. He yielded the sidewalk.

Once he was walking and a Russian general was passing by and the Chofetz Chaim yielded the sidewalk. So the Russian general said, "Old man, why are you yielding to me? You're yielding the sidewalk to me, a young person?"

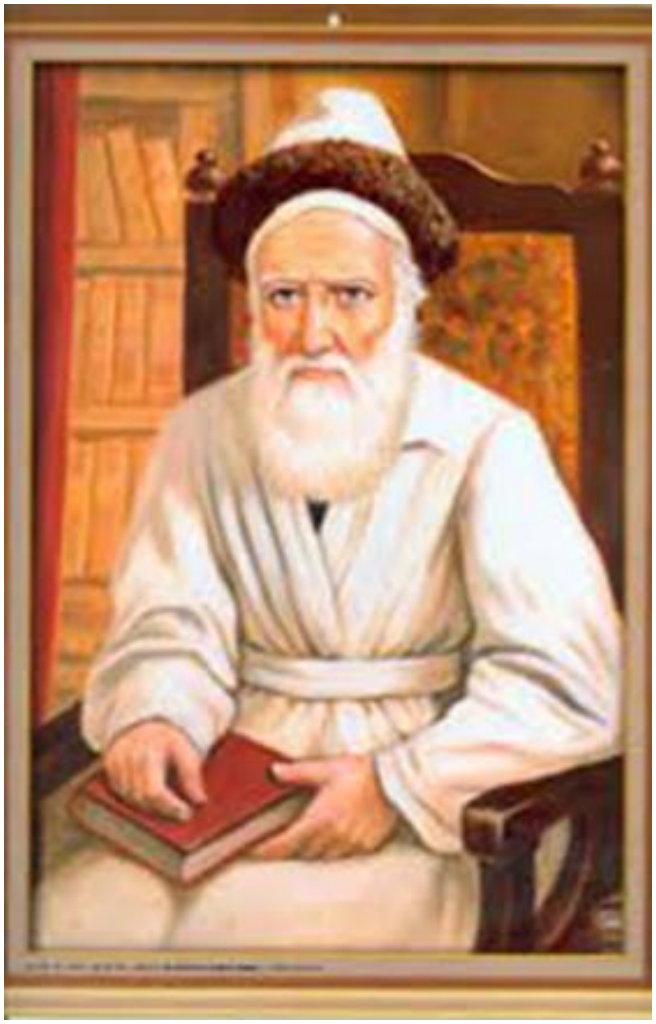
So the Chofetz Chaim said, "I do it to everybody."

So the general said, "You're going to live long," he said. "You'll live long because of that." That's a blessing from a Russian general.

The truth is that Jews are always kindhearted to everybody; only that the mitzvah of loving a Jew is a specific mitzvah that's only for fellow Jews. You don't have that mitzvah for anybody else.

But to be kind and polite, that's not even a question. It's not an issur of *lo sechanem. Lo sechanem* means to do favours for nothing; that you don't do. However, for your own benefit, favors for your own character you can do. And anything you do for gentiles that improves your character, it's a good thing to do because you're doing it for yourself.

The Tzemach Tzedek's Advice to a Devastated Chasid By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton



The following is a story about the third Rebbe of Chabad - Rabbi Menachem Mendel, nicknamed the Tzemach Tzedek. (Who passed away two days before Passover in 1866).

Rabbi Shmuel Pinchas was, besides being a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek, one of the richest men in the city of Homel. He was a genius when it came to finances and the small safe in his home was always filled with jewels, foreign currencies and promissory notes for the large amounts of money the local nobility had borrowed from him. But in one swift and terrible stoke of fate he lost it all. It was a cold and rainy night, perfect for curling up in bed under a warm blanket, and that is exactly what Rabbi Shmuel Pinchas did. But just as he was drifting off to sleep, he thought he heard the window in the room next to his slide open. It could have been his imagination but when he heard some more strange muffled noises from the same place he got out of bed as quietly as possible, took the heavy stick he kept next to his bed, slowly opened the door and peeked into the hall. There was no one. But when he went into the next room he almost passed out; the window was open, so was the safe. And it was empty!

There was nothing he could do. In those days there were no phones and no organized police. So he did the only thing he could; he opened a book of Psalms, wept, read aloud and waited for the break of dawn

and ran to the house of the Rabbi of Homel, Rabbi Yitchak Issac, hoping he had a solution. The Rabbi opened his door and there stood Shmel Pinchas soaked in rain, face wet with tears and shaken to the bone. After hearing the sad story the Rabbi concluded that his only chance was to get to the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, in the town of Lubavitch as soon as possible.

The next morning Shmuel Pinchas, after an all-night carriage ride, was standing before the Rebbe pouring out his heart and weeping. The Rebbe heard the story, looked Shmuel Pinchas deep in the eyes, as though to say 'forget the money', and said, "What is worrying you is the money you lost. But you should know that everything that happens is for a reason. The burglary is only a result of something that you are lacking spiritually. Something much more important. Fix that, and G-d can save you in the blink of an eye!"

The words of the Rebbe totally devastated Shmuel Pinchas. Suddenly he felt as though the ground dropped out from under him and the money was meaningless. What is money worth if he himself is worthless?! Maybe it was his attitude toward the Torah, maybe toward G-d maybe toward his fellow man. Maybe all three! But his heart was broken inside him. Something must have happened spiritually that moment because the Rebbe looked at him completely differently and said very calmly. "Travel to the city of Babroisk and spend the Shabbat there in a small inn just before the entrance of the town owned by a Jew and his sons. Then for the next two days, find a place in the city itself and HaShem will help.

Without hesitation Shmuel Pinchas thanked the Rebbe profusely, ran outside to his wagon and drove as fast as the horses could to Babroisk. It was Thursday night and the only way he could make it before Shabbat was by traveling nonstop. Just minutes before Shabbat he arrived at the hotel the Rebbe spoke of, got a room, washed up and changed his clothes, prayed the Shabbat prayers, ate a meal from the food he had brought along, learned his daily portions

of Talmud he had set for himself and lay down to sleep. His mind wanted to begin racing but he realized that it would do him no good to think about it rather he repeated words of Torah by heart until he drowsed off. But it wasn't easy. A group of five or six drunken gentiles that were staying in the room next to his made raucous noise the entire night.

And so it was the night after Shabbat. He even knocked on their door and asked them to be quiet several times but to no avail. Then, early Monday morning as he was packing to leave, one of his neighbours knocked on his door apologized for the noise and then asked Reb Shmuel if he could speak to him. He asked him if knew any of the rich people in Bobruisk. He explained that he and his friends are working together as investors but now they have an important investment to make and all they have is some promissory notes and jewellery while the other side is demanding cash.

When Shmuel Pinchas heard this he almost jumped out of his skin but he kept calm. "Of course I know the rich people of Bobruisk. Tomorrow we will enter the city, and I'll see what I can do. But what will my percentage be? What do I stand to earn if I help you?

An agreement was made; Shmuel Pinchas would receive half the profits for every buyer he brought and the next day they were in the hotel owned by a friend of his in Bobruisk. "But before I sell anything, I want to see what you have" he explained. And sure enough, when they opened the small suitcase there were all his promissory notes and jewels along with others that also must have been stolen! He managed to keep a straight face and they suspected nothing. He looked through the bills, expressed his satisfaction and walked out, saying he was going to find takers. But in fact, went to the owner of the hotel and told him the entire story.

Together they made a plan; the owner called his sons, all large muscular fellows, told them what had happened and they burst in on the thieves catching them by complete surprise binding and

blindfolding them till the police came. Suddenly Shmuel Pinchas realized the enormity of what happened. If it hadn't had been for the Rebbe's interpretation and advice he would have lost not only his money but also a chance to fix his own attitude toward life.

The Rebbe, with just one sentence had opened his eyes and saved him materially and spiritually at once!

Giving Others the Benefit of the Doubt

Hashem created the world and all that is in it. If we want to be good people in Hashem's world, we must play by Hashem's rules. Many of Hashem's rules involve our thoughts and feelings. For example, we have a mitzvah to love Hashem. We see therefore that our thoughts and emotions do have spiritual consequences.



Unfortunately, thoughts can also be used for bad. In order to prevent causing bad to others with our thoughts, we must constantly study what the Holy Torah has to teach us about human relations.

We will focus this week an often-overlooked mitzvah involving thought. We are referring to the mitzvah to judge others favorably. As Hashem commands us this week, "With righteousness you shall you judge your friend." (Vayikra 19:15) In general, Rambam explains that this mitzvah commands us to do the following: When we see a generally righteous person doing something which appears to be against the Torah, we must give that person the benefit of the doubt and try to explain his actions for the good. (Mitzvah 177, Sanhedrin Chapt. 21 halachos 1-3)

We must be very careful with what we think about others. Because when we judge others unfavourably, we awaken negative spiritual forces against that person; it is as if we call the heavenly prosecutor to trial against that person.

The following two stories illustrate the extent to which we must give others the benefit of the doubt.

As Rabbi Shlomo Yadin of Bnei Brak settled into his seat on his El Al flight from New York to Israel, he noticed someone a few seats over to his left who looked as though he was either an American rabbi of a shul or a rebbi in a yeshivah. Too far away to begin a conversation, Rabbi Yadin made himself comfortable, buckled his seat belt, and waited for takeoff.

After the plane was airborne, R' Shlomo noticed that the American rabbi took an obviously secular book from his attache case and settled down to read it. Even from where he was sitting, Reb Shlomo could see that it was not a sefer (Torah book.) It was definitely a secular book, and Reb Shlomo was a bit surprised. What about the mitzvah of "And [you shall study Torah] while you walk on the way?" (Devarim 6:7) R' Shlomo himself had taken along two sefarim for the long trip, and although he realized that not everyone followed his example, he felt that at least in public a rabbi should be reading from a sefer.

A few hours later as the slender orange rays of the sun began to appear over the horizon, numerous men made their way to the back of the plane to form a minyan for Shacharis – the morning prayers. The American rabbi remained in his seat, and R' Yadin was upset. The American was not sleeping, so he had certainly seen people going down the aisles with their talleisim and tefillin. Perturbed, Rabbi Yadin thought, "The man dresses like a tzaddik (a righteous person), and he is probably observant where people know him. But on a plane, among strangers, he acts like an irreligious Jew. What a hypocrite!"

When the next meal was served, Rabbi Yadin looked to see if his fellow traveler was reciting brochos (blessings). To his shock, the man ate without a brochah and when he finished his meal, did not recite Birchas HaMazon.

Rabbi Yadin was getting more and more furious. It took all his self-control to refrain from saying anything to the American. However, he decided that if there was a group of religious-looking people at Ben Gurion Airport waiting to greet this so-called "rabbi," he would inform them that he was an impostor.

When the plane landed and the passengers had gone through passport control and luggage claim, Rabbi Yadin walked behind the American to see who was awaiting him. To his amazement, when the American passed through customs and left the terminal, there was indeed a group of Orthodox people waiting to receive him.

Rabbi Yadin was about to speak to one of the men in the group when he noticed them all walking towards an old gray van. The back of the van was open, and there Rabbi Yadin could plainly see a coffin, that of the American rabbi's mother! He had come from America to bury his mother in Israel.

Rabbi Yadin clasped his open hand to his forehead in sudden understanding of what he had seen for the past 12 hours. The American rabbi was an *onen*, a mourner on the day of a burial, and was thus prohibited from performing any mitzvos! He could not study Torah, pray, or recite blessings. (see Yoreh Deah 341:1) And now, to his own embarrassment, Rabbi Yadin realized that he had wrongfully suspected this man of SO many misdeeds! *(Along the Maggid's Journey, Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn)*

A bird that you set free may be caught again, but a word that escapes your lips will not return.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-*Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

The Torah tells us in this week's parsha the mitzva of rebuking somebody else. הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא 19:17 ***You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear a sin on his account.***

Nobody likes to be told off. Nobody likes to be told what to do. And we don't even like telling others what to do. Yet the Torah tells us that it is an obligation.

What does this mean to us?

The Ben Ish Chai wants to know, why the Torah uses a double *lashon* of הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ? - ***You shall surely rebuke?*** He explains with an incredible *mashul*.



There was a true story that occurred during his times. There was a person who was caught stealing from a rich man's home. The thief was taken to the king, and he was sentenced to death. He said to the king, "my dear king, I accept upon myself this sentence that was handed down to me, but I have one thing to divulge to you, and that is that I have incredible wisdom about agriculture that will revolutionise the world. If I die, without telling it to anybody, then the world will lose this tremendous act of wisdom."

The king said, " tell it to me then, what is it?" The thief said, "if I take a seed from a certain plant, and I mix it with certain different spices and herbs, then if I plant this seed, within a few months, this seed will grow into a fully formed mature tree". The king said, "wow,

that is incredible! This is a very important piece of information that I need to know. That's it, we are delaying your death sentence until you perform this act."



They put him to work in one of the offices of the palace. He begins to create this concoction of seeds, herbs and spices. Eventually he declares that he is ready. The King says, "let's go, let's do it."

The thief said that to be successful, it is vital that the person who plants this seed has never stolen in his life, and therefore, I cannot do it, because I stole, as you know. Maybe ask your general if he can do it? The general declined as he stole when he was younger. Maybe ask your treasurer if he can do it? "Well, I work with so much money, it could be that at some time, I stole something". They go from officer to officer and each one declines for some reason. "Ok, so give it to the king". The king says, "I will be honest with you, but when I was younger, I was so jealous of my father's money, that I used to steal sometimes from him, so even I cannot do it."

The thief fell in front of the king and said, "my dear king, look at this situation, there is no-one here that can say that he never stole in his life, not even the king, even you stole! I stole to get food for my family, whereas everyone else stole out of greed."

The king than realised that this whole business was only a ploy to get him off his death sentence. The king realised that the thief was absolutely correct, and he pardoned him.

Says the Ben Ish Chai, we are so quick to judge others. We are so quick in looking at what other people do. Saying, "look at them, they are doing wrong." – Stop for a moment. Look within ourselves and check to see if we might be guilty of the same thing. Do we also

sometimes do something wrong? Do we also sometime anger the king? – The Riboino Shel Olam?

The Torah is telling us to look at ourselves before we look at somebody else. - ***Have a wonderful Shabbos!***

The Goldhirsh Family Plans a Large Chasuna



And now for our second story, which has similar if not worse results: About 20 years ago, the Goldhirsh family planned a large chasuna. The Goldhirshs invited all their extended family and friends. Soon after, they sent out invitations.

When people started to receive the wedding invitations, they became very excited, because the Goldhirsh family was very popular in that city. There was one family, however, which did not receive an invitation. The Roth family checked their mailbox everyday as the wedding approached, but they received no invitation. The Roths considered themselves close friends of the Goldhirsh family. Understandably, the Roths felt very offended that they were not included in the Simcha.

The night of the wedding was an overwhelming success. The music was lively, the food was good and everyone left with a smile on their faces. However, the Roths stayed home that night.

The Roths were merely offended at first. However, with time, they later became bitter and angry that they had not been included in the wedding. They cut off all contact with the Goldhirsh family. The Roths never told anyone what had happened. And the Goldhirsh

family was therefore at a loss as to why the Roths had cut all contact.

What followed was decades of hard feelings, distrust and hatred, with the Roths and Goldhirshs avoiding each other at weddings and fund raisers, etc. Some 20 years after the Goldhirsh wedding, the Roths received a curious letter in the mail. The letter was one letter with a plastic bag attached to it. The main letter was a letter from the United States Post Office with something like the following:

"During our recent remodeling, we found the attached letter under one of the older machines. We apologize for the delay in delivering this piece of mail. Better late than never! Thanks for your understanding." In the plastic bag was the Goldhirsh wedding invitation from 20 years previous.

In order to know how to treat others properly we must constantly study the Torah. Without a clear understanding of what hurts others, we may go through life hurting many people without ever realizing it.

A Major Rule and a Minor Rule

Rashi cites Chazal who say that V'ahavtah l'reacha komocha is the "klal gadol b'Torah." It is the "major rule" of the Torah.

Sefer Likutei Yeuhda quotes the **Sefas Emes zy"a** as noting that if the Torah has a "major rule", it must also have a "minor rule". What is this minor rule?

The Bais Yisroel of Ger zy"a says that the minor rule may be that one must first fill himself with love of Hashem before loving other Jews. It is easier to come to love Hashem than it is to love one's fellow man. Therefore, one must first do that before he can love his friend.

The Power of Pushkas By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



Our sages teach us that the mitzvos of tzedakah and gemilas chassadim are important elements of the teshuvah process. Similar to a korban, tzedakah has the capability to atone for one's aveiros and has the potential to bring the ge'ulah.

It was customary for the gabbaim in Mezhbizh to place pushkas throughout the shul on Erev Yom Kippur to collect tzedakah before and after Minchah. They would shake the coin-filled pushkas to inspire community members to give tzedakah.

One year, the leaders of Mezhbizh sought to discontinue this minhag. They said it disturbed the congregants, and most people were in a rush to head home to eat the seudah hamafsekes and prepare for Yom Kippur.

However, the Baal Shem Tov rejected the resolution and said there was no way he could agree to annul this holy custom. He explained that one year Heavenly prosecutors erected a wall in Heaven that disrupted the Jewish people's flow of prayers and prevented them from reaching the Heavenly Throne. The prosecutors could not be removed until the gabbaim began to shake the tzedakah boxes.

There was such a clamor and din that the prosecution became disoriented. Only then did the wall come down and were the people's heartfelt tefillos able to ascend straight up to Heaven.

How great is the power of the mitzvah of tzedakah!

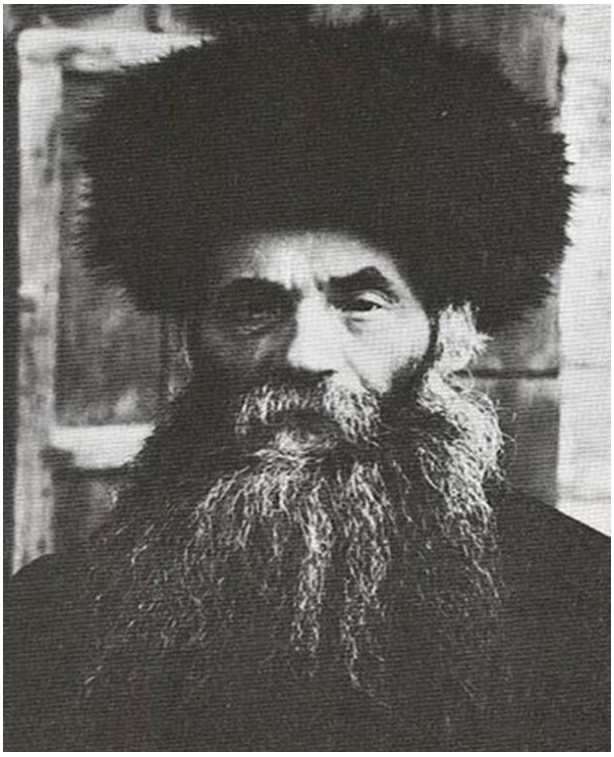
Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

***וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳ And you shall love your fellow as you love yourself* (19:18)**

Unlike most of the mitzvos taught by Moshe, where not everyone was commanded to be present, *Parshas Kedoshim* was taught to the entire Jewish People—without any absentees.

One of the reasons why this was so, according to the *Maharvaz*, was because this *Parsha* contains the mitzvah of "Loving your fellow Jew" which Rebbe Akiva calls the *klal gadol baTorah, overriding principle of the Torah*.

Because of the weight given to this mitzvah, we are obligated to go out of our way to make sure that we treat our fellow Jew with great sensitivity. One of the details contained in this law is that we must consider a person's feelings, and honour their self-respect even where we would not consider honouring ourselves in such a way.



Rav Shach once related that his uncle, **Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer** was once approached by the *gabbai* of his Shul in Slutzk with the following question. "Every year we honour Reb Chaim with an *aliya* on Rosh Hashana because of his generous support of the Beis Hamedrash. We give him this honour every year because in his gratitude, he makes a very generous — and much needed — donation to the Beis Medrash. This year, Reb Chaim lost his entire fortune. Should we still honour him with the *aliya* when we could honour someone else and receive an equally respectable donation, bearing in mind that if we give the *aliya* to Reb

Chaim, we won't get anything, and the Beis Medrash will lose out a lot of money!"

Rav Isser Zalman responded, "You may not take this honour away from him. Remember, when it comes to matters of wealth—who is rich and who is poor— that is one of Hashem's calculations that He makes. But to stop giving this man his customary honour and thereby causing him embarrassment—this is our calculation and involves *our* obligation to consider the feelings of our fellow man. And if you are worried about the loss of money to the Beis Hamedrash, I will personally raise the money for you — so long as you don't hurt that man's feelings."

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

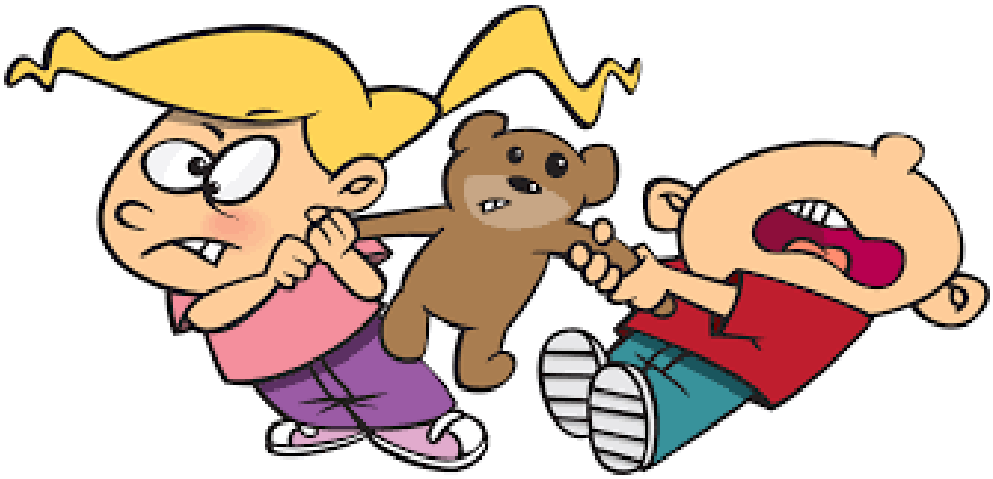
ואהבת לרעך כמוך, אני ה' ***And you shall love your friend as you love yourself, I am Hashem…*** **(19:18)**



The *Mekubal* **Rebbe Chaim Vital** (one of the great students of the *Ari Ha'kadosh*) explains this *Pasuk* as follows. When there is great love -**אהבה** between two individuals, *Hashem* causes His *Shechinah* to dwell amongst them. This is hinted at by the *Gematria* of the word **אהבה** which is 13.

