TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



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לעילוי נשמת



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Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



Hamaayan is prepared by laymen and published weekly for the edification and enjoyment of the reader who is lacking the time or ability to study the weekly parashah on his own. Hamaayan's goal is to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary — classical, recent and "obscure" — as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought. The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah")

From the Haftarah . . .

הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ לָכֶם אֵת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא לִפְנֵי בּוֹא יוֹם ה' הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא - ***"Behold! I send you Elyah the prophet, before the great and awesome day of Hashem."*** (Malachi 3:23)

R' Yitzchak Weiss z"l (rabbi of Verbau, Slovakia; killed in the Holocaust) notes that the initial Hebrew letters in the phrase, **הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ לָכֶם אֵת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא** -"Behold! I send you Elyah the prophet," have a gematria of 343. This alludes to the 343 out of the 613 mitzvot which cannot be practiced today.

- After Eliyahu Hanavi heralds the redemption and mashiach arrives, we will again practice these commandments. (Siach Yitzchak p.151)

וְהָאֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד־בּוֹ לֹא תִכְבֶּה וּבִעֵר עָלֶיהָ הַכֹּהֵן עֵצִים בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר וְעָרַךְ עָלֶיהָ הָעֹלָה וְהִקְטִיר עָלֶיהָ חֶלְבֵי הַשְּׁלָמִים. אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה

'The fire on the Altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not be extinguished; and the Kohen shall kindle wood upon it every morning; he shall prepare the olah-offering upon it and shall cause the fats of the shelamim-offerings to go up in smoke upon it. A permanent fire shall remain aflame on the Altar; it shall not be extinguished.' (6:5-6)



R' Ben-Zion Yadler z"l (1871-1962; Maggid / preacher of Yerushalayim) writes: The Torah is hinting to us that, if a person wants the fire of love and awe of Hashem to burn within him, it is not enough that he doesn't actively extinguish the flame. Rather, he must add fuel to the fire every day.

R' Yadler continues: **R' Yosef Karo z"l** (Spain, Greece and Eretz Yisrael; 1488-1575) opens the Shulchan Aruch with the instruction, "One should be strong like a lion to arise in the morning to serve his Creator."

R' Moshe Isserles z"l (Krakow, Poland; 1520-1572) adds in a gloss, "Likewise, when one lies down to sleep, he should know before Whom he is sleeping." R' Yadler comments: In order to arise like a lion in the morning to serve Hashem, one must go to sleep with an awareness of before Whom he is sleeping.

It goes with saying, R' Yadler concludes, that this requires sustained study of mussar works. (B'tuv Yerushalayim p.147)

וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מָקוֹם טָהוֹר - "He shall remove the ash to the outside of the camp, to a pure place." (6:4)



R' Yosef Tendler z"l (1932-2012) observes: Perhaps the Torah commanded that Aharon and his sons be the ones who take the ashes from the Mizbei'ach to the "dump" to teach us that no act is dirty or degrading if it is part of a Mitzvah.

Just as parents clean their soiled children and do not think it is beneath them–rather, they do it lovingly–so we should approach every Mitzvah of Hashem. (*Od Yosef Chai*)

וְאֶת כָּל־הָעֵדָה הַקְהֵל אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד - "Gather the entire assembly to the entrance of the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting." (8:3)

Miraculously, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people were able to gather at the entrance to the Ohel Mo'ed, a space that was approximately 40 feet wide. As Rashi z"l comments: "This is one of the instances where the lesser held within it the greater."

R' Yerucham Levovitz z"l (mashgiach ruchani of the Mir Yeshiva; died 1936) explains Rashi's comment. -

The midrash which Rashi quotes does not mean that a large group of people *crowded* into a small space. Rather, the miracle that occurred was that the space was not small.

Indeed, space is meaningless to G-d. As the Gemara (Ta'anit 25a) says in another context, "He who said that oil should burn and give light can just as well make vinegar burn and give light." He who enabled 600,000 people to fit comfortably in a large space can just as easily make 600,000 people fit comfortably in a "small" space.

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ - ***"If he shall offer it for a todah / thanksgiving-offering . . ."*** (7:12)

Four individuals are obligated to bring a todah or, in the absence of the Bet Hamikdash, to recite the blessing known as birkat ha'gomel: one who crosses a sea, one who crosses a desert, one who is cured from an illness, and one who is released from prison.

The question is asked: Why do we thank Hashem for saving us from dangerous situations, yet we do not thank Him when He does not place us in dangerous situations in the first place?

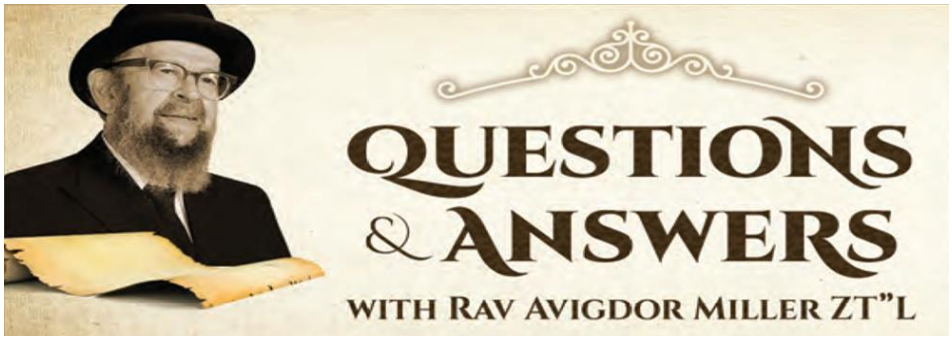
R' Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l (1905-1994) writes in the name of several authorities that being placed in danger is a sign that one is being judged for his sins. Thus, one thanks Hashem for saving him from danger despite his sins. (Shefa Chaim No. 222)

Another answer is that a person should be more grateful when he is placed in danger and saved than if he never is in danger. The reason, according to Sefer Hayashar, is that a person who experiences danger is undergoing cleansing of his sins. In contrast, a person who never suffers either is a perfect tzaddik — which is extremely unlikely — or is being ignored by G-d. That is the worst possible fate.

A person wakes up in the morning, makes himself a cup of coffee. He puts the bitter coffee in a mug, adds to it the sweet sugar, pours in the boiling water and adds some cold milk. A cup full of contrasts; hot, cold, bitter, sweet.

Then he says, "Ribono shel Olam, I don't know how my day will be… bitter, sweet, hot, cold - but one thing I know for sure, it will be "shehakol n'hiyeh b'dvaro — as You say it will be."

And that is how a Jew should start their morning, knowing that HaShem will pick what's right for him out of the sea of contrasts.



The gemara states that it's a mitzvah to speak leitzanus against avodah zarah. But isn't there a danger for a person who engages in leitzanus that it will become ingrained in his character?



Every good thing has negative sides. Let's say you buy power tools, so you have to be very careful with them. If you have just a hammer and a screwdriver, it's not so dangerous. But if it's an electric screwdriver, you have to be more careful; sometimes you're not thinking, and it might go through your hand.

Certainly, any big function that a person undertakes in life creates a bigger responsibility. Now, *leitzanus* against evil is a very important mitzvah. Let's look at **ובערת הרעה מקרבך**, a mitzvah to destroy evil doers. So here is the *shamash* of Beis Din and his job now is to give *malkus*. It's a mitzvah in the Torah to give *malkus*. Isn't there a *sakana* that once he gets into the habit of hitting people, he might practice outside of Beis Din too?

The answer is that they choose a man who is responsible, a *yarei shamayim*, and he'll do it only when it's a mitzvah to do.

And so, if Hakodosh Boruch Hu told us to use the *ko'ach* of *leitzanus* to ridicule the *sheker* of the outside world, it has to be limited only to that. That's our responsibility.

The truth is, the more a person learns, the more he is in danger. Because learning can be utilized to do wrong things. Like a *chochom* once said: **אוי לי אם אומר ואוי לי אם לא אומר** - is "Woe is to me if I say it, and woe is to me if I don't speak up." To say it may be dangerous,

but not to say it may be even worse. And therefore we have to do what's right and make up our minds we're going to utilize it only in the proper way.



The rabbi said that in our time, especially in America, we're so busy with work and other things that we don't spend enough time in the morning on prayers. Is it better this way – I mean praying without much concentration – or are we better off just not praying at all?

No; everybody should continue to pray that way. Only that I recommend that at least for the first *brachah* they should put in all that they have.

In the first *brachah*, the blessing which concludes with the words **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם**, you should be *moser nefesh!* Put all your *kochos* into it! Because that *brachah* is *meakeiv* according to the *din* and therefore it's very important to at least concentrate by the first *brachah* in *shemonah esrei*.

The rest, if a person is ambitious, he can undertake a program; every day he should try to do a little more and by the time he's in his sixties or seventies maybe he'll be trained to keep his mind concentrated on the davening.

It's a great pity! Because when we pray without any thought a big part of our lives is wasted. If we would learn first of all what it means – you have to learn what the words mean. There are deep things there and they deserve to be studied.

By the way, I would like to talk about this all the time, but I know it would be boring for you. On *tefillah*, I would like to talk for a whole year. An entire year only on the subject of prayer! We could take

every word and analyze it; we could study it deeply and it would be worth every minute. I have it written down at home; it's one of my specialties.

But whatever it is, it's a career that is available for every Jew and it's a tragedy that lives are being wasted. I've said it before that it's an illness, this sickness of what we are doing with our *davening* today. The truth is that it's one of the greatest failings in Jewish life today. And therefore, to restore *tefillah* to its proper place should be one of our highest aspirations. However, I'll settle for five minutes too. - Because it's so valuable that no matter how little it is, it's a precious achievement.



אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ - *'If he shall offer it for a Thanksgiving-offering.'* (7:12)

A Korban Todah, Thanksgiving-offering, is given to express his gratitude to Hashem and as a manner of declaration that he acknowledges that no one other than Hashem saved him.

Hakoras hatov, recognizing the benefits/good that we receive from others, is a critical mitzvah, quality, which defines a human being. One who is a kafui tov, denies the good that he receives, is deficient in humanness. It is a never-ending mitzvah which one cannot completely repay because we do not know the complete extent of the benefit and consequences that we have received.

Indeed, **Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl**, explains that it is called hakoras hatov, recognition of the good, rather than hashlomas hatov,

paying back the good, because it is impossible to reimburse his benefactor fully. We remain beholden to our benefactor.



Praying to Hashem is a form of hakoras hatov because it is an indication that we realize and acknowledge that whatever we need, comes from Him. One who does not pray, in effect is saying, "I do not need anything from Hashem," or, "Whatever I needed I have received from 'other' sources."

One must acknowledge that Hashem is the only source of everything that he has. Prayer is that form of acknowledgment.

How ironic it is that the fellow who is about to close a major financial deal has little time for passionate prayer. What he fails to realize is that without prayer, his deal might not achieve efficacy. We never know the effect of an act of gratitude.



The Kadmonim, early commentators, relate an insightful parable which, when we think about it, can be expressed in different terms under varied circumstances. The ending, however, is always the same: hakoras hatov has a long-range and a far-reaching effect:

A lion returned from his hunt for food, filled and satiated. He was tired and lay down beneath a large tree's shade to sleep in comfort. While he slept, a family of mice came by and began to play in the area that he slept. Before long, they began to crawl and jump all over him. After all, it was fun.

Suddenly, the lion woke up, startled. He stretched out his large paw and grabbed hold of the first mouse within his reach – and began to squeeze. A bit more pressure, and the little mouse would be history.

"Please, Mr. Lion, do not choke me. Let me live. I had no intention of harming you. We were just having some fun. If you set me free, I will owe you. One day, I will do the same for you," the mouse pleaded.

"What can a little mouse do for the king of beasts?" the lion scoffed. "You are a puny little thing; what could you ever do for me?" The lion was not very hungry, and he was in a benevolent mood, so he let the mouse go.

A few days passed and the lion was sauntering through the forest, his head held high in the air, when he did not notice a trap that was set in the ground. Too late. By the time the lion looked down, he was trapped in the pit dug in the ground.

Entangled in ropes, he was unable to climb up. In a few hours, the hunters would return to inspect their traps and the prize would be discovered. As hard as he tried to maneuver himself, he could not extricate himself from the tight ropes. Afraid for his life, the lion began to scream. He screamed and roared, but, since no one was around, it did not make a difference.

I should not say "nobody," because actually the lion's screams were heard by his new and very grateful friend: the mouse.

He came scampering over to see what he could do to help the lion who weeks earlier had so kindly allowed him to live. "I am here to help you," the mouse called out to the lion."

"What can a puny little thing like you do for me?" the lion asked.

"Just wait and see," the mouse answered, as he began to bite and chew his way through the ropes that bound the lion. It was not easy, but, in one hour's time, the lion was liberated.

One never knows how the favor he has granted his fellow can become the source of his own salvation.

Two classics of hakoras hatov convey to us the far-reaching effect of this wonderful character trait.

Horav Shmuel Yitzchak Andron, zl, was known as the Illui of Denenberg. He was one of the seven signatories who signed the certificate appointing **Horav Meir Simchah** as Rav of Dvinsk. He was also the founder of America's first yeshivah, Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yaakov Yosef or RJJ. How did this yeshivah begin? What role did Rav Shmuel Yitzchak play as its founder?

One day, one of Rav Shmuel Yitzchak's sons came home singing a non-Jewish song. His son explained that since the Christians' holiday season was in full force, everybody was singing these songs.

Rav Shmuel Yitzchak gathered together his entire family and told them, "Tomorrow, no one is going to school. We are finished with the non-Jewish public school system." He hired a private rebbe for his children, and they studied at home.

Public school exists to serve the general community. Officials from the school visited the Andron home to find out the reason that their children were missing from school. When Rav Shmuel explained his reasoning to them, they said, "Here in America there is no tolerance for such fanaticism. We will notify the authorities that you are preventing your children from attending school."

Rav Shmuel was compelled to stand before a judge and explain why he did not conform to the law of the land. He told the judge in simple language that a Jew cannot send his children to a non-Jewish school. He offered to establish his own school.

The judge allowed him three months to start a "Jewish" school – which is exactly what he did. This is how RJJ was founded.

Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, was wont to say, "If not for that judge, there would not have been Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yaakov Yosef."

Dr. Kagan was a female physician who was medical director of Bikur Cholim Hospital. The Kaminetzer Mashgiach, **Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl**, observed her yahrzeit with the study of Mishnayos and Kaddish recital. When queried for a reason, he explained that she went out of her way to address the needs of their children.

Yerushalayim's population had experienced a number of serious epidemics, such that ministering to the needs of children often meant exposure which could lead to serious personal illness. Dr. Kagan did what had to be done – regardless of personal consequences. - Furthermore, the **Rachmastrifka Rebbe, zl**, promised her Olam Habba, a share in the World to Come. How can one not say Kaddish for such a holy woman?

Rav Stern had heard about the Rebbe's promise, and, out of curiosity, asked Dr. Kagan for the reason behind the promise.

She explained that during a devastating epidemic, the Rebbe's son had become ill, and his life teetered back and forth. She had never left his side, nursing him back to complete health. When the Rebbe asked how he could pay her back for all of her kindness, Dr. Kagan replied, "I would like the Rebbe to sign on a petition for 'women's equal rights.'"

The Rebbe thought for a moment and said, "You can ask for much more. Why waste a blessing on something like that?" She thought, and then said, "Fine, I would like the Rebbe to guarantee me a portion in Olam Habba."

The Rebbe immediately rose to his feet and declared, "I promise you Olam Habba on the condition that everything that you do will be l'shem Shomayim – for the sake of Heaven – not for personal glory or financial benefit. Furthermore, I promise you that you will soon be saved from certain death!"

A few days later, after spending an entire night in the hospital ministering to the needs of sick children, Dr. Kagan crossed the

street without looking for cars. She was hit by a speeding car and thrown one hundred feet. Nonetheless, she picked herself up, brushed herself off, and continued walking. -The Rebbe's promise was realized. - Rav Stern concluded, "For such a holy woman, it is a privilege to say Kaddish."



One last story. There is a well-known picture of **Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl**, feeding a saucer of milk to a cat. This attests to the extraordinary chesed, kindness, of an individual who was recognized as one of the premier mashgichim of the last century.

There is, however, a story behind this picture, which is even more sublime.

One evening, the Rebbetzin went to the yeshivah's (K'far Chassidim) storage room to return some dishes that had made the rounds and had not been returned. When she opened the door, she was greeted by mice who had made themselves comfortable in the storage room. The Rebbetzin was concerned lest these unwelcome creatures would make their way into the yeshivah's supplies.

The man in charge of the kitchen suggested bringing a cat to the storage room to protect the food. They located a stray cat and gave it a home. It would be on "duty" during the day and sleep in a corner of the storage room at night.

One day, Rav Elya observed the cat "patrolling." He asked about it. "Who is feeding the cat?" the Mashgiach asked.

The manager of the kitchen replied, "The mice in the storage room."

"If the purpose of the cat is to expel the mice, and it is has been successful, then it has nothing to eat. No food – no mice. What will the cat eat? If you want it to serve you – you must feed her!"

The very next day, Rav Elya assumed the responsibility of feeding the cat. After all, he owed her for protecting the yeshivah's food supply.

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה לָעֹלָה לַמִּנְחָה וְלַחַטָּאת וְלָאָשָׁם וְלַמִּלּוּאִים וּלְזֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים - '*This is the law of the Elevation/burnt-offering, the meal-offering, the sin-offering and the inauguration offering, and the feast peace-offering*.' (7:37)

There are three forms/categories of korban, offering/sacrifice. This means that individuals from varied backgrounds and circumstances determine the category of korban which they offer.

Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl, explains the following Chazal (Midrash 3:5) which relates that King Agripas, who was quite wealthy, approached the Kohen in charge of the daily service and said, "I want to bring one thousand Olos today. I do not want anyone else to occupy the Mizbayach, Altar, other than me." (Essentially, one thousand korbanos would preclude anyone else from bringing a korban.)



Along came a poor man, and, in his hands, he carried two turtle doves to serve as his korban. The Kohen Gadol said, "Sorry. Today is devoted solely to King Agripas' korbanos."

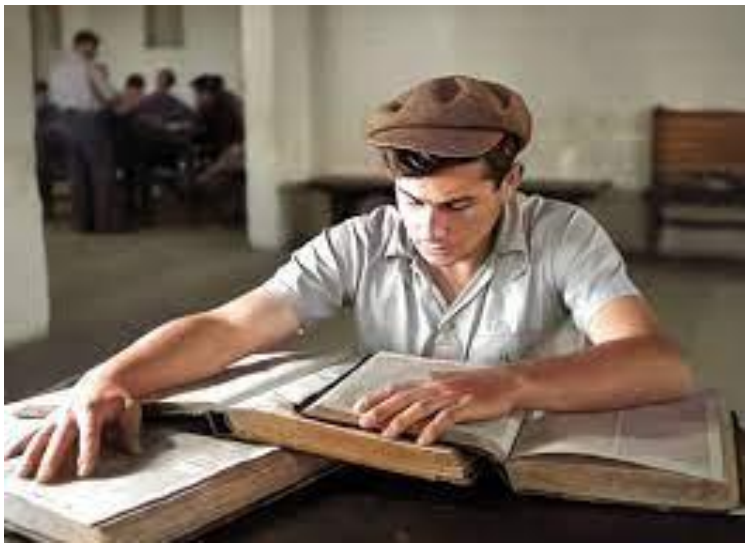
The poor man looked at the Kohen Gadol and said, "My master, the Kohen Gadol, every day I capture four doves, two I use to sustain myself and two I offer on the Mizbayach. If you do not accept my korban, you are (by default) cutting off my source of sustenance." (The man felt that he was blessed with the two remaining doves only because he offered two to the Mizbayach.)

That night Agripas had a dream in which he was informed, "The korban of a poor man preceded your korbanos."

Rav Elyashiv explains that the poor man separated fifty percent of his earnings for the Mizbayach. Furthermore, he did not demand that his offerings be accepted; he asked; he literally begged. Such a korban supersedes all others. It rises to the uppermost category of korban, because of the level of contribution and attitude of the owner who offers it.

The second level of korban is that of Agripas, who brought an impressive one thousand korbanos, undoubtedly a noble offering on his part. How much, however, did he give of himself for this korban? Not very much, due to his extreme wealth. He wrote a check, and unlike some others – he had money in the bank!

The third category of korban is the korban brought by Kayin: from the leftovers; the extra fruits for which he had no real use. So why not offer a korban?



Rav Elyashiv continues with a comparison to Torah study. Chazal (Menachos 110a) state: "Who studies the laws of a Korban Chatas, a Korban Asham, is considered as if he had offered these korbanos on the Mizbayach."

Apparently, due to our lack of a Mizbayach and, thus, no sacrificial service, Torah-study replaces the korbanos. Thus, the varied categories delineated above with regard to the korbanos likewise apply to Torah study.

The apex, sublime level, of Torah-study is he who is so devoted to Torah that he feels that without study he has no life! His livelihood, his sustenance, is dependent upon his studying Torah. He takes whatever few moments he has available and devotes them to Torah. How else will he live?

The second category is quite like the korban of Agripas. I have the time; I am not putting myself out. No sacrifice, so why not learn a little? - While, indeed, the man studies Torah and puts in time, there is no real sacrifice involved in his endeavor.

The third category is the one to which so many of us can sadly relate: the Kayin syndrome. We learn when we have absolutely nothing else to do.

Imagine this picture. A man comes home after a day at the office (or whatever he calls work), eats a leisurely dinner, followed by the newspaper. (Considering that the day is over, the news is really history.) He sits a little in his lounge chair so that he can digest what he has read. His wife asks: "Perhaps you will attend a shiur tonight? Maybe you should look into getting a chavrusa, study partner, for yourself?"

The husband agrees, since, after all, it is too early to go to sleep, and he has already read the paper twice. He goes to the bais hamedrash and studies Torah – as Kayin brought a korban – from the extra, leftover. Why not?

This fellow is a Dayeinu Jew. I refer to the Dayeinu, "It is sufficient" of Haggadah fame: "Had Hashem just brought us to Har Sinai, and not given us the Torah, it would have been sufficient!" We would have figured out a way to live without it. Now that we have

the Torah, we will learn when it is convenient. Obviously, learning as if life depends on it, does not appeal to him.

The Dvar Torah is very appropriate coming from Rav Elyashiv. He lived Torah study. To him it was dear life. Without Torah study, life was not worth living for him.

זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ – '***And the fire of the Altar should be kept aflame on it***.' (6:2)

The fire of one's avodas Hashem, service to the Almighty, should burn passionately בּוֹ, "within him." In other words, he should do nothing during his service to Hashem that in any way offends, takes advantage of, or imposes upon someone else.

The well-known Chazal (Sukkah 28) relates the level of intensity evinced by the Torah-study of the Tanna, Yonasan ben Uziel. His intensity was to the extent that when he studied Torah, birds flying over the roof of his house would be burned.

The Sfas Emes was presented with the Chazal accompanied by the following question: If this was the level of intensity of the student (Yonasan ben Uziel), what level did his holy Rebbe, Hillel HaZakein, attain?

The Sfas Emes replied that Hillel's level was so sublime that he maintained the fire well within him, such that no bird was harmed as a result of his learning.

This is a powerful lesson concerning our avodas HaKodesh. It may not adversely affect another person.

Moshe Rabbeinu held out for seven days, refusing to accept the leadership over the Jewish people, lest it impinge on the honor his older brother, Aharon HaKohen. Moshe empathized with the pain and persecution of his brothers in Egypt. He identified with their every

adversity, yet he could not bring himself to acquiesce to Hashem if it meant that Aharon's feelings would be affected. - Only after Hashem assured him that Aharon would be overjoyed with Moshe's appointment did he accept the position.

This, explains the **Alter m'Slobadka**, is the extent to which one should go in order not to infringe upon another Jew.



Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, met with the **Chidushei HaRim** in Warsaw. The Gerrer Rebbe treated the founder of the Mussar (ethical character refinement) movement with great deference, which was immediately noticed by his Chassidim.

Word spread quickly that the Rebbe had accompanied Rav Yisrael outside of his house all the way to the street. - This was unusual, indicating that Rav Yisrael was a distinguished Torah personality.

Soon, everyone in the community knew that a distinguished Lithuanian gaon was in town. Everyone ceased what they were doing: businesses closed; craftsmen left their work; and everyone went to the shul where Rav Yisrael was davening Minchah.

The entire shul was filled from wall to wall. There was standing room only, as everyone came to view the exalted sage whom the Gerrer Rebbe had honored.

It was therefore a surprise – almost a letdown – when the Chassidim saw Rav Yisrael conclude his recital of Shemoneh Esrai, the silent prayer of eighteen benedictions, very quickly – almost as quickly as the simple worker who was rushing to return to his job.

Rav Yisrael sensed their bewilderment. He gave them a lesson in mussar, ethical imperative: "I saw that people were losing time from

their work due to my presence: the shoemaker left his shop to attend shul with me; the tailor left his work to be with me; the blacksmith left his smithy to come to shul; the storekeeper closed his store – all because they wanted to daven with me. - If I were to prolong my prayers, it would have an adverse monetary effect on the people's livelihood. What right do I have to do that?"

Religious observance is what defines the Jewish people. Nothing is more important than our commitment to Hashem, His Torah and His mitzvos. This should not, however, come at the expense of another Jew's feelings or his livelihood.

וְאֶת כָּל־הָעֵדָה הַקְהֵל אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד – '***Gather the entire assembly to the entrance of the Ohel Moed***.' (8:3)

Rabbeinu Bachya writes that the ability of the entire eidah, Jewish congregation, to assemble in front of the Ohel Moed was miraculous. **החזיק מועט את המרובה**, this was a case of the few supporting the many. Indeed, the Midrash quotes a dialogue between Moshe Rabbeinu and Hashem concerning this anomaly.

Moshe asked, "Ribono shel olam, how can I place 600,000 men and 600,000 youths in front of the Ohel Moed?" Hashem replied, "Concerning this you are wondering? The Heavens were the size of the pupil of an eye; yet I 'stretched' it out to cover the entire world."

In Maayanei Chaim, **Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl**, quotes **Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl**, in distinguishing between the ben Torah and the baal habayis, the perspective of the yeshivah student versus that of the religious layman.

The baal habayis is concerned for tomorrow: what will be; how we will handle the upcoming challenges. The ben Torah, however, is concerned with the past: how he was able to survive the vicissitudes, the challenges, the poverty, the difficulty. For him, this is a source

of amazement which encourages an even deeper, more powerful sense of faith and trust in Hashem.

Rav Zaitchik observes that, if we look back in time, we truly may wonder how we achieved all of this! How did we manage to learn in two small classrooms, unheated, with broken chairs and tables, and lighting that was, at best, inferior? We did learn Torah, however, and we produced gedolim, Torah giants!

We wonder whether it is really true that we were able to function without the electronic conveniences which have become a staple of contemporary society. The yeshivos of Europe functioned with minimal food, and inadequate sleeping arrangements; yet the learning continued unabated on a level that we have yet to emulate! Indeed, we wonder if the tables were to be turned around, and we would be subject to learn Torah under such primitive and degrading conditions: would we be as devoted?

The bottom line is that we must acknowledge that our very existence, our success, our every achievement, is the result of Hashem's miracle.

This is what distinguishes the ben Torah. The ben Torah realizes that it is not "he" that accomplishes. It is Hashem; he is merely the fortunate spectator.

Horav Avraham, zl, brother of the **Gaon, zl, m'Vilna**, was a distinguished talmid chacham, Torah scholar, in his own right. He was the author of the Maalos HaTorah, a profound treatise on Torah study. He would often travel to Vilna to be near his revered brother, to study and be inspired. Travel was difficult and involved much hardship. This did not deter him, since it meant so much to him to be with his brother.

Rav Avraham was once asked why he did not simply move to Vilna. It was not as if he was obliged to live in his village. Rav Avraham replied that, veritably, it would be the correct and proper thing to do, but

he could not do it to his righteous wife, for whom living in their village meant so much.

Obviously, this was not the expected answer. When Rav Avraham saw the look of incredulity on the man's face, he felt that he must explain.

"One year, prior to Succos, it seemed that there would not be any esrogim mehudarim, beautiful esrogim, available. My rebbetzin knew a certain esrogim dealer who, in all likelihood, might be able to help us. She was right. Without asking about the price, she immediately agreed to purchase the esrog for me. She knew how much the right and proper esrog meant to me.

When the seller informed her that the esrog would set her back fifty rubles, she did a double take. Fifty rubles at that time was an enormous sum of money – something which we did not have. Yet, a mitzvah is a mitzvah, and it meant so much to her. She proceeded to mortgage our house, and in return, she purchased the esrog.

"Succos went by, and the joy in our house was palpable. The z'chus, merit, of giving up so much for a mitzvah truly added to the joy of the mitzvah.

Sadly, after Succos, we did not have enough money to pay the loan. We lost our house – in return for the mitzvah of esrog.

We moved to a small, modest home, in which we have been living since then. "Twice daily, as my Rebbetzin walks to shul to daven, she stops by our old house and stares with deep satisfaction as she utters words of praise and gratitude to the Almighty for having availed her the opportunity to give up her house for a mitzvah!

"Do you now understand why we cannot leave my village? How could I deprive my Rebbetzin of paying gratitude to Hashem twice a day? It means so much to her – and it should!" - This is what it means to remember the past with gratitude.

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ וְהִקְרִיב עַל־זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה חַלֹּת מַצּוֹת בְּלוּלֹת בַּשֶּׁמֶן וּרְקִיקֵי מַצּוֹת מְשֻׁחִים בַּשָּׁמֶן וְסֹלֶת מֻרְבֶּכֶת חַלֹּת בְּלוּלֹת בַּשָּׁמֶן – '***If he shall offer it for a Thanksgiving-offering***.' (7:12)





Chazal list four instances in which a person should bring a Korban Todah: when he has travelled overseas; when he has travelled through the desert; when he has been released from prison; when he has been cured of an illness.

Rabbeinu Bachya supplements this, saying that all instances of joy – such as **שמחת חתן וכלה**, wedding – are reason for bringing a Korban Todah. The Korban Todah is comprised of forty loaves, thirty of which are matzoh and ten which are chametz. All this must be eaten in the span of a night and a day. For instance, if one brought the korban today at eleven o'clock in the morning, it must all be consumed by midnight of that day.

The Netziv explains the rationale for this restricted eating. When a person has much to eat and so very little time, he is compelled to invite his family and friends to join him. This will increase their appreciation of Hashem's bestowal of His favor on man, thereby increasing kavod Shomayim, the glory of Heaven.

Likutei Basar Likutei adds that, in merit of one's recognition of Hashem's miracles, he will merit to continue seeing nissim, miracles, in his life. This is alluded to by the pasuk, **וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר יַקְרִיב לַה'**: What is the reward for one who brings Shalmei Todah,

Thanksgiving offerings? - אֲשֶׁר יַקְרִיב – he will in the future continue to bring offerings.

The greatest reward for the performance of a mitzvah is the opportunity to continue performing other mitzvos. We no longer have the opportunity to pay gratitude to Hashem via the vehicle of korbanos. וְנִשַׁלְּמָה פָרִים שְׂפָתֵינוּ, "*Our lips take the place of actual korbanos.*" The power of prayer is awesome; prayer takes the place of a korban.

An example is when we recite daily from Sefer Tehillim (100:1), מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה הָרִיעוּ לַה׳ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, "*A song of thanksgiving; call out to Hashem, everyone on earth.*" In accordance with its name, this psalm was sung by the Leviim as an accompaniment to a Korban Todah. Since this mizmor is associated with a korban, it has become our custom to stand while reciting it.

In his commentary to the Siddur, **Horav Shimon Schwab, zl**, addresses the forty loaves which comprise the Korban Todah. He breaks them up into two categories: Matzoh and chametz. Matzoh symbolizes salvation from grave danger, as Klal Yisrael experienced during the exodus from Egypt. Matzoh commemorates yetzias Mitzrayim, the Exodus. The chametz, unleavened bread, however, is symbolic of the daily nissim, miracles, which we enjoy, including the many miracles of which we are yet unaware. - This is a reminder to thank Hashem, וְעַל נִסֶּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ, '*For the miracles which are with us every day.*'



Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Zt'l, was asked why the mizmor begins with one's personal gratitude, then goes on to say הָרִיעוּ לַה׳ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, "Call

out to Hashem, everyone on earth." Why do all of earth's inhabitants have to join in gratitude? Should it not be a personal thing, since, after all, the korban's owner was the one who experienced the miracle?

Rav Kanievsky explained this with an incident that had occurred at one of the shuls in Bnei Brak. After davening one day, one of the worshippers took out a tablecloth from a bag and spread it on the table. He then placed cake and whiskey on the table and invited everyone in shul to share in his good fortune.

Apparently, the day before he had been crossing the k'vish, highway, and was hit by a car. He was thrown up into the air and landed on his side, but, other than a few slight bruises and a soiled suit, he was fine. He provided cake and whiskey, so that the participants would all have a l'chaim, good wishes, "to life," in honor of the miracle.

The next day, following the morning prayers, another member of the shul took out a small tablecloth, placed it on a table, and proceeded to place cake and whiskey on the table. He invited everyone to share in his Kiddush.

"What happened to you?" they asked. "Perhaps you were also hit by a car?"

"No," he answered. "Nothing of the sort. It is just that yesterday when I heard that fellow relate how he miraculously escaped serious injury, it dawned on me that I have been crossing that k'vish for the last twenty years, at the exact same place – and nothing has ever happened to me! Is that not a neis? I, therefore, want to thank Hashem publicly for all of His graciousness to me!"

Rav Kanievsky continued, " **מִזְמ֥וֹר לְתוֹדָ֑ה** refers to one's personal deliverance from 'what might have been.' **הָרִ֣יעוּ לַ֭יהוָה כָּל־הָאָ֑רֶץ**, seeing another person pay gratitude to the Almighty should spur one to introspect and realize how much he too owes Hashem. True, he may not have experienced any misfortune, but that in itself is a miracle!"

- We must stop taking our good fortune for granted. It is all a gift from Hashem.



There is another way to offer our gratitude to Hashem. **Horav Shmuel Kaidanover, zl**, was originally a Rav in Poland, and, after suffering brutally at the hands of Chemelnicki's barbarians during the gezeiros, decrees, of Tach v'Tat, 1648/1649, he escaped to Moravia, an impoverished, broken fugitive. He served as Rav in a number of kehillos, communities, in Ashkenaz, later returning in 1671 to Poland to assume the position of Rav of Cracow.

In his hakdamah, preface, to his Bircas HaZevach, treatise on Kodoshim, he writes that this sefer is his hodaah, Thanksgiving-offering to Hashem, "I was left alone, broken, beaten, unable to walk. When Hashem decreed an upheaval of the many Jewish communities in Poland and Lithuania, I was then in Lublin. There the Cossacks plundered my valuable library and personal manuscripts, and there were plucked from me the lights of my life, my two young daughters, who were brutally murdered by the accursed barbarians. I was thrown into the street, rolling in the blood of many Jewish martyrs whose lives were sacrificed Al Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify Hashem's Name. Hungry and thirsty, with nothing but my shirt, I was left in the cold to die, but Hashem did not desert me in my moment of dire need. With His miraculous intervention, I was able to reach the city of Nikolsburg."

Out of a sense of profound gratitude to Hashem, he decided to delve into Seder Kodoshim, with the Bircas HaZevach representing the fruits of his study. No complaints, no condemning, just gratitude at its apex.

This is how a Jew lives and accepts life.



וְלָבַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בַד וּמִכְנְסֵי־בַד יִלְבַּשׁ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ וְהֵרִים אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל הָאֵשׁ אֶת־הָעֹלָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשָׂמוֹ אֵצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מָקוֹם טָהוֹר - "***The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic…he shall separate the ash…and place it next to the Altar. He shall remove his garments and don other garments, and he shall remove the ash to the outside of the camp***." (6:3-4)

In the Talmud Yoma 23b, Chazal explain that the Kohen's act of removing his garments was an act of derech eretz, good manners and courtesy. It is not proper for a servant to pour wine for his master while wearing the same garments that he wore when he was cooking the meal.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, z.l., derives a powerful message from Chazal's words. A human king has many servants, each performing a specific function. The cook prepares the food, restricting his area of expertise to the kitchen. In contrast, the king's waiter is someone whose training, refinement and breeding benefit him as he "serves" the king. In short, the waiter does not work in the kitchen because it is a task too "menial" for him, while the cook does not perform his role in the public domain.

The opposite is true in regard to serving Hashem. Rather than assign one Kohen to remove the ashes and another to continue with the avodah, service, the Torah instructs the very same Kohen to remove his clothes, don other clothes and continue with the avodah.

Every aspect of avodas Hashem, regardless of how it may appear to human eyes, is equally laudable. One who has performed a seemingly menial and common task has fulfilled Hashem's will and is thus worthy of praise – regardless of the nature of the task.

The fulfillment of Hashem's will is the critical factor. The apparently undistinguished nature of a mitzvah does not lower its status before the Almighty, for we cannot evaluate the value of mitzvos.

This is consistent with Chazal's teaching in Pirkei Avos 2:1, "Rebbe said, **וֶהֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּמִצְוָה קַלָּה כְּבַחֲמוּרָה, שֶׁאֵין אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מַתַּן שְׂכָרָן שֶׁל מִצְוֹת** - '*Be as scrupulous in performing a minor ritual as in performing a major one, for you do not know the reward for mitzvos.*'"

The "reward" of a mitzvah can have an alternate meaning. Performing mitzvos is a privilege – one we should value. We do not really appreciate many of the things that we receive without effort.

We may waste the meals that are prepared at home, only to pay three times as much for an inferior meal at a restaurant. Why? At the restaurant, we value the food more.

We are born as Jews. The mitzvos that Hashem commanded us are readily available. We have only to go out and perform them. Do we each consider what other generations before us went through to observe these same mitzvos? Do we think about the "price" these mitzvos have cost in the blood, sweat and tears of history?

We do not value mitzvos properly because they come too easily to us. We rarely think about our long martyr-filled history and what our predecessors gave up in order to observe the simplest mitzvos. Blood was spilled, lives were given, just so that the legacy of Sinai is not severed from Klal Yisrael. - With this in mind, mitzvos emanate a new significance.

וְלָבַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בַּד וּמִכְנְסֵי־בַד יִלְבַּשׁ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ – '***The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic, and he shall don linen breeches on his flesh***.' (6:3)

The Kohen was to wear vestments made of בַּד - linen. Linen grows from the ground in individual stalks, similar to human hair.

Rabbeinu Bachya explains that the individualistic nature of each grain signifies the concept of achdus, unity. They reflect an inner harmony, a unified essence.

As the grandson of Aharon, the Kohen serves as the paradigm of unity. Aharon HaKohen was the "אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם " - one who loved peace and pursued peace." He reached out to his fellow man to generate inner peace by bringing him closer to Torah.



Horav Mordechai Miller, Zt'l, notes that the Torah also refers to these vestments as **בגדי לבן**," white vestments. Other than the fact that the natural color of flax/linen is white, is there any other significance to the "color" of these vestments?

He cites the first pasuk in Sefer Devarim, in which the Torah refers to the geographical location at which Moshe rebuked Klal Yisrael. "*These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Yisrael, on the other side of the Jordan, concerning the wilderness, between Paran and Tofel and Lavan...*"

Rashi says that there is no place that is named Tofel or Lavan. He contends that both words are references to the complaints about the manna: Tofel is a derivative of tiflus, deprecation or slander; and Lavan, white, is the color of the manna. Moshe reproached them for their complaints about the "white" bread from Heaven.

In his commentary on Chumash, the Avnei Nezer offers a profound rationale for the manna's white color. White is the color that contains within it all of the colors of the spectrum. It is missing nothing. One was able to experience every taste within the manna. Thus, the manna was white, reflecting its unified character. White is the color of unity, representing total harmony. It is the color of peace, worn by the Kohen, the representative of Klal Yisrael, when he performs the service in the Bais Hamikdash.

Teshuvah, repentance, is a journey into oneself, into one's inner being. Teshuvah is the search for the chelek Elokai Mimaal, the component which is a part of Hashem Above, the neshamah, soul. One attains the apex of teshuvah when he reaches the point at which he is in total harmony with himself.

The Navi Yeshaya says, "If your sins will be like crimson, they will become white as snow." Teshuvah is a process in which one "whitens" himself as he achieves total inner unity and peace. White symbolizes simplicity because it includes all colors. It needs nothing else, because it has everything.

One who has found that inner light, that white light, needs nothing. He is in perfect harmony with himself and with the Almighty.

Horav Miller cites the Talmud in Kesubos 17a in which it states that when Rabbi Dimi came from Bavel to Yerushalayim he said, "Thus they sing before the bride in the west, no powder and no paint, and no waving of the hair, and still a graceful gazelle." The greatest beauty is that which does not need outer enhancements. True beauty shines forth from within.

The Kohen Gadol would enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, clothed in simple Bigdei Bad - Bigdei Lavan, white linen vestments. This was the zenith of his service, the most sublime moment of his year - and he was dressed in simple white garments. He represented the entire Jewish people - unified together in teshuvah and tefillah, prayer. All focused together on

this one day towards one goal, one G-d. - This was his avodas Yom Ha'Kippurim, a goal to which we should all aspire all year.

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה לָעֹלָה לַמִּנְחָה וְלַחַטָּאת וְלָאָשָׁם וְלַמִּלּוּאִים וּלְזֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים – '***This is the law of the (korban) Olah, Elevation-offering, the (korban) Minchah, Meal-offering, the Chatas, Sin-offering***.' (7:37)



In the Talmud Menachos 110, Chazal comment **כל העוסק בתורה כאילו הקריב עולה מנחה חטאת ואשם** - that one who studies Torah does not need to bring a Korban Olah, Minchah, or Asham. The Torah study in itself serves as a vehicle for atonement.

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, once said, "***I thought I would have chassidim who would not listen to the enticements of the yetzer hora, evil inclination, not because they would not want to, but rather, because they would be so involved in Torah study they simply would not have the time to listen***!"

This may be the underlying message of our pasuk. One who studies Torah will have no need for the korbanos to atone for his actions, since he will not have the opportunity to do anything inappropriate.

If we look around, we would better appreciate the truth of his statement. When people have spare time, they tend to get into trouble. Boredom leads to troublesome situations. - Torah study is the panacea which not only prevents the sin but also atones for it.

הֲיִקְבַּע אָדָם אֱלֹקִים כִּי אַתֶּם קְבְעִים אֹתִי וַאֲמַרְתֶּם בַּמֶּה קְבַעֲנָוךָ הַמַּעֲשֵׂר וְהַתְּרוּמָה "***Can a man then rob G-d? For you have robbed Me ... you give me not tithes***. (Malachi 3:8)



The Navi's words are as stirring as they are striking. Our various religious observances belong to us. If we decide not to practice, we are spiting ourselves. We are undermining our own Olam Ha'bah that we decide to ignore.

If we adhere to the Torah, we will receive a reward commensurate with our observance. If we chose to alienate ourselves from the Torah, we will in turn one day answer for our indiscretion and insolence.

If we hoard our money and refuse to share our G-d given wealth with others, then we steal from Hashem. Whatever we have is only a result of Hashem's beneficence. We have it for a specific purpose -to help others. - If we ignore this Divine command, we are no more than thieves.

Loving one's Neighbour as Oneself

"Upon consideration, we find that the fulfilment of the obligation to judge people favorably and the obligation to guard one's tongue, are dependent upon the mitzvah of "loving one's neighbor as oneself." If one truly loves his neighbor, he will surely refrain from speaking lashon hora about him and he will do his utmost to find grounds to judge him favorably." ~ The Choftez Chayim zt"l.

"The only thing that you can take away with you when you leave this world, is what you've given away." ~ Rabbi Yisrael Salanter.

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ "If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering." (7:12)



One who has survived a life-threatening situation is adjured to bring a Korban Todah, thanksgiving offering. Rashi cites Tehillim 107 which is used by Chazal as the source for requiring a Korban Todah from a Jew who finds himself in any of four types of situations: He has been liberated from prison, has recently recovered from a serious illness, he returned from a sea voyage, or traveled in the desert and has arrived safely.

In each of these cases, he is to express his gratitude to Hashem with a specific korban. In Tehillim 50:23 the pasuk states, זֹבֵחַ תּוֹדָה יְכַבְּדָנְנִי, "*He who offers a thanksgiving offering, honors Me*".

The word יְכַבְּדָנְנִי is spelled with an extra "nun," which Chazal suggest teaches us to give kavod, honor/gratitude, twice to Hashem. - What is the reason for this double expression of gratitude?

The Kesav Sofer explains that one must thank Hashem not only for his salvation from peril, but also for originally being placed in grave danger.

"Whatever Hashem does is for the good" is a noted dictum of Chazal. "As one blesses with joy for the good (situation), likewise he should bless Him for the bad" is a halacha.

This, states the Kesav Sofer, is Dovid HaMelech's intention when he says, אֲבָרְכָה אֶת־ה' בְּכָל־עֵת תָּמִיד -"*I bless Hashem at all times*" (Tehillim 34:2). Consequently, one who offers a Korban Todah

expresses two forms of gratitude: he thanks Hashem for rescuing him from grave peril, and he acknowledges Hashem's beneficence in "availing" him the "opportunity" to move closer to Him via prayer and repentance by placing him in the dire situation which he has survived.

For this reason, Dovid HaMelech uses a double "nun" to express the two forms of praise to Hashem for the good and for the bad.

Why specifically are these four situations singled out as being examples for which a Korban Todah is a requisite?

Horav Yosef Chaim, z.l., of Baghdad in his **Ben Ish Chai**, suggests that one who survives these experiences is more apt to delude himself that it was someone or something other than Hashem who/which was the source of his salvation.

For example, one who is ill will invariably attribute his having been healed to the intervention of good doctors who applied their skills and used the latest medical techniques on his behalf. One who was incarcerated figures that he was liberated through the mediation and spirited efforts of others who had his best interests at heart. One who traveled through a desert will assure himself that he had taken adequate measures to safeguard his journey. Likewise, one who traveled across the sea will be confident that he had provided for himself the safest means possible of voyaging.

In all these cases one might not come to acknowledge the real source of his salvation. Accordingly, he must emphasize his sense of appreciation to Hashem, the Supreme Benefactor.

Indeed, the definition of **הכרת הטוב**, gratitude/appreciation, is the ability to acknowledge/recognize, (hakoras), the good, (hatov). One must concede recognition of the great kindness of his Benefactor.

Indeed, if we delve into the source of all the wonderful things that happen to us, we will certainly confront the truth that they all come from Hashem.



וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה מִדָּמוֹ וַיִּתֵּן עַל־תְּנוּךְ אׇזֶן־אַהֲרֹן הַיְמָנִית וְעַל־בׇּהֶן יָדוֹ הַיְמָנִית וְעַל־בׇּהֶן רַגְלׇו הַיְמָנִית - "***And (Moshe) placed some blood on the right earlobe of Aharon and on his right thumb and on his right big toe***." (8:23)

The Torah refers to the thumb as **בֹּהֶן**, while Chazal refer to it as **אֲגוּדָל** because of its thickness (as implied by the word **גָּדוֹל** which means large).

Rabbeinu Bachya notes the specific names which Chazal have given to each finger of the hand. He cites Rashi Talmud, Kesubos 5b, which explains the reason for the name of each finger. Each reason is based upon the finger's specific function reflected in holy endeavor.

It is amazing that when Chazal identified each finger, they named it in accordance with its holy function. Most people who use each finger for a different holy function are not Kohanim Should not a name be given according to its primary use, which is for mundane matters?

The Mesilos Chaim explains that the spiritual function of an object is evidently the determining factor in its name. The reason for this is simple. Everything is created for a single purpose, to serve Hashem. Man is here to serve the Almighty and to sanctify His Name with all his organs and faculties. Consequently, the names of the fingers correspond to their spiritual potential.

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ - "*If for a thanksgiving he offers it*." (7:12)



Rabeinu Bachya asserts that a chasan and kallah should offer a korban todah in gratitude for their abundant joy.

This seems inconsistent with the Talmud in Berachos 54b which cites the injunction that one who has been saved from danger must bring a korban todah.

There are four general categories of people who are required to bring a korban todah. They are those who have crossed a wilderness, those who have been imprisoned, those who have been dangerously ill, and those who have crossed a sea. These are people who had been in situations that could have cost them their lives, but they were spared through Hashem's mercy.

From what danger were the young chasan and kallah saved which would require a korban todah?

Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita, cites the Talmud in Sotah 2a which states that pairing a young couple is as "difficult" as the splitting of the Red Sea." Consequently, the joining of two young people is in itself a miracle. Therefore, it behoves the young couple to acknowledge the receipt of this unique gift with a korban demonstrating their gratitude.

We may suggest another parallel between marriage and the four who were spared from death. These people have just had the occasion to reflect upon their past, thus raising their awareness of the present. They have been availed of an invaluable opportunity for a second look

at their life's experiences, which enables them to nurture a greater appreciation of Hashem's gifts.

Life, health, and material abundance are things we take for granted until they are "almost" taken from us. At that time, it behoves us to reflect, acknowledge, and hold dear all of our blessings. A near-death experience undoubtedly motivates an individual to express "todah." We now appreciate our "new" self.

When two people join in marriage, they merge to create a new being. Each has now attained shleimus, completion. The inherent joy catalyzed by this recognition should imbue them with this realization. They now recognize that their "past" pales in comparison to their "new" self.

This consciousness must stimulate a sense of gratitude, concretized by offering a korban todah. - Whenever one is inspired to appreciate his current situation, an expression of gratitude is appropriate.

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ - "***If for a thanksgiving he offers it***." (7:12)

The imperative to pay gratitude to Hashem Yisborach and to everyone that benefits us is a compelling one. Fortunate is he who is able to show that appreciation.

I have been writing about hakoras ha'tov – recognizing the benefit we receive and demonstrating that recognition – for many years, but I never thought I would publicly convey my personal hakoras ha'tov to HaKadosh Baruch Hu Shehechiyani v'Kimani, u'Gemalani Kol Tuv.

Chazal teach us that the Korban Todah was accompanied by forty loaves of bread, so that the beneficiary would be "encouraged" to invite people in order to relate Hashem's chassodim, kindnesses, to them. I, likewise, use the medium of the Peninim to express my gratitude and hopefully to educate others so that what happened to me will help others know how to respond in a similar situation.

Parashas Tzav coincides with Parashas Terumah in my writing cycle. On Friday night, Parashas Terumah, my life changed – because it almost came to an end. Nissim min HaShomayim guided a few hours that felt like an eternity.

I went to bed that night with no indication of any impending problem. Suddenly at 3:20 a.m., I woke up with an excruciating pain in my upper ribcage, just below my throat, that emanated full-circle to my back and neck. It was like no pain that I had ever previously experienced. The intensity and suddenness were so incredible that I understood that something was wrong.

I immediately got dressed, woke my wife, and called 911. I figured that if I was acting in undue haste, the medics would tell me this. I had the Siyata d'Shmaya to maintain the presence of mind not to delay, but to act immediately.

I was "fortunate" that the E.M.S. crew came immediately; the emergency room physicians were waiting when we arrived, and the members of the catheterization team were immediately placed on call. - At 5:30 a.m., I was already being wheeled into the cardiac catheterization lab for the first of two procedures.

I write all of this because the Peninim is Baruch Hashem read by many people, and I feel that my greatest hodaah, offering of gratitude, is to help others know how to respond in a similar episode.

I look back, and I wonder what zchus I had to survive. I have no idea if it played a role, but I have always felt that the "Shabbos" would protect me.

For the past seventeen years, I have made an effort to walk down to the hospitals on Shabbos to visit patients that are either known or referred to me. I have made it a point to emphasize the significance of not leaving a Jew alone in a hospital setting for Shabbos. Hashem gave me the energy to walk, a family with the patience to tolerate it, and the resolution to continue doing what is

the right thing, even though it was difficult at times. Perhaps my zchus was the fact that I would publicly convey my experience, so that other Yidden will live.

My cardiologist tells me that "time is muscle." The faster one receives cardiac intervention, the less heart muscle is damaged. For "some reason" I did not wait, and at the first sign of pain I called 911. Most people do not do this. They search for antacids or painkillers, anything but make the call that could save their lives.

I never thought that I would use Peninim as a vehicle for expounding about diet. There is no question that a low-salt, low-fat diet is not as palatable as its counterpart, but living to see your children and grandchildren grow up is certainly an option I would not trade for a piece of kishke.

Last, we are taught that Hashem prepares the refuah, remedy, before the makah, illness. We should do the same. Prepare zchusim, merits – give Hashem reasons to keep you alive. Make yourself necessary. Provide a service for others that is vital, even if it is not comfortable or "plaque worthy."

Furthermore, the **Manchester Rosh HaYeshivah, Horav Yehudah Zev Segal, z.l.**, writes that we often take the gifts of good health and life for granted, while bemoaning things that are trivial by comparison.

For this and other reasons, it is good to visit a hospital from time to time. Aside from fulfilling the mitzvah of Bikur Cholim, visiting the sick, and giving encouragement and succour to someone in need, one comes in contact with people who only yesterday have been well and are unfortunately ill today. - This serves as a vivid reminder to be forever grateful for the gifts of good health and life.

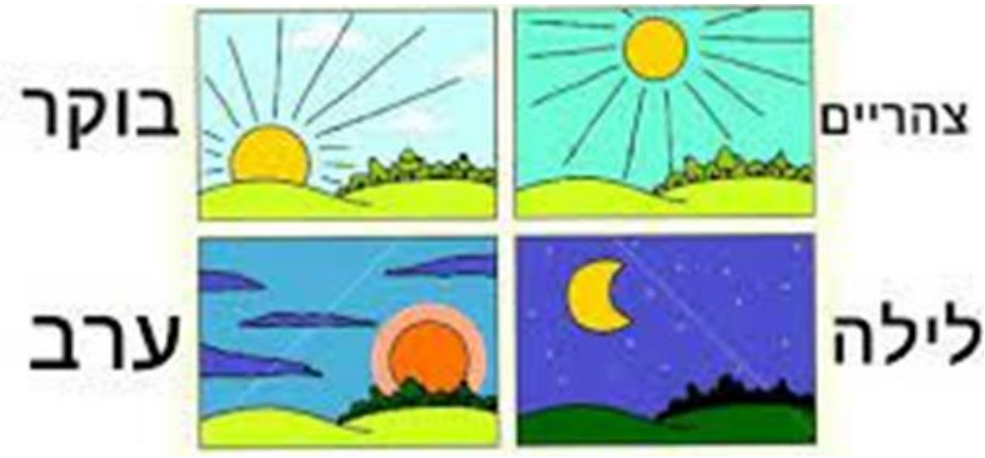
I close with a thought from **Horav Shimon Schwab, z.l.**, from his commentary on the Siddur. He explains that hodaah means more than "thank you." It is a confession of our indebtedness. Hence, the

tefillah, Modim, is an expression of our indebtedness to Hashem, especially for the following: **עַל־חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדֶךָ**, "*for our lives which are entrusted into Your hand.*" - We must constantly realize that our entire lives are in His hand from birth until our very last breaths. We live and die by His will.

May I add that while we live our lives **בדרך הטבע**, following conventional medicine, we must never forget – and always give thanks to – Hashem, because it is only through His will that we **וְעַל נִשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ**, "*for our souls which are in Your care.*" We pay gratitude to Hashem for guarding the neshamah, which He emplaced within our bodies at birth and will retrieve at the moment of death.

Throughout this period, He guards it. **וְעַל נִסֶּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ**, "*for Your miracles that are with us every day.*" This is a reference to the nissim nistarim, hidden miracles, which comprise so much of our lives. We are not aware of the major illness we might have contracted or the dangerous situations we go through in our daily lives.

Each of us could easily relate a number of examples. **וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל עֵת עֶרֶב וָבֹקֶר וְצָהֳרָיִם**, "*And for Your wondrous deeds and bestowal of goodness, which occurs at all times – evening, morning, and afternoon.*" In its simple interpretation, we pay gratitude to Hashem for all of the hidden miraculous events which constantly occur, for which we express our thanks thrice daily in the tefillos of Maariv, Shacharis and Minchah.



Rav Schwab, however, offers a compelling alternative approach to understanding these three periods. He maintains that they are a reference to the moods or circumstances

in which one may find himself. Erev: one may find himself in an "emotional state of erev." Like evening, it is dark, black and unknowing. He feels that his life is declining, either due to age or mazel. Nothing seems to go right. He feels a sense of hopelessness; he is at the "end of his tether."

Boker: A person may be in a boker state of life when he notices a glimmer of light rising into his life. Little by little, things begin to fit into place and turn around for him.

Tzaharayim: In the tzaharayim state of his life, the sun is shining brightly. Everything he touches turns into success. He has the feeling of being on "top of the world."

In this sense, we pay gratitude to Hashem Yisborach for our lives which He holds in His hands, regardless of the state of being our lives are in at the time. We trust and affirm that He holds the key to our existence. It is because of His will and kindness that we are alive.

Regardless of the conditon in which a person finds himself, being alive is in itself the greatest gift from Hashem.

I began writing this Peninim in the hospital and finished it a few days later at home. I thank the reading public for indulging me, and I fervently hope that I have made an impact. - If my experience will save another life, then it will all have been worthwhile.

"One should always cultivate silence and refrain from speaking, except with regard to matters of knowledge or things that are necessary for his physical welfare.

It's said that Rav, the disciple of our saintly teacher, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, never in all his days uttered an idle word–which is what the conversation of most people consists of." ~ Rambam.



