

SHABBOS SHEKOLIM SHABBOS MEVORCHIM CHODESH ADAR



OUR BELOVED RABBI
SOKAVA REBBE

BET Journal

BRINGING
"E Pluribus Unum"
Latin for "Out of
Many, One" - Achdus

EVERYONE TOGETHER



SNOW TUBING THIS
MOTZEI SHABBOS
SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS

ROSH CHODESH ADAR
THURSDAY 2/15 & FRIDAY 2/16
MOLED ADAR : THURSDAY
AFTERNOON 3:09 (3 CHALAKIM) PM

REBBETZIN LANKRY
ROSH CHODESH GET TOGETHER
THURSDAY FEB. 15
SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS

NEW DAF YOMI FOR THE
SHABBOS DAF EVERY FRIDAY
AFTER 12:40 MINCHA
BY RABBI COREN

SHABBOS MORNING MINYAN
Starting at 8:00 AM
18 Forshay Rd. - Main Shul
נוסח אשכנז



AVOS UBANIM
MOTZEI SHABBOS AT 7:00



SHIURIM FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITY

**RABBI YY JACOBSON
WEEKLY CLASS
SHABBOS**

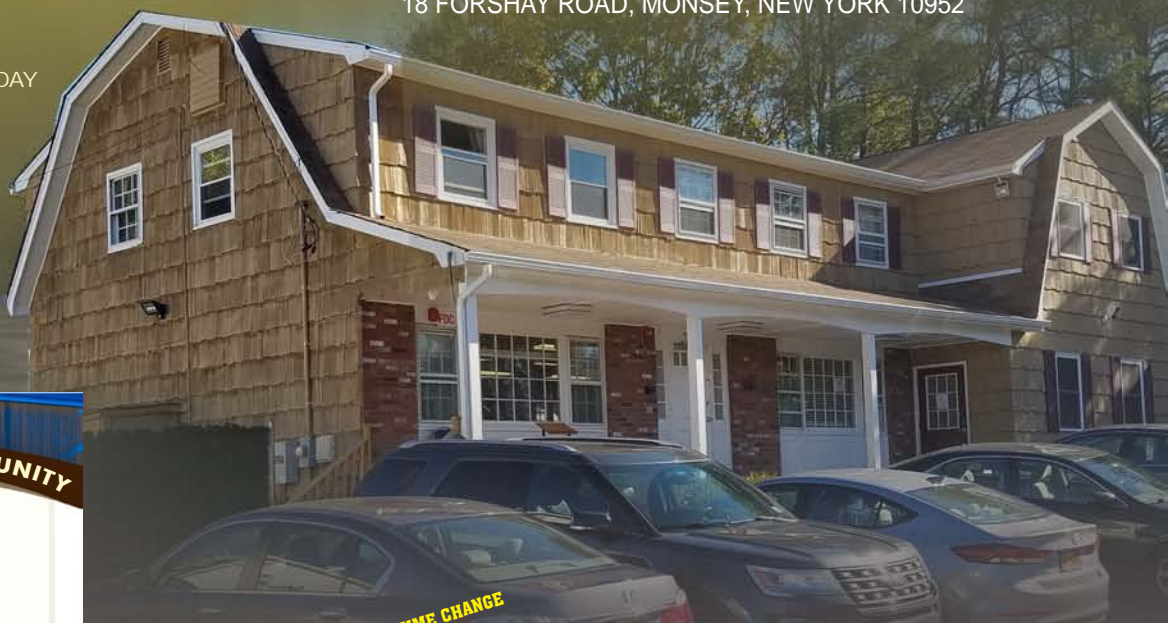
Separate Seating
NO CLASSES THIS SHABBOS

**TUESDAY
NO CLASSES**



בית מדרש אור חיים BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF RABBI AARON LANKRY
18 FORSHAY ROAD, MONSEY, NEW YORK 10952



YOM KIPPUR
KOTTON
Wednesday February 14
1:30 PM 18 Forshay Upstairs

TIME CHANGE

SHOVIVIM SHIUR FROM
RABBI ROTTENBERG
This Friday (Mishpatim)
time changed to 5:45 AM

WE NOW HAVE
MINYANIM FOR MINCHA
From 12:30 - 4:00
at our shull



OUR BELOVED RABBI
SOKAVA REBBE

Dear Kehilla,

BET Parashat Mispatim

People love telling stories about great men especially if it's about a family member of theirs. I am no different. I was fortunate enough to have had a grandfather who was a tzaddik and a real Oved Hashem. He lived most of his life in Morocco as a very successful businessman, and he was the Parnas of the local community. He did business with the government and was familiar with many officials. One day a high ranking government official entered his warehouse along with his family. The officer was noticeably agitated and wore a nasty scowl on his face. He roughly challenged my grandfather asking, "what animal are the Jewish people similar to?" My grandfather answered, "we are like sheep and Hashem is our shepherd." The officer shook his fists and shrieked. "No, you Jews are all wolves and you eat off other people! I am going now to the king to tell him to throw all of the Jews out of the land" My grandfather relates how he put his hand on the mezuzah and started to cry. "Ribono shel olam, this man has very evil intentions against Am Yisrael. Chazal promises us that when all the gates of Heaven are closed the heavenly gates of tears always remain opened. My grandfather continued to pour out his heart, tears streaming down his face he beseeched Hashem to stop the hateful official from carrying out his evil plans. The officer arrogantly pulled out of the parking lot of my grandfather's warehouse and a semi-trailer collided head on, crushing him and his family in an instant. "You see," my grandfather concluded, "never underestimate the power of tears. Be careful and never make your wife cry because if she would daven with tears you caused, you can be in real trouble. Well I tried to listen, I hope.


"(מלאךך ודמעה לא תאחר בכור בניך תתן לי)" "Do not delay your fullness-offering or your priestly heave-offering: the first born of your sons shall you present to me" The Torah explains that when a person receives beracha from Hashem he should not hold back the proper ma'aser or teruma to express his gratitude for

Hashem's kindness. The same applies to a person's cattle or sheep; he has a mitzvah of offering the first born to show his appreciation. Additionally, when one has a first born son he must redeem him through a Kohen.