When this **אהבה** is shared by two people, the numerical value doubles to 26, which is the value of the four-letter Name of *Hashem*. Thus, the *Pasuk* reads, **ואהבת לרעך כמוך**, when you love your friend as yourself, sharing the common love for each other, then, **אני ה'** - I am *Hashem* Who dwells amongst you. (*Parperaos LaTorah*)

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



One of the *Aseres HaDibros* is the commandment to not be jealous of others. **The *Ibn Ezra*** (*Shemos* 20:14) comments that many have asked how this is possible? How can one avoid the natural feelings of wanting what someone else may have?

The *Ibn Ezra* answers that in general, people only feel jealousy for things that they feel they have a chance of attaining. A simple villager who sees a princess will not be jealous toward her, because he realizes that marrying her is beyond any realm of possibility for him. Similarly, every person of intelligence must recognize that whatever he has is provided to him by *Hashem*, and if *Hashem* gave something to someone else, it is even more impossible for him to get it than it is for the villager to marry the princess.

When one internalizes this lesson, it becomes easy for him to follow *Hashem's* commandment to not be jealous!



Often, we think that the tougher and the louder we speak, the more effect it will have.

Mishlei is teaching us otherwise: **וְלָשׁוֹן רַכָּה תִּשְׁבָּר־גָּרֶם – *...and a soft tongue breaks a bone.*** [Mishlei 25:15] -The soft tongue is what "breaks" the hardest barriers.

V'halachtah B'drachav - The Ways of Hashem

A chossid was once discussing *parnassah* with his Rebbe, **the Chernobler Rav**, and was saying how difficult a time he was having in making living. The Rebbe asked the *chossid* what his profession was, and the *chossid* said that he was a professional photographer. However, there was little demand for his type of work in the *chareidi* community.



The Chernobler thought quietly for a moment, and the Rebbe's response to his *chossid* demonstrated his righteousness. The Rebbe told him, "Take my picture. Maybe you can sell it and it will help you make a living."

The *chossid* was surprised and awed by his Rebbe's selflessness, because he knew that the Chernobler Rav, who is known, like other *Admorim* are known, to refuse having his picture taken.

When he saw how earnest and caring the Rebbe was, he thanked the Rav very much, but explained to him that a proper picture is taken in a studio with the appropriate lighting and background, and since to the Rebbe, whose every minute is so precious, he simply could not take so much of his Rebbe's time.

The Rebbe, who was a leader who was willing to change his habit of not posing for any picture, was willing to forgo his standards, in order to help the livelihood of his *chossid*. He told his *chossid* that he will join him at a studio for an hour and allow his picture to be taken, so the *chossid* can sell it and make some money.

This is the love the Chernobler Rebbe has for his fellow *Yidden*.

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"איש אמו ואביו תיראו" ***"You shall fear every man his father and his mother."*** **(19:3)**

QUESTION: The word *"ish"* usually refers to an adult, someone over the age of *Bar-Mitzvah*. Why in stating this *mitzvah* does the Torah use *"ish"*?

ANSWER: The Torah is teaching us that the obligation to fear our parents does not derive from our dependence on them. Even as adults, with our own households, we must still fear our parents simply because they are our parents. (**כתב סופר**)

Vedibarta Bam

"לא תלין פעולת שכיר אתך עד בקר" ***"You shall not withhold a worker's wage until morning."*** **(19:13)**

QUESTION: To what extent should one go to fulfil this precept?

ANSWER: The famous *Chassidic* Rabbi, **Reb Meshulam Zusya of Anipoli** was very poor. His wife once complained to him that she had not bought a new dress for many years. She demanded that he get money so that she could have a new dress sewn. He complied.

On *Erev Shabbat* Reb Zusya noticed that his wife was very thoughtful and subdued. "Why aren't you more cheerful?" he asked in amazement, "You already have your new dress. Be happy!" She told him that when she came to the tailor to pick up her new dress, she noticed that he was very sad. When she inquired about his sadness, he told her that his daughter became a *kallah* not long ago. Recently, the *chatan* visited his home and noticed that he was sewing a new dress. The *chatan* was under the impression that the dress was for his *kallah* and was quite pleased. However, when he found out that it was not for her, he became extremely despondent. "Now I am afraid

that because of his disappointment, the engagement will be cancelled, and my daughter will not get married," the tailor said.

"The tailor's dilemma moved me so," concluded Reb Zusya's wife, "that I told him to keep this dress as a present for his daughter, and thus I am where I began. I still do not have a new dress."

After hearing his wife's story, Reb Zusya asked her: "Did you at least pay the tailor for his work?"



In amazement, his wife replied: "I do not understand you. Did you expect me to pay him, when I already gave him the dress to keep?"

Reb Zusya said to her: "This is no excuse. The poor tailor worked an entire week to sew a dress for *you*, expecting to receive money to buy food for *Shabbat*. If you want to do a *mitzvah* and give your dress to his daughter, that's your business, but he deserves to be paid for his work."

She immediately ran to the tailor and paid him. (**סיפורי חסידים**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ואהבת לרעך" - *"You shall love your fellow..."* (19:18)

QUESTION: What is the ultimate *ahavat Yisrael?*

ANSWER: The famous *Chassidic* Rabbi, Reb Moshe Leib of Sassov once said that he learned the meaning of *ahavat Yisrael* from a conversation he overheard between two simple farmers. While sitting in an inn and drinking, they became intoxicated and one said

to the other, "Do you really love me?" To which the other replied, "Of course I love you."

The first one asked again, "If you really love me, tell me what I need."

"How should I know?" his friend queried, "Am I a mind reader?"

"How can you say you really love me when you do not know what I need?" replied the first.

True *ahavat Yisrael* entails sensitivity and feeling for the anxieties and needs of another Jew, even one who has not approached you for help. (**עיטורי תורה**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ארץ זבת חלב ודבש" - *"A land flowing with milk and honey."* (20:24)

QUESTION: There are so many exceptional things about *Eretz Yisrael*. Why does the Torah choose to emphasize milk and honey?

ANSWER: The land of Israel is praised for "*devash*" (**דבש**) — "honey" — which has the numerical value of 306. This is also the numerical value of the words "*Av Harachaman*" (**אב הרחמן**) — "Merciful Father." The uniqueness of *Eretz Yisrael* is that it is blessed with G-d's mercy, as the Torah states, "A land that G-d, your G-d, seeks out, the eyes of G-d your G-d are always upon it from the beginning of the year to years end" (*Devarim* 11:12). - **ר' פנחס זצ"ל מקוריץ**

Incidentally, the milk referred to in the praise of *Eretz Yisrael* is not cow's milk but goat's milk, and the honey is date honey rather than bee honey (*Shemot* 13:5, Rashi).

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Once **Rabbi Leib Chasman** spent the Shabbos night *seudah* in Radin with the saintly ***Chofetz Chaim***. Reb Leib was very surprised to see that when they came to the *Chofetz Chaim's* house after *davening*, the *Chofetz Chaim* did not sing *Shalom Aleichem*. Instead, he made *Kiddush* and they started to eat the meal. Only after everyone finished eating their fish did the *Chofetz Chaim* start singing *Shalom Aleichem*! Reb Leib asked the *Chofetz Chaim*, "Why did he change the *minhag* and not sing *Shalom Aleichem* first?"

The *Chofetz Chaim* smiled and replied, "I knew that you would be hungry after your day traveling today, so I didn't want to delay starting the *seudah*. The *Malachim* that came home with us from *shul* don't get hungry, and they are able to wait a little. That's why I didn't sing *Shalom Aleichem* right away!" (*HaMeoros HaGedolim*)

Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

איש אמו ואביו תיראו - *Every man, his mother and his father he shall revere* (19:3) - The *posuk* begins in singular **איש** and ends in plural **תיראו**. **The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*** explains that when a man reveres and honours his father he causes his son to also honour him. Whether because of the positive influence of the father or because of the inadvertent training that if the son would see his father denigrate his father (the grandfather), then any semblance of reverence or honour that he had for his father would dissipate.

The opposite is also true, that if a son sees how dear and honoured his father treats the grandfather then the son will learn from this, and he will honour his own father. This then causes increased honour from the son to the father, and this is why the *posuk* begins in the singular and ends in the plural.

An Effort to Succeed



A man was asked to fly a *Sefer Torah* from one country to another. He got to the security line and was immediately confronted. "Sir, what is this?" the TSA agent asked. "It's a very holy religious object."

The agent said, "Well it's going to have to go underneath the plane with the luggage. You can't carry that with you." The man replied, "Absolutely not, please just let me through. This needs to stay with me at all times." She saw it was important to him and answered, "Okay. You can try to go to the gate with it, but there's no way they'll let it on the plane." And she cleared him through security.

When he approached the gate, the man at the gate stopped him. "Sir, what is that?" "This is my Torah," he answered. The man at the gate shook his head. "I was cleared through security, and it has to fly with me. I can't separate from it; it's really important."

The man at the gate called his supervisor and after some deliberating, he said to passenger, "If you want you can try to get on the plane but they're going to stop you at the door again. I'm telling you there is no way they're going to let you on that plane with that." The man happily went through and waited for his next hurdle.

As he stepped on the plane with the *Sefer Torah*, the head flight attendant said, "sir, no you can't bring that on this plane. You have to gate check that. Otherwise, we won't be able to take off." The man stressed how important this holy article was and begged them to let him keep it with him for the flight. The flight attendant went to get the pilot to ask special permission, and the man braced himself waiting for the final answer.

The pilot came out and said, "What's going on here?"

The man started rambling, "This is my Torah and it's extremely important, and I need it to fly with me so I could make sure nothing happens to it."

The pilot said, "Well you can't keep it here, -- but no problem, you can keep it up in the cockpit with me, because that's where I keep my *tefillin*."

When we want to achieve something, we can't just sit back. We have to do everything in our power to succeed, just as *B'nei Yisrael* put their blood, sweat, and tears into trying to build the *Mishkan*. May we see many *berachot* and successes from our efforts, and may we always be the backbone of Torah, whether we are the learners or supporters of those who study. Amen!

Rabbi Reuven Epstein – Can or Can't

Every single person, no matter what your challenge is, you must know that you can face that challenge and beat it. If we tell ourselves, "We can't." This is the biggest lie that we can tell ourselves. Why can't you?

I here this from people all the time – **"I can't."** But in reality, you can! And the reason is that you did! You can accomplish and get through whatever you are going through. It's just that we tell ourselves that we can't.

When our parent asks us to do something, and we tell them that we can't, and they say ok, it is fine, you don't have to. But life is not like that, because Hashem who is giving you the test, knows that you can. You are capable of overcoming any challenge that is thrown your way. Hashem gives you that ability.

Peninim on the Torah-When to be or Not to be Humble

Rav Galinsky relates the following story:



When **the Belzer Rebbe, Horav Yissachar Dov, zl**, was told of the invention of the phonograph, he was not impressed. Indeed, the concept of recording and reproducing sound was not new. He claimed to have been aware of this phenomenon for years.

It heralded back to the time when the vision of the first Belzer Rebbe, **the Sar Shalom, zl**, began to fail due to old age. His mind was in the Himelen- Heavens, when he heard the noise of his grandson playing in the courtyard. He asked his gabbai, aide, to see who was disturbing him. When he heard who it was, he called for Yissachar Dov to come in.

"What did you learn about today in cheder?" the Rebbe asked.

"I learned that Hashem spoke from the burning bush and dispatched Moshe to Egypt to redeem the Jewish People," the child replied.

"Did you understand what you learned?" the Rebbe asked.

Why Was Hashem Upset with Moshe?

"Truthfully, I had a question that bothered me" was the response. "Moshe Rabbeinu was the most humble man to walk the face of the earth. He was not looking for kavod- glory. So, why, when he refused to accept the helm of leadership, did Hashem become upset with him?"

The Rebbe was impressed with his grandson's question, and he immediately replied, "When Jews are in need, and one is asked to

help lead them out of affliction, it is not a time for humility. You might not understand the explanation now, because you are young. When you are older and more seasoned, you will understand quite well."

Rav Yissachar Dov related, "I walked out of the room and met my father, who asked me, 'What did the Zaide, grandfather, say to you?' I told my father the truth – I had forgotten. Years passed, during which the neshamah of the Sar Shalom ascended to its rightful place in Olam Habba, the World-to-Come. His son assumed the position as Rebbe.

"During the time in which he was the Rebbe, the Chassidus grew. He served his flock well until Hashem called his holy neshamah back 'home.' The chassidim now turned to me to lead them. I trembled at the thought. How could I possibly fill the role that had so ably been filled by my late grandfather and father? How could I even begin to sit on their throne?

"I was about to demur the request of the chassidim, when suddenly my grandfather's reply to me years earlier came to mind: 'When one is asked to help Jews in need, it is not a time for humility.' I accepted the leadership of Belz Chassidus. "Nu, was that any different from the phonograph? A record was made and put away for years, and the recording was played years later."

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Boyaner chassidim were discussing a trip they were planning to take together with their Rebbe, **Rebbe Mordechai Shlomo of Boyan *zt'l***.

Their Rebbe told them, "We're already in the middle of a trip because we are in the days of *sefiras ha'omer*, which is a trip towards *mattan Torah*…"

Relax



Towards the end of his life, **Horav Avrohom Yaakov Pam** זצ״ל was often in a lot of pain. Throughout this time, Rav Pam involved himself with many chessed projects. Someone asked him why doesn't he spend some more time relaxing if he is in a lot of pain?

Rav Pam answered that since the pain causes him to feel weak and takes away from his strength to learn, he uses the time to do chessed which doesn't require as much strength.

Circle Time -Gematria

There are two mitzvos in the Torah regarding parents. One is **כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם**, giving honour to them by serving them and helping them out. The second mitzvah is **מוֹרָא אָב וָאֵם**, showing fear and respect by not sitting in their regular places, not addressing them by name, and not contradicting their opinions.

The Torah promises long life and happiness for fulfilling the mitzvah of **כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם**. What is the reward for fulfilling **מוֹרָא אָב וָאֵם**?

The pasuk says **אמוֹ ואביוֹ תיראוֹ**. Each word ends with the letter vav. Vav has the value of 6, and so the three final letters of these words together equal 18 – chai.

This teaches us that we will be rewarded with long life for fulfilling the mitzvah of **מוֹרָא אָב וָאֵם** as well.

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ

There are two mitzvos in the Torah regarding parents. One is **כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם** – the second mitzvah is **מוֹרָא אָב וָאֵם.**

The Biblical Commandment

This concept is derived from Vayikra 19:3, where the Torah commands the specific internal attitude one must have toward their parents. - **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ** – *"Every person, your mother and father you shall revere."*

The Difference between "Kibbud" and "Mora"

In Jewish law (specifically addressed in Kiddushin 31b), the Sages distinguish between these two obligations:

1.Kibbud (Honor): Refers to active service and providing for their physical needs (e.g., providing food and drink, clothing them, and helping them enter and exit).

Regarding Honor (Kibbud): A child naturally feels closer to their **mother** because she typically "sways him with [tender] words". Because honoring her feels intuitive, the Torah lists the **father first** in Shemos 20:12 ("Honor your father and your mother") to ensure he receives equal active care.

2.Mora (Reverence/Awe): Refers to boundaries and respect for their position (e.g., not standing in their designated place, not sitting in their seat, and not contradicting their words).

Notably, in the commandment for Honor, the father is mentioned first (**כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ**), but in the commandment for Reverence, the mother is mentioned first (**אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ**). The Talmud explains this is to teach that both parents must be honored and revered equally.

Regarding Reverence (Mora): A child naturally feels more awe or fear toward their **father** because he traditionally taught the child Torah and was a stricter figure of discipline. Because the child may

naturally feel too casual with the mother, the Torah lists the **mother first** in Vayikra 19:3 ("Every person, his mother and father you shall revere") to emphasize that she also requires boundaries and respect.

By switching the order in these two separate verses, the Torah establishes that **father and mother are perfectly equal** in status. The Sages teach that if both parents appear in a single commandment, the one mentioned first is usually considered more significant; however, since the Torah explicitly alternates the priority, it indicates that "one is not greater than the other"

The Talmud further explains that honoring one's parents is equated with honoring Hashem. Since there are **three partners** in the creation of a person— Hashem, the father, and the mother—showing proper respect to one's parents serves as a bridge to understanding and fulfilling the honor due to the Riboino Shel Olam.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Moshe Mordechai Biderman, *zt"l*, was a *Rebbe* in Yerushalayim. Almost every day at around one o'clock, he would look at his watch and yell out, "It's almost one! It's almost one!" No one knew what he was talking about.

Finally, one day, someone asked him what he meant by saying that. He explained, "When I look at my watch and see that it is almost one, I don't think about the time. I think that *Mashiach* will be here any minute and the whole world will know that *Hashem* is **One** *and* will be declared King over the entire world! And when that happens, there will be no more confusion and questions, and everything that happens will all make sense. –

When I see the time and it is almost one, I get very excited and I have to shout out, 'It's almost **one**!'

למודי משה – Moshe Harris

The Secret to Loving Your Friend as Yourself

In this week's sedra we have the mitzvah of **ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'** – ***"You shall love your fellow as yourself; I am G-d"*** (19:18) and Rabbi Akiva famously commented, **זה כלל גדול בתורה** – ***"this is a great principle of the Torah."***

It has been explained that since Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 talmidim died because they did not treat each other respectfully, Rabbi Akiva stated that the command to love one's fellow as himself constitutes a **כלל גדול בתורה** – meaning, that those who involve themselves in Torah must expend special efforts in this regard, to show respect to one another.

The Avnei Neizer once saw a young talmid chocham denigrating a certain simple Jew. He told the young talmid chocham that the Torah commands **ואהבת לרעך**, ***to love our fellow***, but a person might wonder how he can love another Jew who is on a far lower level than he is.

The Torah's response is **כמוך אני ה'** – the same way Hashem loves every Jew despite his sins and misdeeds. Even though a Jew is very far from Hashem, nevertheless, Hashem loves him deeply. All the more so, then, every Jew must love his fellow, even if they are different from one another, for whatever difference there might be between them pales in comparison to the vast gulf in between a human being and the Ribbono Shel Olam.

This is why we read Parshas Kedoshim each year during the sefira period, as these matters are the main preparations we need to make for Matan Torah. Anyone who cannot achieve **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** cannot accept the Torah, which needed to be given in the presence of the entirety of Am Yisroel, **כאיש אחד בלב אחד** – ***"as one person, with one heart"***.

Now is the time to strengthen our love for our fellow Jew, to increase our **אהבת חינם** – ***"baseless love"*** for every Jew, no matter who he is, and we will then draw upon ourselves love and compassion from the heavens, **אמן כן יהי רצון** (**Tolner Rebbe**).

Weekly Parsha Sheet

R' Naftoli Kopshitz often relates, that he knows a certain mechaber who brings out a weekly parsha sheet. His claim to fame was that **R' Chaim Kanievsky** would look over it.

One week he took his sheet to R' Chaim and he started to look over it and before finishing it he gave it back. The mechaber asked him if something was wrong, R' Chaim said "yes, I have already seen it". The mechaber asked if someone had already shown it him, R' Chaim said "no, but I saw this already a few years ago." The mechaber admitted that he didn't have anything new that week, so he reprinted the sheet he wrote five years ago.

Most people when they read a parsha sheet, before they get to the end, they already forget it, R' Chaim remembered everything.

On the other hand, R' Nosson Einfeld related, that once they brought a very wealthy individual in front of R' Chaim and he donated a large sum of money to help towards the printing of R' Chaim's seforim, and various other causes. At the end of the week the wealthy individual returned to R' Chaim before returning home for a berachah, the gabboim told him that here is the wealthy individual who was here at the beginning of the week and he wants a second berachah before returning home, and R' Chaim didn't remember anything.

Most people, if they receive a large sum of money from someone will remember the donor forever, when it comes to parsha sheets however, they forget it before getting to the end. R' Chaim Kanievsky however, was the other way round, when it came to worldly

matters he forgot everything, when it came to Torah however, even a quick read of a parsha sheet went into his mind and he never forgot it.

We need to learn from here, that the more that we let enter into our heads that is not Torah, the harder it is for Torah to penetrate us and enter into our bones and the harder it will be for us to connect to Torah. And on the contrary, the more one keeps rubbish and mundane matters out of his head, the more he will merit to have a burning desire and great love towards the holy Torah.



No Worries

How does one live a worry-free life? **The Ralbag** (a student of **the Ramban**, on Mishlei 12:25) offers the following thoughts:

"Worry doesn't help at all; it only harms. To worry about something that already happened is insanity.

