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PARASHOT SHEMOT

Shemos 1:1 "And these are the children of Israel who were coming to Egypt". Rashi states," Although Hashem counted them during their lives, by name, He recounts them in their death, to make their endearment known-that they are compared to stars, which he brings out and in by number and by name etc."

What is the purpose of bringing out the stars by number and name? Generally and name describes purpose or an assignment of duty, and a number expresses that something is finite and not infinite. But what is the message here? What is the job of the stars, and for all humanly purposes the stars are infinite?

Bereshis (15:5) states in regards to Avraham Avinu "He brought him outside and said, now look down at the heavens and count the stars if you are able to count them". Clearly the intention of stars is that they are infinite. Also numbers are infinite because you can always add a zero at the end or a one at the beginning. It's the act of counting that is limited to having what to count.

On a deeper level, the concept of bringing out the stars by number is that although they are inherently beyond number to us, Hashem can bring them out by number. This is the perfect metaphor to describe the essence of the Jewish people in the eyes of Hashem. We are in a quasi-state of nature; on one hand we are within nature; being human and having all the physical limitations. On the other hand we are above nature that we can survive; a sheep among 70 wolves. In every generation

there is an effort to destroy us and Hashem saves us from our enemies. The stars have a number that Hashem counts them every day, but they can't be counted by humans. Just as the stars are untouchable by humans so too Am Yisrael, when we do the will of Hashem, we are untouchable by the world.

The stars have names which define their purpose. The spiritual energy that comes to the world passes through the constellations. The constellations are a combination of stars that direct the energy to earth with a definitive objective to enhance humanity. Each Jew has the same objective; to enhance the world with his and her unique abilities. We were chosen to be a light (as a star) onto the world and this is the meaning of us being likened to stars.

Just as the stars have a spe-

cific job that they have been programed to do, we have also a mission that we need accomplish. Hashem therefore watches over us and is involved in our lives to enable us to accomplish this mission. This is the concept of Hasgacha partis, Hashem's personal interaction in our daily lives is a source of love and endearment to us.

In order to achieve success in our mission, we need to attain the manner of the stars. When the two big luminaries were at odds, Hashem made the moon smaller, and the moon was upset. Hashem then introduced the stars to create peace and harmony between the sun and the moon. When we become one that generates peace and harmony, we will be real stars, and our mission possible.

Shabbat Shalom

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi
EPHRAYIM YUROWIT

SHABBOS ZMANIM

EARLY MINYAN FRIDAY 12:30 & 2:30

CANDLE LIGHTING		4:17 ^{PM}
MINCHA TENT		4:27 ^{PM}
SHKIYA		4:35 ^{PM}
MINCHA 20 FORSHAY		4:20 ^{PM}
SHACHRIS VASIKIN- DAF YOMI	SHIUR	6:51 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS		8:00 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS YOUTH MINYAN 18 1	•	9:15 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS		9:15 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS 20 FORSHAY BAIS CH	IABAD	9:45 ^{AM}
MINCHA		1:45 ^{PM}
PIRCHEI		2:00 ^{PM}
DAF YOMI		3:30 ^{PM}
MINCHA SHALOSH SEUDOS		4:15 ^{PM}
SHKIYA		4:36 ^{PM}
MARRIV	5:16 ^{PM} & 5:21 ^{PM} &	6:36 ^{PM}

WEEKDAY ZMANIM









RABBI COREN

TRAVELS TO INDIA AND SEFER SHMOS

On my latest voyage to places across the globe, I have arrived in India and I have become intrigued by the Jewish history of this country. The Jewish communities in India can be mainly divided into three areas of the country—west, east and south, somewhat like a triangle.

In Bombay, there is one main sect of Jews referred to as the Bnai Yisrael. In the early part of the 20th century there were many responses—teshuvos-- written regarding the authenticity of theses Jews. The question was triggered by the seemingly lack of oral traditions. However, these Jews were definitively accepted in 1947 when many of them made Aliyah to Israel.

In the east we have the Baghdadian Jews who originated in Iraq and came mainly for business purposes.

Lastly, the most authentic Jews lived and a few still live in an area called Kochi (also known as Cochin and in Hebrew י,)

The Jews from here have an amazing source of Jewish tradition including an established mission of what we call in the Torah Eved Knani which includes the provision of copies of written bills of freedom that technically transform the slave into a Jew.

There is a lot to speak about regarding the history of India but what intrigues me the most is the name of India which in loshon hakodesh is החדו and the different deities like the cow and the half elephant/ half human statues that can be found all over the country.

When I inquired as to the significance of these figures I uncovered some very interesting halachic questions.

Can one pray in a room that has an elephant statue? Is a cow really a deity or just a holy object? Some of the natives told me that there is no doubt but that a cow is a worshiped symbol-- people pray to it and it's considered a great deed to feed a cow. Additionally, one is not allowed to slaughter and eat any of the animal. Regarding the question of prayer, see Darchai Teshuva 141 which discusses this question and advises that

the best idea when encountering such an entity is to cover it with a towel.

Another question that hit me is the special blessing that one recites when seeing avoda zara(See 224 Orach Chaim) and it's very significant to see the words of the Shulchan Aruch in the next paragraph with regard to which blessing to say when such avodah zara is removed. The blessing itself is very revealing. The idea is that we bless Hashem for being patient with those people who go against his will. Since the objective of the Jewish mission is to inspire the world to acknowledge Hashem, avodah zara weakens this recognition and detaches the person from the infinite to the finite.

My friend Reb Dovid pointed out that the Hebrew word hodu can be linked to the concept of hodaa-- recognition.

On a simpler level, the word means to give thanks which is also a form of yedia—awareness. (How interesting that the name of the current Prime Minister of India is "Modi.")

It's also not by coincidence that so many Jews and people of all religions travel to India to "find themselves" which really means to find Hashem or what they erroneously perceive as some other higher entity.

Now let's speak about this week's parsha—Parsha Shmot. In the parsha there is a strange pasuk that I think exposes in a way

one of the main purposes of Bnei Yisrael going into Mitztrayim and especially coming out. These are the words: Vayeda Elokim--and Hashem knew. Much is revealed in these words. In fact the Arizal says that when we entered Mitzrayim we lost our daas—awareness of Hashem. The main objective of leaving Mitzrayim was to retrieve this daas.

