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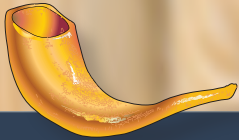
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שבעת המינים



Shabbos Mevorchim
ROSH CHODESH ELUL

Rosh Chodesh is
SHABBOS & SUNDAY
(8/31 & 9/1)

Molad Chodesh Elul:
Friday (Aug 30)
5:06 PM & 4 chalokim



RABBI YY JACOBSON



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EIKEV 5779

A number of years ago I had the opportunity to spend some time with one of the grand children of Baba Sali, Rav Shlomo Buso. He told me a story of a Tzadik that came to a certain town to give chizuk and of course fundraise. It was late at night and he was studying in the town shul when he fell asleep. He was startled awake in middle of his sleep and sees the Shamash of the shul standing over him with a knife ready to stab him. The Tzadik jumps up and begs for his life pleading that the man to spare his life. The Shamash falls down and starts to cry bitterly and the Tzadik asks him what the matter is. The shamash responds, "I have been serving the community for my whole life, and we built shuls, schools, and all the infrastructure necessary for a community. The only thing we are lacking is the grave of a great Tzadik, I was hoping you would not mind volunteering". They were looking for a human Korban

but he declined.

The Baba Sali had an older brother Rav David who due to his greatness was called Ateret Roshainu the crown of our head. He is buried at the southern Sahara of Morocco bordering with Algeria. Over a hundred years ago the two countries were at war and as always the Jews were in the middle. The Jews were constantly being accused that they are spying for the other side. The Algerians wanted to wipe out the entire Jewish community to send a message to all that this is what happens to those who spy for their enemy. Harav David was the Rosh Yeshiva and the spiritual leader and he sent a message to the Algerian authorities saying, if you crush the head of the snake then the body dies. He volunteered to be a Korban on behalf of the Kehila and be killed to spare the rest of the people. The Algerians accepted. They placed him into a Cannon and blew his body across the landscape. The Algerian army prohibited anyone to collect his body parts and bury them. Rav David had requested from

two people that if they do him the chesed of burying his body parts they will have a portion in Olam Habah right next to him. The two men did this chesed shel emes and the Algerian army killed them.

A korban Olah is one in which the entire animal is burnt. The Midrash Tanchuma explains that the Olah is to rectify the sin of improper thoughts. The connection between the two is that a person is obligated to love Hashem with all his heart and when a person has negative or evil thoughts, chances are he is lacking in his connection with Hashem. The Korban is there to reconnect a person totally with Hashem and it is done by putting the entire animal up to be burnt for Hashem.

This is the message of Kriyat Shema with all your life.

We should be Zocha to have such Ahavat Yisrael and Ahavat Hashem to be willing to give ourselves over totally for others. May Hashem avenge our enemies.

Shabbat shalom



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EARLY MINYAN FRIDAY 1:35 & 3:30

Table with 2 columns: Service Name and Time. Services include Candle Lighting, Mincha, Shkiya, Shachris, Pirchei, etc.

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS

20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ 30 ON YOM TOV
S 5:55 M 5:56 T 5:57 W 5:58 T 5:59 F 6:00

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG
S 6:04 M 6:03 T 6:02 W 6:00 T 5:59

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA
S 7:28 M 7:26 T 7:25 W 7:23 T 7:22

AUGUST 25 - AUGUST 30

NEITZ IS 6:15 - 6:20
PELAG IS 6:16 - 6:11
SHKIA IS 7:40 - 7:34 PM
MAGEN AVRAHAM
9:01 AM - 9:03 AM
GRA- BAAL HATANYA
9:37 AM- 9:38 AM

Summer 2019. Bais Hachaim logo. WEEKDAY MINYANIM. Table with columns for Shachris, Mincha & Mariv, and Mizriv. Includes times for various tent sizes and repeat kriat Shema.

BLUEBERRY HILL ZMANIM

EREV SHABBOS PLAG MINYAN 30 Dr. Frank Rd. Entrance on Humbert
MINCHA 6:00 PLAG 6:19



RABBI COREN

PARSHAS NACHAMU TO EIKEV

There is a beautiful midrash quoted in the Avudraham about the succession of the seven weeks of comfort beginning with Shabbas Nachamu and ending with שוש אשיש בשם . It basically describes the prophets that were sent by Hashem to comfort the Jewish people, as it says 'Nachamu Nachamu Ami' etc. The response comes following week when the prophets return to Hashem ותאמר ציון, עזבני "Hashem has forsaken us" and were not taking any comfort from anyone other than Hashem himself. The next week describes הנחמה הוא מנחמכם -- I'm the one that is comforting you. This is followed by an ascending ladder of adulation that the Jewish nation experiences until it reaches the highest point of endearment like the adoration of a chosen and kallah.

I think this isn't just a cute midrash. This is the essence of Sefer Devarim, the quintessence of what Judaism is all about. It's what the Mesilat Yesharim writes and what one needs to know very deeply within. The same author quotes the Ramchal in Eitz Chaim who states that we need to review this concept every day for an hour. This sounds crazy but if we realize that our spiritual and physical lives depend on this, it all becomes clear. Where is all this written down? Is there somewhere in the Torah where itemizes the message that teaches us the purpose of everything we do in life? Indeed, why do we really need to keep Hashem's

commandments?

The answer is quite explicit in this week's parsha but before we get there let's revert back to Parshas Vaeschanan where I believe it all begins--i.e. the intense building of our relationship with Hashem. In truth, it really starts in Devarim but as the Nesivos Shalom explains, Devarim is the Yirah part which is needed to open the gate for Ahava; from then on we must take steps to go higher and higher in our love of Hashem.

I would like to begin with the Matan Torah in last week's parsha. We began discussing the differences between the ten commandments in Yisro as compared to the ten in Vaeschanan. I also mentioned the cute riddle that Rav Yakov Kaminetzky asks which is when Chazal say that זכור ושומר בדיבור the first two words were said together but what was actually written on the Luchos?