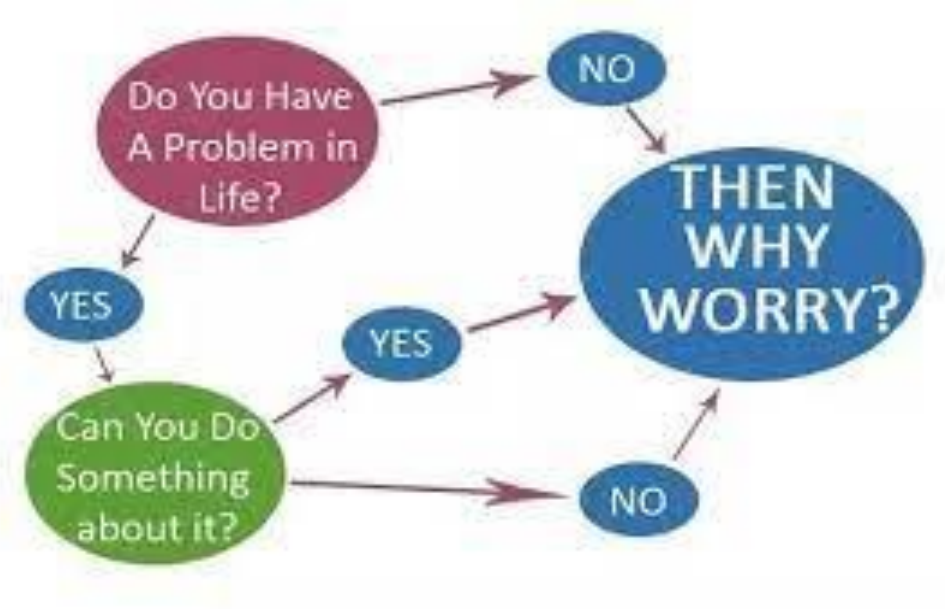
The Chachamim taught us that all worries are forbidden. The only worry permitted is to ask yourself, 'Why am I worried?'"

Contemplating these important lessons will help you overcome your worries. Let's repeat the points:

(1) "Worry doesn't help at all." **The Kotzker zt'l** said, "It's a good thing that worrying doesn't help. People worry so much, although it doesn't help at all. If worrying helped, they would worry so much more." So why worry? It doesn't accomplish anything!

(2) "It only harms." Not only does worrying not accomplish anything, worrying causes us more trouble. It causes the very thing we were

afraid of to occur. **The Maharal** (Bava Metzia, writes) -"When a person is afraid of poverty, he is giving place for poverty to take hold of him. When one is afraid of something, this means he considers himself smaller and weaker than the matter which he fears, and that gives strength for that matter to overpower him.



The early scholars say that the same occurs with falling. Fear can cause it to happen. Take a beam of wood and put it across a river. You will likely fall off it if you try to cross the river. Place the same wooden beam on the ground, and you can walk over it without falling.

Why does he fall when it is over a river? It is because thinking about falling causes it to happen. The mind has this power.

The Kedushas Levi (Beshalach) adds that if a person trusts that Hashem will grant him all his needs, Heaven will do so. But if a person will constantly be worried about his parnassah, this will cause his parnassah to lessen. Fortunate is the person who trusts in Hashem because Hashem will be his shadow and prepare his parnassah."

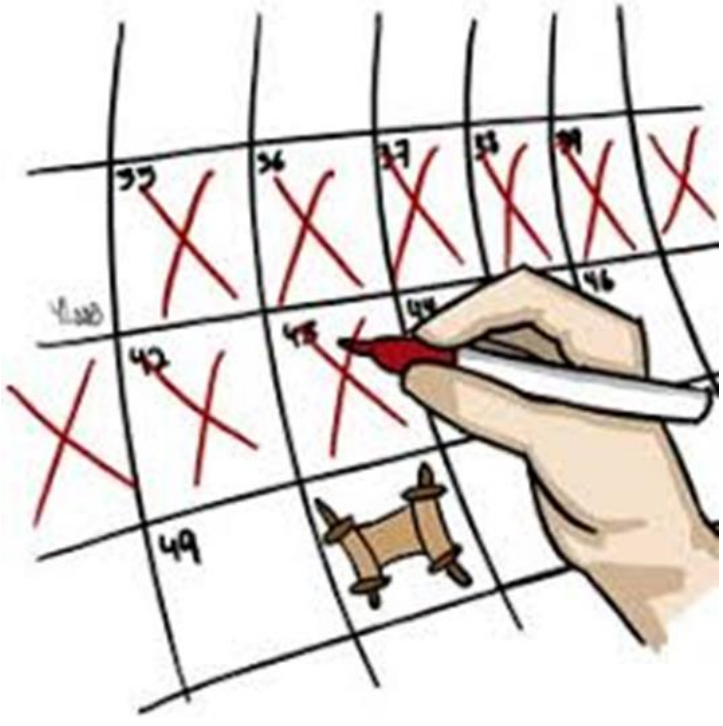
(3) "To worry about something that already happened is insanity." **The Pela Yoetz** (Daagah) writes, "A wise scholar said, "The past is gone, the future hasn't come yet. Why worry? Go drink wine." This is because if it already happened, what will worrying help? It is bad enough that it occurred. Why do you add salt to the wound by worrying about it and being distressed? Keep it out of your mind. And in regard to the future, if there is something you can do, do so.

And if not, what will it help to worry? Trust in Hashem. This is a great counsel to free yourself from worry."

(4) The Chachamim taught us: "All worrying is forbidden." **Reb Ben Tzion of Bobov zt'l** writes in a letter, "The Chachamim told us to do hishtadlus for parnassah, but who gave you permission to worry?" Consider worries to be a forbidden thought. It is forbidden to worry, so banish the worries from your mind.

(5) "The only worry that is permitted is to ask yourself, 'Why am I worried?'" Think about these matters, and you will overcome your tendency to worry.

Rabbi YY Jacobsohn - Hayom Yom [Compiled by the Lubavitcher Rebbe]



What is the secret of time management? During these days, there is a special and enigmatic mitzvah called sefiras ha'omer. We basically count 49 days from Pesach until Shavuos. But what is the point in counting days? Days and nights are passing anyway. What difference does it make if we count them or not?

Judaism conveys a very profound message – Every day needs to be accounted for. When I finish a day, I have to be able to answer this question; what did I accomplish during this day? What was achieved in the last hour, week, month and year? And how am I going to make the tomorrow better and more beautiful than the today?

There was once a very affluent man who was trapped in his house that was on fire. The fireman saved him and carried him out of the raging inferno. On the way out, the man says to the fireman, "Name me your price, and I will pay you, I am a very wealthy man."

The fireman replied, "I was just doing my job, there is no need to reward me."

The man says, "Don't be foolish, I really want to pay you for what you have done for me."

The fireman said, "I am going to ask you for one thing – Live a life that was worth saving." This is the question that I have to be able to answer every single day. That I live a day that was worth saving. Is this a day that I can remember?

An Eyewitness Account From New York City

On a cold day in December some years ago, a little boy, about 10-years-old was standing before a shoe store the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window and shivering with cold.

A lady approached the young boy and said, "My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window."

"I was asking Hashem to give me a pair of shoes", was the boy's reply. The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of sock for the boy. She then asked for a basin of water and a towel.

He quickly brought them to her. She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased for him a pair of shoes. She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted

him on the head and said, "No doubt, you will be more comfortable now."

As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face with tears in his eyes, asked her: 'Are you Hashem's wife?' She hesitated for a moment, wiped a tear frum her eye and whispered. 'No. just His messenger.'

Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskind



One day when **Rabbi Yehoshua LeibDiskind** זצ"ל was moving from one place to another, someone was holding his 2 personal boxes for him. The whole time Rav Yehoshua Leib kept telling him, "Make sure box 1 is always on top."



The person couldn't understand the big deal why box 1 always had to be on top? When they arrived Rav Yehoshua Leib explained, "Box 1 has in it my father Rabbi Binyomin Diskind's זצ"ל chiddushei Torah, and box 2 has my chiddusei Torah in it.

I wanted to make sure my father's chiddushim are always stay on top of mine!"

"Gratitude shapes perspective. It clears our lenses to see Hashem's perspective." – R' Charlie Harary.

Just One Mitzvah

The Treasurer of the bikur cholim hospital in Jerusalem, Reb Avrohom Cohen had a heart attack. When he was in the hospital, **R' Aryeh Levine** came to visit him. During his visit, Reb Avrohom had another sudden heart attack.

R' Aryeh rushed to call for help. After two hours they were **ב"ה** successful in reviving him. The doctor saw R' Aryeh was still there and told R' Aryeh that if he wanted, he could go in to visit Reb Avrohom. R' Aryeh entered the room and Reb Avrohom told R' Aryeh that he had a very interesting story to tell him.



He had just been in the **בית דין של מעלה**. They announced that all of the **מלאכים** created by his **מצוות** should come in. The door opened, and hundreds and hundreds of white **מלאכים** came in and went on one side of the scale. Then they announced that all of the **מלאכים** created from **עבירות** should come in.

The door opened and again many many **מלאכים** started coming in. The scale was basically getting equal. It was an extremely frightening moment, but there was a knock on the door. A **צדיק** from a previous generation walked in and said, "I'm here to say that although Reb Avrohom was the treasurer for BikurCholim he was always completely honest! He never took any money that wasn't his."

The **ב"ד** said that since this **צדיק** gave testimony, he will have a chance to go back to **עוה"ז** and fix up his **עבירות** . Immediately afterwards he found himself in an open area with mountains and valleys, and he had no idea where he was. The only person in sight was a man standing on a mountain. Reb Avrohom went over to him, and the man asked him if he knew who he was! He said, "No!"

The man went on to explain "When I was young, I was a guest in your town for Shabbos. After davening, all the guests and **עניים** would line up and people would take them home for a meal one by one. The problem was that I was 6 feet tall and 400 pounds, so not one person wanted to take me home".

The man continued to relate, "I was the only one left in shul with you and your father. Your father took one look at me and told you, "We can't take him." And you left the shul. My heart was broken. I felt rejected and all alone. I sat down and cried.

10 minutes later Avrohom, you came back into the shul. You told me that you persuaded your father to let me come and that I was invited. You told me that you told your father that if he wouldn't invite me then you were not going to eat for the entire Shabbos!

The man continued, "I came to you for the entire **שבת**. After **שבת** I told you that one day I would repay you. I left the town and I never saw you again. Now I want to repay you, so how can I repay you?"

Reb Avrohom said, "I want you to tell me how I can get back to the world." The man told him to continue walking straight, and then to turn by a specific mountain, then he would wake up wherever he was in the world. This was in the zchus of ONE MITZVAH.

Emunoh In Our Lives

Refoel lived in Soviet Russia under the sinister control of the KGB, where all forms of *Yiddishkeit* were banned, including any communal services. Despite that, he ran a secret money **גמ"ח** for *Yidden* under the noses of the KGB, knowing that at any moment he could be arrested and deported to Siberia for his 'crimes'.

One day, there was a sudden knock at his door. Two KGB officers bundled him into a car and took him to their headquarters where he was led into the interrogation room. A burly officer walked in with a

thick file. He said, "We have documented all your activities from all these years".

Refoel was sure that he would spend the rest of his life in Siberia. The officer said, "I read all the documents. Do you remember how a lady once came to you crying for money but you had nothing to give? She pleaded that she had 11 starving children at home. You took off your watch and instructed her to sell it to buy food".

Refoel nodded, unsure what the officer was getting at. The officer said, "That woman was holding the hand of a six year old boy. I was that boy, and you saved the lives of my family".

The officer instructed Refoel to escape out the back door to a waiting car which took him home to pick up his family. They were then whisked across the border and brought to safely to **ארץ ישראל.**

Torah Tavlin

R' Mordechai HaKohen zt"l says: "The Torah commands us, **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ** -'A person, his mother and father you shall fear, and My Shabbos you shall observe.' 19:3

The word 'Ish' (person) seems superfluous, but it alludes to an important reminder to every parent of every child. The Torah is warning that you have been given a precious soul, a son or a daughter, to nurture and raise properly. Do not relate to the child as just a child. Realize that in just a few years he/she will grow into an 'Ish' - a person, an adult.

You thus bear the responsibility to educate your children so that they observe Shabbos and become connected to their heritage. Since Shabbos is equal to all the mitzvos in the Torah, ensuring that they observe it correctly will guide them on the path of fulfilment for all mitzvos."

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

אֲ֣יִשׁ אִמּ֔וֹ וְאָבִ֖יו תִּירָ֑אוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַ֥י תִּשְׁמֹ֖רוּ -'A person, his mother and father you shall fear, and My Shabbos you shall observe.' 19:3



The Torah tells us that the mitzvah of honouring one's parents is applicable at every stage of life, even after one's parents have passed on. In fact, the Zohar writes that the main mitzvah of honouring parents applies only after they've left this world.

There is only so much a child can do for his parents in this world; in the next world the reward they receive from their children is limitless. This is certainly not to minimize the greatness of this mitzvah here.

The Ksav Sofer explains that the word "Ish" is used to describe one who performs this mitzvah because one should know that even when he grows up and becomes an adult, the mitzvah of honouring parents is not diminished. If anything, it should be more, because as we grow and parent our own children, we must realize how much our parents did for us throughout the years and this should help us appreciate them more.

Unfortunately this is not the way it goes. People often feel that because they are now adults, they do not need their parents so much. They have their own opinions and feelings about things, which often clash with their parents' view. They have become rich or successful and don't necessarily feel dependent on their parents. This might cause one to honour his parents less.

The Ksav Sofer is teaching us that no matter how much of a "self-made MAN" you've become, it is specifically at the time that you feel

like such a big "Gavra" that you must show honour and respect to your parents.

Kibbud Av V'em is increasingly more challenging as the technological changes in the world are causing our young children to feel more "advanced" and "ahead" of their parents. This is causing a terrible breakdown in our frum society.

We as adults must remember and teach our children that the premise of Kibbud Av V'em is Hakaras HaTov; appreciation to your parents for bringing you into this world! No matter how big you are, you could not have done that by yourself! You don't have to agree with all your parents say, but you must respect their opinion. The way you talk about and treat your parents is the way your children will talk about and treat you.



מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

The Torah [19:33-34] warns us to never hurt or taunt a Ger, a convert who was once a stranger to Judaism, for we, as a Nation, were once strangers in the Land of Egypt as well, and we must be sensitive to his feelings and needs.

R' Tzvi Yabrov shlit'a, who is close to the Kanievsky family, and wrote seforim on R' Chaim's uncle, the **Chazon Ish zt"l**, relates a story that he was once in the Kanievsky home on a Friday morning, while R' Chaim was having his usual chavrusashaft with his brother-in-law, R' Yitzchok. The two were fully immersed in their learning, when suddenly, Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky a"h, walked into her husband's study, followed by a very distraught looking kollel couple. The group waited respectfully for a few moments until they were noticed, and the Rebbetzin related their tale.

The couple got married recently. During the engagement, and even before, the young bride was aware that her husband was a baal teshuva, and did not grow up religious. This morning, however, she

learned for the first time, that her husband was really a Ger and had converted to Judaism a number of years ago. He was sincere and fully observant, but she was not prepared for this bombshell, and was having trouble coming to terms with it.

The young woman continued to cry softly as the Rebbetzin detailed fully how the two met and how she was fine with his status as a baal teshuva, but this is a whole new level. The husband, too, felt terrible that he had kept this important information from his bride, now his wife, not to mention her entire extended family and friends. This morning, after he broke the news to her, she cried hysterically for a while, until her husband said, "Let us go to Rav Chaim and we will do whatever he tells us." She agreed.

The Gadol Hador sat and listened pensively to the couple's story. He absorbed every word, and his mind was already processing the solution. He looked at the young bride first and spoke directly to her wounded heart. "What are you saying? That your husband is a Ger? Why, being a convert to Yiddishkeit is **לכתחילה שבלכתחילה** - one cannot be greater than that!

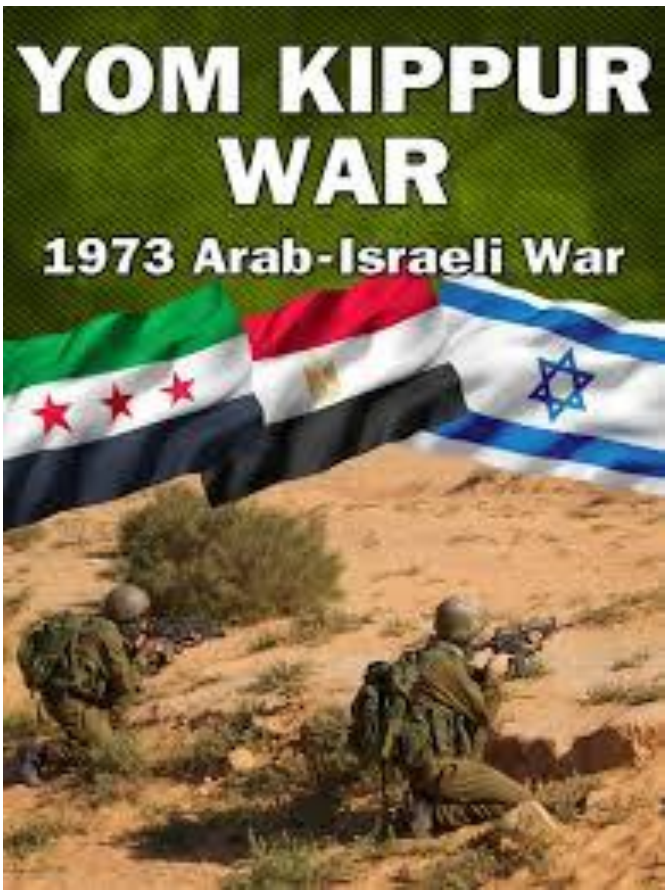
The Rambam lists Shemaya and Avtalyon as two of the 'Mosrei HaTorah' - transmitters of the Torah, who literally carried the Jewish people on their backs - and they were converts. The great Tanna, Rabbi Akiva, had 24,000 talmidim - he came from a line of converts. Even Dovid Hamelech was famously a descendant of Rus Hamoaviya - who was the daughter of a gentile king and she converted to Judaism when she married the son of Naomi. She was a righteous convert!"

The young woman stopped crying, and it was clear that she was feeling better. But R' Chaim was not finished. He turned to his Rebbetzin and asked for some wine. The Rebbetzin was a little surprised as R' Chaim's doctor had prohibited him from drinking alcohol, but she did as she was asked. She brought in a bottle of wine and R' Chaim began to pour it into a cup. "You should know that my

doctor forbids me from drinking wine, but today, in your honour, I will partake of a little wine." He held up the glass and made a loud beracha, "Borei Pri Hagafen," and took a small sip. "L'Chayim, L'Chayim. Mazel Tov! R' Yitzchok, a niggun?" he said to his brother-in-law.

R' Yitzchok started a song. R' Chaim urged the avreich and they both joined in. The young bride's eyes were now shining from happiness. She was proud to have married such a special husband, on the word of the Gadol Hador!

Short Story Of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin



On Yom Kippur of 1973, the Arab countries of Egypt and Syria began a coordinated surprise attack against Israel. The Israeli Army suffered 1000's of casualties during the first wave of attacks; yet with Hashem's help, they were eventually able to drive back the attackers in both the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Unfortunately, the Yom Kippur War left many formerly married women as "agunos", as their soldier husbands had disappeared during the war and were presumed dead.

Halacha dictates that there must be clear proof of a husband's death before allowing the widow to remarry. **Harav Ovadia Yosef, ZT"L**, established a Beis Din dedicated to freeing over a 1000 agunos; he spent countless hours researching medical/dental records, interviewing surviving soldiers, as well as poring over grainy

pictures of war casualties, which caused him much sorrow. He even suffered permanent eye damage due to the strain he placed on himself while poring over such pictures. One particular case caused Rav Ovadia great difficulty.

Finally, one night at 2:00 am, he was satisfied with the identification of the deceased, and he sat down to write the Psak to free the widow. Rav Ovadia told his son to call the widow immediately to tell her the good news.

His son responded that it was so late, and that the lady was for sure sound asleep. Rav Ovadia answered that tomorrow was the scheduled hearing in front of the Beis Din, and that she was for sure tossing and turning in her bed. The son dialled, Rav Ovadia took the phone and cried together with the woman as he told her the good news.

Comment: There are many interpersonal Mitzvos in our Parsha, including that of "V'ahavta Lirayacha Kamocha", love your friend like yourself. ***Rav Chaim Vital, ZT"L****, writes that a Jew who is well-liked by others receives a portion of the reward from every Mitzvah that others perform, for he is a part of them! Rav Ovadia showed us how much one must care about his fellow Jew, and how much effort must go into alleviating another's pain and suffering.*

The Steipler Gaon, zl (cited by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita), writes (Kraina d'Igarta), "One should know that whoever takes upon himself the mantle of oseik b'tzarcehi tzibbur, involving himself in the needs of the community, is not spared agmas nefesh, suffering of the spirit, mental anguish and torment.

In the merit of the yissurim, troubles and pain that he experiences, however, he will be entitled to great achievement and success."

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

The Man Who Bought a Flowerpot at The Funeral



The Tzadik of Yerushalaim, **Rav Aryeh Levin zt"l**, once participated in the funeral of a righteous resident of Yerushalaim. Rav Aryeh related that this man had a very good friend with whom he had worked together for 30 years. In the middle of the levaya, he saw this close friend leave and walk away from the procession that was escorting the deceased man to his final resting place. The man went into a nearby flower shop and bought a flowerpot.

Rav Aryeh witnessed this and wondered why this man would abandon the funeral procession of his best friend in order to perform this mundane task. If he needed a flowerpot, couldn't he find a more appropriate time to purchase it?

Rav Aryeh asked, "Weren't you best friends with the nifter for decades? Why would you leave his levaya to buy a flowerpot?"

The friend explained, "For the past few years, I have been involved in the case of a man who suffered from leprosy. The man died yesterday, and the non-Jewish doctors decided to burn all of his clothing and belongings, including his tefillin, in order to ensure that his disease wouldn't be spread. I argued with them and said that it is forbidden to burn tefillin. Finally, the head doctor agreed that he would give me until noon to bring him a clay flowerpot, in which he would place and seal the tefillin and then bury it in the ground. I had no choice but to leave the levaya in the middle to buy the flowerpot in order to be able to bury the tefillin."

Rav Aryeh would relate, "After I heard this story, I accepted to always judge everyone favourably!"

Migdal Ohr – Rabbi J Gewirtz

R' Izel "Charif" (the Sharp One) once became ill. The doctor who examined him declared, "There is nothing to be done for this patient, he is going to die." When R' Izel recovered, the physician was sheepish about seeing him, for obvious reasons.