To be continued next week as we grow in our hodaa of Hashem one day at a time.

פרשת שמות

בענין הנאה ותענוג בתורה ומצות

יש מושג של "מעשה" והמובן שלו שנעשה עשיה והיינו פעולה, כגון במצות יש מה שנקרא ברכת המצות שצריכים מעשה ומברכים קודם עשייתם, וכן יש דין להיות



חייב מלקות צריך שיהיה לאו שיש בו מעשה וזה לומדים מהלאו "שלא תחסום שור בדישו" וממילא איפו שאין עשיה הלאו לא מחייבת מלקות, והנה יש איוסורים שהם אך ורק במצד ההנאה והרחיב בזה מרנא הגרב"ד ליבוביץ בברכת שמואל קידושין סי' כ' בענין שליח לדבר עבירה בענין חלבים ועריות שחייב שכן נהנה שזהו יסוד האיסור, וכן בדין מתעסק שהוא פטור בכל התורה כולה לגבי חלבים ועריות איתא בסנהדרין סב: וכריתות יט: ועוד, שהמתעסק בחלבים ועריות חייב שכן נהנה ורש"י מבאר שזה הוי חשיב ככוונה, והיינו שההנאה גופא מתייחס לאדם כאילו נעשה בכוונה, והרחיב בספר אתוון דאוריתא להגר' יוסף ענגל זצוק"ל עוד על זה הדרך.

והנה תוסי׳ בבא קמא (לב.)ד״ה איהו קעביד מעשה: וזה לשונו ׳ומיהו לענין חטאת ולענין מלקות חייבת דרחמנא אחשביה להנאה כמעשה׳ עכ״ל והיינו הא דכתיב ׳ונכרתו הנפשות העושות מקרב עמם׳ והא היא לא עשתה מעשה ואיך מחייבי חטאת ומלקות, ווהו שחידש תוסי׳ שהנאה הוי כמעשה, וע״פ דברי רש״י סנהדרין (שם) יש מקום להבין קצת בזה הענין מה שעצם ההנאה למעשה יחשב לה וצ״ע עוד בהבנה של הל נקודה.

"ויאמר אליהן מלך מצרים מדוע עשיתן את הדבר הזה ותחיין את הילדים" והעירו המפרשים מהו לשון 'עשיתן' שעצם זה שהחיו את הילדים זה העדר עשיה שלא הרגו את הילדים אז מהו הלשון עשיה שאמר פרעה למיילדות?

וכתב בזה השם משמואל מאביו בעל האגלי טל על פי ההקדמה שהבאנו מתוסי' בב"ק לב. שהנאה נחשב למעשה, ממילא ר"ל שהצדיקות הללו עצם זה שהחיו את הילדים ולא רצחום כזממת פרעה ההצלה הזאת נתן להם שמחה והנאה כל כך גדולה עד שפניהם צהלו מרגשת הקדושה, כמו"ש רש"י במשלי עה"פ "לב שמח ייטב גהה" כשהאדם שמח בחלקו פניו מאירין, וזהו שטען פרעה שראה אותן כל כך שמחות שפניהם האיר על דבר שלא צייתו לו שההנאה נחשב להם כמעשה.

והן ענו לו "לא כנשים המצריות העבריות כי חיות הנה" וכתב של פי דרכו שהפירוש חיות היינו כנ"ל ששמחתם נובע מעצם זה שהם רוחניים ומופקעים מהחומר משא"כ הנכריות וממילא קל להם להוליד עייש.

"ושמרו בני ישראל לעשות את השבת" והרי שבת היא שביתה ולא לעשית מלאכה ומהו הלשון לעשות, אלא כתב השם משמואל דברים מתוקים וזה לשונו לפי שצריך האדם להיות נהנה משמירת שבת ופניו מצהילים וע"כ חשובה כמעשה וממילא כתב דבר פלאי שזהו היסוד של שמירת שבת לדורותם שהיכא שנהנה ממשהו נעשה דבוק בו כמו שמביא האגלי טל בהקדמה מרש"י סנהדרין נח. ואם אינו נהנה אינו נדבק, וממילא מצות שבת היא לעשות היינו שנהנה משמירת שבת, וממילא נעשה דבוק לשבת וממילא נשאר לו לדורות.

היוצא מזה לימוד לכל איש שהוא נהנה מהלימוד התורה ומהתפילה ומעשית המצות לעומת זה נעשה דבוק בהן ונשאר ממנו להבא, זהו יסוד אדיר לחינוך הילדים ממה שנהנהים ביהדות נעשה דבוק לו ונשרש לדורות.

> שבת שלום ומבורך דוד יהודה פיירסטון



On Speaking Yiddish

"And they said, "The G-d of the Ivrim has come to us..." (5:3)

The Midrash (Vayikra 32:5) brings these words as proof that the Jewish people did not change their language during the Egyptian exile; they continued to speak Hebrew, as did their ancestor Avraham, who was called "Avraham the Ivri"

(Bereishis 14:13). Indeed, the fact that they did not change their language was one of the three reasons they were deemed deserving of redemption (they did wear Egyptian clothing nor did they take Egyptian names).

The Jewish people spoke Hebrew only until the beginning of the Second Temple era; from then on, they spoke Aramaic (Shulchan Aruch Haray, Talmud Torah 1:1). During the Galus Bavel, when Jews lived in a land full of idolatry, the Sages decided that it would be disrespectful to the Holy Tongue to continue speaking it in such a defiled environment (Chasam Sofer on Orach Chaim 85). One may ask why they spoke the holy lounge in Egypt when we find that Moshe had to leave the city to daven as it was filled with idols) Additionally, they realized that the people were no longer on a high enough level to use such a holy tongue as their everyday language, for sinful speech is much worse when spoken in Hebrew than when spoken in another language (Vayoel Moshe 3:8). The Aramaic they used was not the same as that spoken by the gentiles; it was a special Jewish dialect, written with Hebrew letters. Thus they continued to uphold the principle of keeping a separate language. Later, Yiddish fulfilled the same function for European Jews.