The Shla Hakadosh translates this pasuk differently. He explains the word מלאךך means a person's will, ודמעה your tears. This now means if a person really wants something that it will bring them to tears in beseeching Hashem -לא תאחר Hashem will heed their words without delay.

We see from the ending of this pasuk it is a segula to have children. The pasuk ends בכור בניך תתן לי "your firstborn sons you will present to Me". This means if one davens with emotion and tears Hashem will answer his tefillah with an opportunity to fulfil the mitzvah of pidyon haben.

May Hashem hear all of our tefilot.



**SIMCHAS HACHAIM :
OUR MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION.**

ה' says that the תוכחה in כלילות came because we were not במשמחה.

A loving G-D would never allow such consequences for not doing something that's extremely difficult.

This shows us that שמחת החיים is something we all inherently have. It's just about discovering it!

Have a happy & delightful Shabbos.

Avi Weinberg
Contact us at
Happinessbyaviw@gmail.com

SHUL SCHEDULE



SHABBOS ZMANIM

EARLY MINCHA ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON at 12:40 & 1:30

SHABBOS NIGHT / DAY	Candle lighting	5:05pm	SHABBOS DAY / Evening	Shachris Bais Chabad	10:00am - 20 Forshay
	Mincha Tent	5:15pm		Mincha	1:45pm
	Shkiya	5:23pm		Pirchei - Bnos	2:00
	Mincha Bais Chabad 20 Forshay	5:33pm		Daf Yomi	4:20pm
	Shachris Vasikin	6:25am - DAF YOMI SHIUR		Mincha Shalosh Seudos	5:05pm
	Shachris	8:00am - Kiddush		Shkiya	5:24pm
	Shachris	9:15am - 18 Forshay	Maariv	6:04 & 6:09pm	

SHACHRIS
20 Minutes before Neitz
S 6:35 | M 6:34 | T 6:33 | W 6:32 | T 6:29 | F 6:29

MINCHA & MAARIV
12 Minutes Before Pelag
S 4:08 | M 4:09 | T 4:10 | W 4:11 | T 4:11

12 Minutes Before Shkia
S 5:13 | M 5:14 | T 5:16 | W 5:17 | T 5:18

FEB.11 – FEB. 16
NEITZ IS 6:56 am - 6:49 am
PELAG IS 4:20 pm - 4:23 pm
SHKIA IS 5:25 pm - 5:31 pm

סוף זמן קריאת שמע
MAGEN AVRAHAM
8:57 AM – 8:53 AM
GRA- BAAL HATANYA
9:33 AM – 9:30 AM

WEEKDAY MINYANIM חורף תשע"ח WINTER '17-18

שחרית	מערב
כותיקין	פולג AT 18↓
6:15AM	18 Forshay ↑ before Neitz
	18 Forshay ↓ Mon-Fri
7:00	18↓
7:30	20↑
8:00	18↓
8:30	18↑
9:00	18↓
9:30	18↑
10:00	18↓
10:30	18↑
11:00	18↓
מנחה	מעריב
12:30PM	18↓
1:00PM	18↓
1:30PM	18↓
2:00PM	18↓
2:30PM	18↓
3:00PM	18↓
מנחה ומעריב	
12 MIN. BEFORE פולג AT	18↓
12 MIN. BEFORE שקיעה AT	18↓
20 MIN. AFTER שקיעה AT	18↓
50 MIN. AFTER שקיעה AT	18↓
	Repeat Krias Shma after nightfall
	10 MIN. AFTER שקיעה AT 18↑
	30 MIN. AFTER שקיעה AT 18↓
	60 MIN. AFTER שקיעה AT 18↓
	7:30 18↓
	8:00 18↓
	8:30 18↑
	9:00 18↑
	9:30 18↑
	9:45 18↓
	10:00 18↓
	10:30 18↓
	11:00 18↓
	11:30 18↓
	12:45AM 18↓

↑ Upstairs
↓ Main Floor

FOR MORE INFO: www.18forshay.com // ohrchaim18@gmail.com



Parshas Mishpatim: A Lesson From the Field

This past week I spent a few days discussing the act of watching the annual Super bowl game. The overall rating for football had fallen considerably of late due to the refusal of some players to stand for the national anthem. This defiance is based on possible legitimate concerns about discrimination against blacks in America but the rejection reflects a lack of gratitude towards a country that has done so much for all groups of American citizens. This lack of Hakaras Hatov is not the only thing that demands introspection by all Jews watching the game. For many, the game itself has become almost a religion and has taken on the same importance as Thanksgiving Day or other holidays. I believe that this obsession demands to be explored honestly by all of us.

Providence arranged that the daf yomi right before Super bowl Sunday discussed specifically whether one should go to stadiums and circuses and the like. The discussion as to all the halachic concerns regarding this question is a lengthy one but the Gemara makes two things very clear: there is a concern of moshav leitzim which means a group of scoffers and another concern of praising non-Jews for their talents and beauty.

Before we explore this fascinating topic my intention is not to judge people for watching the game. I spent plenty of time doing so in my past and understand very well the fun and excitement it offers. I even enjoyed finding ways to make it a spiritual and kosher event. Each person must know where he/she is holding in life and figure out what he/she can do to show Hashem that Super bowl Sunday isn't a day to forget Hashem. To keep Him in mind even during the game, I suggested that one should try to not watch the entire game and to avoid watching the commercials or to pull out Mishnayos or Tehilim during this time.

The goal here is to understand what it means to be a laitz- a scoffer and why Chazal and Dovid Hamelech are so concerned with hanging out with leitzim.

Rabbinu Yona explains that a leitiz means someone who takes important concepts, puffs away their importance and creates a sense of silliness. Jews are taught that life is precious and every moment in life is precious. A person can earn his Olam Haba in an hour. Chazal mentions several times where Rebbe cried out, "Yesh koneh olamo Beshaa Achas"--a man buys his Olam Haba in one hour. The Chafetz Chaim points out that learning one word equals 613 mitvos and he calculated that a person speaks about 200 words a minute. Imagine how many mitzvos one can accumulate during one commercial! Advertisements during the game cost about 5 million dollars each but to learn during those few moments is worth much more.