"The Righteous Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk Saved Me from Death in Plaszow"

In honour of Adar 21, the yahrzeit of the righteous Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk z"l by Yaakov Rosenfeld - Ganzach Kiddush Hashem

I am Yosef Scheller, from Krakow.

Upon the outbreak of the war, I was a young bar mitzvah aged boy.

Like many residents of Krakow, and especially young skilled workers, I arrived in 1942 at the infamous Plaszow camp, under the command of the murderer, Amon Goeth, may his name be blotted out.

One day, I fell seriously ill and I was sent, due to the right connections, to the hospital in Krakow.

This was in winter 5703 (1943). At the same time, many bunkers, in which Jews were hiding, were discovered in Krakow and its surroundings. All the thousands of Jews were gathered on the hill, where they awaited their death.

After a few days of hospitalization, the German murderer, the SS man Gross, may his name be blotted out, appeared in the hospital. He ordered everyone in the hospital to be rounded up on the hill, along with the thousands of Jews caught in the bunkers.

The mass grave – a huge and deep hole dug for this purpose, stood ready to receive all the thousands of dead, and I no longer expected anything, only death.

And how could I be better than the thousands of people around me?

The cries of babies and infants broke my heart, and a suffocating feeling of impending death was in the air.

We were ordered to undress, and we stood together in groups of five.

Gunshots rang out all around and I awaited my fate. Suddenly I opened my eyes and out of the corner of my eye, I noticed the pile of clothes that was standing next to me. It was cold that night, and I, without thinking much, separated from my "group". I lay down in the pile of clothes. The Jew who was standing next to me was amazed at my daring and scolded me, but I thought to myself, what will happen to me, will they shoot me? After all, I'm going to die anyway.



Jews moving coffins with remains of Jews in them from the Plaszow camp to the Jewish cemetery in Krakow

I warmed myself up between the clothes and suddenly I dozed off, and saw a red-haired man with a red beard standing over me, shaking me and telling me: "Run away from here! Run away quickly! Get out of here before it's too late."

I woke up and didn't think for a moment to run away, it would be a complete act of suicide, and endless gun barrels would have been aimed at us from all sides, especially for this purpose… I said to myself: this is the product of my imagination.

And again I fell asleep, and again the man with the shaggy red beard stood over me and scolded me:

"Why are you lingering?" he asked me. "Did I not tell you to run away from here!?"

I woke up and fell asleep again, and then he came to me and said: "This will not help you at all, I will get you out of here with my own hands. I will pull you by the hairs of your head."

And then I heard gunshots.

The shots were now aimed at my group of five. My friends who remained there fell into the mass grave, and I – was alive…

I put on a shirt, pants, and a hat from the pile, and started walking; it became clear to me moment by moment: the red-headed man was undoubtedly Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk, as I had prostrated myself at his grave before the war and wept and begged for my life there.

After all, it is accepted from generation to generation that Rabbi Elimelech was red-headed with a shaggy red beard, and it was clear to me then, without any doubt, that he himself stood over me three times and saved my life.



The old ohel (mausoleum) on the grave of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk

I walked confidently back to the camp, and amazingly, none of the armed Germans and Ukrainians noticed me or stopped me. It was as if they were all blind.

I arrived at the barracks, and after a long time, the aforementioned evil man, Gross, may his name be blotted out, the one who knew me and ordered to send me to death, entered.

He looked at me in shock; he could not believe that I was alive. Out of his stupor, he shouted: "an angel!"

Since then, the evil Gross watched over me and made sure to improve my conditions with unusual things. In the end, through G-d's mercy, I was redeemed and had the privilege of immigrating to Israel.

Kiddush Friday Night

During World War II, the Nazis were fast approaching *Eretz Yisrael*, and the Jews there were gripped with fear. Special prayer gatherings were held, and people pleaded to Hashem for protection. There was one Rabbi, **Rav Shlomo Zviel**, who was unaware of the situation. On Friday night, after he recited *kiddush*, somebody informed him of the imminent threat. He was very upset.

"Why are you telling me this only now?" he asked. "You should have told me this before I recited *kiddush*!" He explained that when we recite **ויכולו** Friday night, we become Hashem's partner in creation, and partners can influence one another. When we declare at *kiddush* that Hashem created and governs the world, we become His partners, and He then takes our requests more seriously. This, then, is the most opportune time to ask for His help. The Rabbi thus regretted not having known about the crisis before *kiddush*, at the moment he forged his "partnership" with the Almighty.

Shabbat is far more than enduring the inconvenience of all the restrictions. It is about becoming Hashem's partner, and accessing the endless benefits that this partnership yields.

"You should speak to Hashem as you would to a friend, and you should pour out your heart in His presence." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

The Kosel



When the Roman Emperor Vespasian conquered Yerushalayim, he divided the task of destroying the four areas of the city among four of his commanders. The assignment of destroying the Western Gate fell to Panger, the Arabic commander. While the other three destroyed their areas as per their instructions, Panger did not.

Upon hearing that the Kosel Ha'maaravi (Western side) hadn't been destroyed (Heaven decreed that the Kosel will never be destroyed) a fuming Vespasian summoned Panger to explain why he allowed his area to remain standing.

Panger informed the emperor that he had left the area under his jurisdiction standing as a tribute to the honor of the emperor

Vespasian and for the glory of his kingdom. Had he finished his assigned task and destroyed the area then there would have been nothing left of the city. The world would never be able to recognize and understand what Vespasian had destroyed. Leaving one small area standing displayed the awesomeness of the structure that Vespasian had torn down.

Vespasian was pleased with the explanation, but he said because you violated my direct orders and ignored me, you must climb up onto the roof and throw yourself off. If you survive, good, and if not, not.

Panger ascended to the roof, jumped off and died.

So our enemy was assigned the task of demolishing the Kosel and mysteriously he had the peculiar notion of disobeying the command of the emperor. This idea was so convincing to Vespasian that he never sought to destroy the wall himself (Eicha Rabba 1:31).

Around 100 years ago it was a common custom for visitors to the Kosel to leave their names behind as a tefilla or segula for a safe trip home — they would inscribe or paint it on the stones of the Kosel. People would carve their names into the stone or write them in red or black paint. Some added short tefillos or brachos while others drove nails into the wall as a segula before traveling abroad. There was even a custom of dipping one's palm in paint and leaving a handprint on the wall.

Many rabbanim frowned upon these minhagim especially when engravings were made on the holy stones since it showed disrespect to the kedusha of the Kosel and may have been a problem of *meilah*.

From the earliest pictures of the Kosel in the 1860s until photos in the 1920s, names in script, large and small, are seen decorating the stones as far up as a person could reach.

In 1931 one of the laws that were passed was that the Kosel should not be disfigured by having any engravings or inscription placed upon it or by having nails driven into it. With the passing of this law the

custom of painting names immediately stopped. Instead, people began placing notes in the cracks of the stones. Although this custom existed before writing names was outlawed, it grew in popularity in the wake of this law and remains a popular custom.

It has been said that some people have hearts of stones but these stones (referring to the stones of the Kosel) have the hearts of people.

Not Just Three Letters



A Jewish hospital was needed in Izmir, Turkey in the time of **R' Chaim Palagi** and he accepted the responsibility to raise the funds. He wrote a letter to a wealthy man who did business with Baron Rothchild, asking him to go to Baron and request a generous donation.

The wealthy man said that he was afraid that Baron would get upset at him for asking for money, and it possibly would lead to some damage in his business dealings with him.

R' Chaim wrote back in a letter to the man, "I am shocked that you didn't notice in my first letter that I wrote on top of the page **בס״ד (בסייעתא דשמיא)**, With Hashem's help. Therefore you can see that I am relying on Hashem's help.'"

The man then went to Baron who gave him a generous donation.

About a week ago in Israel, a Palestinian Arab was following a chassidish lady who was walking alone in Jerusalem for about 20 minutes, after which he disappeared. The woman was suspicious of him and immediately called in his description to the police, who were able to make the arrest and brought him in for questioning.

There, the Arab admitted that he was planning to stab the woman but couldn't get close to her, since she had with her two big bullies one on her right side and one on her left side. After realizing these bullies weren't leaving her side, he gave up.

The police went back to the woman to confirm she was alone like she had told them. She confirmed she was alone, however, she said that the whole time the Arab was following her she kept repeating the *passuk*: "**מימיני מיכאל ומשמאלי גבריאל**" - "to my right, Michael, to my left Gavriel"



The Weekly Vort

● **והרים את הדשן** - ***He shall pick up the ashes*** (6:3).

This refers to the cleaning of the *Miz'beach*, a task performed each morning at the beginning of the *avodah* in the Beis HaMikdosh. Rabbeinu Bachya points out that this *mitzvah* teaches us a lesson in humility. It commands those holding the highest positions in the social hierarchy, people like Aharon *HaKohein* and his sons, to personally look after ordinary clean-up work (Chovos HaLevovos - Shaar HaHachna'ah 82).

R' Shamshon Rafael Hirsch explains further that picking up the ashes at the start of each new day provides us with a look back at the accomplishments of the previous day. On the other hand, the

subsequent action of removing those ashes teaches that each day starts afresh.

We are told to consider our holy service as something absolutely new, as though it had never been done before. We are obliged to approach the duties awaiting us each day with the same feeling of joy that we felt on the first day. **והוציא את הדשן אל מחוץ למחנה** – ***He shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp*** (6:4) - he must remove what is left of the previous day's service to make an absolutely clean place for the service of the new day.

Understood in this way, the instruction that the *Kohein* was to remove the ashes while wearing worn-out, less valuable clothing assumes new significance. - The past must give way to the present; it must not be allowed to fill us with pride just before we begin the duties of a new day. (Kol HaTorah - R' Elie Munk)

● **עשירית האפה סלת מנחה תמיד** – ***A tenth-ephah of fine flour as a continual meal-offering*** (6:13).

A regular *Kohein* offers this as an initiation rite, the first time he serves. The *Kohein Gadol* must offer it each day.

Abarbanel explains that the *Kohein Gadol* brings the special meal-offering every day because he is the representative of Klal Yisroel. For him to achieve atonement for the people, he himself must be free of sin. Since no man is totally without sin (see Koheles 7:20), the *Kohein Gadol* is enjoined to achieve personal atonement through his daily offering. (The Torah Treasury)

"Tefillah is always necessary, even when Heaven decreed something, it won't happen without Tefillah." ~ Reb Tzaddok HaKohen Zt'l.



There is Always Hope

The Beis Yaakov (Ishbitz, 15) zt'l says that the ashes removed from the mizbeach represent the people who have sinned so much until they were banished from the kedushah. They have sinned and are therefore removed. Nevertheless, we shouldn't think that there is no hope for them.

The ashes were placed alongside the mizbeach. This indicates that even those who have become distanced, remain with their specialness and potential. We keep them near the mizbeach because there is still hope for them to return.

זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַחַטָּאת

This week's parashah discusses the process of bringing a korban *chatas*. It states (6:18) **זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַחַטָּאת בִּמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּשָּׁחֵט הָעֹלָה תִּשָּׁחֵט הַחַטָּאת** - "***This is the law of the chatas; in the place where the olah is slaughtered shall the chatas be slaughtered***..."

This mitzvah tells us that the chatas should be shechted on the north side of the mizbeach, in the same place where an olah is shechted. Some explain that this is to protect the *baalei aveirah* from shame.

A chatas is brought for an aveirah. If they would bring their chatas to an area that is solely designated for the chatas, everyone would know that they had committed an aveirah. Therefore, the Torah obligates us to bring the chatas and slaughter it in the same location as the olah.

All who see him there will think he is bringing an olah, and they won't know that he performed an aveirah.

This is an excellent example of Hashem's compassion. Even when a person sins, Hashem seeks ways to protect him from shame.

The Kli Yakar explains that the mitzvah to shecht the chatas at the place of the olah is to teach us the potential of teshuvah. An olah is the most precious korban (as Chazal tell us). When one does teshuvah and sacrifices a korban chatas, he shechts it at the place of the olah to show that his korban chatas is precious to Hashem as if he brought a korban olah.

Similarly, the **Ishbitze (Mei HaShiloach) zt'l** explains that a chatas is brought by people who have aveiros, whereas an olah is a korban for tzaddikim because it isn't brought to atone for aveiros.

The Torah tells the person who committed an aveirah that he should shecht his chatas with the tzaddikim who bring olahs.

This teaches us that when one wants to improve his ways, he reaches the level of the tzaddikim.



אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה – '***A continuous fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall not go out***.' (6:6)

What was the purpose of this fire that burned constantly and wasn't used at all?

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz zt'l says that this continuous fire hints that we should always have a fire burning in our hearts, a fire of a desire to do Hashem's will. His passion to serve Hashem should always be in his heart.

The Divrei Chaim adds the following important words, "And this is even after he performed a severe aveirah." Even then, he shouldn't lose hope. He shouldn't feel that all is lost. Even then, he should keep his heart aflame with a desire to do Hashem's will.

In Shemonah Esrei, we say רְפָאֵנוּ ה' וְנֵרָפֵא - "***Heal us Hashem, so we will be healed***."

Why do we daven for refuah? - Why don't we daven not to become sick in the first place?

The Yaavetz answers that everyone is ill, only they aren't aware of it. "There isn't a healthy person who doesn't have some sickness in him. He doesn't feel it because according to the rules of nature, this type of illness isn't felt, or it is Hashem helping him not be affected by his illness [but he is certainly ill. As Chazal say], 'Those who experience miracles, but aren't aware of them.'"

The Korban Todah

The Or HaChaim writes, "There isn't an hour or a moment when Hakadosh Baruch Hu isn't doing [kindness] for man, either for his body or for his needs."

Hashem's kindness is constant; therefore, we should constantly praise Him.

This is the lesson of the korban todah. We can't bring an actual korban in our times, but we can praise Hashem for all His kindness.

Parashas Parah

Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen *zt'l* teaches that we become pure from sin when we read this parashah. He proves this from the *haftorah*.

The *haftorah* is usually based on the weekly Torah reading. This Shabbos, the *haftorah* says (*Yechezkel 36:25*) **וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מַיִם טְהוֹרִים וּטְהַרְתֶּם מִכֹּל טֻמְאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל־גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם** -"***I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean; from all your impurities and all your abominations will I cleanse you***."

The haftarah discusses becoming clean and pure from aveiros, which indicates that the parashah of parah adumah in the Torah also refers to being tahor from aveiros.

Torah on Shabbos

Ben Ish Chai writes, "One accomplishes a thousand times more with his studies on Shabbos than on a weekday."

Reb Elyah Roth *zt'l* said, "A *daf* Gemara on Shabbos is equivalent to five hundred pages of Gemara on a weekday. One chapter of *Tehillim* on Shabbos is equivalent to five hundred chapters on a weekday."

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* said that if a non-Jew knew the pleasure Yidden have when they study a *daf* Gemara Shabbos morning before *Shacharis*, they would convert just for that pleasure.

Reb Yechezkel Abramsky *zt'l* would say *Tehillim* chapter **קי"ט** on Shabbos morning before *Shacharis*.

"Emunah means believing in Hashem, but it also means believing in ourselves. If Hashem can do anything, and my soul is a tiny part of Hashem, then that means I could do anything." ~ R' Lazer Brody.

Reb Elyah Roth zt'l said in the name of Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zy'a, "When you experience hashgachah pratis, don't keep it a secret. You have a holy obligation to reveal Hashem's hashgachah to others."

It isn't only major salvations that we should publicize, but also Hashem's hashgachah pratis that we experience in our everyday lives, so everyone should know that Hashem leads the world.

There are two books in Heaven, one of sins where you gave a sigh when you sinned and one when you didn't, and the difference in punishment between them is greater than the distance between heaven and earth. ~ R' Itzele Peterburger Blazer zt"l.



Don't Sit On Your Hands!

There was a great talmid chacham, a man very learned in Torah, who woke up one morning unable to see. He rushed to the doctor who asked him when he had stopped seeing. The talmid chacham replied that it just happened, that morning.

The doctor was shocked! He said that the eyes were in such bad condition that he should have stopped seeing years ago!

The talmid chacham knew the answer as to why he had merited a medical miracle. He had spent his entire life learning Torah and writing sefarim, books on Torah knowledge.

A few months before, he had begun to feel very tired. He decided that he was getting too old to continue writing and was going to stop

as soon as he finished writing his current sefer. He had brought the completed sefer to the printer the day before he became blind!

Hashem had granted the talmid chacham the gift of eyesight, as long as he continued to write sefarim.

Rashi says that the kohen had two distinct jobs removing ashes from the mizbayach, from the altar. One of the jobs was to remove a handful of the ashes that resulted from the offerings that were burnt on the mizbayach. The ashes were placed on the side of the mizbayach. "… He shall separate the ashes when the fire consumes the burnt offering on the altar… (Vayikra 6:3).

The other job was to remove all the ashes once the mizbayach was full of ashes. Those ashes were put in a pure place outside the Temple Mount. "He shall [then] remove his garments and dress in other garments. He shall take out the ashes beyond the encampment…." (Vayikra 6:3).

Rabbi Yissochar Frand wrote a beautiful dvar Torah in the name of **Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l**.

It makes sense that the kohen removed all the ashes from the mizbayach once it became full of ashes. That was necessary to bring the next korban, the next offering. However, why was it necessary to remove just a handful of ashes from the previous day's offerings?

Rabbi Hirsch zt"l explains that this teaches us a very important lesson for life. It acts as a reminder to the kohen, and to us, that what he accomplished the previous day is gone. "The thought of what has already been accomplished can be the death of that which is still to be accomplished. Woe unto him who with smug self-complacency, thinks he can rest on his laurels on what he has already achieved and who does not meet the task of every fresh day with full devotion as if it were the first day of his life's work!"

A person may have accomplished great things. He needs to accomplish more. Every day is a new day, and much more can still be

accomplished. If a person rests on his laurels, feeling he does not need to do more, he will not succeed in his worldly endeavors. Certainly, he will not succeed in his spiritual endeavors.

Thomas Edison invented the phonograph. The phonograph recorded the spoken voice and played it back. He invented an electric copy machine. He perfected the lightbulb, making it usable. He innovated great inventions which changed the world.

He could have told himself that he had already made a mark in the world and that he could now take an early retirement. Had he done so, the 1,090 other patented inventions of his would not have been invented (at least, as of that time)! To Thomas Edison, each day was a new day to accomplish more and more!

In spiritual endeavors, as well, we may have accomplished much. However, there is still so much more that we can achieve. We can raise ourselves to even greater spiritual heights. Unfortunately, if we become complacent based on yesterday's spiritual accomplishments, our spiritual level will sink.

As we know, our spiritual level does not remain at status quo. We are either climbing or falling. We are either growing closer to Hashem or moving further apart.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l says that our soul has a natural tendency to strive higher and higher spiritually. If we are actively involved in learning Torah and performing mitzvos, then our soul is growing spiritually, and we feel inner peace. If we are lazy and don't strive higher, then we will feel inner discontent. - We should always strive for spiritual growth.

"The only thing we can change is ourselves, but sometimes that changes everything." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

The Meaning of Jewish Wedding Traditions by Rabbi Shlomo Shulman

Learn about Jewish wedding traditions that commonly take place at Jewish weddings such as breaking a glass, a chuppah, ketubah, and more. Join us as we delve into the captivating world of Jewish weddings. Beyond the iconic glass-stomping moment, discover the multitude of meaningful traditions that make these ceremonies unique.

1. Fasting on the Wedding Day

The dawning wedding day heralds the happiest and holiest day of one's life. This day is considered a personal Yom Kippur for the groom and bride, for on this day all their past mistakes are forgiven as they merge into a new, complete soul.

As on Yom Kippur, both the groom and bride fast (in this case, from dawn until after the completion of the marriage ceremony). And at the ceremony, the groom wears a *Kittel*, the traditional white robe worn on Yom Kippur.

[Sephardim do not have the custom to fast and wear a *Kittel*.]

2. Kabbalat Panim: A Week of Separation

It is customary for the groom and bride not to see each other for one week preceding the wedding. This increases the anticipation and excitement of the event. Therefore, prior to the wedding ceremony, the groom and bride greet guests separately. Greeting the guests is called "*Kabbalat Panim*."

Jewish tradition likens the couple to a queen and king. The bride will be seated on a "throne" to receive her guests, while the groom is surrounded by guests who sing and toast him.

At this time there is an Ashkenazi tradition for the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom to stand together and break a plate. The reason is to show the seriousness of the commitment —

just as a plate can never be fully repaired, so too a broken relationship can never be fully repaired.

3. The *Bedeken* Ceremony

The "*Bedeken*" ceremony is an emotional reunion after a week of separation. The groom covers the bride's face with a veil, signifying the first time they've seen each other in seven days. The veil symbolizes the idea of modesty and conveys the lesson that however attractive physical appearances may be, the soul and character are paramount. It is reminiscent of Rebecca covering her face before marrying Isaac (*Genesis* ch. 24).

The Ashkenazi custom is that the groom, accompanied by family and friends, proceeds to where the bride is seated and places the veil over her face. This signals the groom's commitment to clothe and protect his wife.

4. The Chuppah

The wedding ceremony takes place under the chuppah (canopy), a symbol of the home that the new couple will build together. It is open on all sides, just as Abraham and Sarah had their tent open on all sides to welcome people in unconditional hospitality.

The Ashkenazi custom is to have the chuppah ceremony outside under the stars, as a sign of the blessing given by God to the patriarch Abraham, that his children shall be "as the stars of the heavens" (*Genesis* 15:5). Sephardim generally have the chuppah indoors.

The Ashkenazi custom is that the groom and bride wear no jewelry under the chuppah (marriage canopy). Their mutual commitment is based on who they are as people, not on any material possessions.

The bride follows the groom, and both are usually escorted to the chuppah by their respective sets of parents.

Under the chuppah, the Ashkenazi custom is that the bride circles the groom seven times. Just as the world was built in seven days, the bride is figuratively building the walls of the couple's new world together. The number seven also symbolizes the wholeness and completeness that they cannot attain separately.

The bride then settles at the groom's right-hand side.

[At this point, the Sephardic custom is that the groom says the blessing She'hecheyanu over a new tallit and has in mind that the blessing also goes on the marriage. The tallit is then held by four young men over the head of the groom and bride.]

5. The Bride's Seven Circles

In many Jewish communities, the bride circles the groom seven times, symbolizing the commitment to building a new world together. This ritual reflects the seven days of creation in the Torah.

Like and comment to share your thoughts on these traditions!

6. The Jewish Wedding Ring

In Jewish law, a marriage becomes official when the groom gives an object of value to the bride. This is traditionally done with a ring. The ring should be made of plain gold, without blemishes or ornamentation (e.g. stones) — just as it is hoped that the marriage will be one of simple beauty.

The groom now takes the wedding ring in his hand, and in clear view of two witnesses, declares to the bride, "Behold, you are betrothed unto me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel." He then places the ring on the forefinger of the bride's right hand. According to Jewish law, this is the central moment of the wedding ceremony, and at this point the couple is fully married.

If the bride also wants to give a ring to the groom, this is only done afterwards, not under the chuppah. This is to prevent confusion as to what constitutes the actual marriage, as prescribed by the Torah.

7. The Ketubah (Marriage Contract)

Now comes the reading of the ketubah (marriage contract) in the original Aramaic text. The ketubah outlines the groom's various responsibilities — to provide his wife with food, shelter and clothing, and to be attentive to her emotional needs. Protecting the rights of a Jewish wife is so important that the marriage may not be solemnized until the contract has been completed.

The document is signed by two witnesses and has the standing of a legally binding agreement. The ketubah is the property of the bride and she must have access to it throughout their marriage. It is often written amidst beautiful artwork, to be framed and displayed in the home.

The reading of the ketubah acts as a break between the first part of the ceremony — Kiddushin ("betrothal"), and the latter part — Nissuin ("marriage").

8. Seven Blessings Over Wine

The Seven Blessings (Sheva Brachot) are now recited over the second cup of wine. The theme of these blessings links the groom and bride to our faith in God as Creator of the world, Bestower of joy and love, and the ultimate Redeemer of our people.

These blessings are recited by the rabbi or other people that the families wish to honor.

At the conclusion of the seven blessings, the groom and bride again drink some of the wine.

9. Jewish Wedding Breaking Glass

A glass is now placed on the floor, and the groom shatters it with his foot. This serves as an expression of sadness at the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and identifies the couple with the spiritual and national destiny of the Jewish people. A Jew, even at

the moment of greatest rejoicing, is mindful of the Psalmist's injunction to "set Jerusalem above my highest joy."

In jest, some explain that this is the last time the groom gets to "put his foot down."

(In Israel, the Ashkenazi custom is that the glass is broken earlier, prior to the reading of the ketubah. Sephardim always break the glass at the end of the ceremony, even in Israel.)

This marks the conclusion of the ceremony. With shouts of "Mazel Tov," the groom and bride are then given an enthusiastic reception from the guests as they leave the chuppah together.

10. The Yichud Ceremony

After the public ceremony, the couple retreats to a private room for the "*Yichud*" ceremony, emphasizing their relationship as the highest priority. These moments of seclusion signify their new status of living together as husband and wife.

Since the couple has been fasting since the morning, at this point they will also have something to eat.

[Sephardim do not have the custom of the yichud room; the groom and bride immediately proceed to the wedding hall after the chuppah ceremony.]

11. Jewish Wedding Dance & Meal

It is a mitzvah for guests to bring *simcha* (joy) to the groom and the bride on their wedding day. There is much music and dancing as the guests celebrate with the new couple; some guests entertain with feats of juggling and acrobatics.

After the meal, *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace After Meals) is recited, and the Sheva Brachot are repeated.

During the week following the wedding, it is customary for friends and relatives to host festive meals in honor of the groom and bride.

This is called the week of Sheva Brachot, in reference to the blessings said at the conclusion of each of these festive meals.

If both the bride and groom are marrying for the second time, Sheva Brachot are recited only on the night of the wedding. The last blessing, Asher Bara, can be recited for three days.



We Must Keep the Fire Burning During *Bein Hazmanim* Too

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה - *"Fire shall be kept continually on the mizbayach; it shall not go out."* (Vayikra 6:6)

In the beginning of this week's *parsha*, the Torah commands us to ensure that a permanent fire burns on the *mizbayach*, and adjures us to prevent it from being extinguished. The Medrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 4:17) adds that this obligation applied even when the Jewish people were traveling in the wilderness. What was the purpose of requiring a fire to burn on the *mizbayach* while the nation was in transit?

Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter posits that the flame on the *mizbayach* represents the fire of spirituality that burns within every Jew. In ruling that the fire must continue burning on the *mizbayach* even while traveling, the Medrash is also symbolically teaching us that even when we are in a state of flux, we must take care to ensure that our internal fire for Divine service remains lit and does not become extinguished.

Rabbi Senter adds that *Parshas Tzav* is traditionally read just before Pesach, at a time when people often go away to family or hotels for Yom Tov, and when yeshiva *bochurim* are on *bein*

ha'zmanim. Even those who are not physically travelling still have different schedules and responsibilities than they are accustomed to. At such times, when we are out of the comfort of our familiar routines, we should remain cognizant of our obligation to keep the spiritual fire within us burning bright. (R' Ozer Alport)

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

Cheerful



● Simcha From Mitzvos

Although the days of Purim have passed, the *simchah* that it brought is still palpable in the air. This special Yom Tov brings a lot of excitement along with it. In essence, *simchah* isn't something limited to the days of Purim, but rather is related to *avodas Hashem* in general. In this week's sheet, we'll discuss the great benefit of *simchah*, and we'll see that it is not limited to Yom Tov days and Purim.

The renowned Maggid of Yerushalayim, **Reb Sholom Schwadron**, would use humor and charisma in his *drashos* to help bring out mussar points and to influence his listeners.

Once, during his weekly Friday night *drashah*, in the Zichron Moshe *shtiblach*, a person got up and announced, "This is *leitzanus*, light-headedness. It is improper to speak this way."

Reb Sholom took the rebuke to heart. He feared that perhaps the man was right, and he feared continuing to give his speech in his normal manner. So, he went to the **Chazon Ish** for advice and guidance as to how he should proceed.

The Chazon Ish asked for a demonstrational speech so that he could better decide whether Reb Sholom should continue speaking in his humorous fashion or not. Since Reb Sholom wanted the Chazon Ish to experience his *drashos*, he began to speak as he normally would, as if he were speaking before a large audience. -

The performance found favor in the Chazon Ish's eyes, who laughed and confirmed he should continue speaking in this way.

The Chazon Ish explained: "In Lithuania, there was a lot of *yiras Shamayim*, but the joy was by the *maskilim*, and that is why so many youths fell away. By you spreading *yiras Shamayim* in this fashion, you are preventing this downfall."

Reb Sholom took the Chazon Ish's words to heart, and from then on continued spreading his moving words, ultimately influencing Klal Yisroel in an impactive way.

This story indicates the importance of joy and how the lack of it can result in heresy or *avodah zarah*, *r"l*. When we are happy, then our children won't look for happiness in other places.

● "Happiness Averts Tzaros"

A child was choking on a coin, and his face was turning blue. His life was in great danger. The **Chazon Ish** exclaimed, "The only solution is to bring the child to the **Ponovitzer Rav**. - The Ponovitzer Rav is an expert in getting coins out of people, even from the tightest places…he is the man for the job!"

Everyone laughed, including the child, and by Hashem's will, the laughter caused the coin to dislodge from his throat and come out.

About the incident, the Chazon Ish said, "Happiness saves people from all *tzaros*."

Along the same lines, the **Baal HaTanya** was once imprisoned, and after fifty-three days, with Hashem's kindness, he was released from jail on the 19th of Kislev. Sometime afterward, people tried to convince the government to reimprison the Baal HaTanya. The Baal HaTanya heard about this, and this caused him immense distress.

Reb Shmuel Minkas wanted to lighten the Baal HaTanya's mood, so he suspended himself from a rope outside the *beis midrash*. It was an unusual sight, especially since this was below his dignity. People from all around came to watch the scene. "Why is Reb Shmuel hanging outside the *beis midrash*?" they wondered.

When the Baal HaTanya walked outside, he looked up and asked, "Reb Shmuel! What are you doing there?"

He replied, "Craftsmen hang samples of their products outside their shop so that people should know what is being manufactured inside. A cobbler hangs a shoe outside his store, a tailor hangs a suit outside his store, and so on. In this *beis midrash*, the Rebbe produces chassidim. I am hanging here as an example so that people who pass by will know what is manufactured here."

The plan succeeded in getting the Baal HaTanya to laugh. Once R' Shmuel saw his success, he knew his Rebbe would be back to himself in no time. The Baal HaTanya's joy helped him get out of his sadness, and within a short time, he was saved from the hands of those who attempted to harm him.

"Hashem is not distant; He is intimately involved in our lives. Every challenge we face is an opportunity to draw closer to Him." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

● The Purim Party!



This past Simchas Torah, there were many mixed emotions. On the one hand, it was Simchas Torah, a time of great joy, but on the other hand, people were finding out what was happening in Eretz Yisroel. At the *Neilas Hachag*, the uncertainty over the future was palpable in the air. My Rav, **R' Moshe Schreiber** *shlita*, gave a legendary speech addressing the dilemma, and he gave us great guidance as to how we should proceed. He mentioned an incredible story that shed light on the perspective. And so it goes:

Amsterdam is situated aside a great ocean. Alongside the ocean is a strong dam preventing the water from overflowing into the city. In the days of **R' Eliezer Rokeach**, known as the *Ma'aseh Rokaoch*, there was a terrible decree. On Taanis Esther, an enormous number of sharp-headed fish attacked the dam, endangering the entire city from overflowing waters.

The king sent an urgent message to the Rokeach saying that he should declare a fast to nullify this *gezeirah*, decree. It was a matter of life-or-death!

The Rokeach replied that he shall do whatever is in his ability to get rid of the fish on condition that the king grants the Yidden however much wine they needed to drink for Purim.

Hearing this, the king was very insulted. He sent a return letter expressing his frustration. "He's rebelling against the kingdom. I'm requesting that he fast and daven to nullify the decree, and he's responding that he's going to party, disregarding the facing destruction!"

"This is my condition," responded the Rokeach firmly. "I wasn't the one who initiated this agreement."

The next day, the Yidden of Amsterdam received a plentiful amount of wine, and the joy in Amsterdam was greater than they'd ever experienced. They were certainly joyful because it was Purim, but it was particularly exuberant from their overabundance of wine.

At nightfall, a message came from the king saying that the danger has passed and the city was miraculously saved. What the Rokeach had been requested to do with crying he accomplished through his joy in doing mitzvos, which in and of itself saved the entire Amsterdam.

We see that unlike what the king had expected, the salvation came about through being happy. The great reward that lies in our doing Hashem's mitzvos saved the entire city from this decree in a supernatural way.

● The Solution



Simchah, a normally joyous figure in the shul, once came into shul looking downtrodden. Something was on his mind, and his friends approached him to alleviate his pain and console him.

Simchah explained the reason for his disappointment. "My grandfather told us that we should drink milk and eat healthy. Why? Because eating these things would allow us to move walls. But today, after years of eating all these healthy foods, when I had to move the wall in my house, I was unable to do it."

The next day, Simchah's mood was visibly different. He was upbeat and energized. Clearly, they thought, he'd figured out how to move the wall.

"How'd you do it?" they asked him.

"I drank vodka," he replied.

"Vodka?" they questioned.

He responded that the vodka made the wall disappear. "Once I drank the vodka, I didn't see the wall anymore!"

There may be things on our lives which seem like brick walls standing in front of us, but by simcha and joy they won't bother us. Through this we'll be upbeat, whatever situation we face.

B"H, we are not this *shikar*, but we definitely should be *b'simchah* during this month and remember that Hashem is at our side in all situations and that He cares for us in whatever we are facing.



R' Shimshon Pinkus *zt"l* would say:

צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה - **Rashi** says that *Tzav* denotes *Zerizus*, to promptly and meticulously fulfill a *mitzvah* for the present and also for future generations.

Zerizus is the key to our *hatzlacha* in all matters, spiritual and physical. Today's world moves much faster than ever before. I once heard from someone that we should view this as a message from the *Ribono shel Olam*: Act quickly or you may lose out!"

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה - *"Fire shall be kept continually on the mizbayach; it shall not go out."* (Vayikra 6:6)

This *posuk* is referring to the fire that burned constantly upon the *mizbeach* (altar) in the *Mishkan*. Explains the **Shlah Hakadosh, R' Yeshaya Halevi Hurwitz *zt"l***, these words are a very important message for every Jew.

A shulchan, a table, is compared to a *mizbeach*. In every Jewish home, it is around the *shulchan* that much time is spent during *Shabbosos*, *Yomim Tovim* and other opportunities to eat together. At every single gathering around the family "altar" a fire must burn.

What type of fire are we referring to? The fire of *Torah* should always burn at every meal! When people get together and talk about politics, or even worse, talk *Lashon Hara* about other people, and not a single *Torah* thought is said, it is deemed "a gathering of fools" and a wasted opportunity to uplift physicality to meaningful and spiritual heights.

In this world, people can get so involved in day-to-day physical activities like working, eating, running errands, shopping, exercising and sleeping. People can get so bogged-down in the less important areas of life and completely forget about the main thing: *Torah! Torah! Torah!*

This includes, *Torah* thoughts, *Torah* ideals, and a *Torah* outlook which must envelope every aspect of life. In fact, it is every aspect of life that should be illuminated with the light of *Torah*.

Especially at this time of year, when we begin our busy preparations for *Pesach*, let us not forget the purpose and goal of all our preparations. *Pesach* is not about cleaning or clothing, and it's not about food. It is about passing over the true *Torah hashkafa* to the next generation. The only way we can give *Torah* to our children, is if it is constantly burning within us.

It is imperative for every Jew to see to it that his personal *"Aish Tamid"* - as well as the burning passion for *Torah* and *Yiddishkeit* of his family - should continue to blaze ahead and fortify his *"Mizbeach"* - his altar upon which he and his family devote so much of their lives and their time to - *"Lo Sichbeh"* - it shall never be extinguished!



The Siddur Speaks

Years ago, when Rav Mordechai Friedman, the Rosh Kollel of the Tehilim Kollel, was just a young boy, he was learning the Sefer of the **Sh"lah Ha'kadosh**, and he saw a story that changed his life.

The Sh"lah tells of a town where a very simple man recited Tehilim every day. The people didn't recognize this as greatness, and they didn't think that saying Tehilim was any type of remarkable endeavor.

When this simple man passed away, he came to the Rav of the town in a dream, and he had a very urgent warning. He said, "Rebbi, you must evacuate the town! Tomorrow night, there will be a massacre here. Robbers will come and burglarize all the homes and kill everyone they find.

- Since I have been saying Tehilim every day, I have provided the town with protection, but now that I am gone, the townspeople are in great danger!"

The Rav took this dream very seriously. He gathered his community the next morning, and told them to pack up their belongings and run

to a safe place. Many people listened, but there were some who didn't, and they thought that such a simple man couldn't have possibly protected their town like that, and that the message couldn't be true.

Sadly, those who stayed behind were killed that night.

Rav Mordechai was astounded by this story and the clear power of Tehilim that it represented. He immediately took it upon himself to say Tehilim every single day, and he continued for over 25 years without missing!



Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, zt"l, once saw a man race by him. He said, "Why are you running so fast?"

As he whizzed by, the man called out, "I'm running after my Parnasah!"

Rav Levi Yitzchak then said, "How do you know your Parnasah is ahead of you? Maybe it's behind you, and you're running away from it!"

לְפוּם צַעֲרָא אַגְרָא - *"According to the effort is the reward." (Pirkei Avos 5:23)*

"Effortless success is not a status of greatness; trying to succeed is where greatness is born." ~ Rabbi Moshe Kormornick.

What Is a Shtetl? - The Jewish Town by Chaya M Way



The Mir shtetl

The image of the shtetl is often synonymous with Jewish Eastern European life. Shtetl is Yiddish for "town," and refers to the small pre-WWII towns in Eastern Europe with a significant Yiddish-speaking Jewish population. Jews occupied a large percentage of the shtetl and were often the majority. They worked as shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, carpenters and water carriers, and Jewish life flourished. Families would live in the same shtetl for generations, forming close-knit communities.

How the Shtetl Was Born



A Polish shtetl in the winter

The beginnings of shtetl life go back hundreds of years, to before the 17th century, which saw the greatest growth of shtetls. Formed in the territories of the old Polish Commonwealth, shtetls were originally estates of the landed

nobility. Jews were encouraged to settle there to boost economic growth. Many of the settlers had come from western and central Poland, which were rife with antisemitism. Even after the disintegration of the estates, the Jews remained.

What You'd See in a Shtetl

In addition to humble hovels, gardens and shops, the Jewish shtetl was distinguished by a number of special institutions:

Shul: The synagogue was a center of Jewish life. Men would gather in the synagogue early in the morning and late at night for prayers, a Torah class and some neighborhood chitchat.



A cheder for boys in Dlugosiodlo. (photo: Alter Kacyzne)

The Cheder: In a society where even the nobility was often illiterate, Jews stood out as a people committed to educating their young. Cheder, which means "room" in Hebrew, was a one-room-school house where young boys would learn to read Hebrew and study Bible, Talmud and Jewish law.

Hekdesh: Caring for guests takes a central place in Jewish life. As such, many shtetls supported a hekdesh (Hebrew for "sacred [place]"), where wayfarers and other indigents could find lodgings when in need.

Beit Din Shtibl: Jewish life in the shtetl was regulated by Torah law. Business disputes, divorces and other legal matters would be

brought to the learned men in the Beit Din Shtibl (courthouse) for resolution.

Beit Midrash: While the shul was primarily a place of prayer, a beit midrash (study hall) was a place of serious scholars, where Torah learning took place at all hours of the day and night.

[Some Jewish people lived in even smaller villages or hamlets where these amenities were often not found.]

The People You'd Meet



A shamash knocks on the window, reminding the residents that Shabbat is about to begin. (photo: Alter Kacyzne)

In addition to shoemakers, tanners, smiths, gardeners and peddlers, the Jewish community had its own set of functionaries:

Rabbi: Of course, there was the rabbi of the community, who would answer questions of Jewish law, support his community's interests and provide for its spiritual well-being.

Melamed: Often destitute by the modest standards of shtetl economy, the melamed taught children Torah in the cheder.

Shamash: Tasked with running the synagogue, the shamash (warden) would make sure that the house of G d was clean, neat and cared-for. Often, he would make his rounds in the wee hours of the morning, waking slumbering villagers for morning services with a rap on the shutters.

The Zogerke: Since many women in the shtetl were illiterate, the zogerke would lead them in prayer and study. Often she would read to them aloud from Tze'ena Ure'ena, a Yiddish rendition of the weekly Torah portion with a commentary based on Midrashic and other sources.

Shadchan: The family is the bedrock of Jewish life, and as such, great lengths are taken to help children find a suitable partner and marry. The shadchan would help find matches for the young men and women of a community.



A wedding in Ushpol (Uzpaliai), Lithuania. (photo: Reuven Milon/JewishGen)

Shochet: Central to the laws of kosher is the requirement that all meat come from healthy animals that have been slaughtered in a specific manner. Families would bring their animals to the ritual slaughterer to prepare them to be eaten. The shochet was a devout and pious man.

Maggid: While the rabbi was concerned primarily with the nuts-and-bolts of Jewish law, the maggid was responsible for the moral,

emotional and inspirational side of life. A powerful orator, he would seek to inspire the villagers to live honestly, kindly and piously.



Baking matzah in the shtetl (photo: Yad Vashem)

Community Organizations: Jewish communal life was highly organized. Often, a chevra (society) would be formed to ensure that things were run in the best possible manner. Some of the common chevras that were formed in the shtetl are still existent in Jewish communities today:

Hachnasat Kallah—helped poor brides and grooms get married.

Chevra Kadisha—prepared the dead for burial.

Hachnasat Orchim—welcomed guests.

Bikur Cholim—visited and cared for the sick.

There were also a number of chevras formed for the purpose of prayer or study. Chevra Tehilim would gather to say Psalms in the early morning; Chevra Mishnayot would band together to study the Mishnah, etc.

Shtetl Life: Market day would bring hundreds of wagons of peasants into town, selling goods. With the money they earned, they sometimes frequented the Jewish owned taverns and shops.



Market day at a shtetl in Poland

While the bustle of market day was an important part of shtetl life, it was not as important as the day of rest, Shabbat. Every week, Jews would spend Shabbat with their families and in the synagogue. Work would cease, and the scrimping and saving of the week would give way to meals of fish and meat.

Legacy of the Shtetl: Despite a sometimes idealized vision of shtetl life, it was far from perfect. Roads were unpaved, and poverty was widespread. Pogroms, attacks by the peasant population or marauding Cossacks, devastated many shtetls across Central and Eastern Europe.

Even after shtetl life was destroyed in the Holocaust, there were some communities that rebuilt a shtetl-like existence elsewhere. Small hamlets like Kiryas Tosh outside of Montreal, and Kiryas Joel and New Square in upstate New York, were created in the decades following the Holocaust in an effort to simulate the quiet, wholesome and pious atmosphere of pre-WWII shtetl life.



The soup kitchen in Novogrudek



A cheder for girls in Laskarzew, Lublin. (photo: Alter Kacyzne)

"Rely on Hashem, not just as a last resort, but as a first resort. Turn to Him for guidance and support." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



There was tremendous **שמחה** at the news that **Rav Tzvi Kushelevsky שליט"א**, had been blessed with his first child at the advanced age of 88!



Eight years ago, his first *Rebbetzen* unfortunately passed away childless after many decades of marriage, and a few years later, Rav Tzvi remarried.

Despite being well into his eighties, with his new *Rebbetzen* in her fifties, the **ראש ישיבה**, whilst standing under his **חופה** asked all participants to give them a **ברכה** that they would have a child.

There were many incredible twists and turns along the way, including the new *Rebbetzen* unfortunately suffering many complications. - During Covid, no doctors wanted to treat the *Rebbetzen*, and when they finally found a doctor who held some hope for them, he was unexpectedly **נפטר**.

Most people in the world would have long given up their dreams by then of ever fathering a child, especially after so many dashed hopes and disappointments. But not Rav Tzvi. With superhuman **בטחון**, he never gave up hope that **ה'** would eventually *bentch* him with a child.

In the **ספרים** that he has published since his second **חתונה**, he would even sign off his introduction with the **תפילה** that **הקב"ה** would bless them with **זרעא חיא וקיימא**.

This is an incredible lesson for us all. **הקב"ה מתאוה לתפילתן של צדיקים**. Sometimes, it can take over sixty years, but **ה'** never wants us to stop *davening* or to stop believing that He can help us, no matter the circumstances!



זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר "Which burns on the altar from night until morning" (6:2)

What does the burnt offering atone for?

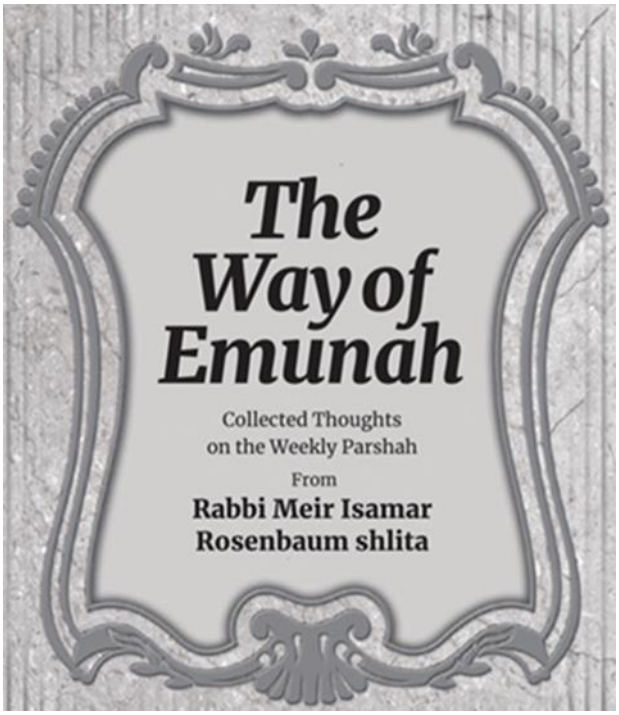
On the neglect of a positive commandment. Our sages say that there are 248 positive commandments, and the Mitzvah of a burnt offering is among them. If so, then the burnt offering atones for the other 247 Mitzvot.

Rebbi Rachamim Chai Chayuta HaCohen Zt'l from Jerba writes that we have a hint to this in this verse. The last letters from each of words in this verse "**המזבח כל הלילה עד הבקר**" – "is equal to the numerical value of 247. It is telling us a burnt offering atones for 247 Mitzvot (Ma'ayan Hashavua)



Man is in a constant state of worry. If it his material wealth that he seeks, even if he has it all, he knows that he could lose it all overnight. Others worry about health, and even the tzadik who is content with whatever he has in the realm of the physical world, worries about his shortcomings in Torah and mitzvos. Since he knows that only Hashem can provide the solution to his problems, he turns to Him in tefilah, and it is for this very reason that Hashem created us this way. The Targum calls man a "speaking spirit" which the Zohar understands to refer to tefilah, and so Hashem created us with our lackings so that we should speak to Him in tefilah. (*Adapted from Sha'arim b'Tefilah*)

"Trusting in Hashem means living in the present moment, with faith that everything will work out for the best in the end." ~ Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.



צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל־מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־ הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ – *'Command Aharon and his sons saying: This is the law of the Olah, this is the Olah on the fire…and the fire of the Mizbeach shall burn on it.'* (6:2)

● Burning Within the Kohen

It is related that the **Chiddushei Harim zy"a** was once testing his grandchildren on the Parshas Hashavua. When his grandson, the **Sefas Emes zy"a**, who was then a young boy, read the verse: **וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ**, he stressed the word "**בּוֹ**" ("in him").

The Chiddushei Harim asked, "In whom does the fire of the Mizbeach have to burn?" And the Sefas Emes answered, "**In** Aharon Hakohen. The holy fire must burn within the kohen himself."

The meaning of this is that a Yid must have a fire of passion for avodas Hashem burning within him. However, it must remain "bo", inside of him, and it should not burst out of him in a way that could harm others.

● Avoiding Causing Pain to the Workers

It is said that the **Rogatchover Gaon zt"l** never personally took part in matzoh baking. Instead, he relied on upright Yidden that he knew to bake his mitzvos with utmost hiddur.

He was once asked why he didn't participate in the baking of the matzohs. Wasn't the minhag of upstanding Jews for centuries to personally take part in this mitzvah and to oversee the baking to make sure it was done properly?

He answered, "If I go to the baking, I might notice some detail that may bring up a shailoh in halacha or that might contradict a detail in a Rambam. I would obviously ask for this part of the process to be changed, which might cause the workers to feel bad. But if I rely on others whom I trust to oversee the baking, I have the right according to halacha to depend on them. In fact, I am not really relying on them – I am relying on the Torah's rule that I am allowed to trust them. Thus, I can fulfill the mitzvah l'mehardin without causing anyone any pain."

● A Mitzvah Without Shame



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l, Rov of Yerushalaim, would put a lot of effort into baking his matzohs with the utmost hiddur. One year, a member of his chaburah noticed that one of the workers was not fully paying attention while rolling out the dough. He said to Rav Yosef Chaim, "Should I scream at him?"

Rav Yosef Chaim replied, "Don't do that. You certainly should not yell at a poor worker and cause him pain just because I want matzohs mehudar.

I am ready to do all I can and to pay a lot of money for good matzohs, and I daven to Hashem to merit having the most mehudar matzohs, and I trust in Him to accept my prayers. But I don't want matzohs mehudar if they come at the expense of another Jew's pain!"

● A Bit of Anger – A Bit of Chometz

One year, during the baking of the matzohs, the **Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz zy"a** saw the foreman yelling at one of the workers for doing something wrong. As he yelled, he noticed that the Rebbe was looking at him disapprovingly.

He started to defend himself by saying that he yelled at the worker for not being careful enough to make sure that the matzohs don't become chometz. He added, "The prohibition of chometz is so severe that even a tiny amount is forbidden!"

The Rebbe replied, "Believe me, a tiny amount of anger is worse than a tiny amount of chometz!"

● A Mitzvah That Comes Through an Aveirah

Rav Yitzchok Shlomo Ungar zt"l, Rov of Chug Chasam Sofer Bnei Brak related (in his Sefer Richumim B'Meshech), "I never once saw my mentor, the **Vayaged Yaakov of Pupa zy"a**, get angry besides for one time.

There was a member of his kehillah who had a job of grinding flour for matzohs. There were some bochurim who wanted to make a few dollars who started to work for him grinding flour.

He once was not happy with them because they weren't working as fast as he would have liked, so he yelled at them, 'You are lazy! Work faster!'

"When the Pupa Rov heard this, he yelled at him and said, 'You are not permitted to spill blood to do a mitzvah. How could you scream like that at boys who spend their days learning Torah? How could such flour be used for matzohs?"

● Respect for Others



When **Mahariyatz of Lubavitch zy"a** came to America, he invited numerous people to eat with him, including some who weren't familiar with chasidishe customs.

At one seudah on Pesach, a commotion broke out amongst the guests and the Rebbe asked what was wrong. He was told that one man, who did not know that chasidim were strict not to eat gebrokts on Pesach, had dipped his matzoh into his borscht.

He said, "It is better for the matzoh to become red (by being dipped in the red borscht) than for a Jew's to become red from embarrassment!"

● Not Causing a Loss for Others

Rav Yisroel Salanter zt"l once came to Warsaw to visit the **Chiddushei Harim zy"a**. The Chidushei Harim greeted him with much honor, and news spread in the city that a great man had come to see the Rebbe and had been honored greatly.

When Rav Yisroel went to daven Minchah, the bais medrash was filled with chasidim who clamoured to greet him and to see his face. However, they were surprised to see that he davened a very short Shemonah Esrei, finishing before most of the others.

Rav Yisroel saw that they were surprised, so he explained, "I saw that many workers stopped working and many storeowners closed their stores to come see me. It would be wrong to daven for a long time, as this would cause them a loss of money."

● It Is Better to be Mevatel Torah Than to Embarrass Someone

The Maharsha writes (Sanhedrin 11A): "Bitul Torah is a serious sin but embarrassing a fellow Jew is much worse. It is better to be mevatel Torah than to embarrass another Jew."

● A Heavenly Revelation for the Maharsha's Honor

On this topic, it is appropriate to relate a story that happened with the Maharsha himself:

It is known that the Maharsha had long hair, which some people would laugh at. The reason for this was because he would tie his hair to a hook on the wall so that he would be snapped back awake if he fell asleep while learning.

Every night, the gabbai of the shul would lock the door and learn in the bais medrash by himself.

One night, a tall man walked in and asked the gabbai where the Maharsha lived. The gabbai couldn't understand how the man had come in through the locked door, but he gave him directions to the Mahrasha's house, and the man left.

The next day, a second man walked in and asked the same question. Again, the gabbai couldn't figure out how he had gotten in, but he also gave him directions.

On the third night, the gabbai checked to make sure he had locked the door – but he was shocked when a third man walked in and asked when the Maharsha lived.

The gabbai asked, "How did you get in?"

The man replied, "The first man was Shaul Hamelech. The second was Dovid Hamelech. I am Eliyahu Hanavi. We came to publicize how great the Maharsha is. In Shomayim, they value his Torah very much. He learns with extreme exertion, and he doesn't care if people make fun of him!"

Eliyahu Hanavi then said, "However, you should know that as soon as you tell people about this, you will have to leave this world."

The gabbai decided to reveal what had occurred right away, and he would accept whatever happened to him. He gathered all of the city's residents and revealed how much the Maharsha's mesrias nefesh for Torah was valued in Shomayim. He said that the proof of this would be that he would soon pass away. - And so it was.



וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־ מָקוֹם טָהוֹר. וְהָאֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד־בּוֹ לֹא תִכְבֶּה – '***And he shall take off his clothing and he shall put on other clothing and he shall take out the ashes out of the camp…and the fire on the Mizbeach shall burn on it, it shall not be extinguished***.' (6:4-5)

● **Removing and Putting on "Clothes"**

Rav Dovid Tzvi Chai zt"l, Rov of Chernigov, was a chasid of **Rav Shmuel of Lubavitch zy"a** (son of the **Tzemach Tzedek zy"a**), and he would often travel to meet with his Rebbe.

One time, the Rebbe's time of "yechidus" (private meetings) was taking very long. Rav Dovid Tzvi Chai, who had an important question to ask the Rebbe but had to return home that night, went into the room next door to the Rebbe's room to wait for him to come out.

As he sat there, the Rebbe's shamash came out. He had brought the Rebbe a fresh garment because the one he was wearing had become soaked with sweat.

He asked the Rov, "Perhaps you know why the Rebbe is sweating so much? He was in yechidus for just one hour, but his garment is soaked through with perspiration!" - The Rov stayed quiet and the shamash said again, "Why is he sweating so much?"

Suddenly, the door to the Rebbe's room opened and the Rebbe appeared. He looked at his shamash and said, "I am dismissing you

from your job. I will still pay you the full amount, but you should go home now. Every week, I will send you your wages."

He continued to say, "Why don't you understand why I am sweating? Over the past hour, I had private meetings with 25 people. In order to give each person an appropriate answer to their question, I have to literally feel their pain. To do this, I have to remove my own clothing and put on theirs, so to speak. But when I have to give them an answer, I have to take their clothes back off because a person can't give himself proper advice as he has too much personal bias. Therefore, I have to remove their clothes and put mine back on. This means that each time I am asked a question, I have to change my clothes twice. I had to that 25 times in an hour. - Is it any wonder that I perspired so much?"

● Clearing Room in One's Heart for Avodas Hashem

Sefer Ohel Yaakov explains this pasuk by saying that when the Torah says to remove one's clothes, it is teaching us that one must shake off all of the frivolities of this world and then to allow kedusha to enter his heart.

He explains with a moshol: A simple villager traveled to the city for business, and he succeeded in earning a nice amount of money. He wanted to return home dressed as a wealthy man, so he went to a tailor shop that sold expensive garments and picked out a fancy suit. However, when he put it on, it would not cover his entire body.

He turned to the proprietor and asked him why he had given him a suit that was too small. The man laughed and said, "The suit is exactly your size. The problem is that you are still wearing your old clothes. Before you put on the new fancy suit, you must take off your old, worn-out clothes."

So too, Hashem tells us to get rid of our old, mundane thoughts, and to sanctify ourselves with pure, holy thoughts. But when a person

finds it hard to do this, he complains to Hashem and says that He is asking him to do something impossible. The truth is, however, that Hashem is not commanding us to do anything we can't do. But if we want to accept to live a sanctified life, we first must remove our "old clothing", meaning that we must get rid of our old, unsanctified way of life. - We must first clear out our minds and hearts of frivolous thoughts, and we can then fill them with holy, sanctified thoughts.

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה֙ יַקְרִיבֶ֔נּוּ וְהִקְרִ֛יב עַל־זֶ֥בַח הַתּוֹדָ֖ה – '***If he is bringing it as a Todah, he shall offer, along with the thanksgiving offering***' (7:12)

● **Until Now…And It Will Not Cease**

Sefer Zichron Tzadik related that the **Bais Avrohom of Slonim zy"a** once went to visit a sick man, whom he tried to encourage with his words.

When he saw that the man was still feeling sad, he said, "Do you believe that Hashem has helped you until now ('ad heina')? So why can't you believe that He will continue to help you (v'al titsheniu')?" - These words succeeded in encouraging the man.

● **The Poritz's Salvation**

The following incredible story is related by Sefer Sichas Chaim.

The Rov of Ostilla had a daughter of marriageable age, but he didn't have any money to marry her off. He decided to travel abroad to collect the money. Before setting off, he went to speak to **Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a**.