This is illustrated by Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin. In Jerusalem there lived a tzaddik who sat all day wearing tallis and tefillin and learning Torah, and he adopted the practice of speaking only in the Holy Tongue. Once he came to Reb Yehoshua Leib to ask a question. He began to say his question in the Holy Tongue, when Reb Yehoshua Leib interrupted him with a rebuke: "Get out of my house! For all the days of our exile, Yiddish will be spoken!" Then he added, "The Jews in Germany, fearing that if they spoke the gentile language they would assimilate, chose a dialect of German spoken by peasants and made it their national language, to serve as a barrier between them and the gentiles. This is how our Yiddish was born. If this language was the barrier to assimilation, it is itself the Holy Tongue!" (Mara D'ara Yisroel, v. 2 p. 95)

It is obvious that the Hebrew spoken in Israel is not the true Lashon Hakodesh. This should be obvious from the time of Yosef who knew the language while Paraoh did not. It would be strange to find a language spoken with ease by a country full of people and yet Paraoh who knew every other know language was unable to speak.



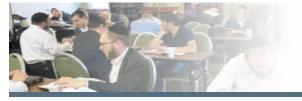
SCREAM!

I normally do not write political columns. In light of current events; both in the parsha and in our community, we will discuss this sensitive topic. The medrash tells us that three people were part of the discussion when Pharaoh wanted to enslave the Jews. They were Bilaam, Yisro and Iyov. Bilaam encouraged the decree. Yisro protested the decree and had to flee to Midyan. Iyov was quiet. The Gemara says they each received payment/punishment mida kneged mida. Bilaam, who encouraged, ended up being killed by the Jews. Yisro, who protested, had children who occupied the makom haMikdash until the Bais HaMikdash was built. Iyov, who stayed quiet, received "yesurim" (tremendous pain.) It seems to be easily understandable when we look at what happened to Bilaam and Yisro. It is harder to understand why Iyov was punished with yesurim when all he did was stay quiet!

I saw an explanation in a sefer that brings down different vertlach beshem the Brisker Roshei Yeshiva. When a person is in pain, he screams from his yesurim. Although his screams don't really help him, it is a natural reaction for a person to scream out when he is in pain. Iyov had a very good cheshbon for staying quiet. He felt that if he would protest he might lose his advisory role and he wouldn't be able to help in the future. Iyov also figured that why bother protesting when it was a fait accompli. Hashem showed Iyov that He gave him yesurim that caused him to cry out in pain despite the fact that the screaming did not bring relief. Hashem proved to him that if a person is truly in pain and truly feels other people in pain, you should not be quiet, but protest and scream out in pain even if it may not help the pain.

Pharaoh had a brilliant technique to cause Klal Yisroel to become enslaved. He spoke to them "B'feh rach-" in a soft manner and even showed that he himself was ready to work. He showed them that his concern was only for the benefit of Klal Yisroel. The Brisker Rov said it is important that we learn from this for the future. Even if reshaim tell us that they are doing something for our benefit, we need to stay away from them and show that they are our enemies when it comes to our spiritual welfare. We must be careful not to fall into the trap of accepting their overtures of kindness because the result may end up with our being enslaved.

We are currently dealing with the issue of the NYS education commissioner who is allegedly saying that she is setting these new educational guidelines for the benefit of our children. We must scream in protest and know that this is a terrible decree. If something hurts, we scream. We cannot stay silent at this crucial time. The Education Department needs to hear from the entire Jewish community that they should not be instituting these new guidelines.





RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

ROSH KOLLEL

MILAH ON SHABBOS — WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE KNIFE? — PART II

We previously discussed that there are four basic opinions in the poskim as to the halachic status of the knife after the milah:

- $1) \hspace{1cm} \text{The Rama rules that the knife} \\ \text{is not muktza}.$
- 2) The Magen Avraham (O"C 331:5) maintains that the knife is muktzah, but one can put it away in its place, without putting it down.
- 3) The Taz agrees that it is muktzah and cannot be carried around, but he allows putting it away in a safe place, because otherwise the mohel will not want to perform the milah on Shabbos.
- 4) The Maharil and the Gra go to the furthest extreme and consider it a bona fide muktza and do not allow moving the knife at all. Consequently, they assert that one would have to drop the knife as soon as the milah is done. The Gra explains that he takes issue with all of the three above-mentioned heteirim. He argues on the Rama and maintains that the knife is muktza. He explains that the knife is, indeed, muktzah from the very beginning of Shabbos, albeit with a special heter to peform the milah.

He also states that there is no allowance for continuing to move a muktzah item, just because it was already in his hand; this is only a heter for a kli she milachto l'issur. As the Gra explains, a kli she milachto l'issur is not mukztah per se; one is, indeed, allowed to move a kli she milachto l'issur for certain things (l'tzorech gufo u'mikomo, e.g., a pen can be used to follow along the reading of the Torah). It is just not allowed to be moved for saving the object (l'tzorech atzmo), because that is considered moving it for a non-Shabbos purpose. However, the milah knife is inherently muktzah and there is no leeway for moving real bona fide muktzah.

The Gra also takes issue with the Taz, who allows moving the knife so that the mohel will not refrain from performing the milah. He posits that this allowance – to permit something that should be forbidden, in order that people will not refrain from the performance of a mitzvah – is limited to the case mentioned in the Gemara, which is for allowing the preparation of certain foods to enhance ones Simchas Yom Tov. Otherwise we do not allow something

forbidden, just because he may not do what he is supposed to do. Therefore, says the Gra, there is absolutely no heter to move the knife and one must consequently drop it like a hot potato, as soon as the milah is finished.

In conclusion, there are four opinions:

- 1) The Rama it is not muktza.
- $2) \hspace{1cm} The \ Gra-it \ is \ fully \ muktza.$
- 3) Magen Avraham it is muktza, but can be moved if still in his hand.
- 4) The Taz it is muktza, but can be moved to a safe place.