Rav Miller z"l was asked about watching the game and as you can guess his reaction: "It's an absolute meshugeneh act for a human being to be involved in." Now for non-Jews it might be good, it gives them something to do. But for a Jew to spend his time watching something that is devoid of any significance in addition to the harm done to the actual players on the field, the whole idea that these men are glorified and paid millions of dollars is nothing less than dumbfounding.

I must emphasize that playing sports rather than just watching them is a whole different ballgame. We would be much better off spending time with our kids and friends playing a football game or better yet a basketball game while fulfilling the mitzvah of taking care of our health than watching others engage in the activity. Exercise is known to not only keep us healthy and active it helps the body to produce endorphins which make us happier and many people today would be much better parents and spouses if they paid more attention to their health.

There is another concern that needs to be addressed: the prohibition of le sechonem which Chazal say means don't praise the non-Jew. Despite the fact that there is a major dispute whether this applies only to idol worshippers or to every non-Jew, what is central here is what the Torah is conveying to us. The Chinuch explains that when you offer praise or give something of importance you will eventually be drawn to it. This is the danger and pitfall of the Superbowl and many similar seemingly harmless acts that we incorporate into our lives.

Let's connect this to the Parsha and a Yerushalmi and Brachos. The Parsha begins with the laws of slavery. If you look at the mefarshim like the Ramban and others you will see that the laws were given to make us better people. The Yerushalmi on the Mishna that speaks about someone who says, 'Hashem, your compassion on us should be like the compassion you have on birds,' explains that this is problematic because the point of mitzvos wasn't to tell us about Hashem being compassionate but that we should learn how to be compassionate ourselves. We should learn to be better people, to understand what is important in life and what we should hold exalted and precious.



BY SHALOM BER MUNITZ

NECHAMAH IN ACTION

After the Rebbetzin's histalkus, 22 Shevat 1988, thousands of chassidim and admirers sought to bring the Rebbe nechama. One woman, the widow of a famous New York Times journalist, penned the following:

"Most revered Rebbe, please accept my deepest sympathy. I wish I knew what to say that would help ease your pain and grief. What words of comfort are there for me to give to you, who has comforted so many of us?"

The Rebbe wrote his answer on the side of her letter, to be communicated to her:

"Your deeds in continuing a Yiddishe life, despite being widowed, is itself a source of encouragement and support for me."



AVOS UBANIM SPONORS

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This Week Parshas Mishpatim is Being Sponsored For A

Refuah Shelaimah

אסתר לאה בת עטא



**Youth Minyan-
Avos Ubonim
Snow Tubing Trip**

WHEN: FEBRUARY 10TH -MOTZEI SHABBOS
PARSHAS MISHPATIM

BUS LEAVING FROM: 18 FORSHAY ROAD @
7:45 "SHARP" (RIGHT AFTER AVOS UBANIM)

BUS RETURNING: 10:30 SHARP AT THE SHUL
(PARENTS PLEASE BE ON TIME FOR PICKUP)

COST FOR TRIP:
\$12.00 DOLLARS per person
\$ 20.00 per Family
\$ 100.00 MITZVAH DOLLARS

Please private message Rabbi Fried
ASAP [9179020744](tel:9179020744) for RSVP.

YOUTH MINYAN PARTICIPANTS
WILL HAVE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
TO THE MOUNTAIN FOR THE
BEGINNING PART OF THE EVENT



New schedule in Rabbi Coren's Office

- 5:30 to 6:00 Minhag Yisroel Torah
- 6:25 to 7:25 Daf Yomi
- 7:30 to 8:00 Shachris
- 8:00 to 8:20 Tamid
- 8:20 to 9:00 Megilah
- 9:00 to 10:00 Daf Yomi
- 10:00 to 10:30 Mishna Berura
- 10:30 to 11:00 Pirush Tefilah



Lying for the sake of Tzedaka

By: Rabbi Berach Steinfeld

The posuk in Shmos, Perek Chof gimmel, Posuk zayin says, "Midvar Sheker Tirchok." The Gemara in Meseches Ksubos, daf yud zayin, amud alef teaches us that when the posuk is telling us to distance ourselves from sheker, it telling us that it is forbidden to lie. There is a machlokes Rishonim about what the guidelines are in this prohibition. The Yereim in siman resh lamed heh says that the Torah only forbade a lie that will cause monetary damage to your friend. A lie that is irrelevant as far as monetary damage goes is not forbidden. Tosfos in Ksubos, daf yud zayin, amud alef s.v. yeshabchenu argues with this ruling and says that any kind of lie is forbidden, even if it does not cause monetary damage. The discussion in the gemara takes place when discussing whether one may praise a kallah in front of her husband even if he does not think she deserves the praise. Bais Hillel allows this, because at the end of the day the kallah is really beloved in the eyes of her chosson, so in his eyes the speaker is not lying. However, from this gemara we see that because the husband deep down thinks the words are true, it is permissible; however, if not for that fact it would be forbidden to lie. This is so even when there is no monetary loss. The Chazon Ish and Igros Moshe come to the same conclusion that it is forbidden to lie even in the case where it would not cause monetary damage.

Chazal learn in the Gemara in Yevamos, daf mem gimmel, amud alef that one is allowed to lie for the sake of peace. Some are of the opinion that it would be a mitzvah to lie for the sake of peace.

The Gemara in Brachos, daf mem gimmel, amud bais is mashma according to some opinions that one is allowed to lie in order to save one from embarrassment. The Gemara brings down that an Amora paskened in accordance with a Tana based on the Amora's actions. The halacha was really not like the Tana. The Amora paskened that way in order to save himself from embarrassment. The Gra and Bach have a different version of this account. Some are of the opinion that it would be permissible to lie in the above case not because of avoiding embarrassment, but in order to keep the peace.