The answer is stated in the Shabbas davening. Regrettably, we don't pay enough attention to the words we say but we explicitly say וכתוב בהם שמירת שבת which seems to imply that שמור was written. In any case the Meshech Chochma writes a profound explanation regarding the Luchos. He begins by pointing out that sometimes the Torah will say אשר יטב לך and sometimes למען יטב לך . What's the difference? The answer is based on a Mishna in Pirkei Avos that says שכר מצוה מצוה the reward of a mitzva is a mitzva. What does this mean? the Meshech Chochma explains that the reward for a mitzva is the divine light that one gets when experiencing the mitzva. When one is on the correct level and performs the mitzva correctly he or she should experience an incredible feeling of dveykus-- clinging to Hashem. This is what the Torah means by אשר יטב לך --it will be good for you, now you can feel

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it. This also explains why it sometimes says למען יטב לך . After the sin of the golden calf we are not able to feel the immediate light that is available in every mitzva [See the Meshech Chochma who proceeds to explain a difficult Gemara in Baba Kama 54 that discusses why the word tov--good isn't mentioned in one of the Luchos and a whole fascinating discussion regarding the letter ט .]

This message is extremely important to internalize and many times when I say this over to old timers they ask me 'where did you get this? We didn't grow up believing that Hashem created the world to benefit us and to give us pleasure.' Of course there is a price we must pay and there are levels of pleasure-- the highest being awareness or dveykus-- but at the end of the day this is what Shma Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem EChad conveys: He is Infinite; He doesn't need anything from us;It is all about us. [See more about this in Nefesh Hachayim, Ruach Hachaim, Mesilat Yesharim, Derech Hashem and others.]

And where do we have this in the Torah? In the beginning of the fifth aliya, Moshe says לטוב לך... ליראה . Moshe is asking what it is that Hashem requires of us other than to be close to him? To reach dveykus. That is the purpose of the entire Torah where every mitzva is supposed to connect us closer to Hashem. And as we enjoy the higher levels of pleasure and increase the Nachas Ruach we give Hashem the more deserving we become of being the Kallah that Hashem longs for us to be.

Good Shabbas



SHOWING YOU TRULY CARE

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman

Of course, the Mitzvah of Birchas Hamazon, Bentching is one of the first Mitzvos in the Parsha and I would like to talk about it, a beautiful Der'her.

In Bentching, the Parsha reads in 8:10 (ואכלת, וישבעת - על הארץ הטובה). The Parsha says that you eat, you are satisfied, and bless HKB"H on the beautiful land of Eretz Yisrael. Bentching is somehow connected to Eretz Yisrael. The second Beracha of Bentching is called Birchah Ha'aretz the Beracha on the land. The Gemara in Maseches Berachos 48b (3 lines from the bottom) says (הארץ ומלכות בית דוד בבונה ירושלים לא יצא ידי חובתו כל שלא אמר ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה בברכה). Someone who does not mention Eretz Yisrael is not Yotzei Bentching. It says (אמר ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה) someone who does not refer to Eretz Yisrael as a desirable, good, and wide land is not Yotzei Bentching. Indeed in (נודה לה) we say the Beracha (ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה). The question is why is it important to say (ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה). We have to mention Eretz Yisrael as the Torah says (על הארץ הטובה), but why do we understand that mentioning the beauty and bounty of Eretz Yisrael is so important?

In the Toras Moshe from the Chasam Sofer we find a Vort (which is actually from Rav Shimon Sofer). (In the Toras Moshe, any piece that has the * asterisk mark indicates that it was written by the son of the Chasam Sofer, Rav Shimon Sofer). He has an absolutely beautiful thought on (ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה). What make it all the more beautiful is because it touches on a Yesod which we have discussed many times. He brings this Yesod in the name of the Chovos Halevavos. The Yesod is that Ahava, love, is noticeable when a person does something for someone else that is more than he is obligated to do. When a person does the things that he is obligated to do that doesn't show that he loves the other person it just shows that he is a honest straight person. He does the things that he is obligated to do. If a person wants to show that he cares about somebody he has to do something a little more. In Mitzvos we have ideas of Hiddur Mitzvah, Zerizim Makdimim L'mitzvah, we have situations of Hamachmir Tavo Alav Beracha. Situations of doing a Mitzvah where we could show that we are not just doing it to be Yotzei, we are doing it with an Ahavah, with a love. The Yesod is that to show love you have to do something a little more.

I once saw an explanation of the Posuk that is found in Tehillim 118:5 (מן-המצרה קראתי קוה; עניי במקרהב קה). Dovid thanks Hashem and he says I called you during time of difficulty. (מן-המצרה) during time of difficulty I called you HKB"H, (עניי במקרהב) and you answered me (במקרהב) with a wide and open arm which shows love. When HKB"H answers (במקרהב) it shows an Ahavah. When we thank HKB"H for the land that he has given us says the Toras Moshe, we thank HKB"H for (ארץ חמדה טובה). Hashem could have satisfied his promise to Avraham Avinu to give us a land by giving us any land, we could have gotten Madagascar. We got Eretz Yisrael which is a land that the world has been fighting over for at least 2,000 years. A little piece of land that if you look on the world map you can barely

find it and here everyone is busy fighting and tumbling over Eretz Yisrael. (ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה) part of thanking HKB"H is (עניי במקרהב קה) HKB"H answered us and granted us a land with his wide open arms.

I can't resist but adding a lesson from Yirmiya Perek 38. It is a Perek you might want to learn. In Yirmiya 38, Yirmiya was thrown into the dungeon by king Chizkiyahu but not in a prison like we are accustomed to but a prison that was in style during that time which was a deep pit with a muddy bottom. As Yirmiya was left there he was sinking into the mud. The Posuk tells how a mysterious person came to King Chizkiyahu and said to him if Yirmiya dies you have no chance with HKB"H. Pull him out. This person is granted permission and he throws ropes down to Yirmiya and Yirmiya puts them under his arms and is pulled up. A very uncomfortable way of being pulled up. When he is pulled up what is Yirmiya's response? We find that Yirmiya said according to the Medrash, Hashem, you couldn't get me a ladder I had to be pulled up in such an uncomfortable way? Halevai you had brought for me a ladder. It is strange, HKB"H saved your life, you should Bentch Gomel instead he says Hashem you couldn't bring me a fancier car to save me, no limo? Interesting! At any rate, that is Yirmiya's complaint. There are Meforshim who explain Yirmiya's thought along the lines of (עניי במקרהב קה). HKB"H if you have a love for me why was I pulled up by my underarms, that is painful. (עניי במקרהב קה) Hashem you should answer me (במקרהב). In life we go through difficulties there are times when HKB"H winks at us, where in redeeming us from a difficulty there is something a little nice, a little special, a little unusual. (עניי במקרהב קה). What a Yesod. It is a Yesod in a way to deal with other people too. When you try to go out of your way for someone to add just a little bit, a little bit extra to show that you truly care.