BEFORE THE MILAH

The above discussion is all in regards to the moving of the knife, once the milah was completed. What about before the milah? There is a custom that people have to place the knife under the pillow of the baby before the bris, as a segulah. Is one allowed to move the knife for that purpose? A similar question is discussed as to whether one can follow the custom that the father hands the knife to the mohel (quoted by the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch). This is done to show appointment of the mohel as a shaliach. Does this warrant moving the knife on Shabbos?

The Shevet Halevi rules that one is allowed to place the knife under the pillow of the baby before the bris. He maintains that this is not only true according to the Rama who rules that the knife is not muktza, but even according to the others, it is considered a part of the mitzvah of milah and is allowed. The same reasoning should apply to the father handing the knife to the mohel. Indeed, the sefer Otzar Habris writes, in the name of Rav Elyashiv, that it is allowed. However, the sefer Koreis Habris quotes others that do not allow moving the knife for this reason.

IN CONCLUSION

Halachically speaking, the poskim rule that one should try to put away the knife, but if one put it down, the Eliyahu Raba and the Chachmas Adam rule that one can rely on the Rama and the Taz and put away the knife. There is also another reason to be lenient because it is a danger to leave a knife around and this would be similar to cleaning up the broken pieces of glass, which although they are muktzah one may remove them, since they are a danger.

On a practical level, many mohalim use a disposable knife, which can be discarded and, additionally – since it is not expensive – is not muktza. Others keep it in a bag together with other things that are more important, rendering the bag a *bosis l'heter u'lisur*, thereby allowing the moving of the bag. The Minchas Elazar – who was a mohel – had the custom to hang the knife as part of a chain, making it into a garment, which is not muktzah.

Some rule that one can place the knife under the pillow of the baby before the bris and the father can hand the knife to the mohel.





RABBI YY JACOBSON

WHY DO WE FIGHT SO MUCH?

Moses Faced Two Enemies: One He Could Handle:

the Other Eluded Him

THE WAR IS OVER?

A man in Germany felt that he needed to confess, so he went to his priest. "Forgive me Father, for I have sinned. During World War Two, I hid a Jew in my attic."

"Well," answered the priest, "that's not a sin."

"But I made him agree to pay me \$50 for every week he stayed."

"I admit that wasn't good, but you did it for a good cause."

"Oh, thank you, Father; that eases my mind. I have one more question..."

"What is that, my son?"

"Do I have to tell him the war is over?"

TWO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE

In this week's portion (Shemos) the Hebrew Bible introduces us to Moses, through two incidents (Exodus, Chapter 2):

"It happened in those days that Moses grew up and he went out to his brethren and observed their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brethren. He turned this way and that way and he saw that there was no man, so he struck down the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."

THE BIBLE CONTINUES:

"He went out the next day, and behold! Two Hebrew men were fighting. He said to the wicked one, 'Why would you strike your fellow'? He replied: 'Who appointed you as a prince and leader over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' Moses was frightened."

As a result, he escapes from Egypt. Only later would he return to the country and liberate his people from slavery.

It is no coincidence that these are the only two vignettes the Bible shares with us concerning Moses' youth in Egypt, and that the Bible emphasizes that these two episodes occurred during two consecutive days. It seems that these two episodes somehow encapsulate Moses' life-mission and destiny; they seem to capture his particular story. How so?

TWO CONDITIONS OF EXILE

Exile for the Jewish people consists of two dynamics – oppression from without and erosion from within. The former might be more painful, but the latter is more lethal. Hence, the first and emblematic Jewish leader, Moses, as he is growing into his position, is immediately confronted with these two problems that would define the Jewish condition in exile.

On the first and most basic level, Jewish exile – from Egypt till today – has been defined by the "Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man." Persecution, abuse, oppression, expulsion, random torture and murders, even genocide, have been the fate of the Jewish people from Pharaoh to Hitler. In almost every generation the Jew needed to reckon with the tragedy of baseless Jewish hatred that never ceased to claim innocent lives. The Jew turns this way and that way and sees "that there is no man" who cares enough. The world—The UN—will remain silent.

Yet with all of its crude and incomprehensible brutality, Moses finds a solution to this crisis. "He struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand." Moses taught us, that there are times when we have no choice but to take up arms and strike the enemy, in order to protect innocent lives. The use of moral violence must always be the last resort, but when all other attempts fail, righteous might is the only response to immoral violence.

THE SECOND DAY

On the second day, after Moses rescued his fellow Jew from the external enemy, he is confronted with a new challenge: A Jew fighting a Jew. One would think that the solution to this problem would be easier than the former one. After all, this is only a quarrel between Jews themselves. Yet, astoundingly, in this incident Moses fails. His attempt to create reconciliation gets thrown back at him. In a typical Jewish response, Moses is told: "Who appointed you as a prince and leader over us?" Who do you think you are to tell me how to behave?

Anti-Semitism is dangerous, very dangerous, and we need much determination and courage to combat it wherever and whenever it rears its ugly head. Yet since the enemy is clearly defined, we have no problem identifying the target and eliminating it, either through peaceful methods or through justified conflict. However, discord within the Jewish people – the strife and mistrust between communities as well

as the animosity within communities and families – is a silent disease that eats up at our core, and does not allow us to experience liberation. At first it does not seem so destructive; its negative potency shows up only in time, especially in moment of crisis when we need each other most but the trust has been eroded.

The Jewish people has often been threatened by hostile civilizations, from ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century, and by fundamentalist Islam in our own times. But the most fateful injuries have been those the Jewish people has inflicted on itself: the division of the kingdom in the days of the First Temple, which brought about the eventual defeat of both halves and the loss of ten of the twelve tribes; the internecine rivalry in the last days of the Second Temple, which brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the longest exile in Jewish indeed, in human—history.

There have been only three periods of Jewish political sovereignty in four thousand years. Two ended in and because of internal dissension. The third age of sovereignty began in 1948, and already Israeli society is dangerously fragmented. The democratic process alone does not guarantee the existence of the body politic; it needs also some shared culture and identity—a shared sense of purpose and destiny. Israel at war is defined by its enemies. Israel in pursuit of peace is less easily defined and may erode from within.