As soon as Rav Meir shook his hand, he asked, "Who are you?" The man humbly answered, "I am the son of the Rov of Ostilla." He meant to say that he was the son of the previous Rov of Ostilla.

Rav Meir replied in a stern voice, "Ben Yitzhar, ben Kehas, ben Levi… But who are you?"

The man then answered, "I am also the Rov of Ostilla."

Rav Meir asked, "What can I do for you?"

The Rov answered, "I need money to marry off my daughter."

Rav Meir then raised his voice and yelled, "Does Meir have money? Meir has no money! The Poritz who lives nearby has money. Go to him!"

The Rov asked Rav Meir to at least be allowed to stay until after Minchah but Rav Meir screamed, "No! You can't even daven Minchah with me."

He ended up davening Minchah on the wagon as he traveled to the closest village to Premishlan. When he got to the village, he heard the sound of crying. He sent his attendant to see what the matter was.

The attendant was told that the Poritz's wife was undergoing a difficult childbirth and the doctors had given up hope for her.

The attendant went to the Poritz and said, "A great rabbi who is a miracle worker has just arrived in town. If you ask him to pray for you, I am certain that you will receive a salvation."

The Poritz ran to the wagon and asked the Rov of Ostilla to pray for him.

The Rov said, "You will have to pay me 300 gold coins for this. If you give me that amount, I guarantee you that she will give birth soon and both mother and baby will be healthy."

The Poritz agreed and the Rov began to daven Maariv. He prayed excessively to Hashem and, as soon as he finished, he heard the news that a baby boy had been born and everything was fine.

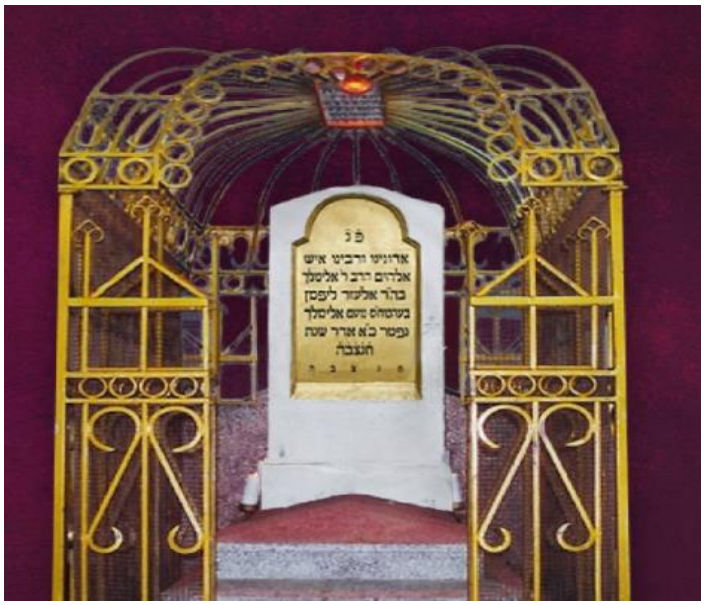
The Poritz kept his word and gave the Rov 300 gold coins.

The story spread and it became known that the Rov of Ostilla could perform wonders. People began to flock to him with kvitlach and

money for pidyonos, and he easily collected enough to marry off his daughter.

He now understood Rav Meir's insistence that he leave immediately. He quickly went back to Premishlan to thank Rav Meir. This time, Rav Meir greeted him warmly and was overjoyed to see him.





Facts About Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk Zt'l in honor of the yahrtzeit 21 Adar Born: Galicia, Southeast Poland, 1717 Died: Lizhensk, Poland, 1786

● As his birthdate is uncertain, Reb Elimelech was either 69 or 70 years old when he passed away.

● He was born in Tykocin (Tiktin) Poland, a small town which today still has only 2,000 inhabitants. Sadly, the Nazis murdered all of the Jews of Tiktin during WWII.

● He had many talmidim including the Chozeh of Lublin, Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, the Kozhnitzer Maggid, the Apter Rov and Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Halevi Epstein, author of Maor Vashemesh.

● His last name was Weissblum.

● Many people consider the Noam Elimelech a "segulah sefer" and keep it in their home (and travel with it) for protection (among other uses).

● The Piaseczna Rebbe, Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira hy"d was Reb Elimelech's great-grandson.

● Upon Reb Elimelech's matzeiva (gravestone) there is no year of death. Instead, the Hebrew acronym for "rest in peace" (**תנצב"ה**) is written, which has the same gematria, or numerical value, as the Hebrew year of his passing, 5,447 (**תקמ"ז**).

● Thousands of people travel to Lizhensk every year; and you can submit your names to Reb Elimelech's kever.

● Reb Elimelech was one year older than his brother Reb Zusha of Hanapol zt"l. The brothers were extremely close and famously traveled in exile together for eight years.

● Besides for the Noam Elimelech and the Tzetil Katan, Reb Elimelech wrote Hanhagos Ha'Adam, a small kuntres (booklet) with good customs that one should conduct themselves.

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Where They Left Off

Living today in Netanya is Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau. His father is the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau. Years ago, Rabbi Moshe Chaim once received a call from a young woman. She was getting married soon, and she wanted him to officiate at the wedding. To that, Rabbi Lau had one immediate question. "When is your wedding?" "The night before Passover," she replied.

The night before Pesach is arguably the busiest night for a rabbi. Last-minute questions about selling chametz and the laws Pesach arise, bedikas chametz must be performed, the house needs final preparations, and the food needs to be cooked and readied. "I would love to," replied Rabbi Lau, "but it's an extremely busy night and I don't think it will be possible." Besides this, it was a far drive to the

wedding venue, making it even more prohibitive for Rabbi Lau to make the trip. But the woman was determined. "I want you, rabbi!" "I'm very sorry," Rabbi Lau repeated, a genuinely apologetic tone to his words.

But this was one of those instances when no didn't mean no; it meant more phone calls. Calling back Rabbi Lau again and again, the woman kept on nudging him over and over. But each time, Rabbi Lau remained calm and poised, reiterating the same point he had made before. "I wish I could, but it's a very busy night, and it's just not feasible. Again, I'm truly sorry I cannot be a part of your simcha." But the woman kept at it. "I know you officiate at weddings, and I heard you do a wonderful job, and I want you at my wedding."

Finally, Rabbi Lau came up with a solution. "If you can call the *chuppa* for 5:00 p.m., I can come, and I'll leave right afterwards so I can be available to my community that evening." It was a workable proposal, and the woman agreed.

The day of the wedding, Rabbi Lau arrived at five o'clock. And along with many guests, the kallah's grandfather, an elderly man, was there from Argentina. Seeing the rabbi who had come to officiate, the grandfather warmly approached him, and in perfect Yiddish asked, "Shalom Aleichem! Where are you from?" "I'm from Netanya," replied Rabbi Lau. "And where are you from?" Rabbi Lau asked in turn. "From Piotrków… Have you ever heard of Piotrków?" Rabbi Lau knew of Piotrków, the city in central Poland, very well. In fact, he knew of it so well that the very name sent chills down his back. His father, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau, was born in Piotrków and raised in Piotrków until age five when the Germans sent him to Buchenwald. Of course he had heard of Piotrków.

The man continued, oblivious to what the city meant to the rabbi standing before him. "Do you know who the last couple was to be married in Piotrków before all its Jews were murdered?" To that, Rabbi Lau had no idea. "Me and my wife," replied the man. "It was

1942. And you know who married us off? The rabbi of Piotrków, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau. He married us off the night before the Germans sent him to the concentration camps and he was gassed. My wife and I ran to the Partisans. The town, though, was entirely murdered. That wedding was the last for all the Jews in Piotrków." By this point, Rabbi Lau was frozen still. The man then continued.

"Have you ever heard of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau, the rav of Piotrków?" With tears in his eyes, Rabbi Lau spoke up. "He was my zeide, my father's father, and I am named after him. My name is Moshe Chaim Lau. And now, where my grandfather left off, I take over. My zeide married you off, and I will marry your granddaughter off.

When your granddaughter phoned me and pleaded, 'Rabbi Lau, you have to come to the wedding!' she didn't know why she was driving me crazy. She called because she had heard good things about me. But I couldn't understand why she so desperately needed me of all people. There are many other rabbis. But now I know. When the Germans murdered my grandfather, along with so many others in my family, they thought it was finished. But now, seventy-four later, his grandson, his namesake, is here to marry off your granddaughter."

The elderly man and the young Rabbi Lau met at the chuppa of a granddaughter more than seven decades after the destruction of European Jewry. Imagine.

When I heard this story, it captured the lifeline, the essence of Jewish history: "Where our grandparents left off, we take over and then we pass it on."

"Hashem's love for us is infinite and unconditional, and we must strive to reflect that love in our relationships with others. ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

Rabbi Joey Haber - A Walk to the Rescue

The first year I began teaching, I was asked to substitute a class. The class was bright, but difficult to discipline. So one morning, as soon as the boys settled in, I said the following.

"Here's what we're going to do. We're going to learn Gemara every day this week. If we learn well, we'll head to the rooftop of the school and play a football game with an eraser."

We did just that. And in the snow. I can't tell you how much fun we had. Most of those boys went on to become *b'nei Torah*, and in fact, one of them became a real talmid chacham and married my daughter.

One day, my son-in-law reminded me of that moment. "I still remember that football game we had with the eraser… What a blast we all had! What a memory!"

Hearing this many years later reminded me of what it really means to shape someone's life, in small and quiet ways.

During the 1970s, a vote was held in the Knesset as to whether yeshiva students should be drafted into the army. The vote came down to one Knesset member. He wasn't religious and yet he voted in favor of the yeshiva students. Subsequently, a few months later, the Knesset member traveled abroad to America, and Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l called together a meal in his honor. He had helped spare the yeshiva bachurim from needing to enter the draft, and he is due recognition, said Rav Moshe.

At the party, he was asked, "What possessed you to favor the yeshiva students? You're not religious; why would you support them?" "I'll tell you why," he said. "When I was a kid, I read a poem called 'Ha'masmid.' It described a yeshiva student learning with beautiful diligence. The words of that poem were so moving, that as we were voting, I told myself that if vote against the yeshiva students, I'll be extinguishing that glorious image which so eloquently sprang from the words of 'Ha'masmid.' And I couldn't do that."

Now let's freeze that moment, and travel back in time…

Rav Chaim Brisker, the rosh yeshiva of Volozhin, had a student who was veering from a life of Torah. The rebbeim of the yeshiva eventually approached Rav Chaim and informed him that it would be best if the boy leaves the yeshiva. Rav Chaim conceded, though with one condition: "I walk him to the train station."

The boy was asked to leave, and Rav Chaim accompanied him in the wagon to the train station. Later, the rebbeim asked Rav Chaim why he had gone to such lengths to escort the boy on his way out.

"This boy is very talented, and he has a great knack for writing. I know that one day he will be writing about the life and experience of yeshiva students, and when he does so, I want him to write positively about it. That's why I accompanied him to the train station."

That boy was Hayim Nahman Bialik, and many years later, he penned the poem 'Ha'masmid.' The poem that was read by the Knesset member who helped save yeshiva students.

Rav Chaim took the time to show a student that he cared for him even as he was sending him away, and with that, the future life for scores of *yeshiva* students in Israel was being written.

Whenever a student enters your room, whether they are the star of the class or not, brilliant or unable to focus and free as a bird, make every single one of them feel understood. And when the year is done, they'll be yearning to understand every word you said.

It is not necessarily the big moments that yield the biggest memories. It is the small, yet caring, heartfelt, dedicated moments that leave the biggest imprint and impact. Most of the time, students won't remember what they learned from their teachers, but they will remember who their teacher was. And with that memory, the future is open and hopeful to anything.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

וּבְשַׂר זֶבַח תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמָיו בְּיוֹם קָרְבָּנוֹ יֵאָכֵל לֹא־יַנִּיחַ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר - "***And the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace-offerings; on the day of his offering, it shall be eaten.***" (7:15)

Usually an offering of lesser sanctity (kadashim kalim) such as the karban shelamim — peace offering — may be eaten for two days and one night; Why is the karban todah — thanksgiving peace-offering — limited to only one day and the succeeding night?

The Imrei Emes of Gur explains: A thanksgiving peace-offering is brought in recognition of a miracle that was done by Hashem on behalf of the individual. Miracles happen daily and continuously, as we say in the Amidah, "and for your miracles which are with us daily." Limiting the time when the karban todah may be eaten teaches us that each day one should be aware of and appreciate the new miracles Hashem constantly performs on his behalf.



There is a popular misconception about the Parah Aduma (red heifer) that it makes the impure, pure, but also that it makes the pure, impure. This is actually true, and it is the reason that Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of men, said, "I said to myself, "I will become wise," but it was beyond me." Indeed, the water mixed with the ashes of the Parah Aduma when sprinkled on an impure person made him pure, but one who carried or

touched those waters when he was pure would become impure. So wherein lies the misconception?

The missing step is that though one who touched or carried the water with the ashes became impure, the pure person one who sprinkled the water on the impure person did NOT become impure.

The logic is impeccable. When a person is involved in helping another, he gets Divine protection. This is alluded to by the fact that that one who is busy purifying another remains so. Only when he is touching or moving the waters for his own reasons, or even preparing them for use, does he need to purify himself. However, if he is actively involved in helping another, Hashem decrees that the waters have no negative effect on him.

We Can't Appoint an Agent to Say 'Thank-You'

I recently saw a beautiful insight in the **Avudraham**.

When the Chazan says Modim, the congregation recites a prayer known as "The Rabbis' Modim". Why is that?

The Avudraham says that for all blessings in the Shmoneh Esrei we can have an agent. For 'Heal Us', for 'Bless Us with a Good Year', and so forth we can have a messenger — the Shliach Tzibbur can say the blessing for us. However, there is one thing that no else one can say for us. We must say it for ourselves. That one thing is "Thank You". - Hoda'ah has to come from ourselves. No one can be our agent to say 'Thank You'.

"Emunah is the anchor of the soul. It keeps us grounded amidst the storms of life, reminding us that Hashem's love and guidance are constant." ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

Tell About It

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ - '*If he offers it to give thanks*.' (Vayikra 7:12)

There are four types of offerings: Olah, Chatas, Asham and Shelamim. The Korban Shelamim, the peace offering, is not brought because of a sin. It is a korban a person brings because he wants to "share" his simchah with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

When he brings this type of korban, he receives most of the meat for himself to eat, the kohen gets the certain cuts that are to go to him from a korban, and the eimurim, the fats and innards specified by the Torah, are burned on the Mizbeach. Thus, all parties "share" in this korban and benefit from it. And what about a Korban Todah?

An additional requirement of the *Korban Todah* is that forty loaves of bread are brought along with it. These loaves are to be eaten partially by the *kohanim* and partially by the bringer of the offering.

When a person brought a *Korban Shelamim,* he received a lot of meat, and had a limited time period to eat it. Since he couldn't finish it all himself that day and night and following day, and there is a *mitzvah* to finish the meat, he would invite people to partake of it with him. He would typically invite friends and relatives.

With the *Korban Torah*, the time factor is even more pressing. He has a day less to eat it, and there are also the forty loaves of bread that come along with it, which also must be eaten within the specified time-period. So the bringer of the *korban* would need to invite a lot more people.

Since a lot of people would thus be at the banquet of the *korban*, this would publicize the miracles and kindnesses of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, since a person would bring a *Korban Todah* in order to give thanks for a *chesed* and *nes* that *Hashem* did for him.

When *Hashem* does *chesed* for a person, he should publicize it, he should tell people about it. This is a very important thing.

When we speak about *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and publicize His acts of *chesed*, we bring health and happiness and everything good to the people around us. Because when people hear our story, it causes them to recognize *Hashem* and love Him and attach to Him. And that is the source of everything good in the world.

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל־מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלָּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ - ***'It is an offering that ascends upon the pyre of the altar.'*** *(6:2)*

Why is the word מוֹקְדָה ("pyre") written in the Torah with a miniature *mem*?

To teach us that the fire in one's soul should be understated; it should burn within but show nothing on the outside. (**The Rebbe of Kotzk**)

וְהָאֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד־בּוֹ לָא תִכְבֶּה וּבִעֵר עָלֶיהָ הַכֹּהֵן עֵצִים בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר - '***The fire upon the altar shall be kept burning in it . . . and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning.***' *(6:5)*

There is a fire of love for G-d that burns within every soul. It is the task of the *kohen*—the spiritual leaders of the generation—to feed and preserve this fire. (**Alshich**)

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לָא תִכְבֶּה – '***A constant fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall never go out.***' *(6:6)*

"It shall never go out—also not during the journeys." Special care must be taken during the "journeys" of life—the times when a person ventures away from the home environment that fosters his character and integrity—so that the fire in his soul should not succumb to alien influences. (**Maayanah Shel Torah**)

זֶה קָרְבַּן אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו אֲשֶׁר־יַקְרִיבוּ לַה' – '***This is the offering of Aaron and of his sons . . .***' *(6:13)*

The ordinary priest brought a meal offering on the day that he began serving in the Sanctuary, while the high priest brought one every day.

It is a mark of greatness that a person regards his every day as a new beginning in which he strives to transcend all his previous achievements. (**Maayanah Shel Torah**)

"The harder it is to pray, the more powerful the prayer becomes. When prayer feels difficult, that's the exact moment to pray with all our strength. – Miracles often happen when heartfelt prayers are spoken in times of great challenge." ~ Living Emunah.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● How did Hashem test Aharon to see if he was fitting to be the Kohen Gadol?

צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל־מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ (6,2) "***Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt offering: it is the burnt offering which burns on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall burn thereby.***"

The reason why the parsha started with the law of the burnt offering is in order to allude to the teaching of the Midrash, that from the beginning of sefer Vayikra until now Aharon's name was not mentioned in connection with the work of the Mishkan. Because of this Moshe asked Hashem: The cistern is hated, but its water is beloved? You gave honour to the tree because of what it produces - You did not allow olive wood and vines to be burnt on the altar because they produce olive oil and wine, but You give no honour to Aharon because of his sons?

But Moshe's complaint can be answered from the Midrash in parshas Beha'alosecha on the posuk "take the Levites", that Hashem does not elevate a person to greatness until He first tests him. Here too, Hashem wanted to test Aharon to see if he was fitting to be the Kohen Gadol by giving his sons prominence in parshas Vayikra. If Aharon would complain about this it would show that he is arrogant and cares about his honour, and so he would not be fitting. But if he keeps quiet and does not complain it would be clear that he has the attribute of humility, and thus fitting to be the Kohen Gadol.

And since Aharon passed the test Hashem now explained to Aharon the reason why He had not mentioned his name until now, by saying:

"This is the law of the Olah (of that which goes up)" - this is the law of one who rises to greatness. He must first be tested, and therefore I did not mention your name until now in order to test you.



◣ Torah Offering - Chacham Yehudah Elbaz Of Morocco צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה - "***Command Aharon and his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the burnt-offering…'***" (6:2)

The midrash states that when Bnei Yisrael heard the parshah dealing with the korbanos they became very frightened. They feared the time when there would be no Beis HaMikdash. - How would their sins be forgiven?

Moshe reassured them, "Involve yourselves in Torah and you will not be afraid." Torah study atones like korbanos, as Chazal tell us that one who involves himself in Torah study does not need an Olah, Minchah, or Chatas (Menachos 110). That is what is meant by the pasuk, "This is the Torah for the Olah." When one learns Torah, it is like he brought a Korban Olah.

"Hashem challenges us in order to extract and bring forth our latent, potential powers of faith. Hashem knows what tremendous strength of character we possess, but He wants us to know it for ourselves." ~ The Ramban, Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman (1194-1270).

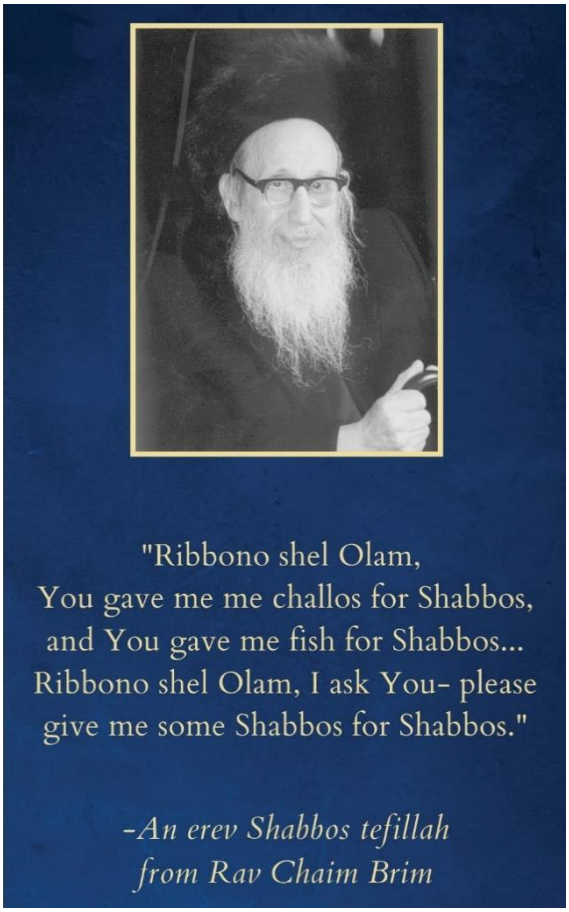
◣ Remember The People - Reb Simchah Bunim Of Pshischa

וְלָבַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בַּד וּמִכְנְסֵי־בַד יִלְבַּשׁ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ וְהֵרִים אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן - "***The kohen shall dress in his linen garment and he shall wear linen pants on his skin, and he shall separate the ashes***..." (6:3)

The Torah commanded the Kohen Gadol that when he entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, he should change his clothing and remove the ashes.

He changes his clothing so that at that moment of intense holiness, when the holiest Jew on the holiest day enters the holiest place, he should not forget the basic and seemingly mundane situations, such as asking for sustenance for his people. – Therefore, he was commanded to change to weekday clothing and begin to consider the weekday necessities of his people.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner



Many young people develop close relationships with their Rebbeim whilst in Yeshiva or Seminary, which they maintain, and cherish, for years to come. Some even get the privilege of being able to serve that Rebbe in their own special ways and do favours for them that in time becomes known as their personal privilege.

Shimon Levin* a former talmid of the famous Tzadik, Rav Chaim Brim zt"l of Yerusholayim , used to pick his Rebbe up at JFK airport whenever the latter visited the United States of America. No one seems to know how Shimon Levin had managed to secure this coveted responsibility, but that's

the way it was. Shimon told the following incident to his close friends.

"As you know, I always picked up Rav Chaim Brim when he came to America. Our route from JFK to his host usually took us along a stretch of highway that presented us with a wonderful view of the unique Manhattan skyline."

Now, if you have never seen the Manhattan skyline before, this is something you must experience. It really is magnificent, as emblematic of the hustle and bustle of New York City as the Statue of Liberty was of freedom to the thousands of refugees who sighted it from their ship when they arrived at these shores in search of a better life. [This is something others who have seen this scenery, have described it].

"Whenever we drove past that skyline," Shimon continues, "Rav Brim would look at this skyline, and shake his head and say, **אזכרה א-קים ואהמיה, בראותי כל עיר אל תלה בנויה ועיר הא-קים משפלת....** - *'I shall remember, Hashem, and I shall sigh; when I see every city built upon its hilltop; and the city of Hashem degraded to the depths that are nethermost.'* (Piyut Neilah). - "He would utter that lament each time he saw the magnificence of that skyline.

"On one occasion, we were driving along our regular route on our way from the airport. It was very early in the morning; the sun had not even risen properly. As the skyline came into view, I waited for Rav Brim to say his usual line. This time, though, he remained silent.

"About an hour or so later, we arrived at our destination. I had stopped myself from remarking on Rav Brim's silence in the car, but I could contain myself no longer. As I helped him with his bags, I mustered up the courage and inquired why on this visit he had not said his usual phrase.

"Whenever we drive past that skyline," Rav Brim replied, "I am always seized by a certain feeling that prompts me to say that *piyut.*

This morning though, I did not have that feeling. I don't know why, but I didn't, so I remained silent."

That day was September 11, 2001. Later that morning, two planes flew into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre.

The Torah teaches us lessons that refine our character, that enable us to raise our spiritual level and envelops those who cling to it in holiness, allowing them to sense things the rest of us don't aspire to.

How fortunate we are that our nation, and our nation alone, has leaders of such extraordinary calibre.

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Clean Up!

In this week's Parsha, the pasuk says, **וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו**, the Kohen, the priest, divests himself of his holy priestly clothing, **וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים**, he puts on ordinary simple clothing, **וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן**, in order to remove and dispose of the ashes. The question is why necessitate, why require the holy Kohen to do a menial chore of disposing the ashes? Why not allow it to be someone else's responsibility?

I'd like to share with you a beautiful idea based on **Rav Bunim of Pshischa**: He says that it is precisely the holy person who engages in the most exalted of services, who understands that it is not beneath his dignity to remove the ashes. That, that too, can be holy.

Perhaps we can all relate to this in a conventional sense, without belittling the greatness of the Kohen, but applying it to our own lives. Sometimes we are asked to take out the garbage or to clean up a mess. If you understand that you can consecrate, that you can sanctify even a mundane task, even a menial chore because you're

doing it out of service to Hashem and service for his people, that too is holy!

One day, a newly married couple had a dispute, so they consulted **Rav Mordechai Gifter zt"l**. The husband, a budding Torah scholar, considered that it was belittling and beneath his dignity to fulfill the lowly task of taking out the nightly garbage. His wife on the other hand disagreed and felt that it was his job. Rav Gifter decided that if the young man thought he was too important to do such a menial task of taking out the garbage, he should not have to do it.



That night there was a knock on this young couple's door. To their astonishment, it was the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Gifter. Rav Gifter said that he came to take out the garbage. Noticing the dismay on the woman's face he explained, "We decided that your husband was too important to take out the garbage. Somebody must do it and it surely should not be you, so I am here to do the job." - What greatness!

We must remember that we can consecrate, that we can sanctify even a mundane task, even a menial chore. By doing that it contributes to our holiness!

"We must remember: Our view of the world is like peering through a keyhole, seeing only a pen moving on paper. Just as the pen is guided by a hand, our lives are guided by a Higher Power."
~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler.

Greater than Even Witnessing the Coming of Moshiach By Daniel Keren



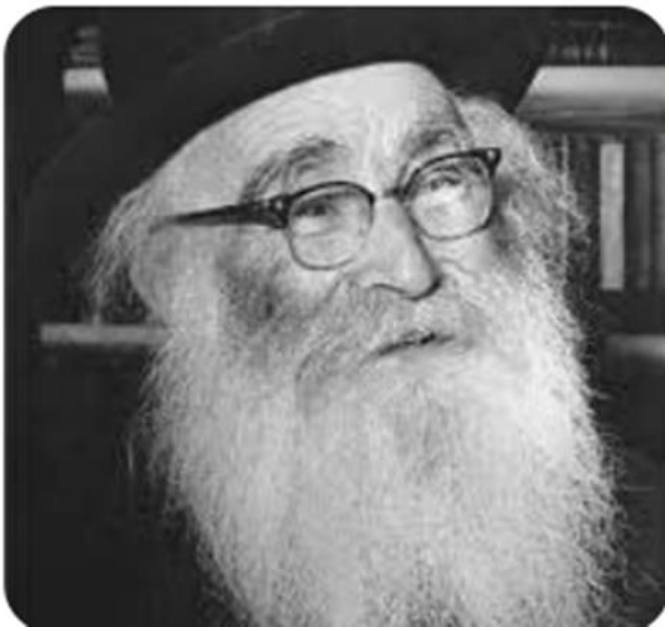
One of the featured speakers at the recent January 1st Hakhel Yarchei Kallah Event in Flatbush was Rabbi Chaim Aryeh Zev Ginzberg, rav of the Chofetz Chaim Torah Center in Cedarhurst, Long Island. He reflected on some of the most fascinating shailos that he asked of some of the leading Torah leaders of the past generation such as the Steipler Gaon, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Rav Shach, Rav Chaim Pinchus Scheinberg, Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky of blessed memories.

Rabbi Ginzberg recalled words that he had once heard from Rebbetzin Sheina Chaya Elyashiv an important insight regarding the concept of having the zechus, the merit to mikabel pnei Moshiach, see the coming of Moshiach. She recalled that when her grandfather Rabbi Aryeh Levin, 1885-1969, was very ill and in the hospital, she and one of her sisters went to spend Shabbos with their illustrious grandfather.

When Rabbi Levine's son came to visit his father, he blessed his father with the wish for a refuah sheleima, a speedy recovery and that he should be mikabel pnei Moshiach. Rebbetzin Elyashiv remembers her father shaking his head negatively and saying that he only wants to recover in order to be able to perform mitzvahs and study Torah in order to properly serve Hashem. [And in that merit may we be worthy of Moshiach.]

Rabbi Ginzberg remembered when as a young man he came from America to learn Torah in a yeshiva in Yerushalayim. He got a letter from someone telling him of a woman in Jerusalem who had suffered

three miscarriages and was now pregnant. Her family was very concerned and they asked Rabbi Ginzberg if he could go to the famous Sephardic mekubel, mystic – the Baba Sali (Rabbi Yisroel Abuhatzeira, 1889-1984) and get from him a bottle of water for the woman to drink as a segula for a safe pregnancy and for the delivery of a healthy baby.





In those days, it was a difficult six-hour trip by non-air-conditioned bus from Yerushalayim to Netivot where the Baba Sala, a famous Moroccan born mystic and reputed miracle worker lived, to be followed by another similar six-hour trip back to the holy city and his yeshivah. He asked his rosh yeshiva if it would be permitted for him to get the special water for the pregnant woman. His teacher said that it was too much time travelling and loss of time from the beis medrash, Torah study hall.. Rather he should go to Bnei Brak and get a brocha, blessing from the Steipler Gaon. He did so and returned to his yeshiva in Jerusalem.

It just so happened that he soon met somebody from Netivot who regularly came to Yerushalayim and he asked that person to on his next trip bring a bottle of water from the Baba Sala. A few days later he got the bottle and gave it the pregnant woman and in a few months, Baruch Hashem, she gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

One time Rabbi Ginzberg went to visit Rav Elazar Shach, 1899-2001, in Bnei Brak. The Torah Gadol was suffering at that time from an abscess in his foot. The doctor explained that he would have to cut out the abscess which would require using some form of strong anesthesia to eliminate the terrible pain from the famed Rosh Hayeshiva.



However, Rav Shach said that he could not take any anesthesia as he needed to have a clear mind to prepare his shiur, lecture for the students in the Ponevezh Yeshiva. Rabbi Ginzberg along with a grandson was asked to help hold down Rav Shach while the doctor cut out the abscess. Amazingly despite the great pain, Rav Shach was calm throughout the entire procedure.

Once Rabbi Ginzberg visited Rav Shach and saw an amazing incident. Someone told Rav Shach that there was a IDF helicopter crash, and six soldiers were killed. Upon hearing that tragic news, Rav Shach burst into uncontrollable tears. Rav Ginzberg noted that many non-religious Jews criticized Rav Shach for his opposition to having yeshiva student enlist in the Israeli army. - Probably none of those six soldiers who were killed in the helicopter accident were the type who would study Torah in his yeshiva or were even religious. Nevertheless, the news that six Jews had been killed in a tragic accident caused him to cry uncontrollable. And this from a man who did not cry despite the incredible pain he must have felt when the doctor cut out the abscess from his foot.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● A Life of Service

You're hearing here a fundamental truth of the Torah and if you didn't know it before, now is the time. And that is the great lesson of Mamleches Kohanim – that we are the Kohanei Hashem of this world. Of course we have plumbers and truck drivers too – but we do it all in the service of Hakadosh Baruch Hu as if we were kohanim standing in the Beis Hamikdash. And in order that it should be clear that the expression "a kingdom of priests" is not merely a poetic declaration but an actual status, Hakadosh Baruch Hu commanded the Am Yisroel in the same priestly laws as the kohanim.

Hashem tells us: "If this animal would have been offered up to Hashem, the cheilev would have to be removed and brought up on the fire, and the dam sprinkled on the sides of the mizbeiach, before partaking of the meat. And so, even when it's ordinary meat that you're eating you must also remove the cheilev and the dam."

Even though your own personal shechitah is not an avodah of a korban – you're merely standing in the kitchen preparing supper for your family – Hashem tells you that you are to treat it like an avodah, because the Mamleches Kohanim is always standing before Hashem in His service. And therefore, just like the kohen who was working

alongside the mizbeiach, we can't eat the cheilev of our beheimos. And the blood that would have been sprinkled on the mizbeiach had this animal been a korban, we spill it out to the ground.

The preparation of our food reminds us that we don't have the same function as the mishpechos ha'adamah! Our shechitah is not merely shechitas chullin – it's an echo of the shechitas kodshim that took place in the Beis Hamikdash.

● **Bread of Many Lessons**

Let's say you want to sell your product to a potential customer; so you're going to take out a big prospectus describing the product, how good it is and everything else – so while you're talking he's yawning; he's already falling asleep.

That's not how you do business. If you want to make a big sale, you take him to a restaurant and give him a big lunch; and after he's burping at the end of the meal, so that's the best time to pop the question – "Do you want to buy my product?" And that's when he'll be persuaded to give you an order.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is a salesman too – only that He's selling Torah attitudes. And by feeding us the priestly food, the matzah, on Pesach, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is selling us the important ideal that we're His Mamleches Kohanim. And therefore it's a mitzvah to enjoy the matzah because the more you'll enjoy it, the more you'll absorb the lesson. - That's why it says in the hagadah: **לֹא אָמַרְתִּי** – When did I say you should start talking about these things that the matzah comes to teach you? **בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר מֻנָּחִים לְפָנֶיךָ** – When it's right there in front of you. When everything is on the table, now you can start thinking and talking. Eat, enjoy – but you have to remember that the lesson is all important – eating matzah like a horse is not going to get you anywhere. If you're not thinking when you chew the matzah so it's a big waste — it's a mitzvah, but it's a waste of a great opportunity to achieve more daas. But if you chew with idealism, if you're thinking as you chew, then there's nothing that can beat that.

Because as we are enjoying the matzah, we are also absorbing the lesson that we're the Mamleches Kohanim.

● **Lessons in Humility**

It's human nature. **אֲנִי וְאַפְסִי עוֹד** – *I am what matters and nothing else* (Yeshayah 47:8). Every man! Even if you're a tzaddik and you daven and do mitzvos; you're serving Hashem all day long; no matter — as far as you're concerned you're still the most important person there is and even Hashem is imposing on you; He's crowding you. And that's why a man must work on himself to be humble to Hashem.

Even the kohen, in the Beis Hamikdash, he's commanded to change into other clothing – he takes off his bigdei kehunah and puts on his work clothes and he takes the dirty ashes out. - That's what the Chovos Halevovos tells us about this mitzvah.

One of the great kohanim in our recent history was always practicing that. **The Chofetz Chaim**, he was already an old man, a tremendous servant of Hashem – he's famous for that – and they were carrying him, they were helping him from one place to another, and they heard him whispering under his breath; he said, "Shlep der neveilah, shlep der neveilah." "Pull the dead carcass," he said. - He was reminding himself that he's nothing special.

Every little grain of hachna'ah to Hashem is so valuable, it's such a perfection of character, that it's never enough. As much as you can you're reminding yourself that whatever you've accomplished, as great as you may be – and you are! – but before Hakadosh Baruch Hu you're humbled. And therefore if it does happen that you have the good luck that somebody criticizes you — your wife is probably generous enough to give you some criticism from time to time — you should listen carefully. If your wife tells you you're no good — by the way, you should never say it to your husband because the more you tell him he's no good the worse he becomes. You should always tell your husband how nice he is! But suppose your wife made a mistake and she told you the truth "you're no good", she tells you something

wrong about yourself, so don't just be angry and answer back. Listen! It could be true.

● Greatness At The Seder

The fragrance of Pesach is already in the air for a few weeks already but now Shabbos Hagadol is coming and Yom Tov is right around the corner – the fragrance is getting stronger, it's in our nostrils already, and so we'll take the opportunity now to spend a little time preparing for the Seder night and the days that follow.

There is a mitzvah in the Torah, **לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ** – *You should remember all the days of your life, that day that you went out from Mitzrayim* (Devarim 16:3). Now, when we learn pshuto shel mikra, so we understand that it means: as long as you're alive you have to remember what happened at Yetzias Mitzrayim. Always! Morning, mid-morning, afternoon, and evening you have to remember.

If you get up in the middle of the night and you're tossing and turning, there's no reason to waste the opportunity – even then it's good to remind yourself, "Oh, Hashem, I remember that day that You took us out of Mitzrayim."**כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ** means always.

Along will come the lamdonim and they'll say, "What kind of business is this?" they'll say, "What kind of nonsense are they telling you in that place? The Gemara in Brachos tells us that it means once in the day and once at night, and that's all." And they're right; if you want to get away with the bare minimum that's all you need. And of course, we cannot criticize you as a sinner if you did the minimum. But the minimum is only for the minimum people. If you want to be maximum people, then you have to come back to the pshuto shel mikra. The kavonas haTorah is that you should remember it all the time. Always, before the eyes of the Am Yisroel is that great spectacle, the unforgettable day, when we marched out of Mitzrayim.

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

The Emunah Generator

When the mother of a large family in Kiryat Sefer gave birth to a child with Down's syndrome, she and her husband decided to strengthen themselves in mitzvos and emunah. The father approached Rav Rothschild to seek his counsel, and the rav replied that they should work on improving their shemiras Shabbos.

The avreich could hardly conceal his surprise. "We are very makpid on hilchos Shabbos and even learn the halachos at the Shabbos table every week."

"Do you use a Shabbos generator?" asked the rav. [Some rabbanim in Eretz Yisrael hold that Jewish-produced electricity should not be used on Shabbos and therefore each family should use other means such as a private generator.]

"No."

"Then start using one, so your electricity will be completely kosher, too."

The avreich blanched. His newborn was his thirteenth child, and they lived from hand to mouth, subsisting on the bare minimum. "A generator is very expensive," he replied, ashamed, "and I can't afford the cost."

"If you use a generator, I guarantee that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will repay you," said the rav. "It is known that expenses l'chavod Shabbos Kodesh are not included in the money that Hashem allocates for a man on Rosh Hashanah. Our Sages teach, 'Borrow on My account, and I shall repay.' Borrow the money to buy a generator, and you'll see that you won't even notice the expense.

"Should I use a generator only for lighting, or for the whole house?" the avreich asked.

"The whole house," Rav Rothschild replied, "including air-conditioning and any other appliances."

The avreich inquired into the cost of the generator and learned that it would cost him an initial fee of 4,500 shekels, plus another 530 shekels per month. A quick calculation revealed that the total cost for the first year of use was 10,860 shekels.

There is a pamphlet distributed weekly in Eretz Yisrael called Iyun Haparshah. It features she'eilos and teshuvos written by Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, and others, including the avreich from Kiryat Sefer. Once a month, a raffle is held among all who contribute to the pamphlet. That month-the very month that the avreich connected his home's electricity to the city's Shabbos generator-he won the raffle prize: 12,000 shekels in cash! After deducting ma'aser from the windfall, he realized that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had indeed repaid him the 10,860 shekels he'd borrowed on account of the generator.

The story of the avreich's "payback" made waves, and when the pamphlet's publishers shared it with the donor who had sponsored the raffle prize, the latter marveled at the manifest hashgachah pratis. But something irked him. "If that's the case," he mused, "then the avreich ultimately didn't gain anything." - Without another word, he pulled out his checkbook and wrote the avreich another check for 12,000 shekels!

A chassid once asked the Rebbe Rashab (Reb Sholom DovBer Schneersohn), "How do I know if I'm fulfilling my purpose?"

The Rebbe replied: "If today, because of you, one more Jew smiled, prayed, or felt closer to Hashem, then you've changed the world."



"הודאה" – Gratitude by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

One of the sacrifices delineated in this week's Parsha is the offering of thanksgiving. The Torah teaches us that if one has a miracle performed for him, for example if he was very ill and then became better, or if he was in a dangerous situation and was able to come out of it unscathed, he brings an offering of thanksgiving to Hashem, along with 40 loaves of bread which all needed to be eaten in a short amount of time.

The Midrash on this week's Parsha explains that the "Toda" offering is so important that after Moshiach comes, when all the other sacrificial offerings in the temple will be nullified, only the Toda offering will remain. Similarly, the Midrash asserts that in the future, all prayer services will cease completely, except for the prayers of thanksgiving which will remain until the end of time.

The Ramban in Parshas Bo says that the purpose of all creation is so that a Jew will thank Hashem for his existence. The first word that every Jew utters in the morning is "Thank you".

From the thanksgiving offering, we learn another valuable lesson in gratitude. The verse in psalms says, "**זובח תודה יכבדנני**" – Those who sacrifice a Toda, honor me. The Midrash points out an interesting anomaly in this verse, that the words "Honor me", are spelled with two nunim instead of one, implying that there are always two things to thank Hashem for and not one.

The Kesav Sofer explains this enigmatic Midrash by saying that often we feel tremendous gratitude when Hashem saves us from a dangerous situation, but neglect to feel the same level of gratitude to Hashem for putting us in a dangerous situation.

One might ask, "Why in the world should I feel gratitude for being put in a life-threatening situation?"

The Kesav Sofer explains that the Gemora says that all that Hashem does is for the best. Perhaps by being in a dangerous situation, we will feel stimulated to repent from our stubborn ways, or the discomfort of the fright may atone for many sins that we have transgressed. Or perhaps an unforeseen benefit may come out of the person's being in that unpleasant situation that will help him in the future.

Truthfully, this message of thanksgiving to Hashem for <u>all</u> that He does is latent in the Purim story. The Gemorah says that in the future, all the Jewish holidays will be nullified except for Purim. What was so special about the Miracle of Purim that earned it to be the only remaining holiday in future times?

The answer is nothing! The Purim story contains nothing extraordinary in it and this is precisely what makes its message so pertinent, that it will be the only message needed for future generations. There were no open miracles in the Purim story. No sensational seas were splitting for us and our enemies did not get miraculously smitten down by any natural disasters. Rather our salvation came through seemingly "natural" causes, over the course of *eleven years*, and through the "right" people being in the "right" place at the "right" time. Yet Chazal, by instituting the holiday of Purim in order to commemorate these seemingly non-extraordinary events which brought about our salvation, were attempting to inculcate in us the importance of this message – to thank Hashem for **every** event that befalls us, and to recognize His gracious Hand in every aspect of our lives.

Additionally, there is another crucial message from the Purim story which illustrates beautifully all that we have written about Hodah. During the Purim story, many events happened which seemed disastrous for the Jews. Modechai seems to be aggravating the

situation by not bowing down to Haman and angering him. Esther seems to be making new friends with Haman by personally inviting him to two different parties. An onlooker may have not given such a good prognosis to the Jewish people. Yet in the end of the day, it was precisely these events which brought about our eventual salvation.

The message is clear. Although world and personal calamites don't always seem to be so positive, we must have complete faith that they are for the best and that Hashem knows what he is doing.

May we merit to foster a true sense of gratitude for all the good (and even the not so good) that we are constantly receiving!

Toda - The "Thank You" Offering

Parshas Tzav continues to expound on the different korbanos and their laws as we are introduced to a very important korban called the Toda, the "Thank you" offering.

Rashi explains that the Toda had to be brought by anyone who went overseas, travelled through the wilderness, was let out of jail, or had been healed from a near-death illness. The major concept behind the Toda offering is that an individual who has merited a personal salvation should properly express thanks to Hashem for having taken him out of danger and distress.

In the Torah we find that the principle of giving thanks is extremely central. The Ramban at the end of Parshas Bo says that the entire purpose of creation was that man should believe in Hashem and thank Him.

The Sfas Emes adds that the Hebrew word for Jew, "Yehudi", actually means "one who thanks". A Jew is really supposed to personify the idea that a human being was created to give thanks to Hashem. That's why the korban Toda isn't a voluntary offering. It's actually an obligation because thanking is so essential to a Jew's

essence and how he is expected to respond to the miracles Hashem does for him. So what's the big deal about the Toda offering and why is giving thanks understood to be so important in the Torah's eyes that it actually can be called Hashem's intent behind all creation?

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach observes that being able to appreciate Hashem's hand in our lives is one of the most elusive abilities for mankind. People often attribute even miracles to be products of nature or to their own doing. When one is sick and goes to the doctor, it's very easy to go home thinking that it was the miracle of modern medicine that cured him. To be able to attribute thanks where it truly belongs takes great maturity, devotion, and reflecting. And most of the time, this isn't even enough. However, through the Toda offering, the Torah expects us to capitalize on our miracles and to whole-heartedly express our appreciation.

By articulating our gratitude, we can be aroused to a greater and deeper recognition that Hashem is in control of our lives. Hodaa, which means thanks in Hebrew, also means to admit. In truth, when one thanks Hashem, he is really just choosing to admit to the fact that he is a gross beneficiary in the scheme of the Divine. By taking our life experiences and relating them back to G-d, we are deepening our recognition that it is Hashem who helps us and saves us. Through thanking, we recognize Hashem and build the belief we have in Him. And this is what the entire world was created for.

I remember I once went with a friend to meet with a big mekubal. My friend was greatly distressed over many hardships that he had been struggling with for years. He asked the mekubal if there was anything he could do that would alleviate the pain he was going through. The mekubal gently replied to my friend that he should really be happy for all the good that Hashem had given him in life. To be able to learn, to be able to teach, to have a family, to be in good health, and to be able to have parnassa are incredible brachos

that others aren't always privileged to. "You're only missing one thing," said the mekubal, "gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. You especially should be thanking Hashem very much!"

Rav Pinchas Scheinberg z"l was very known to have powerful t'fillos. Many people would seek his brachos and they were known to have affected a great number of people. At his yeshiva, Yeshivas Torah Ore, he would daven as shaliach tzibbur every day for every t'filla. Those who heard him daven were deeply moved by the sincerity behind his t'fillos and were inspired to emulate his cavana in davening. After Rav Scheinberg passed away, his personal siddur was found, its pages worn away by the great number of tears that he shed over it. But what was especially notable was that most of the tears shed over the siddur were found at modim. - For Rav Scheinberg, the gratitude he had for Hashem brought him more tears than any other pain or desire he had in the world.

May we all be zoche to give thanks to Hashem for every precious day in our lives!!!

KANKAN

Wax Figurine by Yossi Kwadrat

When the Maharal Made a Looming Jewish Tragedy Melt Away

At storytelling time, tales of the Maharal and his Golem are always audience favorites. But there are other dramatic stories involving that towering *gadol* of sixteenth-century Prague that rival the Golem tales for sheer drama. Here is one such little-known story, which was recorded by Rabbi Avraham Khalfan, a disciple of the Chida, and thus bears a degree of veracity that some other of the Maharal tales may not.

The story features three protagonists:

The Maharal of Prague – He is the only one of the three main characters mentioned by name. From his involvement in the story, it is possible to conjecture regarding the identity of the other two characters who go unnamed. The Maharal lived from 1512 to 1609, and on the reasonable assumption that these events did not take place in his youth, we can presume a historical timeframe for the scenery be in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Pope — In the second half of the sixteenth century, we find quite a few acting popes, but only one of them, Pope Clement VIII, was known for his anti-Semitism, making him a perfect match for the character in this story. On the other hand, from the story, it would appear that the events occurred prior to the establishment of the Jewish ghetto in Rome by Paul IV, who was a predecessor to Clement VIII.

The King — The last king to rule over Italy was Charles V, who was the king of Spain. He was also the Roman Emperor, but his seat of power wasn't in Rome since, ironically, the Roman empire never included Rome in its territory. During the era in which this story takes place, Italy was a united kingdom. In the south, Naples was a kingdom for itself, known as the kingdom of Sicily. In the north of Italy, there was a collection of many kingdoms, some of them belonging to the Roman Empire. In central Italy, there was the duchy of Tuscany, and the Papal States, ruled by the Pope, with Rome as the capital.

In the time of the great tzaddik and gaon, Rabbi Loew of Prague, the Pope in Rome was a very sly character who was not only an anti-Semite but was also very knowledgeable in the use of the "impure names" known as *sheimos hatum'ah*. The Pope's ability to use the powers granted by the use of these names led people to treat his words as prophecies.

In his evil cunning, he devised the following plot. He sculpted a figurine of the Christian deity, *Yeshu*, *ys"hv*, out of wax, intending

to use the evil powers granted him by the impure names to bring the statue to life. His plan was to have it speak out aloud, saying, "Look what the Jews did to me, the revenge they took upon me! Christians, it's about time for you to avenge my death and seek retribution for all they did to me!"

But in order to make his malicious plan work, the Pope needed to also incorporate some of the powers of *kedushah*, holy powers, into the figurine. How he thought to himself, could he get this done?

The Pope took the wax figure and stored it in a box on which he placed a heavy lock. Taking the box with him, he set out in the direction of Rome's Jewish quarter, known as the Ghetto, where he went looking for the home of one of the rich Jews in town.

Understandably, the Pope's visit caught this Jew by complete surprise. "Oh, the Pope himself has come to our home! Please come in!" the Jewish host exclaimed. Wondering to himself what might lie behind this most unusual visit, the wealthy homeowner initiated the conversation: "How can I be of help to the Pope?"

"I've come because I need a *gemach*."

"*A* what?!" The Jew was astounded to hear that word from the mouth of the ruler of the Chrisitian church.

"*A gemach*. Isn't that the word you Jews use for a loan? I need it only for three days."

"Yes, certainly. But there was no need to come down to my home. You could just as easily have summoned me to your presence."

"I need some money, and I wanted to keep it highly confidential. I've brought with me a box filled with jewels and gemstones as a security for the money you'll lend me. Would you like to have a look inside? Just tell me and I'll open it for you to see."

"I dare not tell the Pope to open the box lest that be taken as a sign that I don't trust him, " the Jew thought to himself. He resigned

himself to having to lend the Pope as much as he would ask for, and with no security either. "N-no, that's entirely unnecessary. I would never even think to request a pawn from the Pope!"

"Obviously not, but take it anyway."

And with that, the Pope left the box with the Jew, took the loan money, and left the house.

The Pope proceeded from the Jew's home directly to the royal palace for an audience with the king. He told him, "Your Majesty, you should know that on this and this day, Yeshu will reappear to tell us what the Jews did to him, and what he expects you to do in return to them!"

In the meantime, the Jew who had lent money to the Pope didn't know what to do with the collateral the Pope left with him, so he took it and hid it away in a secure location in his home.

That night, Eliyahu Hanavi appeared to him in a dream and warned him, "Get rid of the *tum'ah* in your house!" The next morning, upon awakening from his sleep, he remembered the frightening dream he'd had, but could not believe it could really be true and decided to ignore it. The ominous dream repeated itself the next night, and the one after that, but still the Jew went about his day as if nothing had happened. Finally, on the third night, seeing that the Jew was ignoring him, Eliyahu Hanavi made his way to Prague, to the home of the saintly Rav Loew, known to all of Jewry as the Maharal. Eliyahu told him, "Rav Loew, I am here on a matter of the highest urgency! Please travel immediately to the house of a Jew in Rome whose name I will give you and tell him he must get rid of the terrible *tum'ah* in his house. If he will not do so, he will be the cause of unspeakable tragedy for the Jewish nation!"

Heeding the words of Eliyahu Hanavi, the Maharal arose and prepared to set out on the long journey to faraway Rome, but he experienced *kefitzas haderech*, a miraculous shortening of the

journey that brought him there almost instantaneously. He made his way to the Jew's home, and after introducing himself, said, "Please listen carefully, for I have come here for your benefit and that of all the Jews. You must rid yourself of the *tum'ah* that's in your house!"

"*Chas veshalom*, I have no *tum'ah* in my house!," he replied. "I must admit that I, too, had three such dreams about having some kind of idol in my house, but I have no idea what this is all about." "Go search thoroughly and see what you can find!"

Suddenly, it dawned on him that this was about the box of jewels he had received from the Pope. "I think I know what this *tum'ah* is," he told the Maharal. "I received a box from the Pope filled with gemstones!"

"Please bring it here."

The Jew went and brought the box from its hiding place.

The Maharal, using his great esoteric knowledge of the names of the various *malachim*, summoned the *malach* who is appointed over all of the locks in creation and requested of him to open the box.

As the box opened, it became apparent that there was not a single gemstone or jewel therein – only a wax figurine. Suddenly, it came to life, screaming out at a fever pitch, "Look what the Jews did to me, the revenge they took upon me! You sit there and let them live between you, and you even do them favors? You must know that now is the time to take revenge on them, and if you don't do as I instruct you, one day you will have to give account!"

When the Maharal heard these words, he immediately called for the *malach* who oversees fire to appear and instructed him to melt the figurine until it was unrecognizable as anything other than a nondescript clump of wax. Then, he instructed the *malach* of locks to reseal the box as it had been, after which the Jew returned the box to its place.

The very next morning, the Jew answered a knock at his door to find the Pope standing there, having come to return the money he had borrowed. The Jew, in turn, gave the box back to the Pope. Not realizing anything was amiss, the pope called for the king to be present when he opened the box, expecting his plot to proceed as planned and result in a decree of annihilation against the Jews.

Slowly, he opened the box, waiting for this once-in-a-lifetime happening to unfold, when their deity, *Yeshu*, would speak. But they waited and waited…and waited, while nothing happened. Peering inside the box, the Pope found nothing but a melted clump of wax.

He immediately understood that a Higher Power, a real G-d, had come once again to the aid of His people, the Jews. The Pope parted from the king shamefaced and in mourning. But as the story goes, the more he contemplated what had happened, the more he came to believe in the Jewish G-d and the truth of Judaism. Soon thereafter, he disappeared from Rome, having fled not only the Papal city but his religion as well. Eventually, it is said, he joined the ranks of the Chosen Nation of *Yisroel*.

The Weekly Vort

והרים את הדשן – ***He shall pick up the ashes*** (6:3).

This refers to the cleaning of the *Miz'beach*, a task performed each morning at the beginning of the *avodah* in the *Beis HaMikdosh*. **Rabbeinu Bachya** points out that this *mitzvah* teaches us a lesson in humility. It commands those holding the highest positions in the social hierarchy, people like Aharon *HaKohein* and his sons, to personally look after the ordinary work involved in cleaning up (Chovos HaLevovos - Shaar HaHachna'ah 82).

R' Shamshon Rafael Hirsch explains further that taking up the ashes at the start of each new day provides us with a look back at the accomplishments of the previous day. On the other hand, the

subsequent action of removing those ashes teaches us that each day starts afresh. We are told to consider our holy service as something absolutely new, as though it had never been done before. We are obliged to approach the duties awaiting us each day with the same feeling of joy that we felt on the first day.

"He shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp" (6:4) – he must remove what is left of the previous day's service to make an absolutely clean place for the service of the new day. Understood in this way, the instruction that the *Kohein* was to remove the ashes while wearing worn-out, less valuable clothing assumes new significance. The past must give way to the present; it must not be allowed to fill us with pride just before we begin the duties of a new day. (**Kol HaTorah - R' Elie Munk**)

A Vort from Reb Yoel

רב אברהם מרדכי מגור פרק ז פסוק טו

"ובשר זבח תודת שלמיו ביום קרבנו יאכל"

"And the flesh of his thanksgiving peace offering must be eaten on the day of its offering."

Why is the קרבן תודה limited to only one day and *that* night?

(Usually a *korban* of קדשים קלים like a שלמים could be eaten for two days and one night.)

THE ANSWER IS that a קרבן תודה is brought in recognition of a miracle that Hashem performed for the giver. Miracles happen every day and all the time, like we say in *shemona esrei* "ועל ניסיך שבכל יום עמנו". Limiting the time when a קרבן תודה can be eaten teaches the person that everyday anew he should see and appreciate the nissim that Hashem constantly does for him.

"Show empathy towards everyone. We may be on different paths, but we are all climbing the same mountain." ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz (1726-1791).

Torah Thoughts from Rabbi Michael Skobac

וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מָקוֹם טָהוֹר - "...***and he shall carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place***." (6:4)

Just as ashes can catch fire again, even that which is utterly corrupt and "outside the camp" can change for the better. Since Hashem ultimately hopes that even the wicked be restored to goodness, we must not discard the ashes. Instead, we place them in a clean place – for perhaps they will once again glow. (**The Ishbitzer Rebbe**)



A Segulah From Eliyahu To Protect From Evil Thoughts

I saw the following thought in the Sefer Tiferes Torah from **Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus**, of Blessed Memory, who was tragically killed in a car accident on the 11th of Nissan. I share this thought in honor of his Yahrtzeit.

The Shalo"h Hakodosh (Shaar haOsiyos 30) writes in the name of **Rav Moshe Cordevero** (1522-1570) that he once heard from an elderly Jew that an effective method (segulah) for removing forbidden thoughts from one's mind is to repeat the following pasuk over and over: "The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not be extinguished." [Vayikra 6:6].

The Shalo"h comments that he is sure that the "elderly Jew" who Rav Moshe Cordevero heard this from was the prophet, Eliyahu. However, due to Rav Cordevero's great modesty, he did not want to reveal the true source, since that would have revealed that he was worthy of conversing with Eliyahu.

However, what does this pasuk have to do with forbidden thoughts?

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains the difference between a Sin Offering and an Olah offering. The sin offering (korban chatas) comes from [unintentional} violation of prohibited actions. A korban olah, on the other hand, atones for improper thoughts. Improper thoughts, Rabbeinu Bechaye explains, is something that a person can never totally escape from. Unfortunately, they are very prevalent, and they are more prevalent at night than during the daytime. It is for this reason that the Olah offerings are to burn the entire night. Nighttime is the time when people especially need atonement from improper thoughts.