IS MOST OF IT ALL OF IT?



We learn about the requirement to bentch Birkas Hamazon after eating and being satiated from the posuk in Devarim, Perek Ches, posuk yud. The gemara in Brachos, daf chof alef, amud alef says that we learn that Birkas Hamazon is a mitzvah d'Oraysa from the above posuk. All other brachos achronos are mi'DeRabbanan.

The shiur for drinking in order to be required to say a bracha achrona is discussed in the Tur, Orach Chaim, siman kuf tzaddik which discusses that there is a safek whether the shiur for a bracha achrona is a kzayis or a reviis. The Tur therefore says that a person should be careful to either drink less than a kzayis and be exempt from a bracha achrona or more than a reviis thereby definitely necessitating a bracha achrona. Regarding a kos shel bracha, the Shulchan Aruch says that a person is required to drink a cheek full, which is the majority (roiv) of a reviis. If a person drinks from a kos shel bracha, he should drink a full reviis so as not to have any doubts of whether or not a bracha achrona is necessary.

The following question arises. We understand that regarding a kos shel bracha we say a cheekful is enough because it is the majority of a reviis and the rule is rubo kekulo (majority is like all of it). Why don't we say the same svara regarding a person who drank the majority of a reviis; shouldn't he be required to say a bracha achrona since it is rubo kekulo?

The Ran in Psachim and the Bach in Orach Chaim, siman taf ayin bais say that the reason a person needs a cheekful of wine is not because of

rubo kekulo, but rather there is a requirement of te'ima (tasting) and a person who has kos shel bracha needs a te'ima chashuva, which is a cheek full. According to the Bach and Ran there would be no question as to why a bracha achrona is different from a kos shel bracha.

The following question arises regarding the four cups of wine at the seder where both the Ran and Bach require the person to drink the majority of the cup of wine. The Bach explains that drinking roiv kos is like drinking the full cup. We need to explain why we don't say the majority of a reviis is like all of the reviis regarding bracha achrona?

The concept of rubo kekulo can be analyzed in two ways. Is the fact that a person who does roiv of the mitzvah considered as if he did the entire mitzvah, and therefore the minority part isn't considered relevant? For example, if one slaughters roiv of the simanim of the animal, is it as if all of the simanim are slaughtered; or do we say it is as if only majority is done, but the Torah says that a majority is enough and therefore the fact that the minority is not done is inconsequential?

If we say that the rubo kekulo is a din that the majority needs to be done and the minority is not considered done, but becomes inconsequential then we can understand why it is sufficient to drink the majority of the kos when it comes to daled kosos and the leftover would be inconsequential. However, when it comes to bracha achrona, where the shiur of bracha achrona is when a person's stomach enjoyed the drink, we won't say that majority is considered a totality since the stomach of the person still feels a lack. One would therefore not be mechuyav in bracha achrona unless he had the entire thing and we won't say rubo kekulo.

It is important to thank Hashem for all the food and drink and look to say brachos of thanks.

Seasoning Your Words

The Shwarma Rebbe Yerachmiel Tilles

David Deri used to own a kosher meat restaurant in Manhattan's. One day, he noticed a man enter tentatively and begin to look over the menu that was laying on the table nearest the entrance. He was wearing jeans with a few holes and patches, and a shirt that had clearly seen better days - a not so unusual look on the streets of New York in those years. He approached this unpromising looking customer. "Hello, sir. My name is David. How may I help you?" "Hi, I'm James. I'd like shwarma." David looked at him curiously. He had included shwarma on the menu only because there were Israelis that liked to drop in from time to time. But Israelis, he knew, were not likely to respond to being called 'James.' He couldn't hold himself back from asking, "How do you know what is shwarma?" "Whaddya talking about?" responded James like a true Jew. "All my life I've eaten shwarma." Then he added emphatically, "I'm an Israeli." "And your name is 'James?'" David wondered if perhaps he had heard incorrectly. James laughed. "My real name is Chayim, However, here in America I decided to adopt a more popular name." David decided to utilize the opportunity; he was, after all, a Chabadnik, a follower of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He began to pepper their exchange with words of Torah. James' facial expressions indicated that he quickly grasped the theme and that he enjoyed hearing ideas that were new to him. After a series of visits to the restaurant, in which James ordered a large portion of shwarma and received it each time seasoned with Torah thoughts, David suggested to him that he subscribe to a weekly one-on-one Torah class with a Lubavitch Yeshiva student, who would contact him to arrange a mutually convenient hour. "Why not?" James responded, smiling, handed to David one of his business cards. David had never inquired about what James did for a living, so he was quite surprised to discover that James was the CEO of a large investment firm on Wall Street! That evening David gave the card to a yeshiva student he was acquainted with, named Shneur. In the next few weeks, David didn't see James at all. Had he switched restaurants? Did he come in the hours when David was not there? He didn't know. In any case, the incident soon passed from his mind and he didn't think about James at all. But then, after several months, it occurred to David that he hadn't seen James in such a

long time, and he wondered what had happened with him. He phoned Shneur, and asked him if he was still in touch with James. "Am I still in touch with him? I certainly am. And our connection has become much stronger," was the response David heard, to his joy. And more good news was still to come. Shneur continued. "Know that James purchased his own pair of tefillin and puts them on faithfully every [week] day. Not only that, he also has taken on to observe Shabbat! - at least partially, at any rate." * * * Years passed. David was standing behind the cash register when a religious-looking Jewish man entered the restaurant. The man looked around and, upon noticing David, rushed over to him, grabbed his hand, and began shaking it enthusiastically. "Do you remember me?" he asked, still grasping David's hand. David didn't. The man smiled triumphantly. "I'm James!" David gulped. "Of course I remember you. But you certainly look different," he added, staring at the kippah adorning James' head and his overall well-groomed appearance. "That's right. I wear a kippah all the time now. And it is all because of you!" he snapped with mock indignation. "Here's what happened," James continued. "I began to study with Shneur, the yeshiva boy you told to call me, by telephone once a week. In one of those sessions, we encountered the Rebbe's idea that those who have very little Torah knowledge should take it upon themselves to teach the little they know to another Jew who unfortunately doesn't even know that much. "This idea was difficult for me to digest. I asked Shneur, how could it possibly be that someone like me, who not only knows very little, but also is not mitzvah observant, is qualified to teach the holy Torah? "Shneur easily deflected my concerns, and went on to convince me that I could do it, that me too the Rebbe had in mind. "Right then on the telephone, I decided I would arrange a Shabbat party every week for the Jews among my employees and customers, and that in addition to the food I would have catered, I would share with them the teachings that I was learning with Shneur. "To host the Shabbat parties, I rented a large gallery space in an upscale building in Manhattan. The parties became an instant hit. No doubt the long tables aligned along one wall laden with a wide variety of food from