"There is no need to be embarrassed," said R' Izel, "you were right. I expired on my bed and went up to Heaven, where I did you a tremendous favour!"

Intrigued, the doctor wondered what favour was done for him. "Well," said the sage, "In Heaven, I saw a long line of doctors, waiting to be brought to purgatory, as the phrase says, **טוב שברופאים לגיהנום - *[even] the best of doctors will go to purgatory.***

Then I saw you in the line," he said to the doctor, "and I called to the angel. "Wait! Take this man out of the line! A doctor is one who heals people, not one who gives up on them. This man is no doctor!"

A Message from Gan Eden by R' Zecharia Wallerstein z'tl



Somebody came over to me a few weeks ago and said, "Rabbi Wallerstein, I am jealous of your portion in Gan Eden."

I said to him, "Don't be jealous of my portion in the next world. You have no idea what I did as a kid. You don't know if I even have a portion in the next world."

If you want to be jealous of me, you can be jealous of my **עולם הזה.** My Olam Hazeh is not making money or driving a nice car but is helping someone. When someone save you changed my life or saved

my life, or made them smile, that is my **עולם הזה**. I can't do that in the next world. Because in the next world, you sit and learn all the time in **ישיבה של מעלה** , whereas in this world you can help someone.

To make an autistic kid smile- a down syndrome kid smile- your wife smile- your parents smile- somebody in the street smile. You can help somebody through a crisis. This is amazing. It is much better than the next world.

People might think that I am an apikorus, but I didn't make this up. I believe in the next world, but the Mishna in Pirkei Avos says: **מִכָּל יָפָה שָׁעָה אַחַת בִּתְשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא** – ***One second of teshuva and good deeds in this world is greater than the whole of the next world.***

I understand the Mishna, because in the next world you can't do anything. But here, you can give tzedakah, you can do chesed, you can make someone smile, you can give someone hope.

Wow!, you want to be jealous, be jealous of this world. ***Make the most of every moment in this world!***

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



"The Jewish people have chosen their G-d well. But G-d has also chosen His nation well – for even the most unsophisticated Jew sanctifies His Holy Name!" – Toldos Yaakov Yosef.

Guardian of Added Life By Rabbi Dani Staum



A neighbour related that when he informed his six-year-old son of the *petirah* of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *zt"l***, the boy burst into tears. Through sobs, he told his father that he had wanted to ask Rav Chaim a question and now he doesn't know who to ask. He wanted to know why we have the custom to bang when we hear Haman's name in the Megillah, but not the two times his evil wife Zeresh is mentioned in the Megillah.

I was moved by the story because it gives a glimpse into the greatness of Rav Chaim and the profound loss we are all reeling from. It wasn't just his unparalleled knowledge and complete mastery and clarity of all areas of Torah, it was also his care for and devotion to every single Jew of whatever background. The truth is that he would have answered such a question, no less than he would have responded to an intricate question from the greatest of scholars.

It's well known that for years Rav Chaim would hand reply to every single letter and inquiry sent to him. This was despite the fact that it required tremendous exertion and time, both of which were so precious to him.

Over two decades ago I sent Rav Chaim a letter asking his opinion about a certain matter. His reply arrived a few weeks later. In small letters, he wrote with tremendous humility, "I don't know anything more than what is written in the *Sefer HaPardes* (Keansburg)." He concluded with the page number.

I had never heard of the *Sefer HaPardes* (this was not the *Sefer HaPardes* attributed to Rashi), and it took me some time before I

tracked down the *sefer* and read what the author had to say about my question.

What struck me about Rav Chaim's response was not only the brevity and humility of it, but also that he had taken the time to reply at all.

Rav Chaim's published *seforim* are extraordinary. His breadth of knowledge and clarity are apparent in his writings. He wrote about many obscure and unfamiliar sections of Torah. He published a four-volume masterful work about *ze'arim*, the laws connected to agriculture and planting, in the style of the *Mishna Berura*.

Rav Chaim also began working on a similar work on *Kodshim*, the corpus of laws involving the divine service in the *Bais HaMikdash*, including *korbanos*. He printed the first volume but never printed successive volumes. - Reb Chaim explained that because he spent so much time replying to inquiries and meeting people each day, he didn't have time to continue the invaluable and unprecedented work.

When told that such a work would invariably benefit future generations, Rav Chaim replied that his primary responsibility is to give *chizuk* to this current generation. He felt a responsibility to help those who sought his blessing and guidance and had to prioritize that over what could be beneficial to future generations. It is a very telling statement. Rav Chaim gave up something precious to him and the Jewish people because he felt it was more important to give *chizuk* to people who needed him now.

Someone once quipped that if Rav Chaim had a nickel for every person who came to his home, he would have been well off. But he never took a red cent. He gave himself over to *Klal Yisrael*, old and young alike, even at the expense of his own spiritual accomplishments. Each of those meetings consumed his time and sapped his energy.

On one occasion, a family member was sitting next to Rav Chaim as he was perusing letters that had arrived that day. Rav Chaim showed

his relative a letter he received from a young boy. The young boy wrote that in *cheder* he was learning the *parsha* of *Miketz*. When Pharaoh recounts his dreams to Yosef, he says, "Behold seven cows came up *achareihen* – after them." The boy wanted to know why it says *achareihen* and not *achareihem*, which would seemingly be more appropriate in Hebrew. The boy said that he asked his rebbe but his rebbe didn't know the answer. Therefore, he was now asking Rav Chaim.

Rav Chaim told his relative that he wasn't sure how to reply because he didn't think the young boy would understand the grammar rules involved. The relative suggested that Rav Chaim simply not reply. Rav Chaim explained that the reason he spends so much time replying to letters sent to him, is to give *chizuk* to the questioner. "I'm not sure if everyone feels *chizuk* from my responses, but I have no question that such a young boy will feel good about receiving a reply from me to his question."

After a few more moments of thought, Rav Chaim smiled and wrote back that Pharaoh was in Egypt and didn't speak Hebrew. That's why he used incorrect grammar (*Rabbi Chaim*).

Rav Chaim never held a formal position. He wasn't a *rav* or a *rosh yeshiva*. On one occasion he was asked to substitute for another rebbe. Soon after he began teaching, a boy asked if he could go to the bathroom. When Rav Chaim allowed him, another boy asked if he could go out too. Then another boy asked, as another, until Rav Chaim was left with no students. He promptly got up and went home.

At the end of the day, Rav Chaim was a Jew who loved and lived Torah with every fiber of his being. He had the absolute conviction that the solution to everything, including health problems, lay in the Torah. He was the personification of the words of the Nefesh HaChaim (*Sha'ar* 4) that Torah is the purpose of the world and there is nothing more valuable.

In a *hesped* delivered about Rav Chaim, Rabbi Bezalel Rudinsky repeated a thought that Rav Lazer Shach said in a *hesped* he delivered about Rav Chaim's father, the Steipler:

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 105b) states that anyone who is lax regarding eulogizing a Torah scholar is fitting to be buried during his life. As a case in point the Gemara notes that following the death of Yehoshua bin Nun, Moshe Rabbeinu's successor, there was a complaint against the Jewish people, because they didn't eulogize Yehoshua properly.

How could it be that the nation failed to pay final respects to their great leader?

The point of a eulogy is to be inspired by the life and legacy of the deceased to personally grow in one's *avodas Hashem*.

When Yehoshua died the nation undoubtedly spoke of his greatness, including the miracles he facilitated, such as stopping the sun and conquering 31 Canaanite nations. But those are things that the common person cannot relate to. They failed to speak about his greatness in Torah, his humility and his love for every Jew.

Those were things the nation could aspire to imitate. By not speaking adequately about them they failed to eulogize him properly. That is what the Gemara refers to as being lax in eulogizing a Torah scholar. Speaking about the scholar's inimitable greatness that the common person cannot relate to does not motivate others to improve, and therefore fails to fulfill the objective of a eulogy.

Rabbi Rudinsky noted that Rav Chaim's incredible greatness in Torah is far beyond what we can aspire to. The stories of his knowledge are mind-boggling, but they are largely not relatable. Therefore, if we only repeat those stories, we are not eulogizing him properly.

Rather, we should focus on his love for every Jew and the fact that he never turned anyone away. His prioritizing giving *chizuk* to others over his own growth is something we can relate to.

His name was Shmarayahu Yosef Chaim, which loosely translates as Guardian of Added Life. For nine decades his home was the address where all who visited felt an injection of spiritual life. We have not only lost a life, but we have also lost the guardian of added life. We are all mourning the irreplaceable loss. May Hashem comfort us all.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman -Torah Wellsprings

Love Your Friend

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ Love your friend (רֵעֲךָ) as yourself (19:18). Why does the Torah use the specific term רֵעֲךָ for friend and not any other word such as חברך? A possible explanation is that when your close friend is kind to you, it is natural to reciprocate and treat him kindly in return.



When does this mitzvah really kick in? When it's רֵעֲךָ. The root of the word is רע - evil. Even when someone is making your life miserable it still is a mitzvah to love them. Just like the level of one's emunah and d'veikus with Hashem will be most evident when Hashem's presence is hidden from him and it's hard to see the good (It's a easy to have faith when everything is going well), so too, even when your friend is treating you wrong you should love him as yourself.

An old man once said: "If you live to be one hundred years old, you've got it made. Very few people die past that age!"

Parsha Points to Ponder by R' Ozer Alport

A person who causes another Jew to violate any of the commandments transgresses the prohibition (19:14) against placing a stumbling block before the blind. Is it forbidden to invite a non-religious Jew to come for a Shabbos meal, which may cause him to sin by driving back and forth?

Rav Moshe Shternbuch rules that if the host's intention is solely for the benefit of his guest in the hopes of inspiring him to become more interested in Judaism, it is permissible to invite him even if he will drive to the meal. He explains that the prohibition against doing an action that will cause somebody to sin is only if one's intention is to cause him harm, similar to placing a stumbling block in front of a blind person. Just as nobody would view a surgeon who operates on a person to save his life as wounding or damaging him, so too if the host's intention is to help his guest spiritually, it would be permissible with two caveats. First, one may not command the guest to drive and should make it clear that his driving causes the host pain. Second, there is a separate concern of publicly desecrating Hashem's name if a guest drives up to his house on Shabbos, so he should insist that the guest park at a distance so that it will not be clear that he is specifically coming to visit the host.

However, Rav **Moshe Feinstein** strongly disagrees and argues that if the guest lives at a distance that will cause him to drive, the invitation of the host is tantamount to commanding him to drive, and instead of educating him to observe Shabbos, he is teaching him to desecrate Shabbos. He further adds that if the guest lives so far away that it would be impossible for him to walk to the host's house, inviting him for a Shabbos meal would transgress not only the prohibition against placing a stumbling block before the blind, but would be considered in the even more severe category of an inciter to sin (see Devorim 13:7-12).

Well Worth the Wait by Rabbi Yechiel Spero

וּבֶגֶד כִּלְאַיִם שַׁעַטְנֵז לֹא יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ 19:19

During his tenure as one of the premier leaders of Russian Jewry, **R' Yitzchak Zilber** taught countless Jews who otherwise would have been completely ignorant of all Torah. Even after he made his way to Eress Yisrael, he would still make it his business to sneak back into his native country to inspire and instruct. During those trips, he had to make sure to keep a low profile because if his true identity were revealed he risked being sent to the Russian gulag, a prison from which few return.



Once, as he was on one of his trips, a man called out to him, "Reb Yitzchak! Reb Yitzchak!" Shocked that someone would call his name publicly, he turned around and recognized a man whom he had taught many years before, obviously in dire straits, dressed in rags. Poor and hungry and cold as he was, the man could not control his excitement upon seeing R' Yitzchak for the first time in many years.

R' Yitzchak tried to temper his own excitement in seeing the man, and after quickly looking around to make sure no one was watching, he asked many questions about how his former student was doing. Nothing, though, could have prepared him for the question this poor, hungry man asked him. "Rebbi, seven years ago I bought a new coat to wear during the winter months. I have not worn it yet. I was wondering if you would be able to check it for sha'atnez."

R' Yitzchak could hardly believe his ears…or his eyes. He looked at the coat the man was wearing. It was literally falling off his

shoulders, it was so worn down. The man had purchased a coat seven years ago. Despite the brutal Russian winters, he was worried about the possibility that the new coat might contain sha'atnez and therefore had not worn it.



Any Rabbi would have given him a heter (allowance) to wear the coat, regardless of whether or not it had sha'atnez; it was pikuach nefesh (saving a life), without the coat the man could have frozen to death. But to this unbelievably sincere Jew, sha'atnez was poison! He had probably been hoping, for the past seven years as his old coat became more and more tattered, that he would find someone able to check the coat for sha'atnez. It boggles the mind!

Saying Of The Week With Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"Even the most worthless item - if you give it esteem - will become important in your eyes."

The Torah teaches (Vayikra 19:4) the Jewish people not to turn to worthless idols not to make gods of metal for themselves.

Rashi (based on the Toras Kohanim, 1:11) explains that the idols start off as being worthless, but if one follows them, they will end up making them to be a god. There are many things in this world that are worthless. Let's keep considering them that way and by doing so we will be able to focus on the truly important things in this world: Torah and Mitzvos.



Setback!

A boy entered the room of the **Sar Shalom of Belz**, and complained that, due to his endless sins, he isn't able to serve Hashem properly. His situation was simply irreversible and irreparable. How could he continue on?

The Sar Shalom responded, "Chazal teach us that a person should see every day as if today is the day that the Torah is given.

The simple understanding of this Chazal brings one to infuse fresh joy into one's learning, as one is certainly more excited, enthusiastic and eager when something is new.

However, there's another aspect to this. "When the Yidden accepted the Torah, they had just gone through the tumah of Mitzrayim, and had sinned several times. And yet, when they received the Torah and started anew, they become Yidden for the first time, forgetting about their past to chart a new course of life.

"This is the approach that we should have," explained the Sar Shalom. "Each day, we should start without dwelling on our past but instead begin refreshed, rejuvenated, and recharged, without being pulled down by the past and our previous history."

"There is no place devoid of Hashem. Just as Hashem fills the heaven and the earth, so does He fill the hearts of human beings." ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Expelled, Expelled, Expelled!!



There was a bachur who was once thrown out of yeshiva due to his behaviour issues. He went to speak with the **Klausenberger Rebbe**, and he guaranteed the Rebbe that he would improve his behaviour.

Upon hearing that, the Rebbe immediately called for a meeting with the mashgiach of the yeshiva. The Rebbe told the mashgiach that since the bachur had promised to discontinue his bad ways, he felt that the mashgiach could and should take him back into the yeshivah.

The mashgiach wasn't so quick to agree. "I've heard this assurance from him thousands of times, and soon after he goes back to his old ways. I don't trust his promise!"

The Klausenberger Rebbe tugged his long white beard and exclaimed: "I'm already old. Throughout my life, I have promised Hashem far more than a thousand times that I would progress and improve my avodas Hashem, my commitment to serving Him, and I haven't done so yet. According to what you're saying, I should give up. Is there no hope for me?! Shouldn't I anticipate that one day I'll be better?" asked the Rebbe.

"As long as a Yid lives," continued the Rebbe, "he has the potential to improve and rectify his ways, and thus he should never be rejected and declined from improving."

"A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there."

Rectifiable



The Midrash states, "The Jewish nation isn't called Reuveni or Shimoni, only Yehudi. We are named after Yehudah and no other tribe. This is because Yehudah admitted to his aveirah" (see Bereishis 38:26).

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that if the past can't be rectified, it is hard to admit to a sin. Yehudah believed in teshuvah. He believed that teshuvah with love can turn aveiros into mitzvos. This is the reason Yehudah was able to admit his sin. We are called Yehudim (or Yidden) after Yehudah because he teaches us that the past CAN be fixed.

Yaakov blessed Yehudah: "He crouched, rested like a lion, and like a lion, who will rouse him?"

The Chidushei HaRim explains that when a lion lies down, it is still a lion. This was Yehudah's trait. He was always strong like a lion. Even during times of yeridah, spiritual falls and setbacks, he was ready to bounce back like a roaring lion to serve Hashem. He didn't let the past prevent his future growth. To a large extent, this is because he believed that the past could be rectified. We are Yehudim because we also know that everything can be atoned for.

The thoughts that follow one's sin must be handled with great caution. Many of them can prevent us from continuing to grow. Our yetzer hara will get us to think: "I tried committing to discontinue my conduct, and I haven't been able to keep to my commitment, so I should just give up trying."

If we listen to the yetzer hara, we'll become broken and won't attempt to give it another try. Therefore, if we are plagued and

overwhelmed with these thoughts, we must instead uplift ourselves and know that it's only the talk of the yetzer hara and thus not true. We are special people, proud "Yehudim" who won't be limited by our past, as we have seen how it has no bearing on our ability to move on and move closer to Hashem.



איש אמו ואביו תיראו ***Every man: Your father and mother shall you revere/fear****. (19:3)*

Chazal (*Pesikta Rabasi* 23) characterise the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud av v'eim* as, "*chamur she'b'chamuros*," among the most difficult *mitzvos* to carry out properly. One must respect parents regardless of their suitability as parents.

I have written numerous times that the Torah does not command us to love parents; rather, the Torah demands that we respect and fear them – under all circumstances.

The following story occurred concerning a man who was blessed with extraordinary longevity, whose mental cognition was in perfect working order past his one hundredth birthday. He was blessed with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who showed him the greatest respect and waited on him hand and foot, making sure that he was never in need of anything. This was carried out with love, devotion, and the understanding that serving their Patriarch was a privilege.

This man was troubled by a question that kept gnawing at him. He asked his son, "I do not know why I was *zocheh*, merited, such longevity. Am I a greater *tzaddik*, more righteous, than my parents who did not live a long life? Am I more worthy than my many friends

who have passed away? Why did Hashem choose me for such an unprecedented life? Perhaps I did something special. Or maybe, Hashem wants me to experience the infirmity, illness and pain that often accompany old age."

The son had no answer for his father's query. Indeed, it was an anomaly. Hashem has His reasons, which are all good. This, too, was good. It was the accepted response, but it did little to still his father's frustration.

The son was a close *talmid*, student, of the ***Novominsker Rebbe, zl***. When he heard that his revered *Rebbe* was planning a trip to *Eretz Yisrael* to (among other things) visit with ***Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl***, who was himself a centenarian, he asked that the *Rebbe* present his father's conundrum to the *gadol ha'dor*.

The *Rebbe* presented the man's question to *Rav* Shteinman, who immediately took hold of the *Rebbe's* lapels and declared, "I will give you the answer to this question. I insist that you relate this answer to him in the exact words that I use.

You know that we are presently in the waning period of *galus* Edom, the exile personified by Eisav *ha'Rasha*. (This is not the forum to describe Eisav's psyche and behaviour and how his minions continue until this very day to adhere to the contemptuous character traits which he personified.) The merit that Eisav accrued, which has served him throughout the generations and continues to support him, is the *z'chus* of his *kibbud av*.

Eisav showed extraordinary honour to Yitzchak *Avinu,* in many ways setting the standard for this *mitzvah*. While his intentions were far from noble, on the surface his actions were exemplary.

Now Hashem seeks to free us from the shackles of Eisav's *galus*. Thus, he gave us the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim*, with the hope that we will perform this *mitzvah* with zeal and devotion. This is why, as we inch closer to the end of our *galus*, the Almighty extends the

longevity of our aged, so that their children will be able to honour them longer and better."

The *Novominsker* was moved by this explanation. He added that many parents do not want to be a burden to their children. Every time they are compelled to call for a favour, they mull it over five times before they make the call. According to the aforementioned, this "burden" is actually Hashem's way of providing children with the opportunity to honour their parents, thus catalysing an end to our *galus*.

Fascinating INSIGHTS



Sweet Scroll

The Torah is naturally sweet and as we say **מלה במתיקא כדובשא ומללו** , the words of Torah are as sweet as honey. Likewise, the pasuk says **מתוקים מדבש ונפת צופים** , sweeter than honey and drippings from the combs.

One year the fast of the 10th of Teves was over at 5 p.m. in New York. At midnight, the wife of **R' Shmuel Birnbaum** (1920-2008), Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir in Brooklyn, knocked on the door of his Shiur room and said, "You didn't break your fast yet, in addition to the fact that you have a heart condition!" He replied that he really was on his way home after the fast but then he thought of a question on the Gemara he was learning. As a result, he returned to his Shiur room and opened the Gemara thereby forgetting about the fast. Seven hours later he still hadn't broken his fast!