Now we know what Eliyahu meant when he told Rav Moshe Cordevero that the segulah for ridding oneself of evil thoughts is recitation of the pasuk at the end of the chapter on burnt offerings: "The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not be extinguished." [Vayikra 6:6]

Just as we say that one who recites the pasukim associated with the sacrifices is credited (nowadays) as if he brought that offering, so too if one recites this pasuk from the section of the Korban Olah (burnt offering), it is as if he brought a burnt offering and he thereby receives the segulah associated with the Korban Olah – namely protection from evil thoughts.

Double Entendre in the Word "Hoda'ah"

Among the sacrifices mentioned in this week's parsha is the Thanksgiving Offering. The Medrash says that in the future all the sacrifices will be nullified except the Thanksgiving Offering — because there is always need to give thanks.

Rav Hutner z"tl, makes a very interesting point. "*Todah*" [thanks] comes from the word "*Hoda'ah*," meaning giving thanks. However, the word "*Hoda'ah*" also means to admit (as in the expression *Hoda'as*

ba'al din k'meah edim dami – an admission of a litigant is like one hundred witnesses).

Rav Hutner says that it is no coincidence that the word for thanking and the word for admitting are one and the same. In order for a person to give thanks, he must be able to admit that he needed help. The first step in being grateful to someone for doing something for you is the admission that you needed help and that you are not all powerful. Therefore, the Hebrew word for thanks and for admission are the same.

How do we know whether an occurrence of the word "*Hoda'ah*" means admission or thanks? Rav Hutner says that we need to look at the preposition that comes after the word. The word "*Hoda'ah*" — meaning admission — is always followed by the Hebrew preposition '"sheh…" [that]. The word "*Hoda'ah*" — meaning thanks — is always followed by the Hebrew word "al …" [for].

In davening [prayers], there is a Blessing of *Modim*, called the Blessing of "*Hoda'ah*". How does it read? "*Modim anachnu lach sheh…*" This indicates that the first thing we must do is not thank G-d, but admit to G-d that we are dependent on Him. Once we come to that understanding, then we are ready for the end of the blessing where we say "*Nodeh lecha… …al…*" — We thank You for… *Birkas HaHoda'ah* is thus a two-stage blessing. It begins with a *Hoda'ah* of admission and then climaxes with a *Hoda'ah* of thanking at the end.

We Can't Appoint an Agent to Say 'Thank-You'

I recently saw a beautiful insight in the **Avudraham**. When the *Chazan* says *Modim*, the congregation recites a prayer known as "The Rabbis' *Modim*". Why is that? We listen silently during most of the repetition of *Shmoneh Esrei*. Why is *Modim* different? The Avudraham says that for all blessings in the *Shmoneh Esrei* we can use the services of an agent. 'Heal Us' and 'Bless Us with a Good

Year', and so forth have messengers — the *Shliach Tzibbur* can say the blessing for us. However, there is one thing that nobody else can say for us. We must say it for ourselves. That one thing is "Thank You". *Hoda'ah* needs to come from ourselves. No one can be our agent to say, 'Thank You'.



Why Can The Korban Todah Offering Only Be Eaten For One Day?

And the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace-offering must be eaten on the day of its offering…" [Vayikra 7:11-15].

It must be entirely consumed the day that it is offered.

This could be very difficult. If a person brought the sacrifice late in the day, he might have only a few hours or theoretically only a few minutes to consume the entire offering, and all the accompanying loaves! Why is this so?

The Netziv gives a beautiful answer. When a person is confronted with a large quantity of food that has to be consumed in a short amount of time, there is only one way to handle the situation — he must throw a party! He needs to invite his brother and his brother-in-law and his neighbor and his neighbor's neighbor together to help him eat all the food.

Thanksgiving, he explains, requires publicity. With a Todah offering, the more the merrier. Regarding thanksgiving, one should invite as many people as available to partake of the offering.

The Torah therefore built into the halacha of Korban Todah this concept that it must be shared with others.

The Chidushei HaRim asks the same question as the Netziv: Why is the Korban Todah only eaten for one day? The Chidushei HaRim gives a different answer than the Netziv, but nonetheless a beautiful one.

The Chidushei HaRim explains that a Thanksgiving offering is only eaten for one day because the offering is brought as a result of a miracle done for a person by the Almighty. Yesterday's miracle is yesterday's miracle. Today is a different day and it comes with its own miracles. "And upon your miracles that are with us EVERY day" (From the Modim paragraph in the daily Amidah).

We do not want to celebrate yesterday's miracle today when today has new miracles of its own. Therefore, the Korban Todah representing today's miracle, must be finished today.



A Mother's Silence - R' Meir Simcha Sperling

There is a man who lives in Bnei Brak, and his wife works for a 'special needs' kindergarten for gifted children.

There is this one child in this playgroup who's not able to talk properly or communicate well. This makes things very hard as he cannot share his feelings or tell the teacher where he's holding with his learning. This makes it difficult for him to keep up with the rest of the class. But his wife is very dedicated and working very hard to ensure everything goes as smoothly as possible, because she really wants to make a difference.

During that term, she had to leave that kindergarten for a month. When she returned, she was shocked to discover that this child who was never able to speak, was now speaking almost perfectly! He was able to communicate like never before. She was blown away and couldn't understand what in the world happened whilst she was gone.

She called the mother to find out what's going on. The mother started crying and said the following: "It's been getting very difficult, day in day out trying to communicate with him and get him

to do things. And I decided that things must change. We cannot go on like this. Now, I'm not a religious person as you know, but I'm going to talk to Hashem. I'm going to have a connection with Hashem, and I'm going to speak to The Melech Malchei Hamlochim – Hakadosh Baruch Hu – Who controls the entire world. He can do anything.

So, I told Hashem that Shemiras Halashon is so important in Shamayim. And therefore, I want to give up my mouth – Peh Tachas Peh! A mouth for a mouth. I am begging You Hashem, please. I am going to work on guarding my tongue, and I'm going to stop talking Lashon Horah no matter how hard it is. I'm going to close my mouth, and in that zechus, I want You to please open the mouth of my child.

It was very difficult, but I held myself back from speaking Lashon Horah every single time. And guess what? – A few days later, Hakadosh Baruch Hu opened my child's mouth! And that's why you are now dealing with a different child.

The power of words. The power of controlling your mouth. The amount of Bracha that Hashem Yisbaruch can give us when we work on Shemiras Halashon. Imagine only speaking positively about everybody! Let's all take it upon ourselves to master the art of speech!



A Wise Man would say:

"Do you know what the relationship is between your two eyes?

They blink together, they move together, they cry together, they see things together - but they never see each other. That's what true friendship is all about."

Shabbos Clothes by Rabbi Eliezer Chrysler



Chazal have taught us that a servant should not wear the same grubby clothes when he serves his master wine as he wears when he cooks the food. They take their cue from the pasuk **וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מָקוֹם טָהוֹר** (6:4), ***"And he (the Kohen) shall remove his clothes (the ones that he uses to serve G-d - i.e. offer the sacrifices and pour the wine) and don other "clothes" (to take the ashes from the Mizbei'ach outside the camp).***

From here the Gemoro derives, explains the Maharsho (Shabbos 114a), that one should not wear the same clothes on Shabbos, when he pours his Divine Master the (Kiddush) wine, as he wore on erev-Shabbos whilst preparing for Shabbos.

Torah Tavlin

Rabbeinu Bechaye zt"l writes: **וְלָבַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בַּד... וְהֵרִים אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן**:- The ethical teaching of all this is that when performing sacred tasks, especially in the Temple, regardless of how demeaning the same task would be considered for a socially highly placed individual outside the sacred precincts, one must wear the finest garments in order to enhance the reputation of the L-rd in whose honour this whole service is being performed.

If this holds true, we may learn that even when in the synagogue or the Yeshivah while studying Torah it is only elementary good manners vis-a-vis Hashem whose Torah we study, to be properly attired."

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח לא תכבה (6:6)



In the beginning of Parshas Tzav, the Torah commands us to ensure that a permanent fire burns on the Altar and adjures us to prevent it from being extinguished. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 4:17) adds that this obligation applied even when the Jewish people were travelling in the wilderness. What was the purpose of requiring a fire to burn on the Altar while the nation was in transit?

Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter posits that the flame on the Altar represents the fire of spirituality that burns within every Jew. In ruling that the fire must continue burning on the Altar even while traveling, the Midrash is also symbolically teaching us that even when we are in a state of flux, we must take care to ensure that our internal fire for Divine service remains lit and does not become extinguished.

Rabbi Senter adds that Parshas Tzav is traditionally read just before Pesach, at a time when people often go away to family or hotels for Yom Tov, and when yeshiva students are on bein ha'zmanim. Even those who are not physically travelling still have different schedules and responsibilities than they are accustomed to.

At such times, when we are out of the comfort of our familiar routines, we should remain cognizant of our obligation to keep the spiritual fire within us burning bright.

The Compassionate One! May He Send Us Abundant Blessing To This House. By Menachem Leibtag



Passport photo (1920s)

In an address given at the Grodno Yeshiva in Ashdod, **Rav Shach** cited a story related in the Midrash: A Roman matron asked Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta, "What has G-d been doing since He finished creating the world?"

"He sits and arranges shiduchim," he told her. "That's all?" she marveled. "Even I can do that! I have many male and female servants. With minimum effort I can pair them up!"

She then went and took a thousand male servants and a thousand female servants and lined them up, one row opposite the other. She declared, "Mr. So-and-So will marry Miss So-and- So," until she had all of them paired up by that night.

The next day they came before her. This one had his head split open, that one had his eye poked out, another one had a broken leg. "What happened to all of you?" she demanded.

A female servant said, "I don't want that man," and a male servant said, "I don't want that woman." And so on.

She immediately sent for Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta, and said to him, "There is no G-d like your G-d!"

Rav Shach explained that that Roman matron had expected Rabbi Yosi to answer her question ("What has G-d been doing since He created the world?") by telling her, "He upholds the existence of the heavens and the earth, and arranges the heavenly bodies according to His will," or something along those lines. She

understood that G-d is the ruler of the cosmos at large. But she thought that when it came to her own household, it was she who was in charge, and not G-d. This was her mistake, as she later learned.

Without G-d's help, not a single household would be able to continue functioning."

Thank You



Rashi gives examples of 4 types of people that bring a Korban Todah; thanksgiving Korbon- **יורדי הים**; seafarers, **הולכי מדברות**; those who travel deserts, those released from prison and a sick person that was healed. The Shulchan Aruch tells us a hint to these 4 in the Bracha of thanks in Shemona Esrei, Modim, **וכל החיים יודך סלה**; all those living will thank you. **חיים** is an acronym **חולה יסורים ים מדבר**

The 4 cups of Pesach are about thanking Hashem and as it says **כוס ישועות אשא**. The 4 cups correspond to these 4 people. The **יורדי הים** to Krias Yam Suf, **הולכי מדברות** to the 40 years in the desert. The sick person refers to the work in Mitzrayim (and by Matan Torah they were healed from all sickness). Those released from prison refer to the Jews in Mitzrayim as Rashi in Beshalach tells us that no one ever escaped from Mitzrayim.

Additionally, the word **כוס** is 86 in Gematria, the same as **אלה-ים** - since these 4 are the idea of thanking Hashem. Is it any wonder that Tzav- which contains the Korbon Todah- usually comes out near Pesach?!

Your Precise Location



At a given time, many may be unhappy with where they are. For some, it may be stuck in a traffic jam or waiting for a delayed flight. For others, it can be that they would rather live in a different country than the one they are presently in. Yet, for others, it may be that they wish they were married already or had more children. Or wanting to have more time to learn or having a job that paid more. Whatever it is, we must abide by the saying, "Grow where you are planted."

R' Shlomo Karliner interpreted **שלא יהיה לבך חלוק על המקום** - don't be upset with the place you find yourself self in, whether you are stuck in traffic, some station in life and so on.

I once read the following: "New York is three hours ahead of California, but that doesn't make California slow. France is six hours ahead of New York, but that doesn't make New York slow. Someone graduated from college at 22 but waited five years before securing a job. Another became a CEO at 25 but died at 50. A different person became a CEO at 50 but lived until 90. Someone is still single, while another is married with children. Everyone in this world works based on their own time zone. People around you might seem to be ahead of you. That's totally fine. Some are behind you. Everyone is running their own race in their own time zone. Don't envy or mock them. They are in their own time zone and you are in yours. Life is about waiting for the right moment to act. So relax. You're not late. You're not early. You're very much on time!"

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – It's important!

We may consider certain tasks insignificant when in reality it may be just as important, when we do it **לשם שמים**. Examples of these include taking the garbage out, cleaning up the house and the like.



A poor guest who finished eating at the house of the **Chozeh of Lublin** noticed him cleaning the table. Puzzled, the man asked I can understand that you serve the guests because of the great Mitzva of Hachnasas Orchim, but why are you cleaning the table? Servants do that. The Chozeh answered that on Yom Kippur after the holy service in the Kodesh Hakadashim, the Kohen Gadol would also remove the fire pan and the spoon. So too this Mitzva is no less important.

This idea is represented by the **תרומת הדשן** which was removing the ashes from the **מזבח** - the dirty work. Hence, **דשן** is an acronym of **דבר שאינו נחשב** ; that which is not considered important. We see how significant it is since it was placed next to the **מזבח** . Next time we need to do some dirty work lets realize that it is really cleansing us.

R' Naftoli Tzvi Hurvitz zt"l (Ropshitzer Rebbe) said:

"On Shabbos Hagadol, I gave a derasha imploring the rich to help feed the poor. In the end, though, I was only half successful: the poor willingly accepted what I said. But the rich people - I'm not so sure!"

Nissan- A Month Unlike Others



Nissan is no ordinary month rather it is special. This is how **The Ohr Hachaim** explains **ראש חדשים** - Nissan- as **ראש** is the choicest as in **בשמים ראש**; choice spices, since Nissan is the greatest of all months. The Siduro Shel Shabbos writes **ראש חדשים** refers to the head like the head of a person where the powers of the body and its vitality come from the head.

The Shela informs us that each day in Nissan is like Rosh Chodesh as it says **החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים**; each day of this month is like a Rosh Chodesh. As a result, there is no Tachanun this entire month. In a letter dated Motzai Shabbos, Parshas Acharei Mos in the year **תרמ"ו** (1886), **the Avnei Nazer** writes to **R' Chaim Berlin**- who asked him questions on matters regarding Pesach- that it is hard for me to answer because these days of Nissan are so precious as it is **שעה כיום יחשב**; an hour is like a day. However, since I was asked very much for an answer as it is for his oneg and simchas Yom Tov, I took a little time to answer.

In fact, the **Shem Mishmuel** testifies about his father- the Avnei Nazer- that in the days of Nissan he would go around in the upper worlds and because of the great Keusha of these days, he didn't need to sleep!

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Keep The Faith



R' Mordechai Gifter once arranged a flight to a wedding in Baltimore. Upon arriving at the airport, he was informed his flight was delayed. This caused him, along with his students, to miss the wedding. While in the airport, they asked the custodian for a private room in order to daven Mincha. As they began to daven, the custodian joined in, in which they helped him recite Kaddish at the end. After Mincha, the custodian explained that his father, who recently died, appeared to him in a dream and asked him to recite Kaddish on his behalf. Since he wasn't raised with a religious background, his father told him that he will arrange a Minyan so that Kaddish could be recited.

This was the Minyan. R' Gifter and his students originally thought that they arrived at the airport to go to a wedding when really it was so that this person could say Kaddish. A Jew clearly sees the Divine hand in such an incident whereas an Amaleki attributes it to natural occurrences.

It states **שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה** - ***lift up your eyes and see who created these***. Through observing the events in our lives, we can recognize Hashem. Therefore, when we combine the words **מי** and **אלה** we get the word **אלה-ים**. This can occur when we accept the sovereignty of Hashem- **עול מלכות שמים** - as the first letters of **שאו מרום עיניכם** are **שמע** This is the opposite of **עמלק - עול מלכות לא קבלו**. It comes as no wonder that the letters of **שנות מכל עם**; their laws are different from other people's, spell **שמע**.

In the early 1990's, a group of real estate developers purchased land in the heart of Tel Aviv with the intention of constructing a massive development project, replete with office buildings, malls and shops. It was to become known as the Azrieli Center. Many sharp-eyed investors recognized the opportunity and invested huge sums of money, some purchasing entire floors of the towers, plucking down large sums of money even before the building plans were drawn up.

One young Israeli developer was building his portfolio and was a success story at a young age. He lived in a bachelor pad in a trendy part of Tel Aviv, enjoyed the local night life and was far, far away from a Torah or even religious lifestyle. He really didn't have many friends but that was okay as his life was all about making money and it was all he cared and thought about on a daily basis.

He inquired into the new Azrieli Center project and learned that if he acted quickly, he could purchase the entire 17th floor of one of the towers at a bargain discount price. It was an amazing deal and just before he could pull the trigger on the deal, another investment deal came across his desk. This one sounded even more attractive. A huge parcel of land in one of the most up and coming cities in Romania became available and he could have it for less money than the Israeli project. The potential return was huge as the land was so much more voluminous and he grabbed the Romanian deal.

Well, wouldn't you know it? The Romania deal collapsed. The Israeli investor had pumped all he had into it and now, it seemed that he had lost everything! He was devastated. He did not know where his next dollar would come from. He was left totally broke!

Meanwhile the Azrieli Centre was built and became an instant success. Investors who had the good fortune to put their money in the project did remarkably well and this young Israeli entrepreneur could only watch and eat his heart out.

One day, with no money and no business to speak of, the Israeli man decided that he had no choice but to take a loan. But as no conventional bank would touch him, he found that he could only get a "Black Market" loan in cash. He needed to go to a certain office on the 17th floor of the Azrieli Center, where it could be arranged. As he rode the elevator up to the same floor that he had almost purchased years ago, he couldn't help but wonder at the turn of events that led him to this place at this time. Thankfully, he was able to procure the loan and walked out with an envelope full of cash. He decided to take a quick look around and rode the elevator up to the top floor of the tower. There, he walked out onto the roof to get a panoramic view of Tel Aviv.



Suddenly, and without warning, the roof door slammed shut and he was stuck on the roof! He banged and shouted but no one heard him. He looked down and could see people walking on the street 49 floors below, but there was no way anyone could see him. He thought for a moment and realized that the only way people might notice him is if he tossed something down from the roof. But what? All he had on him was an envelope of cash.

That's it! People will stop for cash. So, he took a few bills, rolled them up and tossed them down 49 floors. He watched as people saw the money hit the ground, grab it up and run off. He did it again and again, but nobody looked up. All they did was grab the heaven-sent cash and run off to celebrate their good fortune. The man was crushed. For the first time in his life, he looked up to Heaven and

said, "G-d, please hear my call. Save me. I have nowhere else to turn!" He really truly meant his words and he prayed with a broken heart. Suddenly, he noticed a pile of stones on the roof.

With newfound resolve, he picked up the stones and threw them down one by one. This time, people looked up to see who was throwing rocks from the roof. They alerted a security guard who ran up to the roof and found the man throwing rocks. He was arrested and it took quite a bit of explaining as to why he was on the roof and what he was doing.

Eventually, the guard was convinced and let the man go. But this singular event changed his way of thinking. When he threw money down from the roof, nobody looked up. But when he threw rocks, it made an impression.

The same goes for him. When life was good, and Hashem was "throwing money" down on him from Heaven, he never gave it a second thought. He never said thanks and didn't bother with G-d. But when Hashem was "throwing rocks" at him and his life was a disaster, suddenly he took notice. Suddenly, he was praying, and the Hashem heard his plea.

The man became a Baal Teshuva and his life took on new meaning. And within a few months he got a call that the Romanian deal had turned to gold - he was rich!

Erev Shabbos

R' Pam once remarked that what missed from Europe was the Erev Shabbos. People would come to shul early and say Shir Hashirim, learn a Sefer on the Parsha and so on. **R' Yaakov Kamenetzky** expressed it in this way: In the beginning of the 1900s, there was Chillul Shabbos in America. Over the years we recaptured the Shabbos. However, we have yet to reclaim the Erev Shabbos.



Preparing for Shabbos is biblical as it says **והיה ביום הששי והכינו את אשר יביאו** on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring. The importance of preparing for Shabbos is shown in the Gemara that says Eliyahu won't come on Erev Shabbos because of the difficulties this would impose on those who would need to interrupt their Shabbos preparations to greet Eliyahu.

We know there is a special Yetzer Hara of arguing and getting angry on Erev Shabbos. This is demonstrated in the story related in the Gemara of two people whom the Satan regularly incited so that during every twilight period on Erev Shabbos they fought with one another…. Why is this so? Because the first sin was on Erev Shabbos. Consequently, the Yetzer Hara has dominance then. We can be caught up in such a rush on Erev Shabbos that it can lead to quarrelling. Indeed, **נחש** is rooted in **חיש**; act quickly, rush. To counter this, we need to be ready early.

Erev Shabbos should be peaceful and not rushed. Then we can live up to **וזכנו לקבל שבתות מתוך רוב שמחה**; to receive Shabbos amid abundant gladness. This can be attained by following a unique interpretation of **מת בערב שבת סימן יפה לו** make yourself like you are dead on Erev Shabbos. Meaning, that you only deal with matters of Shabbos so that Shabbos can be brought in early and without tension.

We need to be ready with time to greet Shabbos. We should live up to the words **לקראת שבת לכו ונלכה**; let us go welcome Shabbos. R' Chanina would wrap himself in finery and stand towards evening on Friday and say **בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה**; come, let us go out to

greet Shabbos the queen. R' Yanai would put on his Shabbos clothes on Friday and say **בואי כלה בואי כלה**.

One can already feel Shabbos on Erev Shabbos. Indeed, **ערב שבת** means mixture like **תערובת** since Erev Shabbos has the Kedusha of Shabbos mixed into it and one can already feel it on Erev Shabbos.

The Meor Einayim would actually feel Shabbos through his Shabbos preparations such as the Mikva and the like. Once, on Erev Shabbos after his preparations, he still felt some Kedusha lacking. He then realized he was wearing his weekday socks!

Chinuch Perspectives



The following are other takes on that which we initially may have thought otherwise:

1) In the time of the **Chassam Sofer** (1762-1839), there was a 17-year-old boy without a Torah background who had a weak memory in addition to its being difficult for him to understand any learning. Nevertheless, to the astonishment of the students, the Chassam Sofer accepted him to the Yeshiva as he explained the boy had a tremendous love for learning. He then set up this boy to learn with various boys in the Yeshiva for an hour each.

Many years later, the Chassam Sofer received a question from a Dayan in the town of Matersdorf which showed the greatness of the Dayan as it covered many areas of Shas and Poskim. The Chassam Sofer even called his son to show it to him to illustrate the greatness

in Torah this person had. That question from the Dayan was this boy who learned by the Chassam Sofer.

2) The son of **R' Yaakov Kamenetzky** founded the Yeshiva of South Shore in the late 1950s. He once gave a tour of the school to his father where among other things he was shown the pre-school program. On the doorway of the classroom, there was a colourful Mezuza that was placed lower than a regular Mezuza which is at the bottom of the top third of the doorpost. This one was at the bottom third of the doorpost. The teachers explained the downward adjustment: "This way the children will be able to reach the Mezuza and kiss it." R' Yaakov Kamenetzky smiled and said we must not lower the Mezuza for the children to kiss it. Instead, we must raise the child to reach the Mezuza at its proper level. What we must do is put a step stool in order for the children to reach higher- to the proper level of the Mezuza. Raise the child at an early age to reach the height of the Mitzva instead of lowering the Mitzva to the child!

3) When asked about incentives (prizes and the like) for children, **R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz** said that people think the bad part of incentives is because of the children that lose. He commented that those children who win are worse off since it builds arrogance in addition to the pressure they feel to win every time.

4) At his own Sheva Brachos in the Mir in Yerushalayim, the Chassan- a devoted learner- related that when he was in fifth grade there was an expensive watch of a classmate that was stolen when the boy took it off to play ball. Since no one admitted to it, the Rebbe lined up all thirty boys against the wall and checked each boy's pockets, telling them not to turn around until he gave permission. The Rebbe discovered the watch in the pocket of the third boy in the line. Expecting rebuke, the boy was stunned when the Rebbe went through the pockets of all thirty boys since he didn't want to embarrass this boy as in this way no one would know who stole it. The boy admired this Rebbe for what he did and said he wants to be like

him. This Chassan was the boy who stole the watch. He expressed his gratitude to the Rebbe as if the Rebbe hadn't done what he did, it could be this boy would have continued on this bad path.

5) In the 1950s, there was a Yeshiva comprised of fifteen boys where three had a negative influence on the other twelve. The Menahel approached the **Satmar Rebbe** asking if he should throw out these three boys from the school. His response: throw out the twelve good boys because they will go to a better Yeshiva. If you kick out the three boys, they won't go to any Yeshiva.

6) The grandson of **R' Yochanan of Tolna** once walked into the room where they were having the Seder, holding Chametz in his hand. Instead of losing his composure, the Rebbe said to the grandchild Chazal say that when one finds Chametz on Yom Tov, he should cover it with a utensil and burn it after Yom Tov. How often do we have the opportunity to keep this Chazal? Thanks to you, we are able to observe this Halacha! And so, he was joyous with the Mitzva!

Protect Others From Embarrassment

We are told in parasha Tzav that the burnt offering and the sin offering were to be slaughtered in the same place.

The Talmud Yershalmi in Yevamos says this was in order to protect the ones who sinned from embarrassment as people would not know who was for the sin offering or the burnt offering. From here we can see how important it is to save someone from embarrassment, shame or discomfort.

Similarly the **Chofetz chaim** in his sefer on the laws of Loshon Hora says that a person listening to Loshon Hora when in a group setting should be careful not to rebuke his fellow, rather he should wait until later when they are alone to rebuke Him as to not cause Him embarrassment over his sin!

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]



The Limitless Love that Hashem Has for Us

כֹּה אָמַר ה' זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד נְעוּרַיִךְ אַהֲבַת כְּלוּלֹתָיִךְ לֶכְתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה

"Thus said Hashem: I recall for you the kindness of your youth … following Me into the wilderness, into a barren land (without food planted)" (Yirmiyahu 2:2)

This Shabbos, the Shabbos before Pesach, is known as Shabbos Hagadol, the Great Shabbos. One reason that it is known as the Great Shabbos is due to a great miracle that Hashem performed for us. Hashem had commanded the Jews to take a sheep on this Shabbos and tie it to their bedposts. (Shmos 12:3). This was to ensure that the sheep was unblemished, in preparation for it to be sacrificed four days later, on the eve of Pesach.

The Jews were frightened. How could they take a sheep, which was sacred to the Egyptians, and tell the Egyptians that in four days they would be sacrificing it? The Egyptians would surely stone them! The Egyptians **did** want to harm the Jews. Hashem, in His loving kindness, performed a miracle and the Egyptians were powerless to harm the Jews.

When we showed our faith in Hashem*, by tying the sheep to our beds, *Hashem protected us.

When we left Egypt, we showed our total faith in Hashem by following Moshe and Aharon into a barren dessert, without enough food to survive. "*Thus said Hashem: I recall for you the kindness of your youth … following Me into the wilderness, into a barren land* (without food planted)" (Yirmiyahu 2:2). Because of

that, ***Hashem felt such love for us, as a bride feels under her chuppah*** (**Metzudas Dovid**).

The **Radak** explains that Hashem feels that same love for us now. Even though Hashem must punish us for our sins, we will not be destroyed, and our enemies will be punished. **Rashi** explains that Hashem longs to forgive us and show compassion to us, as soon as we repent from our sins.

Hashem's love for us is endless. Hashem wants everything to be perfect for us, even the "small" things.

The pasuk tells us, "*Today you are leaving in the month of Aviv*" (Shmos 13:4). **Rashi** asks, why was it necessary for the Torah to say this, as we already know in which month Hashem took us out of Egypt?

Rashi explains, Hashem is pointing out His extra act of chesed to us.

What was the point of that extra chesed? Would that even have made a difference to the Jewish People? We were enslaved for 210 years! The Egyptians had tortured us and had murdered many of our babies. Hashem freed us with great miracles. We would have been ecstatic to leave, even in the middle of the winter!

That extra chesed was important to Hashem. **Hashem loves us so much that he wanted everything to be perfect for us**. Even the weather had to be perfect. As **Rashi** states, it was at a time of year that wasn't too cold, too hot or rainy. **We are so lucky that Hashem loves us so much**. Hashem has that same degree of love for us, even today. Hashem waits impatiently for us to repent from our sins, so that He can again shower us with total goodness.

I saw a beautiful illustration of Hashem's kindness in **Rav Pam** on Chumash by Rabbi Sholom Smith. The Midrash (Bamidbar 34:2) quotes a story about a poor, starving man. He wanted to buy a small roll which cost ten cents, but he only had nine cents. Someone passed

by and gave him a penny, enabling him to buy the roll. That food saved his life. Hashem said that the kind-hearted donor would be rewarded at a time when his soul would be about to depart from his body. Why would Hashem wait to repay his generosity right before he dies? Why not reward him sooner?

The Dubno Maggid, in his sefer Ohel Yaakov (Bamidbar 25:35), explains that the one penny made it possible for the poor man to buy a roll which calmed his hunger and extended his life. The poor man did not face starvation again for hours. With the one penny, the donor had extended the poor man's life for that number of hours. Hashem stores those hours for a time that the donor truly needs them, giving him those extra hours of life. For example, the time right after a massive heart attack or serious accident is very critical. If the patient pulls through this dangerous period, he will often recover fully. Similarly, with great kindness, Hashem "saves" those hours of reward for a time that the donor desperately needs it. Those few hours can lead to many more years of life.

Rav Pam once developed a very high fever. He suddenly felt very weak and was about to faint. A neighbour heard the commotion and ran into his house, holding a lemon. With his last strength, Rav Pam bit into the lemon and sucked-out the juice. The lemon temporarily revived him. When Rav Pam felt better, he recalled an encounter that he had about 25 years earlier. He had visited a friend in a nursing home when he passed a patient who was almost totally paralyzed. Rav Pam peeled an orange and put it into the man's mouth, piece by piece. The man hungrily sucked the juice from the orange. His eyes conveyed his intense feelings of gratitude. Hashem had saved the reward for Rav Pam's actions for 25 years, until he really needed it!

This week's Haftarah is special for Shabbos HaGadol. It is from the prophet Malachi. It announces the final redemption (how timely). Hashem says that He will send Eliyahu the prophet one day prior to

the arrival of Moshiach. Eliyahu will try to convince the people to return to Hashem with all their hearts before Moshiach's arrival (Malachi 3:23-24).

May we once again show our total faith in Hashem. May we all return to Hashem wholeheartedly, bringing Hashem's total compassion and total chesed back to us. May we then be blessed to see the arrival of Moshiach, speedily in our time.

The Source of Our Money



The Ben Ish Chai, Chacham Yosef Chaim, zt"L Of Baghdad, (1835-1909)

The *Gemara* in *Brachos* (10b) says that if one eats before *Davening*, Hashem asks, "First you are haughty, and then you are *Mikabel Ol Malchus Shamayim*, you accept the Yoke of Hashem?"

What is the connection between eating before *Davening* and *Ga'avah*, haughtiness? The *Ben Ish Chai* in *Sefer Ben Yehoyada* answers with a *Mashal*. There was once a person who was awarded by the king with income to last him for an entire year.

Every day on his way to the market to purchase food for his family, this man would pass by the king's courtyard and stand there for five minutes. Only after he stood still would he proceed to the market. His friend saw him doing this and asked him why he bothered to do this? The man answered, "Even though I take the money from my own pocket to go to the market, it doesn't really belong to me. It is the king's money that was given to me in the beginning of the year.

"However, my entire family watches me take the money out of my wallet and they are likely to think that the money really belongs to

me. Therefore, I make sure to pass by the king's courtyard on the way to the market so that I and my entire family will not forget where the money came from!"

The *Ben Ish Chai* says that it is similar with *Davening*. We receive all our livelihood and provisions from Hashem. However we don't actually take our money from *Shamayim*. It is in our wallet and our bank account, and it comes from our salary or profits, and we are likely to forget the true Source of the money, that it is all from Hashem.

Therefore, we come to the King's courtyard— the *Shul*, every day before we eat, in order to remember that Hashem is the real Source of all we have. If one eats first before *Davening*, then when he later arrives in *Shul*, Hashem asks, "First you eat and think the food is your own, and now you come to *Daven* and thank Me?!"

It is for this reason that we *Daven* before we eat. To show that we acknowledge that our food and money are all from Hashem, and we are not haughty to forget this! *(Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*



וְהֵרִים מִמֶּנּוּ בְּקֻמְצוֹ מִסֹּלֶת הַמִּנְחָה 6:8 ***And he shall lift out of it in his fist, from the fine flour of the meal offering***

A young child accompanies his mother to the grocery store. There, he watches in fascination, as the storekeeper measures his wares on a scale and then, with a wink of his eye and a smile at the child, he throws a bit extra on top, as an added bonus. The good-hearted storekeeper bundles up the wares and mother and child depart with a friendly wave.

Next stop: the drugstore. The child watches intently as his mother hands her prescription to the pharmacist. No smile or nod here; the pharmacist is serious and contemplative as he stares at the paper. Then, he putters a bit in the back before coming back with a few

bottles of pills. Carefully, he extracts an exact amount from one bottle, and an equally exact amount from a second. The child is transfixed as the man works with furrowed concentration until the potion is just right. When he's done, he hands over the medication and moves on to his next customer.

What is the difference between the two? When the grocer adds a little extra to the food, he is being generous and nice. But if the pharmacist does this, he is being reckless and dangerous, for the extra dosage could kill someone!



The posuk says **בְּקֻמְצֹו**- "three fingers full." A Korban Mincha (meal-offering) is invalid if the flour does not fill the kohen's three fingers precisely. No more no less.

Says R' Zalman Sorotzkin ZT"L(Oznaim L'Torah) since many of the concepts, details and reasons for korbonos are beyond our human grasp, we cannot fathom why there must be exactly three fingers full of flour. However, we believe that if this is how it says it in the Torah, then this is how it must be. Any change, the minutest adding or subtracting, could very well be dangerous to our spiritual health.

Shabbos Treasures -The Precious Gift of Shabbos

Chazal teach us that on Shabbos we get a Neshamah Yeseirah, an extra neshamah just for Shabbos. **The B'nei Yisas'char** quotes the **Rama MiPano** (Piskei T'shuvos 185), that the main enjoyment of the Neshamah Yeseirah on Shabbos is the bentching of seudas Shabbos!

Hashem Has Extra Special Love for…



לֹא תֵאָפֶה חָמֵץ חֶלְקָם נְתַתִּי אֹתָהּ מֵאִשַּׁי קֹדֶשׁ קָדָשִׁים הִוא כַּחַטָּאת וְכָאָשָׁם

"It [the Mincha offering] shall not be baked with leaven…it is most holy (kodesh kodoshim) as the sin offering and the guilt offering." (6:10)

There was a Jewish immigrant who came to the United States from Europe in the 1920s and refused to work on Shabbos. Each week, he informed his boss on Friday that he would not be coming to work on Saturday. The boss warned him that, if he did not come in on Saturday, he should not come on Monday or ever again. Thus, he would begin each week looking for a new job.

At one point several months passed without a job. The man was unable to pay his rent, and he and his family were evicted from their apartment. As he, his wife and his children were leaving their apartment, the building's custodian saw them and felt bad for them. He told them that there was a coal room near the heating system in the basement where they could live until their situation improved. Having no other choice, the family moved into the coal room and lived there.

One day, the children were playing outside the building, with their faces covered with soot from the coal room. A wealthy Jewish man passed by, and when he saw them, he assumed they were African-American children, as their faces were black. But as he drew closer, he heard them speaking Yiddish. When he heard their story, he was very moved. He pulled out his chequebook, asked the couple how

much they needed to get set up in a new apartment, and wrote out a check.

The wife turned to the man and asked if he was shomer Shabbos. "I used to be," the man said, "but after I came to this country and started earning money, I gave up Shabbos." "Then I cannot take your money," the woman said. "What?" the man asked. "What do you mean?" "We are sacrificing for the sake of Shabbos," she explained. "We got into this situation because we refused to work on Shabbos. We will not take money from somebody who works on Shabbos."

The man went home and told his wife what had transpired. She became very upset and said, "Remember, when we first married, we, too, observed Shabbos. But then we became wealthy and gave it up. I want to keep Shabbos again".

The man agreed. He returned to the couple, told them that he would now be keeping Shabbos, and not only gave them a cheque, but hired the husband to work in his business. The husband accepted and went on to become financially successful. (from Living Shabbos by Rabbi David Sutton)

Whenever a Korban Mincha, a meal offering consisting of flour, was brought it had the status of "most holy" – "kodesh kodoshim". That was so, even if it was just brought as a free-will offering and not as sin offering. **The Abarbanel questions** why that should be so. He answers that a Mincha offering was brought by a poor person who could not afford to offer an animal as a sacrifice. This korban brought by a poor person was especially cherished and beloved to Hashem. That is because of the financial difficulty the poor person went through to even bring this less expensive sacrifice. Thus, it is always considered "most holy" – "kodesh kodoshim".

We see a similar idea in the Mishna, in Tractate Bikurim (3:8). The rich bring their first fruits to Jerusalem in silver and gold baskets which they bring back home with them. The poor bring them in baskets woven with willow reeds. The baskets of the poor are

accepted by the kohanim, together with the fruit in them. Why do the kohanim take the baskets of the poor yet return the baskets of the rich?

The Malbim explains that the poor probably made the baskets themselves, especially to place the first fruits in them. Since the poor went to the extra bother, the self-sacrifice, their baskets are accepted by the kohanim. The baskets of the rich were bought and didn't involve the same measure of self-sacrifice.

All of us have many opportunities to make personal sacrifices to Hashem. It may be sacrificing in order to learn Torah, to keep Shabbos, to show respect to certain people, to do acts of kindness or to dress more modestly.

We see the extra special love that Hashem has for those who make personal sacrifices in order to serve Him. In Hashem's eyes, these people are truly special.

For Love of Money!



צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא

"[Hashem told Moshe to] "COMMAND" Aharon and his children about the laws of the korban Olah…" (Vayikrah 6:2)

Rashi questions the terminology used by Hashem. In most instances, Moshe was instructed to "**speak to**" Aharon. Yet here it says "**command**". Why? Rashi explains that the word "command" was used to give Aharon and his descendants extra encouragement and reinforcement to do this mitzvah. Rabbi Shimon

said that extra encouragement was needed in situations that involve monetary loss. Unlike other korbanos, the korban Olah was totally burnt on the altar, and the Kohanim did not receive any benefit from its meat. Thus, it was a loss of money for them. The obvious question is, why would such a tzadik as Aharon, need the extra encouragement? Would love of money cause **him** to refuse to bring a korban Olah??

We see in Parshas Behaloscha that Aharon was saddened that neither he nor his shevet was asked to participate in the dedication of the Mishkan. Only when Hashem told Aharon that he would have a more important job – of lighting the Menorah, did Aharon feel better. That was because Aharon cherished doing mitzvos. If mitzvos were so beloved by him, why did he need the extra encouragement to sacrifice the korban Olah?

The fact that Aharon still needed the extra encouragement, teaches us the power that money has over us. We all have an inborn desire for money. Even a great and holy person such as Aharon could be slightly affected by that desire. That could cause him to hesitate ever so slightly before sacrificing a korban Olah. Certainly, this desire for money can impact the rest of us. It can cause us to rationalize less than honest behavior. What a difficult challenge we have!

There's a story of a vicious anti-Semite who hated Jews, without ever having met a Jew. Once, he had business dealings with a specific individual and was impressed by that person's integrity and helpfulness. When that person told him he was a Jew, the anti-Semite couldn't believe it. Sometime later, the anti-Semite visited the Jew and thanked him for changing his perspective about all Jews. He was now a lover of Jews.

In **Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky**'s town in Europe, a Jew made a Kiddush Hashem by returning the extra change given to him by the postmaster. The postmaster thought it was a fluke. He started

testing other Jews by intentionally giving them extra change. They all returned the extra money. Their actions made such a great Kiddush Hashem. When the Nazis entered the town, there was only one non-Jew who worked tirelessly to save Jews. It was the postmaster! ***We must be so careful in our business dealings or any dealings involving money. We must always have integrity in our business dealings with both Jews and non-Jews.***

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה 6:6



This posuk is referring to the fire that burned constantly upon the mizbeach (altar) in the Mishkan. **The Rambam** indicates that this is a positive commandment for a fire to be continuously burning on the altar, including Shabbos. Even though fire would descend from Heaven to consume the sacrifices, we are commanded to bring our own "hedyot" common flame.

Explains the **Shlah Hakadosh, R' Yeshaya Halevi Hurwitz zt"l**, these words are a very important message for every Jew. A shulchan, a table, is compared to a mizbeach. In every Jewish home, it is around the shulchan that much time is spent during Shabbosos, Yomim Tovim and other opportunities to eat together. At every single gathering around the family "altar" a fire must burn. What type of fire are we referring to? The fire of Torah should always burn at every meal! When people get together and talk about

politics, or even worse, talk Lashon Hara about other people, and not a single Torah thought is said, it is deemed "a gathering of fools" and a wasted opportunity to uplift physicality to meaningful and spiritual heights.

In this world, people can get so involved in day-to-day physical activities like working, eating, running errands, shopping, exercising and sleeping. People can get so bogged-down in the less important areas of life and completely forget about the main thing: Torah! Torah! Torah! This includes, Torah thoughts, Torah ideals, and a Torah outlook which must envelope every aspect of life.

In fact, it is every aspect of life that should be illuminated with the light of Torah. Especially at this time of year, when we are all busy preparing for Pesach, let us not forget the purpose and goal of all our preparations. Pesach is not about cleaning or clothing, and it's not about food. It is about passing over the true Torah hashkafa to the next generation. The only way we can give Torah to our children, is if it is constantly burning within us!

The Apter Rov, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel zt"l (Ohev Yisroel) would say:

"Nisan is referred to as **מקיפות הגאולה** - '***Surrounded with salvation.***' This word can also mean 'borrowed,' for in Nisan, the Jewish People can 'borrow' salvation. Even someone who is not worthy of salvation can achieve it anyway, for in Heaven there is always hope that in the future he will mend his ways and deserve to be redeemed. Nisan has this marvellous potential ever since the Geulah. For then the Jewish people were granted salvation from Egypt even though they did not have enough merit to deserve it, because in Heaven it was known that they would later have the merit of accepting the Torah."

Torah Tavlin - Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מָקוֹם טָהוֹר

Every morning the Kohen would walk into the Bais HaMikdash and



the first task he did was the removal of the ashes that accumulated from all the Korbanos consumed throughout the previous night. **The Chovos Halevavos** explains that the Torah did not want the Kohen's exalted position to go to his head. He could become arrogant and start to believe that he is better than all the others. Therefore, the first duty - taking out the ashes - is designed to humble him. And just as the Torah is concerned that the Kohen's ego shouldn't be inflated, it is also a concern that other people's egos should not become deflated.

Chazal tells us that when people brought Bikkurim (first fruits) to the Bais HaMikdash, the rich would bring them in baskets of gold and silver, while the poor would bring them in baskets of woven reeds. When the rich stepped forward, the Kohanim would take the fruit from the basket and then return the baskets to them. But when the poor presented theirs, the Kohen would take the fruits together with the basket. Why did the Kohen differentiate between the rich and the poor donors?

My machshava is, it was done for the protection of the poor. The rich people usually have magnificent fruits; their Bikkurim offerings were lavish. When the Kohen took their nice luscious fruit out of the basket it was a sight to behold. But when the poor man with lesser

fruit, would bring his, had the Kohen taken the fruits out of the basket for all to see, it might cause him embarrassment. Therefore, he kept the fruits in the basket, out of sight, so the poor man could maintain his dignity.

We must always be concerned with other people's respect and feelings. May we all be zoche that our children should grow up in the ways of the Kohen, treating their family and friends with dignity, always "taking the basket with the fruit in it." The zechus of Torah learning and adhering to this important life-lesson will no doubt hasten our Geula.



A distinguished and accomplished Talmid Chacham once came to the home of **R' Aharon Leib Steinman zt"l** with the following question: He was offered a "shteller" (position) in a Yeshivah for younger students. It was a good job, he told the Rav, but he was hesitant to accept since he feels that he has much more potential inside him and can accomplish much more by teaching older students. Should he take the position being offered right now, or should he hold out and wait until a better job offering opened up?

R' Aharon Leib mulled over the question for a moment and then asked a few pertinent questions about the man's personal situation. The two proceeded to discuss the matter for a few more minutes until the Talmid Chacham was satisfied. He stood up to leave and shake the Rav's hand, but he was astonished when R' Aharon Leib also stood up and began to follow him to the door to escort him out.

Quite embarrassed and confused, he tried to convince the elderly Rosh Yeshivah that it was completely unnecessary and not befitting of his honour. R' Aharon Leib looked the man in the eye and said, "Why do you seek a more distinguished position? Is it because you want the kavod? Look, I'll give you kavod right here!"

Offering a korban is an expression of humility, since many korbanos are brought as a kapara for a sin and teshuva is predicated on the ability to humble oneself before Hashem. Even korbanos which are brought as an expression of thanks require a sense of humility. One who views his success as a result of his own accomplishments will not acknowledge that it is Hashem who really has bestowed upon him these gifts; he will feel no need to offer thanks. A Korban Todah, by contrast, is the ultimate expression of the realization that we are humbled by the goodness He performs for us.

Halacha L'Maaseh – Rabbi Baruch Hershfeld



Maos Chitim. The RM'A in the beginning of Hilchos Pesach writes that one should donate to funds that help poor people have their needs for Pesach. Doing so causes Hashem to help the donor have all his needs.

Cleaning. When cleaning for Pesach, and working to maintain a "chametz-free" household, one should have in mind: That he must use the same care and vigilance in keeping his neshama. This, of course, means guarding and self-disciplining one's eyes, ears and mouth to the negativity around him. On Pesach, one should focus on the fact that the power of our forefathers' survival in the filth and muck of Mitzrayim, was "pumped in" to them with the purity of Yosef HaTzaddik who guarded his eyes from all impropriety the whole time

he was a ruler in Egypt. The act and physical toil of cleaning for Pesach, is in itself an atonement and purification, for anything that is undesirable in the past.

Shabbos HaGadol. The Shabbos before Pesach is not just another day before Pesach - it is still Shabbos. It should not be put into a back position merely because it comes just before Pesach. In fact, this may be one reason that it is called Shabbos HaGadol, to remind us that notwithstanding its position in the year, it must be given the respect it deserves, and we should not take away from its kavod or oneg with any inferior meals or zemiros, by missing usual Shabbos guests, or in any way be lacking Divrei Torah relating to the Parsha.

Bedikas Chometz. Even if one goes away for Pesach, he should be sure to designate an agent to be bodek chametz and to be mevatel and sell his chametz as well. Going away does not create 'an exemption' from chametz. R' Belsky zt"l suggested that one search for chametz as if he were searching for a valuable coin or piece of jewellery. Would you shrug your shoulder and not make the extra effort when you realize how much is at stake?

Burning of Chametz. When one burns his chametz on Erev Pesach, he should have in mind to try to rid himself of at least one undesirable flaw in his conduct. It might be anger, conceit, lack of concentration, etc. I once heard in the name of one of the Litvishe Roshei Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel, a segula, that one should write on a piece of paper one negative aspect of his conduct and throw it into the fire together with his chametz.

"The rewards of a life devoted to Hashem are not limited to the afterlife, but include a sense of peace, purpose, and fulfillment in his world as well." – Sefer Chovos Halevavos

Hashgacha Pratis - Casriel Silver - No More Excuses



I just heard an incredibly beautiful story that I want to share with you. As many of you know, there were two young ladies that went missing on Shabbos [9th April 2016]. B"H they were found. But on Motzei Shabbos there was a group of men who set out from Boca Raton to go to Orlando to help in the search for these two young ladies.

Someone rented a very large van, and a bunch of people pull up at three o'clock in the morning so they can help find these girls. All of a sudden, a fellow in a wheelchair comes to the search van along with everyone else. The driver of the van looks at him and says, "I am so sorry. I don't have a handicap van. I can't take you along on the search". He said, "I know that". The driver said, "You know that?" And he said, "Yeah. But I said to myself, I have to do whatever I can. And I can come up to the van. That is what I can do. Maybe I cannot get on to the van, and maybe I can't even help with the search. But I have to do what I can do. And so I came here because that's as far as I can go".

The fellow, the driver of the van told over the story, as he was crying and overwhelmed with emotion to see such mesiras nefesh; such unbelievable devotion and dedication from one Jew to another.

It needs to serve as a mussar haskil for all of us. We need to do whatever we can. There are no excuses in this world for not trying. There is no doubt in my mind, that it is partially because of his mesiras nefesh that these girls were found. It is because he did his

utmost that the Ribono Shel Olam says, "You know what? I'll take over from here. I'll make the rest happen". And B"H the two girls were saved.

There are a lot of people to help. There are many Jews who need help, and we can't do everything for everyone. But we can do the most that we can do. No more excuses. Let's get to it. Have a great day and a great rest of your week.

The Temptations of Money By Rabbi Y. Gefen

"And Hashem said to Moshe, saying; Command (*tzav*) Aaron and his sons, to say; this is the Law of the burnt offering..."

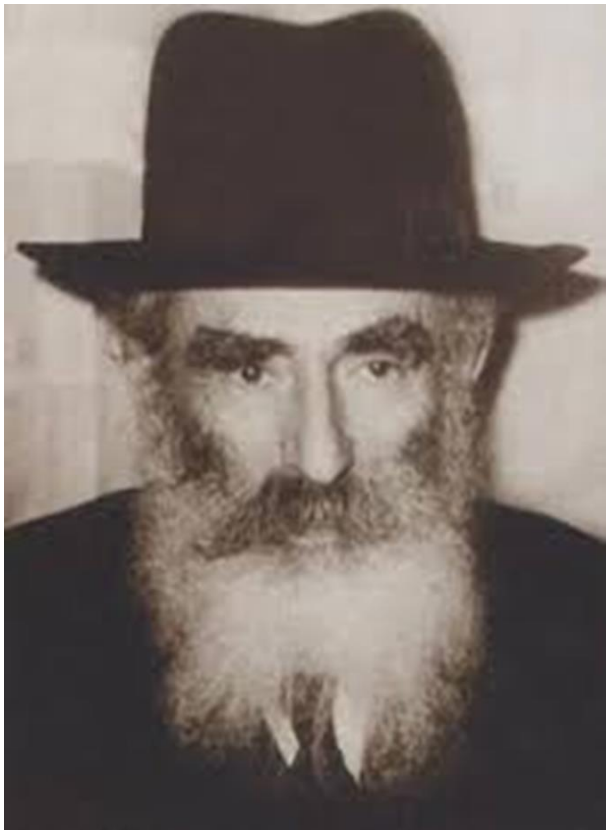


The love of money is evil

The Parsha begins with Hashem instructing Moses to command the Kohen Gadol regarding the burnt offering, the *Olah*. The Midrash notes the use of the word, '*tzav*' in the verse; normally the Torah would say 'tell Aaron and his sons...' Why here did the Torah use the stronger language of '*tzav*'?

The Midrash, quoted by Rashi, explains that the word '*tzav*' implies an extra sense of *zerizus* (alacrity) and that there was an extra necessity for this stronger language with regard to the Olah offering.

Rebbe Shimon explains that there is an element of financial loss involved with this offering, therefore there was the concern that the Kohen Gadol would be more hesitant in fulfilling this mitzvah. Accordingly, it used the stronger language of '*tzav*' in order to warn the Kohanim of the extra need for alacrity in bringing the *Olah*.



Rav Yechezkel Levenstein zt"l points out a remarkable lesson from this Midrash: The Kohen Gadol was, in most instances, the most righteous and holy man of the generation. Moreover, the Talmud tells us that one of the prerequisites for being the Kohen Gadol is that he must be very wealthy.

Based on the Kohen Gadol's great righteousness and wealth, it would have seemed unnecessary for the Torah to be concerned about a possible lack of alacrity as a result of a relatively small financial loss. Rav Levenstein explains that the Torah is teaching us that even the Kohen Gadol is subject to the powerful drive of love for money.

Our Sages emphasize the power of the desire for money in a number of other places. One striking example of this is the Talmud in Bava Basra that discusses the most commonly transgressed sins. "Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, the majority of people [stumble] in theft, a minority [stumble] in immorality ..."

Rashi explains that it does not mean that the majority of people engage in blatant theft, **rather they *rationalize* during their business dealings to withhold the money that others deserve**. This piece of Talmud teaches us how everyone is at risk of being enticed by the *yetzer hara* for money to justify dishonest behaviour that constitutes theft according to Torah law.

Even the most righteous people felt the power of the *yetzer hara* for acquisition of money. The great sage, **Rav Yisroel Salanter** once visited the home of a very wealthy man. The man had to step out of the room for a few minutes, leaving Rav Yisroel alone. When

the man returned, Rav Yisroel was no longer in the room. He finally found Rav Yisroel standing outside the house. Rav Yisroel explained that there was a large amount of uncounted money in that room and he did not want to be alone with that money.

He explained by bringing the aforementioned Talmud that the majority of people stumble in theft and only a minority stumble in immorality. There is a prohibition of '*yichud*' to be alone with a woman because of the concern that one may not be able to overcome his temptation for immorality.

Rav Yisroel concluded that if there is a prohibition of *yichud* for fear of immorality of which only a minority stumble, then all the more so the *yichud* prohibition should apply with money, an area in which a majority stumble.

If someone such as Rav Yisroel Salanter felt a need for extra boundaries to protect himself from the temptations of money, then surely everyone needs to be extra vigilant of this powerful *yetzer hara*.

There are a number of areas in which such vigilance is necessary. Firstly, the lesson of this Parsha is that one must be careful that fear of loss of money does not harmfully affect one's fulfillment of mitzvot. There are numerous commandments that involve significant expenses, and one should strive to maintain the same alacrity in performing such mitzvot as in less expensive ones.

Moreover, one should be aware to maintain consistency in his spending on commandments in comparison to his expenses on material comforts. If one elaborately spends on his vacations, home and car, then he should show a similar desire to spend money on commandments in general and giving charity in particular.

Another way in which love of money can hinder one's Divine Service is that in areas of potential monetary loss a person may be tempted to 'bend' the laws of the Torah. Thus, an otherwise God-fearing

person, may be inclined to avoid asking halachic questions to rabbis in areas that pertain to monetary issues.

We see from the warning to the Kohen Gadol of the powerful effect that desire for money has on even the greatest people. May we all merit to only use money for the good.

Hashem Pays Back

Hashem constantly puts tests in front of us. Each one is an opportunity to gain from. When we overcome our natural inclinations and make the right decision, we are the beneficiaries. Many times, Hashem will make it appear that by making the right choice, it caused a loss or damage. However, that is also part of the test. The fact is, every good deed only brings blessing, which Hashem brings about at the proper time. However, sometimes, we do see immediate benefit from our deeds. When that happens, it gives us chizuk for the times that it is not so obvious.



One of the directors of the organization, "Yad Eliezer," told me a story that happened recently. They own two wedding halls in Israel, which they rent to poor families at a discounted price.

There were two girls getting married the same day, "Sarah," and "Esther." Sarah booked first and received the hall that had room for more guests. Esther really wanted that bigger hall. She called

Sarah and asked if she would be willing to switch. Sarah politely declined, explaining that she also wanted a big wedding with many guests. They parted, wishing each other well. However, after thinking more about it, Sarah decided, as an act of Chesed, to call Esther back and offer her the bigger hall. Esther was ecstatic. The day of the wedding came, and Sarah was overcome with a sense of peace and calm. Giving the larger hall made her focus more on her future husband and the life of Chesed they would lead together.

On that day, the director of Yad Eliezer received a phone call from a man who said that on that day he was marrying off his younger daughter, and as a token of appreciation to Hashem, he wanted to pay the wedding expenses of a poor bride in Israel. The director said, "We have two weddings today, one in the big hall and one in the small one." The man said that he would like to pay for the wedding in the small hall.

That night Sarah received a cheque for the entire cost of the wedding. Giving of herself for her friend turned out to bring her immediate benefit.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz, *Shlit"a*, relates regarding his mother that on *Erev Pesach* she would not allow her husband to do any work in the house. She explained this to her children:

"We are anxiously awaiting and believing that *Moshiach* is coming and that we will have the *Bais HaMikdash*, and your father is a *Kohein* and he will get to serve in the *Bais HaMikdash* and offer *Korbanos*. Therefore, I always want to be accustomed to preparing for Pesach without his help. Also, I want him to be ready to go to the *Bais HaMikdash* at a moment's notice!"

Drush V'Chiddush

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה 6:6

"Ten miracles were performed for our fathers in the Temple .... Rain never extinguished the fire of the arranged wood (on the mizbeach); Wind never prevailed over the pillar of smoke (that rose from the mizbeach)" *(Avos 5-7)*



The Mishna recounts how the fifth of the ten miracles in the Bais HaMikdash was that rain never extinguished the fire on the mizbeach. It continued to burn even as the skies opened up and poured down upon it. The obvious question that comes to mind is: why was this miracle even necessary? Why did Hashem cause it to rain over the Bais HaMikdash only to have to create a miracle to show that the fire on the mizbeach was not extinguished? Chazal teach that Hashem does not make miracles for no reason. If so, couldn't He have just caused it not to rain altogether?