The question arises whether lying in order to avoid embarrassment is permissible if it would not fall under the category of keeping peace? For instance, a person exaggerates a story for tzedaka or exaggerates the number of students in a school one is collecting for. Is lying permissible in such a case? It would seem from the Gemara in Bava Metziya, daf chof gimmel, amud alef that one may even lie for the sake of middos tovos since the Gemara says that a talmid chochom may lie for three things and these three things are not necessary for the sake of peace. Tosfos on that Gemara wants to say that two of the three things are for the sake of peace so we would not be able to say that one may lie even for the sake of midos tovos or for the sake of a mitzvah. The Maharsha concludes that according to Tosfos one would only be able to lie for the sake of shalom (peace.) The Drisha on the other hand in Choshen Mishpat, siman resh samech bais, os chof alef writes that according to Tosfos one would be able to lie for the sake of any mitzvah since the mitzvos were given as darkei shalom.

Based on what was written above it would seem that a gabbai tzedaka would be allowed to exaggerate in order to collect more funds. The Yerushalmi at the end of Meseches Peah recounts that the Amoraim would collect money and say it was for them despite the fact that they had no need for the money and they would give it out for tzedaka. This was done even though the people who contributed gave more money thinking the money was going to a talmid chochom. It would seem that a person who is collecting on behalf of others may lie and say that he is collecting for himself in order to save others from embarrassment.

The Shevet Halevi does not like this svara. He said that it would be forbidden to mislead the donor into thinking he is supporting a talmid chochom when he really isn't, since he would not give the same amount if he knew otherwise. Reb Yisroel Fischer in Titen Emes L'Yaakov, Perek Heh, amud ayin gimmel says that it would be permitted based on the above Yerushalmi. Reb Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach in Minchas Shlomo says he does not see a hetter for exaggerating in a story connected to tzedaka, but he says that he is sure that those who do this practice probably found a hetter to do so.

It is clear that we must be very careful what comes out of our mouths. May we keep the peace!

Parshas Mishpatim & Shekalim

Following the revelation at Har Sinai, Hashem legislates a series of laws for the people of Israel. These include the laws of the indentured servant; the penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault and theft; civil laws pertaining to redress of damages, the granting of loans and the responsibilities of the "Four Guardians"; and the rules governing the conduct of justice by courts of law.

Also included are laws warning against mistreatment of foreigners; the observance of the seasonal festivals, and the agricultural gifts that are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem; the prohibition against cooking meat with milk; and the mitzvah of prayer. Altogether, the Parshah of Mishpatim contains 53 mitzvos—23 Mitzvos Asei and 30 prohibitions.

Hashem promises to bring the people of Israel to the Holy Land, and warns them against assuming the pagan ways of its current inhabitants.

The people of Israel proclaim, "We will do and we will hear all that G-d commands us." Leaving Aaron and Hur in charge in the Israelite camp, Moses ascends Mount Sinai and remains there for forty days and forty nights to receive the Torah from G-d.

On Shabbas, during the month or so around Purim and Pesach, we read four special maftir readings, called the Arba Parshios. The four shabbosos are named after their readings: Shabbas Shekalim, Shabbas Zakhor, Shabbas Parah, and Shabbas Hachodesh.

Shabbas Shekalim takes place the Shabbas prior to Rosh Chodesh Adar or on Rosh Chodesh Adar itself if it happens to fall on shabbas. On Shabbas Shekalim we read a maftir taken from Parasha Ki Sissa (Shemos 30:11-16).

The maftir describes a census of the Jews during the time that they were wandering in the wilderness. Instead of counting the people directly, each man over the age of 20 was commanded to contribute half a shekel toward the construction and upkeep of the mishkan, the portable sanctuary, which was used until the Temple found its permanent residence in Jerusalem. When all of the money had been collected, one could calculate how many people were wandering together in the desert.

Later, the collection of the half shekel was done annually in time for the first day of the month of Nisan; we read this maftir a month before that as a reminder.

The machazis hashekel served to unify the Jewish people. Each family had to participate, and participate equally. "The rich may not give more and the poor may not give less than this half shekel" (31:15). Even the notion of a half shekel speaks to the unity of the Jewish people. The individual Jew is incomplete, needing a fellow Jew to become whole. It was the half shekel that enabled the Temple to function, and when the Jewish people started to demonstrate discord—engaging in fighting and hatred—the shekel became just a worthless coin, and the Temple was lost.



פרשת משפטים

מובא מהקדושת לוי זיע"א שביאר הפסוק "ומראה כבוד ה' כאש אוכלת" שכאשר אדם מישראל רוצה לדעת, אם אמנם הוא עושה נחת רוח להשם יתברך בעבודתו ואם באמת הוא מרבה כבוד שמים, הסימן לכך הוא, כשהוא מרגיש בקרבו ההתלהבות ולהט אש לעבודת ה', שכשנותנים לו התלהבות מהשמים התעוררות ותשוקה לעבודת ה' הרי זה הוכחה שעבודתו מתקבלת, וז"ש "ומראה כבוד ה'" שזהו המבחן לאדם, אם אמנם הוא רואה את כבוד ה' בעבודתו, הוא "כאש אוכלת" אם הוא מרגיש בקרבו תשוקה להוטת כאש לעבודת ה'... אבל אם הוא צונן ושווה נפש, הרי"ז סימן שעבודתו רחוקה מלהיות רצון. ע"כ מה שמובא מהברדיטשעבר זיע"א, ושמעתיה ממו"ר הגר' צבי חשין שליט"א שמספר על אחד מגדולי הצדיקים שהיה מודה כל יום לה' יתברך על שהניח בבריאה צדיק כמו בעל הקדושת לוי אשרינו שזכינו לתורתו, ואבאר קצת דיברות קודשו.

הגמרא דורשת ברכות ו: שרלון אפילו בשבת לבית כנסת אין שום איסור ודרשין מקרא "דורנדפה לדעת את ה'" וכתב רבינו יונה ז"ל שעצם הרדיפה ומריצה לבית כנסת מייצרת בעצם ידיעה בה' ובתורתו, והסביר דבריו, שהרי לכל דבר צריך הקדמה לבא עליו, ולכך לתפילה ועבודת ה' המרוצה לזה היינו ההקדמה, ומחדש רבינו יונה ז"ל שזה כבר נותן לו השגה בעצם ידיעת הדבר. עייש. והדברים צריכים ביאור.