the best kosher catering available was a major element. Still, the highlight each week was my presentation of the Torah teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. "From week to week the number of people requesting to be invited grew, until after a few months I had no alternative but to assign the regular participants into shifts that would attend on alternate weeks." The moment finally came when I could no longer push aside the realization how inappropriate it was to be having Shabbat parties in which the Shabbat laws were not being adhered to. Even more, that I, the organizer, host and teacher, was only partially Shabbat observant. After a brief inner struggle, I had to accept that the time had come: I would be fully Shabbat observant! "Once I actualized my Shabbat commitment, other mitzvahs came smoothly in its wake. Eventually, I decided to take the plunge and change my life to be a full-fledged religious Jew in all its implications. "More time went by and then I met a wonderful religious Jewish woman. We got married, thank G-d, and we moved to Canada." "See the power of shwarma!" David commented wryly. Then he winked and patted James on the shoulder. "Hold on," protested James. "The story I came to tell you is not yet finished." A few weeks ago - like now - I flew into New York on a business trip. I was walking on a street in Manhattan when suddenly a kippah-wearing Jew approached me and greeted me excitedly. "Rabbi James, hi!" he exclaimed emotionally. "'Rabbi' he called me, no less! Meanwhile, I had no idea who he was. "Then he began pumping my hand and wouldn't let go. 'You should know that you changed my life!' he said, to my open-mouthed amazement. "It turned out that he was one of the regulars at those Shabbat parties I used to organize while I still lived in New York. The words of Torah he heard each week seeped into his heart and, like with me, percolated there until he realized that he had to change his lifestyle, and accept upon himself to live according to Torah and mitzvot. "Do you get it, David? Without me even realizing it, the Lubavitcher Rebbe turned me of all people into a shliach -- one of his emissaries to inspire other Jews to return to their roots, thus bringing closer the final redemption." James laughed. "Yes, that was genuinely powerful shwarma that you served me."



RABBI YY JACOBSON

THE LEGACY OF WOODSTOCK

Fifty years ago, when America watched news reports from Woodstock, the youthful counter-culture saw a celebration of their generation. But many of their elders saw an unimaginable horde of immoral, drug-abusing, morally unrestrained freaks. The rebellion of the youth of the 60's culminated with what has become a cultural symbol - the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in August of '69 that drew close to a half million people to a pasture in Sullivan County, N.Y. For four days the pilgrims experimented with extraordinary quantities of drugs, "free" love, and minds and hearts open to anything and everything. The music, which began Friday afternoon, Aug. 15 and continued until mid-morning of Monday, Aug. 18, captured the wild life of the flower generation, as their teachers and parents looked on in shock, grief, awe or a combination of the three.

Why did an entire generation of young and bright Americans reject the pragmatic and sensible path of their parents and grandparents? Was it an expression of immature naiveté and futile innocence? Was it simply one hell of a party, legitimizing hedonistic temptations? Was it merely a holiday of dumb luck before the realities of capitalism resumed? Was Woodstock a whole lot of people getting stoned at a rock concert, which was much easier than working to change the world? Or was there something deeper at stake?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe (1902-1994), one of the great moral voices of that generation, in a historical address six months after the event, Purim 1970, saw it as something far more profound and existential than just lots of youngsters living out their natural animal passions*.

A little introduction is necessary.

DRUNK

An intriguing and uncharacteristic statement in the Talmud (the primary body of Jewish law and literature) declares that "On Purim a person is obligated to become intoxicated until he does not know the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai.'" (Talmud, Megilah 7b).

In Judaism, excessive drinking is seen as both repulsive and destructive. In Genesis we are informed that intoxication by Noah and then Lot led to disaster. Little needs to be said today to validate this truth. In America today, as in so many other parts of the world, alcoholism has destroyed too many a life and family. For people who have fallen prey to the devil of addiction, no religious excuse should ever be employed to allow the horrible demerol of alcoholic or drug addiction to destroy themselves and their loved ones.

Yet for individuals living up to Talmudic moral and spiritual standards - abstaining from any form of excessive drinking all year around and, instead, toiling to refine their characters and dispositions under complete sobriety -- Jewish tradition designates one day of the year when they ought to leave the inhibitions of the rational mind in order to express the depth and glow of their passions, which are usually stored in the super-conscious chambers of their souls. An individual who has dedicated an entire year to work soberly on his or her psychological, emotional and spiritual identity, as Judaism incessantly demands, is highly unlikely to be pulled down by the once-a-year consumption of alcohol.

Still, the Talmud's demand that under the spell of intoxication one ought to forget the difference between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai" seems absolutely bizarre.

Haman was a ruthless power monger, a self-centered egomaniac and an evil barbarian who schemed to exterminate every single Jew living in the Persian Empire. He was the Hitler of his day. Mordechai, on the other hand, was a saintly sage, a genuine leader, a lover of G-d, of his people and of humanity. It seems obvious that a decent human being should never forget that Haman must be cursed and Mordechai blessed. Moral equations between monsters and good people, although popular in some academic circles today, are grotesque and disgusting. They allow the monsters to continue their work.

What is even more bizarre is that we are enjoined to engage in this forgetfulness on the Jewish holiday of Purim - the day in



which we celebrate Jewish deliverance from the vicious Haman as a result of the courageous spiritual and political leadership of Mordechai. The very holiday of Purim is about the fall of Haman and the rise of Mordechai. How, then, are we to make sense of the Talmud's demand that on Purim we know not "the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai' when this distinction is what constitutes the very essence and purpose of the holiday!

Obviously, then, we must understand these words of the Talmud in a deeper way. Indeed, interpretations are abundant. What follows is one of my personal favorites presented by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, delivered at that Purim assembly in 1970, some six months after Woodstock.

WHY SHOULD I BE A GOOD PERSON?

There are two levels of consciousness, the Rebbe explained, in which one can distinguish between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai." The first is pragmatic and materialistic; the second is soulful and eternal. One speaks in the name of self-interest and personal gain, the other in the name of meaning.