The answer, explains **R' Chaim Volozhiner zt"l**, is that there is a very fundamental lesson to be derived from this miracle that Hashem performed in the holy Temple. A person must always remain steady in his Avodas Hashem. He must remain firm and strong and not give in to any disturbances that might interfere with his service to his Creator. Even when a person will get "rained" upon by whatever the circumstances may be, he must never allow them to "wash" him away by the disturbances all around him. Rain (**גשם**) refers to materialism **גשמיות** while fire (**אש**) refers to the Torah.

This is the message the Torah is conveying: A person must never let the materialism - the **גשם** (rain) - of this world overtake him, even in the slightest way. **אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה** - The fire of a

person's Torah, as well as his Avodas Hashem, should burn bright and never be extinguished - even slightly - by the rain, the **גשם (גשמיות)** that may look so enticing!



הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר ***"Which burns on the altar from night until morning"*** (6:2)

What does the burnt offering atone for? On the neglect of a positive commandment. Our sages say that there are 248 positive commandments and the Mitzvah of a burnt offering is among them. If so, then the burnt offering atones for the other 247 Mitzvot.

Rebbi Rachamim Chai Chayuta HaCohen Zt'l from Jerba writes that we have a hint to this in this verse. The last letters from each of words in this verse **המזבח כל הלילה עד הבקר** – is equal to the numerical value of 247. It is telling us a burnt offering atones for 247 Mitzvot (Ma'ayan Hashavua)

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה ***A perpetual fire shall be burning on the altar, it shall not go out*** *(Lev. 6:6)*

A Jew must be careful to preserve the spark of his attachment to G-d throughout the day, thus ensuring that the love he feels for the Creator can be easily rekindled at any time. If, however, the spark is allowed to cool off, the "fire" must be re-lit whenever he wishes to pray or study Torah. *(The Baal Shem Tov)*

Torah Tavlin



R' Tzvi Hirsch Marinover shlit'a would say: **צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה** - The gematria of the word **צו** and the name **המן** are equal (with the kolel). The lesson is: just as Rashi tells us that 'Tzav' refers to a commandment **לדורות** - 'for all generations,' so too there is a wicked Haman who attempts to harm the Jewish people in every generation. But if we keep every **ציווי** - every commandment the way we should, Hashem watches over and protects us from every Haman and every threat!"

R' Aharon Yaakov Greenberg ZT"L (quoted in Iturei Torah) would say:



The custom to recite Haggadah shel Pesach on Shabbos HaGadol is based on the fact that we do not blow shofar on Rosh Hashana that falls out on Shabbos. Rabba tells us it is because since people are not fluent in the mitzvah of shofar, one might carry his shofar outside and bring it to an expert to teach him how to blow.

On Pesach which falls out on Shabbos, this same concern would apply. One who is not fluent in the Haggadah will carry his Haggadah to a rabbi to teach him how to

correctly read the words and thereby violate the Shabbos. It became customary to "practice" reading the Haggadah a few days before - and thus the minhag to say it on Shabbos HaGadol was born!"

אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכְבֶּה 6:6



All his life, the great mashgiach **R' Elya Lopian ZT"L** would always rise very early in the morning to learn for a few hours before davening. Even when he was quite old and weak, he never failed to alter his routine or change his custom. A former student once asked him, "Rebbi, why must you wake so early each morning? Its not even healthy and you are not young anymore. Why not sleep a little longer and rest your weary body?"

R' Elya shook his head. "It's specifically for this reason that I continue to wake up early. You see, I am an old man and soon it will come my turn to stand before the Heavenly Tribunal and they will ask me if I was careful to keep all the halachos of the Shulchan Aruch. If I say yes, they will pull out a Shulchan Aruch and open it to the first page where it states: **יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו** - ***'He should strengthen himself to wake up (early) in the morning to serve his Creator.'*** What? I should ruin my eternal judgment on the first page?"

The Torah is compared to an **אש תמיד** - ***"Eternal flame."*** Just as the fire on the Altar in the Mishkan was never extinguished, so too, a

person's fire and zeal to study Torah and immerse himself in it, should never burn out. No matter how old or young one is, he should always keep his flame burning bright.

A rich investment banker on a business trip, was at the pier of a small coastal village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked.



Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The banker complimented the fisherman on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them. The fisherman replied, "Only a little while." The investment banker then asked, "Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more fish?" The fisherman said, "With this, thank G-d, I have more than enough to support my family's needs."

The banker couldn't fathom the thought of it. He asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?" The fisherman said, "Well, I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a break with my wife, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play music with my closest friends. Thank G-d, I have a full and busy life."

The investment banker scoffed, "I have a degree in business and I could help you. You obviously have a talent for catching fish. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you could sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control

the product, processing and distribution. With all this money, you could then afford to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to a big city where you can compete in big business and from where you will run your ever-expanding enterprise."

The simple-minded fisherman was confused. "Um, okay, but how long will all this take?" To which the banker replied, "Oh, not more than 15 to 20 years." "Okay, and then what?" asked the fisherman . The banker laughed and said that's the best part. "When the time is right you would sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You would make millions."

The fisherman was still having trouble comprehending. "Millions? Okay, and then what?" The investment banker stopped smiling and thought about it. He finally understood the fisherman's simple logic and the way in which he was grateful and content with all that he had.

"Well, I guess, then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take breaks with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play music with your closest friends!"

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick

The פָּסוּק says אִם עַל תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ – "***If he brings them for a korban toda***."

Why does the פָּסוּק use a plural expression?

Rabbi Akiva Eiger זצ"ל answers that it comes to teach us that if a person brings a korban to show his gratitude to Hashem for the good Hashem did for him, Hashem will do more good and give him the opportunity to bring more korban todas.

[Dvar Torah from **ספר פרשה פשעטיל**]

Rabbi Mordechai Twerski -A New Season, A New Perspective



One of the most important things we can do when reciting Modeh Ani in the morning is focusing on one simple thought. As the Torah tells us, after Hashem initially created Adam and Chava as one unified entity, He split them into two. In essence then, a husband and wife are two halves of the same neshama. When we therefore wake up in the morning, we ought to look over at our spouse and only then recite the words, "Thank you for returning my neshama." It is only together with our spouse's neshama that we are complete.

With this attitude, much of the marital conflict which occurs will be diminished. For after all, we cannot be in conflict with two halves of the same self.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"Do not feel offended if you were not seated at a place of honour in the room.

Learn from the Mezuzah – it is holier than you yet never complains about being placed by the door!" – Harav Shmuel Eliyahu of Zevalin

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS TZAV

Dr. Jack Cohen - Keep to your Values



Rav Ovadia Yosef *zt"l* was known for his towering brilliance and supreme piety. As the previous leading and late Torah sage of our generation, his guidance and rulings were sought by Jews worldwide and heeded to with absolute respect. However, what few individuals know is the story involving a shidduch of his, as was related by his son.

Rav Ovadia was initially set up with a shidduch, which some time thereafter materialized into an engagement. Rav Ovadia became a chattan. Days later, his kallah approached him and asked if he would like to go to the movies later that night. Rav Ovadia was unclear as to what his kallah was referring, and so he questioned her. "They are playing Tarzan at the movies, and I would like to go with you to see it."

Once Rav Ovadia understood what she was referring to, he politely told her that he could not go. "What do you mean?" she asked. "You mean you are not going to go to the movies with me when we are married?" Rav Ovadia explained that he would not watch a movie. Period. It was non-negotiable. And with that, his kallah walked away.

Two days later, Rav Ovadia received a summons to the court, at the request of his kallah, who wished to receive monetary remuneration for being misled in her expectation for marriage. She argued that she had been fooled into believing that Rav Ovadia would attend movies with her, when such was not the case. Compliantly, Rav Ovadia

appeared at the court. Once there, he did everything in his power to mitigate the situation and reach a quick settlement. Approaching the court, he relayed that he would reach out to his Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Ezra Attiah, for a job in putting away sefarim in order to pay his kallah the money she requested. The court consented to Rav Ovadia's request, as he went along to repay the amount she demanded. Fast-forward seventy years later to 2012, a year before Rav Ovadia's passing.

There was a knock on the door to Rav Ovadia's home and his gabbai, Tzvi, opened up. Standing at the doorstep was an elderly woman with a cane. "How can I help you?" kindly asked Tzvi. "I would like to speak to the Rabbi," she said. "Tell him that his first shidduch is at the door." The gabbai shortly thereafter returned to let the woman inside.

Rav Ovadia and the woman exchanged pleasantries, after which she went on to talk about the many hardships she experienced throughout her life, financial and otherwise. She had no family, she explained. Rav Ovadia listened to her every word with utmost attention and care, shouldering her heavy burdens and providing his support.

After some time, she thanked Rav Ovadia, bid him farewell and got up to head out. However, as she approached the door, she turned around straightaway and looked back at Rav Ovadia. "I just want to tell you Rabbi that you have great mazal (fortune). After I broke the shidduch, I went for a routine doctor checkup and received a number of blood tests. To my misfortune, I was told that I was physically incapable of bearing children. I was devastated. But you should know that had you married me, your many G-d fearing children would never have come into this world…"

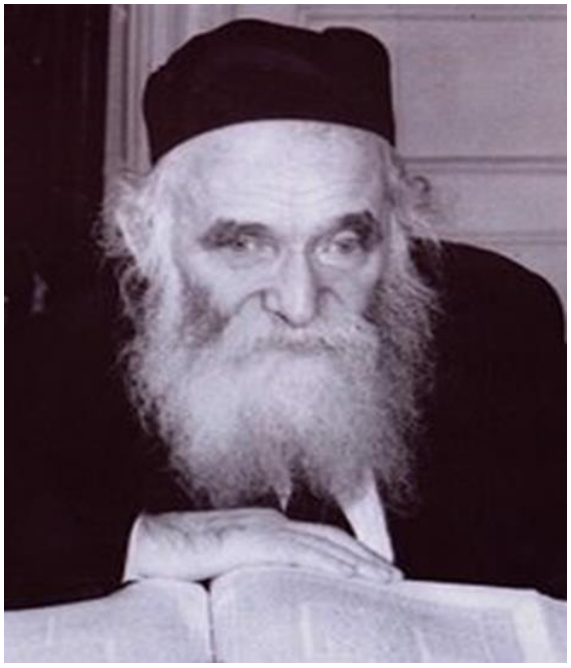
That is what happens when an individual sticks to his or her values in life and doesn't waver. Along these lines, **Rav Avidgor Miller z"l** once

made a fantastic remark: ***"You are not born a winner in life, nor are you born a loser; you are born a chooser."***

The choices you make are going to define and shape your future. If those choices are aligned with Torah values and ideals, you are bound for success. Rav Ovadia's choice was clear; he knew what was right to do and where his values stood. And as a result, he made the right choice and set himself up for unbelievable success. Had he set aside his value system and gone along with her, he likely would never have become who he actually did become. His greatness was defined by the choices his made, and those choices were defined by the values he held so steadfast to.

So if you are looking for a straight ticket for success in dating, in marriage and in life, here it is: Keep to your values and don't budge. They will lead you to the greatest life you can lead.

The Bittersweet Tears of Rav Ahron Kotler By Rabbi Shraga Kallus



How did **R' Ahron Kotler** know to go to America? A land that was barren and desolate. Was there any way to ensure that this was the right decision? R' Ahron performed a Goral HaGra, and the **פסוק** that emerged made everything clear.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵךְ לִקְרַאת מֹשֶׁה הַמִּדְבָּרָה – "***Hashem said to Ahron go to greet Moshe in the Midbar***". He was Ahron, and Moshe must be referring to R' Moshe Feinstein who already had relocated to America. The answer was understood and R' Ahron boarded the boat for the 'Goldener Medinah', and this was how Torah was brought to America.

A grandson of R' Ahron heard this story and called its validity into question. He inquired and was told in the name of R' Shneur that it is not possible that R' Ahron was unsure as to where to go, R' Ahron only received a visa to America. Furthermore, at that time, R' Ahron had no clue who R' Moshe Feinstein was - the story did not happen.

But, the grandson had a different story that was heard from **R' Shneur Kotler zt"l**: "Throughout the entire boat ride from Europe to America, R' Ahron was in tears. He was crying uncontrollably the entire duration of the trip. 'It is such a bitter matzav in America, the situation there is terrible! There is no Torah in America!' R' Ahron could not control himself …"

R' Shneur concluded the story: "R' Ahron did not merely cry and plead to survive and live. But, he cried out, 'Please Hakadosh Boruch Hu, let me be zocheh to bring Torah to America. Let there be many people sitting and learning in Yeshivos, even more than in Europe!'"

The Mesiras Nefesh of The Ridbaz's Father



Rabbi Yissochar Frand related a story about someone who had immense love for Torah, that he was willing to do something that most people would find incredibly difficult.

When Rabbi Yaakov Dovid *ben* Ze'ev Willowski (The Ridbaz) was an old man, a young boy had walked into the rabbi's study and noticed him crying hysterically while hunched over his desk. The young boy asked him why he was crying, and the Ridbaz answered it was his father's *Yahrtzeit*. The boy knew the Rav's father had passed away over 50 years before, so he asked him to explain a little more.

The Ridbaz told him a story. "I remember how much my learning meant to my father." He recounted that when he was six years old, his father hired a tutor to teach him Torah. But his father could not afford to pay him, and he was two months behind in the tutor's payment. One day, the tutor sent home a note with the Ridbaz giving the father an ultimatum. If the tutor did not get paid, he would need to find other employment and stop learning with the child.

His father was beside himself with anxiety. He went to shul and overheard a wealthy man saying that he wanted to build a house for his future son-in-law who just got married, but he could not find the necessary bricks to make the chimney. Without a chimney, he could not build the house. The father of the Ridbaz went home and dismantled his own chimney brick by brick, sold the bricks to the wealthy person, paid the tutor the back wages and then had enough money to pay him for the next six months.

The Ridbaz said that he remembered the bitter cold of those winters. There was no heat in the house. The father took apart the chimney so that his son could learn Torah. This, he explained, was why he was crying on the *Yahrtzeit*. He was not just crying over the loss of his father 50 years later. He was mourning the loss of someone who had an unimaginable love of Torah.

One Mitzvah Breader Than the One Before

The Ben Ish Chai (Chasdei Avos), relates an amazing true story.

A woman, who was a Yiras Shamayim, was baking bread in an outdoor oven in her yard, as she would do every day. One day after she finished her baking for the day, a poor man came to her with tears in his eyes, saying how hungry he was, and pleaded with her for something to eat. She immediately took out a freshly baked loaf of bread and gave it to him, and he couldn't stop thanking her.

As he was walking away and still within her sight, another poor man approached her and said that he hadn't eaten anything in two days and asked her if she had anything that he could eat.

The lady took out another fresh loaf of bread and gave it to him. The man washed, ate, had something to drink, bentched, and gave many brachos to the woman who fed him.



When he left, the woman realized that she now didn't have enough bread for her own family to eat, so she took a sack that was filled with wheat and went to the mill which was located on the shore near the ocean, to grind it into flour. She then filled her sack with the flour, carried it over her shoulder, and started to head back home to bake more bread for her family.

As she was walking on the edge of the ocean shore, a fiercely strong wind came unexpectedly, and blew her sack of flour into the ocean! She was now left with nothing for her family to eat.

She realized that the series of events could not be unrelated, so she decided to seek Hashem, and went to the Bais Medrash that was located nearest to where she lived, to see if she could learn why Hashem had arranged the events like this. She told her story to the Rosh HaYeshivah, and he told her to please wait a while so he could try to uncover the answer for her.

A short while later, two men came to the yeshivah, and they were holding a pouch full of gold coins which they were dedicating to the yeshivah. They told the Rosh Yeshivah that they were just previously on a ship at sea, when their boat hit a large rock and began taking on a lot of water. They realized that in just a few short moments, their ship would sink, they would drown, and all their merchandise would be lost.

They immediately stood up and swore to Hashem that if He performed a miracle for them and saved them from drowning in the ocean, they would give a pouch of gold coins to the Bais Medrash! Immediately as they finished their pledge to Hashem, they heard something get stuck in the hole that was on the side of their ship, and the water stopped rushing in. They were able to then quickly get their boat to the shore and anchor it, saving them from peril and great loss. They came immediately to fulfill their promise to Hashem Yisbarach.

The Rosh Yeshivah asked them, do you know what it was that got stuck in the side of the ship that stopped the water from flooding the boat? The men told him, please wait for us to return, and we will investigate. When they examined their boat, they found a sack full of dough that had gotten stuck in the hole, and they brought it to the Bais Medrash. The Rosh Yeshivah asked the woman if she recognized it as hers, and she said that yes, it was indeed hers.

He said to her, "Now you can see the zechus that Hashem has arranged for you. For the mitzvah that you did in giving your bread to poor people, you merited saving an entire ship full of people from drowning, because the wind carried your flour into the ocean, and the water turned it into dough. It then plugged the hole that was in the ship."

The Rosh Yeshivah told her, "This is Mitzvah Goreres Mitzvah! Praiseworthy are you and may all good come to you!" The woman was very happy with the words of the Rosh Yeshivah, and went to the market to buy food for a celebration and a festive meal with her family!

Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights" compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.



The Kever (Burial Place) of Rav Yeshaya of Kerestir

There are many stories told about R' Yeshaya ben R' Moshe of Kerestir. One about a shidduch for an older boy who immediately upon returning to Israel found a shidduch and became engaged within forty days of visiting the kever. Another one about someone who prayed because his business was in complete collapse and when he returned it was revealed that his worker who wanted to be his partner was fooling him and was stealing all the profits. He was only able to deal with it after davening by the Tzaddik which opened his eyes and he was able to save the business.



The Hungarian burial place of Rabbi Yeshaya Steiner, known to his followers as Reb Shayale Kerestir.

This time I will tell a story about a man who traveled to pray by the kever of the Tzaddik. Late one night, he landed in Hungary and approached the car rental agency to get the car that he reserved. The car was waiting for him, but when he wanted to pay with his credit card, they asked him to enter his code to complete the transaction.

However, since in Israel one does not need a code, he did not know his code. He tried to remember, and he punched in a number that did not work. He tried his luck again with another number and again it was rejected. The agent warned him that he only had one more try and if it was wrong, his account would be locked.

Now he feared that he would be stuck at the airport without being able to go to the kever so he stood in prayer that the merit of the Tzaddik who he was going to would help him find the correct number. He checked his cell phone until suddenly, he found the code he was looking for. With shaking hands, he punched in the number, but it did not take.

Giving up, he went out to find another traveler who might give him a ride. Walking no more than 20 meters, the agent called after him that the card went through and everything was fine.

Happy and grateful, he got the car and drove straight to the holy kever of the Tzaddik to pour out his request. On his way back, he wanted to buy a bottle of something to quench his thirst. He took it and paid with his card and when they asked for his code, he entered it, but it was rejected. He again punched in the code and again it was refused.

He then realized that the code had been wrong by the car rental agency as well, but it was another wonder in the merit of the holy Tzaddik, R' Yeshaya ben R' Moshe, his merit should protect us and all of Israel, amein. .

The last word A one-liner worth remembering:

"It's not how much or how little you have that makes you great or small, but how much or how little you accomplish with what you have." ~ Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

The Chofetz Chaim's Passport Application



Rav Yissochar Frand once related a story about the **Chofetz Chaim, zt"l**, and how he strove to be honest and truthful in everything he did. When the Chofetz Chaim applied for a passport so that he could travel from Poland to Eretz Yisroel, he had to specify his profession on the application.

Technically, although the Chofetz Chaim was a Rav and Rosh Yeshivah, he had never gotten Semichah, Rabbinic ordination. He had written the Sefer Chofetz Chaim, he had written the Mishnah Brurah, he was one of the leading Halachic authorities of the generation at the time— but he had no official Semichah.

Although no one would have questioned that 'Rabbi' was his profession, the Chofetz Chaim refused to write it on the application. He felt that it wasn't true, as he was not officially a Rabbi. He decided to telegraph **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, zt"l**, and requested Semichah from him on the basis of the Halachic works he had written, and Rav Chaim Ozer telegraphed him back a letter of Semichah. Only then did the Chofetz Chaim write that he was a 'Rabbi' on his application.

Rabbi Frand said, "Can you imagine, the author of the Mishnah Brurah and the person who was accepted as the leading Halachic authority around the world, was asked to state his profession, and he wouldn't answer that he was a Rabbi? The Chofetz Chaim would not allow even a shade of falsehood for himself, no matter how minor the detail might be!" (*Torah U'Tefilah: compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

A Summary Of The Points In The Parashah

1. The Mitzvah of a continuous fire and bringing up the limbs of the sacrifices all night on the altar.

2. Burning the ashes every day and removing the ashes when it is too much. (6, 1-6).

3. The laws of the meal offering, a fist of it for the altar and the rest gets eaten by the Cohanim (6, 7-11)

4. It is forbidden to kneed it or bake the remainder of the meal offering with Hamess.

5. The meal offering of the Cohen Gadol every day and a Cohen who is being taught the work of the Beit HaMikdash (6, 12-17).

6. The laws of a sin offering, the blood of the sin offering and the laws of the guilt offering (6, 17-23).

7. The meat of the sin offering and the guilt offering and the remains of the meal offerings (except for the meal offering of the Cohen) is eaten by the Cohen on the day it was sacrificed and the skin of the burnt offering gets divided up by the Cohanim (7, 1-10).

8. The peace offering with 40 breads for a person who had a miracle happen to him.

9. Peace offering and prohibition to eat rejected sacrificial meat and impure meat (7, 11-21)

10. The prohibition to eat fats of animals and the blood of animals and birds (7, 22-27).

11. The waving of the fat and the breast of the peace offering by the owners of the sacrifice and the Cohen.

12. The portions from the peace offering belonging to Aharon and his sons (and the thanksgiving offering) (7, 28-38). 13. The preparations and sacrifices during the seven inaugural days (8).

Play The Real Game by Rabbi Moshe Malka





What is it about sports that everyone is attracted to? A big football game coming. People gravitate towards the big game. What is it all about?





If you analyse sports, most of them are pretty much the same. In football, you have 11 guys on one side, and 11 guys on the other side and the objective is to break through the defence of the other side and score. Take hockey, you have 5 on offence, 5 in defence, you have the goalies, and you have to break through and score. Basketball the same. Baseball the same. Soccer, this team, that team, break through the defence to score.

Isn't it all much the same? What is it about sports that we love so much?

The Torah teaches us that Hashem created a person for the ultimate sport – and that is to overcome the yetzer harah. You are at one end and Hashem is at the other end, and the yetzer harah is in the middle. The yetzer harah is your opponent. You need battle plans, you need tactics. You need to study the yetzer harah in order to overcome him and win. And then you can score the big goals.

Now, if you look around, who is watching the game? The world loves to watch. Who loves the game, but are not watching? You know who they are? -the players themselves! You see, when you are playing the game, you don't need to watch. Play the real game. Get out there and beat the yetzer harah. You know what his tactics are?

The Mesilas Yesharim says:

1. Keep him busy, distract him.
2. Bad friends.
3. Letzanus – the mocking and the scoffing.

Nowadays, the yetzer harah is on holiday. He created the smartphone. It keeps you very busy. All the group chats. All the negative things that are on there. Put away the phone. Find the real game of sport. Beat the yetzer harah, and you will see that you will be connected to Hashem, and you will feel His love.

Custom Struggles By R' Tzvi Sytner



Sometimes, the most precious thing that we can contribute, are perhaps the things that are not the prettiest. Perhaps, they are the things that we are not the most proud of. But our most precious gift- our greatest contribution, is the thing that we struggle with the most. That is our greatest contribution.

Rav Tzaddok H'Kohen [**צדוק הכהן מלובלין**] writes in **Tzidkas HaTzaddik [צדקת הצדיק]** that every single person struggles with different things. But he says that the things that we struggle with the most in life, are the things that we need to work on the most. He says that each person is created in life with a particular purpose.

Your neshama was created with a specific tikkun that it needs to complete, different from anybody else.

So this is the greatest contribution that you can make in life. The greatest contribution that you can make is by working on the most difficult things. The things that you want to work on the least. The things that you struggle with the most. The things that you are least proud of. That's your greatest contribution.

Your struggles were custom tailored to help you reach your potential.

A Kiddush Hashem

"It happened over ten years ago," recalled Rav Moshe Friedman of Rechasim, Israel. "The Rabbanim of my town chose me to accompany a sick person of our community who was traveling to the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in Washington Heights, New York, for delicate brain surgery. For various reasons, no family member was able to accompany him, so I went instead." Rav Friedman continued.

"For the next twenty-four hours," the doctor sternly warned me on the erev Shabbos before the surgery, "this patient may not so much as move a muscle. If he does, he may suffer internal injuries that could prove to be fatal. Watch him well!"

I had been invited to eat the Shabbos meals with a family that lived close to the hospital. When I heard these dire words of caution, I immediately abandoned the idea and prepared to spend Shabbos in the hospital, keeping watch over this critically-ill young man.

"Chaim," I whispered to my friend, "Did you hear the doctor's orders? Do not move a muscle! But don't worry, I'm staying right here with you. If you need something, tell me, and I'll bring it." Moving was forbidden but talking was permitted.

The Shabbos Queen made her regal entry even within the somber hospital walls, bringing along with her the calming peace and serenity of Shabbos. I davened Mincha and sang Lecha Dodi. When night fell, I davened Ma'ariv — trying to invoke a warm, and meaningful prayer there, a lonely Jew among hundreds of non-Jews.

We sang Shalom Aleichem and Aishes Chayil, thinking about our families who were spending Shabbos without us so many thousands of miles away. Then I poured the grape juice and began reciting Kiddush. When I was only halfway through, two muscular orderlies wearing white coats entered the room. Without a word, they handed me a doctor's letter stating that the patient had to be taken downstairs for further x-rays.

"What?" I asked incredulously, "He can't be moved! The doctor said one move could be fatal... It just can't be..." Without further ado, they lifted Chaim the helpless patient, placed him on a stretcher and wheeled him out of room. We took an elevator down to the 2nd floor basement to take x-rays. Because Chaim was very ill, I was allowed to accompany him on the elevator, which was operated by non-Jews.

Once downstairs, I noticed an older woman who lay alone, waiting for her turn to take x-rays. I was overcome with pity for this lone woman, who seemed to be suffering greatly. Catching my sympathetic glance, she lifted her wrinkled hand and beckoned to me. I came towards her and saw her lips moving in a whisper. I bent my head down to hear better. All she said was two words: "Gut Shabbos." I looked at her in surprise.

So this woman was Jewish! "Gut Shabbos!" I replied warmly. "May you feel better soon! May the Shabbos bring along a recovery for you." I turned to my friend and said, "Chaim!" I said, "Guess what? We have a fellow Jew here. This woman is Jewish, and she even speaks Yiddish." This was our first encounter with a Jewish face and Yiddish words in Presbyterian General, and we were both excited.

"R. Moshe," said Chaim, sharing my enthusiasm, "go to our room and bring down a cup and some grape juice. Make Kiddush for her — I'm sure she has not heard Kiddush yet."

"Go up to our room?" I repeated. "Chaim, just think. We're on floor minus two and our room is on the seventeenth floor. There are no stairs reaching the upper floors of this building. How do you expect me to get there?"

But Chaim would not be swayed, "R. Moshe, you could use the fire escape," he insisted, "Please get the grape juice and make Kiddush for her; she's a Jewish woman!" I had no choice. I know it wasn't advisable to upset Chaim in his condition — it could affect his already teetering blood pressure.

It was obvious that I would have to comply with his wishes. I left the waiting room and ascended the two flights to the ground flour. I was about to leave the building when I encountered a new problem. The lobby doors were electronically operated. I stood at the side, waiting for a non-Jew to pass through and activate the doors.

When someone finally entered the building, I zoomed past, not wanting to cause the electric doors to slay open for even an extra second. The people in the lobby probably had a good laugh, After all they had seen a crazy fellow waiting patiently for several minutes at the doors and then suddenly scooting through them as if someone were at his heels.

I looked upwards from the base of the fire escape, trying to make out the seventeenth floor, but all I saw was a cloudy gray sky. I took a deep breath and began my trek. It was a typical New York winter. The cold penetrated my bones and the biting wind took my breath away. Upwards I marched, up and up, on and on, until, to my immense relief, I saw the number I7 smiling at me in a friendly, bright fluorescent yellow.

My trials were not yet over. To my dismay, I realized that there was no handle on the door. The door could only be opened from inside. There was a small bell affixed on the brick wall, helpfully designed to call someone to open the door. But on Shabbos the bell was useless to me.

"Ribbono Shel Olam," I cried out in despair, "I'm cold and exhausted from this strenuous climb. What do I do now? Go back down again? What will I tell Chaim?" My prayers were answered. The door was suddenly pushed open — someone must have mistaken it for a different door. The unsuspecting man was frightened out of his wits when I darted past him.

I fell into the nearest chair, took a couple of deep breaths and rubbed my hands together, trying to warm myself up a little, Then I took the grape juice and a few cups and headed back to the fire escape, back to my waiting friend and the elderly Jewish woman.

The descent was far easier than the way up. When I reached the ground floor, I had only a short wait until the automatic doors opened for a non-Jew. Since there was a fence around the hospital, there was no problem to carry in the area around the hospital.

Once in the main building, my halachic difficulties were over. I easily descended the two flights of stairs to the waiting room and approached the woman. Speaking in Yiddish, I told her, "I've come to make Kiddush for you." The woman threw me a look of gratitude. She listened closely while I recited Kiddush and then said in as loud a voice as she could muster, "Amen." I would never have expected to hear such a hearty Amen from this sickly, emaciated woman.

I gave her a drop of grape juice and then bent down once again to listen to what she was trying to tell me. "Fifty years have gone by since I heard Kiddush last," she said in a feeble voice. Using her last reserves of energy, she told me that she was born in Poland and that she had spent the war years hiding among gentiles. After the war she emigrated to America. She did not elaborate on what happened

to her after that. She only repeated, as if in a trance, "It's been fifty years since I last answered Amen." I was overcome with emotion.



What a zechus it was for me that I could make Kiddush for this woman and give her the chance of saying Amen after fifty years. I was even further moved an hour later when I discovered that the woman had passed away...

"Master of the Universe," I thought to myself, "I've travelled seven thousand miles in order to elicit a hearty Amen, her first in fifty years... the key she needed to open the gates of Paradise." Indeed, our Sages say "One who answers Amen with all his strength, the gates of Paradise are opened for him." (Shabbos 119b) (Heard from R. Moshe Friedman, Rechasim)

We can be inspired by this story to make every effort to say "amen" to other people's brachas - blessings. In fact, the Sages tell us that answering amen is even more meritorious than saying the bracha itself. One should also endeavor to say blessings loudly, so that others may answer amen. One who says a blessing quietly is compared to a thief, because he denies others the mitzvah of answering amen!

A Wise Man would say: "What the world needs is more geniuses with humility, there are so few of us left!"

Revach L'Neshama – The Ponevezher Rov - Why Doesn't Death Scare Us?

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת ה' וְלֹא תָמֻתוּ (Tzav 8:35). Rashi explains that Aharon and his children are instructed not to leave the Ohel Mo'ed during the Shivas Yimei Miluim, because if they do they will be Chayav Misa.

Chazal tell us that when we are fighting with our Yetzer Hara, as a last resort we should remember that we can die at any moment. Death is the threat of last resort and is the most powerful threat that can be made. Yet, asks the **Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman the Ponevezher Rov**, we find that most people despite the frailty of life are not moved by the threat of death. We do many things that we know are dangerous and we don't change our actions much, even though we live in the shadow of a looming death which ultimately no one ever defies. Why is this?

The Shulchan Gavo'a says that the Ponevezher Rov answers that we are made up of two parts, a guf and neshama, body and soul. Our Neshama is Nitzchi, eternal. Because our Neshama is eternal it cannot fathom death. It is a concept that it simply doesn't grasp. Our Neshama doesn't even understand time. It is L'Maala Min HaZman. Since half our being is tuned out to death, (and the other half is less intelligent and will usually choose instant gratification over long term payoff) it takes lots of work and constant reminders in order for us to fear death. This is why the Rosh in Orchos Chaim says, ***"Remember death constantly." Only then might the message sink in.***

A clever person turns great troubles into little ones, and little ones into none at all.

Revach L'Neshama - Leaders Must Lift the People



The Chasam Sofer says that the great gedolim would much prefer to sit and learn in solitude. Just them and their gemara; Mei'ein Olam Haba! However, they have an obligation to the people of Am Yisroel and must spend endless hours dealing with the mundane needs of even the lowest among us.

A Remez for this can be found in the words of the Pasuk 6:3, **וְלָבַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בַּד** - literally meaning the Kohen wears his garments, but also alluding to the Gadol Hador, also considered a Kohen, wanting to be alone. "Mido Bod" his way is to sit alone. **וְהֵרִים אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן** -he must lift the ashes referring to the lowest of the nation who need to be lifted up. **וְשָׂמוֹ אֵצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ;** even these people should be placed next to the holy alter and be taught how to sacrifice their lives for Hashem.

Revach L'Neshama - Whose Turn Is It To Clean Up?

There was a daily Mitzvah of Terumas HaDeshen, where the Kohanim took ashes off the Mizbayach from the previously burnt Korban Olah, and placed it on the east side of the Kevesh. **Rabaynu Bachye, in his Sefer Chovos Halevavos**, explains the reason for this Mitzvah. He says that Hashem was concerned that the Kohanim might become haughty while wearing the Bigdai Kehunah and doing the Avodah. They might have feelings of superiority over the rest of Klal Yisroel. He therefore gave them the Mitzvah of Terumas HaDeshen, a Mitzvah that could make one dirty in the process, a Mitzvah that could be looked at as a lowly job, in order to humble them in the process.

Revach L'Neshama – Sforno - The More The Merrier



Why is a Korban Todah accompanied by 40 Challos, all required to be eaten in 1 day and night?

The Sforno answers that Hashem wants us to thank him publicly, among a great multitude of people. If one would only bring few loaves with his Korban Todah and be able to eat it for 2 days and a night, he might invite just his immediate family to the subsequent Seudas Hodaah.

Therefore, Hashem commanded us to bring 40 challos, to be eaten for 1 day and night, so that it will force us to invite many people to the Seuda in order to finish this large amount in a short period of time. This way this Nes will be publicized to all.

Revach L'Neshama – The Kotzker Rebbe - The Great Hidden Flames

זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל־מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ The Olah went up on the great flames of the Mizbei'ach." The letter "Mem" of the word Mokda is written small. Why is that?

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that although you should serve Hashem with great Hislahavus, with a fiery spirit, nevertheless, you should remain small and all your passion and frenzy should be hidden from the public, just like the small "Mem" of the word Mokda.

Revach L'Neshama – The Rebbe Reb Elimelech Doesn't Let Reb Zusha Serve Him



When **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk** became a famous Rebbe and people from far and wide started coming to see him, his brother **Reb Zusha of Anipoli** wanted to be his gabbai and help him with all his needs. Reb Elimelech knew the greatness hidden in his humble brother and would not allow this.

Reb Zusha complained to Reb Elimelech that we see in Parshas Tzav that Moshe Rabbeinu served his brother Aharon when he went up to greatness. He even washed him and dressed him. If Moshe Rabbeinu the greatest of all men and the King of Bnei Yisroel can humbly serve his brother, then surely I can serve you, said Reb Zusha!

Reb Elimelech told Rav Zusha that he overlooked the words that the Torah says before Moshe undertook this service (Tzav 8:5), **וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעֵדָה זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה׳ לַעֲשׂוֹת** Aharon HaKohen only allowed Moshe to serve him because this was a direct command from Hashem. Since you Reb Zusha were not commanded by Hashem, I cannot and will not allow this.

"Hashem's love for us is infinite and unconditional, and we can tap into that love by opening our hearts and souls to His presence." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

צו את אהרן ואת בניו לאמר זאת תורת העלה *Command Aharon and his sons saying, 'This is the law of the burnt-offering.* (6:2)



QUESTION: Rashi writes that the term "*tzav*" denotes encouragement for the present and for future generations, and Rabbi Shimon said that it is especially necessary to give encouragement in the places where **שיש בו חסרון כיס** – there is a "loss of money."

"*Chisaron kis*" literally means "loss of purse." Why does the text not say "*chisaron mamon*" — "loss of money"?

ANSWER: The burnt offering atones for sinful thoughts (*Midrash Rabbah* 7:3). A person can also sin with his eyes by viewing improper things, and with his ears by hearing evil, and with his tongue by speaking sinfully.

To avoid speaking, the upper and lower jaw are like a "*kis*" (purse) that can lock up the tongue. The eyelids are a "*kis*" that can cover the eyes and prevent them from seeing evil. The external parts of the ears can be a "*kis*" with which to seal them from hearing evil. The only part of the body that has no protective guard is the mind.

Therefore, Rabbi Shimon says that it is necessary to warn a person to be especially careful with his thoughts because of "*chisaron kis*" — the absence of an external constraint.

(חידושי הרי"ם)

Vedibarta Bam

"במקום אשר תשחט העלה תשחט החטאת" – "In the place where the burnt-offering is slaughtered shall the sin-offering be slaughtered." (6:18)



QUESTION: Why did the Torah prescribe that the two karbanot be slaughtered in the same place?

ANSWER: A sin-offering is brought by a person who has violated the Torah, while a bunt-offering is brought as a contribution to the Beit Hamikdash. To protect the reputation of the people, the Torah commands that they both be slaughtered in the same place, so that if someone observes the animal being slaughtered, he will not suspect that the owner is a sinner, but rather a generous person bringing a contribution.

Since tefillah (prayer) takes the place of avodah (sacrifices), the Gemara (Sotah 32b) says that the sages have prescribed that the tefillah of Shemoneh Esreih be recited quietly, so that a sinner who wants to confess to Hashem should not be overheard by his neighbour and suffer embarrassment. *(רבינו בחיי)*

B'Kitzur… A Quick Look at Hilchos Tefilah

R' Yehoshua ben Levi taught that one should try his utmost to wake up early and go to *Shul* in order to be one of the first ten men to arrive and create the *minyan*- **עשרה ראשונים**. Those among the first ten to arrive have a *s'char*, reward, which is equal to that of all the people gathered together for *davening*, even if a hundred people would come after him! (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 12:9)

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



In this week's *parshah* we are commanded regarding the *Mizbei'ach* (6:6) to have an ever-lasting flame burning on it. The *Mishnah* in *Avos* (5:5) tells us of ten miracles which took place in the *Bais HaMikdash*. One of them was that rain waters did not extinguish the fire on the *Mizbei'ach*. The question can be asked, if the fire stayed burning through a miracle, why couldn't Hashem just make it not rain on the *Mizbei'ach*, instead of the fire burning through the rain?

R'Chaim Volozhiner, *zt"l*, explains that there is a deeper message to be learned here. When one is experiencing troubling times which can divert his focus in life, he must strengthen his focus and reliance on Hashem. This is represented by the rain which is falling on his own personal fire which he is striving to keep alive and burning despite this difficulty. The miracle in the *Bais HaMikdash* teaches us that Hashem is our Provider and He is the only one who can guarantee all our needs. If one finds himself in a situation where it is "raining on his fire", he should remind himself of the miracle in the *Bais HaMikdash*, and put his trust in Hashem.

"The beauty of Hashem is revealed in His creation. The more we appreciate the world around us, the more we appreciate Him." – Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook.

L'Maaseh - A Tale to Remember

Rabbi Paysach Krohn relates how **Rav Shalom Shwadron, *zt"l*,** the *Maggid* of Yerushalayim, who as a young boy of thirteen years old, joined a group of boys who would practice giving speeches to each other. They would meet every Shabbos and the first time they met, Rav Shalom Shwadron was chosen to be the first speaker.



Rav Shalom walked up to the *Shtender* and began his speech with a *Mashal* that he hoped one day to say in front of a large audience. He said, "A father had two children who had a certain illness, which required them to take a very bad tasting medicine.

To the older child, the father explained the severity of the consequences if he wouldn't take the medicine, and he told him that he may even end up in the hospital if he didn't take care of himself. Eventually, the father convinced his son to take the medicine. The second son, however, was a different story. The father played with him and told him jokes, and as soon as the son opened his mouth with hearty laughter, the father slipped the medicine in his mouth.

Anyone seeing this might think that the father liked the second son better than the first son. With the first son he was stern and strict, but with the second son he played with him and almost got him to 'enjoy' the medicine.

However, this is far from the truth. Rather, the older son was old enough to be spoken to logically. The younger son would not understand the seriousness of having to go to a hospital. He might think that it was fun. Therefore the father had no choice but to find a pleasant way of giving him the medicine.

The same is true of our generation. It used to be that the *Maggidim*, those who speak to the public, could get straight to the point without softening them up with pleasantries and stories, and making them laugh.

Nowadays, people resent *Mussar* and rebuke, and they will not accept it. If the speaker will lighten things up for them with laughter and stories, their hearts and minds will open up and become receptive to *Mussar* and instruction!"

Rav Shalom Shwadron said these words many years ago. He related later in his life that it was true then when he was a child, but it is even more true today!

Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וילבשם כתנת ויחגר אתם אבנט ויחבש להם מגבעות ***He dressed them in tunics and he bound each of them with a belt and he bound the turbans upon them*** *(8:13)*



Why were the tunics and turbans written in plural form and just the belt was written in the singular? According to the *Rambam*, the belt was a specific and unique length [32 *Amos* – approximately 64 feet], unlike the other priestly garments which was tailored to the size of the individual *Kohein*.

This is why the belt was written in the singular as all belts were identical, but the other garments varied in size according to the size of the *Kohein*, and this is why these garments are written in plural. (*Meshech Chachma as brought in Mesukim MiDvash*)

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

Outsmarting The Yeitzer Hara While Eating:

וְאִם הֵאָכֹל יֵאָכֵל מִבְּשַׂר זֶבַח שְׁלָמָיו וגו׳ And if He shall surely eat from the flesh of his Shelamim offering…(7:18)

A misnaged from the city of Sanik once passed through the city of Ruzhin and decided to go and see the **Ruzhiner Rebbe zy"a** in order to debate him about the ways of chasidus.

He went over to the Rebbe and asked, "Our way of life is the way of Hashem. We spend a lot of time learning Torah. We get up early and daven Vasikin. Right after davening, while still wearing our talis and tefillin, we sit down to learn Mishnayos. On the other hand, not only do chasidim daven late, right after davening they sit down to drink a l'chaim of shnaps. But you call yourselves 'chasidim' and you call us 'misnagdim'? Your entire outlook is backwards!"



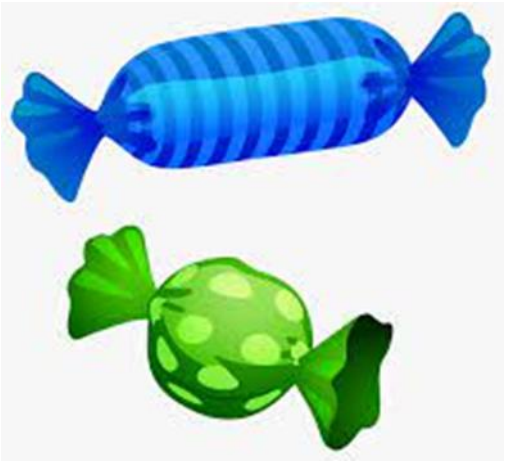
The Rebbe responded, "Since the Bais Hamikdosh was destroyed, we have no korbanos. Tefillah is in the place of korbanos (Brachos 26B). Just like a korban becomes invalid if the one bringing it has improper thoughts, tefillah also is worthless if one has improper thoughts while davening.

"The yeitzer hara tries very hard to ruin our prayers by introducing improper thoughts into our minds while we are davening. But the chasidim found a way to get around this strategy of the yeitzer hara. After davening they sit down to a drink some whiskey and they bless each other with bracha of 'l'chaim'. Everyone then turns to their

friends and gives them a bracha that Hashem should fulfil their prayers and grant them whatever they need.

According to halacha, tefillos can be said in whatever language a person speaks. Therefore, these brachos have the status of a tefillah. The yeitzer hara thinks that these men are just sitting around and drinking, eating cake and shmuzing. He doesn't realize that they are actually davening, so he does not get in the way of these prayers and try to ruin them."

L'Maaseh



R' Moshe Aharon Auerbach, *zt"l*, was a tremendous *Baal Chesed* and a great person. After working for a Jewish company for quite some time, he was summoned to a meeting with the bosses of the company. Since R' Auerbach was already getting on in his years, he knew that this meeting was likely a discussion about a cut in his salary.

The day of the meeting arrived and R' Auerbach approached the office where his bosses were waiting. He walked into the room and sat down. One of the bosses spoke up and said to him, "R' Auerbach, do you have anything to say before we tell you what we have to say?"

R' Auerbach answered, "Yes." He pulled out a candy from his pocket, took off the wrapper, and firmly and clearly, proclaimed the words of the *Brachah* of *Shehakol*, and then put the candy in his mouth.

R' Auerbach was relating a vital message to them. He was telling them that only *Hashem* is in charge, and they are just puppets! The only One who really makes the decisions in this world, and certainly in the company, is not them, but *Hashem* Himself!

L'Maaseh

The Kozhnitzer Maggid would tell the following story.



There once lived a Jewish doctor who scorned the Torah and did many Aveiros. He successfully encouraged his son to follow in his ways, however, his wife managed to get the boy to commit to perform one Mitzvah— the Mitzvah of Netilays Yadaym, and he agreed to always wash his hands before he ate any meal that included bread.

Though he grew up to be as irreligious as his father, the son took his mother's words to heart and would only eat bread if he washed first, even though sometimes this meant that he would spend an entire day starving before his first meal.

The son became a doctor like his father, and one day, he got entangled in a dispute, and was summoned to Bais Din. When the Dayan issued his decision in favour of the other party, the young doctor felt this was unjust, and he proceeded to ridicule and ignore the Dayan's ruling. Left without any other choice, the Dayan reluctantly wrote a notice of excommunication, forbidding anyone to come in contact with the doctor. The young doctor dismissed this too with arrogance, for he didn't care much about the Jewish law.

Around the same time, the young doctor prepared to set out on a journey. Part of the way included a dangerous, a long stretch of road that went through a forest, where packs of bandits were known to stay, and they would wait for people passing through to rob. Because of this, travellers would get together and go through as a group, before they would enter the woods. However, because of the ban, the young doctor had trouble finding fellow travellers.

He asked many merchants if he could join their caravans, but they all ignored him because of his excommunication. Desperate to finally leave, he decided to purchase a fast horse and set out on his own.

As the young doctor rode through the forest, he realized that he had forgotten to bring water along. Finding a river was too dangerous now, but it also meant he wouldn't be able to eat the bread that he took. The young doctor urged his horse forward in desperation, as pangs of hunger kept increasing. He only slept when exhaustion finally took him over.

Many times, he thought of reaching into his bag and eating the bread, but he never brought himself to actually do so. Even though he was suffering from hunger, the young doctor was too frightened to gamble with his life to try and find some water.

On the fourth day of his journey, he heard the sound of rushing water, and he found himself in front of a swiftly moving river. The young doctor began to swing off his horse, and then he felt his heart stop. Just on the other side of the riverbank, bandits were assembling on horseback.

Two thoughts went through the young doctor's mind. He could either wash his hands now and risk being killed, or swing back onto the horse and escape. But the young doctor's hunger made him delirious, and he quickly ran to wash his hands. The bandits saw him and immediately headed his way, and the young doctor began racing back to his horse.

He had just opened his bag with the bread in it, when a bandit struck him. The young doctor fell, bleeding from a wound. The other bandits closed in around him, and they beat and robbed him. After they took everything he had, they left him to die, and soon after, his Neshamah ascended to appear before the Heavenly Court in Shamayim.

Before anything was said in Bais Din, the Mitzvah that the young doctor had just performed, Netilas Yadayim, appeared before the Malachim, and related the young doctor's dedication to the Mitzvah, and insisted that he should be admitted immediately into Gan Eden. The Malachim accepted this argument, and the young doctor was escorted to the gates of Gan Eden. However, the Malach standing at the gate was blocking his way. He said, "You were excommunicated during your time on earth, and I cannot let you in. Go back to the Rav who put the ban in place, so he can reverse it."

That night, the young doctor appeared to the Rav in a dream, and informed him of his predicament. The Rav did not want to delay the Neshamah from entering Gan Eden, and he removed his decree.

When the young doctor again went to the gate, the Malach still would not let him in. He said, "Just as your excommunication was in writing, so it must be when it is reversed. Also, request for the Rav to arrange a Jewish burial for your body."

The young man again appeared to the Rav and made his requests, and he agreed to publicly annul the ban first thing in the morning. He also reassured the young doctor that his body would be found and buried by the next group of merchants that left the city.

One thing caught the Rav's attention. As he spoke with the young doctor, he realized that the young man had a deep understanding of the Torah and its teachings. The Rav asked how the young doctor had learned such knowledge, since during his life he was very removed from anything Jewish.

The young doctor replied, "Before I went up to Shamayim, the Malach that was created from my sacrifice to fulfil the Mitzvah of Netilas Yadayim, taught me the entire Torah." The Kozhnitzer Maggid would teach from this story that we can learn from it the immense value and spiritual power of even a single Mitzvah!

Essential Rabbi Nachman - Feeling Others' Pain



You should be able to feel another person's pain in your heart - all the more so when many people are suffering. It is possible to know another person's pain and suffering yet still not feel them in your heart.

When many people are suffering, you should certainly feel their pain in your heart. And if you do not feel it, you should knock your head against the wall: you should strike your head - your mind and intelligence - against the walls of your heart!

This is the meaning of the words: וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וַהֲשֵׁבֹתָ אֶל־לְבָבֶךָ ***"Know this day and realize it in your heart."*** (Devorim 4:39). You must bring the realization from your mind into your heart. Understand this well. [Sichot Haran #39]

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

One of the *Roshei Yeshivah* of Telshe, **Rav Eliyahu Meir Bloch**, would not sway one iota from the truth, regardless of the repercussions. A Rav once told him that in America one must please his financial supporters. To be critical of them and their secular beliefs might undermine his ability to sustain the *Yeshivah*.

Rav Bloch replied, "My father told me that I do not have to be a *Rosh Yeshivah*, but I do have to be an *Ehrlicher Yid*, an honest Jew. I will not please someone if it means lying to them!"

Remarkable Stories About Tzedakah Giving



The Torah commands us to open our hands and hearts to the poor, telling us: "If there will be among you a needy person, from one of your brothers in one of your cities in your land that Hashem is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy brother. Rather, you must open your hand to him, and lend him sufficient for his needs, which he is lacking." (Devarim 15:8)

Indeed, giving tzedakah is one of the traits for which Jews throughout the generations have gone above and beyond. This innate midah of tzedakah remained part of the collective conscience of the Jewish people, and even those who strayed from shemiras hamitzvos still maintain the wonderful quality of tzedakah.

Just go to any hospital or museum, and you'll notice that much of the funding for these institutions came from Jewish philanthropists. One of the remarkable things about tzedakah is the willingness – from great gedolim to the simplest of Jews – to invest much time and energy into giving tzedakah and lightning the load of their brethren.

The Shirt Off His Back

"The rebbetzin of the **Alter of Novardok**," writes **Rav Chaim Zeitchik**, "would relate that every erev Shabbos, after her husband would return from the mikvah, he was always missing his shirt. "When she would ask him what had happened, he would give various explanations. Once, it was this, and another time it was that… The

bottom line was that he would give his shirt to a destitute person. He literally gave the shirt off his back to the poor every week."

Rav Chaim Brisker's Tzedakah Rav Chaim Brisker is perhaps best known for his unique derech halimud or his unusual yiras chet, but equally incredible was his devotion to tzedakah and chesed. **Rav Yechezkel Abramsky**, a close talmid, related, "I was once in Rav Chaim's home when two wealthy residents of Brisk came by and handed him a sealed envelope.

"What was in the envelope? That week, the two had celebrated the wedding of their children and Rav Chaim had been mesader kiddushin. They came to give him a donation in honor of his efforts, as was customary in those days, whereby rabbonim would receive support as payment for siddur kiddushin.

While they were there, a poor person entered and asked Rav Chaim for a donation. Without thinking twice and without even looking to see how much money there was inside, Rav Chaim gave the poor person the sealed envelope. The two wealthy individuals observed all of this, mouths open wide!"

Why Rav Chaim's Salary Was Given to His Wife

Rav Abramsky continued, "Even when a regular beggar would come to Rav Chaim for a donation, he would always give whatever he had. Sometimes it was a gold coin, but when he didn't have money, it didn't stop the rov from giving either. He would borrow money and give tzedakah that way!

Rav Chaim was once asked, 'You have so many debts from giving tzedakah – how will you pay them back?' Rav Chaim answered, 'There are plenty of wealthy Jews in Brisk who can afford to support their poor fellow inhabitants of Brisk.' "Indeed, it wasn't uncommon for Rav Chaim's own family to not have enough money to buy bread. When the heads of the community of Brisk realized that the rov's family was starving due to Rav Chaim's seemingly endless tzedakah giving,

they decided that from then on, they would give the rov's salary to the rebbetzin…"

"My Rebbetzin Collects Money at Weddings"



Rav Naftoli Tzvi Halberstam, the Bobover Rebbe, zt"l

The phenomenal levels of tzedakah and chesed attained by **Rav Naftoli Tzvi Halberstam**, **the Bobover Rebbe**, attested to the import he attached to helping others – this, to him, was ruchnius. Before he was rebbe, during a period when Bobover mosdos were millions of dollars in debt, a formerly wealthy man – who was not a Bobover chossid – came crying that he had lost money in a bad deal, and the people to whom he owed massive amounts were giving him no respite. The rebbe told the person that he would call him back shortly.

The man related, "I never thought I would hear from him again. When you ask someone for money and he says, 'I'll call you back,' you know what that usually means… Forty-eight hours later, there was a knock on my door. A Jew stood there with an envelope containing $40,000 in cash. Astonished, I called the rebbe, explaining that I had only been expecting at most $5,000. How could the rebbe give so much?

The rebbe replied, 'It is fine. My rebbetzin collects money at weddings, and the funds are designed specifically for cases like these.'" The man felt that it would be appropriate for him to thank the rebbetzin too, and he called her to do so. But the rebbetzin was so astonished that she blurted out, "What?! I don't collect at weddings! We ourselves are penniless, and I just received a notice

in the mail that our electricity is about to be shut off pending payment!"

The man guiltily called the rebbe back, but Rav Naftoli Tzvi immediately replied, "I have been taught that personal considerations should play no part in preventing one Yid from helping another Yid, if he can."

Another time, a chossid got himself into a messy situation, and was left with a choice of coming up with $100,000 immediately or facing serious ramifications. The rebbe could not bear to see the man's tzoros, but he did not possess such a massive sum of money. Instead, he mortgaged his own house on 15th Avenue in Brooklyn in order to extricate the man from his predicament. (Rabbi Avrohom Birnbaum - Yated August 28, 2019)

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וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים

"And he removed his clothes and wore other clothing" (6:4)

Rebbi Tzvi Tzimelinski teaches us that, "Each person should remember that sooner or later his end will come and then 'he will remove his clothes' – they will take off his clothes that he wearing, 'and he will wear other clothes' – they will dress him in white cloth, "And they will take out the ashes outside of the camp" – the body will be taken outside of the city and the soul will go up to the heavens "to a pure place" to give judgment "and a person should take to his heart" to always remember these things. It is written in Pirkei Avot (chapter 6, mishnah 9), "When a person dies, no money and no gold and no precious stones will accompany him, only his good deeds".



Benefits of Joy

Yirmiyahu HaNavi asked (*Yirmiyahu* 12:1) **מדוע דרך רשעים צלחה** - "Why do *resha'im* prosper?"



Rebbe Henoch of Alexender *zy"a* supplies us with the answer. They succeed because they are happy.

Yosef is the only person in Tanach who is called **איש מצליח** – a successful man. On these words, Chazal write **גבר קפיז**, that Yosef was a person who would dance and jump from joy. Even as a slave for Pharaoh, Yosef was always happy. And therefore, he was a **איש מצליח**, always successful.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov *zy"a* related the following tale:

A poor peddler once found an enormous diamond. A jeweller told him, "Go to London and sell it there. Only the wealthiest people can afford to buy this precious diamond."

The peddler sold his belongings and begged for money until he had enough money to get to the port where ships leave for England. But he still didn't have money to pay for the journey. He found a ship leaving for London and showed the captain his diamond. The captain

understood that he was very wealthy, and he let him on board without paying. It was understood that he would pay later.

The captain gave him the most luxurious cabin on the ship, as it befits someone so wealthy, and ordered all the deckhands to honour him and give him anything he requested.

Every day on the trip, the captain came to the Yid's cabin, discussing important and trivial matters. Sometimes, the captain would ask the Yid for business advice. He had immense respect for this Yid and enjoyed speaking with him.

The Yid (ex- peddler) would often take out his diamond to enjoy looking at it. Especially during mealtime, he would take out the diamond because happiness is good for digestion.

Once, he fell asleep, with his diamond still on the table. The bellboy came in, saw that he had finished eating, so he picked up the tablecloth with everything on it and tossed it into the ocean. When the Yid awoke, he realized that his diamond was lost.

Initially, he almost went insane from distress. But then he understood that he must conceal from the captain what occurred. If the captain finds out that he lost the diamond and can't pay for the trip, he is liable to throw him into the sea.

The Yid pretended that everything was fine. He put on a happy countenance and went about the ship as though the world was his. The captain asked him, "I haven't seen the diamond in a long time. Where is it?"

"I'm being careful from the sailors," the Yid replied. "I have to be cautious of thieves. " The captain continued to speak with him, just as before, and the Yid didn't show any sign of worry or distress.