ואולי זה בבחינת יגעתי ומצאתי מגילה (והיינו שההשגה כבר יש מהא דנדה) (לורק משכח על ידי המלאך, ולכך היגיעה שוב מביאה לידיעה, והפשט שלעצם עומק ההשגה, שזהו עומק פנימיות השגת התורה זה תורה בעצמותה, שהיא מעולם מעל עולם האצילות, כמו שמרחיב הנפש החיים בהרחבה (בשער ד') ולא על ידי יגיעה ועמלות להשיג עומק הבנתה, ניתנת לנו התורה במתנה שזהו מתנה אלוקית על ידי עמלות בהשגתה, והעמלות בתורה יש בה כח התשובה אפילו לדברים שכמעט מופקעים מפרשת תשובה, אולם על ידי עמילות בתורה שייך להשיג דברים מעל הטבע כמו שמרחיב הנודע ביהודה בתשובה אור"ח קמא סימן לה' עייש בתיקונים אבל על ידי עמילות בתורה שייך להשיג מעל הטבע.

ויש לומר שעל ידי הרדיפה ללמוד זה בעצם מייצר התלהטות פנימית וזה בבחינת יגעת וממילא ישיג בזה המציאה שיש בדבר אלוקים, וכל זה בדרך אפשר.

וחשבתי להציעה ראיון שעלה במוחי, והם מש"כ הרמח"ל במסילת ישרים (פרק ז') שכמו שעושה דבר בחשק זה נובע מהתלהטות, כן העושה דבר בהתלהטות מייצר חשק, שזהו שני הפכים ממש שכל אחד מביא השני, עייש. והדברים מפליאים בעולם עשיית האדם בעולם מלא עצלות ועצבות.

אלא נראה לי בזה בהקדם יסוד הרמב"ם בסוף פרק ב' מהלכות גירושין בדין רצון הבעל בגירושין בעל כרחו, שההלכה היא שכופין אותו עד שאומר רוצה אני, והרי צריך דעת הבעל ואין זה מועיל בכפייה, ועל זה כתב הרמב"ם דברים שכל יהודי חייב לדעת וזה שהאמת הרצון שיש ליהודי זה לעשות רצון ה' ורק שיצרו כופה עליו שמשתדל לבטל הרצון האמיתי שלו שהוא באמת רצון ה', וממילא הכפייה היא רק לייצרו, וממילא רצונו הטוב זה שהוא רוצה באמת.

ובזה יש לומר הפשט ברמח"ל שהאדם שנפל לעצלות אבל מצד רצונו האמיתי היא כל כולה לעשות רצון הויה ולכן על ידי מעשים החיצונים שעושה בזריות ממילא מציאותו מתבטלת מחושי העצלות וממילא יהיה לו החשק האמיתי לעשות עבודת ה' בזריות כדרכם של האבות הקדושים שהיו בזריות כמו שמרחיב המאירי ביומא כח: והוריות י: עייש.

שבת שלום ומבורך
דוד יהודה פיירטון
ישיבת יורה דעה ליברטי

Parshas Mishpatim The Right Glasses

This generation is faced with a problem. Our lives are moving so quickly that there is very little time left in our day for self reflection.

Another contemplative behavior we have little time for is distinguishing between the good or "seemingly bad" things that happen in the world.

We at our worst, can be quick to judge, albeit superficially, any given situation...without realizing that we might not be privy to the whole story.

Most often, what we interpret as "bad" can really be good, or even great and life changing.

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניכם
These are the Laws and Judgements you must teach Klal Yisroel.

According to Chassidische Seforim, the message Hashem is trying to communicate to us is a positive one.

Mishpotim, laws; dinim as it were.. can be harbingers of judgement. At times our lives can be very stressful, there can be failure, there may be moments where things may not be going right... but we must not despair- all is for the good.

This message is cryptically encoded in the which stands for La'Yehudim, ואלה, word V'eilah
Hai'ssa Orah V' Simcha

(a gentle reminder to get going on those Shalach Manos and Costumes)!

Something that we hope will survive all the eras, is the tradition of a bedtime story..

Wanting to interject creativity into this custom, A grandfather asked his curious grandson one night, as he put him to bed-

"What type of story do you want tonight" (sound familiar?)

Do you want a happy story.. a scary story, a sad story?

"All your stories are good, Zaidy!" whatever you decide...

"I'm going to try something different tonight, I'm going to tell you a story and you can guess whether the ending will be happy, sad, scary..."

"Ok!" said the grandson, as he rolled the blanket up over himself."

"Once upon a time, there was a young boy who lived in a small town. His life was carefree and happy. Everyday his father worked the land on the small farm that provided all their needs... In the afternoon his father went to the forest to get all the wood they needed to stay warm on the farm and hauled many buckets of water from the well in town back home.

One day his father became ill. Taking to his bed with a high fever, he was unable to bring the supplies his family needed to survive.

The house on the farm became cold and dark.. with the farmers wife barely able to bring a scarce few buckets of water each day. Their food dwindled and the firewood supply slowly ran dry.

Hunger had taken over the once happy home.

"Oy Zaidy, what a sad story that is.. the boys life- its so sad"

"Lets listen to what happened" The Zaidy continued the story.

The Farmers wife saw that her husband was not getting better so she decided to send her son to an uncle in the big city where he would live until his father was fully recovered.

This uncle was wealthy and took the boy under his wings. Together they enjoyed the beautiful sights and sounds of the big city. They swam in the riverbanks outside of town, visited zoos and gardens, filling up their days with one adventure after another.

This went on for an amazing few months until they received notice that the boys father had gotten back to himself!

"Ok Zaidy, this story is turning out better, now..!"

" Wait...the boy was packed up in a private carriage and whisked back to his family but unfortunately there was an accident on the way and the boy was injured badly.. he needed to stay in a hospital in a town along the way."

"How sad".. said the boy. "I told you, Zaidy, this was a very sad story."

The Zaidy continued on.. "during the time the young boy was in the hospital, a war broke out and the boys town was overrun...there were no survivors."

"Now I see", said the mature young man listening to his Zaidy's story, "because he was injured, he survived..! I can see the good in this story..."