From a pragmatic and materialistic world outlook, Haman's path ought to be rejected, and Mordechai's lifestyle embraced. Indeed, many of our parents and grandparents employed the pragmatic argument in order to persuade us to live the good and decent life.

"If you wish to get into a good college," they told us, "you should keep away from drugs and alcohol. If you want to graduate with honors, you must abstain from promiscuity and frivolousness. If you desire to be hired by a successful firm or company, you need to demonstrate responsibility, consistency and trust and get a good education. If you want to generate a good income, live in a beautiful home, take a few vacations a year, and own three cars and a summer home, you need to get up early each morning, put in a full day at the office, remain loyal to your spouse and stay away from dangerous and trippy behavior. If you wish to be respected socially and invited to upper-class receptions, stay away from any form of racism, bigotry and violence. You must behave like a 'mentch'."

"And," they continued, "if you manage to give some charity on the side, you might even be honored one day at fund-raising dinners and have your name engraved on a building or two. When you hit old age, you will retire with dignity, accompanied by a hefty savings account and time for golf and relaxation. If you make enough money, you may even establish a tax-deductible foundation on your name."

This is, admittedly, a nice vision (a certain part of me likes it too, though I must confess I have at this stage of my life already violated many of the ground rules.) It promotes decent behavior, loyal citizenship, hard work and faithful family commitments. It works for many youngsters and has proven successful with many American Jews who made a life for themselves. Yet it proved futile with millions of American and Jewish youngsters who in the 1960s revolted against the "Establishment" and embraced a lifestyle of boundless frivolousness, uninhibited intimacy and uncontrolled acid trips.

In the view of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, large segments of American youth were consciously or subconsciously rejecting the pragmatic but essentially self-serving philosophy of their teachers and parents because it failed to address the depth of their souls. It spoke in the name of financial security, comfortable living and a respectable social status. It attempted to impress them with the glamour of a comfortable life style, a nice home, beautiful clothes and engaging entertainment.

These are certainly tempting to many of us. But what about the idealistic cords inherent in the soul of our youth? What about the passion for truth and the dedication emblematic of the human spirit? What about human beings' quest to touch infinity and live a life of true meaning? On this count the Establishment failed them miserably then, as it does so often now. Not because it demanded too much, but because it expected too little. It reduced souls to machines, spirits to robots and humans capable of moral greatness to self-centered creatures. It spoke not to the profoundest passions of our youngsters but rather to their most superficial instincts. It addressed not their idealistic and spiritual yearnings, only their bodies and physical cravings.

"We are not only animals," was the subconscious cry of a generation, "searching for self-gratification and self-aggrandizement. We are souls; we care not only about a capitalistic secure financial future, but for deep meaning and the echo of truth."

When the distinction between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai" is founded merely on materialistic, self-serving and pragmatic benefits rather than on the deepest passions and commitments of the human soul; when it speaks in the name of external satisfaction rather than with the voice of existential wholesomeness, the youthful spirit is likely to reject it and, in his or her rebelliousness, travel to the opposite extreme where the distinctions between Haman and Mordechai are blurred and all moral standards become hazy and meaningless.

When the goals of education and decent behavior are motivated by superficial human qualities they do not resonate with deeper, more sensitive and more spiritual kids. And in their attempt to touch their own depth, they reject all standards and boundaries.

SHATTERING THE MYTH

This is the meaning behind the Talmud's demand that on Purim we must lose our knowledge of the distinction between Haman's evil and Mordechai's goodness. There is no question that even on Purim we must know the difference between good and evil, between light and darkness, between love and hate, between a life committed to building the world and a life dedicated to destroying it. Never are we permitted to forget the difference between a lifestyle of morality and virtue vs. a lifestyle of immorality and selfishness.

What the Talmud is telling us, however, is that for the distinction between the two to resonate deeply and eternally, sometimes the superficial basis for the distinction between the two paths of life must first be destroyed. It is only after we know not the difference between Haman and Mordechai on a superficial level -- because we are not driven merely by our selfish instincts and motivations -- that we can discover the essential difference on a far truer and deeper level.

And this, the Rebbe concluded, was the true calling behind the rebelliousness of the youth. They were rejecting the superficial distinctions between "Haman" and "Mordechai," because these did not resonate with their deep, sensitive souls. Morality must speak in the name of truth and depth, not in the name of shallow narcissistic benefits. "Don't blame the youth, blame the educators," the Rebbe declared.

Now, he believed, we have the opportunity to teach the youth about the true and profound distinctions between the two lifestyles and philosophies, founded on the soul's awareness that man was created to become larger than human, and that in a life committed to goodness, kindness, morality and the service of G-d the soul encounters itself in its profoundest dreams, tragedies and hopes.

AND TODAY...

Fifty years have passed. Woodstock today is nostalgia. And even nostalgia today is not what it used to be like, as one old nostalgic man remarked.

Yet so many youth still find themselves in the muddy fields of unrestrained passion and behavior. Are they too not responding to the superficial messages coming from their teachers and parents?

*) The Lubavitcher Rebbe, in his usual style of avoiding direct references, did not mention Woodstock by name, only an entire generation of young people who rejected the Establishment.



The Shloshim of Harav Hagaon Rav Reuvein Scheiner Zatz"l

ואתם הדבקים בד' אלוקים חיים כולכם היום

There's a certain purity of heart, a melody that reveals itself in the still of night, when the "song of Torah" merges with the oneness of creation- bringing forth another day, more dreams, more passion-more hope.

The carriers of this purity, this softness of the soul are few but so very important to the continuity of our nation.

Horav Reuvein Scheiner Zatz"l was undisputedly a nefesh shefeilah, one who ascribed very little to "himself", but brought down so much light- and used this light to build up others in his inimitable fashion. His countenance was enough to inspire anyone who saw him to make a change- to learn more, to act lovingly towards others and to simply sense the gadlus haodm- the innate potential in each person this alone was enough for all of us to be thankful and treasure and his long and fruitful time here=

But there is more, so much more- the midos tovos that R Reuven, left over in yerusha to his children, this fine sense of serving the tzibbur, of caring for others like they were all close family members has made an indelible mark on our local Monsey community - sending worldwide ripples and ; actively overflowing onto every single part of our world.

R-' Reuven Scheiner's spiritual and physical heirs here at Ohr Hachaim- R' Lazar shlita and his broth-

er R' Moshe Shia Shlita have have made an indelible mark on the Monsey community!