When Moses, more than three millennia ago, observed the Jew fighting the Jew, he grew frightened. Moses knew that as long as unity prevailed among his people, no force from without could crush them. But the moment they became fragmented within, their future is dim.

Today, in 2012, we are still in exile, and we suffer from both problems. There are the people who wish to strike us down, and there is conflict within our own ranks. And, just as it was with Moses, it seems at times that the former challenge is easier to address than the latter. It is easier to gain a consensus concerning Ahmadinejad and Hamas than it is to create peace in a family and community. Will we at least this time around have the courage to dull our egos, open our hearts and embrace each of our brothers and sisters with unconditional love?

RABBI BENTZION SNEH

Parshas Shemos

Coming Back from the Abyss

The hardest decision a Yeshiva must make is whether to ask a student to leave because of their behavior. If they fall, coming back will be an uphill battle. Shidduchim will suffer. Worse than that- emotionally the child can spiral downward engaging in behavior that can have repercussions for years, if not decades. But keeping such a student in the school presents its own set of challenges, perhaps they will influence their peers....

These questions are known as dinei nefashos- life or death decisions.

It all starts with taking responsibility for our actions. In a generation where we do everything for our children- teaching responsibility has become a lost art.

As with everything else that must be learnt, this lesson can only be taught with love and sincerity- with the child sensing that you really care about them. But the will to change must come from inside the child. We can only help them fan this spark into a flame that will warm their life.

At a recent wedding, a distinguished grandfather rose

to say a few words to those attending the simcha. He directed his talk to the Chosson and Kallah. "I was born in the post holocaust generation, right here in America.

It was a time when most Jews were giving up their religious obligations in a quest for "success". I was an only child to my fervently observant parents. Good jobs were few and far between. When one came up in a far flung city in the midwest, I grabbed it. After discussing the challenges to Yiddishkeit this would pose, my parents consented to the move, provided I would make every effort to keep the traditions.

It was then that my father sat me down with a plea that shook the foundations of my very being. He began...

"Though it may not seem that way to you now, I was not a model student in Yeshiva. In fact I made trouble at every turn. My learning was non-existent, but my pranks got more creative with each passing year. One Rosh Hashanah, I actually hid a goat in a closet that stored taleisim for the bochrim who were Kohanim- when they opened the door for taleisim to duchen with, the old goat got loose- creating havoc everywhere.

I was finished. The Rosh Yeshiva demanded my departure. I pleaded for one more chance that I knew I did not deserve. I asked for the Dayan in the town to hear my case. Pledging to change my ways, I begged the Rosh Yeshiva- even if I have sinned- what

wrong have my future generations done that they must suffer as well! If asked to leave - I will most probably drop many levels in observance- and will not merit marrying a wife with Yiras Shamayim. In this trajectory, my children and grandchildren have little chance of remaining frum.

The Dayan heard my case and ruled in my favor- I then changed- becoming a top student and a Talmid Chacham.

Turning towards me, my father's tearful eyes, met mine. "My son - we cannot let my heartfelt promise to the Rosh Yeshiva become hollow words. You are our only child- when you move out west- please stay true to our faith."

"Finding a Sabbath observant wife was extremely difficult at that time, the grandfather continued telling the astonished crowd at the chasuna- but with my father's plea ringing in my soul I waited and finally married your grandmother at the age of 40! My joy, now in seeing you- my sweet grandchildren, continue in the ways of our forefathers knows no bounds. May you be blessed with many Torah true generations!"

How many yeshivas today will keep a student who is less than perfect in his behavior? How many schools are there that will discipline with unconditional love, sincerely caring about the challenges their students face daily- no matter how extreme?

A POWERFUL STORY OF A FATHER'S LOVE

A remarkable true story that every parent must read Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

"רודקתי עליכם מים טהורים ויטהרתם. - I will shower pure water upon you and you will become cleansed ..." (Yechezkel 36:25)

Rav Schwadron explains the concept of this verse with the following illustration. A father wants to present his son with a special gift, but the son runs away. Disappointed, the father tosses the gift after him.

Like a wayward child who does not appreciate the kindness his father is offering him, says Rav Schwadron, we all -- at one time or another -- turn away from our Father in Heaven and do not welcome Hashem's intention to purify us. What does Hashem do? He showers us with the purifying water. The establishment of that connection with Hashem results in —we ourselves set in motion the purification process and seek to return to Hashem.

A fellow Jew once called me to consult on a pressing parenting issue. The man begged me to make time for him at my earliest opportunity, because the matter was very urgent and needed immediate attention. I agreed to meet with him first thing in the morning.

The man who came into my office the next morning was deeply crushed and heartbroken. He sighed and tearfully began to tell his story.

"I was always very dedicated to my children's upbringing," he said. "I learned with them, paid for the best tutors, did everything possible to ensure that they would grow up to be G-d Fearing Jews. But my 17 year old son ..." he groaned, and put his face into his hands.

"You know, - with children, you need a lot of mazel. My son is completely off the path of the Torah. Shabbos means nothing to him. Yom Tov means nothing to him. I don't even know where or with whom he spends his day."

The man went on.

"He comes home late at night, and sleeps till noon. He doesn't talk to us or to his sisters and brothers. I don't think he does anything Jewish at all. My wife and I have no more joy in life," he said. "Even our family occasions are marred - how can we rejoice when our son has nothing to do with Judaism or with us?"

"You know," he continued, "I always wondered why Yaakov Avinu mourned Yosef for 22 years. Why couldn't he accept the situation, and go on with life? Now I don't wonder anymore. I can't make peace with the situation. My own son -- my own flesh and blood, whom I raised with such love -- is going against everything I live for."

Tears streaming down his face, the man told me that his Rabbi had advised him to speak to me.

"Rav Goldwasser," he cried. "What should I do? What can I tell him? What can I tell my wife and other children?"

I spent a long time with him, offering encouragement and guidance, and mapping out a plan he could follow. I suggested positive steps he could take, things he could say, things he could do. I also told him what not to say and do. He asked me halachic questions, and listened carefully to everything I said.