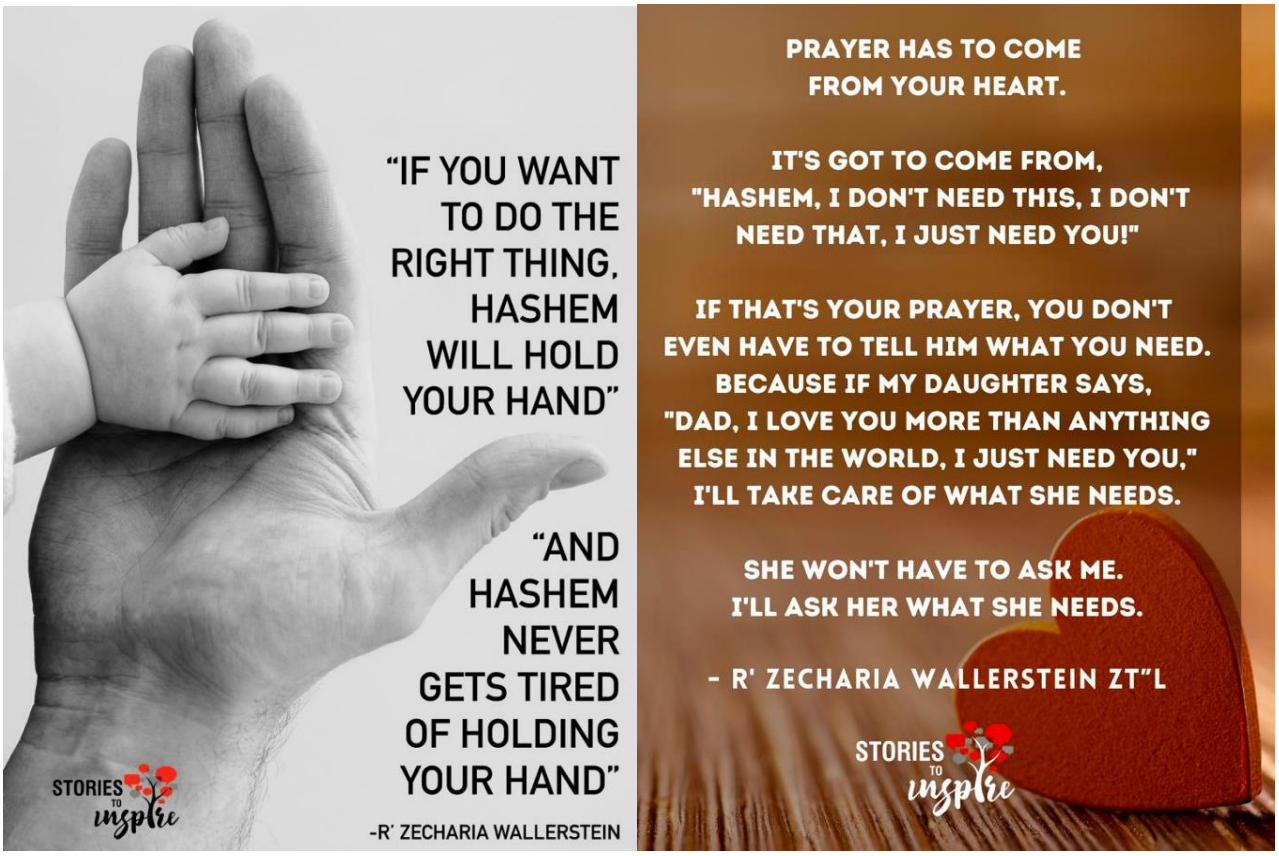
The Ohr Hachaim [Devarim 26:11. The pasuk states **ומצור דבש אשביעך**, with honey from the rock I sate you (Tehillim 81). **דבש** are the first letters of **דעה, בינה, שכל** as that is real sweetness, real honey — **מתיקות התורה**. This, which was given from Hashem (who is called the rock — Devarim 32:4), is what sates spiritual people.] tells us that if people would feel the sweetness of Torah, they would go crazy and run after it and not give any importance to gold and silver because the Torah includes every good that there is in the world.

[Concerning Shavuos, the **Pele Yoatz** (**עצרת**) writes how it is not possible not to be happy on this day as we have Torah and mitzvos which is better than all the good of this world and life of **עולם הבא**.]

The sweetness and enjoyment of Torah is shown to us in Hilchos Tisha B'av as it is prohibited for a person to learn Torah then since it makes him happy.

The Chazon Ish once remarked that if a non-Jew would know the felicity we have when we learn Torah before Shacharis on Shabbos morning, he would convert to Judaism.

The four primary areas of Torah interpretation are: **פשט, רמז, דרוש, סוד**, known by the acronym **פרדס**. The word **פרדס** means an orchard. When we enter the **פרדס**, delicious fruits are waiting to be picked and eaten.



Reb Shmuel Donn - Remez

דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם ***Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy.***

The Aseres HaDibros were given to Moshe Rabeinu on Har Sinai – as the Pasuk says in our parsha – Hashem tells Moshe to make it very clear to Klal Yisrael that to be considered a holy nation, that must not only observe the Ten Commandments of the Luchos, but rather ALL 613 of the Mitzvos.

The remez is in our Pasuk: **דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל**

בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל is gematria 603 added to the the 10 mitzvos written in the **לחות העדת** (**עֲדַת**) = 613!

All 613 mitzvos must be observed properly, as they were All Given to Moshe Rabeinu on Har Sinai! – **אמרי חיים**

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Parashas Kedoshim – A Fundamental Parashah

There are many mitzvos in Parashas Kedoshim. Hashem told Moshe (19:2) **דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל**, that he should say this parashah to the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael.

The Maharal says that for Parashas Kedoshim, everyone had to be present, unlike the rest of the Torah, that if a person was busy or unavailable to attend, he didn't have to come.

This is all because of the importance of the mitzvos of this week's Parashah, which are foundations for the entire Torah.



One of the mitzvos of this week's parashah is (Vayikra 19:18) **לא תקום**, that we may not take revenge. **The Sefer HaChinuch** (mitzvah 241) writes: "It is the way of most people to avenge those who caused them trouble or distress. They seek to give back the pain and anguish that they received. However, Hashem doesn't permit us to do so.

"*Lo sikom*"[don't take revenge]. The reason for this prohibition is for us to acknowledge that everything that happens– the good and the bad – comes from Hashem. No one can harm his fellow man if it isn't part of Hashem's plan. Therefore, when someone hurts you, know that your sins caused it, and Hashem Yisbarach decreed it. The perpetrator isn't guilty; sin is.

So, according to Sefer HaChinuch, the reason for the prohibition is for us to believe that everything that happens is from Hashem, and there is no reason for revenge.

Some advice in helping to overcome the urge to take revenge is to do *chesed* specifically to the people who harmed you.

The Imrei Yosef of Spinka zt'l would do this. His son, the **Chakal Yitzchok**, writes, "There were several episodes of my father doing kindness to those who hurt him, with the motivation to uproot any bad *middah* that may still be in him."

Once, the Imrei Yosef was extremely kind to a certain Rav. He invited him to eat breakfast with him and helped him in several ways. The Imrei Yosef's son (the Chakal Yitzchak) was surprised because the kindness he bestowed on this Rav was more than what his father would generally do for others.

The Imrei Yosef explained that he had reason to be angry with this Rav because he was once in his city, collecting money, and this Rav didn't help him at all. So, to uproot any negative feelings that he might feel towards him, the Imrei Yosef honoured and helped the Rav immensely.

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zt'l had a list of poor people he wanted to support. Periodically, his *gabbaim* would deliver money to them.

When Rebbe Yehoshua was *niftar,* and his son **Rebbe Yissachar Dov** became the Belzer Rebbe, the *gabbaim* showed him the charity list.

Showing him the list was mostly a formality because they were sure Rebbe Yissachar Dov would want to continue performing the tzedakos his father was involved in. However, he surprised them when he crossed off one of the names.

"You don't have to send him money anymore," he told them. "He isn't poor. My father used to support him in order to uproot any negative feelings he felt towards him because he had once gone out against my father. But he never harmed me, so I have no special reason to send him money."

When the **Sfas Emes zy"a** of Gur was a newly married yungerman living in Biala, he had a neighbour who was very cruel to him. After the First World War, this person needed money and assistance, and the Sfas Emes helped him continually.

The Sfas Emes's *rebbetzin* told him: "He didn't do that much bad to you, that he should deserve all this kindness."

Because this was the way of the Sfas Emes; instead of avenging the bad that people did to him, he sought to do them kindness, thereby improving his own middos.

Judging Favourably

One of the mitzvos in the Parashah is (19:15) **בצדק תשפוט עמיתך** "*You shall judge your fellow man with righteousness*."

This means if you aren't sure whether someone did an *aveirah*, judge him favourably, grant him the benefit of the doubt, and assume he didn't commit the sin.



The *Mishnah* says, **את כל האדם לכף זכות והוי דן** - "*Judge every person favourably*." Literally, **לכף** is a spoon. When someone wants to find a good piece of meat or kishke in the cholent pot, he searches with a spoon until he finds what he is looking for.

Similarly, one should hunt and search to find the good in others until he finds it.

The Pnei Menachem of Gur zy"a explained **לכף** - a spoon, to be the shoehorn used to help put on shoes. The shoehorn doesn't make the shoe larger. It simply helps push the foot inside.

This is what we must do when we seek to judge our fellow man favourably. Sometimes we must push an explanation.

We wrap our arms with tefillin seven times. Some people count the seven times (to make sure that they did it correctly) while thinking the pasuk, **ואתם הדבקים בה' אלקיכם חיים כולכם היום** because this

pasuk has seven words. It discusses being attached to Hashem, which is the essence of tefillin.

I heard that **Rebbe Itzele of Pshversk zy"a** would instead think the Mishnah **והוי דן את כל אדם לכף זכות** - to judge everyone favourably, because these are also seven words.

Bitachon and Hishtadlus

A primary counsel to overcoming worry is bitachon. When you know Hashem is helping you, you have nothing to fear.

Rebbe Yisrael Salanter taught the following three ideas:

1] "***Men darf teen un nisht uf-teen," we must do. We aren't obligated to succeed***.

In all aspects of life, for *parnassah*, and in *ruchniyus* pursuits, we must do *hishtadlus*, but success isn't in our hands. It is Hashem's decision whether we succeed or not. Our obligation is to do, not necessarily to succeed.

2] "***Men darf teen un nisht up-teen" we must do, and not 'to get it finished and over with***.'

Sometimes, people's primary intention is to finish. (This often occurs with tefillah, where people's thoughts are, "When will I finally finish?") This isn't how one should think. Each moment of *avodas Hashem* is precious. Instead of trying to finish, our goal should be to cherish every moment.

3] "***Men darf teen un nisht noch-teen" we must do, and not copy***.

Hashem created everyone differently; therefore, each person should find his unique way to serve Hashem. He should live a life of truth, not a charade of imitating others.

Good Middos

Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* said that the Torah contains 613 mitzvos, but it doesn't explicitly state that one must have good *middos*. The reason is that good *middos* are the foundations which don't need to be discussed because, without good *middos*, there is nothing at all.

The same applies to *shidduchim* and marriage. The foundation of the holy edifice of a Jewish home is the *middos*.

Someone asked the **Tchebiner Rav *zt'l*** what he should look for when seeking a *shidduch* for his daughter. The Rav replied, "***Look for three things: (1) good middos, (2) good middos, and (3) good middos***."

The Steipler Gaon *zt'l* sent a messenger to gather information about a certain *bachur* who was suggested for his granddaughter. The *shaliach* returned and relayed the wonderful things he had heard about the *bachur*. "He learns eighteen hours a day and is a great *talmid chacham*…"

"What about *middos*?" the Steipler asked. "Until now, all he had to deal with was his *shtender*. When he marries, he will have to deal with a wife. You must find out whether he has good *middos* because, without good *middos*, it is a disaster."

Once, many people were waiting to receive a *brachah* from **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l***. One person didn't want to wait, so he cut the line and stretched out his hand to Reb Shlomo Zalman.

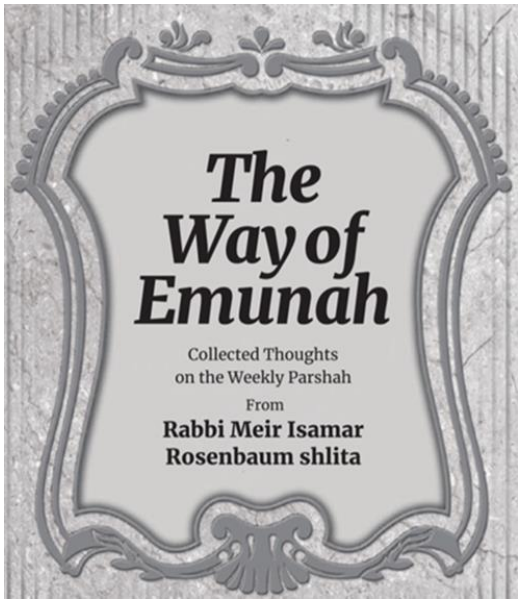
Reb Shlomo Zalman replied, "I give you a *brachah* that you should become a *mentch*."

To cushion the rebuke, Reb Shlomo Zalman asked him, "Why don't you wish me, **וכן למר** (that I too should become a *mentch*)?"

Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin *zt'l* would say that when you ask about a bachur and hear he has good *middos*, you should mark

down the number 1 in your notebook. Every other quality you hear about him is another zero.

Place those zeros next to the 1, and it becomes a large, impressive number. However, if there are many qualities but good *middos* are lacking, all you are left with are many zeros.



Do Not Lie to a Friend Who Trusts You

לֹא תִגְנֹבוּ וְלֹא־תְכַחֲשׁוּ וְלֹא־תְשַׁקְּרוּ אִישׁ בַּעֲמִיתוֹ

You shall not steal...You shall not lie, one man to his fellow. (19:11)

Sefer Turei Zahav asks why the pasuk uses the word "amiso", which indicates a peer or friend. Is it only forbidden to lie to a friend? Isn't it forbidden to lie to anyone?

He answers that a stranger will probably not trust you anyway, but a friend trusts you and believes what you say. Thus, the Torah is saying that one especially should not lie to someone who trusts him.

One Who Doesn't Daven for His Friend Oppresses Him

לֹא־תַעֲשֹׁק אֶת־רֵעֲךָ וְלֹא תִגְזֹל ***You shall not oppress your friend. You shall not steal.*** (19:13)

Sefer Mei Hashiloach explains that whenever someone has the ability to help his friend in any way and chooses not to, he is considered to have "oppressed" him. The same is true if one could have davened for his friend's benefit. If one chooses not to daven for him, he is called an oppressor and he transgresses this prohibition.

This is seen from the pasuk (1 Shmuel 12:23) where Shmuel said to the people: "*I also, far be it from me to sin to Hashem in ceasing to pray for you.*" The Gemara (Brachos 12B) learns from this that anyone who could pray for his friend and doesn't do so is called a sinner.

(19:18) לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה׳

The More One Loves His Friend, The More Hashem Loves Him

Sefer Divrei Yisroel explains the pasuk to mean that if one loves his friend, then Hashem says: "komocha ani Hashem" – I, Hashem, will do like you did. I will love you. Hashem will treat you the way that you treat your friend. The more you show him love, the more love Hashem will show you.

This is the meaning of the words that we recite in the brachos of Kriyas Shema: "Ahavas olam ahavatanu" (with a world of love, You loved us). This can be translated to mean that the same way we love each other in this world, that is how much Hashem will love us.

Living Jewish – From our Sages

Counting the Omer

Why must we count the Omer, when we know beforehand exactly how many days there are until Shavuot? The number is always 49--no more and no less. What is gained by our counting them?

We count the Omer to show our love for each and every day that we are allotted. Indeed, every minute and second of a Jewish life is equally as precious and should be treasured. [**The Lubavitcher Rebbe**]

Judging Favourably - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

בְּצֶדֶק תִּשְׁפֹּט עֲמִיתֶךָ – *You shall judge your fellow with righteousness.* (19:15)

Let us speak about the mitzvah in its basic sense.The simple meaning of it is, as the Gemara in Shabbos says - **וֶהֱוֵי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת – "*Judge every person favourably*."**

It's not easy, huh? – 'How can I judge him favourably?' 'I can't think of a single good explanation for his actions!'

A youngerman from Lakewood called me up several years ago and told me a story that happened to him in Kollel. See what being **דָן לְכַף זְכוּת** really means!

He studied in a Kollel of four hundred *yungerleit* and bachurim. All of them were learning the same Shulchan Aruch. Instead of having to look through all of the Shulchan Aruchs every day until he found his own, this yungerman bound his sefer with colourful elastic bands in a specific way so that he would be able to identify it easily. (A clever solution.) That's how he would find it without trouble every day.

One day however, he couldn't find his Shulchan Aruch. He knew that it looked completely different to any other, with its unique binding – but he couldn't find it. The next day, he wasn't able to find it either.

On the third day, he noticed a yungerman sitting to his left, learning Shulchan Aruch with great enthusiasm, and recognised that the sefer that the yungerman was using was his own!

He approached him, and asked, "Excuse me, but do you know whose Shulchan Aruch you are using?"

"Of course," the latter replied, "It's mine."

"What? Could he be lying just like that?"

"How about we open it and see whose name is written inside? Maybe you're mistaken?"

"I'm not mistaken, I am sure that it's mine."

"So let's check the first page."

They opened the sefer to the inside cover, and the first yungerman sees his own name scribbled out and replaced with the other man's name!

He asked for an explanation, thinking to himself, 'This yungerman, besides for being a liar, is also a brazen chutzpanyak!' - "The binding is clearly mine and it has my name in it, which you have scrubbed out and written your own name."

Rabbosai – let me ask you – Is there any way to judge this person favourably?

But the second yungerman insisted that he had bought it legitimately at a certain store.

Suddenly, the first yungerman remembered something. When he had bought his Shulchan Aruch a year before, he had noticed that there were 20 pages missing. He had already bound the sefer and had also written his name inside, but when he noticed the missing pages, he returned it in exchange for another one.

He finally realized what had transpired!

"Are you aware that this Shulchan Aruch is missing 20 pages?"

"Certainly," he replied – "That's why I got it at half price!"

Imagine! Would this ever occur to you? His unique binding, his own name scribbled over! How on earth would you judge that yungerman favourably? Everything about the sefer pointed to its original owner! And furthermore, out of the hundreds of Shulchan Aruchs the store sells, what were the chances that this specific one should end up in that Kollel – right next to him!

But the Torah tells us **בְּצֶדֶק תִּשְׁפֹּט עֲמִיתֶךָ** – that we **must** judge others righteously!

Rav Yankel'e Pshevorsker would say, "Why does the Torah use the word **בְּצֶדֶק** - ***judge others righteously***, and not **דָּן לְכַף זְכוּת** - ***believe in his innocence***?"

"That's because more often than not, it later becomes evident that the person is indeed righteous!"

We believe that we are being so noble – giving another person the benefit of the doubt, when in the end, we see that he had actually been right in the first place!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ"ל- נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד

Parshas Kedoshim begins with **אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ** - ***Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and you shall observe My Sabbaths***... (19:3)

The Meforshim ask, (**Be'ar Heitev**) what do we learn from the juxtaposition of Kibud Av V'eim to Shabbos?

One of the reasons brought down from the **Arizal** is that every Shabbos, a person receives a **נשמה יתרה**. At the end of Shabbos, our **נשמה יתרה** leaves us (which is why we have the mitzva to smell spices). - The Arizal says in the name of the **Zohar** - this neshama goes **לגנזי מרומים** - (heaven, Paradise.) and when it arrives there, The Riboino Shel Olam personally asks the **נשמה יתרה** – **איזה חידוש חידשתם** – what new Torah were you mechadesh on Shabbos?'

So, it appears quite difficult to always come up with a new chiddush every single Shabbos. Not everybody has the ability to do this.

I saw a beautiful thought by the **יסוד ושורש העבודה**, who quotes the Zohar Hakadosh, who says that The Riboino Shel Olam does not expect more from us than we are capable of.

The Baer Heitev says that a chiddush doesn't just mean to come up with something novel/new, but even learning something that you haven't learnt before is considered a chiddush and qualifies.

Not only that, but the **יסוד ושורש העבודה** says that just by sitting on Shabbos, and thinking, 'How can I further perfect my avodah to Hashem? And making a conscious decision to do something in the coming week that will bring me closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu' – that also qualifies as **איזה חידוש חידשתם**!

The **נשמה יתרה** replies – **ומעטרין לאביו בישיבה של מעלה** - A persons parents are crowned in shamayim, due to the **חידוש חידשתי**.

This is why these two mitzvos are put together. Because the Chiddushai Torah learned is a way of bringing honour to one's parents, both in their lifetime, and afterwards.



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ"ל

"מִפְּנֵי שֵׂיבָה תָּקוּם וְהָדַרְתָּ פְּנֵי זָקֵן" - ***You shall rise before a venerable person, and you shall respect the elderly*** 19:32 - There is a mitzvah of **וְהָדַרְתָּ פְּנֵי זָקֵן** - To honour and stand up for someone over the age of seventy or for a talmid chacham.

The Abarbanel says that this is a segula for **אריכות ימים**.

The Chida says that if a person stands up and honours in this fashion, he is zoche to **יראת שמים**.

The Gemara in Berachos 28a tells us that Rebbe Zeira became very weak and ill at the end of his life, and he didn't have enough strength to learn or teach Torah. So what did he do?

הָוָה אָזֵיל וְיָתֵיב אַפִּתְחָא - *he would go and sit in the doorway of the study hall. He said to himself: 'When the entering and exiting Sages pass, I will rise before them and be rewarded for the mitzva of honouring Torah scholars.'*



How could it be that he said he was doing this mitzva with the specific intent of receiving a reward? – As it says in Pirkei Avos 1:3 - **אַל תִּהְיוּ כַּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין אֶת הָרַב עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס** - ***do not be like servants who serve the master in the expectation of receiving a reward.***

So, what was he doing over here?

The answer is according to what the Chida was saying:

He wasn't doing it for the reward. He was doing it to get more **יראת שמים**. He said, "Look, I can't learn or teach anymore because of my weakness, but I **can** increase my **יראת שמים**.

This is a mitzva that is not so difficult for us to keep. The benefits are that it is a segula for **אריכות ימים** which will enable us to continue doing it for longer, and it also increases our **יראת שמים**.

"Even if the chances of success and failure are equal, why worry about failure when you can just as easily hope for success?" ~ Rambam.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ 19:18

ואהבת לרעך כמוך זה כלל גדול בתורה. The Chasam Sofer asks that there is a Gemara in Bava Metzia that says in Perek **איזהו נשך** 62b - *If two people were walking on a desolate path and there was one jug [kiton] of water in the possession of one of them, and the situation was such that if both drink from the jug, both will die, as there is not enough water, but if only one of them drinks, he will live, and the other will die.*

So, what do we do? - *It is preferable that both of them drink and die and let neither one of them see the death of the other. This was the accepted opinion until Rabbi Akiva came and taught that the verse states:* **וחי אחיך עמך** *"And your brother shall live with you," indicating that your life takes precedence over the life of the other* **-חייך קודמים לחיי חבירך** .

But you Rabbi Akiva, just told us **ואהבת לרעך כמוך**? So, is it **חייך קודמים** or is it **ואהבת לרעך כמוך**?

The Chasam Sofer gives a very interesting answer: The difference is what the outcome will be. If we are talking about survival of the person (the Guf) than we pasken **חייך קודמים**. However if a person says to someone that he has no time to learn with them, because it will detract from their own time and Torah, than we pasken **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** - His time is like your time and visa versa. **זה כלל גדול בתורה-** when it comes to Torah, and sharing this time with others, then we are all equal.