When the ship neared England, the captain said, "Over this trip, I got to know you, and I see that you're honest and intelligent. I have merchandise aboard worth a fortune. However, the English government knows that I do business whenever I come, and they

watch me very carefully. If I sell the merchandise, they will place a high tax on it. So I want you to sell it as if it is yours. I'll pay you a large commission." The Yid agreed to the offer.

It didn't take long, and the Yid sold all the merchandise. He filled a sack with money and went to the captain's cabin to give it to him and collect his commission. When he arrived, people told him that the captain had died and left no heirs. All the money was now his. It was a larger fortune than the value of the diamond.

Rebbe Nachman concluded, "The diamond wasn't his. The proof is that he lost it. The wealth earned from the merchandise sold was his lot. The proof is that he got it. But he only got his wealth because he remained happy even in hard times."

Let's take two lessons from this story:

1. You have to pretend to be happy. We discussed above methods of being happy. One method is to pretend to be happy.

[**The Yismach Yisrael *zt'l*** said that one should pretend to be happy, even if he isn't. A hint is from the words (*Devarim* 16:16), **אַךְ שְׂמֵחַ וְהָיִיתָ**. The first letters spell **שו"א** , falsehood. This teaches us that a person should have a false joy too, because false joy will eventually turn into true joy.]

2. Happiness leads to success. This peddler became wealthy because he was always happy. *Simchah* is *mesugal* for all kinds of *yeshuos*. Tzaddikim say that this is hinted in the *pasuk* (*Yeshayah* **כי בשמחה תצאו 45:12**, with joy you get out of all *tzaros*.

"People are not always born great. Sometimes they seize the moment, taking up a challenge or a job that requires greatness, and the job makes them truly great." ~ Rabbi Avraham Chaim Tanzer Zt'l.

The Kotzker Rebbe (1787–1859)

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotzk was Born to a non-Hasidic family in Goraj near Lublin, Poland, he became attracted to Hasidic philosophy in his youth. He was known for having acquired impressive Talmudic and Kabbalistic knowledge at an early age. He was a student of **Reb Bunim of Peshischa**, and upon the latter's death attracted many of his followers.

He was well known for his incisive and down-to-earth philosophies, and sharp-witted sayings. He appears to have had little patience for false piety or stupidity. From 1839 he lived in seclusion for the last twenty years of his life.



The Kotzker Rebbe never published any works. He wrote many manuscripts, but he had them all burned before his death. Several collections of his sayings have been published, most notably *Emes VeEmunah* (Truth and Faith).

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kotzk (1787-1859) was a legendary reclusive and acerbic leader of Polish Chassidic Jewry. He never wished to become a leader of the masses, yet the more he shied away from fame, the more people flocked to him, eager to glean from his greatness.

A brilliant and insightful scholar who valued the truth above all, he couched many of his teachings in witty exegetical lessons on Scripture and the writings of the sages. Here, we have collected 50 sayings that have been attributed to the Rebbe of Kotzk.

1. A horse walks down the middle of the road. A human being, on the other hand, sticks to one extreme or the other.

2. People tend to look upwards, contemplating the mysteries of the heavens. They would do well to look inward and examine what's happening within themselves.

3. When people ask me what not to do, I can tell them. But to know what they should do, that's something they need to ask themselves.

4. I've never wanted to serve a G-d whose ways would be understandable to mere mortals.

5. He who doesn't see G-d everywhere isn't capable of seeing Him anywhere.

6. Where is G-d? Wherever He is allowed in.

7. The way of the world is such that parents feel the pain of their children, but the children are oblivious to the suffering of their parents. Likewise, G-d feels our pain, but we are blind to His misery.

8. "I" is a thief, which must be banished from the heart.

9. Serving yourself is a form of idolatry.

10. If you say something you don't truly believe, even if you emit a sigh that does not come from the depth of your heart, any motion that is not entirely true—you are guilty of perjury.

11. If you need to hide something—something is wrong.

12. If a person maintains his faith when he is in trouble and sees no solution, is his faith true? What choice did he have? But if a person has all that he needs and still chooses to place his trust in G-d—that's true faith.

13. I never regretted telling the truth.

14. I never feared getting sick, but I dreaded the coddling that follows.

15. The loftier the soul, the greater the challenges and darkness surrounding it, like the most valuable pearl which is set in the largest encasement.

16. The body finds it easier to accept all kinds of suffering than to accept the yoke of Heaven.

17. G-d made the human upright, unlike the animal who walks on all fours. While the beast sees only the earth, man can also look up toward the heavens.

18. The heavens will always remain heavens. But the earth we can elevate and make heavenly.

19. Why do you call out to G-d and beseech that He have mercy on Israel? Better to call out to the people that they have mercy on G-d!

20. Elijah the Prophet will not enter through the door or even the window. He will come by way of your heart and your mind.

21. Silence is the most beautiful of all sounds.

22. When a person has reason to cry, and he wants to cry, but is not able to cry—that's the greatest cry of all.

23. A great generation can make do with petty leaders. But a lowly generation needs great leaders.

24. Even a wagon driver is a leader. And woe is to the wagoner whose horses take control.

25. The most dangerous thing of all is habit.

26. Not every thought should be said. Not every speech should be written down. And not all writings are fit for print.

27. If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you—then I am I and you are you. But 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.

28. Death is but a change of circumstances, like moving homes. But a wise person sees to it that the new home is better and nicer than the old one.

29. Don't fool yourself and don't imitate your fellow.

30. So and so, he is amazing, he learns so much. When does he have time to know anything?

31. In Torah scholarship, there are geniuses. But there are no geniuses in Chassidism. To become a chassid, one must toil.

32. There are rebbes who are so great that they can revive the dead. But reviving the dead is G-d's business. A rebbe needs to be able to revive the living.

33. There are not enough sacks in the world to contain the wily arguments of the evil inclination.

34. I want people to refrain from wrongdoing, not because they fear sin, but because they don't have the time.

35. There is nothing more complete than a broken heart, and there is nothing more upright than a crooked ladder.

36. "I will"—this is bad "I want to"—this is neither here nor there. "I am"—this is good.

37. Poverty and hunger are nothing to fear, for they come from G-d. I fear only the callousness and cruelty that come along with hunger.

38. Through money, even the incorruptible can become corrupted.

39. Joy is wonderful. Through it, one can escape the worst of circumstances.

40. Something that can be acquired in a single hour can be lost in half an hour.

41. A person has two eyes—one to see the greatness of G-d and the other to see his own smallness.

42. A person isn't a goat, whose every movement is heralded by the bell on his neck.

43. Even the greatest person—who has never sinned—must pray to G-d that he not come to believe in himself, for self-aggrandizement is worse than the worst sin.

44. There are three inns that a person visits during his earthly journey: The Inn of Jealousy, the Inn of Desire, and the Inn of Glory. I managed to leave the first two fairly quickly and have never returned. But the third, the Inn of Glory, I struggled mightily to leave, until I felt that my very veins were snapping.

45. Blaze your own path. You can be sure that it has not been sullied by others.

46. More important than writing is erasing.

47. Some people speak words of Torah in order to climb to the seventh heaven. I sought words of Torah in order to crawl into the innards of the listener.

48. If you have no tallit, wrap yourself in the four corners of the earth and pray.

49. "A person must renew himself, and his world with him, each and every day. But one who does not do so, and rather performs his deeds as a mechanical function, does nothing other than the actions of a monkey. Just as this monkey has no personality of his own, but rather copies his own actions and his fellow, so too this person."

50. "You don't love fish. If you loved the fish, you would not have killed it and cooked it on a fire."

R' Elazar Menachem Mann Shach ZT"L would say:

"The Korbon Todah was brought as a means to give thanks to Hashem after a person experienced a miraculous salvation and underwent a life-altering change. But if a person lives a normal life; he and his family are healthy, he has sustenance and happiness in his life, should he be any less obligated to give thanks for the pain that was withheld?"

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

וזאת תורת זבח השלמים אשר יקריב לד' אם על תודה יקריבנו (7:11-12)

The Gemora in Berachos (54b) rules that a Korban Todah (Thanksgiving-Offering) is brought by four groups of people to express their gratitude to Hashem for being saved from potential danger. In the absence of the Temple, they instead publicly recite a blessing known as Birkas HaGomel.

It is curious to note that after hearing somebody make a blessing we answer simply, "Amen," with one exception. After hearing a person say Birkas HaGomel, we respond, **אמן מי שגמלך כל טוב הוא יגמלך כל טוב סלה** – ***He who has bestowed upon you all good should continue to bestow upon you all good***. As this lengthy response is found nowhere else, it clearly needs an explanation.

In his introduction, the Shalmei Nedorim offers a beautiful insight based on a fascinating episode related by the Gemora in Shabbos (53b). The wife of a poor man passed away shortly after giving birth. The pauper lacked the means to hire a nurse-maid for his newborn, but the baby's life was saved when the man's body miraculously became capable of nursing the baby.

The Amora Rav Yosef praised the man, saying that he must have had great merits to have brought about such an open miracle. Abaye, on the other hand, remarked how lowly he must have been for needing a miracle performed on his behalf.

The Shalmei Nedorim explains that Abaye's intent was not to say that the man was wicked. After all, he merited an extraordinary miracle to save his child's life. Rather, Abaye was lamenting that the miracle used up so many of his merits (see Rashi Bereishis 32:11).

He explains that Birkas HaGomel is recited after a person has been saved from potential danger. While we are happy that he survived, we are also afraid that it may have come at the expense of his accumulated merits. As a result, a simple "Amen" won't suffice, and

we add a special supplication requesting that his good fortune should continue and not be depleted through this miracle!

Berina Yikzoru

הָעֹלָה עַל־מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר ***"Which burns on the altar from night until morning"*** (6:2)

What does the burnt offering atone for?

On the neglect of a positive commandment, our sages say that there are 248 positive commandments, and the Mitzvah of a burnt offering is among them. If so, then the burnt offering atones for the other 247 Mitzvot.

Rebbi Rachamim Chai Chayuta HaCohen Zt'l from Jerba writes that we have a hint to this in this verse. The last letters from each of words in this verse **המזבח כל הלילה עד הבקר**- is equal to the numerical value of 247. It is telling us a burnt offering atones for 247 Mitzvot (Ma'ayan Hashavua)

Rabbi YY Jacobson – The Shabbos Deal

I was once sitting in my house on Shabbos afternoon. My oldest son who was 6 years old, and likes to challenge his parents, as many Jewish children today like to do, said, "Tatty, if somebody would offer you $25 million, and ask you to sign a paper on Shabbos, would you do it or not?"

So, I said, "I wouldn't." He said, "I don't believe you! It's just a signature, it will only take you two seconds"

"It doesn't make sense to me, why wouldn't you sign?"

I realised that when a child asks such a question, it is a moment that you don't want to lose. When I am preaching, they are not interested. But when they are asking a question, now is the moment.

So I said, "let me ask you a question."

"If somebody came to me and offered me $25 billion and they can keep you, do you think that your tatty will accept the offer?" He thinks for a moment, and says, "No, you won't."

I said, "Thank you, but I have another question."

"Do you think that tatty will have to think about it?"

He said, "No, you probably won't have to think about it."

I said, "Wow, why not?"

He said, "I don't know."

I said, " Because there are some things in life that are priceless. The value of your life doesn't have a monetary value."

"I want you to understand that Shabbos is a priceless gift. **בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִוא לְעֹלָם** It is an intimate gift that The Riboino Shel Olam gives the Yidden." **Keep Shabbos like it's priceless.**

We Can't Appoint an Agent to Say 'Thank-You'

When the *Chazan* says *Modim*, the congregation recites a prayer known as "The Rabbis' *Modim*". Why is that? We listen silently during most of the repetition of *Shmoneh Esrei*. Why is *Modim* different?

The Avudraham says that for all blessings in the *Shmoneh Esrei* we can use the services of an agent. 'Heal Us' and 'Bless Us with a Good Year', and so forth have messengers — the *Shliach Tzibbur* can say the blessing for us. However, there is one thing that nobody else can say for us. We must say it for ourselves. That one thing is "Thank You". *Hoda'ah* needs to come from ourselves. No one can be our agent to say 'Thank You'.

Bein Hazemanim? Not For The Rosh Yeshivah, 99, Who Says Birchas HaIlanos, Delivers Daily Shiur



The Rosh HaYeshivah recites Birchas Hailanos on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. (Photo: Shuki Lehrer)

HaGaon HaRav Gershon Edelstein engages in his regular schedule during Bein HaZemanin and delivered his daily shiur on Thursday, Rosh Chodesh Nissan, as usual.

At about noon every day, the Rosh Yeshivah delivers a shiur to Ponovezh bochurim, avreichim and even baalei batim from the area. During Bein Hazemanin, the shiur continues as usual, with no difference from the shiur delivered during the zeman.

Prior to the shiur, the Rosh Yeshivah went outside to recite the bracha of Birchas HaIlanos. *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*

Rav Henoch Leibowitz zt"l By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



It has been 15 years since Rav Henoch Leibowitz zt"l passed away on the tenth of Nissan. His dedication to Klal Yisroel, his penetrating approach to both mussar and Gemorah learning, and his inculcating his remarkable values within his students are sorely missed by all of his Talmidim and continue to serve as a source of constant inspiration to them.

Presented here below are 18 of Rav Henoch Leibowitz thoughts and sayings.

● Knowing G-d is to walk in His ways. This means to emulate Him in acts of kindness, in seeking just solutions, and in the performance of truly charitable acts.

● It's important to seek inspiration from others – just so that we can awaken ourselves to perform a difficult task with joy.

● When trying to impart a lesson, it is much more effective when they figure out the lesson themselves.

● Sometimes the motivating force to do the right thing when faced with difficulty is the very absence of anyone else present who is willing to do it.

● When surrounded by those of lower morality, there is a grave responsibility to gird oneself in strength of character.

● Talking and reviewing something deeply with a friend often allows for greater examination of an issue and helps one see the truth.

● There is often a grave responsibility to think and ponder the gravity of our responsibility.

● Never despair. Its awful power can warp and destroy the power of the mind.

● Even the greatest of people are susceptible of giving up hope.

● Always make the effort – even when the chances look slim. And if you need a miracle, the effort will make it easier. Always make the effort to remain calm, cool, and collected – even when you are involved in earth-shattering matters.

● Losing it – is a sin.

● What is the definition of a "sucker?" To people who are far removed from the concept of chessed it is often it is a pejorative term for a "baal chessed."

● Performing acts of kindness each day, aside from being obligatory, is a means to acquire the character trait of loving others like oneself – step-by-step.

● Quite often it is improper to join with evil people, even for a worthy goal, because it appears as if you agree with their decisions. The issue is complex and requires consultation with the greatest of Torah leaders.

● Embedded within the soul of man is a natural tendency toward goodness and fulfilling Hashem's will. Without this, the soul cannot be truly happy, just like a princess who marries a commoner does not find true happiness.

● Humility is not the negation of the true state of affairs – rather it is the recognition of one's faults and qualities together, with the true and deep realization that all talent comes to him solely by the grace of the Creator.

● One cannot achieve a state of wholeness merely by focusing on Mitzvos between man and G-d. One must perfect relationships and fulfill all Mitzvos between man and each other as well, in order to achieve the desired shleimus that we must all reach.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

A Royal Residue



In 1924, at the laying of the cornerstone of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, **R' Meir Shapiro** said, "Our great Rebbes of Chachmei Lublin—the Maharshal, R' Shalom Shachna, Maharsha, Maharam Lublin…You Gedolei Hador spread Torah here in Lublin before me. It is your light and power that gave me inspiration to establish a Yeshiva that will continue the light of the Torah that you transplanted in Lublin.

I invite you to come and be part of our cornerstone laying. I am sure that in your merit and in the merit of your Torah we will be successful." Then he commented **קדושה ראשונה קידשה לשעתה וקידשה לעתיד לבוא** - 'The Kedusha from the great Achronim whose Torah we learn to this day, that Kedusha remains.'

The eminent Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin was the brainchild of R' Meir Shapiro. The yeshiva was a five-story modern building with central heating. The first two stories (the basement and ground floor) housed a boiler room, laundry, bathrooms and a Mikva (ritual bath), a bakery, kitchens and a dining room.

On the second floor were offices, reading rooms, and a room with an impressive model of the Beis Hamikdash, crafted by Henoch Weintraub. When the students learned Kodshim, they used this model as a visual.

The third floor housed a library, a conference room, an apartment for the Rosh Yeshiva, guest rooms and a large auditorium which also served as a synagogue.

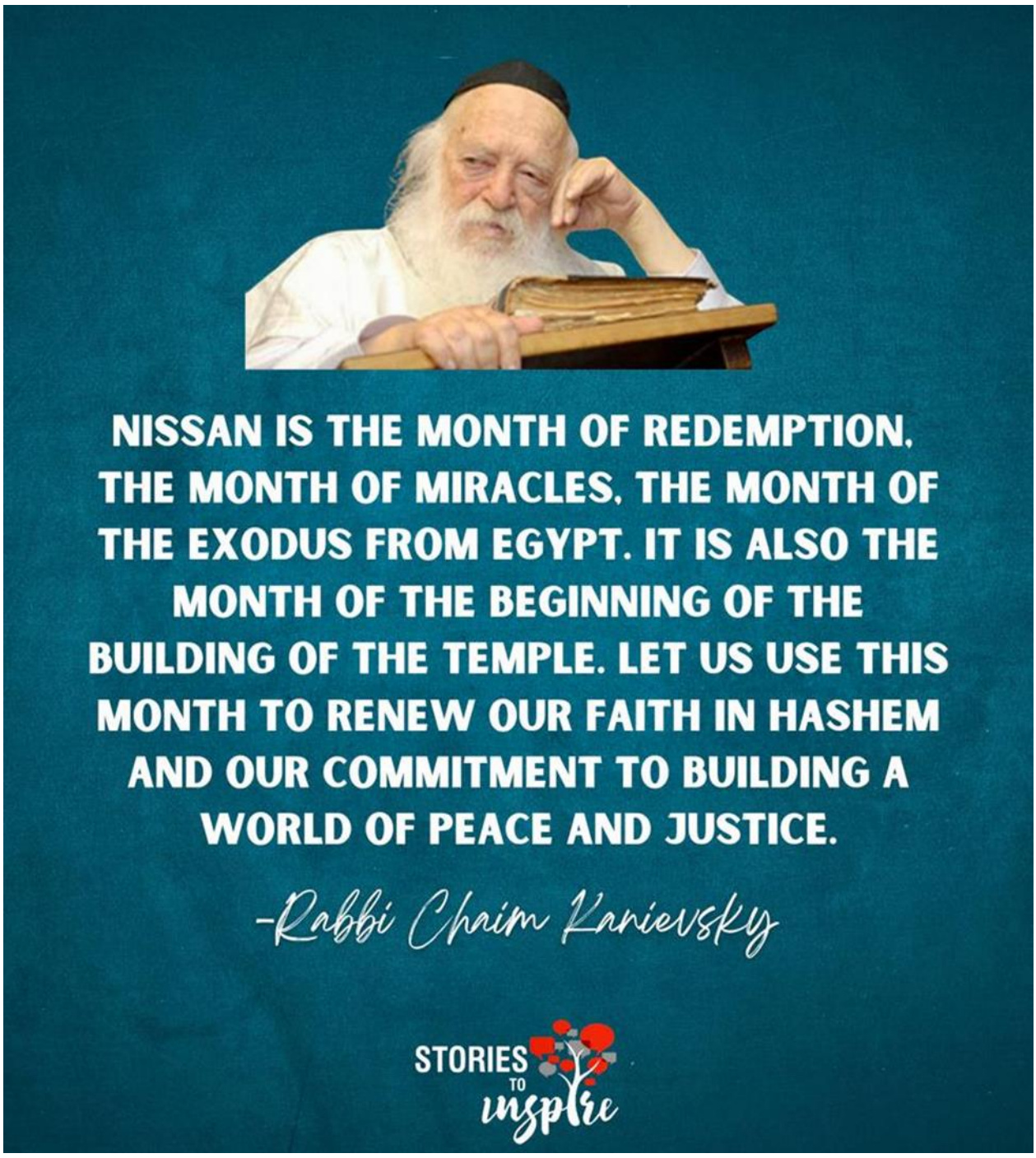
The fourth and fifth floors contained spacious and comfortable dormitory rooms for students.

Finally, in front of the building was a spacious garden with paths, benches and trees which also served the students. Chachmei Lublin, which was a chassidish yeshiva, opened its doors in 1930 with approximately 200 students.

Included in the curriculum of the yeshiva was Daf Yomi, the innovative initiative of R' Meir Shapiro. R' Meir Shapiro's plan was to not just have one Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, but rather to have one in each major city. For example, one in Lvov, one in Warsaw, one in Lodz and so on. To cap it off, he had a plan to open a super yeshiva of Chachmei Lublin in Yerushalayim where the greatest students of Poland would attend.

Most of this never materialized, partially due to his early demise at the age of 46 in 1933. Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin was opened for only nine years — 1930-1939. R' Meir Shapiro was Rosh Yeshiva there for just three years, until his passing in 1933. [Interestingly, R' Meir Shapiro's brother was a Rav in Brooklyn, New York in the 1950s.]

Most of the staff and students of Chachmei Lublin were killed in the Holocaust. Some escaped to Vilna at the outset of the war and they wound up in Shanghai. And so there was a branch of Chachmei Lublin in Shanghai during the Holocaust, consisting of around 35 students.



A Wise Man would say: "Open your ears before you open your mouth - it may surprise your eyes!"

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ"ל- נפטר כ׳ט שבט תשע׳ד



One of the things that we discuss in this week's sedra is the Korban Todah. The Korban itself is a korban Shlomim – yet it comprises of 40 challos. 30 of which are not chometz, and 10 of which are chometz.

Out of all of these, 4 challos (3 matzah and 1 chometz) are given to the Cohen, and 36 must be eaten by the owner of the korban. A normal korban can be eaten on the day it was shechted, together with that night and the following day. However, the korban Todah comprises many more challos that must be consumed within a much shorter time span – The rest of that day it was brought, and that night. (Until midnight)

What is the purpose of having so many challos and they must be consumed in such a short time span?

Chazal say that there were different types of people who would bring a Korban Todah: Someone whose life was saved, because they either crossed the sea, or the desert. Or, they were in a prison, where their life was in peril.

This would be a way of thanking The Riboino Shel Olam for saving their life. But it was also a public display of thanks, to show other people that Hashem had saved his life. We want that this person should share this **מכיר טוב** with as many people as possible. Therefore we tell him that he must bring a large korban, but it must be consumed in a short period of time. This will force him to share it out amongst his friends – which will inevitably publicize that he has brought a korban Todah, and thanking Hashem publicly.

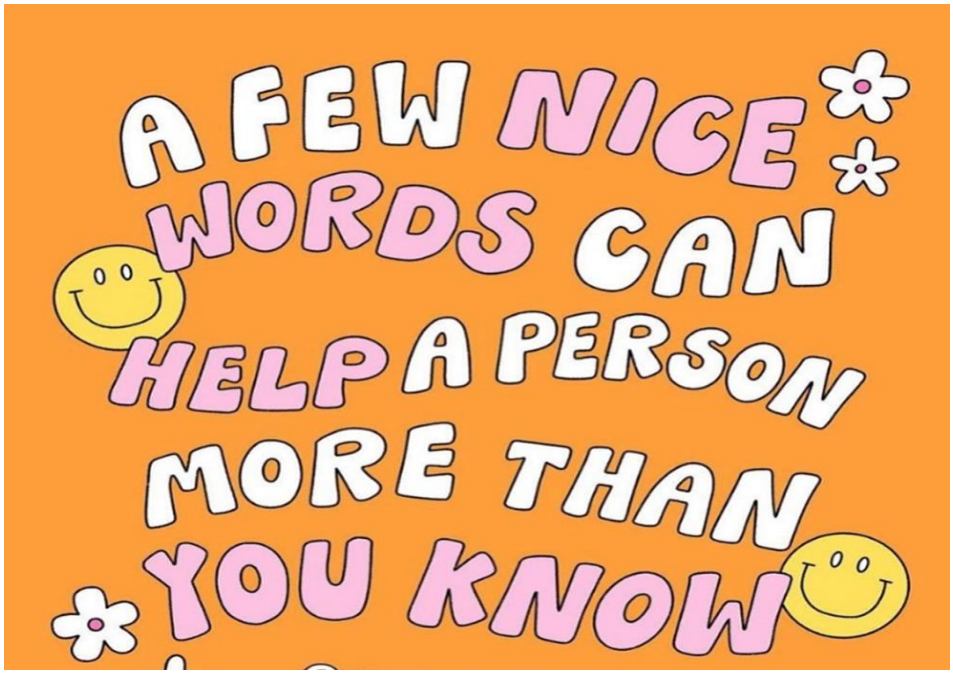
What we have in place of the korban Todah today, is that anybody that goes through any of those experiences, makes the beracha of

'*Hagomel*.'- הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיָּבִים טוֹבוֹת שֶׁגְּמָלַנִי כָּל טוֹב. '***Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, ruler of the world, who rewards the undeserving with goodness, and who has rewarded me with goodness***.'

The meforshim ask, "Why do we then answer this beracha with the words מִי שֶׁגְּמָלְךָ כֹּל טוֹב הוּא יִגְמָלְךָ כֹּל טוֹב סֶלָה – '***May He who rewarded you with all goodness reward you with all goodness for ever.***'- and not just answer 'Amein' like we would normally do after a beracha?

One of the reasons could be, that a person who goes through any of these life-threatening situations, and comes out alive, is likely to have used up some of his merits. And therefore, we wish him - ***May Hashem who bestowed upon you with this goodness reward you with all goodness for ever***. (Your merits should not be used up, but you should continue to have merits.)

Also, **כֹּל טוֹב** refers to Olam Habah – that you shouldn't have anything diminished from your Olam Habah. Like we say in Birchas Hamazon - וּמִכָּל־טוּב לְעוֹלָם אַל יְחַסְּרֵנוּ: '***And everything good; and of all good things may He never deprive us***.'



שמואל זנוויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry)

The Most Precious Sacrifice in The Eyes Of Hashem

וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ "*And the fire of the altar will be kindled in it*" (6:2)

The Kabbalists say that everything created will exist forever. If so, where is the altar that was in the Temple, and which was destroyed nearly two thousand years ago?

Well, that altar is in every heart of every man. It is said, "And the fire of the altar was kindled in him"; "In" means both "within" and "upon". The Kabbalists say that the fire on the altar will forever continue to burn in the hearts of the descendants of Aaron the High Priest and in the hearts of each and every one of us.

They say that every person is considered a priest, every life is considered a temple, and every heart is considered an altar. Whenever our good nature overcomes our evil nature, we make a sacrifice on the altar of our heart. Every good deed adds light to the spiritual fire burning in our midst.

It is said that once the angels wanted to find out which sacrifice was most precious to G-d. They brought Hashem the uniform of a soldier who gave his life for his country. Hashem said that indeed, this is a great sacrifice.

The angels returned and brought before Hashem the hat of a nurse, who knew that the patient she was caring for suffered from an infectious disease, and she did contract the disease - and died. Hashem said that this is also a huge sacrifice, but it is not the greatest either. After that, the angels brought two small tears to Hashem; and Hashem saw them and said that they are more precious than any sacrifice.

But why? And who shed these tears?

One man carried a knife in his hand, and wanted to take revenge on his fellow man. When he approached his former friend's house he looked through the window and saw the man happily playing with children and smiling at his beautiful wife. When he saw this his heart melted within him; Then two tears fell from the eyes of that murderer, and he threw the knife from his hand and walked away. These were the two tears that the angels brought before Hashem.

Every time we overcome our evil inclinations, we offer Hashem a sacrifice, which He cherishes above all else.

שמואל זנויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry)

Every Useful Task Is Sacred

וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־ מָקוֹם טָהוֹר "*And [the priest] took off his clothes and put on other clothes and took the manure outside the camp to a clean place*" (6:4)

People came to pray and study in the Beit Midrash and found it dirty and untidy; All the mud they brought in their boots the previous day remained on the floor. The worshipers complained, but none of them thought to take a broom and clean the floor.

The Hasidic rabbi decided to teach his congregation a lesson. He put on his holiday clothes: a capote and a streimel, grabbed a broom and began to clean the room.

His disciples were amazed: "What is he doing?" they asked - "I do what the priests would do in the Mishkan and in the temple,"

"In G-d's house," the rabbi added and explained, "every work - even the simplest - is sacred. The whole world is a temple, and every task is useful - and sacred!"



Kibud Av v'Em



Reb Chaim Palagi (Nefesh Kol Chai, Kibud) writes, "His father and mother are better than a kameia to protect him."

People wear kameias, good mazal amulets, for protection, but a far better protection for health, success, and longevity is practicing kibud av v'em.

The Chazon Ish zt'l would tell the yeshiva bachurim, "Just as one must study the halachos of a yom tov thirty days before the yom tov, so too must one review hilchos kibud av v'em thirty days before returning home."

And when a bachur lives at home with his parents, he certainly must constantly review the halachos of kibud av v'em. The Chazon Ish compares this to hilchos chag b'chag, the obligation to study the halachos of yom tov on yom tov itself. On Pesach, one should learn hilchos Pesach, and on Succos, one should study hilchos Succos. So, when a child lives at home, the halachos are always applicable, and thus should always review these halachos.

Pele Yoetz (*Kibud Av v'Em*) writes, "Precious Jewish children, be cautious to give honor to Hashem by honoring your father and your mother. Do everything they request from you without turning to the right or the left. I have already mentioned that there are mitzvos that have mazal. How much money people spend to have the honor of *pesichah*, to open the aron kodesh, or to be a sandek, and the like, although these are neither mitzvos *d'oraysa* nor d'Rabanan. They are *chibuv* mitzvah, an expression of love to the mitzvos. *Ashreihem Yisrael*!

However, every time they obey their father or mother, they are doing a great mitzvah *d'oraysa*!

Kibud av v'em is from the greatest mitzvos, yet people don't appreciate it. I've heard parents complain that after their children got married, they don't visit anymore. They become busy with life, and they hardly see their parents. But this isn't an excuse, because we have the telephone in our generation. You can be far away, on the other side of the world, and you can speak to your parents. So why shouldn't a son or daughter set a time each day to call their parents? You can tell them what is happening to you and your family. With this simple deed, you perform a mitzvah from the Torah of kibud av v'em, which is from the greatest mitzvos.

Reb Shlomo Kluger *zt'l* wrote to his son, Reb Avraham Shmuel Binyamin *z'l*, "My dear son, why isn't *yiras shamayim* upon you? When you write a letter to me (with *chiddushei Torah*), send regards to your mother, and thereby you will perform the mitzvah of *kibud em*. From now on, send a greeting to your mother…"

"Happiness is not a life without problems – But a life with purpose." ~ Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe.

A father called up a *rosh yeshiva* to complain that although his son is learning well in yeshiva and is growing in *yiras Shamayim*, at home, he doesn't honor his parents. "Perhaps you can speak to him and set things straight."

The next day, the *rosh yeshiva* asked the *bachur* to learn with him every Friday morning.

"That would be a great honor," the *bachur* replied. "What does the *rosh yeshiva* want to learn?"

"*Hilchos kibud av va'em*."

"*Hilchos kibud av ve'em*?" the *bachur* asked. "Why? I think we should study something that is l'maaseh, something that is relevant to day-to-day life."

He didn't realize just how l'maaseh and essential hilchos kibud av v'em is.

The first Rashi in *Chumash* states, "Reb Yitzchak asked: The Torah didn't have to begin with *Bereishis*, rather with **החודש הזה לכם**.

The Taz (*Divrei Dovid*) writes that he saw in a very old sefer that this question that Rashi writes in the name of Reb Yitzchak isn't found in any Midrash or any other Chazal. Rather, Rashi wanted to begin his commentary by honoring his father, Reb Yitzchak. His father wasn't a scholar, so he asked his father to ask him a question and his father asked "Why does the Torah begin with *Bereishis*?" So Rashi put the question at the beginning of his commentary.

The Taz maintains that Rashi's father was a scholar because Rashi writes towards the end of *Avodah Zarah*, a commentary that he heard from his father.

Nevertheless, we see from this story that the introduction to Torah is honoring parents.

The Damesek Eliezer of Viznitz zt'l was being *maavir sidra*. He was almost finished when his father, the Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz, asked him a question. The Damesek Eliezer answered the question and then went back to the beginning of the parashah to be *maavir sedra* again because his custom was that he didn't speak while being *maavir sedra*.

The chasidim asked him, "You could have shown your father that you have just a couple of pesukim to finish."

The Damasek replied, "The mitzvah of *kibud av v'em* is from the Torah, and it is from the most stringent mitzvos. Therefore, I preferred to be maavir sedra again than to have my father wait."

Reb Shlomo Zalman zt'l was one of the rabbanim of Pressburg. For years, his dream and hope was to travel to Eretz Yisrael, even for a short visit, but he couldn't afford the long trip. One year, on Purim, a wealthy person gave him a ticket to travel to Eretz Yisrael. His dream had come true. - He immediately began preparations, and when the day of his departure came closer, he traveled to his parents (who lived in another city) to say goodbye.

His mother told him, "In two and a half months, when you reach Eretz Yisrael, send me a telegram so I will know that you arrived safe and sound, and then I can sleep calmly and peacefully."

Reb Shlomo Zalman understood that his mother was worried about the trip and that she won't sleep well, so he immediately changed his mind. - "I'm not going to Eretz Yisrael," he told them. "I will stay here."

His mother tried to convince him that he should go. "Just contact me when you arrive," but he had made his decision. He wouldn't go to Eretz Yisrael if this caused his mother distress until he arrived.

I heard from **Reb Shmuel Wosner zt'l** that Shlomo HaMelech became king because he honored his father immensely (see *Malachim* 1, ch.2).

Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l taught his children that they should never say **שבע**. Even when they were referring to seven o'clock, or as a number, they shouldn't say **שבע** because the name of their righteous mother was **בת שבע**. (He didn't say this as a halachah, rather as an added caution in hilchos *kibud av v'em*.

The Beis Aharon zt'l said that he reached all his levels in the merit of *kibud av v'em*.

The Chazon Ish zt'l said, "Know that every madreigah that I attained, and any good middah that is in me, it is all in the merit of *kibud av v'em*" (*Maaseh Ish* vol.4 p.198).

Reb Moshe Turk davened every morning with the **Chazon Ish *zt'l***, and considered it a *zechus* to receive the Chazon Ish's daily "good morning." After *shacharis*, Reb Moshe Turk would go off to a cheder in Tel Aviv, where he taught. Once, he brought his class to Bnei Brak, so they could also daven *shacharis* with the Chazon Ish.

After *shacharis*, one of the students wanted to ask a question from his rebbe, Reb Moshe Turk, but Reb Moshe stopped him. He said, "In the presence of the Chazon Ish, it is *derech eretz* to remain silent."

The class filed by the Chazon Ish and received his *brachos*. When the child who had a question passed the Chazon Ish, the Chazon Ish asked him to tell him what he wanted to ask. The child looked up at Reb Moshe Turk, wondering whether it was *derech eretz* to speak, and Reb Moshe Turk replied, "If the Chazon Ish asks, you may reply."

The student asked a question that only a child could ask. He said, "How did the Chazhon Ish become the Chazon Ish?"

The Chazon Ish replied, "It was because I never wasted a moment of my time, and I was always cautious with the mitzvah of *kibud av ve'em*" (*Maaseh Ish* vol.4, p.198).

Longevity

The pasuk states that as a reward for honoring parents, one will live a long life (**למען יאריכון ימיך**). The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 39:) says that this refers to Olam HaBa and that he will live long in Olam HaBa. Nevertheless, he will surely benefit from many rewards in this world, as well, because honoring parents is from the mitzvos that **אדם אוכל פירותיהן בעולם הזה והקרן הקיימת לו לעולם הבא**, whose primary reward is in Olam HaBa, but the fruits of the mitzvah are already enjoyed in this world (Mishna, beginning of *Pei'ah*).

Once, the **Chofetz Chaim zt'l** came to Vilna, and many people came to see him and to receive his brachos. **Reb Eliyahu Klor z'l**, who learned in **Reb Shlomo Heiman's zt'l** yeshiva in Vilna, wanted to go with his friends from yeshiva to greet the Chofetz Chaim, but his father told him not to go. The father explained, "You're weak, and many people will be there. Perhaps there will be some pushing and shoving, and I'm afraid you will get hurt."

Eighty bachurim from the yeshiva went to the Chofetz Chaim, and they returned so happy because they received a brachah for long life. Reb Eliyahu Dov was upset that he lost out on this opportunity.

At that time, he wrote down the names of all the bachurim of the yeshiva who went to the Chofetz Chaim.

When Reb Eliyahu Dov was ninety-five years old, he said to his grandson, "Today, the last person from my yeshiva who went to the

Chofetz Chaim to receive a brachah for long life was niftar. Only I remained, and I'm still healthy. I walk without a walker, and I don't need eyeglasses.

This is the reward I received from the Torah, that blesses those who honor their parents with a long life."

The Chasam Sofer zt'l (*Drashos*, vol.2 p.362:) writes that, at times, children think they shouldn't honor their parents because it takes away from their time to study Torah, which is the greatest mitzvah. Therefore, the Torah promises, **למען יאריכון ימיך**, that you will live long.

If you honor your parents now, Hashem will grant you a long life, and you will have even more time to study Torah, daven, etc.

The Tur Ha'aruch writes on the words **יאריכון ימיך** , that the way it is written indicates that your parents will ***cause*** you to live long. This is because if you honor your parents, they will daven that you live long, so you can continue to honor them and to help them, and their tefillos will cause you to live long.

The Lev Simchah (Gur) zt'l said that each person comes to the world with a quota of time that he will live, and the time that one spends with *kibud av v'em* isn't part of the *cheshbon*. Whatever time he spends honoring his parents will be returned to him.

It states (*Bereishis* 27:31) **ויבא לאביו**, and these words can be read forward and backwards, which hints that when one does *kibud av v'em*, it will come back to him because his children will honor him as well.

The Imrei Emes zt'l was once on a wagon with his mother a'h. He sat in one corner of the wagon, together with the men of the family, and she sat in another corner, with the women. At one point during the trip, the Imrei Emes washed and ate lunch. Then, after he benched, his mother (who didn't know that he had eaten) told him, "You should eat something." Without saying a word, he took out some more food from his suitcase, washed his hands, and ate again to do kibud av v'em.

He wouldn't consider telling his mother he had already eaten (Rosh Golas Ariel).

Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (*Raba* ch.26) states, "Whoever desires longevity, wealth, or honor in this world and the next world should do the will of his father in heaven and the will of his father and mother."

Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l said that honoring a parent is a matter of pikuach nefesh because the Torah says that for this mitzvah, one will live long.

It is a special merit to receive a brachah from one's parents. The Seporno (*Bereishis* 32:1) writes, "The Torah tells us that Lavan blessed his daughters, so that we should know that the brachos of a father to his children, which is certainly with a whole heart, will definitely take effect…"

Instead of asking others for a brachah, go to your father and mother and ask them to bless you. If the brachos of Lavan took effect because he blessed with a whole heart, certainly the brachos of *ehrlicher* parents will be very effective.

Rabbeinu b'Chayei writes, "It is clear that people are rewarded in this world for doing *kibud av v'em*, or that they experience tranquillity and success with everything they do."

The sefer *Meah She'arim* (Shar 16) writes, "Whoever keeps this mitzvah, nothing bad will happen to him. - The One Who rewards is trusted that He will send malachim before him to protect him."

The daughter of **The Steipler zt'l** once told her father that "Chaim has a backache." The Steipler thought she was referring to Reb Chaim, his son, so the Steipler went home, told Reb Chaim to lie in bed, and brought him what he would need for the day. The Steipler told him to remain there until the morning.

Eventually, someone explained to the Steipler that his daughter was referring to his grandson Chaim and not to Reb Chaim, his son.

The Steipler smiled and commented that Reb Chaim would remain in bed the entire night rather than question or disagree with his father.

The Imrei Emes zt'l said that it is written in sefarim that every person should have at least one mitzvas asei and one mitzvas lo saaseh that he should be especially careful to always keep, under all circumstances, and never transgress it.

The Imrei Emes said, "I accepted on myself the mitzvas asei of kibud av v'em and the lo saaseh of **דבר שקר תרחק**, to never tell a lie."

Someone asked, "Why did you choose specifically these two mitzvos?" - He replied, "It is because these are the hardest to keep!" (Rosh Goals Ariel).

Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l related that once, he was ill, and his father, the **Steipler zt'l**, came to visit him. In the conversation, the Steipler mentioned that he was going to the printer that day to bring some corrections and amendments on a sefer that he was printing.

Reb Chaim told his father, "My sefer, Orchos Chaim, is also by the printer, and I also have edits and changes to give in, but I am ill now and can't go to the printer."

The Steipler said, "Give me the changes, and I will hand it over to the printer."

Reb Chaim gave him the pages, and the Steipler gave them to the printer. But the sefer wasn't printed until a few years later, which was very unusual. Reb Chaim mentioned the delay to the Steipler and asked why it happened. The Steipler replied, "It is because you allowed me to bring the corrections to the printer."

"But you offered to do so!" Reb Chaim said.

"That's true," the Steipler replied, "nevertheless, it wasn't proper that I should be your messenger, and the punishment was that it took several years before it was printed" (Derech Sichah).

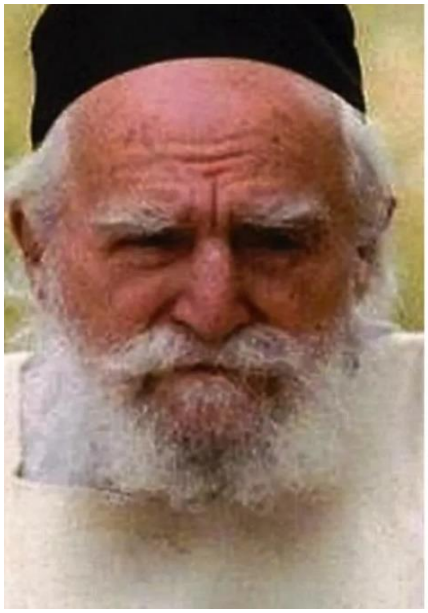
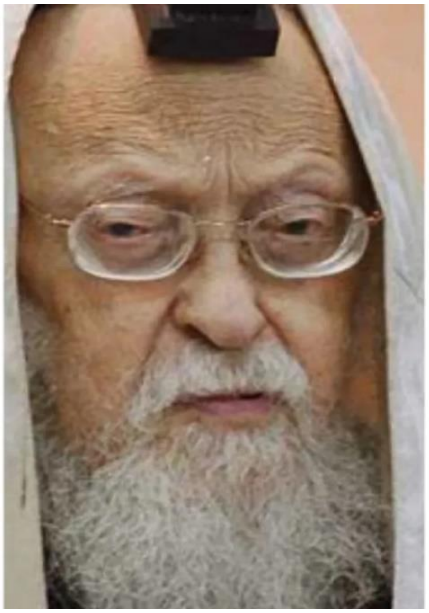
May it be His will that we perform the mitzvah of kibud av v'em in the best way, and we should merit all the brachos that come from it, as the Torah writes (Devarim 5:16) **למען יאריכון ימיך ולמען יטב לך**, "So that your days be lengthened, and that it may go well with you."

"The ultimate purpose of our lives is to develop a relationship with Hashem – To come closer to Him and to serve Him with all our heart, soul and strength." – Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman-Torah Wellsprings - Increasing our Faith

R' Menachem Nachum of Boyan-Czernowitz taught, just like our sages tell us that when Adar comes, we increase our joy (Ta'anis 29a), so to when it is the month of Nissan we increase our Emunah. This is because we were redeemed from Egypt in Nissan because of our faith, and will be redeemed with the coming of Moshiach in the merit of our faith as well (Yalkut Shimoni)... as the pasuk in Michah (7:15) tell us, "I will show him wondrous deeds as in the days when you left from the land of Egypt." Nissan is the month that is designated for these miracles.

Who is Kerria Lacca and Why Do Some Rabbis Hate Her So? By Rabbi Yair Hoffman


She lies at the heart of the most controversial issues that have hit the Chareidi World since the mid-sixties. Satmar and the Rabbis in Lakewood, New Jersey would like nothing better than to see her go away. The same is true with the Rabbanut of Israel and the Eida HaChareidis in Yerushalayim. The Rabbanut has even barred her from entering the country. At least two local Five Towns/Far Rockaway synagogues have forbidden her entry.

Yet throughout America, she is welcomed and loved almost everywhere. Who is Kerria Lacca? Where does she come from? More pertinently, why has she inspired such abhorrence and debate?

Let us start at the beginning.



Kerria Lacca started off in the jungles of south-east Asia where she first found her home. Kerria Lacca, by the way, is a small female beetle - more commonly called the lac beetle — of shellac fame. She is found covering numerous foods — particularly chocolates, Mike and Ikes, Cinnamon flavored Hot Tamales, and shiny fruits. [Some apple suppliers use shellac as the wax while others use Carnauba wax — which is not beetle-based.]

The Process

Farmers in southeast Asia and in Mexico obtain sticks of Kerria Lacca eggs that are ready to hatch and attach these sticks to trees that are to be infested. The beetles hatch and colonize the branches of the host trees. Let us watch her for a few minutes. There she stands inserting herself into these branches in small cavernous tunnels, sucking out the sap and some bark for sustenance. Soon she will begin secreting a much sought after resin in order to traverse the branches of the tree. The resin is called sticklac.

There are 150 Kerra Lacca beetles per square inch, after they hatch. The resin is collected by workers. It is heated and filtered. Body parts and bark parts are removed. The end product is known as Shellac. Alcohol is added to it, and it becomes an ingredient in many

food grade glazes. This glaze is placed on thousands of products — including candies, chocolates, and fresh waxed fruit.

The glaze is actually made out of sugar and gum Arabic, but the shine doesn't last too long. To give the shine some longevity, the glaze-makers add in some shellac. Shellac is added to many New York State apples, chocolates, and other glazes. To make the glaze, the Shellac is mixed with four or five parts of alcohol.

The issue is not a new issue. What is new is that a growing number of organizations and people are taking the more stringent view. Why this has happened is another issue. But few can deny that the matter is of growing concern.

The debate seems to be a three-way debate between **Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, Rav Elyashiv zt"l, and Dayan Weiss zt"l**. It concerns the Kashrus of confectioner's glaze and other food resins that are used on hundreds of food products, including apples and candy, and come from beetles.

Rav Moshe Zt"L

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (Igros Moshe YD II #24) in a letter dated January 18th, 1965 to Rabbi Nachum Kornmill, the former Rabbi of the Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst in the Five Towns, cites four reasons why shellac should be permitted:

- The process regarding Lac beetles seems no different than bee honey — where the product is produced outside of the main body of the insect. The Beis Yoseph seems to extend one type of honey to another type of honey — therefore we can perhaps also extend this to shellac production from beetles.

- Rav Feinstein zt"l also suggests that Shellac would be included within the verse that is understood to specifically come to permit bee honey since there is only one type of Shellac (as opposed to many types of honey). The verse, argues Rav Feinstein zt"l, permits the product of all flying things that do not require name identification

by species. Shellac does not require this because there is only one type of shellac.

- Rav Feinstein zt"l disagrees with the view of Rabbi Joseph Teumim (the Pri Magadim) who writes that even a non-kosher item with no taste still requires a ratio of sixty times the amount of kosher to non-kosher in order for it to be considered kosher. Rav Feinstein suggested that this view is incorrect.

- Rav Feinstein dealt with the possibility that this Shelac is not ingested into the body at all and is therefore not forbidden.

At least three of Rav Feinstein's four points have come under great scrutiny and debate among some circles in the Rabbinic world. The first point is questioned because Rav Feinstein needs to change the girsah or wording of the Talmud in order to make this argument. Some question this because there is no indication of this change in any manuscript or Rabbinic work. There are also over 100 different types of coccoid beetles that produce different lac products. Rabbis also question his other points as well (See volume III of Rav Yechezkel Roth's responsa book).

Dayan Weiss Zt"L

The next view is that of Dayan Yitzchak Weiss zt"l. He writes in a responsa dated May 7th, 1986 (Minchas Yitzchok Vol. X #65) that there would be basis to permit it based upon the fact the Shellac is only added for Chazussah — appearance and even then it may fall into the category of zeh vazeh gorem — two items both being a cause of it.

Furthermore, he rules that the halacha is in accordance with the Pri Chadash that in regard to matters of appearance we are only dealing with a Rabbinic issue and not a Torah prohibition. The fact that it is mixed with a greater percentage of alcohol may make the prohibiton null and void. However, he concludes that due to our lack of a depth

of knowledge into the properties and nature of Shellac — he is unable to permit it.

Rav Elyashiv Zt"L

Finally, the third view is that of Rav Elyashiv zt"l. He writes in Kovetz Teshuvos (Vol 1 #73) that according to the ruling of the Mordechai and Rabbeinu Gershom — the leniency of the external product of a forbidden animal would only have applied to an animal or creature that the surrounding population generally consumes. Beetles, however, are not generally consumed — therefore that which comes from it (the Shellac) would still be forbidden.

One can perhaps challenge the information presented to Rav Elyashiv in terms of whether or not the beetles are eaten by the general population or not. Beetles are the most popular insect in the world with some 3 billion people in China, India and Africa consuming them. While it could be argued that Rav Elyashiv's point would not apply in those countries, but there is a huge icky factor in western countries. Thus, in the United States, Canada, and in Israel — they would still be forbidden. Nonetheless, there are 36 African countries that are "entomophagous" – as are 23 in the Americas, 29 in Asia, and 11 in Europe. Clearly, we are moving toward a more entomophagous society. The United Nations in New York has also called for more and more beetle and insect consumption.

It is this author's view that commercial bug and beetle consumption in this country is on the rise. The Bugsfeed.com/directory lists some 69 restaurants tin the USA alone that carry insects on their menus.

It could be that with the rise in immigration from bug consuming countries, Rav Elyashiv's stringency would no longer be applicable. It seems, that most of the organizations and Rabbis who have ruled stringently on the matter also do so because of Dayan Weiss' hesitations as well as questions that they had on Rav Moshe's ruling. Some have also argued that Rav Feinstein zt"l was the Posaik of

America and since he permitted it, how may anyone come to question his ruling?

Of course each person should consult his own Rabbi as to what to do in regard to Kerria Lacca. But whatever one's personal views on the matter, at the end of the day, many schools, shuls and entire communities are now strictly adhering to this standard to avoid Kerria Lacca. The vegan community is also interested in a replacement product and many have stopped eating this product opting for a corn-based item instead.



וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הַמִּנְחָה ***This is the law of this meal-offering. (6:7)***

In *Parashas Vayikra,* the Torah addresses the laws of the *Korban Minchah*. The Torah (2:1) begins the laws of *Korban Minchah* with a word not used regarding any of the other *korbanos nedavah,* voluntary offerings: *Nefesh*, soul (*v'nefesh ki sakriv*).

Rashi explains that, concerning a *Korban Minchah*, the Torah makes an exception, since this inexpensive *korban* is usually the offering which a poor man brings. Hashem says, "I will regard it (the *korban* of an *ani*, poor man) as if he had offered his very soul.

Concerning the *Korban Minchah, Chazal* (*Menachos* 110a) teach, *Echad ha'marbeh v'echad ha'mamit, ubilvad she'yichavein libo la'Shomayim*, "Whether one does a little (brings a *Minchah*) or one does a lot (brings an animal sacrifice) (what matters most) is that one's *kavanah*, intent, in bringing the *korban* is *l'shem Shomayim*, for Heaven's sake."

We no longer have *korbanos*; nonetheless, the imperative, "*Echad ha'marbeh v'echad ha'mamit u'bilvad she'yichavein libo la'Shomayim,*" has not changed. Whether it is with regard to our *avodah she'b'elev*, service of the heart, prayer/supplication, or any spiritual activity for that matter, it is all about intent. One who acts for Heaven's sake fulfils the *mitzvah/tefillah* meaningfully. Otherwise, it is a *mitzvah* that lacks completeness and perfection.

A well-known story about the ***Baal Shem Tov*** gives us insight into how our *tefillos* will gain entrance to the Heavenly gate of prayer. It took place on *Yom Kippur*. The saintly *Baal Shem Tov* was leading the services, when he abruptly paused in middle of a chant. He appeared troubled, his countenance presented a strained, troubled image.

When the *Baal Shem Tov* stopped, so did the rest of the congregation. The people knew something was out of sorts. Their revered *Rebbe* did not just stop in the middle of his service.



During the wait, a young shepherd boy who was sitting in the back of the *shul* was troubled that he was unable to express his yearnings through prayer. He so wanted to *daven* like everyone else, to articulate his love for Hashem and supplication for the coming year.

Alas, this boy had never been availed religious instruction. Sadly, he still could not read the Hebrew letters of the *siddur*. His lack of knowledge would not prevent him from expressing himself to his Heavenly father.

He took his shepherd's whistle out of his pocket and decided to pray in the form of a tune. After all, Hashem "understands" the yearning and love behind the tune. Why should it be different than oral expression?

As soon as the boy blew the first sound, the congregation turned around and silenced him. How could he make a farce out of the holiest day of the Jewish calendar year?

Suddenly, the *Baal Shem Tov's* visage changed, as a smile brightened his face. The holy *tzaddik* resumed the service and brought it to a joyful conclusion. His students asked him for an explanation. They were acutely aware that every action which the *Rebbe* performed was profound and well-thought out. He explained, "I sensed the Heavenly gates were sealed to our pleas. When Hashem heard the sincere prayer emitted by the shepherd boy via his whistle, the gates were opened in our favour."

The following story has three versions. Indeed, it supposedly took place with three different rabbis. In any event, the message remains the same: *Davening, avodah she'b'lev*, is all about sincerity and intent. Some of us are more well-versed than others, and, as such, we have a deeper knowledge of *pirush ha'milos*, meaning of the words. Without sincerity and intent *l'shem Shomayim*, however, knowledge of the words alone comprises imperfect prayer. As we saw above, what we say is overshadowed by how we say it. Now for the story.

One of the students of the ***Tzemach Tzedek***, himself a scholar of note, was sent by the *Rebbe* to travel throughout Russia, visiting the small far-off villages where the few Jews who made these places their home would be availed some spiritual inspiration and encouragement.

It was *Erev Yom Kippur* when he arrived at a village far off the beaten path to discover that its Jews, about one hundred in all, had all gone to Vitebsk to join in the services at its large *shul*. While he did not blame them, he was still stuck in a village nowhere in the proximity to a *shul*.

One of the villagers told him that two hours away there was a Cantonist village with a small *shul*. The Cantonists were a unique group of Jews whom we would refer to as bordering on the fringe.

These men had been kidnapped as young children and forced to serve in the Czar's army for 25 years. The goal of this forced incarceration was to distance these children from Judaism. In most cases, the accursed Czar's diabolical plan succeeded. Those who withstood the emotional, physical and spiritual challenge emerged as changed men, hollow, broken shells of humanity.

Having survived a quarter century of debasing, cruel treatment – with their commitment to Hashem still pulsating within them – these men kept to themselves and served Hashem in the manner that they could.

When he heard that a Cantonist *shul* was within a two-hour walk, he ran all the way. He entered the "village" comprised of a few broken down wooden shacks. The first person to see the *Rav* immediately called the rest of their group.

Within a few moments, a small, motley group assembled around their honoured guest. They were beyond excited. To have such a distinguished scholar visit their outpost was an honour. They asked him if he could lead them in the *Yom Kippur* service. They looked at him in such a pleading manner that he saw they really meant their request. How could he refuse?

They made, however, one stipulation: one of them had to lead the *Neilah*, closing service. The *Rav* agreed, and they all went to the makeshift *shul* to usher in the Day of Atonement.

The *Rav* was amazed by the way these men *davened*. After suffering for 25 years, to be able to maintain their faith and *daven* the way they did required almost super human effort and a connection with, and love for, Hashem that only they could have. These simple men were giants of spirituality. The *Rav* felt honoured to have the privilege of joining with them in prayer.

Finally, the closing moments of *Yom Kippur* was upon them. It was time to recite the hallowed *Neilah* service. Regardless of a person's

affiliation, *Neilah* is the most compelling prayer of *Yom Kippur*. As they closed the service of the holiest day of the year, it was laden with emotion and trepidation. One was either successful, or he was not. No other avenues existed. As such, the individual who leads the service must be one who understands the enormity of the moment, such that he is able to inspire the congregation.

These men had chosen one of their own. The *Rav* was in for a life-altering surprise. After this *Neilah,* he would no longer be the same person.

The *chazan*, leader of the service, ascended to the lectern and proceeded to unbutton and then remove his shirt. When the *Rav* saw this, he was about to yell "Stop!" One does not remove his shirt in a *shul*.

When the shirt fell to the floor, however, he saw hundreds of scars and welts on the man's back and shoulders. These scars were the result of 25 years of refusing to give up his Jewish faith. These scars represented a badge of courage. When the *Rav* saw the *chazan's* scarred back, he broke down in tears. He knew that he was standing in the presence of greatness.

The Cantonist then raised his hands to Hashem and, with a loud voice, began his supplication, "Hashem! Please send *Moshiach*! I do not ask for the sake of our families, because we have no families. I do not ask for the sake of our futures, because we have no futures. I am not asking for the sake of our livelihoods, our comfort, our children or our reputations, because we have none of those. We are asking *L'Maancha; Asei l'maan Shemecha;* Do it for Your sake; Do it for Your Name.'"