If we are honest with ourselves, if we could see, even if for only a moment- what Hashem and the angels see- if we could only put into words what R' Moshe Shia's Torah and Avodah have accomplished and what R' Lazars chesed, support of Torah and personal yegias hatorah- have done to protect Klal Yisroel on an almost 24 hour basis keh- if we could only fathom the greatness of what Rav Reuvein Scheiner's grandson Harav Hagaon Rav Nachum Scheiner, Rosh HaKolel of Ohr Hachaim has achieved in the last few years together with his incredible Rabbinic colleagues Rabbi's ,Lankry, Coren and the entire staff! Together, they have piloted the ship of chesed, Torah and tefillah to new shores, heights reached by few but appreciated by many!

If we could see through the lenses of truth- inherent truth- we might finally get a glimpse of what living in the same generation as the patriarch of the Scheiner family-R Reuven Scheiner, has accomplished for us.

The daily diet of emunah and bitachon, torah and tefilla that R Reuvein Zatz'l has excel in- has influenced people in an outsized proportion- all this influence stems from one thing and one thing only- 'ואתם הדבקים בד'- אלוקים חיים כולכם היום the sense of closeness that R Reuven achieved, he gave over to our world- kulchem..

Living life each day with the credo of-

"Closeness to Hashem brings life to ourselves and those who know and love us."

Rav Reuven Scheiner Zatz"l taught us a all lesson for life, a lesson we must never forget-

Yehei Zichro Baruch

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

Good Shabbos!



פסוקי דזמרה, מצב של הכנה ועליה בהדרגה לעמידה לפני ה' ולהגיד לזה הוא מחויב בהכנה רבה להשתייך לפסוקי דזמרה, ולהיות שייך אפילו במעט ולהדמות למלאכים.

בברכות ו: "כרום זלות לבני אדם" דרשו רז"ל אלו דברים העומדים ברומם של עולם ובני אדם מזלזלים בהם, ופירש רש"י כגון תפילה שעולה למרום עכ"ל ומעולם תמהיתי מנלן שזהו קאי דווקא אתפילה אפשר תורה? אבל הפשט הוא שתורה כתיב היה כל מקום שאזכיר את שמי אבוא אליך וברכתך, הפשט שהעוסק בתורה ה' יתברך נמצא אצלו ממש וכן ה' יושב כנגדו גיטין ו: אבל תפילה כנ"ל מדברי החיי אדם שכל תפילה ותפילה עולה עוד ועוד ומתקן עוד ועוד, וזהו שכתב רש"י כגון תפילה שעולה למרום.

חז"ל דאגו לנו לדרך סלולה, דרך התפילה שבה האדם יכול לעלות מעלה מעלה, והעיקר בתפילה היא ההתחלה, כשמשים אל לבו ומתחיל לחשוב להיות שייך לתפילה להרגיש את הקרבה לד', בזה הוא כבר יוצא מהחשיכה וממילא כשמתחיל ומתפלל ומפעיל הלב, אז כבר באים כל הסגולות והטובות, ובמשך הזמן יתעלה בזה עוד ועוד לטוב לנו כל הימים.

שבת שלום

דוד יהודה פירסטון

פרשת עקב

"את ה' אלקיך תירא אתו תעבד ובו תדבק ובשמו תשב" (דברים י"א)

דעת הרמב"ם בענין מצות תפילה וז"ל: "מ"ע להתפלל בכל יום שנא' ועבדתם את ה' אלקיכם, מפי השמועה למדו שעבודה זו היא תפילה, שנא' ולעבדו בכל לבבכם, אמרו חכמים איזו היא עבודה שבלב זו תפילה, ואין מנין התפילות מן התורה, ואין משנה התפילה הזאת מן התורה, ואין לתפילה זמן קבוע מן התורה."

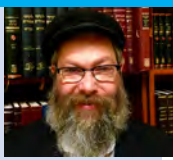
בספר חיי אדם (כלל כ') כ' התפילה נחלקת נגד עולם הזה ועולם הגלגלים ועולם המלאכים ועולם העליון, הברכות והקרבות הם כנגד עולם וכנגד האדם עצמו, ואחר כך פסוקי דזמרה הוא כנגד עולמות העליונים שמכין עצמו ועולה ממעלה למעלה עד לתפילת י"ח שהוא עומד לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה בכבודו.

בספר נתיבות שמואל מרחיב בענין זה, שהרי רואים בפסוקי דזמרה שכולו נכתב במטבע של שירה, והוא כנגד העולמות היותר גבוהים שהם שייכים לשירה, וכשאדם נמצא בתפילה הוא צריך להבין ולדעת את המשמעות של



ROUND SHEMURA MATZAH WITHOUT CUTTING CORNERS PAID BY COMMUNISTS UFARATZTAH

When the Soviet government nationalized the mill, they knew that the Jews would not buy flour without the supervision of a recognized Rabbi, so Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was asked to certify that the flour was kosher.



"I'll give the certification," Rabbi Levi Yitzchak told them, "but it will be your responsibility to fulfill the halachic requirements: to ensure that the wheat won't come into contact with water, to hire supervisors to ensure that the wheat and the flour are kosher for Passover, and to grant them complete freedom of action."

"These demands are completely unacceptable!" the officials responded in anger. "When water is mixed into the wheat while grinding, the volume of the wheat increases substantially. Grinding dry wheat will cause a loss of thousands of rubles! You can't think that we'll agree to religious demands that will cost the government thousands of rubles!"

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak replied firmly, "According to the Constitution and my own conscience, I won't be able to tell anyone that the flour you grind is kosher for Passover when it's not."

In the end, he traveled to Moscow, where he met with senior officials and explained his stance to them. Unbelievably, they agreed and told all the mill supervisors in the Ukraine to comply with Rabbi Schneersohn's kashrus supervisors, in spite of the high cost it would entail.

==== Chof Av 75th Yartzeit of the Rebbe's father, Hagaon Hamekubal Harav Reb Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn

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DR. SIMCHA

It's easy to SPOT the SIMCHA in this weeks PARSHA. The very first word VE'HAYA says it all. There's a famous CHAZAL that says that the word VE'HAYA means (a terminology of) SIMCHA ! The 2nd word of the PARSHA is AI'KEV translated as " because " ! Aha ! Look what happens " because of SIMCHA " Just take a good look at the PESUKIM that follow ! WOW ! Great week for getting " into " SIMCHA ! Get a hold of me in case I could be of help ! Avi Weinberg 845. 558. 4027

SUSPECT CHICKENS

The shochet in the midwest slaughtering facility was upset. He had just slaughtered two chickens and no one was sure if they were kosher or not. He decided to fly them to Chicago to ask the famous rabbi there.