Rav Moshe Feinstein has a famous teshuva where he says that everybody is mechuyav to give Maaser of his time to teach Torah to others.

Rabbi Chaim Kaufman once told me that the Pasuk in Tehilim 92:13 says: **צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר יִפְרָח כְּאֶרֶז בַּלְּבָנוֹן יִשְׂגֶּה** - ***The righteous one flourishes like the palm; as a cedar in Lebanon he grows***.

Some people might say that if they were to give out their time to others, it would stunt their own spiritual growth.

But - **צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר יִפְרָח** – a person who spreads himself out like a palm and helps and carries the burden of others,(it grows lowly because it is burdened with fruit) - **כְּאֶרֶז בַּלְּבָנוֹן יִשְׂגֶּה** – he will still be able to grow tall himself like the cedar (which does not bear fruit)

Michael Winner dvartorah@frum.org (Vayikra 19:18).

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ "***And you shall love your fellow as yourself***"



Rav Shimshon Pincus notes that there are certain mitzvos that you'll find people "psyching themselves" up for. It could be lulav, baking their own matzas, Seder night, davening, Shabbos, etc. There will be people who will go through extensive preparations beforehand, including extra tefillos based on Kabbalah, going to the mikvah, etc.

Yet, you will rarely find people who will do such a thing before giving tzedakah, visiting somebody who is sick, and other such mitzvos that deal with other people. Yes, they do the mitzvah and they do it with a smile, and they enjoy the mitzvah, but there isn't this same level of preparation and excitement beforehand.

He answers that those mitzvos in which you are doing good for another person, most people do them because they themselves feel good about it. It's natural that when you loan money to somebody or give tzedakah, you feel good. When you bring food for a sick person, you feel good about yourself.

Nothing wrong with that at all! That's something that Hashem programmed into human beings. But there is a difference between doing a mitzvah because it makes you feel good about yourself and doing a mitzvah because that is the will of Hashem.

Again, we're not talking about good or bad here, we're talking about good and better. While it is definitely good to do chesed for somebody because it makes you feel good, it is certainly better to do it knowing that you are doing what Hashem wants from you. It makes the mitzvah to be on a higher level.

With this same idea, Rav Pincus says, there is a flipside, a negative that comes from this, and we see this a lot. When it comes to personal danger, a person will weigh chances of something happening with convenience.

For example: a person enters his car ... is it worth the convenience to make sure he and his children are buckled up properly, when they are only driving five minutes? Here, the person is thinking from his own perspective rather than a Torah perspective which demands that he fulfils the mitzvah of "guarding ones life."

But, we don't think about that, since we are so used to operating our lives according to our own viewpoint instead of the viewpoint of the Torah. Same with smoking. Same with not eating in a healthy way. Or exercise. Or even how we deal with money. In these areas, we're used to thinking from "our gut" and not thinking: "what does Hashem want from me?"

Therefore, it's important to start thinking more often: "what is demanded of me right now?" rather than just doing. Do I have an obligation to buckle up for such a short drive? Am I allowed to continue to eat in such a manner? When I do this chesed for this person, what is the best way to do it? When I loan this money, how can I do it in a way that will make it easy for the person to accept and repay without embarrassment.

By constantly thinking that each action in life is most likely governed in some way by the Torah, we have opportunities to stay away from many sins, and many opportunities to raise the level of the mitzvos that we are currently doing.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

מִפְּנֵי שֵׂיבָה תָּקוּם *You shall rise before a venerable person.* 19:32



In Parshas Kedoshim, the Torah commands us to rise in the presence of a zakein - elderly person - in order to show him honour.

The Gemora (Kiddushin 32b) teaches that this obligation is not limited to an aged individual, as the word zakein can also be read as a contraction of the words zeh kanah - he who has acquired, which the Gemora elucidates as referring to zeh she'kana chochma - a sage who has acquired wisdom. In other words, in addition to the literal requirement to rise and show respect to an elderly person, we are also commanded to do so in the presence of a Torah scholar.

Why does the contraction state only zeh kanah without clarifying to what acquisition we are referring, namely the wisdom of Torah study?

Based on the teachings of **Rav Avrohom, the brother of the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter** explains that although there are many objects and possessions that seem to be acquirable, in reality the only true acquisition that a person can own in this world is Torah

scholarship, which is permanent and can never be taken away from him. Therefore, there was no need for the Torah to clarify which acquisition it is alluding to, as it is self-evident.

Rabbi Senter adds that while the society around us tempts us to spend much of our time pursuing the "acquisition" of mundane and ephemeral objectives, we must not lose sight of the fact that acquiring Torah knowledge is not only our mission and purpose in this world, but it is also the only enduring acquisition and accomplishment.

Motherhood & Shabbos Pie, by Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ "***One must revere his mother and father and observe my Shabbos, I am Hashem your L-rd***" (19:3)



By combining the mitzvos of respecting parents, the Torah begins the first of the myriad commands between both man and his fellow man, and man and his Creator, that fill Parshas Kedoshim.

Rashi notes this curious combination of Shabbos observance and parental respect. It interprets the juxtaposition to mean that Shabbos observance is so important that it overrides parental request for its desecration. But in addition to the halachic directive inferred by the proximity of the two laws, perhaps there is a moral lesson, too.

Dr. James David Weis had been attending ***Rabbi Berel Wein's*** *classes for a while, and though he was not committed to Yiddishkeit in all its aspects, he was truly fascinated by the amazing insights and the spiritual impact that Torah study had made on his life. In fact*

although he was a shiur regular, and his wife was committed to Torah observance as prescribed by the Shulchan Oruch, the doctor had not yet made the commitment to observe Shabbos.

Towards the summer, Dr. Weiss mentioned to Rabbi Wein that shortly he would be visiting Israel. The doctor had heard Rabbi Wein's stories of his experiences, as the Rabbi of Miami Beach, having chauffeured ***Rabbi Yosef Kahanamen, the Ponovezer Rav*** *on his fund-raising missions in the United States.*

In many of his lectures, Rabbi Wein had related his close relationship with Rav Kahanamen, and Dr. Weiss excitedly told Rabbi Wein that he would soon visit the Ponovez Yeshiva. Dr. Weiss did not know that the Rav had passed away a decade earlier, so he enthusiastically offered to send Rabbi Wein's regards to the Ponovezer Rav.

Not trying to discourage the visit, Rabbi Wein smiled and said, "you could try." Dr. Weiss arrived at the Ponovez Yeshiva and after marvelling at the beauty of its gilded Aron Kodesh and nearly 1000 swaying Talmudists, he asked a boy to direct him to the Ponovezer Rav.

Since the Rav had passed away a decade earlier, they directed him to the Rosh Yeshiva, ***Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Shach****. Dr. Weiss waited for the sage to lift his head from the large tome. The old sage looked up and greeted the doctor. Dr. Weiss stuck out his hand, and with the remnants of the Yiddish he had salvaged from his youth, he addressed Rav Shach.*

"Sholom Aleichem! My name is Dr. Weiss I study with Rabbi Wein and I come from America with warmest regards from him."

Rav Shach looked at him quizzically. "I don't know a Rabbi Wein."

"Don't you remember?" asked Dr. Weiss in shock. "Rabbi Berel Wein," he repeated. "He would often drive you when you visited Miami on behalf of the Yeshiva."

Rav Shach smiled. "I don't know Rabbi Wein, and I have never been to Miami. My name is Shach. I think you meant to see Rav Kahanamen, but unfortunately he has passed away."

Dr. Weiss looked embarrassed. But Rav Shach quickly dissolved the discomfort by holding the doctor's hand and blessing him warmly. "Dr. Weiss, you are a good Jew and you should be a gebenchta (a blessed) Jew. But remember, Shabbos observance is an integral part of Yiddishkeit. Do not forsake the Shabbos!"

Dr. Weiss was astonished. How did Rav Shach know about his wavering about commitment to Torah-observance? It did not make much of a difference, because from that day on Dr. Weiss affirmed his committed to Shabbos with the same intensity that he had always committed to his fellow man.

Perhaps the Torah juxtaposed the most basic tenet of any society with the highest form of our spiritual expression to teach us that the two are inseparable. Many people feel that Judaism entails all that is mom and apple pie. But there is more to Yiddishkeit than what we, as Americans, Europeans, Asians, Africans, and even Israelis feel good about or think is morally correct.

Judaism entails the essence of our spirituality that is encompassed and represented by Shabbos observance. Judaism is more than Mom and Apple Pie; it entails Motherhood and Shabbos rest.

"If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you. But if I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you."- Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk

"I never lose. Either I win or learn."



For the Shabbos Table

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ "Say to them "you shall be holy" (Vayikra 19:2)

The parashah begins by stating the importance for a Jew to live a life of holiness. Yet, the parashah continues and discusses many mitzvos that, perhaps, would seem to be basic and elementary in any society such as honouring parents, avodah zara and laws against thievery and falsehood.

Why are these mitzvos considered to be those of holiness?

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that a mitzvah is a tzivui, a command, and a Jew performs a mitzvah not because he perceives it as moral and correct but rather because that is what he was commanded by Hashem. Even mitzvos between man and his friend which seem ethical and necessary for society must be abided not out of fairness but rather because this is Hashem's will and we exist to serve Him. (**Kol Ram**)

"If you are not a better person tomorrow than you are today, what need have you for a tomorrow?" – Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

The purpose of human life is to improve one's character traits, by working on oneself every day. That's why Hashem gives us today – and tomorrow.

שמואל זנוויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l

A man named Yehuda once said: "I noticed that all our blessings are worded in the plural. Every Jew, before wrapping himself in a tallit, blesses in the plural: *'Blessed are you, Hashem, our G-d, the King of the world, who sanctified* ***us*** *with his commandments and commanded us to observe the commandments of tzitzit.*' If this is a personal prayer, why is it worded in the plural?

"The blessing is written in the plural," replied the rabbi, "to tell us that a person cannot live for himself alone, but is part of a community. Therefore, when he prays, he must think not only about himself, but also about others. Before you turn To Hashem in prayer you must show your love and concern for others.

For this reason, the holy **Ari** and his disciples always used to give charity before starting the morning prayers, and they also began the dawn prayer with the verse וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ -*'Love your neighbour as you do*'.

They felt that they had no right to draw close to Hashem if they did not first express their love for their neighbour."

Sefira

When counting sefira, the 49 days leading up to Shavuos, we mention both the days and the weeks. For example, "Today is 14 days, which is two weeks in the Omer." Isn't that obvious? Why do we do the math?

The answer is that each day must be part of something bigger, part of a larger life journey, contributing towards the goal. Little by little, we add to our lives; one moment at a time. Who is the man who desires life? He who loves the days and knows the value of time. As heard from **R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg z"l.**

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

At the kever of the Rebbe - **Rabbi Elimelech of Lishenzk** there is prominently displayed the tefilloh that he wrote - **אַדְרַבָּה, תֵּן בְּלִבֵּנוּ שֶׁנִּרְאֶה כָּל אֶחָד מַעֲלַת חֲבֵרֵינוּ וְלֹא חִסְרוֹנָם** – '***Rather, let it be in our hearts that each of us see the virtue of our friends and not their shortcomings…'.***

In this week's parsha, we talk about the idea of **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** '***you shall love your neighbour as yourself***.' (19:18)

I want to share something with you that I think is so true, and something that we can all learn from.

What is the real *pshat* in about the idea of **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** '***you shall love your neighbour as yourself'?*** How in the world could the Torah **demand** that we should love somebody the way we love ourselves? It is almost impossible – Everybody loves themselves? [well at least I hope they do!]

I think that the real answer is as follows: **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ** - Love your friend – **כָּמוֹךָ** – like you love yourself.

Why do you love yourself? Because you think about all the wonderful, good things that you do. We all do good things, and we all do negative things. But we love ourselves, because we only concentrate on the good things that we do.

This is how we must love our friends – just like we concentrate only on our goods things and ignore the bad – that's how we should love our friends. Only look at their good things!

"Hashem's love is like the love of a father and mother combined; But it is even greater than that- It is an endless, boundless, and eternal love." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Holy, Even if You Fall

The Bais Avraham taught that Parshas Kedoshim starts with the words You shall be holy and continues onward to discuss various prohibitions and forbidden relationships. The parsha ends though with slightly different words –'You shall be holy to me.' (20:26).

The message is that while initially we are commanded to guard our holiness, if a person stumbled and fell from his level, he should not despair and give up. Rather, from here and on You shall be holy to me and you can (still) sanctify yourself again. - This is because the soul of every Yid is tied to his Father in Heaven even if he committed the most severe of sins.



Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick



The פָּסוּק says, **לֹא תִגְנֹבוּ** - ***You shall not steal***. (19:11)

Why is the word **תִגְנֹבוּ** written in plural form?

Rav Yonasan Eybeschutz זצ"ל says that this is to teach us that when someone steals, others might think that it is ok to steal too. They will steal just like their friend did, and this will cause many people to steal. [**ספר טללי אורות**]

There was a shoemaker who lived in **תל אביב** known as Reb Yakov Ribikov. Once he was knocked over by a car. After he was released from hospital, he was summoned by the court to testify what had happened.

The judge began questioning:

"Are you called .....?" "Yes"

"Were you living at this address ....at the time of the accident?" "Yes"

"Were you knocked over?" "Yes"

"Do you recognize this man as the driver who knocked you over?" "No!!"

"Who then knocked you over?" asked the judge.

Reb Yakov replied, "It was from **ה'ש**. It was **ה'ש** Who knocked me over."

The judge was completely confused. He banged on the table and called, "Respect for the courthouse!"

The judge started questioning in more detail: were you walking on the street at this time? Were you knocked over? And so on. When the judge questioned, "Was it this man who caused the injury?" the shoemaker replied "No!!"

"So who then?" enquired the judge

Again Reb Yakov replied, "The injury was from **הש'**."

The judge flew into a rage and shouted, "If you are going to joke around in the courtroom, I will send you out and fine you for being disrespectful."

The shoemaker looked he judge in the eye and said, "I am not joking. I mean it seriously; I am only answering the truth. It was not him. [It is **הש'** Who runs the world. The driver will be punished by **הש'** but he is only like a stick that a man hits with. If someone asks you, 'who hit you?' you don't answer, 'the stick'. Rather, you say that the man who was holding the stick hit you.]

Let us strengthen ourselves in this area and next time someone causes us harm, let us not immediately react without thought. Think! He is **הש'**'s messenger. **הש'** will punish him. I deserved the pain.

Horav Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman זצ"ל went to Berlin to give people chizzuk. While he was there, he went to visit a Yeshiva, and the cook gave him lunch. His grandson noticed that Rav Shteinman wasn't eating and asked him why?

Rav Shteinman answered that since he wasn't a talmid in the Yeshiva, he felt that he had no right to take the food that belonged to the talmidim.

Rav Shteinman borrowed five dollars from his grandson to pay the Yeshiva for the lunch, and when they got back to Eretz Yisroel, Rav Shteinman made sure to pay his grandson back right away.

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ (יט/יח)

רבי שמשון Wertheimer was the Rov of Vienna (about 300 years ago). Many times he came under attack from the **גלחים** with the following protest, "How can you claim that the **אידן** are the **עם הנבחר** – the chosen nation?" How are you so different from us? With that they would start a fiery debate with the Rov.

Eventually the king himself got involved and told the Rov, 'Enough with all these debates! If you are right, prove it to me once and for all.'

The Rov agreed to prove his point to the king. He requested that the king arrange for two feasts in the palace; one for the **גויים** and one for the **אידן** as the **אידן** may not eat the same food as the **גויים**.

The invitations were sent to a large group of people inviting them to dine at the king's palace on the following Tuesday. The public were invited from 6pm until 8pm. The **אידן**, who have special dietary requirements, were invited to a separate **כשר** meal from 8pm-10pm.

Eight a clock arrived and a large group of **גויים** all dressed in their finest suits and bowties entered the royal dining hall. They saw in front of them tables piled high with all kinds of mouth-watering delicacies. One thing was missing: cutlery. After a few minutes there was an announcement, "In the name of the king! It is forbidden to eat any food unless one uses a spoon or a fork." The waiters walked into the hall holding spoons and forks whose handles were one and a half meters long!

The people exclaimed with shock, 'How are we meant to eat with these forks?!' They tried without any success (besides for getting food over others' suits!) There they were; staring at all the food and just wishing they could use their hands. Then the clock struck eight and they were told, 'Supper is over.'

The **גויים** wanted to know if the **אידן** would be getting a better service than they. The **גויים** watched as the long tables of non-

kosher food were wheeled out and huge tables, piled high with schmaltz herring, cholent, and all other delicious foods were wheeled in.



The **אידן** were standing around the table and the same announcement was made. Again, the waiters came in holding forks and spoons whose handles were one and a half meters long! The **גויים** waited to see what the **אידן** would do. Within seconds they heard someone shout across the table, 'Yankel! What would you like? A piece of kishka? Here, it's on my fork. Open your mouth.' That's how it went. Everyone was feeding the person opposite him on the other side of the table. After half an hour the tables were empty.

'You see!' said **רבי שמשון** to the king. 'Only the **אידן** think of helping someone else and do not just think about themselves.

In his youth, the **בעל שם טוב** wanted to serve a **תלמיד חכם** so he went to a **צדיק** by the Name of Reb Yitzchok Mederhovitch and served him a cup of tea. When Reb Yitzchok had finished the tea the **בעל שם טוב** removed the cup and cleared up. Reb Yitzchok asked him "I understand that you wanted to serve me but why did you find it necessary to tidy up? Why not let the cleaner do it"?

To which the **בעל שם טוב** replied, "We find in the **תורה** that tiding up is also a **הייליגער עבודה**, for we find that a **כהן גדול** before entering

the **קודש קדשים** the second time, required **קידוש ידים ורגלים** and **טבילה**, and he had to wear the white **בגדי כהונה**, everything was exactly the same as the first time that he entered the **קודש קדשים**. The first time the **כ״ג** went in to do the great **עבודה** of offering the **קטורת**, but the second time he went in to remove the empty ladle [i.e. to tidy up]. So do we not see that tidying up is just as much an **עבודה** as offering the **קטורת**.

Next time you help to tidy up the table, realize that it is a **הייליגער עבודה**.

He Had One Mission — And It Saved His Life by Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

One of the great sages of our generation was **Rabbi Shmuel Halevi Wosner**. Toward the end of his life, he once visited Maayanei HaYeshua Hospital in Israel. As he entered, he was greeted by Rabbi Zicherman—the hospital's rabbi, responsible for answering all the halachic questions that arise within its walls.

"Rabbi," he said, "I have a question from a patient—and I don't know how to answer it." "There is a man in the intensive care unit. Day by day, he is losing more and more of his bodily functions. He cannot move his arms or his legs. He depends entirely on others for everything—even the most basic needs.

"He asked me: every morning we say the blessing that Hashem has given me everything I need. But in my condition… should I still say that blessing?"

Rav Wosner didn't answer. Instead, he asked: "What room is he in?" They walked together through the hospital and entered the patient's room. Rav Wosner sat beside him. "How are you feeling, my son?" The man groaned… and then forced a weak smile.

"Can I tell you a story?"

The man nodded.

"When I was a young student," Rav Wosner began, "I learned in the yeshiva of Chachmei Lublin, founded by Rav Meir Shapiro. "One day, my rabbi asked me to visit a very sick man in the hospital. "We walked in expecting sorrow… but instead, we saw a man glowing with joy. "He could not move. He was at the end of his life. And yet—he was smiling.

"My rabbi asked him: how are you smiling in a moment like this?

"The man said: I would love to get up, make you tea, serve you… but I can't. "But there is one thing I can do. "I can smile. "And if that is the one thing I can do—then that must be my mission."

Rav Wosner looked at the patient. "My son… whatever Hashem gives a person—that is exactly what they need. "If you were meant to do more—you would have more. "But right now, you have one mission. "If you cannot move… then your job is to smile. "Smile at those who care for you. Smile at those who visit you. Smile for yourself. "And then you can say with full sincerity—thank You, Hashem, for giving me everything I need."

The man smiled. And shortly after… he began to recover. Not long later—he walked out of the hospital on his own two feet. Because sometimes… when a person is given purpose— they are given life.

Never think your actions are insignificant. Every deed has repercussions in heaven and affects the brilliance of the spiritual lights above. ~ Sefer Nefesh Hachaim.

Every moment of life, even if accompanied by the worst suffering, is the greatest gift a person can have. ~ R. Chaim Kanievsky.

בס"ד

למודי משה

Keeping Peyos Behind the Ears

In this week's *parsha* (*Kedoshim*) we have the mitzvah of *peyos*.

The *sefer Darkei Chaim VeShalom* (*ois* 880) writes: "Rabbeinu (the *Minchas Elozor* of Munkatch) was very particular not to bend or to hide his *peyos* behind his ears". In the *he'oras* (*ois* 1) they bring a source for this from the *Tikkunei Zohar* (*Tikkun* 70) who writes that one should remove his *peyos* from behind his ears during *Shemonah Esrei*, as keeping the *peyos* there stops the *tefillos* from being answered. If one learns the *Tikkunei Zohar* carefully he will see that even not during *davening* one should be careful, as he brings the problem of *peyos* behind the ears together with women covering their hair, and that always applies, therefore, keeping the *peyos* behind the ears is likewise always a problem. However, during *davening* one must be extra careful.

In the *he'oras* they relate further that when the *Minchas Elozor* had the *tanoim* for his first wife the daughter of HaRav Shragah Yoir MiBialbezig, his *zeidah* the *Ba'al Shem Shlomah* never came, as he didn't want to have to hide his *peyos* behind his ears like what the people in Russia did due to a decree made by the government.

In *Orchos Rabbeinu* (Vol. 1, pg. 236) they bring that *Steipler* was particular that his grandchildren would keep their *peyos* in front of their ears and not behind them as, "one must be happy to show off *mitzvos* and not hide them". They also bring that the *Chazon Ish* was particular about this.