"In fact", he continued, "I can even guess how this story turns out even nicer.."

"How?" .. his grandfather asked.

"Its simple, the boy gets better, grows up and goes back to his hometown seeking to rebuild his childhood home.. in the process he finds a great treasure underneath the foundation of the farmhouse..!

"Great", the Zaidy said.. but wait, its not the end of the story..."

"The boy, now a man.. becomes extremely rich, but- all the wealth blinded him..making him into a rich miser.. a very stingy person, who was despised by all!

"Oh Zaidy.. this is a really bad ending..!"

"Let me change it a little".....he told his grandfather...." I have an idea..."

And so it went on for a while.. as they wove and changed the story many times over..

Had the hour not gotten late, it might have continued all night.

Now lets look once again at the lessons of these Parshiyos.

Yosef was sold by his brothers ending up in a deep dark prison.(not good)

Only after years was it all revealed to be for the good when Yaakov Avinu and his family survived the hunger and Yosef was elevated to be the Viceroy of Egypt! (getting better)

Fast forward to two hundred and ten years of Yaakov's descendants being enslaved in the most cruel fashion imaginable in Egypt..the very land that saved their life.

The story turns "bad" for us again until we realize that the years of hard slavery helped us merit receiving the Torah...

All roads lead to good.

In G-d's eternal blueprint.. we need to have the right glasses, the right perspective, in order to see the good in everything that happens.

This may be the reason that we received Mishpatim; judgements, after receiving the Torah..to tell us that our history, both personal and as a nation..may seem unjust, unfair, too harsh..but in the end .. all judgments turn sweet and good.
Have a wonderful Shabbos!

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Cherishing Your Failures

When Your Inner Thief Steals Your Life, You Can Reclaim a Double Portion of It

The Jewish Parrot

After his wife died, an old Jew received a parrot from his sons to keep him company. After a time, he discovered that the parrot had heard him pray so often that it learned to say the prayers. The old man was so thrilled he decided to take his parrot to the synagogue on the Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashanah. The rabbi protested when he entered with the bird, but when told the parrot could “daven” (pray), the rabbi, though still skeptical, showed interest. People started betting on whether the parrot would pray, and the old man happily took bets that eventually totaled \$50,000. The prayers began but the bird was silent. As the prayers continued there was still not a word from the bird. When the prayers ended, the old man was not only crestfallen but also \$50,000 in debt. On the way home he thundered at his parrot: “Why did you do this to me? I know you can pray, you know you can pray. Why did you keep your mouth shut? Do you know how much money I owe people now?” To which the parrot replied: “A little business imagination would help you, dear friend. You must look ahead: Can you imagine what the stakes will be like on Yom Kippur?”

Double Compensation

This week’s Torah portion, Mishpatim, which deals primarily with civil and tort law, presents the following law:

“If a man shall give money or vessels to his fellow to safeguard, and it is stolen from the house of the man, if the thief is found, he shall pay double.”

Simply put, the Torah is stating here the law that a thief need not only compensate the victim for the loss; he is also given a penalty, and is obligated needs to pay double the sum which he took. Yet, a well-known axiom in Jewish thought is that every single passage in the Torah contains, in addition to its literal meaning, a psychological and spiritual interpretation.

The physical and concrete dimension of a mitzvah may not always be practically relevant, yet its metaphysical message remains timelessly relevant in our

inner hearts and psyches. What is the psychological interpretation of the above law?

The Human Custodian

“If a man shall give money or vessels to his fellow to safeguard,” can be understood as a metaphor for the Creator of life entrusting man with “money and vessels to safeguard.” G-d grants each of us a body, a mind, a soul, a family and a little fraction of His world’s resources. He asks us to nurture them and protect them from a myriad of inner and outer forces that threaten to undermine them. Yet, each of us also possesses an inner thief who schemes to steal these gifts and use them according to his own will. This “thief” represents the “destructive inclination”—yatzer hara, in Talmudic jargon—that exists within the human psyche and constantly seeks to control his or her body, soul and life by abusing their identity, violating their integrity and derailing them from their appropriate course of action. For example, when a powerful instinctive craving compels me to drink or consume something destructive for my body or spirit, my inner “thief”—or destructive craving—has just “kidnapped” part of my existence and harmed it. Similarly, when I lie for short-term convenience, my inner “thief,” once again, has entered and robbed my “lips” and “words,” employing them for an immoral function, thereby degrading my conscience and soul. When I cheat in a business deal, my inner “thief” managed to get his hands on my business, and so forth.

Apathy and Guilt

There may be those few individual saints who never fail to safeguard their sacred space. Yet most of us are subjected to frequent visitations by this little thief who conquers chunks of our lives. How do we deal with it? Some people ultimately feel that their battles against their inner thief are, in the end, destined for failure. They give up the fight, allowing the thief take whatever he wants, whenever he wants. They develop a certain lightheadedness and cynicism toward living a life of dignity and depth. Others, at the other extreme, become deeply dejected and melancholy. Their failures instill within them feelings of self-loathing as they

wallow in guilt and despair. Judaism has rejected both of these notions, since both lead the human being into the abyss, one through carelessness and the other through depression.

The Majesty of Returning

The Torah, in the above law, offers instead this piece of advice: “If a man shall give money or vessels to his fellow to safeguard, and it is stolen from the house of the man, if the thief is found, he shall pay double.” Go out, suggests the Torah, and find the thief. Then you will actually receive double of what you possessed originally! Here we are introduced to, in subtle fashion, the exquisite dynamic known in Judaism as teshuvah, or psychological and moral recovery. Instead of wallowing in your guilt and despair, and instead of surrendering to apathy and cynicism, you ought to identify and confront your “thief,” those forces within your life that keep derailing you. You need to reclaim ownership over your schedules, behaviors and patterns. Then you will receive from the thief double the amount he took in the first place. What this means psychologically is that the experience of falling and rebounding will allow you to deepen your spirituality and dignity in a fashion double of what it might have been without the thievery.