Quickly packaging them into separate plastic bags with ice, he summoned a taxi and sped off to the airport. He succeeded in obtaining a standby ticket at a good price, but when he tried to board, the stewardess refused to allow him.

"What's the problem?" he asked.

"It's those chickens."

"But they are dead."

"I know," she shuddered.

"Are you worried about the smell? They are freshly slaughtered and I packed them immediately with ice. It won't be a problem on this short flight," he reassured her.

"Nevertheless, it is against the rules, sir. I cannot permit you on with them."

"What rule?"

"We only allow one carrion per passenger."

IF JEWS WERE WEATHER FORECASTERS AND WHY THEY ARE NOT

A cold front may or may not be coming in from the North tonight depending upon the will of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Tomorrow morning, early, before shacharit, there will be a slight drizzle, im yirtze Hashem. If you drive to Shul, beware of slippery conditions to prevent accidents, rachmanis letzlan. Then, later in the day, if Moshiach hasn't come yet, chas veshalom, there will be -- b'ezrat Hashem -- heavy rain. Keneina hara, pu pu pu, this will help fill the reservoirs, kein yirbu (and if you need my brother-in-law is offering a good deal on umbrellas). By Shabbat kodesh, haba aleinu letovah, the sun will emerge from its sheath and shine upon the inhabitants of the land, may they live and be well bis hundert un tzvantzic, in gezuntheit.

Okay, schoen, that's it for this evening. Enjoy your dinner, zeit gezunt und shtark - chazak ubaruch, and don't forget to count the Omer!

A LONG TRIP

A Rabbi waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Rabbi," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The rabbi chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

A JEWISH DISEASE

A little Jewish grandmother gets on the crowded bus and discovers that she doesn't have correct change for the fare.

The driver tries to be firm with her, but she places her hand delicately over her chest and murmurs, "If you know what I had, you'd be nicer to me." He caves in and lets her ride for free.

She tries to push her way down the crowded aisle, but people won't move over for her. She finally places her hand delicately over her chest and murmurs, "If you know what I had, you'd be nicer to me." The crowd parts like the Red Sea and lets her down the aisle.

She gets to the back of the bus where there are no seats and looks significantly at several people, none of whom take the hint and get up to offer her their seat.

COMBINE WINE WITH YOUR DINNER,

CALL THAT A "WINNER".

—David Asovski



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Once again she places her hand delicately over her chest and murmurs, "If you know what I had, you'd be nicer to me." Several people jump up and insist that she sit down and ride in comfort.

A woman who had been watching all this leaned over and said to her, "I know this is none of my business, but just what is it that you've got, anyway?"

The little Jewish grandmother smiled and said, "I've got chutzpah."

MOSQUITOES & TICKS?



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A JOB FOR A RABBI

A rabbi was having a difficult time supporting his family on his meager synagogue salary, so he took a part-time job at a Duracell factory. He had to stand on the production line and as the batteries went by, call out:

"I wish you long life".



RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

ROSH KOLLEL

IN HONOR OF THE SHLOSHIM OF MY GRANDFATHER ZT”L

, I would like to share some of what I spoke about at the shloshim, this past Tuesday.

First and foremost, Zeidy is remembered by all for his learning. Not only was he a masmid – learning every possible moment – but even more was his enjoyment he had in learning. His sheer delight when learning was contagious, and did not get any less, even as he grew old. This excitement for every word of torah is what propelled him to seek more and more torah. It is no surprise that he so enjoyed buying more and more sefarim, filling up shelves and shelves of his house with sefarim.

His thirst for new insights in torah – even in topics that he learned and knew well – was nothing less than amazing. His bikush ha’emes – search for the truth – is what made him ready and willing to hear divrei torah – and even go to shiurim – from people decades younger than him. Whenever I spoke to him in person or on the phone, he would show genuine interest in hearing about any topic that I was learning or teaching, listening as if he never heard

this before. I will never forget his sheer excitement – so clear to all – when he participated in a shiur that I gave, here in Ohr Chaim.

There are many who sing the song “Ki heim chayeunu,” but looking at Zeidy, turned these words of “Ki heim chayeunu” from a concept in theory, into something real. In him we could see what it means that Torah is our life. It is no wonder that he could be seen everywhere he went – walking in the street, waiting for a bus, or traveling to Lakewood or Monsey – holding a tape recorder and listening to shiurim. He was literally like a fish in water, because that was his source of life.

Someone who used to drive Zeidy, told me that he wouldn’t be surprised if he finished the entire Shas in his car, just using those minutes traveling for learning. And it is not a surprise that Zeidy pushed himself to go to yeshiva, even up until his last days. He may have had been excused, in his weakened state, but he wasn’t looking for excuses. Going to yeshiva was his life, his real place and his true enjoyment.

At the end of his life he may have been weak at times, but when a topic of torah was discussed he lit up and the transformation was amazing. Just a moment before he was so drained, but suddenly he became fresh and invigorated. I went not long ago to visit with my children, and he looked so weak; it was hard to even have a conversation. But then he turned to my son and asked him what he was learning in cheder, because that was his life; that is what he would schmooze about.



I would like to share an anecdote that illustrates his great excitement for every opportunity to learn, a story I heard from the person involved. My grandfather was in the mountains for a simcha, and wanted to look up a certain Gemara. One of the neighbors found the Gemara he needed. This neighbor gave him the Gemara and saw the great joy my grandfather displayed when he was given the opportunity to be able to study from the Gemara he needed. Some people get excited form a new car, but his joy was from a little more torah.

Every person learns torah – some more and some less – but Zeidy took learning torah to a whole new level. He didn’t learn because you have to learn. For Zeidy it was a labor of love. He learned because it was his true joy. This is a lesson that we can all learn from Zeidy, and in that he will continue to teach us. Hashem should help us continue in his footsteps and seek to learn with true joy and excitement.



Night Kolloel

SHAVING – A POSSIBLE ISSUR OF “LO YILBASH”

The Chofetz Chaim in his classic sefer, Sefer Mitzvos Hakatzar (Lo Saaseh 177) quotes the Chinuch that besides the issur of the actual shaving, one also transgresses the issur of “lo yilbash,” putting on female attire.