Finally, the man arose, thanked me, and turned to go. He was at the door when he turned back.

"Can I ask the Ray one more question?" he asked.

"Of course," I said.

"I've been preparing the negel vasser (hand-washing) in my house for years," he said. "Every night, I fill the basins and put them at the foot of every bed, and every morning, I spill out the used water. It's my special mitzvah, my special zechus. But lately, when I collect my son's negel vasser, I see that the water isn't used. He isn't washing negel vasser anymore. I feel like a fool preparing it every night -- it's just a waste of time. Should I continue preparing the water, or can I just skip it?"

The question hit me for a moment, and then I said, "If you're asking me, I would continue to fill the negel vasser every evening."

I could see that my answer surprised him. He seemed taken aback as he had not expected that answer.

Three weeks later, the man called to let me know what was going on. Things were pretty much the same, he said, and he was getting discouraged. I gave him encouragement, and some new suggestions.

Just before he hung up, he asked, "About the negel vasser -do you think that I still need to bring it to his bed? I feel like
such a fool every day." Again, I urged him to continue.

Three weeks later, he called me again. This time, he could barely speak. He seemed to be crying; he was literally choking over his words.

"I listened to you, Rav Goldwasser," he said. "I listened to you! I filled my son's negel vasser every day, and emptied it, even though he wasn't using it." The man paused.

"This morning, I went to his room to collect the basin, and he was wearing his tefillin and praying!"

Overcome with emotion, he paused to catch his breath. Then he said, "I ran to him, and hugged and kissed him. It was the first time in months! I couldn't bring myself to hug him while he was 'gone.' And then I asked him, 'Tell me, my dear child, what made you put on tefillin today?'

"And my son said, 'I'll tell you, Dad. It was the negel vasser. You knew I wasn't using it and, still, you refilled it every day. I saw that you never lost your faith in me. You made me feel that I shouldn't lose my faith in Hashem, either."

Every day of the year, Hashem showers each and every one of us with purifying waters, even those who have become alienated or estranged. It is up to us to take advantage of this exceptional kindness and to come forward to purify ourselves. V'tihartem!

"Learn Torah!" the Blind Boy Cried: "All I Want is To Learn Torah"

Naamah Green

This story was told over firsthand from the mother of the boy. The boy's name was Betzalel Zolti who grew up to be Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem.

Once upon a time, an epidemic of eye disease overtook Jerusalem. Most of the people who contracted this ailment became blind since there was no medication against it. Betzalel was a 10 year old at the time. His father died when he was very young and his mother raised him alone with much dedication. Even at a young age it was apparent that Betzalel was very bright. In addition his love for Torah was boundless. Indeed Betzalel grew and grew in Torah despite his young age. Those who knew him predicted great things for him; his mother had high expectations of him and felt it was her mission to raise Betzalel to be a Torah giant of the next generation.

Betzalel's mother always poured her heart out in prayer that her son be spared from the eye epidemic that raged in Jerusalem at the time. But one day Betzalel came home with complaining: "Mommy, My eyes are hurting me!" She hoped that the dreaded disease would spare him but the next day he came back from school with swollen eyes. They went to the doctor that confirmed the worst; Betzalel contracted the disease and would probably become blind from it.

And that's what happened. The gifted 10 year old boy that everyone hoped would grow to greatness went blind. Betzalel's mother was inconsolable all her dreams and hopes for her son disappeared. How could he learn the Torah he loves so much? She herself taught him just a bit...

In her deep pain she decided to do what all mothers before her did; she prepared to go pray at Rachel's tomb. She took Betzalel with her and since he was blind she put him in a baby buggy to go without stumbling. It was a two hour trek by foot from the old city of Jerusalem to Rachel's Tomb. When they

arrived she started sobbing and begged G-d to have pity on her son and return his vision for all he wants is to learn the Holy Torah! Betzalel joined his mother praying and he cried out to G-d from the depths of his heart to light up his eyes with Torah. Betzalel cried: "G-d I want to ask from you a request and I want our mother Rachel to hear this request. I am ready to give up my vision and never see my loving mother again. I'm prepared to give up ever seeing my friends again, I'm prepared never to see the food I eat again and never see the whole world you created ever again. But one thing I am not prepared to do- I want to see your Holy Torah."

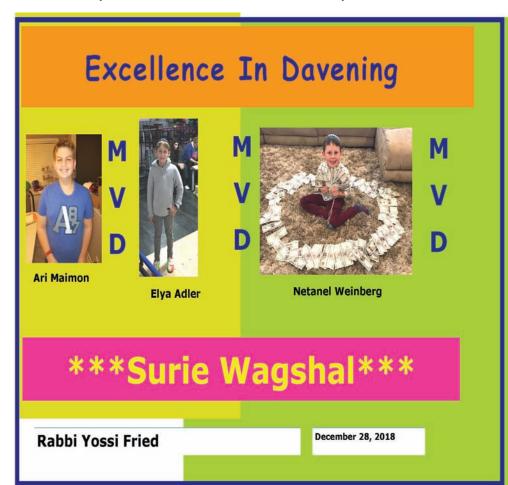
"I'm just a small boy that didn't learn enough Torah. Your Holy Torah is vast and I want to continue to learn it; in order to do that I need my vision. I need You to return my eyesight to me!" Betzalel cried bitterly to G-d with heartrending cries. His tears streamed in a small rivulet to the tomb of Rachel and Betzalel fell asleep crying. His mother pushed him back home as he slept.

The next morning Betzalel woke up and asked his mother to let him go back to school. But his mother asked in wonderment, "but you can't see?" He answered, Mommy I see fine now and I want to run back to school and learn Torah!

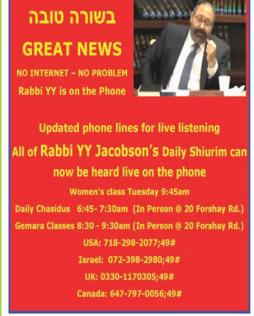
Betzalel's mother understood that a great miracle took place. Their prayers were answered. But just to make sure she wanted him to go to the doctor to check his eyes to make sure the illness doesn't return.