The Talmud puts it thus: “Great is repentance, for as a result of it, willful sins are transformed into virtues.” When you, sadly, fail, and allow your life to go to shambles, but then confront the thief and reclaim your life as your own, those previous failures bestow upon you a perspective, an appreciation, a depth and a determination that otherwise would not have been possible. By engaging in the remarkable endeavor of teshuvah, the sin itself is redefined as a mitzvah. Why? Because the very failure and its resulted frustration generate a profound and authentic passion and appreciation for the good and the holy. The next time your inner thief hijacks your moral life, see it as a reclamation opportunity: Reclaim your life with a double dose of light and purity.



Parshas Shkalim and its connection to the Tefila of Musaf

This week is the first of the four special additions to the leining that take place before Purim and Pesach. This week we read the parsha of Shkalim from the beginning of Parshas Ki Sisa, which spells out the requirement for each person to give a Machtzis Hashekel to the Beis Hamikdah in order to fund the various karbanos that are brought by the tzibur.

In the time of the Beis Hamikdah there was a mitzvah to give the Machtzis Hashekel, and is one of the 613 mitzvos, as spelled out by the Rambam and the Sefer Hachinuch. As a remembrance, we give a Machtzis Hashekel on Taanis Esther to commemorate this mitzvah, which we are not able to fulfill when there is no Beis Hamikdah.

The Mishna in Shkalim states that women were exempt from giving the Machtzis Hashekel. The Rambam explains that this is based on the pasuk: "זֶה יְתִנּוּ כָּל הָעֵבֶר עַל הַפְּקֻדִים מִחַיִּים - צִית הַשְּׂקָל - those who were counted should give a Machtzis Hashekel. The Bartenura states that it is based on the pasuk: וַיִּתְּנוּ אִישׁ כַּפֶּר נַפְשׁוֹ - each man should give.

Based on this, Rav Akiva Eiger (Teshuvos 1:9) quotes from the sefer Besamim Rosh, that women should be exempt from davening Musaf. Since they did not give towards the korban, and did not have a partnership in the korban, they should be exempt from davening Musaf, which is a remembrance of the Korban Musaf.

(This does not apply to the regular davening of Shachris and Mincha, which women are required to daven, according to some Rishonim. This is because davening is a form of

asking Hashem for help, which is something that women need just as much as the male population.) The Tzlach, the Noda B'Yehuda also concurs with this ruling, that women are exempt from davening Musaf.

Other Acharonim take issue with this ruling and opine that women are in fact required to daven Musaf. This includes the Amudei Ohr, Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spector, the Shoel U'meishiv, and the Magen Giborim. The Shoel U'meishiv reasons that since the Korban Musaf is a part of the Kedushas Shabbos, that is something that women are required in, as well.

The Kehilas Yaakov (Zevachim Siman 4) quotes a question posed by the Amudei Ohr on the position of Rav Akiva Eiger: although the women were not required to partake in funding the karbanos, they did have a kaparah that is achieved from the offering of the korbanos. That being the case, they should be required to daven Musaf. The Kehilas Yaakov counters this proof and says that even if they get a kaparah; that would not require them to daven, that would just allow them to daven.

Indeed, the Tzlach, who concurs with the ruling of Rav Akiva Eiger that they are not required to daven, does maintain that women are allowed to daven, even if they are not required to do so. He writes that even the Rishonim who do not allow a woman to recite a brocha on a mitzvas asei she'hazman grama, would agree that she can daven Musaf. The

only problem with reciting a brocha on a mitzvah is because they cannot recite "vitzivunu," Who commanded us, if they are not commanded in the mitzvah.

Rav Yitzcok Elchonon has a different proof that women should be required in davening Musaf, even if they did not take part in funding the korbanos. He proves this from the very same Mishna, which states that a kohen did not give a Machtzis Hashekel, and no one would entertain the possibility that a kohen is exempt from davening Musaf. The same, he opines, should apply to women, and although they did not give a Machtzis Hashekel, they can still be required to daven Musaf, since they were included in the kaparah of the korbanos.

The Kehilas Yaakov answers this question by saying that even if kohanim are not required to fund the korbanos, they are still required in the mitzvah of bringing the korbanos in the Beis Hamikdah, since the mitzvah of offering the korbanos are a mitzvah incumbent on all. On the other hand, since women are not commanded in mitzvas asei she'hazman grama, they are not commanded in the mitzvah of offering the korbanos. Thus, they are not part of the funding and are also not commanded in the mitzvah of korbanos and are therefore totally exempt from the Korabn Musaf, and davening Musaf as well.

In conclusion, there is a machlokes if women are required to daven Musaf. But the Tzlach rules that they are allowed to daven Musaf.

Wishing you a wonderful Shabbos,

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

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DON'T WAIT. NATE!

If you take your fellow's garment as security, until sunset shall you return it to him. ...so it will be that if he cries out to Me, I shall listen, for I am compassionate. (Ex. 22:25-26)

The Torah commands us to lend money to our fellow Jews. If the borrower does not repay, the lender may ask the court that he be given an item as collateral. However, the lender must return the collateral to the borrower at the times when he needs it. If the lender does not return it, he will be punished since God listens to the cries of the borrower.

One may ask: the lender has rights to an object of the borrowers. He needs to insure that he gets his money back. What then is the sin of not returning the collateral to the borrower when he needs it - the lender should be able to demand his money back if the borrower has to have his collateral?

God gives a person more than what he needs for survival, merely for helping and giving to others. A person must look at the spare money he has as a deposit from God to assist the needy. Therefore, in a sense the lender has an obligation to lend out his extra money and doesn't deserve any collateral for it. However, the Torah has given him rights to take collateral so that he can keep lending his money to others. Still, when the borrower needs the coat the lender has to return it - out of the knowledge that nothing, even his own possession, is truly his.

The Talmud (relates that Turnus Rufus, the Roman Governor of Judea, asked Rabbi Akiva: "If your God loves the poor, why does He not support them?" Rabbi Akiva replied, "So that we may be saved from the punishment of gehinom by giving charity." God gives me extra so that I can gain by helping others. With this in mind, when someone comes and asks to borrow something, instead of making up a poor excuse try lending it out and saying "Thank you for giving me this opportunity!"