A Yid is here to help another Yid. ~ Reb Shayaleh Kerestirer.

Is It Permissible to Keep Beard Hairs Inside a *Sefer*?

The *Sefer Chasidim* (899) writes: "One shouldn't store his pen/quill or any other item inside his *sefer*".

The Ben Ish Chai in *Shu"t Torah Lishmah* (447) writes: "One should warn those people who keep their beard hairs that fall off inside *seforim* that doing so is incorrect. However, if they do it to mark the place so that they can know where to start learning without needing to find the place, then it is okay."

The *Likutei Maharich* (*Seder Kevias Itim L'Torah*) brings that the *sefer Me'orei Ohr* was also against this, however, he writes that many *Anshei Ma'aseh* do this, and certainly there is great *sod* [secrets] behind it. He adds however, that this is only for those who follow the stringency of the *Arizal* cited in the *Be'er Heitev* to never cut their beards in order to not ruin the *tzinoros* of *kedusha* [pipelines], however, for those who constantly walk around uprooting hairs from their beard and they throw them in the garbage, certainly it is forbidden to place them inside a *sefer*.

Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, *zt"l*.

He was the uncle of three of the Roshei Yeshivah of Chevron: Horav Avraham Cohen, Horav Moshe Chevroni, and Horav Yechezkel Sarna.

The following story was related by Rav Moshe Chevroni during the *hesped*, eulogy, he gave for his revered uncle. His goal was to underscore Rav Isser Zalman's unparalleled love of Torah. He learned another part of the story, the rest of the story, during the *shivah*. This added part demonstrates an attribute of Rav Isser Zalman which complimented his scholarship and explains why he was a *gadol* without peer.

During the British mandate, a curfew between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. was imposed on the residents of Yerushalayim. The British

soldiers patrolled the streets, and, because they were in a conflict with the Israeli underground, every Jew was suspect. It was not safe to be out at night, because the soldiers had no problem shooting first and then asking questions.

During the curfew, Rav Moshe Chevroni was in the *yeshivah* at 2:00 a.m. when he heard knocking at the door. The knocking became serious and loud. Rav Moshe feared for his life in case it was British soldiers looking for weapons. Since he did not speak English, communicating with them would be impossible.

In a shaking voice, he asked who was there. "It is your uncle," Rav Isser Zalman replied.

"What is the uncle doing here at this hour? It is not safe to go outside."

Rav Isser Zalman explained that he was troubled by a ruling of the Rambam, and he figured that he would not sleep until he understood the Rambam, "I was wondering who could help me at this time of night, and I thought of you. Together, we will learn the Rambam and resolve my question."

The question was brilliant, but what was most amazing was the exuberance manifest by the senior Rosh Yeshivah of Eretz Yisrael.

A short while later, Rav Moshe arrived at an understanding of the Rambam, which satisfied Rav Isser Zalman. He could now go home.

Rav Moshe attempted to dissuade him from leaving. He should remain in his home overnight. Rav Isser Zalman explained that he must immediately record the explanation in his notebook.

"Look at his love for Torah: his sleep, his safety – nothing mattered when it came to Torah study!" This is how Rav Moshe ended his *hesped*.

Now, for the rest of the story. During the *shivah*, Rebbetzin Meltzer revealed the true reason that Rav Isser Zalman had risked his life

to go out that night. "The Rosh Yeshivah authored *Even Ha'Azel* on the Rambam. He wanted very much to have it printed. (It has been a staple in the *yeshivah* world from the moment the book saw the light of day.) The printer was busy, as he had other jobs. He said it would be a wait of a few years before he could get to it. One day, the printer informed us that there had been a cancellation and, if the *Even Ha'Azel* was there in the morning, he would go about printing it. Finally, my husband's *sefer* would be printed."

When I told him it had to be ready by morning, however, he turned white. He explained that he had included a short Torah thought from two of his nephews. He still did not have one from Rav Moshe Chevroni. He could not print the *sefer* without including him – even if it meant not printing it!

This is when he had a brainstorm. He would go to the *Yeshivah* under the pretext of a question on the Rambam. He was certain that, with his brilliant mind and encyclopaedic knowledge, Rav Moshe would render an exceptional resolution to his query. Thus, he would ensure Rav Moshe's Torah thought in his *sefer*.

He risked his life, not only for Torah, but to avoid hurting the feelings of another Jew. (Peninim on the Torah)

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

There was a beis midrash. Outside, children were playing. In the middle of davening, the children were playing outside. There was a passer-by there, someone walking by. He grabbed one boy and said, "Have a sweet candy, a sweet little treat," and he gave him a delicious candy. The passer-by went on his way.

All the other boys were jealous of him, because the man had already gone. They were so jealous — "Look what a good candy he got!" Terribly jealous.

This boy was an innocent, sweet-natured child. He ran straight into the beis midrash to his father and asked, "Does it have a hechsher? Does it have a hechsher?" When the father saw it, he was terrified. "Who gave this to you?" He ran outside, but the man was already gone, already far away.

He checked whether any other child had gotten one — no one had, only this boy. Everyone had been jealous of him.



What was it? It was a mothball — *naphthalene*. A pesticide against moths. It was deadly poison. A pesticide. A literal poison! It looked like a sweet candy. All the children were jealous of him. But it was actually deadly poison.

The father told the boy that what saved his life was only this: that he went to look for a hechsher. Because he didn't want to eat it right away, he went to ask his father whether it had a hechsher.

The same thing the yetzer hara does with us. He shows us a "good candy." Then comes Parshas Kedoshim and says: Pay attention — they're selling you poison here. To you it looks like a sweet candy, a little treat, but inside it's poison, deadly poison, G-d forbid.

And this deadly poison — you can save yourself the same way that child saved himself: Go look for a hechsher. Know this: **קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ, כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** — "***You shall be holy, for I, Hashem your G-d, am holy.***"

If a person truly lived knowing Hashem controls everything with Hashgacha Pratis, worry wouldn't exist. ~ R' Yaakov Emden zt"l

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Resolving the Unresolved



The gemara sometimes concludes a discussion with **תיקו** ("teiku"), signaling that the matter remains unresolved—a deficiency in our grasp of Torah.

R' Nachman cites the Zohar that **תיקו** said in shas is the idea of lacking **תיקון**, rectification. Meaning the *nun* of **תיקון** is missing and it becomes **תיקו**. When this *nun* is missing from **תיקון** it becomes **תיקו**.

What does this *nun* represent? That missing *nun* alludes to the **נ' שערי בינה**, the fifty gates of understanding. As long as that fiftieth gate is lacking, the matter remains in a state of **תיקו**.

What happens to this *nun*? This *nun* becomes low and bent over and becomes a short *nun*. It goes from ן to נ. And it becomes in the category of **קינות**, lamentations, which shares the same letters as **תיקון**. It represents a world lacking full knowledge of Torah.

In the ultimate future **תיקו** will become **תיקון** as a *nun* will be added, where the *nun* represents the **נ' שערי בינה**. Indeed, **משיח** forms an acronym for משיח יגלה **ש**ער **ח**משים, Moshiach will reveal the fiftieth gate.

When the path feels uncertain and the climb feels endless, remember that sometimes the most difficult roads lead to the most beautiful destinations. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810).



I want to share with you a magnificent story that transpired many years ago.

In a particular town, there was a blind fellow who lived by himself. Every morning he would make his way down the stairs of his building, onto the street, down the street, around the corner to the local grocery. He would buy a few food items that he needed for that day and then he would make his way back.

He did this for over 20 years, and he knew exactly every bump in the road. He knew where to hold on, he knew where there were streets, where it was dangerous. It was almost like a science to him. Unbeknownst to him, there was a group of local thugs that observed this man's daily routine.



And one day they decided, 'listen, the man comes there with a wallet of money, it seems like he has some money, one day we're going to mug him, we're just going to take his wallet away from him, he's blind he won't even know who we are.'

But upon second thought they realized that if they do that he's going to start screaming and there's going to be a commotion and they'll get caught. So how could they take away his wallet without him knowing? So they decided that they're going to dig a little pit exactly where he walks, exactly along the path of where he walks every single day. He won't know that that pit is there.

He'll fall into the pit, he'll start screaming anyways, they'll go help him out and in the process, they will assist him by removing his wallet. They'll have the wallet, by the time he realizes it they'll be far gone.

And that's exactly what they did. Late at night when no one was watching, they dig a hole exactly in the path where the blind man would walk.

Sure enough, the next day exactly on time, he walks down the street. He's just steps before the pit, but all of a sudden he turns around and he goes back home. They couldn't believe it. Their plot was foiled.

How did he know? Later that day one of the thugs happened to see him and said to him, 'what happened this morning? we didn't see you go to the grocery store.'

He says, 'yes, I started going and all of a sudden I realized that yesterday I bought enough to last me for today so I didn't need it. So I just went back home.'

I want to ask you a simple question. - Was the blind man grateful that he didn't fall into the pit? That he didn't get mugged? No, because he didn't know about it. Should he be grateful? He probably should but if you don't know there's no way to be grateful.

In Hallel each day we say, **הללו את ה' כל גוים**, ***all the nations of the world should praise Hashem***. **שַׁבְּחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֻמִּים**, ***they should laud Hakadosh Baruch Hu, all the peoples of the world***. **כי גבר עלינו חסדו**, ***because Hashem's chesed is so powerful to the Jewish people***.

Why should the non-Jewish world praise Hashem for the chesed He does to us?

Says **Rav Itzele Volozhiner**, because sometimes we don't even know about the chesed. We don't know their nefarious plots, yet Hashem

in His incredible kindness foils their plots and we don't know about it. So they're the ones that have to praise Hashem.

Do we know what Iran has up its sleeve? Do we know what Hezbollah wanted to try to do? Do we know the terrorists around the world, the plans that they have that have been foiled? We don't even know. But one thing we do know: that Hashem is protecting us all the time.

כי גבר עלינו חסדו, His kindness is just so overwhelming and amazing and for that they need to thank, because they know about it, and we certainly have to think about it even if we're not aware.

מי כעמך ישראל



A falafel stand owner refused for months to take money from soldiers despite bankruptcy A reserve unit did something unimaginable for him!

A story spreading rapidly across Israeli social media tells of a small falafel stand in the north, run by a man named Chaim, who made a simple decision at the start of the war: any soldier in uniform eats for free.

Day after day, week after week, he stood behind the counter feeding fighters on their way in and out of combat zones.

Thousands passed through. What started as generosity slowly turned into a financial collapse, with the business sinking deep into debt and on the verge of shutting down.

Then came the moment that has captured the country. According to the viral account, a reserve unit that had eaten at the stand before

entering Gaza heard what had happened. One Friday morning, dozens of soldiers showed up-this time not to receive, but to give. They came with families, friends, and civilians, buying everything in sight. Within hours, the stand was sold out.

But the real moment came after. When Chaim opened his tip jar, he reportedly found an envelope filled with tens of thousands of shekels and a handwritten note: " You fed us before battle when we were hungry. Now it's our turn to feed your business. With love, the company!" He sat down on a plastic chair and broke down in tears.

"90 Seconds" by Rav Nachman Seltzer ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications

After a catastrophic earthquake in Turkey, the non-profit EMS angels of United Hatzalah worked non-stop for twelve hours preparing medical equipment, humanitarian aid, food, tents, batteries, and satellite phones that work in every location. They also packed special drones used for search and rescue designed to find people based on body heat signals. Meanwhile, El Al graciously agreed to give Hatzalah a plane to use at cost price.

Twelve hours after they'd heard about the disaster, the Israeli volunteers were already flying to Turkey. Hatzalah joined the IDF unit of 150 soldiers specializing in search and rescue missions, while Hatzalah brought aid and rescue know-how. When the team landed in Turkey, they knew immediately that they weren't going to have much local logistical help. Thirteen million people had been affected. The electricity grid was down and the gas stations were all shut. Through Hatzalah's connections with local Jewish leaders in Turkey, a truck driver met the team at the airport. They loaded ten tons of medical supplies and expensive equipment into the truck.

Another plane had landed right next to the Israeli volunteers. This flight was filled with Iranian rescue personnel, and when the

Iranians realized who these volunteers were, they wouldn't look at the Israelis.

Disregarding their behavior, the Hatzalah team made sure to say hello to them and wish them well, but the Iranians ignored the Jews in their yarmulkas and Israeli flags, pretending the Israelis didn't exist.

In the brief time the Hatzalah team was there, they assisted over 3,000 people in countless ways and saved the lives of 15 people, primarily children.

They initially planned on remaining in Turkey for two weeks but ultimately had to leave after only six days when their presence was deemed a security threat. Members of ISIS who had escaped from local prisons were headed in their direction.

United Hatzalah leadership understood that the time had come to get out of Turkey. El Al didn't have any available planes, and Eli Beer, leader of it all, turned to Dr. Miriam Adelson, who provided a plane to fly their volunteers out of Turkey that day.

Eli remembers: "*While we were busy getting our people out of Turkey, the volunteers were saving the life of a local sixteen-year-old girl. They worked for twelve hours to pull her out of the rubble, somehow managing to put an IV into her arm to keep her from dehydrating. Hundreds of local Turkish people were watching, and when our team succeeded, the onlookers began to scream 'Allah Akhbar,' in praise to the Creator for having allowed us to save this girl's life.*

At about the same time that we were pulling a young Muslim girl out of the wreckage in Turkey, a terrorist drove his car into a group of Jews standing at a bus stop in Ramot. I arrived at the scene in less than three minutes. When I got there, United Hatzalah volunteers, including our CEO Eli Pollak, were already working on the victims. As the terrorist used his car to try and kill even more Jews, one of our

volunteers heard him screaming 'Allah Akhbar' at the top of his lungs, until he was neutralized by a policeman.

While one Arab was screaming 'Allah Akhbar' as he mercilessly murdered Jewish children, hundreds of Muslims were using the same words to praise Israel and the Jews for helping to save their children's lives. We aren't helping them because ***they*** *are Jewish. We are helping them because* ***we*** *are Jewish – and Jews help others whenever we can."*

The Miraculous Story of Walter Kairy



Yom Tov ben Yaakov *A"H*.

When Walter grew up, he did not have a lot of exposure to religion. As a teenager he went one day to pick up some friends who were learning at Lakewood, New Jersey. He passed by a class that was being given by a white bearded man. He was giving a fiery lecture in Yiddish.

Though he did not understand a word, Water stood there, transfixed. When the class ended, he asked his friends who was this man. They said he was none other than **Rav Aharon Kotler**. Right then and there, Walter made a promise to himself, even if he may never learn Torah like this, he wanted to be a part of this fire, this passion. He decided he would never work on Shabbat again.

Years later Walter got married, built a home, and grew in his Judaism. He opened a clothing store in Brownsville, and everything was going well until the night of July 13th, 1977. There was a devastating citywide blackout that devastated Brooklyn. Riots broke out, security systems were down and stores were looted. Walter watched as his entire business collapsed in one night.

Courageously, he borrowed the money and rebuilt his business. His business was finally going well again, when Hashem sent him the ultimate test. That year, December 24th, the biggest shopping day of the year, fell out on Saturday. Walter went to **Rav Moshe Feinstein** and asked for a *heter—permission* to keep the store open just this once as it would be such a loss of money. Reb Moshe Feinstein said he would give him a blessing if he kept it closed. Walter told him he chose Shabbat. After he said that, the Rabbi said that in merit of his choice Hashem will bless him with one hundred times what he thinks he will lose from that day.

Friday, December 23rd the store was packed, wall to wall with customers. As Shabbat was getting closer Walter knew he had to close the store. No one was leaving the store, and by kicking them out he would lose so many customers. But he knew he could not betray Shabbat. He stood on the table and shouted, "Fire!" Everyone fled out of the store, and Walter locked up and hurried home for Shabbat. Motzei Shabbat, he reopened for a few hours, and the total earnings matched last year's.

Still, he did not see the Rabbi's blessing come true. A few weeks later he got a call from his landlord who owned a couple of stores on his block. After the riots most of these stores were still empty. She offered to sell him the entire building for $120,000. He would pay $20,000 up front and $20,000 annually for five more years. Walter borrowed the money, repaired and renovated the stores. Within a year his building was worth $3 million dollars. The $26,000 he was worried about sacrificing he got back and much much more.

The merit of Shabbat protected and paid him back. We should never be afraid of growing because although it may seem like a sacrifice, in hindsight, we will see how much better we become, and we may be responsible for literally changing the course of history.



Ticket to Eternity By Dvora Kiel

I was on a bus on my way home from Bnei Brak. One of the passengers approached the driver and said he found a cell phone on his seat. The driver said he thought it might belong to one of a group of workers who travel on his bus every morning to a factory in Bnei Brak. So, the driver decided to keep the phone and ask the workers the next morning if one of them was indeed the owner.

While the phone was in the driver's hand, it rang. Instinctively the driver answered and found himself speaking to the owner of the phone. The two discussed when and how the phone would reach its rightful owner. The entire conversation took no longer than half a minute.

An eagle-eyed traffic cop spotted the cell phone in the hand of the driver and came on his motorcycle in pursuit of the bus. All eyes were on the driver as he pulled over to the side of the road.

The policeman wanted to give the driver a ticket for speaking on the phone while driving. Naturally the driver attempted to explain that he never, ever spoke on the phone while driving, but this was an unusual, unavoidable happening. The policeman was adamant. At this point, all the passengers intervened. They thought it was grossly unfair to penalize the driver for a once-in-a-lifetime coincidence.

To everyone's utter astonishment, the policeman told the driver that if he would agree to put on *tefillin* from that day forward and promise to do so forevermore, he would tear up the ticket! The driver accepted the condition on the spot, and the policeman rode off.

The driver then told the passengers this curious story. He said that for some time he had wanted to return to the ways of his parents. He had been postponing it daily, not sure exactly how to begin. Now, here was a sure sign from Heaven. Besides, he said, this only shows the truth of the saying of the Sages that one *misvah* brings another in its wake.

I heard the rest of the story from a friend who was on the same bus later that day. He had been the last passenger off the bus, and the driver, who was not wearing a *kippah*, walked a few paces with my friend, saying he was in a hurry to get home to put on *tefillin* before sundown. When my friend evinced curiosity, the driver told him that he had promised someone that morning that he would begin putting on *tefillin* that day and did not want to break his word.

I would have found the story impossible to believe if I had not witnessed it myself.



When one has a playgroup, it's always important to know who your clientele is going to be. And there was one playgroup in *Eretz Yisroel* that was run by a woman named *Malka*. And *Malka* had an outstanding reputation. And it was the beginning of the new year and people were signing up, and one day this woman *Ephrat* signed up.

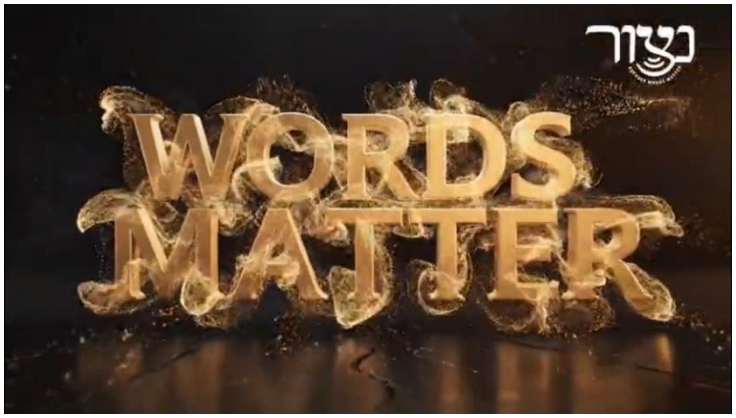
She didn't know much about her and she's in the park one day and her friend *Tzippi* is sitting next to her and she says, "You know this

woman *Ephrat* called, she wants her son *Yonatan* to be able to come to the playgroup." And she said, "*Ephrat* so and so?" She says, "Yeah." She says, "I don't know, I know somebody that has her older child and he's a very difficult child. I don't know, I don't know if you should take the child." And she decided she's not going to take *Yonatan*. She came home that night and she told her husband about the conversation that she had in the park with *Tzippi*. Her husband said, "Are you sure? I mean, you should just believe that person because they said something not nice? Maybe this child's different.

Maybe this woman's an outstanding woman. To just say no? You can't say no. Look into the matter further." She did and she found out that the two children are different and indeed she found out that *Ephrat* was an outstanding woman. She was a nurse and she would drop her child off early and she accepted her.

Well, it was a few weeks into the school year and one morning there's a knock on the door. *Malka* wasn't feeling well. She answered the door and when she did, she collapsed. It was *Ephrat* with *Yonatan*.

Ephrat quickly rushed her aside. She called an ambulance and she saved her life. *Malka* had a stroke. It took weeks for her to recover and then one day she called up *Ephrat* and she said, "I want to thank you.



And I almost didn't take you." She told her the story and she said, "Little did I know how much words matter. You saved my life all because I was willing to listen a little further." *Netzor* because words matter and choosing the right words and listening to the right words just may save your life.



דוד was living in ארץ ישראל and he couldn't make a living. So he decided to move to America, but he had to feed his family in the interim. But he had a friend that had a grocery who consented to give him food on credit. And don't worry, when you get a job you'll pay me back.

But it didn't happen. Over a year passed by and דוד could not find a job. And he couldn't bear the concept of meeting his friend. What's he going to say? Until one day he bumped into his friend literally, and he started crying. It was an outburst of emotion. I don't know, I can't pay the debt, I don't have any money. And his friend says, דוד, I want to tell you a story. Come to my office.

I want to tell you a story. Just yesterday someone walked into the store and he asked me, does דוד so-and-so shop here? I said yes. Does he have an account? I said yes. How much is it? I said it's none of your business.

He says it is my business. I want to pay his debt because I respect him, he's a real בן תורה. Whatever it is, I'm going to pay the amount. And it was over $20,000 and he paid in full.

And then the friend says דוד, come with me, let me show you something. He turned on the computer, pressed a few buttons. Is that your name, that your address, that you, your account? And he hit the button. Balance? And in big letters zero.