Betzalel adamantly refused, he wanted to go straight to school to learn Torah. "I got a gift from G-d, I can see again. I don't know how long this will last; therefore I must use every spare minute to learn the Holy Torah for who knows how long I'll be able to see!" Betzalel went to school and refused to go to the doctor for an eye checkup. Betzalel grew up to be Rabbi Betzalel a Torah giant and Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. He was famous for his clarity depth and diligence in Torah. When people would praise him to his mother she would reply: 'You have no idea how many tears were shed to get him to where he is today.

Story courtesy of Dirshu







When You Are Raised As A Prince, YOU ACT LIKE A PRINCE

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Pharaoh's daughter rescued baby Moshe from the Nile River. She brought him home to the palace and raised him as an adopted son. On a superficial level, it is a great story. Pharaoh wants to get rid of all the Jewish baby boys, in order to preclude the possibility of a savior being born to them. He orders all Jewish baby boys thrown into the Nile. In the irony of ironies, Pharaoh's own daughter saves the future savior of Israel from the Nile and brings him into Pharaoh's own palace to raise and nurture him.

Of course, there is more to the sequence of events than just the fact that it "makes a great story." There is a fascinating Ibn Ezra that explains the motivation of hashgacha [Divine Providence] in causing events to turn out this way. The Ibn Ezra speculates that the reason the hashgacha brought Moshe to the palace was to create a future leader of Israel who would be raised in an atmosphere of royalty and power, rather than in an environment of slavery and submission.

In the great controversy of nature versus nurture, the Ibn Ezra lends weight to the point of view that gives great import to nurture in determining what a person eventually becomes. If Moshe Rabbeinu had been raised as a slave, thinking like a slave and acting submissively like a slave, it would have been much more difficult for him to become the leader of two million people.

The Ibn Ezra cites the fact that Moshe killed the Egyptian for an act of injustice that the latter perpetrated. A slave, who is always downtrodden and spat upon, would not have the forcefulness and the gumption to protest injustice and to personally punish the perpetrator. There is no way we could imagine someone with a slave's mentality doing such a thing. On the other hand, someone brought up in the house of the king, believing he is a prince, automatically possesses a certain aura and confidence that allows him to intervene in situations that people with less self-esteem would certainly avoid.

The Ibn Ezra similarly notes Moshe's intervention on behalf of Yisro's daughters during the incident with the Shepherds at the well of Midyan. Moshe was a stranger who had just arrived in town. Who asked him to intervene? Who asked him to get involved? The answer is that someone who grew up in a house of authority and leadership has the courage and the assertiveness to take charge and administer justice wherever justice needs to be administered. These leadership abilities were much more easily nurtured in the palace of the king than in a house of slaves.

The Mir Masgiach, Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, comments on this Ibn Ezra that we learn from here the power of nurture. Two genetically identical twins will grow up to be very different individuals if they are exposed to different educations and different atmospheres in their formative years. This underlies the power of chinuch [education], the power of environment, and the power of a nurturing home.

We look around today and unfortunately see the many ills that plague our society. What is happening to society? Why is this happening? Part of the answer is that there is no real home life for a large number of children growing up in our society. It is not the least bit surprising and it does not require a great social scientist to see the cause and effect relationship between how one is raised and how one turns out.

The reverse is true as well. When one

takes an individual and showers him with love and with confidence, giving him a sense of self and a sense of presence, chances are high that the individual will grow up to demonstrate far greater leadership capabilities than an equally talented individual who was not given the benefit of such an enlightened upbringing.

The ironic sequence of events at the beginning of Sefer Shmos provided the leadership training necessary for the savior who would eventually take Israel out of Egypt.



YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT



To a parent who asked whether, in order to increase his children's appetite, it is appropriate to serve them foods that he himself would not eat due to halachik concerns, the Rebbe explained that since the food a person consumes becomes his flesh and blood which is united with his soul, the nature of the food can have an impact on the person's character. As such, when it comes to children who

are in the process of developing, it is important that the food they eat is pure, and as it is not a matter of medical necessity, it is worth finding other methods to get children to eat and gain strength.

====My Encounter\Igros Kodesh vol. 18 page 110

Teves 24 Yom Hilula of the Alter Rebbe – Baal Hatanya vehaShulchan Aruch haRav.

DR. SIMCHA



Purim time!!

KING Achashveiros makes a lavish party with "you name it he had it ". BUT!! Isn't it interesting that he didn't have music there?!

CHAZAL say, he was afraid that the music would bring out the SIMCHA of

the YIDDEN & he'd never have control over them !!

He learned it from his great great etc. GRANDFATHER namely PAR'OH the KING of MITZRAYIM.

Let's turn the LIGHT on & SPOT the SIMCHA that

PAR'OH was afraid of. See in our PARSHA Perek 1/posuk 10. "Hahvah Nischakma Lo Pen Yirbeh VE'HAYA

CHAZAL say the word VE'HAYA means / refers to SIMCHA!! Aha! PAR'OH said "LETS GET SMART RE: the YIDDEN, lest they have too much SIMCHA!! Have a deLIGHT-FULL SHABBOS.

Let me help you turn YOUR light on !! Avi Weinberg 845 558 4027

R Gottlieb Speaking Dec 25 Legal Holiday Shuir





pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.



The past present and future walk in to the bar it was tense

Forget about the past, it's already happened.

Forget about the future, you can't control what's coming.

Forget about the present, I didn't get you one.

On a Chol Hamoed day an Asian boy in the park asked his mother: "Why are all Jewish kids called Kim Du"?

Mujibar was trying to get a job in India.

The Personnel Manager said, 'Mujibar,
you have passed all the tests, except one.
Unless you pass it, you cannot qualify for

this job.'

Mujibar said, 'I am ready.'

The manager said, 'Make a sentence using the words Yellow, Pink and Green .'

Mujibar thought for a few minutes and said, 'Mister Manager, I am ready'

The manager said, 'Go ahead.'

Mujibar said, 'The telephone goes green, green, and I pink it up, and say, 'Yellow', this is Mujibar.'

Mujibar now works at a call center.