What about if someone uses cream or a trimmer – which does not involve the issur of shaving? Is there an issur of “lo yilbash” in this case? At first glance, the same issur should apply, since regardless of the method used, the person now looks like a female. This is in fact the opinion of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Kli Chemda, the Darkei Teshuva, and the Steipler. They are of the opinion that even if there are halachically valid methods of shaving, where one will not transgress the issur of shaving one’s beard, there is still an issur of “lo yilbash,” wearing clothing or dress of a woman.

However, the Chasam Sofer (Shu”t Chadashos 30) argues and writes that there is no issue. He explains that once men have started this practice, it is no longer something exclusive to the female population, and is not considered “female attire.”

The Igros Moshe (Y”D II:61) has a different rationale why there is no concern of “lo ilbash.” He posits that the only time there is an issur of “lo ilbash” is when one is copying a practice of the women. However, shaving is not something that women do; they just don’t have any beard, so it is not included in this issur.

Interestingly, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would tell his family that it is proper to grow a beard, since this is the appearance that Hashem wants you to have. In addition, he would point out that besides all of the other concerns about shaving, it is a good idea to be concerned with the opinion of the Tzemach Tzedek and the others who rule that there is an issur of “lo ilbash.” He therefore recommended not even using a trimmer.

SHAVING – A POSSIBLE ISSUR OF “CHUKOS HAGOI”

There is another interesting question which is relevant to shaving. It is possible that one will not transgress the issur of following the non-Jewish practices. The Chofetz Chaim, once again writes (Sefer Mitzvos Hakatzar Lo Saaseh 177) in the name of the Chinuch that one who shaves is also transgressing this issur.

The Minchas Chinuch (Mitzvah 251) writes that one transgresses this issur even when shaving in a permitted manner. The Shevet Halevi (V:98) takes issue with this ruling, pointing out that the Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch seem to be clear that using a trimmer is allowed, and there is no issur at all. He adds that this is quite logical, since the non-Jews don’t cut their beards in this manner. But if one uses a razor, besides the issur of shaving, there will be an additional issur of “chukos hagoi.”

The Chasam Sofer (ibid, O”C 159) argues and writes that there is no

issue, at all. Once Jewish men have started this practice, it is no longer something exclusive to non-Jews and is not a violation of “chukos hagoi.” He also points out that, historically speaking, this was not something ever done exclusively by the non-Jews. What happened was that many centuries earlier there was a non-Jewish king who did not have a beard and decreed that everyone should shave their beards. Everyone began to shave – the Jews and non-Jews alike – so it is not considered a non-Jewish practice.

In summary, there is a machlokes whether shaving also involves an issur of “lo ilbash” or “chukos hagoi.”

COMMUNITY KOLLEL NEWS:

Barbecue/Siyum

The Kolloel Boker made a barbecue on Sunday, in honor of the Siyum on Meseches Makos. Long-time member, R’ Eliyahu Kaufman hosted the siyum, in conjunction with R’ Moshe Felsenberg. The families of the Kolloel Boker members also joined in the festivities, enjoying the opportunity to celebrate in this great achievement. There were also a number of activities for the children to enjoy, such as horse rides and a moon walk.

Rabbi Jundoff spoke, pointing out the harmony and camaraderie that exists between all the members of the kollel. Our very own Yehuda Grodkow also spoke, pointing out that this is not just another kollel, but something real and sincere, where everyone is ensured that they get the best Chavrusa possible.

YESHIVAS BEIN HAZMANIM: Come join us, at Ohr Chaim’s Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim, which is already in full gear. As in the past, there is a wholesome, deluxe breakfast – including bagels, eggs, and hash



The collage features the Kollel Boker logo at the top, which includes the text "בית מדרש אור חיים" and "Kollel Boker Barbecue Summer 2019". Below the logo are several photographs showing a group of people gathered for a barbecue. One photo shows a man on a horse, and another shows a man in a white shirt standing near a table. Three smaller photos at the bottom show individuals: Yehuda Grodko, R' Eliyahu Kaufman, and R' Shlomo Yosef Yundoff.

browns, as well as lunch served afterward.

One participant – a guest from out of town, who has a summer home in Monsey – related that he was enjoyed immensely the exciting and invigorating learning as well as the pleasant atmosphere. And – in true Ohr Chaim style – we have a true kiddush Hashem, with people from all walks of life and all different color shirts and hats joining together, in such beautiful harmony.

Wishing you a Wonderful Shabbos,

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



The advertisement features a background image of a park with trees and a bench. At the top left, it says "Labor Day". The main text reads "Yarchei Kallah – September 2 Shuir Topic". Below this is a large question mark icon and the text "Please Email your suggestion: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com". At the bottom right is the Kollel Boker logo with the text "בית מדרש אור חיים" and "For more information: chichaim18@gmail.com".

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Why is L'Chaim said over drinking alcohol and not orange juice or any other beverage? Some older Sefardic Siddurim say the word is actually לחיי

The Medrash Tanchuma (Siman 2) on Pikudei says we learn this from when a case of life or death was presented to the Sanhedrin.

After completion of the cross examination, the judges would confer. Once they returned with their verdict they would be asked: "סברי מרן What do you think?" If the person was innocent they would answer L'Chaim.

Each week we say a minimum of 2x Kiddush and 1x Havdala. Before the Bracha on the wine we say סברי מרן. This is when people chime in L'Chaim. We want the words "To Life" to flow from the lips with

ease each time a person hears סברי מרן. We never want to proclaim a person to death. Therefore, each time we hear סברי מרן we say L'Chaim, so that those who are on the Sanhedrin, and deciding a matter of life or death, should also be quick to say L'Chaim.

The Nitei Gavriel (Nesuin 2 - 80:21:38) brings a few sources for L'Chaim. He says that wine brought

a curse into the world when Noach cursed Canaan. Therefore, we say L'Chaim when we drink wine to metaphorically negate that curse. He mentions the Baal Shem Tov who says to only say L'Chaim on wine and not whisky or non-grape derived alcohol.

Rabbeinu Meshulom says that he can think of no better time to say L'Chaim than on the Yimei Hadin, the days of judgment. The days that Hashem decrees Life or Death.

Let us say L'Chaim this Rosh Hashana on delicious wine and contemplate what it means to say L'Chaim. For those visiting Uman, Wine Boutique - יין הונגרי is available for all your L'Chaim needs.

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