He then put on his shirt and began *Tefillas Neilah.*

אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering. (7:12)

One who has survived a life-threatening crisis brings a thanksgiving offering to Hashem as an expression of his gratitude. This gratitude goes far beyond the *korban*. On the contrary, it begins with the *korban* and should continue in every aspect of his life. He should never forget that he is alive by the grace of Hashem.

Throughout *Sefer Tehillim*, David *Hamelech* reiterates his praises of Hashem in his gratitude to the Almighty for sustaining him throughout the difficult moments in his life. He went further than just thanking Hashem for the good. He understood that, with regard to Hashem, there is no such thing as bad.

What we perceive to be negative is due to our limited perception of events. David *Hamelech* declares *Odcha Hashem ki inisani va'tehi li l'yeshua*, "I thank You Hashem, for You have answered me, and You have been a help to me" (*Tehillim* 118:21).

The *Bais HaLevi* observes that the word *inisani*, which is translated as "You answered me," has the same *shoresh*, root, as *inui*, suffering, affliction. This alludes that David was thanking Hashem both for the *inui*, suffering, and the salvation. He realised that the suffering was an integral part of the salvation.

We do not know the reason for what we perceive as bad; thus, we are unable to see the necessity of the suffering in the scheme of Hashem's plan. We must keep in mind that there is a Divine plan, and this is part of it. It is all about attitude.

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, relates that he was privy to a conversation that ensued between the ***Steipler Gaon, zl***, and ***Horav Avraham Yoffen, zl***. The conversation was difficult, due to the *Steipler's* failing hearing. He was hard of hearing, and, for some reason a hearing aid was not an option.

The Rosh Yeshivah (Novardok) said to the *Steipler*, "You know there is no reason for you to suffer. Today, there are hearing aids which are very effective."

The *Steipler* replied, "Truthfully, during *Krias HaTorah*, I strain my ears to hear every word. Other than that, what reason do I have to hear?"

When *Rav* Yoffen heard the response, he turned to *Rav* Galinsky and said, "What do I say to such a response?"

The *Steipler* had not heard *Rav* Yoffen's remark. He, however, had read his lips and replied, "Do you think that the One who made me deaf owes me? Do you realise that hundreds of people come to see me? If I was not hard of hearing, I would have to devote all my time to them. When would I be able to learn?

"Hashem helped me by making me hard of hearing. Visitors are now compelled to write their requests on a piece of paper. Since people are, for the most part lazy, the petitions that they write are short. Thus, *Baruch Hashem*, I have time to learn!"

It is all about attitude. Who would even think that being unable to hear well would be viewed as contributing positively to one's learning?

The *Steipler* did. He thanked Hashem for his handicap, because he knew that it was all part of His plan.



וְהַנּוֹתָר מִבְּשַׂר הַזֶּבַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בָּאֵשׁ יִשָּׂרֵף ***What is left over from the flesh of the feast-offering shall be burned in the fire on the third day. (7:17)***

We are enjoined to burn the *nosar*, left-over meat of a *korban*, after the time limit for its consumption has passed. The simple reason for the burning of *nosar*, is that after a few days, the meat begins to spoil and emit a putrid odour. It is no longer edible and people will

be disgusted by it. Hashem does not want *kodoshim*, consecrated meat of a *korban,* to be a source of repulsion. Thus, He commands us to rid ourselves of this meat through the most effective means. (This is a rationale given by the *Sefer HaChinuch* for the purpose of human understanding.

The actual reason for all *mitzvos* elude us. Hashem, the Divine Author of the Torah has His reasons for individual *mitzvos* – esoteric reasons which are beyond our grasp)

Second, the *mitzvah* alludes to the importance of *bitachon*, trust, in Hashem. The Almighty does not want a person to starve himself for fear that he might not have sufficient food for the next day. He, therefore, commanded that the meat should be destroyed when its time has passed. Neither human nor animal may partake of this meat.

Hashem wants us to look up and rely on Him to provide us with our needs. Tomorrow? He will take care of us when the time comes.

We must learn to place our trust in Him. We do not starve ourselves today out of worry for tomorrow. The One Who provided for us today can, and will, do so tomorrow.

This idea is the underlying concept, the anchor behind the *manna* that descended from Heaven. The people were enjoined to eat whatever they needed for one day. They received exactly as much as Heaven determined were their individual needs for one day – and no more. This routine continued every day (except for *Shabbos* for which they received a double portion on Friday) for forty years.

They were prohibited from saving *manna* for the next day, because such action would be indicative of a lack of faith in Hashem's ability to sustain them.

As a distinguished *Rav* said, "He Who created the 'day' will also create the sustenance for it." One who has *bitachon*, who lives his life with unreserved trust in Him, will safeguard his performance of

mitzvos against violations which are engendered by anxiety concerning material hardship – real or imagined.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, contends that one who has not learned to trust Hashem for the next day will worry so much about the prospects of years to come that he will ultimately be led astray from Hashem and His Torah.

The *Gaon, zl, m'Vilna*, was asked what it means to trust in Hashem. He replied that David *Hamelech* answers this in *Tehillim* 131:2, *Shivisi v'domamti nafshi k'gamul alei imo*, "I have stilled and quieted myself like a suckling babe beside his mother."

We should think of ourselves (says the *Gaon*) as a nursing infant. When he is full, he does not worry whether he will have more in a few hours when he will once again be hungry. He does not worry about what will be. Now, he is fine. His mother provided for him. So, too, we should not worry. Our Father in Heaven has provided and will continue to do so.

The *baal bitachon* who trusts in Hashem realises that he has no other option than Hashem. Every other source is either a figment of our imagination or one of the many agencies which Hashem employs to deliver His beneficence.

How often do we petition the assistance of individuals who have *protektsia*, personal connections, as an "alternative" to relying on the only true Source of abetment? After wasting considerable time, effort and money, they come to the realisation that human assistance is just that: human. Hashem pulls the strings. Sooner or later, we will have to turn to Him for an answer to our concerns. So, why not sooner?

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita (*Barchi Nafshi*) offers an excellent analogy that should engender contemplation on our part, to the point that we realise that we are looking for aid in all the wrong places.



A benevolent king, who loved his subjects and treated them royally, sought to avail them the opportunity to obtain great wealth. As he was not giving it away, he devised a test which put their cognitive skills to a test. He announced that, at the bottom of a pond located in the royal garden, was a treasure chest filled with diamonds and other precious stones. The pond was far from shallow, and the chest was far from light. It was up to the successful person to figure out a way to retrieve the chest and somehow haul it to dry land.

Everyone lined up and took his turn in attempting to drag the chest up to the garden. Some used brute strength, others were more creative, devising intricate engineering plans to bring the chest up. All failed. The people felt that the kind king had used and made fools of them. There appeared to be no way to draw the chest to the surface. They all gave up.

There was one person, a wise man, who did not give up. He knew there was a catch to this. He walked all around the pond, studied the chest, and, after contemplation, asked the king, "Is it necessary that one's clothing become soaked in his attempt to retrieve the chest?" In other words, was it necessary to dive down into the pond in order to get to the chest?

The king replied, "No."

The king was no fool. He knew by listening to the question that the wise man had solved the conundrum. He had figured out how to bring the treasure chest to the king.

The wise man took a ladder and proceeded to climb the tree whose branches overhung the pond. Lo and behold, situated in the tree, supported by branches, was the elusive treasure. It was never in the

water. What they saw was a reflection. They had been looking in the wrong place this entire time.

The lesson is obvious. We look all around us for someone, something, any avenue or medium that can extricate us from our situation. We look everywhere but up to Heaven.

The following story gives us a window into the perspective of *bitachon* intimated by *gedolei Yisrael*. One of the most prolific heroes of the Holocaust was ***Horav Michael Dov Weissmandel, zl***. Through his tireless efforts, he saved thousands of Jews from the Nazi murderers. He could have saved more; he could have done better. These feelings gnawed at him until his last mortal breath.

He had an intense love for the Jewish people and was prepared to do anything, to go anywhere, to spare their lives. As a result of his negotiations with the murderers, he was given the opportunity to save Slovakian Jewry (over 100,00 souls) for the sum of two million dollars. The ransom was indeed an exorbitant sum, but can one put a price on a Jewish soul?

Rav Weissmandel pleaded, begged and wept copious tears in his attempt to warm the hearts of the assimilated Jewish leadership both in America and in *Eretz Yisrael*. They were, however, committed to establishing a Jewish state – an ideal which, to them, took precedence over the plight of Slovakian Jewry.

One cannot calmly relate one of the ugliest periods in our history, where brother could have saved brother – and chose not to. His priorities were Jewish land over Jewish life.

Rav Weissmandel was relentless. He refused to give up. Telegram after telegram described the atrocities, the persecution, the wholesale murder. Yet, they were not moved. They had their own agenda, and it did not coincide with *Rav* Weissmandel's.

In the end, they relented and contributed some money – too little – too late. He was able to save some Jews. The majority, however,

were relegated to become martyrs as they perished sanctifying Hashem's Name.

It was after the war, and *Rav* Weissmandel came to America. He met with ***Horav Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, zl***, the *Lubavitcher Rebbe. Rav* Weissmandel became very emotional when he met the *Rebbe*. The pain and anguish over his failure to save more Jews was overwhelming. He could not stop crying bitterly.

The *Rebbe* said nothing, allowing him to vent his emotions. Finally, when *Rav* Weissmandel calmed down, the *Rebbe* asked, *Uhn ver hot dos getohn*, "And who (do you think) did all of this?" *Der Bashefer*, "The Creator! You think that this was all the result of the failure of secular Jewry to assist in the plight of their brothers and sisters? Can they do anything? Are they able to achieve anything (on their own)? This was all the Hands of Hashem.

Since He did all of this, then all this is His decree. It is all for the good – because this is what the Almighty wanted."

Parshah Thoughts By Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

One of the first steps of Service in the Bais HaMikdash each morning, was the clearing of the ash from the Mizbei'ach (6:3).

Likutim Niflaim suggests an idea that explains the significance of this action. When starting the important services and connection to Hashem, the first step is something which is so simple and basic.

When we aspire to better serve Hashem, we have to start with the simple things. Even the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur would clear the ashes, showing us that even this lowly task is not below the stature of the Kohein Gadol.

Simple acts should never be considered beneath us.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Thanks For The Miracles!



A young man had a baby girl after one year of marriage. He asked **Rav Shach zt"l** if he had to make a kiddush to celebrate the occasion.

Rav Shach asked him, "Suppose you were married for eight years without children? If you would have had a baby girl at that point, would you then question whether or not to make a kiddush?"

Certainly, you would not! "Now that Hashem saved you from seven years of anguish, shouldn't you be even more inclined to express your gratitude to Hashem?"

The Torah (Vayikra 7:12) discusses the korban todah, the sacrificial offering of thanks. Rashi says that the korban todah was brought when one was miraculously saved from one of four events. One who traveled over a sea or a desert and arrived safely, one who was released from prison, or one who had been healed from a serious illness brought this sacrifice.

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l asks a very insightful question. The four examples of deliverance that Rashi mentioned are great occurrences but why does Rashi call them miracles? They don't compare to the miracle of Kriyas Yam Suf or other open miracles that are recorded in the Torah.

The answer is that these are "hidden miracles" for which one must be thankful. For example, we take modern medicine for granted. However, it was not long ago that people died from illnesses for which we now have medications or operations.

We must thank Hashem not only for the "major miracles", but also for many everyday events that are also miraculous. The Talmud (Brachos 7B) states that no one ever thanked Hashem until our Matriarch, Leah, thanked Hashem upon the birth of her fourth son, Yehudah. Leah was a prophetess and knew that our forefather Yaakov would have 12 sons. Yaakov had 4 wives. Leah assumed that each wife would give birth to three sons. When Leah gave birth to her fourth son, she realized that Hashem had granted her more than "her portion". Thus, Leah had said (Beraishis 29:35), "This time I will thank Hashem."

Many are puzzled by this Gemorah. There were others before Leah who thanked Hashem! Why is Leah considered the first?! **The Chida** says that the first man, Adam, thanked Hashem.

Adam declared – **מזמור שיר ליום השבת וכתיב טוב להודות לה'** "A psalm, a song for the Shabbos day…. It is good to thank Hashem and to sing praise to His name."

Noach also gave thanks when he offered burnt offerings of thanksgiving to Hashem after the flood. **The Chizkuni** explains that Noach acted like the sailors in the story of Yonah, who after having been saved from a great storm, immediately brought offerings to Hashem, in thanks for their deliverance.

Sarah also said (Braishis 21:7), "Who would have said to Avraham that Sarah would suckle children! Yet I have borne a son in his old age."

The Da'as Zekanim says that this was a way of giving thanks to Hashem. In that case, how can we understand this Gemorah?

The answer is that until Leah, people thanked Hashem for open miracles. Leah was the first to thank Hashem for an event that seemed "natural", a "hidden miracle".

Nowadays, we take a healthy childbirth for granted because it is so common. We must remember that it, too, is a miracle. We must be

thankful that we can walk, that we can breathe, that we can see, etc…. When the chazan repeats Shmone Esrei and says Modim, the congregation recites a different version of the prayer, called Modim d'Rabbanan. No-where else in the chazan's repetition of Shmone Esrei does this take place. Rather, the chazan recites the repetition of the Shmone Esrei on behalf of the tzibbur.

The Avudraham explains that you can appoint a representative to pray for health, livelihood, etc. But you cannot appoint a representative to say thank you for you. You have to say that yourself!

We must constantly be appreciative of all the good with which Hashem showers us. We should express our gratitude to Hashem for the seemingly natural, "hidden miracles" which Hashem regularly performs on our behalf.



There was once a notable prince, Graf Gumprecht von Hartz Losser Gesellschaft, who was known as a vicious anti-Semite and leader of the so-called "Progressive" party. Once, he accosted the famous Rav of Prague, **R' Yonason Eibsheschutz zt"l** and demanded: "Rabbi, how is it that fashions have changed with you Jews so much? Your great Moses and his wife rode on a donkey from Midian to Egypt, and you say the Messiah will come riding in similar style, yet we never see a Jew nowadays ride any animal but a horse?"

R' Yonason looked the imposing man straight in the eye and replied with a smirk, "It is because we wish to refrain from offending anybody," he answered.

Confused by the answer coming from the renowned brilliant Rabbi, the Graf asked for an explanation. R' Yonason was more than eager to complete his thought.

"You know," he began, "people used to pride themselves on the way they act. But now that donkeys are calling themselves 'Progressives' we have given up riding on donkeys in order to avoid offending anyone or mixing into politics!"

The most famous reason for the name "Shabbos Hagadol" as quoted in the Shulchan Aruch, is to remember how the Yidden in Mitzrayim fearlessly took the gods of the Egyptians and tied it to their beds. This forms the basis of Yiddishkeit; unless faced with extenuating circumstances, there is no compromising or changing the will of Hashem.

This basic tenant is what has allowed us to survive for so many thousands of years, and it is this important concept that we reiterate year after year at this special time of year.

זכרו תורת משה
לע"נ ר' משה בן החבר צבי ור' משה יצחק בן ר' אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
The perfect Chizuk for the Shabbos Table

No request to small!

On May 22nd, 2019, Amazon held its shareholders meeting in Seattle, Washington. The future trajectory of the company was discussed, including new global expansion, minimum wage issues, and other serious topics.

Jeff Bezos, the company's CEO, one of the wealthiest individuals in the world, fielded questions from shareholders in the effort to provide a glimpse into the company's financial forecasting and future strategies.

At one point, Bezos called on Evie Schwerin, who took the opportunity to ask the CEO her question: She had ordered a book,

but due to technical issues, she couldn't return her purchase. She was therefore taking her claim to the top.

"Could you return it for me?" she asked the amazon CEO.

"Of course," Bezos told her. "My apologies that you had to use this unusual venue to do something so simple. A simple customer service clerk could have taken care of! Does anyone else have anything to return?" he then asked the crowd.

Many news stations carried this story of Evie's request as highly unusual and down-right off-the-mark. Asking the CEO of a multi-trillion-dollar company at an annual shareholder meeting to help return her $14.99 book was rather peculiar!

Yet, this is absolutely par for the course when it comes to Hashem, who, *l'havdil*, is far more powerful than Jeff Bezos! In the case of our simple needs, going straight to him is not unusual at all. There is nothing to small or unimportant to ask Hashem, as He wants us to connect to Him with ANY concern or need that might come up.

Teenage Orphan

R' Yosef Zalmen Bloch illustrates this point with a *mashal*:

There was a generous couple that took a teenage orphan into their home. They covered all his extensive bills, including some medical expenses that he had undergone.

One day, as they were eating supper together, the father realized that they hadn't served any drinks. He asked the boy, "Aren't you thirsty? Why haven't you asked for a drink?"

"I really am thirsty," replied the boy, "but I didn't want to ask for a drink because I've already gotten so many favors from you in the past."

The father was deeply offended. "After all we've done for him, he thinks that a small request poses a challenge?! After receiving so much, he doesn't want to be even more indebted?!"

The same is the case when we approach Hashem. He has done and does so much for us, and so when we ask Him for our everyday needs, it reflects that we realize how much he has done for us in the past, and how much he cares for us. (*Just One Word: Emunah*, p. 95)

Cleaning Help

R' Pinchas Koritzer was a great *tzaddik*. One example of his righteousness is that every day, he would place his hand into a fire to ensure that he hadn't sinned that day. Once, he was overheard davening for cleaning help. His followers had asked him what his intentions was, assuming that such a great Rebbi must have a good reason for such a simple request.

He responded, "I'm simply asking Hashem for a cleaning lady, since my wife is in need of one. I ask Hashem for anything on my mind!"

He was a very great Rebbi, yet he approached Hashem as he would with any other personal connection, such as a child connects to his father. A child of the king who needs cleaning help wouldn't refrain from asking his father for it, however mundane it is. With us, the children of Hashem, we can approach him with all our needs. (*Tiferes L'Moshe, deveikus*, p. 60–61)

Final Words

It is told about the great *mekubal,* **R' Shlomo Elyashiv**, known as the *Leshem*, that he would learn Kabbalah with a young fellow into the late hours of the night. On the last night that they learned together, as they departed, he said to his *chavrusa*: "Chazal say that when someone has a problem on his mind, he should talk it out with his friend. What should one do if he doesn't have any friends? With whom shall he express himself?!" asked the *Leshem*.

The *Leshem* responded with a *pasuk*: "*Karov Hashem l'chol ko'r'av*, Hashem is close to those who turn to Him." "When we turn to Him, we *k'viyachol* become His friend, and so He is the friend we should be turning to. He is our greatest friend." With this, the *Leshem*

returned to his home, and then that night departed to the next world.

We learn the great advantage that we're given that we have a personal connection with Hashem, and therefore, can ask all our concerns. (*Tiferes L'Moshe, deveikus*, p. 52)

Ripped Shoes

A boy entered the room of the **Chazon Ish**, with tattered shoes. The Chazon Ish asked him why he hadn't gotten new shoes?

The boy responded that he didn't have the money for it, as his family was having financial difficulties.

"Did you ask Hashem for new shoes?" the Chazon Ish asked him.

"I'm embarrassed to ask Hashem for my routine thing. I would ask him for big things, but not something small like that."

The Chazon Ish responded that his thinking was not coming from *yiras shamayim,* but rather, from unhealthy embarrassment. "Had you realized that Hashem is at your side and is your loving caring Father that provides you with all your needs, you wouldn't be troubled with asking Him for shoes.

"When you were a child, did you refrain from asking your father for shoes?! You know that he is there for you and seeks all your needs. So too, Hashem seeks all your needs, including the mundane ones, so there's no need to fear asking Him.

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

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky on Tzav

It is not a glamorous job, but somebody has to do it. And so the Torah begins this week's portion by telling us the mitzvah of terumas hadeshen, removing the ashes that accumulate from the burnt-offerings upon the altar. The Torah teaches us: ***"The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic, and he shall don linen breeches on his flesh; he shall separate the ash of what the fire consumed of the elevation-offering on the Altar, and place it next to the Altar"*** (Leviticus 7:3).

What is simply derived from the verse is that the service of ash-removal is done with the priestly tunic. What is noticeable to the Talmudic mind is the seemingly innocuous adjective "fitted." Rashi quotes the derivation that applies to all the priestly garments: they must be fitted. They cannot be too long, nor can they be too short. They must be tailored to fit each individual Kohen according to his physical measurements.

The question is simple. The sartorial details of the bigdei kehuna (priestly vestments) were discussed way back in the portion of Tezaveh, which we read five weeks ago. Shouldn't the directive of precise-fitting garments have been mentioned in conjunction with the laws of tailoring? Further, if the Torah waits to teach us those requisites in conjunction with any service, why not choose a more distinguished act, such as an anointment or sacrifice? Why choose sweeping ashes?

My dear friend, and the editor of the Parsha Parables series, Dr. Abby Mendelson, was, in a former life, a beat writer for the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club. In the years that we learned Torah together, he would recount amusing anecdotes and baseball minutia. Some of his stories have retained an impact on me years after I heard them. This is one of them.

Roberto Clemente was an amazing athlete who played the game of baseball with utmost dedication. One day, late in the 1968 season,

he was playing outfield against the Houston team. The Pirates were no longer contenders, and the game had no statistical meaning.



A ball was hit deep toward the outfield wall. As Clemente raced back, it seemed that the ball was going to hit the wall way over his head. With superhuman strength he propelled himself like a projectile toward the wall. Speeding at a forty-five-degree angle he collided with the wall at the same time that the ball hit it, two feet above his head.

Strictly adhering to the laws of nature, both Clemente and the baseball rebounded from the wall, the former's return to earth much less graceful than the latter's. While the white sphere gently bounced to the playing surface and rolled toward the infield, the much larger uniformed and spiked entity came crashing after it with a resounding thud.

Bruised and embarrassed, Clemente clamored after the elusive orb and finally threw it to a less traumatized member of his team who completed the hapless mission.

In the post-game interview, an innocent reporter asked Clemente, "Roberto, your team is out of contention. There are three games left. Why in the world did you try so hard to make that play? Was it worth bruising yourself?"

Clemente was puzzled. In a few short sentences he explained his actions. "I am not paid to win pennants. My job is to catch the ball. I tried to catch the ball. I was trying to do my job."

When the Torah tells us that the clothes have to fit perfectly for a particular service it is telling us that the job is exactly right for

the man who is doing it. The ash-cleaner is not doing another Kohen's job, wearing an ill-fitted garment as if it were thrown upon him as he entered for the early morning shift.

What seems to be the most trivial of jobs is the job that must be done! That is the job of the hour, and that is exactly what the Kohen is designated to do. And for the job or service that is tailor-made for the individual the clothes must also be tailor-made for the job as well!

I once asked a high-level administrator of a major institution what was his job. He answered in all seriousness, "I do what ever has to be done to get the job done and that becomes my job."

Whatever we do, and however we do it, we must realize that the end can only come through the menials. Whatever it takes to get to the goal is as integral as the goal itself. It requires devotion and commitment, and it requires self-sacrifice. If you dress with dignity to collect the ash, if you approach every task with both with sartorial and personal pride and grace, then you are certainly up to any task.

Hashem has enough angels. If Hashem wanted perfection, He wouldn't have created us.

Hashem wants us, with our faults and human imperfections.

Our deeds seem slanted and incomplete, and sometimes we step out of line, but it is precisely due to our human nature that Hashem desires our service. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

"Living with Hashem means recognizing that everything we have is a gift from Him, and that our ultimate goal in life is to use these gifts to serve Him." – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Working on our Middos



Rav Shimshon Pincus, zt"l, would always put in special effort to honour Shabbos Kodesh, and this applied to every Shabbos of the year. Even if it was a difficult Shabbos on the calendar, and many people would do things easier, Rav Shimshon would not diminish the honour of Shabbos in any way.

For instance, one of Rav Shimshon's neighbours recounted that on Erev Shabbos HaGadol, which fell out that year on the 11th of Nisan, his wife happened to meet Rebbetzin Pincus, and their conversation was about their Pesach preparations. This woman asked the Rebbetzin if the Pincus's stove was already clean and Kosher for Pesach. However, the answer the neighbour received caught her by surprise.

"Is the stove Kosher for Pesach?! How could it be Kosher already on Erev Shabbos HaGadol? We still need to bake cakes L'Chavod Shabbos Kodesh!"

As Rav Pincus would say, "Why should Shabbos suffer just because it's close to Pesach?" And for this reason, Rav Shimshon would not use paper plates on Shabbos, not even on Shabbos HaGadol. He insisted, "This Shabbos is no different than any other Shabbos. We must honour Shabbos just as we do during the rest of the year."

He would emphasize, "Disposable dishes aren't fitting for Kavod Shabbos."

In their last years, in order to ease their Pesach preparations, Rav Shimshon and his family ate their Shabbos HaGadol meals in a small hall near their home. But even then, they never compromised the honour of Shabbos Kodesh. The Shabbos delicacies were plentiful and served on regular dishes, as on every Shabbos, since "Shabbos should not suffer just because it's close to Pesach."

Additionally, in Rav Shimshon's home, Friday was completely dedicated to preparing for Shabbos.

One family member once told of a certain Friday early in Nisan when Shabbos preparations were finished earlier than expected. The Rebbetzin decided to take advantage of the time and make some progress with the Pesach cleaning. She asked the girls to go through one of the cabinets and clean out any Chometz. The girls were happily working at it, until their father found out. He told them, "On Erev Shabbos, we don't do anything that's not connected to preparing for Shabbos. Not even in honour of Pesach. On Erev Shabbos, we only prepare for Shabbos!"

Sterling Character - The Name of Hashem



Give Tzedakah according to your ability. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 29:2)

In Parashas Terumah, when the Torah discusses the people's contributions to the Mishkan, the Pasuk says (25:2), "And they should take for Me a portion." Rashi adds, "Take for Me — for My Name."

The Chavos Ya'ir wonders what Rashi is coming to teach us. Isn't it obvious that if someone is contributing to the Mishkan, where the Shechinah will reside, that the person is doing it for Hashem?

The Chavos Ya'ir offers a powerful explanation that effects the way one give Tzedakah. He quotes the **Sh"lah Ha'kadosh** who writes that one who gives Tzedakah to a poor person, even if it is an amount as small as a Perutah, which is the smallest denomination, actually partners with Hashem, because the act of giving Tzedakah creates the Divine, Four-Letter Name of Hashem (Yud, Kay, Vov, Kay). How does this occur?

The Perutah, resembles the letter Yud, the smallest letter of the Aleph-Bais. This is followed by the letter Hei, the fifth letter of the Aleph-Bais, and this alludes to the hand with its five fingers that holds the Perutah and gives it to the poor person. The outstretched arm of the one getting Tzedakah resembles the letter Vav, the sixth letter of the Aleph-Bais, and is shaped like the straight line of the Vav. Lastly, the poor person's outstretched hand with the five fingers hints to the second Hei of Hashem's Name. Therefore, when one gives Tzedakah, his act of giving forms the Name of Hashem!

The Chavos Ya'ir adds an important point to this. One must be careful not to ignore a poor person when he seeks help. If one waits for the poor to beg and stretch out his hand, it is creating a situation where the poor individual's outstretched hand, which is the Vav and the Hei of the Ani, will precede the Yud and the Hei of the giver.

This causes Hashem's Name to be spelled out of order! And this is what Rashi is teaching when he writes that one should give Tzedakah for Hashem's Name. The act of giving Tzedakah should symbolize Hashem's Name in its proper sequence. This means that one should give Tzedakah before the poor suffer the embarrassment of stretching out his hand to beg.

One morning after Shacharis, the holy Rebbe, **Rav Meir of Premeshlan, zt"l**, greeted some people who had come to seek his

advice and Brachos. There was a line of people who were waiting to see him, and suddenly, a poor widow arrived and demanded to see the Rebbe immediately.

An argument broke out, as she demanded to go ahead of the line. The Gabai tried to explain that this was exactly the purpose of a line, that people would be seen in the order they had come, and she would get to enter when it was her turn.

The woman did not accept this, and she said her needs were great and she needed to be seen immediately.

The Rebbe heard the commotion and called out to his Gabai to allow her to enter. He said that she needs Tzedakah and she must have it immediately. The Gabai allowed her to enter. As the woman stood before the Rebbe, he lifted a large coin from his table, held it for a moment, and transferred it from one hand to the other. Afterwards, he placed the coin on the table and motioned for the woman to take it.

Later, his Gabai asked him to explain his seemingly strange action. Rav Meir said, "You should not think that I was playing with a coin. We are taught that when one gives Tzedakah, his intention should be on Hashem's Name." He then explained that the coin is the Yud, the giver's hand is the Hei, the poor person's arm is the Vav, and his hand is the second Hei.

"However," he said, "if the poor person is a woman, it presents a problem, since physical contact with a woman is forbidden, and I can't place the coin in her hand. Therefore, I transferred the coin from one hand to the other so that I would have the benefit of a second hand and five fingers, to create to the second letter Hei. Once I did all the actions to form Hashem's Name, I let her take the money!"



צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל מוֹקְדָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד בּוֹ "*Which burns on the altar from night until morning*" (6:2)

What does the burnt offering atone for? For the neglect of a positive commandment.

Our sages say that there are 248 positive commandments and the Mitzvah of a burnt offering is among them. If so, then the burnt offering atones for the other 247 Mitzvot.

Rebbi Rachamim Chai Chayuta HaCohen Zt'l from Jerba writes that we have a hint to this in this verse. The last letters from each of words in this verse - **הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר** – is equal to the numerical value of 247. It is telling us a burnt offering atones for 247 Mitzvot (Ma'ayan Hashavua)

זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה *This is the law of the burnt offering; that is the burnt offering* (6:2)

In Otzar Hamidrashim the words of our sages are brought down regarding the burnt offering. About the burnt offering, Hashem says, "I don't want it to be removed from the altar as this sacrifice is the dearest to me from all the sacrifices!"

To what is this compared? To a king who had a joyous occasion and his household and those who loved him bought him gifts and the king praised each and every one. Then a person arrived with a basket full of special fruits. The king asked him, "Who are you"?

"I", the man answered "Am the king's gardener. I take care of the king's orchards and I brought you a gift from the fruits of the orchards". After him arrived a man with a small sheep. "Who are

you"? the king asked. "I", answered the man, "take care of the king's flocks of sheep and I have brought a new-born sheep to the king as a present". Then a third person arrived with a present for the king. "Who are you?" the king asked him. "Are you also one of the people who work for me"? "I do not work for the king", the man answered. "I just brought a gift for the king in order to honour him".

"The gift that this person brought me", the king said, "will not be removed from my table".

"My master the king", one of the advisors asked the king, "How come this gift is more precious than all the other gifts"? "All the rest of people that brought me gifts", the king answered, "are obligated to honour me, but this person who is not one of my workers and is not a part of my household brought me a gift for the sole purpose of honouring me. Therefore, his gift is the most precious of all the gifts"!

It is the same with the sacrifices. If a person sins, he has to bring a sin offering and if he is guilty, he has to bring a guilt offering, but the burnt offering is a donation; therefore, it is the most precious to Hashem than any other sacrifice.



וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים "***And he removed his clothes and wore other clothing***" (6:4)

Rebbi Tzvi Tzimelinski teaches, "Each person should remember that sooner or later his end will come and then 'he will remove his clothes' – they will take off his clothes that he wearing, 'and he will wear other clothes' – they will dress him in white cloth, "And they will take out the ashes outside of the camp" – the body will be taken outside of the city and the soul will go up to the heavens "to a pure place" to give judgment "and a person should take to his heart" to always remember these things.

It is written in Pirkei Avot (chapter 6, mishnah 9), "When a person dies, no money and no gold and no precious stones will accompany him, only his good deeds".



Shabbat Hagadol - R' Adam Philip

This coming Shabbos, the one just before Pessach, is called Shabbos HaGadol. The year when the Jewish people left Egypt, the 10th of Nissan was on a Shabbos. On this day everyone took a sheep that was intended for the Pesach offering and tied it to their bed posts.

When the Egyptians asked what this was all about and heard that these sheep were supposed to be brought as an offering, it infuriated them, since they worshiped sheep. Hashem performed a miracle, and the Egyptians did not hurt anyone. This is why this Shabbos is referred to as the "great Shabbat" after the great miracle that occurred on this day.

The Nesivos Shalom writes an additional idea. There are two significant Shabboses during the year (all the Shabboses are significant). One before Yom Kippur and one before Pesach. Yom Kippur represents the trait of Yirah – fear of Heaven. The one before Pesach represents serving Hashem with Ahavah – Love. It is mentioned in several places, that the Shabbos gives the "energy" both spiritually and physically to the week that follows. Therefore, the Shabbos before Yom Kippur gives the spiritual energy to Yom Kippur and the Shabbos before Pesach gives the spiritual energy to Pesach.

Since the trait of Ahava is greater than that of Yirah, and we should all strive to serve Hashem out of love, the Shabbos of Ahava is called Shabbat HaGadol, since it is greater than the one before Yom Kippur.



Like Equals By Rabbi Nachman Seltzer



Rav Yitzchok Scheiner

During a visit of **R' Chaim Dov Sorotzkin**, a relative of Rav Yitzchok Scheiner, to the Rosh Yeshivah's house, he brought along his cousin, R' Matis Goldberg, a noted photographer of gedolei Yisrael. Their meeting that day lasted several hours, and when it concluded, R' Chaim Dov could see that his cousin was somewhat overwhelmed by everything he had seen and heard. - R' Chaim Dov asked him why he was so taken aback.

"I'll tell you why he impressed me so much," R' Matis replied. "You remember how he was talking about **Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz**? He spent a lot of time talking about what a gadol he is — and then he uttered a line that really made me sit up and take notice."

"What line was that?"

"We Will Never Be Like Him"

"Rav Yitzchok said: 'The three of us will never be like Rav Michel Yehudah. He is a kadosh. He was born in Vilna and learned in the best European yeshivos. We will never be like him. I was really into chess when I was young. I even followed some of the best players and could describe the games they played in detail. But Rav Michel Yehudah wasn't like that. He was kulo kadosh!'

"Did you catch that? The Rosh Yeshivah was equating himself with us! 'We will never be like him.' Those were the words he used, making it sound as if we are all equal and playing for the same team when we aren't even in the same ballpark.

"And he didn't do it only once. Throughout the conversation, Rav Yitzchok included himself along with me and you, as if we are his

equals in every way. Never mind the fact that he is among the gedolei hador and a member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah. Even without all that, he's almost a hundred years old! We're still kids compared to him. And yet he put himself in the same sentence with us."

Rav Yitzchok epitomized humility, never viewing himself as any more significant than anyone else.

Rebbe Shlomo of Radomsk By Rabbi Dovid Caro

It was a sad story that this penniless Chassid wrote to his Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk. His daughter was of marriageable age, and he did not know where to begin to find all the money needed for a dowry and a wedding. All this was written out in the kvitel note which he handed the Rebbe.

The Tzaddik read it through, and exclaimed, "what is this I read here about your being 'a poor man'?! You had better leave my house at once, for our Sages teach us that 'a pauper is accounted as if dead,' and I am a Kohen, and the Halacha is that a Kohen may not be defiled and become Tamei by exposure to the dead!"

The man ran out from sheer fright, but the Tzaddik called after him, "Come now, come back in! This must surely be a case of a mes mitzvah, a dead body who is attended to by nobody, in which case a Kohen is allowed to defile himself."

Those present laughed at the seeming joke, little suspecting that there were more to come. The Tzaddik addressed himself another time to the poor fellow, "you are worrying about marrying off your daughter? Tell me: do you have bread to eat?"

"To be honest," stammered the pauper, "I haven't."

"But you do say the Beracha of Hamotzi over bread every day, don't you? So where do you get the bread from?"

"Most of it comes from my wife. She works and earns a little."

"What a fine business!" cried the Rebbe. "His wife supports him! Shouldn't we be warned by the example of Adam, whose wife gave him something to eat? And this fellow says that his wife supports him! Tell me how does your wife earn her income?"

"She goes to all the courtyards [in Hebrew: chatseiros] of the squires in the area, sells fruits and vegetables, and earns a little from that." the poor man replied.

"If so," said the Tzaddik, "we have a verse in the Torah (Devorim 1:1) which lists place names, and there it says **וַחֲצֵרֹת וְדִי זָהָב** - that if she goes to chatseiros, she will no doubt encounter **וְדִי זָהָב** (literally, "ample gold"). Go home in peace, my good man, and Hashem will help you, and your wife will prosper with vediy zahav – plenty gold."

But when he came home and his wife asked him what he had brought back from the Rebbe, he did not know what to answer. After sometime his wife came home with a package, and said, "Look here. I found this thing today lying about in the mud." They opened it, and found three hundred rubles, quite a sum in those days.

Half of it they set aside for their daughter's dowry and the wedding expenses and with the rest the happy man set up a little business in which he prospered for the rest of his life.

After the passing of Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk, this Chassid came to visit his son and successor as Rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Yissachar, and told him the above story.

"My father," said the Tzaddik, "was a remarkable man. Every expression of his supernatural powers and his divine inspiration he managed to clothe in jests and witticisms, so that no one should detect that there was anything extraordinary afoot.



The Sundial

R' Elchonon Wasserman often said that a mitzvah may seem small to us, but we have no idea of its effect in the Upper World. R' Elchonon illustrated this concept by describing a sundial.

"A sundial," he taught, "is a circular instrument with a hand that indicates the passage of time. When the shadow moves two inches, that indicates that an hour has passed. Another two inches, another hour, and so on. In this world, two inches indicate an hour.

"Yet in heaven, the same hour means that the world has revolved around the sun for a thousand miles. In this world, a mitzvah may seem to have only two inches of merit, but in the Upper World, it spans a thousand miles.

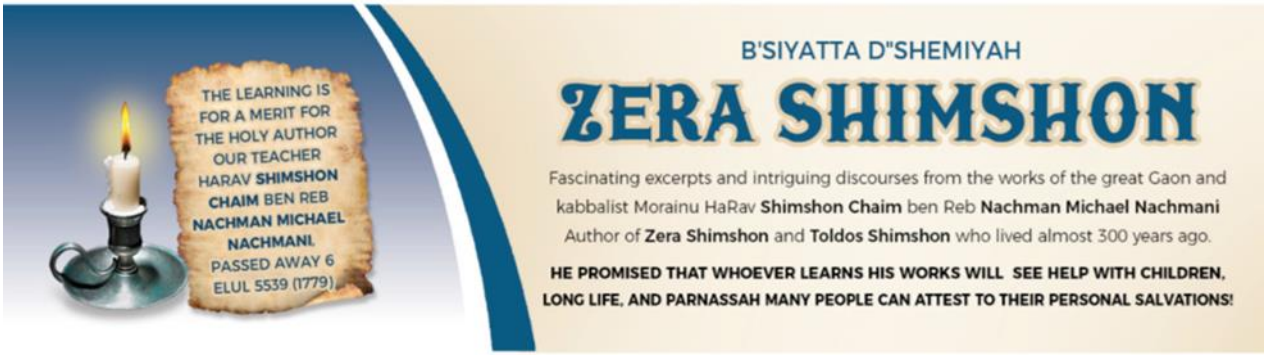
"The impact of aveiros is identical. Deeds – good or evil – may seem small to us, but only because we do not realize their effect in shomayim." (A Fire in His Soul)

From our Sages

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה לָעֹלָה לַמִּנְחָה וְלַחַטָּאת וְלָאָשָׁם וְלַמִּלּוּאִים וּלְזֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים ***This is the law...and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings*** (7:37)

The Rabbi of Lublin used to say: It is far better to have an imperfect peace than a perfect controversy.

It is preferable to live in peace with one's neighbour, even if that peace is only superficial and not with a full heart, than to engage in controversy, however well intended.



אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ וְהִקְרִיב עַל־זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה *If he shall offer it as a thanksgiving offering* (7:12)

A Korban Toda was brought by someone who either safely crossed the ocean, crossed the desert, was freed from jail or was ill and became better.

The 107th Mizmor in Tehillim speaks about all these instances and the Zera Shimshon explains the Mizmor in great detail. (The elaborating on this specific Mizmor coincides well with those that have the custom to recite this Mizmor on Pesach.)

In this Mizmor (107:2), Dovid Hamelech says the four individuals thank Hashem - "Who saved them from the hand of enemies" **אֲשֶׁר גְּאָלָם מִיַּד־צָר**.(The Zera Shimshon asks that this description is only accurate when referring to someone who was freed from jail. However, the other three individuals who were delivered from the sea, the desert or illness, were not saved from the hands of enemies? Why then does Dovid Hamelech use this phrase when referring to all four categories?

To accurately describe all four categories with one sentence he should have said - **אשר גאלם מצרה**, Who saved them from distress?

The Zera Shimshon explains that the **צר**, enemy, mentioned here refers to the Satan who prosecutes against a person who is in distress or in a perilous situation, arguing that he should not be saved due to his many sins. Thus, when any person who is indeed saved from any one of the four situations mentioned above, he in

essence was rescued from the hand of his enemy, the prosecuting Satan.

The next passuk (107:3) says - "those that Hashem gathered from the lands, from east, west and north etc. will praise Hashem."

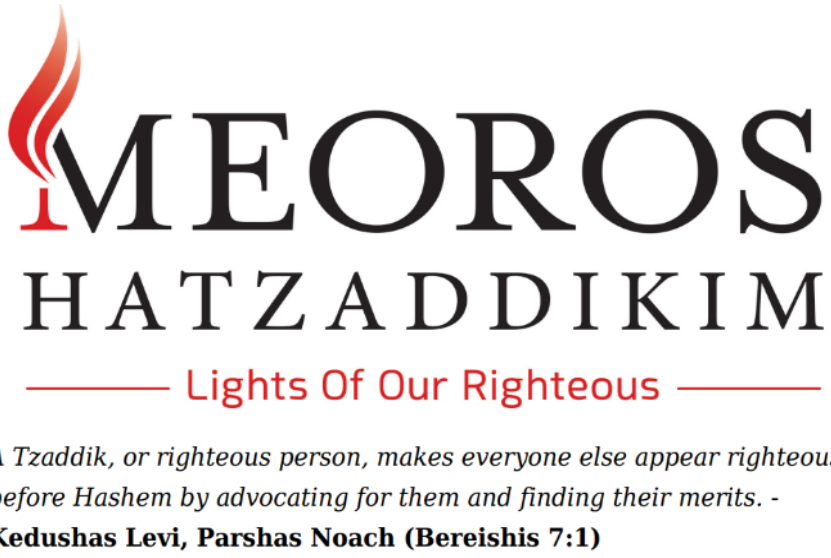
The Zera Shimshon asks - what gathering is this passuk referring to? As well, what does this passuk have anything to do with what the Mizmor is speaking about?

The Zera Shimshon answers that the Gemara (Rosh Hashana 18a) says that the prayers of an individual who davens by himself are not always answered (unlike the prayers of the many that have much more merit and are answered).

In fact, the Gemara (Sanhedrin 44b) says that a person should always word his personal requests from Hashem in the plural tense; if someone is sick, he should daven for that individual, amongst all the sick Jewish people in the world etc. like this even his personal prayer carries the significance of a prayer of the masses.

This is the meaning of this passuk and what it is doing at the beginning of this Mizmor. Since each person from the four categories davened in the plural tense, it is as if they actually davened together and Hashem gathered all their tefilos together from the four corners of the world and thus, many sick people were healed and many people crossed the desert safely etc. due to the ingathering of these tefilos that were now considered the tefila of many.

"Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov



Praises for the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

Rav Moshe Kobriner (Yahrzeit 29th of Nissan used to say that reciting the words of the holy **Zohar** even without understanding them refines and purifies the part of the soul named Neshoma, and the study of the Ohr HaChaim refines the part of the soul named Nefesh.

He also used to say that the Ohr HaChaim placed his powers into his sefer and therefore a person who is moved to hispa'alus by studying the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh can be moved as if he heard the words coming straight from his own holy mouth [of the Ohr HaChaim himself], may his merit shield us. (Ohr Yeshorim p. 81)

The Steipler's Matza

For The Seder One year, a Talmid Chochom in Bnei Brak was niftar before Purim. Shortly thereafter, one of the Steipler's close students came to see him to discuss a matter concerning the almona (widow) of the Talmid Chochom who had passed away.

In the midst of the conversation, the Steipler said, "Pesach is approaching. The almona will sit down the night of the Seder and be pained by her loneliness. She will remember that her husband always ate hand matza the night of the Seder, but most probably she would not have bought hand matza. I'll give some of my matza to her."

The Steipler got up and took out his package of matza, giving some to his student. He said, "There's enough here for the night of the

Seder. When you give her the matza, don't say that I sent it to her, because it's forbidden to give a present to a woman. Simply say that I gave you this matza to give over to someone who needs it."

The talmid later said, "It's impossible to describe in words the incredible excitement and tears in the house of the almona when I entered and said to her, "I have matza for you from the Steipler for the night of the Seder." (Chaim Sheyesh Bohem: Halichos Vehanhogos)

Rav Yeshaya Halevi Horowitz Shelah Hakadosh *(Nissan 11, 5390 / 1630 - 393rd Yahrzeit)*



The *holy gaon,* Reb Yeshaya Halevi Horowitz was born in approximately the year 5230 (1470). His father R' Avrohom Halevi was *dayan* in Prague, Cracow and lastly in Lemberg.

R' Yeshaya learnt with his father and with the *gaon* R' Shlomo Ben Reb Yehudah Leib *zt"l*, better known as the *Maharshal Hasheini*, the second *Maharshal*. He also learnt with the *Maharam of Lublin, zt"l.*

He married Chaya, daughter of one of the prominent members of the community in Vienna, Rabbi Avrohom Moyal. In an awesome statement, R' Sheftel *zt"l* later wrote about his mother, the Rebbetzin Chaya, "It was said in her generation that she lacked nothing in deeds and traits of the holy *Imahos,* Soroh, Rivka, Rochel and Leah."

Over the years, R' Yeshaya Halevi practiced as rov in various communities: in 5260 (1500) in Dubno, Russia, in 5262 in Ostroa and

from 5266 he took over the reins in Frankfurt, leading the prestigious *kehilla* until their expulsion from the city on 27 *Elul* 5274 (1514).

The *rabbi* was exiled together with his flock and he returned to Prague, where he was appointed Rov in 5275 (1515).

When his *Rebbetzin* passed away on 4th *Adar* 5280 (1520), Reb Yeshaya Halevi decided to make his dream of going to live in Eretz Yisroel a reality. On 8th *Elul* 5281 the *Shloh* boarded the ship and after a turbulent, difficult journey he arrived in the holy land on 2nd *Kislev*, 5282. Upon reaching Yerushalayim, he was immediately accepted as Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel.

Seeing the immense poverty of the settlers in the holy land, the *Shloh* sent messengers to the Diaspora and their Rabbonim, particularly to the communities where he had served as rov, initiating a *tzedokoh* campaign which he called "*Yachatz*" -- an acronym in Hebrew for the three cities Yerushalayim, Chevron and Tzfas.

On 11th *Elul*, 5285 (1525), the *Shloh was* imprisoned due to a libel trumped up by the wicked Machmed Ibn Paroueh. On *Rosh Hashonoh*, start of the year 5286 he was freed and he fled to Tzfas and Teveriah. There he established his center of learning and prayer in the ancient *Beis Haknesses* on the shores of the Kinneret in Teveriah.

He was niftar on 11th *Nissan* and is buried in the old cemetery in Teveriah close to the tzion of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai.

His holy *seforim* were accepted and beloved by Jews the world over, a fact which is proven by the amount of times his great *sefer Shnei Luchos Habris* had to be printed over and over.

The Shloh Hakodesh was extremely preoccupied with his Torah studies and duties as rov, and had no spare time at all. However, when he saw how most of the Jews of his time were grossly

neglecting their fear of Hashem and their whole attitude in serving Hashem was so lax, he took upon himself as a holy mission to teach Bnei Yisroel mussar, ethics and unadulterated fear of G-d. With this is mind, he wrote his holy sefer Shnei Luchos Habris, teaching the bypaths of the Torah and exhorting every Rov and teacher to impress mussar and ways of serving Hashem upon their congregants and pupils.

His famous *siddur Shaar Hashomayim* is also well known (In Skver they have a *minhag* to *daven* from it) and in reference to it the *Sulitza Rebbe ztzl* of Far Rockaway who himself *davened* from the *Siddur HaShelah* showed me and told me that Rav Yoel Sirkis author of the *Bach* on the Tur wrote in his approbation, "I guarantee that whoever *davens* with this *siddur*, his *tefillos* will be accepted."

On Shabbos and Yom Tov the Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz davened from the Shela HaKodosh siddur that he inherited from the Tzemach Tzaddik. He used to say about this siddur, "I remember holding this siddur in front of my Zeide during Nishmas! Holy Jews held this siddur in their hands!"

Once, when someone tried to hand him a different siddur, the Rebbe pointed toward the Siddur Shela, indicating his preference for davening from that siddur. He turned to the approbations and pointed out that which the Tzaddik Rov Yoel Sirkis, mechaber of Bayis Chodosh – the Bach on the Tur – wrote in his haskoma: "I promise that whoever davens from this siddur, his prayers shall not return empty – and not remain unanswered!" (Sarfei Kodesh p. 350)

"Hashem's love for us is infinite and unconditional, and we must strive to reflect that love in our relationships with others." – Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

Rav Moshe Feilshus Rav Moshe New Yorker *(Nissan 10, 5763 / 2003 - 20th Yahrzeit)*

After he married, he had two children, and fled Germany for America after Kristallnacht. He settled on the East Side, where many frum families lived. He continued his *avodas Hashem* privately and quietly without anyone knowing who he really was. The Boyaner and Kapishniczer *Rebbes* recognized his true colors and they were among the few who really knew him to be a *Tzaddik nistor*.



Most of the following stories were passed down by the Chassid Rav Moshe Chaim Steinberg: My first meeting with him was to see and meet up close the man whom many respected, while others held him to be a meshugener. I arrived on the East Side before Shacharis, wondering where to chap a minyan.

No sooner had I entered the Bais Medrash than an elderly Yid came up to me and said to me straight away, "Go to such and such a Bais Medrash - there they are beginning to daven Shacharis." This was none other than my first encounter with Reb Moshe New Yorker, and a clear example of his ability to "know" things, perhaps through ruach hakodesh, since I had never met him before, never spoken a word to him, and certainly not told him or anyone else that I was looking for a minyan and had not yet davened.

I asked him how he knew I hadn't yet davened, and he answered in his characteristic simplicity that "after davening you would look different – nuch davenen hot min an andere punim!"

One time before I took a new friend to meet Reb Moshe, I explained that we should prepare by studying a shtickel Zohar on the parsha in advance. We did so and when I came in I had the Zohar turned to the first page of that week instead. Reb Moshe approached and declared emphatically, "No, no, that's not it," and turned the pages knowingly to the topic we had in fact studied together previously as preparation! He then studied this shtickel with us and left behind hints and ideas related to it. My friend was absolutely amazed.

When asked if he reads the newspapers he once remarked, "Yes, yes, I read the headlines and I know all the rest." When he saw that no one got the hint, he stressed, "Head lines – the lines on your forehead! I read the lines on your forehead and there everything is clearly written and spelled out."



Summer of 5746 and a Yid entered the She'eris Yisroel shul. He approached where Reb Moshe sat and claimed that he wanted to sit there and could Reb Moshe move. That's how little anyone thought of Reb Moshe – they simply had no idea who he really was.

Reb Moshe refused to just get up and move, and so this Yid pushed him aside roughly and sat down. A look of anger crossed Reb Moshe's face.

"What's the matter? Why do you look so upset?" someone asked him. "You don't just push me; when you shove me aside you are pushing up there," and so saying he pointed up toward Heaven.

Everyone chuckled and no one took him seriously…until the next day when that Yid who had so callously shoved Reb Moshe didn't wake up. By then they got the hint – too late.

They asked him, "What happened here? What have you done?" But he simply pointed up and said, "Up there," as if to say, "I didn't do anything. It wasn't me; it came from On High. From then on no one messed with him and he sat and stood wherever he wanted.

Before chatzos he headed out of the Bais Medrash to the bakery on the same street, and collected the crumbs from the bread machine tray into a bag. With these breadcrumbs in hand, he made his way to the park.



As soon as he neared, literally hundreds of birds came from all directions to greet him. He would feed the birds with outstretched hands, breadcrumbs direct from the palm of his hand. He used to say he was tipping them. We understood that they got a tip for uplifting all the tefillos among the inyonim he achieved this way.

He once told us that the birds revealed to him the future and all things that would come to pass. When people wondered where he got certain astonishing information from and how he could possibly know it, he said the birds had told him.

He had a special seder and avoda concerning which bird ate from which hand. Some birds he pushed away and they had to circle and come back. He would sometimes transfer the breadcrumbs from one hand to another and the birds from one hand to the other. Everything with a purpose in mind.

There was once an argument between two gentile nations and their bickering was reported in the press. The papers all had their theories of what war was brewing. Reb Moshe remarked, "They will say that the goyim fight and hit one another, and I say that it's not the Russians or anyone else; it's the Nazis!"

People thought he was joking, but a few days later the newspaper headlines all confirmed what Reb Moshe had said. How did he know? "The birds told me," is what he answered.



Late at night after chatzos, he came home – if you could call it a home. It was a tiny hole in the wall, abandoned, filthy, and unkempt. There he continued his avoda undisturbed. He normally never let anyone into his tiny room. Only in his later years when the need arose we came in and saw what went on in there. The holy Zohar with the Ramak, Rav Moshe Cordevero's commentary, lay alongside the Sefer Yetzira, Siddur Arizal, Noam Elimelech, and other sifrei Kabbola that he studied on a regular basis. In his pocket was always a copy of Raziel HaMaloch. His Siddur Arizal was filled with comments and glosses in the margins, things he wrote while others slept.

His other forms of strange customs were avodas Hashem. He used to gather the wax drippings from all the tapers and candles in the Bais Medrash. He collected the wax, melted it down, and fashioned new candles from it. He would sit beside the recycled wax candles and recite Tehillim until they melted down. He used to tell me that the neshomos ask that the wax get used up completely. Around where he sat the smell of melting wax was ever present.

He also smoked cigars, but never allowed anyone to see him do so. If someone knocked or appeared he immediately put out his cigar. When asked why no one was allowed to see him smoke he replied that the ketores was lit and smoked privately.

He had a special avoda with orange peels. He used to peel them off the orange in a special manner, saving them, wrapping them around bottles and producing an ashtray. When asked why he did so, he replied, "See how I transform a klippa into a kli – see how I

transform the peel into a useful vessel." When asked jokingly how long he held onto the peels, klippos, he replied seriously, "So long as they have even just a bit of orange moisture left, they contain sparks of kedusha and I am forbidden to throw them away."

He used to hint to us deep concepts from mundane things, such as fluorescent bulbs. He claimed that they were invented because first they were round and that couldn't last well and so they made them long.

When we did not understand, he said, "They were round, igulim, and they broke, shevirah. Afterwards they made them straight, yoshor – and that was the tikkun!" He didn't explain further; those who understood, understood.

He pointed to a bridge and explained that it was invented to allow a person to travel over from one location to another safely, the bridge above, the churning waters of his tzoros below, transporting him to safety so that he would come to no harm. So too can we traverse life's tzoros safely by crossing on a bridge.

He knew all seventy languages. We saw him speaking Chinese to the Chinese and my friend once had an entire conversation with him in French. When he was sick he complained in the hospital that perhaps he was being punished for studying languages and other secular subjects in his youth. Afterwards, he consoled himself that Mordechai haTzaddik had known all seventy languages and had used it to help Jews and so would he, during the war years, help Klal Yisrael, using his knowledge of foreign languages.

The doctor asked me if I thought Reb Moshe was crazy. When I shook my head and said no, he replied, "You are right – he isn't crazy; he is a genius!"

When they tried to give him intravenous medicine, he refused without being allowed to read the prescription. The doctor laughed to himself and agreed. What could this old Jew know about these

technical medical terms? he thought. "Isn't this ingredient non-kosher? Doesn't it come from pork?" he asked after reading them through. "I myself didn't know," admitted the doctor, "and after looking it up I agreed with him" – it was in fact treif! Throughout his life he refused medicines, doctors, and treatments, living to the ripe old age of ninety, healthy and strong.

His nickname, Reb Moshe New Yorker, came about because of the following incident: One day in the Satmar Bais Medrash around Mincha time for Rav Yoel's minyan, in walked a stranger and went to the back of the shul, where he began reciting korbonos with the tzibbur.

Only the Rebbe seemed to notice him, and he approached the stranger and offered his holy hand in greeting. "Shulem Aleichem, vi'azoi hayst a Yid – what is your name?"

He answered simply and enigmatically, "Moshe."

"Fun vi – from where?" continued the Satmar Rav to inquire.

"Fun New York – from New York," was the simple reply! And as he did not elaborate any further, the nickname stuck – Reb Moshe New Yorker.

Onlookers present remarked how uncharacteristic it was for the Satmar Rav to have walked all the way to the other side of the Bais Medrash to greet a stranger, unless… implying he was a man of hidden qualities.

"When you come to the edge of all the light you know, and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: There will be something solid to stand on or you will be taught to fly." – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus Rav of Ofakim *(Nissan 12, 5761 / 2001 - 22nd Yahrzeit)*



There was a fire burning perpetually within the heart of HaRav Shimshon Pincus *zt'l*. It was a restless fire, constantly moving and flickering in an array of hues; now bursting into huge upward reaching leaps; now sending out showers of sparks to ignite similar fires within other hearts. What fed this fire?

It was no fuel that originates in this world. It was fed from within, by a soul whose sustenance flowed along a direct conduit from Heaven. This spiritual fuel flowed and flowed, freely, generously and bountifully, until the night of the twelfth of *Nisan* eight years ago, when the conduit and the fire suddenly merged into one, becoming a tower of flame joining Heaven and earth, that carried the souls of *HaRav Pincus*, his *Rebbetzin*, and their daughter *a'h*, to their yearned for destination.