No doubt you have spoken to him. I know I have.

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a quinea

It was a packed flight from Tel Aviv. The doors were about to close when suddenly a Chassidic man in row 47 stood up. He was seated next to a woman and there was no way that he would spend the next 11 hours like that! The entire plane was asked to switch seats with him - and not one person agreed. The stewardess told him it's time to either sit back down- or get off the plane. As he was walking off the plane, a man with a small knitted yarmulke stood up and said "Take my seat. We can switch". Stunned, the Chassid asked "How come before you were unwilling and now you changed your mind"? The man responded: I know what's going to happen! You get off the plane, it crashes killing everyone on board, and you'll be telling the world the Hashgacha prattis story about how your life was saved for not sitting next to a woman. Well let me tell you something- If this plane goes down-you're coming down with us!!!



MAARIS AYIN - BY AN ISSUR DIRABANAN PART II

I would like to continue to discuss the topic of maaris ayin in regards to milchigs and fleishigs. We previously discussed the machlokes if there is a concern of maaris ayin applies, when it appears that someone is trangressing an issur d'rabanan? The Maharshal and the Shach rule that the concern of maaris ayin does, in fact, apply even in regards to an issur dirabanan. On the other hand, the Rama and the Taz rule that it does not.

The Pischei Teshuva (Y"D 87:10) writes that it is possible that even the Rama agrees in theory with the Maharshal – that the concern of maaris ayin applies even in regards to an issur dirabanan - and he only meant to allow eating chicken with almond milk it in private, where no one sees and there is no issue of maaris ayin. Then, he adds an even greater chidush and writes that if there are only family members present, that can also be included in this allowance, since they are aware that one is using parve milk. The Pri Megadim (S"D s"k 6) also alludes to this and writes that by big meals – which are open to the public – one should try to put almonds. It is clear from his words that he holds that there is only an issue of maaris ayin in a public setting, and not where there are only family members who are aware that one is using parve milk.

WHERE SHOULD THE HEKER BE?

When using almond milk, and one wishes to put almonds with the milk, as an indication of the parve status, where should the almonds be placed?

In the case of the blood, Rav Akiva Eiger points to the expression of the Gemara. The Gemara writes that one is allowed to consume the blood of fish, if there are scales in the blood. This would seem to imply that it has to be actually in the blood and not just next to it.

In addition, he points out that it may only apply if the scales were already in the blood and it will not suffice to merely put the scales into the blood afterwards. He proves this from the fact that the Gemara assumes that human blood has no option of making a heker. Why didn't the Gemara

suggest that human blood can also be consumed, by simply adding scales, and one will think that it is fish blood? We see, says Rav Akiva Eiger, that it will not suffice to merely put the scales into the blood afterwards.

However, Rav Akiva Eiger points out that from the words of the Rama – that allows placing the almonds on the side – we see that he holds that a heker on the side is also good. The Chochmas Adam (40:3) also seems to concur with Rav Akiva Eiger and writes that the almonds should be placed inside the milk.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shulchan Shlomo 252:5) rules that in regards to the case of the almond milk, one can rely on the Rama — and place the almonds on the side.

OTHER FORMS OF HEKER

What about putting a sign that the milk is parve, or using a bottle that says on it parve, is that sufficient indication to eliminate the concern of maaris ayin?

If the milk is served in a bottle, the Maharsham (Daas Torah 87:3) allows it. But in regards to hanging a sign, the poskim rule that it is not sufficient. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shulchan Shlom 252:5) proves this, because if a sign would solve the concern, there would never be an issue of maaris ayin, since a sign will always alleviate any concern. He therefore rules that one cannot have a timer to water the fields on Shabbos, and even if one puts a sign that it is done with a timer, it is still not allowed.

The Badei Hashulchan also proves this from the Taz, who says that — in the case of chicken and almond milk —one can make the dish and not put almonds, if almonds are not available. Why didn't he just require a sign? Obviously that doesn't help.

SUMMARY

There is a machlokes if one needs to make a heker when it appears that he is trangressing an issur d'rabanan, with most poskim requiring it. There is a question exactly how to make the heker — if it needs to be in the food or if on the side is also good. There are other ways to have a

heker, and there are numerous cases that don't need a heker.

COMMUNITY KOLLEL NEWS:

I gave a shiur this past Wednesday on the topic of waiting between meat and milk. And will be featured in a future article.

The Night Kollel has recently started a weekly shiur in the holy sefer "Zera Shimshon." This sefer was written by Rav Shimshon Chaim Nachmeni of Modena zy"a, and studying this sefer is known to be mesugal for yeshuos and brachos. The shiur is given by: Rav Simcha Bunim Berger and takes place every Thursday night, 8:15 – 9:00, 18 Main Bais Medrash. There is a Maariv Minyan available both before and after: 8:00 & 9:00.

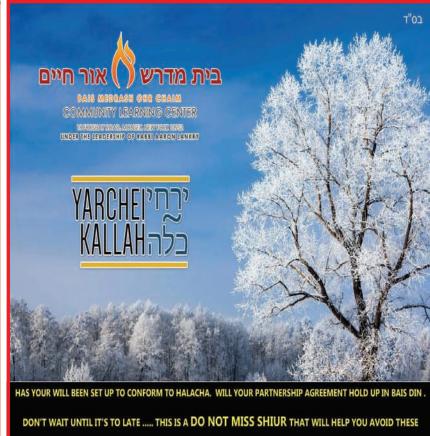
Wishing You a Wonderful Shabbos,

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



R Berger Giving the Zera Shimshon Shuir Thursday Night at 18 Forshays Night Kollel





AND OTHER COMMON PITFALLS.

Tuesday, Jan 1st, '19 יום ג' פ' וארא

Rabbi Avraham Kahan

Ray of Kehilas New City Dayan, Vaad Hadin V'horaah

"How to set up your assets to comply with Halacha"

Jeffry Feinstein

Financial Advisor: Lenox Advisors

"Asset Management: What you need to know about Life Insurance and Charitable giving"

Followed by Q&A Session

Light Refreshments will be served 18 Forshay, Main Bais Medrash





















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