Can you imagine the euphoria that דוד felt? Balance zero. The גמרא tells us **כל המעביר על מדותיו מעבירין על כל פשעיו**. Someone can have an enormous debt in שמים. - **המעביר על מדותיו מעבירין על כל פשעיו**.

When someone forgives and forgets or foregoes, is **מוותר**, in any way of the different explanations of that superpower called **מוותר**. You know, there are many different words to describe **מוותר**, but the most important is being an understanding person. Nobody's perfect. Relationships have problems.

And if you can't go beyond it, you'll never enjoy a relationship. So much of the **מחלוקת** in families and neighbors, in **שולס**, in businesses, because people can't forgive, can't forget, can't forego. And that's when we see the truth of **רב שטיינמן׳ס הייליגע ווערטער:**

נער הייתי וגם זקנתי ולא ראיתי מוותר מפסיד. I've aged, I've seen a lot of the world, **ולא ראיתי מוותר מפסיד** - No one ever, ever, ever loses by giving in. You're not a doormat, you're not a pushover, you're a **גיבור עצום**. You're harnessing the most incredible force in **רבונו של עולם**'s world of **המעביר על מדותיו**.

Sometimes we have a relationship that doesn't exist. Sometimes relatives don't talk, friends don't talk. Now is the time to harness and take a moment and pick up the phone and say let us become **איש אחד בלב אחד**. And if you ask me why should I do it? Because you're a smarter person and you realize **ולא ראיתי מוותר מפסיד**

Story Of The Holy Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh

קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ: כִּי קָדוֹשׁ, אֲנִי ה׳ אֱלֹקֵיכֶם (Vayikra 19:2)

The Ohr HaChaim was once a guest in the home of simple, G-d fearing people, and he couldn't understand why he felt a strong aura of kedushah in their home. At first, he thought they were from the thirty-six hidden tzaddikim, but he soon realized that it wasn't so. "So where did this holiness come from?" he wondered.

One day, the family was reminiscing about a wealthy guest who visited their home. The guest was an old, wealthy man, and the family would honour him immensely. Every time he came, the elderly man

brought valuable gifts to each family member. However, there was one issue with which they didn't see eye to eye. The family enjoyed serving Hashem with passion, and this upset the elderly man. He believed fervour should be inside one's heart. Externally, he felt, one should serve Hashem without any signs of enthusiasm.

On one of his visits the old man said, "Why do you say birchas hamazon so loud? Hashem hears quiet brachos too. Furthermore, your zealous ways make your guests feel uncomfortable and embarrassed because they feel they aren't as frum as you are. In my opinion, it is wrong to say birchas hamazon so loudly."

The family accepted his mussar and benched in silence. The old man was pleased that they listened to him and gave each of them another gift.

Sometime later, the old man returned, and as always, he gave costly gifts to each family member. On Friday night, the family began to sing Shalom Aleichem joyously and loudly, and the old man became edgy once again. "There's no reason for all this fervour!" he shouted. "Say it silently!" and the family obeyed. - The old man gave them some more presents.

One year, the old man showed up in their home on erev Pesach, and he distributed presents to the family members. The baal habayis greeted him joyfully and invited him to the Seder.

The old man replied, "I can't be at your Seder if you're going to shout out the hagaddah and act silly. I will only join you if you agree to be silent at the Seder. Do as I teach you. Keep the fervour in your heart. Don't show it on the outside."

The baal habayis said that he'd have to ask his wife.

She said, "When he stole our birchas hamazon, I was quiet. Then he took away our Shalom Aleichem, and I also forgave him. But I refuse to give up the Seder night."

The old man said, "I shouldn't have given you all those presents since you don't listen to me."

The baal habayis was worried the old man would ask them to give back all the fancy presents he had given them over the years, but his wife saw things differently. She said to her husband, "Gather all the presents and give them back to him. I don't want them, and I don't want to hear his false rebukes."

The Ohr HaChaim listened in astonishment as the family repeated this story. He said, "Now I understand why there's a holy aura in your home. That man was the yetzer hara trying to uproot your temimus. The **חכמת נשים**, the wife's wisdom, **בנתה ביתה**, saved your home."

Rav Shaya'leh Kerestirer ztvk"l By Rav Ezi Wartelsky, Director of Yartzeit Yomi

I want to share with you two stories about Reb Shayale of Kerestir, one about the last day of his life and one about a man who bought earings for his wife. They both illustrate the unique relationship which Reb Shayale had with his chassidim as well as how he relates to each and every one of us today.

There was a woman who had not had children for many years, she approached Rav Shayale with a request for a **ברכה** to have children. Shockingly, he responded, "Today is the last day of my life. Soon there will be lots of people in Kerestir for the **לויה** and they will need to eat. Please prepare a large batch of potatoes for all the people, and if you are able to give out all the potatoes, **אם ירצה ה'** you will be blessed with a child."

Indeed, the woman and her husband prepared a large batch of potatoes, distributed every last piece and were blessed with a child.

Imagine, on the last day of his life, Reb Shayale was worried about other Yidden.

I heard the second story from noted historian Yehuda Geberer who heard it from the grandson of the man involved. He shared a beautiful insight through this story.

There was a Yid from the city of Mishkolitz, who was a chossid of Rav Shayale. He did something pretty normal for any middle-aged couple, he bought a pair of earrings for his wife. Before giving them to her, he went to Rav Shayale and asked him to bentch them.

Rav Shayale took the earrings and gave a **ברכה** that whoever wears these earrings should be **זוכה** to a long and happy life.

The woman who received these earrings lived an illness free life till the age of ninety-one. Her daughter, who inherited these earrings, managed to carry them throughout World War II, she too lived until the age of ninety-one in good health. She had no daughters, and her daughter-in-law who inherited them is wearing them today.

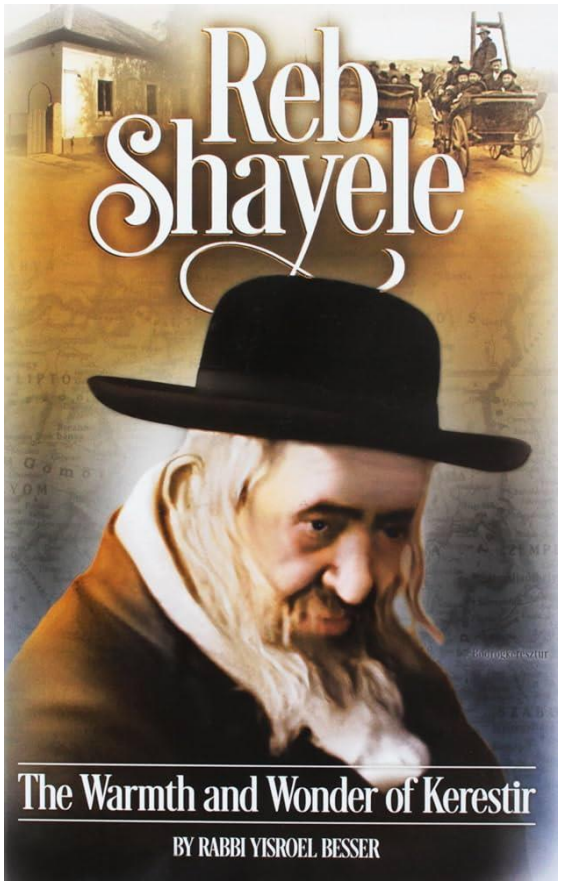
The story shows the power of Rav Shayale's **ברכה** , it also shows the unique relationship Reb Shayale had with his chassidim, and shows why people flock to his **קבר** until this day.

Rav Shayale was unique, he was like a father to his chassidim. People felt comfortable around him, so comfortable that they could ask him to bentch a pair of earrings and he would actually do it.

Reb Shayale cared for every Jew, no matter where they came from or their background. It is this powerful love for every Yid which draws people to travel to his **קבר** in Kerestir every year, to daven for their personal requests, because they believe that Reb Shayale will intercede in **שמים** on their behalf, just as he did so many years ago.

"To attribute success to one's own strength is a fundamental mistake." - Success is a gift— not an achievement. ~ Kli Yakar

Rav Shaya'leh Kerestirer ztvk"l – by Rav Uren Reich Shlita



There are a lot of stories and **מופתים** about Rav Shayale Kerestirer. I want to say a story which is incredible, I have a **התעוררות** from it because it really teaches us the meaning of **נושא בעול עם חבירו**. The **חסד** of Rav Shayale of Kerestir is famed throughout the world.

When he was beginning to become famous, one of the great rabbanim in Hungary, the **דרכי תשובה**, the father of the **מנחת אלעזר**, the Munkatcher Rebbe, had to travel to **קבר אבות**. The place to which he had to travel was not far from Kerestir. On the way back, he decided he would stop off for a **שבת** in Kerestir and see this new rebbe that everyone was talking about. He sent a message, saying that he would like to come for **שבת** and of course, he was accepted with great honour.

The **דרכי תשובה** came and was given a beautiful place in **מזרח**. He then came to **קידוש** with the Rebbe and the first thing he noticed was that in contrast to everyone else, Rav Shayale rushed through **שלום עליכם** because many people are hungry and he did not wish to keep everyone waiting. The rebbe made kiddush, hundreds of people were crowded around. He then made **על נטילת ידים** and then made **המוציא**.

After making **המוציא**, Rav Shayale stopped and motioned to a person who was right at the back to come to the front. There was a whole commotion, this man who was at the back could hardly move. The **דרכי תשובה** thought he could not take this, this is a **הפסק**, surely one should eat a little and then do what you need to do. He banged and said "Nu, nu," Rav Shayale ignored this.

Meanwhile, people were trying to push this Yid closer to Rav Shayale.

After three or four minutes, this man came close to Rav Shayale, who began to take out the white parts in the middle of the challa and the **דרכי תשובה** kept saying, "Nu" throughout the time, Rav Shayale ignored him.

Eventually, he gave the Yid some of the white from within the challa, he then gave him some more, before eating a little himself. He then gave to the **דרכי תשובה** and then to everyone else.

Rav Shayale then turned to the **דרכי תשובה** and said, "I see that the rov is upset with me."

The **דרכי תשובה** confirmed that this was the case.

Rav Shayale asked, "The rov feels I was **מפסיק** after the **ברכה** ?"

He said, "Yes."

Rav Shayale said "The rov is a bigger **תלמיד חכם** than me. The **גמרא** says that if a person makes a **ברכה** of **המוציא** and remembers that he has not yet given his animal to eat, he must give to his animal. The **פסוק** in **קריאת שמע** states **ואכלת ושבעת** after one has given to one's **בהמה** in order to teach that the animal must be given first. One can even be **מפסיק בדיבור** to give to the **בהמה**, because he can't eat anyway until he gives to the **בהמה. לכאורה**, a person is no less than a **בהמה, להבדיל** .

What does the rov hold if I see a Yid standing at the back who obviously has not eaten for a long time and I see he is going to faint? Does the rov hold that I should make him wait until I have eaten?"

The **דרכי תשובה** was stunned.

Rav Shayale continued, "And when such a Yid comes closer and I see that he does not have teeth, should I ignore that and just give him challa? So I took out the white from the middle of the challa and I gave him."

The **דרכי תשובה** was quiet. Afterwards he said that this was just beyond. "I was scanning the crowd, as it was a new world for me. I did not see any Yid was challishing, I didn't see any Yid who was hungry.

Clearly, Rav Shayale's **מדריגה** of **נושא בעול** is so powerful and profound. We all know when we are hungry. However, he can feel the pain of someone else's hunger like his own. He can feel it and sense it right away. This is an **אדם גדול**. This is **נושא בעול עם חבירו**.

זכותו יגן עלינו ועל כל ישראל אמן

הרה"ג ר' מתתיהו סולומון שליט"א once related the following: During the early 1950's in England there was a very contagious flu known as the red flu which spread across England. It wasn't too dangerous, however, people who caught it lay in bed for four days. You couldn't leave the house. That year **ראש השנה** in Gateshead they just about managed to make minyan, the whole town was in their beds with the red flu.

Four, five days later when most of the town already recovered, at the **שבת שובה דרשה** – the shul was packed, everyone flocked in to hear the words of the Rov - **הרה"ג ר' נפתלי שקוביצקי זצ"ל**.

Said the Rov, "The way you davened your **ראש השנה שמו"ע** in your pyjamas should show you all where you really are in your davening. Very nice – every other year you come to shul together with the nice atmosphere, however, in reality you're davening the same as you davened with your pyjamas. The **עולם** in shul with all the noise inspires us. However, if we want to know where we are really up to, we must look the way we davened in our bedroom with closed windows."

Rabbi Shlomo Hoff Shlita

רבותי - פרשת קדושים is full of **יסודות** teaching us how to live **בקדושה** — a life of self-control

The **חינוך (מצוה רל״ד)** explains **לא תקלל חרש**: why is cursing so serious if it causes no physical harm?

Because **דיבור** activates the **נפש המדברת**, the **כח עליון** that Hashem breathed into **אדם — ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים**. Speech is a **רוחניותדיקע כח** that reaches far beyond physical action, like a spiritual force that can impact anything in the **בריאה**. A **צדיק**'s words have greater effect, but every Jew possesses this **כח**.

Therefore, **תפילה** and every word we speak are real actions with real spiritual impact. That's why the **תורה** warns **לא תקלל** — your **דיבור** and your **נשמה** are intertwined. Refining speech refines the **נשמה**, and the purity of the **נשמה** strengthens the **כח הדיבור**. Misusing speech damages that **נשמת חיים**.

The **חינוך** in **הוכח תוכיח** teaches that embarrassing someone is the greatest pain — worse than physical pain. If hurting someone emotionally is so severe, then uplifting someone is the greatest **טובה**. **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** means: go give people dignity, compliments, and chizuk.

יתן השם we should be able to live up to this great calling of **קדושים תהיו**, live with **קדושה**, in control of all **תאוות**, all **עניינים**, and caring for others, reaching out for others, forgiving others, complimenting others, **און אזוי וועט זיין א געוואלדיגע ברכה פאר אלע אידן**.

גוט שבת.

The Sfas Emes writes, **"אין שמחה כשמחת הבוטח בה"** - ***"No joy compares to the joy of trusting in Hashem."***

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

First Responders - The Ahavas Yisrael of Rav Yochanan of Rachmistrivka , and Rav Shlomo of Bobov

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת קדושים**. The **רחמסטריווקא רבי** of America, **זכר צדיק לברכה**, who just passed away this year, told a story about his ancestor, **רבי יוחנן** of **רחמסטריווקא**. There was once a famous wedding in Europe that was known, he said, as the **חאטינער חתונה**, perhaps because of where it took place, and it was a wedding between **רבי יוחנן**'s daughter and a member of the **בויאן** dynasty who became known later as the **פחד יצחק** of **בויאן**, the **בויאנער רבי**. Thousands of Jews came to that wedding.

Now, at the **סעודה**, at the meal, they had benches which were going up one upon the other, what's called in Yiddish **פאראנטשעס**, and they were serving people who were eating standing up. Unfortunately, there was a **חסיד** who was standing directly above the **רבי**, and when he got his bowl of soup, he dropped the full bowl of soup and scored a direct hit on **רבי יוחנן** of **רחמסטריווקא**'s new **שטריימל** that he had bought for the wedding. The bowl was so full that it saturated the **שטריימל**, and soup was raining down on the **רבי**'s face and beard and **פאות**.

The **רבי** turned around, looked up, and said, "Whose soup was that?" The **חסיד** was petrified, and was afraid that the **רבי** would be upset with him.

He pointed to himself, and the **רבי** said, "So you don't have soup?" He turned to the waiter who was giving out soup to people, he says, "Bring that man soup, he doesn't have any." And with that, it was over.

In our **פרשה**, we learn **ואהבת לרעך כמוך**, which **רבי עקיבא** told us is a **כלל גדול בתורה**. It's a small story, but it's a story that can only be done by a great person who has a constant **אהבת ישראל** running within

him. Immediately to be able to sense the pain and fear of the mortified **חסיד**, to be able to think of a clever way to transmit to the **חסיד** that he's not bothered by it, and that he loves him and he cares for him, and to be able to do all of this without hesitation shows the greatness of **אהבת ישראל** which is expressed in those small actions.

I heard a similar story listening to a **שיעור** by **רב בן ציון טווערסקי שליט"א** from Milwaukee. He said that when he was learning in Boro Park, in **באבוב**, his great uncle was the **רבי באבאווער - רב שלמה האלבערשטאם זצ"ל**. So he said, at the **טיש**, there would be a **תורנות תלמידים** would take turns having the honor of bringing the **רבי** a glass of tea at the **טיש**. Now, he said, European Jews often like their tea extremely hot. They wanted it like bubbling in the cup when it was brought to the table.

And this boy who had the opportunity to bring the tea on that **שבת** approached the **רבי** at the **טיש**, but then he stumbled, and spilled the tea right on the **רבי**'s lap.

The **רבי**'s reaction was simply to look at those around him. He said, "How many times do I have to say that I like my tea to be hot?"

It was without hesitation. It was such a clever way of transmitting to this young man that it's fine, nothing happened, I'm not burnt, to do it even with a sense of humor.

This is the greatness of people who are true **אוהבי ישראל**, and often times that greatness is expressed in the small actions that come in a moment of crisis. And **הקדוש ברוך הוא** gives those who love His children the wisdom and the words to be able to help them feel good if they're truly imbued with the **מידה** of **אהבת ישראל**.

Wishing everyone a wonderful **שבת** and **כל טוב**.



ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה' וכו' (ויט-יח)

We can see from here how great the power of "Loving your friend" truly is. When two friends sincerely love one another, Hakodosh Baruch Hu rests his divine presence amongst them.

The great Talmid of the **Ari Hakodosh**, and renowned Mekubel **R' Chaim Vital ZT"L** writes that an allusion to this is the fact that the word **אהבה** - Love, in gematriya is 13. When there is mutual love between two people, then the love is actually doubled and therefore the 13 is doubled. This makes 26, which is equivalent to the letters of Hashem's name.

It says "**ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה**' - Love your neighbor as yourself, I am Hashem. When a person will reach the level of " "**ואהבת לרעך כמוך**" - loving his fellow man unconditionally, it will awaken the same kind of love in his friend, and the result will be a double love. Then **אני ה'** Hashem will rest his Shechinah with you and his presence will be felt in all that you do and wherever you go.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

לא תקום ולא תטר את בני עמך ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה' וגו' (ויט-יח)

One of the great Chassidishe Rebbes, R' Binyomin Zev of Zbaraj ZT"L was known as a tremendous **אהבת ישראל**. It is told, that 10 Ruble once came into his possession - for him a considerable sum of money - and he searched for a safe place to hide this money from **נבנים** and other greedy hands.

What did he do? He finally decided to take the money to the local Bais Medrash where he placed it inside a Chumash, right next to the words "**לא תגנבו**", in **פרשת קדושים**, figuring that anyone who was to

come across the cash would never think to remove it unlawfully, after seeing the words that the money was placed next to.

However, R' Velvel misjudged the situation. A person did open this particular Chumash and happened to notice the money sticking out of it. He then proceeded to take five Rubles for himself, while the remaining five Rubles he once again inserted into the Chumash, this time, immediately next to the words "**ואהבת לרעך כמוך**".

A number of days later, R' Velvel returned to check the Chumash to see if the money was how he had left it, and to his surprise, only half the original amount was still there - and not in the spot that he had left it, but next to a different Possuk in **פרשת קדושים**, by the Mitzvah of "**ואהבת לרעך כמוך**".

R' Velvel became distressed - not because half of his money was taken from him - but for a very different reason. Said the Rebbe to his Chassidim, "It is clear how much of a lower **מדריגה** I am on, compared to the man who took the money. Look at me, when I was in possession of the entire amount - 10 Rubles - I only thought to keep the full amount for myself, not wanting anybody else to have any part of it. This man, on the other hand, was not selfish with his new-found cash. Instead of retaining the entire amount for himself, he only took half and willingly gave up the remaining half for the original owner, thereby being **מקיים** the very special Mitzvah of " **ואהבת לרעך כמוך**". I, unfortunately, was not **זוכה** to accomplish this Mitzvah!"

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

לא תקם ולא תטר את בני עמך ואהבת לרעך כמוך וכו' (יט-יח)

Throughout Jewish history, we find tales of great tzaddikim who placed exceedingly rigid demands upon themselves, to the point that they underwent a self-imposed penance of exile for what they felt were their spiritual shortcomings. R' Aryeh Leib Ginsburg ZT"L, better known as the Sha'agas Aryeh from the title of his

monumental halachic work, undertook such a voluntary exile as part of compensation for his "sins.

In one community, while not recognized as the great man that he was, R' Aryeh Leib was invited as a shabbos guest by the local rabbi, who himself was an accomplished Torah scholar. The two entered into a discussion on a variety of topics - Talmudic law and halachic issues found in the gemarah - and as tends to happen, this eventually escalated from a lively dialogue to a heated exchange, with the two talmidei chachomim defending opposite sides of the issues. Each tried to bolster his line of reasoning by recourse to opinions of accepted halachic authorities. Sefer after sefer was brought out and quoted in the hope of proving the point at hand, until a large pile had accumulated on the table.

As may happen in an argument where one feels his position is challenged by the other side, one may take things personally and verbally lash out against his opponent. The local rabbi was carried away by the fervor of his argument and directed some insulting remarks at R' Aryeh Leib, calling him among other things, a boor and an ignoramus. R' Aryeh Leib, however, stood his ground and was not swayed in his arguments, nor shaken at the assault on his character.

The local rabbi was exasperated. "I'll prove to you that I am right," he exclaimed with an air of finality. He then ran to the bookcase and withdrew a sefer. Hurriedly turning pages, he waved it emphatically, "Here, come see for yourself! Even the great Sha'agas Aryeh supports my position!"

The author of the Sha'agas Aryeh smiled wearily. "Isn't that strange?" quipped R' Aryeh Leib to a person sitting nearby, "when the Sha'agas Aryeh stands in the bookcase among the other seforim, he is respected, however, when he stands on his own two feet, he is insulted!"