The devastating news stunned the members of HaRav Pincus' *kehilloh* in Ofakim, the other Torah communities of the Negev, the large chareidi centers, and Jews in other locations in Eretz Yisroel and across the world where he had travelled to speak and lecture.

Scant days after the tragedy Pesach began, and the feelings of grief that had scarcely begun to make themselves felt, had to be laid aside in deference to the joy of the *regel*.

In the weeks that followed, gatherings were held up and down the country, to eulogize a *gaon* and *tzaddik* who had literally sacrificed

every minute of his time and every ounce of his strength towards *kiddush sheim Shomayim*.

Young children would run after Reb Shimshon on the streets of Ofakim and call out their news to him, "Rabbi, Rabbi, We're going to Savta for Pesach . . . "

Though his mind was immersed in spiritual preparations for the seder night, Reb Shimshon would adjust himself to the children's level and take an interest in what was important to them.

One boy, who was laying tefillin in preparation for his bar mitzva, did not know that the yud, the knot of the shel yad, should be touching the bayis. Reb Shimshon went over to him and in a friendly manner, pointed this out. The boy, noting his companion's extraordinary gentleness, began to argue that it didn't have to.

Reb Shimshon was among the first to own a computer. His laptop was perhaps the first in Eretz Yisroel. He would type chidushei Torah of young talmidim on it. He used this as an opportunity to guide them as to how to write their chidushim. He would polish the language, checking its accuracy, correcting and improving it.

"Look here," he told one avreich. He went over to the bookcase, took out a Reb Chaim and showed him that every piece opened by presenting a difficulty in the Rambam. Reb Chaim also teaches us how to write, said Reb Shimshon. One should start with a kushya right at the beginning; then the reader won't be able to leave the piece until he sees the answer. He would also type the young children's sheet, so that they would develop the desire to write.

Once, at the barber's, he was offered the next turn ahead of the line, but he refused. In the meantime, an elderly man came into the shop. The rav rose in his honor and naturally, everybody else rose as well.

Seeing how the rav had honored the old man, the other customers offered the first turn to him instead.

Reb Shimshon would make light of his wide brimmed hat and say, "When the Beis Hamikdosh is rebuilt and we go up to be seen there, I will have somewhere to hide from His glorious greatness ..."

Reb Shimshon's myriad acts of chesed, of a thousand different kinds, arouse our wonderment. How was one man able to devote himself to others to such an unlimited extent?

Reb Shimshon himself provides us with an answer, though not in reference to himself. In notes made by one of his talmidim, ylct'a, Yechezkel Gordon, we find that he posed the following question: "I have a four year old daughter at home, an innocent and pure child. Does the Torah command me, a devoted father, to send her to the local water well and to draw water for the camels belonging to ten Arabs? This however, was the sign that Eliezer asked for. The girl who would say, 'Drink and I will also give your camels to drink,' she is the one that You have demonstrated is for Your servant Yitzchok (Bereishis 24:14). Does the Torah expect such a devotion to others from a young girl?"

The answer which Reb Shimshon gave was: "Avrohom Ovinu was not simply a kind person. He was master of the trait of kindness. For someone who embodies the very trait itself, there is no limit, no boundary and no measure. The essence of chesed is the utter abandonment of self for the sake of others."

For Reb Shimshon, the only place where the word onochi, I, belonged, was in the aseres hadibros. As far as he himself was concerned, no such concept existed.

He opened a vaad on tefilloh with the question, "Why is it that we say Modeh ani and not Ani modeh? Because first, we offer thanks to the Creator and only then do we relate to the party that was created." Someone who is totally involved in thanking his Creator, therefore, does not relate to himself at all. Is it any wonder that Reb Shimshon had no time for himself?

There was a time when Reb Shimshon was staying in Yerushalayim. A bochur related that every time that he was assailed by feelings of depression, he would go and watch Reb Shimshon davening. That alone gave him the necessary encouragement.

When considering the broad sweep of Reb Shimshon's tzedokoh, there are literally thousands of stories that can be told that simply do not seem to belong to our world and frame of reference. Vast sums passed through his hands, yet he was still able to raise his fingers heavenward and say, "Ribono Shel Olom, You know that I have labored over Your Torah and have not benefited personally in the slightest!"

His son, Reb Yaakov Moshe, says, "We knew that one mustn't put money into Father's hands. It would simply leave them. People were amazed. They said to themselves: 'Rav Pincus travels all over the world. He must be a tycoon, who rakes in millions.' We had to send people to explain to them that Rav Pincus himself was a pauper!"

Reb Avrohom Deutsch relates: "I approached one of the people who used to invite him to speak at seminars. I asked him, 'Why don't you pay him anything?' "He replied, 'I pay him, but he doesn't take it. I give him a check and he tears it up. What shall I do with him? I told him, "Let me at least pay you for your travelling expenses." He replied, "What, for the gasoline? It's embarrassing to take for that."

"Nobody realized the levels he attained. When a youngster came to his house, he would offer him snack foods as though they were the same age. 'Want some Bissli? Some cola?' with such a good heart. His broadness, his openness of spirit in relation to others, were extraordinary. Would you like to see what he gave me?" asks Reb Avrohom, as he gets up and goes over to a glass case. "Look at these beautiful silver candlesticks. He gave to others as though he was a rich man, or a noble; but for himself, nothing. Take a look at his rundown home, you'll be amazed.

An avreich, who had not yet had children, approached Reb Shimshon on Purim night and asked him to daven for him and his wife. Reb Shimshon chastised him, "Do you think that there's a single tefilloh when I don't mention your name and your wife's name?"

A year later, on Purim night, Reb Shimshon called the avreich and asked him whether they had not yet received an answer to their prayers. The avreich said that, no, they had not.

Reb Shimshon asked him again and the answer was once more in the negative. After a while, Reb Shimshon called the avreich and became annoyed with him. "Haven't you been answered yet? If I don't have to rip the heavens open — and it's extremely difficult — then don't do it to me!"

The avreich broke down and told Reb Shimshon that because they were worried about ayin hora, he and his wife had decided not to tell a living soul that she was expecting.

"Reb Shimshon felt that the prayer had been answered," commented the avreich.

Reb Shimshon's originality was well known. He could find ways to reach people where others could not. Once, while 'selling' the aliyos on Purim, the gabbai announced, "Fifty shekels for opening the Oron hakodesh." Reb Shimshon leaped to the bimah and said, "Pesichoh, for saying asher yotzar word by word for one month." When someone undertook to do this for three years, Reb Shimshon awarded him the mitzvoh.

A woman once consulted him about a pill that was made from chometz that she had to take on Pesach. Reb Shimshon was concerned that she might not take the medication even though she had to and he wanted to make it clear to her that it was permitted. "What's the problem?" he said, "Put matzoh all around the pill and then it's absolutely okay." The woman did as he said, and was reassured.

Reb Shimshon's oldest son, Rav Yisroel Yaakov, who now serves as rav of the chareidi community in Ofakim, says, "The thread that ran constantly through Father's life was, Shivisi Hashem lenegdi tomid, I have set Hashem before me always.

Throughout the twenty-four hours of the day, he deliberated what Heaven wanted. If it was to be firm, then he was firm; if it was to show kindness, he showed kindness. When he had to yell at someone, he yelled.

Everything he did, was in accordance with Hashem's will . . . Every movement was in accordance with Shulchan Oruch. Every utterance, with no exaggeration.

"Abba held that one could not give chewing gum a hechsher because of the gelatin it contains. There was a store in Tifrach that started selling gum. Abba went in and bought up the whole stock. This happened many times, until the storekeeper gave in and stopped bringing gum.

"It can be said about him, 'The very place of his greatness, is the place of his self effacement.' With all his greatness, he knew how to cloak it all in simplicity."

There was once a terrible boating accident and a young man was killed. His non-observant mother, devastated, found herself in shul for the first time in her life and confronted Rav Pincus with the age-old question: Why? "Why did Hashem do this to me?!"

Rav Pincus did not bat an eyelid and responded on the spot, "For eighteen years you had and loved this young child. In all of that time, did you ever just once thank Hashem for that gift?"

Knowing that the answer was no, he continued, "If you had done so perhaps he wouldn't have been taken from you…My purpose is not to cause you more pain," explained Rav Pincus. "My purpose is to make you realize that you still have other children and a good life left. You have much to be thankful for – thank Hashem for what you have and

appreciate it. Start asking yourself – why, why did Hashem bless me with all these gifts? – and thank Him while you have them and it's not too late." (Haggoda Tiferes Shimshon p. 353)

Whenever he drove his car he looked around to see if there was anyone to whom he could give a ride. No matter where they were going, it was "on his way." My sister related that just this erev Pesach, we travelled to the shopping center in Ofakim and he met an avreich and told him, "When you finish, call me -- I'm here anyway -- and I'll take you home."

In the meantime, the family finished the shopping and Abba had sat down to start learning with the boys, when the mobile phone suddenly rang: "HaRav, I've finished my shopping." Without a word, Abba left the house and went to bring this Yid home.

Somebody said that, were it to be announced that a calamity was hovering over Klal Yisroel, and that a communal sacrifice was needed to stave it off, who would be prepared to be that sacrifice?

Rav Shimshon Pincus would of course jump to be first.. . . It was an unblemished sacrifice, that went up in a tempest to Heaven as an atonement for Klal Yisroel. It's obvious that this is a signal to Klal Yisroel -- such an accident, the like of which has not taken place for tens of years. The clearest proof is that they were people who belonged to the entire community.

The whole concept of self simply did not exist for them. They only gave to others, without taking anything. They gave and gave, without any personal agenda.They devoted their entire lives to serving Hashem.

There is no cause for concern for the welfare of the deceased. It is very good for them where they are. But their task in this world is still incomplete. Their mission was to increase spirituality in the world.

Whoever continues with this mission is assured that the souls of the departed will assist him. We must prove to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that we have understood -- that the sacrifice was not for nothing! - "Do something that will make Moshiach come today!"

Double Entendre In the Word, by Rav Yissochor Frand

Among the sacrifices mentioned in this week's parsha is the Thanksgiving Offering. The Medrash says that in the future, all the sacrifices will be nullified, except the Thanksgiving Offering — for there is always need to give thanks.

Rav Yitzchok Hutner z"tl, makes a very interesting point. "Todah" [thanks] comes from the word "Hoda'ah", meaning giving thanks. However, the word "Hoda'ah" also means to admit (as in the expression Hoda'as ba'al din k'meah edim dami [An admission of a litigant is like one hundred witnesses]).

Rav Hutner says that it is no coincidence that the word for thanking and the word for admitting are one and the same. In order for a person to give thanks, he must be able to admit that he needed help. The first step in being grateful to someone for doing something for you is the admission that you needed help and that you are not all powerful. Therefore, the Hebrew word for thanks and for admission are the same.

How do we know whether the word "Hoda'ah" means admission or thanks?

Rav Hutner says that we need to look at the preposition that comes after the word. The word "Hoda'ah" — meaning admission — is always followed by the Hebrew preposition '"sheh…" (that). The word "Hoda'ah" — meaning thanks — is always followed by the Hebrew word "al …" (for). We daven a Blessing of Modim in Shmoneh Esrei, called the Blessing of "Hoda'ah". How does it read? "Modim anachnu

lach sheh…" This indicates, that the first thing we must do is not thank G-d, but admit to G-d that we are dependent on Him.

Once we come to that understanding, then we can come to the end of the blessing where we say "Nodeh lecha… …al…" — We thank You for… Birkas HaHoda'ah is thus a two-stage blessing. It is a Hoda'ah of admission at the beginning which climaxes with a Hoda'ah of thanking at the end.

Shabbos HaGadol



The Shabbos before Pesach is called Shabbos HaGadol, the great Shabbos. The term came about in the Middle Ages and there are several explanations for it.

Indeed, before the Jews left Egypt, they tied a sheep to their beds in anticipation of slaughtering for the Pesach offering four days later. When the Egyptians who worshiped the sheep asked, the Jews told them what they were doing. Upon hearing this, the Bechorim (the first-born who were slated to die in the tenth plague) rebelled and began fighting Pharaoh.

This miraculous turn of events, and the fact that the Jews were able to keep this command despite the danger to themselves, are noteworthy. That day, the 10th of Nissan, was a Shabbos.

Another reason for it is the mention of the term "Hagadol" in the Haftarah, which states, "Behold I send Elijah to you, before the great and awesome day of Hashem ['s redemption.]"

As we approach Pesach and the time of our final redemption in Nisan, we should do what we do for Shabbos – prepare. Just as the Jews then extended themselves and even risked their lives to be ready for Hashem's redemption, we must prepare ourselves for the times of Moshiach, when we will be sustained only by the storehouses of Torah and mitzvos we've prepared.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Without the Beis HaMikdash, we cannot offer a Korban Todah, we instead recite a blessing known as Birkas HaGomel. Who was the first person in history to say this beracha?

After Moshe told Yisro how Hashem saved the Jewish people from the Egyptians, he responded (Shemos 18:10), "Blessed is Hashem Who has rescued you."

The Sifsei Kohen points out that this is the first beracha recorded in the Torah and suggests that in thanking Hashem for this salvation, Yisro was saying Birkas HaGomel on behalf of the Jews.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מָקוֹם טָהוֹר "...***and he shall carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place***." (6:4)

Just as ashes can catch fire again, even that which is utterly corrupt and "outside the camp" can change for the better. Since G-d ultimately hopes that even the wicked be restored, we must not discard the ashes. We place them in a clean place - perhaps they will once again glow. (**The Ishbitzer Rebbe**)

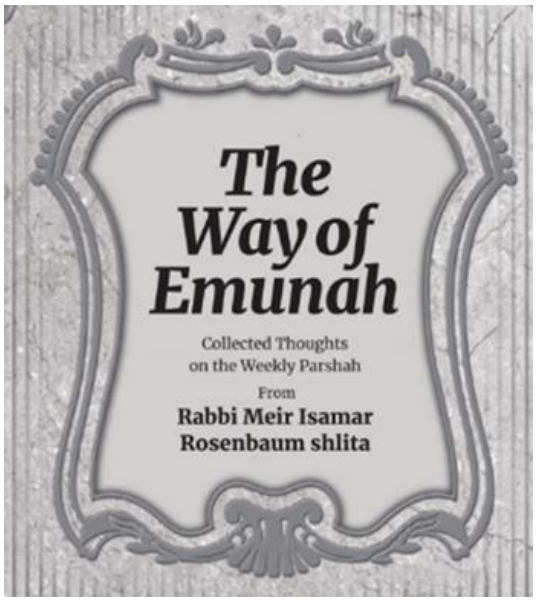
An Agent to Say 'Thank-You'



I recently saw a beautiful insight in the **Avudraham**. When the Chazan says Modim, the congregation recites a prayer known as "The Rabbis' Modim". Why is that?

The Avudraham says that for all blessings in the Shmoneh Esrei, we can have an agent. For 'Heal Us', for 'Bless Us with a Good Year', and so forth we can have a messenger — the Shliach Tzibbur can say the blessing for us.

However, there is one thing that no one else one can say for us. We must say it for ourselves. That is - "Thank You". Hoda'ah must come from us. No one can be our agent to say 'Thank You'.



Learning Torah With Devotion Atones Like an Olah

צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הִוא הָעֹלָה עַל־מוֹקְדָה

***Command Aharon and his sons saying: This is the law of the Olah, this is the Olah on the fire…* (6:2)**

My father, **The Kretchnifer Rebbe** of Yerushalaim shlita says that the words "Zos Toras Ha'Olah" can be translated to mean: What type of Torah ascends upwards?

The answer is: "Al mokdah." If the Torah is learned with fiery yirah and ahavas Hashem. "Hu ha'Olah al mokdah." It is just like the Korban Olah in the Bais Hamikdosh, when a fire would come down from Heaven to show that the korban was accepted and desired by

Hashem. So too, when one learns Torah with enthusiasm and yirah, it is as powerful as a Korban Olah and is greatly desired by Hashem.

If a person were to ask: Who am I that I should be found worthy of reaching such a lofty level? The pasuk answers: "Kol halayla." Even during a time of darkness and "night", when we feel like we are on a lowly level, we can still reach a level of "ad boker".

We can feel that a time will come that will be light like the morning. "V'aish hamizbeach tukad…" At that time, just like the fire descended to accept our Korban Olah, so too shall our avodah be accepted by Hashem.

Rav Shlomo of Karlin zy"a states that the pasuk is hinting: What kind of Torah ascends upwards?

Torah that is learned with enthusiasm. If the Torah is "like a Korban Olah on the fire", meaning that one learns it with fiery passion, it will ascend to Shomayim.

When There Was No Way Out — And Hashem Answered! by Rabbi Shlomo Landau

The story happened many, many years ago with Rabbi Lazar Eliezer ben David, the head of the Orachim organizations in Bnei Brak and Elad. They run seminaries and dormitories for girls from dysfunctional homes, where these girls can find a new home, grow, and eventually get married and establish beautiful, functional homes of their own.

Many years ago, when the organization was just starting, they had many girls and ran into tremendous financial difficulties. Someone pushed Rabbi Eliezer ben David to get on a plane and fly to Toronto to try to get a meeting with Joe Tenenbaum, the world-renowned philanthropist known for his generosity and support. In the end, Rabbi Eliezer agreed, but there was a problem: he didn't speak

English, and Mr. Tenenbaum didn't speak Hebrew comfortably. He needed an interpreter.

He asked a substantial donor of Orachim, a man who spoke both English and Hebrew and was friendly with Mr. Tenenbaum, to accompany him. The man initially refused, saying he doesn't solicit. But when Rabbi Eliezer explained that it was pikuach nefesh — they couldn't throw these girls out on the street — he agreed.

They strategized carefully. They decided to ask for $250,000, hoping to receive $100,000. They planned the pitch so the interpreter could guide Rabbi Eliezer during the meeting.

They arrived in Toronto, went to Mr. Tenenbaum's office, and waited. An hour passed, then two, then three. Finally, the secretary came out and apologized: Mr. Tenenbaum wouldn't be coming in that day. Disappointed, they left.

A few hours later, the phone rang where Rabbi Eliezer was staying. Mr. Tenenbaum had decided to come in after all and was ready to meet. Rabbi Eliezer frantically tried to reach the interpreter but couldn't get through. Panicking, he then stopped himself and said: Hashem runs the world. If this is meant to happen, it will happen.

He went calmly to the office. In the hallway, he met a shy young man and asked if he spoke Hebrew. The young man did. Rabbi Eliezer asked him to interpret. Though extremely shy, the young man agreed. Rabbi Eliezer began speaking passionately. The young man translated hesitantly. - Suddenly, the interpreter-donor called Mr. Tenenbaum, explaining what happened. Mr. Tenenbaum responded, "Would $500,000 make you both feel better?" On the spot, he wrote a check for $500,000 — far beyond anything they imagined.

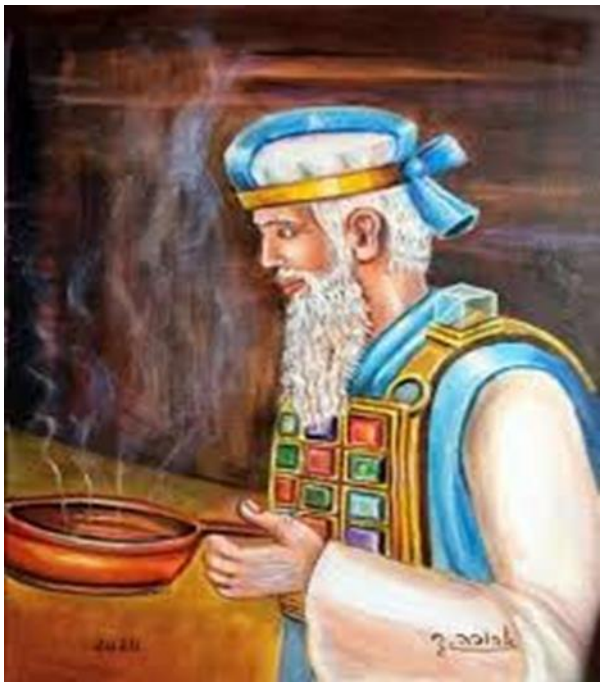
That money became the foundation for Orachim's first permanent building. It's incredible how, despite all the planning, Hashem provided in His own way.

CONGREGATION ISRAEL OF SPRINGFIELD

Rabbi's Message

The following Dvar Torah from Rav Yochanan Zweig shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of the Talmudic University of Miami, presents a fresh perspective as to why we keep mitzvos. Hope you enjoy! Have a great Shabbos.

צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר – Command Aharon and his sons, saying... (6:2)



Rashi (ad loc) comments that the word "***Tzav***" (command) means enthusiastically encourage (the Kohanim) beginning now and for succeeding generations.

This would seem a little incongruous. After all, have you ever tried "commanding" someone and achieved that the person commanded feels "encouraged" or "enthusiastic"? Hardly. For a proper understanding of this concept try "commanding" your spouse to do the dishes and let us know how that works out for you.

In addition, how could Rashi say "to encourage the Kohanim for now and succeeding generations"? Commanding this generation of Kohanim to do their duty would seem difficult enough, how would this last for succeeding generations?

The word Mitzvah also etymologically has the root "***Tzav***" which is why Mitzvos are generally translated as commandments. This is, at best, an incomplete translation.

Both *Targumim* on this Possuk translate "***Tzav***" as "***Paked***" which means to appoint. This is also the exact same word that Moshe uses

when he asks HaShem to appoint a leader in his stead over the Jewish people - "***Yifkod HaShem...***" (Numbers 27:16).

This is a very important concept to understand. When HaShem first chose Moshe to go lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, a weeklong conversation ensued. This consisted, primarily, of Moshe arguing with HaShem. This would seem very odd, after all HaShem is telling him to go, how can Moshe possibly argue?

The answer is that HaShem was asking Moshe to accept a position of responsibility, and responsibility has to be accepted willingly. This is why when Moshe finally accepts to go with Aharon the Torah uses the same exact language of ***"Tzav" - "Vayetzavem Al Bnei Yisroel"*** (Shemos 6:13).

The same is true by the entire Torah and Mitzvos which is also a derivative of "***Tzav***". They are a responsibility. That is why HaShem has to ask us to accept the Torah, and every soul has to be present at Mount Sinai and sign on for this obligation. The Torah and Mitzvos aren't merely rules we must keep. They are a complete agenda for the perfection of the world, and we are signing on for the responsibility of seeing it fulfilled.

So too in our Parsha, HaShem is telling Moshe to appoint Aharon and his sons to the permanent role of Kohanim and to do it in an encouraging and enthusiastic manner in order that they should feel the same way. They aren't being commanded, they are being asked to accept a sacred responsibility. Once they accept it, this responsibility becomes binding for all succeeding generations.

Bitachon Even Without Bitachon

"If someone doesn't have bitachon, he should have bitachon that Hashem will help, even without his bitachon." ~ R' Rafael of Bershad zt"l.



The Ramban once went to visit a Talmud who was very ill. When he arrived at the sick man's bedside, he realized that it would not be long before the Talmud would be niftar. The Ramban said to his Talmud, I'm going to give you a kameah, an amulet. With this kameah, all the doors will open up for you in heaven. I want you to go to a 'heichel elyon', a high-level chamber, where the judgment is passed, and there you will ask this list of difficult questions, including why certain things are happening in Klal Yisrael. - With that, he handed his Talmud a paper of questions. - The Talmud was niftar.

After some time, he appeared to his Rebbe, the Ramban, and said, that wherever he went in Shomayim, in heaven, when they saw the Kameah, the amulet, the doors opened for him and he was allowed to ascend higher and higher until he reached to the Heichel, about which the Ramban had told him.

But he continued, when I wanted to present the questions which you gave me, I saw that in the Olam Ha-Emes, the true world, there are no questions, there are no kashas. On the contrary, it is very clear how everything, until the last detail, is carried out with tzedek and mishpat, with righteousness and judgment.

In **Reb Chaim Vital's** writings, in the name of his Rebbe, **The Arizal**, he writes, 'There was a woman who lost her husband and a young child. She was shown in a dream a beautiful garden filled with exquisite flowers of marvelous fragrance. All around were gleaming ponds. The whole garden was bathed in the glow of intense sunlight. From there she was taken to meet her husband.

In the distance she saw a wide field enclosed with a golden fence. Inside were people wearing brightly coloured clothes, sitting in rows and studying Torah. In the midst of them stood a young man who was

giving the shiur. She was told to wait there for a few moments. When the shiur was over, the teacher came over to her. She recognized him as her husband. 'Avram', she cried faintly and leaned against a tree for support. 'Why did you leave me so young?'

Her husband gently explained, 'You must understand that in the world in which you live, souls are sent to complete a certain mission and to endure hardships because of sins they committed previously. I was already in this world once before. I was a Talmud Chocham and a Tzaddik, but I did not marry and have children so that my learning would not be disturbed. When I left the world and came here, at first, they made me head over to one of the yeshivas in Gan Eden. I started rising from one level to another level.'

Since I had never been married nor had children, they sent me back to the world. There I married you, and when we had our seventh child, they called me back to Gan Eden to return to my yeshiva, where everybody was waiting for me. Your merit is great, and when the time comes, we will be together again in this world, the real world. The woman nodded, but then questioned…

'And why did that tragedy happen to us when the drunken Goy killed our precious three-year-old son?'

Come with me, her husband replied. They walked together. Beautiful birds flew from tree to tree singing songs, Shira. Even the blades of grass and trees sang. Then she saw a canopy made of precious stones shining with all the colours of the rainbow. Underneath the canopy was the form of an angel who came and stood before her. She recognized the angel as her son who had died at a young age and cried emotionally, 'Oh my son, why did you leave me when you were so young?'

The child answered, 'Everything has been calculated by Hashem Yisborach. I had been in the world once before. Before I was born to you, I had been born to a very special family. In our city there was a pogrom and the Goyim murdered all the Yidden. I was six

months old and the only one left alive. A Gentile family took me in and raised me until the Yidden from the neighboring village ransomed me and brought me back to live among them. I became a great Talmud Chochom. - When I left the world, they received me here with great joy and I rose from level to level until I reached a place where I couldn't go any higher because I had been nursed for one year by a gentile woman. The verdict was that I should be born again and nursed for three years from a yid and then I would be able to attain my proper high place.'

'That's when I was born to you, and this is a great zechus for you. When I finished my three years, I was taken again to my real place, because there was nothing left for me to do in that lowly world.'

'But why did you have to go in such a terrible way? his mother asked.'

'When I was about to pass from the world, a terrible decree was issued against the Yidden of our city and all of them were about to be killed, including you and Abba. That's when I was honoured by being able to atone for the whole city and I was killed in their place. In that way, I saved the whole city and that's why I was able to merit all the honour you see here.'

Her husband said to her, 'you have seen that all your questions have been answered.'



וּכְלִי־חֶרֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר תְּבֻשַּׁל־בּוֹ יִשָּׁבֵר – *'An earthenware vessel in which it is cooked shall be broken.'* (6:21).

An earthen vessel in which meat of a korban chatos was cooked has to be broken since the walls of the vessel have absorbed **בליעות**, ingestion of the meat.

The question is, why must it be broken? Why can't a person wait 24 hours, and then the **בליעות** will go bad. (**נותן טעם לפגם**), and it won't be **אסור** any longer?

The Mishneh in Avos writes that one of the miracles that happened in the Beis Hamikdosh that no meat ever went bad. This being the case we can understand why the vessel must be broken since the **בליעות** of the Chatos meat even if it were left for 24 hours, never went rancid or foul, - And so, the only option left is to break it.

וְאֶת כָּל־הָעֵדָה הַקְהֵל אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד – '*And assemble the entire community at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.*' (8:3)

Why was it necessary for Hashem to make the miracle, that over 600,000 Yidden should fit into a small place? Also, what command did Hashem tell Moshe to tell the Yidden.

Answers the **Chasam Sofer** that Moshe was teaching the Yidden a lesson. …. A person should be happy with a little and not complain about his portion. That is what Hashem was demonstrating with this miracle. Even in a small place one can still be happy and serve Hashem. There's no need to complain. - That is the message that Moshe wanted to teach Klal Yisrael.

The Chofetz Chaim lived in great poverty. Once when things were very difficult his wife complained and said our neighbour is an **עם הארץ**, an ignorant and his children have not been educated in the Torah way. He is wealthy and you who spend the whole day learning Torah and your children following your ways can't seem to make ends meet. Where is the **ישרות**? How is that fair?

Replied the Chofetz Chaim, 'Our neighbor who has not been Zoyche to appreciate the beauty of Torah and he was not Zoycha to see Yiddish Nachas from his children, is it fair that he should be poor as well? - However, Baruch Hashem, we have been Zoycha to enjoy the sweetness of Torah and to see our children with nice midos. Is it fair that we should have riches as well? - Should he be poor in

Gashmius and Ruchnius? Should we be rich in both Gashmius and Ruchnius?

The Gr'a recounts that while he went into Golus, he came to a house where he had never seen such poverty. The owner was an extremely happy man and welcomed me with genuine happiness. Around the rickety table were sitting other visitors who were hungry and were welcomed for supper. The owner sat at the head of his table in great joy. His great joy was visible to all. Fresh bread and water were served.

After three days the Goan felt bad eating the food from such a poor man so he decided to leave before Shabbos. The poor man begged him to stay, and the Goan saw that his host was very pained by the fact that he intended to leave.

The Goan asked his host, but how do you manage to feed everybody for Shabbos?

The owner replied, it is true, we don't have money, but my wife goes to the mill every evening where they let her take all the bran and leftover bits, which she then bakes into fresh bread for all these poor people. They come every evening and eat warm bread to their heart's content with great delight. As for Shabbos, my wife works on Thursday at the Shochet, at the slaughterer's house, from morning to evening, plucking chickens. Her payment is that she may take all the heads and feet. - Of course we can't eat them, but she cooks two big pots of chicken soup, one for the night and one for the day, and we are all very happy.

The Gaon stayed, and he said that he had never seen a person so happy with his lot. The host sat at the head of the table with many poor people around the table, and he sang and learnt Torah with such simcha as if he was a rich man who lacked nothing.

The Weekly Vort

■ **הוא העלה על מוקדה על המזבח כל הלילה עד הבקר** – ***It is the elevation offering that stays on the flame, on the Altar, all night until the morning*** (6:2) The letter "mem" in the word **מוקדה** (flame) is printed smaller than the other letters.

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that the fire that burns within a Jew when he learns Torah and performs *mitzvos* has to be within him – inside and hidden. He should not display his passion for Torah and *mitzvos* outwardly as a show for others to see. (**Maayanah Shel Torah**)

■ **ופשט את בגדיו ולבש בגדים אחרים** – ***He shall remove his garments and don other garments*** (6:4).

Chazal teach (Shabbos) that the clothing with which one cooks for one's master, should not be worn when one pours a drink for one's master. The Maharsha explains that this is proof that one must change to nicer clothing for Shabbos than what one wears during the week. Just like the *Kohein* does not wear the same clothing when he performs the *avodah* as when he takes out the *deshen* (ash from the burnt *korbanos*), so too we must wear nicer clothing on Shabbos than what we wear during the week. (**Maayanah Shel Torah**)



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

The verse states that - "Truth sprouts from the earth". If so, why don't people lift it up from the ground?

Because no one wants to bend, to lower himself in order to pick it up! ~ The Baal Shem Tov.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

The Handshake

There are BH countless organisations that distribute funds, food and household items as *Kimcha D'Pischa*, for the benefit of Yidden to enhance their Yomtov. Each one is very praiseworthy. Sometimes, though, one story behind a distribution deserves a special mention. The following is one such.

During the busy days ahead of Pesach, **Hagaon HaRav Moshe Sternbuch, Shlita**, personally distributes *Kimcha D'Pischa* funds to the 180 *avereichim* of the *Teshuvos V'Hanhagos kollel*.

The distribution is just the beginning of a large-scale annual operation led by the Rosh Yeshiva, which includes assistance to hundreds of his *avreichem*, to the Rabbanim and Dayanim of the *Eidah HaChareidis*, the Rabbanim of his yeshiva in Beit Shemesh, and extensive support for *Kupos Tzedakah* in Israel and around the world.

Yet within this massive operation, one detail stands out: the Rosh Yeshiva's insistence on personally handing the envelopes to the *avreichem* after delivering his final shiur at the end of the zeman. Those present have been wondering why the elderly Rav doesn't spare himself the effort of personally handing out the envelopes - a task that could easily be carried out by one of his *gabboyim*. He was asked several times about this practice.

HaRav Sternbuch responded with a powerful and stirring story he heard from **HaGaon HaRav Yechezkel Abramsky, zt"l** – a story that sheds light on the significance of each detail of every mitzvah, even the smallest one.

The Rosh Yeshiva said: "HaGaon Yechezkel Abramsky [1886-1976] told me that once, while he was in Vilna, he looked through the ledger (*Pinkus*) of the *Chevra Kadisha* and found an entry about the **Vilna Gaon's** wife. [The Vilna Gaon was known as the Gra – the acronym of

Gaon Rabbeinu Eliyahu and lived in the 1700's]. She would collect money for the poor of Vilna together with a friend. Over the years, the two agreed – with a handshake – that whoever passed away first would appear in a dream to the other and describe what happens in the *Olam HaEmes* and how judgement is carried out there.

"Years passed, and the friend died first. After some time, she appeared in a dream to the Gra's wife and said: "It's impossible to describe how every small action is accounted for in Shomayim. I am not permitted to reveal what happens there, but since I promised you with a handshake, I was granted permission to share one detail.

"Do you remember that once, on a certain street in Vilna, we saw a poor man on the other side of the road? I signalled to him to cross over so I could give him some money, and he came and was happy. You should know that in *Shomayim* I was judged for not exerting myself to cross the street to reach the poor man, because that showed a lack of appreciation for the value of mitzvos. Such is the depth of judgement – awesome and terrifying.

"In the morning, the Gra's Rebbitzen awoke trembling and told the Gra about her dream. The Gra instructed that the members of the Chevra Kadisha be summoned to hear about the dream from his wife directly and record it in their ledger (*pinkus*) for future generations to contemplate the depth of judgement in *Shomayim*. And indeed, it was written: 'By order of the Gra we record this story.'

"HaRav Abramsky then told me: 'From that day on, whenever I sent money to a poor person or a *mossad* by mail, I never send a messenger to the post office, as I did in the past. Instead, I make sure to go myself and place the envelope in the mailbox – so as not to lose the *zechus* of personally exerting myself for the mitzvah of tzedakah."

The moving message was clear: When it comes to the mitzvah of tzedakah, there is no substitute for personal effort – every small act is counted and measured. For HaRav Sternbuch, personally

distributing the envelopes is not a technical task of transferring funds – it is a rare opportunity to fulfil a mitzvah in its purest form – with his own body and effort, without compromise.

Wishing you a **חג כשר ושמח**

Good Shabbos

In this week's Parsha, Tzav, the Pasuk (Vayikra 6:18) says, "*This is the ritual of the sin-offering: the sin-offering shall be slaughtered before Hashem, at the spot where the burnt offering is slaughtered: it is most holy.*" - The burnt offering is entirely burnt for Hashem.

One would think that a sin-offering should be brought elsewhere. Instead, the Torah instructs us that the sin-offering is brought in the same place as a burnt offering.

This is a profound idea.

Rav Tzadok writes (in the Tzidkas Hatzadik) that the place where we struggle/sin, it's Hashem's way of communicating to us, saying, "in this area, you can be great." - Where we brought a sin offering, we also brought a burnt offering. The potential for greatness of a person is in the area where one is facing the biggest challenge.

The word נִסָּיוֹן does not only mean a challenge; it also means a banner. Yes, one can have a tough time in a certain area. Yet, in that very place, one can plant a flag that can wave so proudly and tall.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein teaches that the Jewish people left Egypt knowing they had no way to provide for themselves in the desert. Their only option was complete trust in Hashem-that He would sustain them through miracles. So, they didn't take provisions. They took only the leftover matzah- not as food, but as a precious reminder of the mitzvah they had just fulfilled.

משל למה הדבר דומה

צַו אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו



A wealthy merchant hired two workers for his estate. One was tasked with shoveling coal into the furnace, while the other was hired to cut and polish rare diamonds. The merchant handed the coal shoveler a spade and left him completely alone for the day. However, he stood constantly over the diamond polisher, repeatedly urging him: "Pay close attention! Be meticulous! Don't lose focus for a second!"

Eventually, the diamond polisher grew frustrated. "Why do you constantly badger me," he asked, "while you leave the coal worker completely alone?"

The merchant replied, "If the coal worker gets distracted and drops a lump of coal, it's just coal. No real harm is done. But you are holding a fortune in your hands. If you lose focus and make even a millimeter of a mistake, the loss is catastrophic. That is why I must constantly urge you on."

The very first verse of the *Parsha* says: "*Command (Tzav) Aaron and his sons...*" **Rashi** asks: Why use the harsh word *Tzav* (command) here, instead of the usual *Emor* (speak) or *Daber* (tell)?

Rashi explains that *Tzav* implies *zerizus* - an urgent, meticulous encouragement, specifically required when a task involves a high cost or potential loss.

The **Dubno Maggid *zt"l*** explains: The *Kohanim* were not just performing another ordinary ritual; they were handling the spiritual

"diamonds" of the Jewish people. They were facilitating the connection between *Hashem* and the nation.

Because the spiritual stakes were so incredibly high, because as we know a single incorrect thought or an action could completely invalidate a sacrifice, *Hashem* used the word *Tzav*. He was telling Aharon and his sons: "You hold a fortune in your hands. Be exact. Be alert."





Horav Yisroel Friedman Shlita - Letters Of Chizzuk During The Coronavirus Pandemic

רב ישראל פרידמן רב קלויז טשארטקוב מנשסתר

מכתב התחזקות

י"ב ניסן תש"פ

This year many families are making their own Pesach for the very first time. Young couples who were used to always going to their parents for the Seder, are forced to remain at home and conduct their own Yom Tov and their own Seder. Parents and grandparents, who always enjoyed a house full with their children and grandchildren, are also concerned how their Yom Tov and their Seder will be in an empty home without the input of their children.

When Klall Yisroel brought the Korban Pesach for the very first time in Mitzrayim, the Torah (Shemos 12; 29) tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu instructed Klall Yisroel about how to prepare the korban Pesach. "And Bnei Yisroel went and did as Hashem had commanded Moshe and Aharon, so they did". Rashi comments that this possuk comes to tell us the praise of Klall Yisroel **להגיד שבחן של ישראל** that they did not detract from what they had been commanded by Moshe

and Aharon. The Torah also stresses -'so they did'- that Moshe and Aharon also brought a korban Pesach".

The Chortkover Rebbe zt"l (in his sefer Ginzei Yisroel) points out that in this Rashi is written a very important lesson which is a great chizuk for all of us in our present situation.

In their eagerness to keep the mitzvos, Moshe and Aharon would normally have been the first to bring the Korban Pesach. The Torah wants to stress that in their great ahavas Yisroel, Moshe and Aharon specially waited to allow everyone else to first perform the mitzvah. Sometimes people do mitzvos because they are influenced by external factors, or they wish to copy their rov or rebbe, and they try to emulate their actions. Although it is commendable to copy the good actions of others, it is an even greater level to perform the mitzvos lishmoh, –just because Hashem has commanded us - and not just to copy the actions of others.

Moshe and Aharon were worried that if they first bring the korban Pesach, some people would run to copy them and then their actions might be lacking in lishmoh and sincerity.

Klall Yisroel had to bring the very first Korban Pesach without the help of Moshe and Aharon, they could not watch their actions and observe how they brought the korban Pesach, the Yidden had to do it all by themselves. This was in order that they fulfill the mitzvah lishmoh, only because Hashem had commanded them and not just to copy the actions of others, and this is the praise of Yisroel **להגיד שבחן של ישראל**.

Therefore they specially waited in order to allow all of Klall Yisroel to first bring the korban Pesach and only afterwards Moshe and Aharon also brought their own korban Pesach.

Similarly, this year many people will be conducting their Seder on their own, without the help and encouragement of parents or children, locked in their homes unable to see or to hear others, such

a Seder is truly **שבחן של ישראל** "the praise of Klall Yisroel" and shows that we are keeping the mitzvos lishmoh with total sincerity to fulfil the wish of Hashem to relate the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim.

In a similar vein, the Rebbe of Ruzhin zt"l explained the possuk in sefer Yirmiyah (ch 23)

"אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאום ה'" Hashem proclaims "If a person conceals himself in hiding does he think that I cannot see him"?! The meforshim understand this possuk as a rebuke, a person who commits aveiros in hiding, does he really think that Hashem does not see his actions and will not bring him to task? The Rebbe of Ruzhin however understood this possuk in a totally different context which is very apt for our situation.

Sometimes a person is forced to conceal himself, and despite the difficult situation he now finds himself in he continues to keep the mitzvos and daven and learn like beforehand, although he is now cut off from his surrounding and his friends, shul, etc. Says Hashem about such a person **אם יסתר איש במסתרים** - If a person keeps the mitzvos in concealment, he should not feel despondent, or that he is lacking, rather he should know that **אראנו נאום ה'** Hashem looks at him and has much nachas from his mesiras nefesh to keep the mitzvos whilst he is in concealment. - "If a person learns Torah in concealment does he think I do not see him! I will reveal his actions to all". (Yalkut Shimoni Shemos 7, 180)

This year many people will be conducting their Seder in concealment, sitting alone by themselves without anyone to see them or listen to them, and about such people it is written **אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאום ה'** - Hashem proclaims "If a person conceals himself in hiding does he think that I cannot see him"?! They are not alone, Hashem is watching their Seder and they are the true praise of Yisroel **שבחן של ישראל** and Hashem will proclaim them to the entire world.

After Avrohom Ovinu had Bris Mila, Hashem came to visit him on Pesach (see Rashi Bereishis 18, 10), yet we don't actually find that Hashem actually spoke to him during that visit. Explained the Chidushei Harim and Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, that Hashem came to observe the actions of Avrhom Ovinu to see how he performed the mitzvos even when he was in great pain. Similarly, every time a Yid performs a mitzvah when it is very difficult for him, the person merits that Hashem comes to watch his actions and to see the mesiras nefesh of His children, how they keep the Torah and mitzvos, even under difficult conditions.

This concept is also mentioned in a letter written yesterday by the Sadigerer Rebbe shlita: "Since from Heaven it has been decreed that everyone make their own Seder in their own home, the Heavenly Courts desire to watch how we conduct ourselves with true emunah and inner tranquillity and simcha even in times of nisayon.

This period is indeed mesugal for everyone to merit to overcome his yetzer hara and attain an internal geulah, and to elevate his entire household, that his house become a Mishkan Hashem, that even the beams of his house will be able to testify about him "Here lives a Yid"! Thereby the entire house will be worthy of being a home for the Shechinah".

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן

"The command of Tzav teaches that avodas Hashem requires zerizus, not because Hashem needs our speed, but because the soul burns when it acts without delay. Every mitzvah has a moment when its inner light is open to us, and if we hesitate, that light closes and the act becomes heavier. Therefore the Torah says Tzav—to awaken the fire within, so that the outer fire on the mizbeach reflects the inner fire of the heart." ~ Sfas Emes.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Power of Tears

We all know that there is no power that can do anything in this world, except for Hashem. The following story shows us the extent of the works of Hashem's hashgachah. - Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita relates:

"Dovid Cohen, a ba'al teshuvah, was married for eleven years, and he and his wife still did not have children. They ran a kosher and harmonious home and the Gemara, Ish v'ishah zachu, Shechinah beineihem - When a husband and wife merit it, the Shechinah dwells among them,'could be said of them.

"After eleven years without children, the couple decided to get divorced. It was an excruciating decision, but they realized that if they would each remarry, there was a chance that they would be able to have children. - They got divorced.

Two weeks later, Dovid got a call from his former mother-in-law, who told him that her daughter was going to have a baby. "He was flooded with mixed emotions. He was overjoyed at the news, but he was devastated that they would not be able to remarry, because he was a kohen and a kohen cannot remarry his ex-wife.

"He cried when he davened, and couldn't sleep at night. In his anguish, he turned to **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, z't'l**, to ask him what to do in such a sensitive situation.

"When he got to the rav, tears clogged his throat. He barely managed to tell the rav his story. The rav listened, and then said there was no solution to the problem, for Ein chachmah ein eitzah, u'ein tevunah l'neged Hashem — There is no other wisdom, idea, or understanding other than Hashem's. 'However,' he advised, 'go to my father-in-law **Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv**.'

"He did as Rav Chaim said. When he got to Rav Elyashiv, z't'l, he told him the whole story. The rav listened intently, and after a few

minutes, said that he had no good solution, but he could give him other advice, 'Go to Kosel and cry, as shaarei demo'os lo ninalu, the gates of tears never close.'

"With the last of his strength, he traveled to the Kosel. When he reached the tear-soaked Wall, he caressed the holy stones that had seen so much suffering and rested his head against them. He cried and cried.

"After some time, a man standing nearby heard his heartrending sobs and asked if he could help. Dovid decided to tell the man his story. The man also admitted that he had no solution to the problem, but said, 'I feel that your pain is too heavy to bear alone. You need to share this with someone. Do you have parents? Maybe tell them what's going on with you.'

"When Dovid heard this, he thought: Rav Elyashiv told me to go to the Kosel, and while I'm here, a random person suggests I talk to my parents. It must be a sign that I really should share this with them.

"His father was a patient in a geriatric ward in America and was in poor health. Dovid bought a plane ticket for the next day and drove to the hospital immediately upon arrival. He was in for a disappointment — the hospital staff tried to convince him not to go in to his father because he was in such bad shape. 'He sleeps most of the day and is basically uncommunicative,' they said.

"But Dovid, who had come a long way, wasn't to be dissuaded. He entered his father's room and started to cry. His father woke up from the noise and was surprised to see his son from Eretz Yisrael there, next to his bed. He asked what he was doing there.

"Dovid told his father what was going on.

"No, no...' his father said and started to cry. His son asked what he meant.

"After his father calmed down, he told Dovid that his real parents had died in a terrible car accident when he was just a baby, and he

and his wife had adopted Dovid. All these years, they raised him and didn't tell him that he was adopted. He was not a kohen.

"The father finished speaking, closed his eyes, and returned his soul to its Maker.

"Dovid got in touch with his ex-wife and told her the good news. He arranged his adoptive father's funeral and burial and returned the next day to Eretz Yisrael. A short time later, they remarried and were zocheh to make the bris of their son together."



וְאֶת כָּל-הָעֵדָה, הִקְהִיל, אֶל-פֶּתַח, אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד..... וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, אֶל-הָעֵדָה: זֶה הַדָּבָר, אֲשֶׁר- צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת (ח/ג-ה)

אל פתח אוהל מועד: זה אחד מן המקומות שהחזיק מועט את המרובה (רש"י)

Why was it necessary for **ה'** to make this **נס** -that over 600,000 **אידן** should fit into a small space? Also, what command did **ה'** tell **משה** to tell the **אידן**? **(זה הַדָּבָר, אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת)**

Answers the **חתם סופר** that **משה** was teaching the **אידן** a lesson: A person should be happy with a little and not complain about his portion. That is what **ה'** was demonstrating with this **נס**. Even in a small place one can still be happy and serve **ה'**. There is no need to complain! That is the message that **משה** was to teach **כלל ישראל**.

❖ The **חפץ חיים** lived in great poverty. Once when things were very difficult his wife complained and said, 'Our neighbor is an **עם הארץ** and his children have not been educated in the **תורה** way, he is rich! and you, who spends the whole day learning **תורה**, and your children follow your ways, can't seem to make ends meet. Where is the **ישרות**!!?!!'

Replied the **חפץ חיים**, 'Our neighbor, who has not been **זוכה** to appreciate the **געשמק** of **תורה** and he was not **זוכה** to see **אידיש נחת**

from his children, is it fair that he should be poor as well?! However, **ב״ה**, we have been **זוכה** to enjoy the sweetness of **תורה** and to see our children with nice **מידות**, is it fair that we should have riches as well? Should he be poor in **גשמיות** and **רוחניות**?! Should we be rich in both **גשמיות** and **רוחניות?!' (חיים שיש בהם)**

❖ The **גר״א** recounts that whilst he went into **גלות** he came to a house where he had never seen such poverty: '...The **בעל הבית** was an extremely happy man and welcomed me with genuine happiness. Around the rickety table were sitting other visitors who were hungry and were welcomed for supper. The owner sat at the head of his table and his joy was visible to all. Fresh bread and water were served.'

After three days the **גר״א** felt bad eating food from such a poor man, so he decided to leave before **שבת**. The poor man begged him to stay, and the Gaon saw his host was very pained by the fact that he intended to leave. The **גר״א** asked his host, "but how do you manage to feed everyone for a **שבת**?"

The **בעל הבית** replied, 'It is true; we don't have money, but my wife goes to the mill every evening where they let her take all the bran and left over bits, which she then bakes into fresh bread for all these poor people. They come every evening and eat warm bread to their hearts content with great delight. As for **שבת**, my wife works on Thursday at the **שוחט**'s house from morning to evening plucking chickens, her payment is she may take all the heads and feet. . Of course we can't eat them, but she cooks two big pots of chicken soup, one for the night and one for the day, and we are all happy.'

The **גר״א** stayed and he said he had never seen a person so happy with his lot. The host sat at the head of the table, with many poor people around the table, and he sang and learnt **תורה** with such **שמחה** as if he was a rich man who lacked nothing.

וְהֵרִים אֶת-הַדֶּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל הָאֵשׁ אֶת-הָעֹלָה, עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ; (ו/ג)

Every morning the start the daily **עבודה** was for a **כהן** to go up the **מזבח** and remove a shovel full of ashes from the previous day's **קרבנות** and place it on the side of the **מזבח**.

What is the symbolism of this **עבודה**?

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch gives a beautiful explanation: every morning the **כהן** is showing that today's **עבודה** is a continuation of yesterday's **עבודה**. In **אידישקייט** our **עבודה** does not change with times or fashion. A **איד** today has the very same mission and **עבודה** as a **2000 איד** years ago. Yes, each day we should start out with a new freshness but remembering that times don't change. (Rebbe Y Frand 5767)

When we realize that our **עבודה** is to continue and build upon the **עבודה** of the previous generation, we come to respect our parents and Rabbanim much more.

Reb Yosef Davis retells: when I was a small child, I ran ahead of my father as he walked with the Rosh Yeshiva of Telz Rav Elya Meir Bloch. When I reached the building, I swung the doors wide open and was about to enter, when suddenly, I felt the grip of the Rosh Yeshiva on my shoulder. He said to me, "You should know that you don't ever enter the building before your father. And you don't enter before me, because I am the **ראש ישיבה**. (Rav Gifter/ 28)

"The eish tamid represents the inner fire placed in every Jew. It may flicker, but it never extinguishes, for it is a spark of the Divine. Our task is not to create the fire, but to guard it— to remove the ashes that smother it, the habits and distractions that dull the soul. When a person clears away these obstructions, the flame rises naturally, illuminating his entire avodah." ~ Rav Eliyahu Dessler — Michtav Me'Eliyahu.

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

House Calls - Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt'l

On **י״ט אדר שני** is the **יארצייט** of **רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד זצ״ל**, the first **רב** of the **עדה החרדית** in **ירושלים**, one of the great **רבנים** in **ארץ ישראל** in the early part of the century.

One of the many specialties he had was being a peacemaker. If he ever heard that there was an argument between two friends or between husband and wife, he would immediately try to go and take care of the argument before it developed any further.

חז״ל say that a **תיגרא**, argument, is like a **בדקא**, is like a crack in a dam, right, a hole in the wall of a dam, which starts off very small, but as the pressure of the water mounts becomes bigger and bigger and then it's very difficult to do anything about it. - So what he used to do is he would go to the house of one of the parties at night. He would oftentimes wake up the person.

Now the person was shocked to find the great **רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד** standing over him in the night, and he would say, "Why are you here? Why are you coming?" And when he told him that it's because of the argument, the person would start to apologize, "I feel so bad that my argument caused the **רב** to come out like this at night." And then he would speak with the person, and his eyes they said would have both love and rebuke at the same time, until he got the person to realize that he really should make peace.

Now the person would often ask him, you know, "Why is it you couldn't you couldn't wait just a little bit longer? Right, why not come tomorrow?"

So **רב חיים זוננפלד** said that the **גמרא** tells us in **מסכת סנהדרין** that **משיח** sits in the gates of Rome among **חולאים**, among people who are sick and wounded. And the way you can identify him is that everyone when they need to change their bandages, they unwrap all their bandages and then they put on new bandages.

משיח undoes one bandage, puts on a new bandage, and then undoes the other. Why? Because he wants to be ready at the moment that it's time for him to come, that he'll immediately be able to go and not be caught in the middle of bandaging.

The **רב** said, "How long does it take to finish tying up a bandage?" And yet he says, "In order that the **שכינה** can return to its rightful place in **ירושלים** among **עם ישראל** in the **בית המקדש**, we don't even want a delay of a few seconds.

Argument drives the **שכינה** out of a home, drives the **שכינה** out of a community. If I can stop it as soon as I can, I do everything that I can for that."

His family sometimes asked him why he would go to people's houses, it wasn't befitting his honor, why didn't he summon the people?

He said, "I know that people find it much easier to make excuses and to not come." He says, "I don't care about my honor. I care about bringing **שלום**, following in the path of **אהרן הכהן** who was **אוהב שלום** and **רודף שלום**."

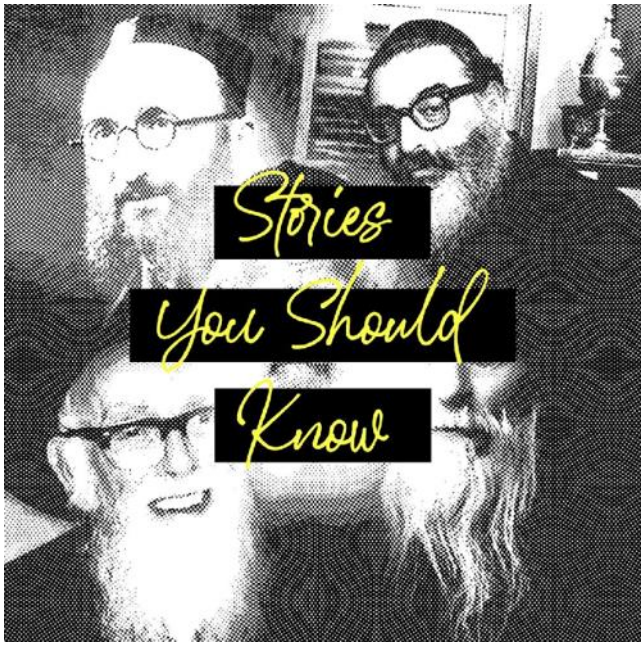
This week's **פרשה - פרשת צו** , the word **צו** Rashi says, implies **זירוז**, the **מידה** of **זריזות**, which is not just speed, but energy, taking something very seriously and doing everything you can to solve the problem as soon as possible.

רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד embodied and personified that **מידה**.

May we all walk in his steps, wishing everyone a wonderful **שבת** and **כל טוב**.

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsh ZT'L would say:

'Anger is contagious. By associating with a short-tempered person, one may also come to adopt his nature!'



Just One Phrase- Rabbi Moshe Shapiro's Unexpected Encounter With Greatness

I recently heard an incredibly enlightening story about one of the greatest spreaders of deep Jewish thought in recent years, Rabbi Moshe Shapira, of blessed memory.

In general, when someone shares a wise quote with another, it enlightens the person, but oftentimes there's only one basic understanding of the quote or phrase and the wisdom stops there. Further, it will always remain just a quote, something that's interesting or a fascinating human observation that is fun to share, but it is not lived. It is just said.

Rabbi Moshe Shapira, on the other hand, was famous for taking just one saying of our sages and asking questions on it, delving into it, and concluding with an idea that would leave everybody in the room with the resounding feeling: How could I have ever claimed to understand that saying until now? He would live with the one quote that was said and reveal to the world its infinite depths. But where did Rabbi Shapira get this appreciation of the breadth of just one saying of our sages?

It was one unforgettable Purim, when he revealed to his close students how it all happened. He was a young boy playing with his friends in front of the study hall of Ponevezh' Yeshiva in the city of Bnei Brak. Suddenly, the children noticed that the lights went out in the study hall. It was a complete blackout.

Young Moshe Shapira and his friends went to check out what was going on, to see if there was any action, any possible excitement that could be happening there. But when they got inside, there was no thrill, but they did find something puzzling.



There was one man there, sitting in the corner of the dark room, singing to himself one phrase of our sages, one line, one idea, over and over again.

He just kept repeating it again and again. The boys all began to laugh at this man. What could he possibly be doing? But the man would just start from the beginning of the phrase, repeating it with more and more energy, devotion, and intensity each time. It wasn't long before the children recognized that something special was going on.

They began to feel awe, as they recognized that they were witnessing something majestic, this majestic moment of one person wrapping his entire being into a phrase with all of his emotions. Little Moshe's laughs slowly morphed into heartfelt tears. It wasn't long until every single person in the room began to cry. And the man would just continue singing to himself the phrase as if nobody was in the room.

Rav Moshe Shapira said that this was the moment he discovered the infinite depth contained within a **מאמר חז"ל**—even without departing from its simple meaning.

And that man who was sitting in the corner of the room was **Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler**.

R' Pinchos of Koretz ZT"L would say:

"If a person davens to Hashem and his prayers are not said on behalf of the entire Jewish nation - it's as if he hasn't even prayed!"