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A THOUGHT IN HONOR OF THE YAHRZEIT OF RAV YISRAEL SALANTER

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

This Shabbos, the 25th of Shevat, is the Yahrzeit of Rav Yisrael Salanter. I happen to remember that on the 100th Yahrzeit, Rav Ruderman, who was a student of the Alter of Slabodka, who in turn was a disciple of Rav Yisrael, came into the Beis Medrash and gave a special lecture on the personality of Rav Yisrael Salanter and the mussar movement in general. Rav Ruderman felt very close to the entire mussar movement and in fact named Ner Israel, the Yeshiva he founded, after the founder of the mussar movement — Rav Yisrael (Lipkin) of Salant...

We have all, in one way or another, been affected by the mussar movement. On the occasion of this special Yahrzeit, I therefore would like to relate the following story about Rav Yisrael. May it be a source of merit for him.

Rav Yisrael was once traveling by train from Salant to Vilna. In those days, it was not prohibited to smoke on the train. Rav Yisrael was smoking a cigar. (It may be hard for us to picture the founder of the mussar movement smoking a cigar, but in those days it was a sociologically different experience.) A much younger person came up to him and started yelling that the cigar smelled up the car. Although technically he was within his rights to keep on smoking, being who he was, Rav Yisrael extinguished the cigar. He felt so bad about it that he opened the window to air out the car. Then this same fellow started yelling at Rav Yisrael that the car was too cold because he opened the window. He humiliated Rav Yisrael with his tirades. Rav Yisrael closed the window.

When they arrived in Vilna, the young man noticed there were hundreds of people waiting to greet Rav Yisrael. He found out who Rav Yisrael was and started crying to the rabbi with profuse apologies. Rav Yisrael said he forgave the man.

The man then began pouring out his heart to him. He told Rav Yisrael that he came to Vilna because he needed a livelihood and had no job. He was a shochet but in order to receive a slaughterer's license he needed a "kesav kabalah" (written Rabbinic permission) from one of the Rabbis in Vilna who issued such licenses.

Rav Yisrael told him that he had a son-in-law who was a Rav in Vilna. He offered to write him a letter of recommendation and sent him to his son-in-law for a test for his Shechita license. Unfortunately, when he went to the son-in-law for the test he failed it miserably. He returned to Rav Yisrael and again cried to him with his tale of woe. Rav Yisrael found him tutors to learn with him and they prepared him for the test, which he was eventually able to pass. He finally received his "kesav kabalah" from Rav Yisrael's son-in-law.

When he was about to leave Vilna he came back to Rav Yisrael and said to him: "it was nice enough that you forgave me for my rudeness in the train, but the fact that you sent me to your son-in-law with a letter of recommendation and found

tutors for me when I failed — why were you so nice to me?"

Rav Yisrael responded, "Anyone can say the words 'I forgive you.' But the only way I felt it would be possible for me to really forgive you was to get to like you. The only way to get to like someone is to help him. The key to becoming someone's friend is not to take from him but to give to him. I wanted my forgiveness to you to be sincere and not merely lip service. In order to be able to forgive you with a full heart, I really had to be able to go out of my way a bit to help you. This was not YOUR golden opportunity. It was MY golden opportunity."

This is exactly why the Torah singles out the fact that the burdened donkey belongs to "your enemy". One might be thinking to himself "This could not have happened to a nicer guy." One's natural inclination is "v'chadalta me'azov lo" — "I don't want to help this guy."

Therefore the Torah commands: "You shall surely help him". The only way to overcome this situation of enmity is by, in fact, helping him. There used to be a bumper sticker: "Love your enemies — It will drive them crazy". This is not a mussar idea. The mussar idea is "Love your enemies, and they won't be your enemies anymore!"

That was what the mussar movement was all about — to teach people how to overcome their natural inclinations and to live up to the standards of "man created in the Image of G-d".

What do you call bears with no ears? B

I bought the world's worst thesaurus yesterday.

Not only is it terrible, it's terrible.

Cole's Law: Thinly Sliced Cabbage

A mom texts, "Hi! Son, what does IDK, LY, & TTYL mean?" He texts back, "I Don't Know, Love You, & Talk To You Later." The mom texts him, "It's ok, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister, love you too."

This is the true story of George Phillips of Meridian, Mississippi, who was about to go to sleep when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the shed. George opened the door to go turn off the light but saw there were people in the shed in the process of stealing things.

He immediately phoned the police, who asked, "Is someone in your house?" and George said, "No," and explained the situation. Then they explained that there were no available patrol cars, and that he should simply lock his door and an officer would be there when available.

George said, "Okay," hung up, counted to 30, and phoned the police again.

"Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people in my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I've just shot them all."

Then he hung up. Within three minutes three squad cars, an Armed Response unit, and an ambulance showed up. Of course, the police caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the policemen said to George, "I thought you said that you'd shot them!"

George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

Mahatma Gandhi often walked barefoot which produced an impressive set of callouses on his feet. He also ate very little, making him rather frail and with his odd diet he often suffered from bad breath. This made him a super calloused fragile mystic hexed with halitosis.



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ישלם שנים

...He will pay double (Shemot 22:6)

As a young boy, Alex Clare had a unique knack for both composing and playing music. Even as a young sixteen-year-old, he performed as the drummer and backing vocalist of a band, where he remarkably excelled. But then something happened which got him thinking.

Sitting one day with his friends, Alex didn't look too good. "I know I have a whole career ahead of me which includes a lot of money-making," he remarked, "but suffice it to say, I am just not happy. I am looking for something more, and what I have now is not providing it."

Alex, although far from Torah observance, appreciated and valued his Jewish heritage. And so, he began to learn more about Shabbos and kashrus and explore the meaning of Torah and mitzvos. It was the beginning of a riveting and life-altering journey, but something which Alex fully accepted and embraced.

At the same time, his career moved along and met tremendous success. At age 22, he signed a contract with Island Records, a Major record label. "But," he told them, "I am an observant Jew and cannot play on Shabbos or other holidays." Notwithstanding this condition, the label agreed to work with him. And so, things began to take off. Alex released his debut album - The Lateness of the Hour - which the label expected to be a big hit.

But, as it turned out, despite the tremendous investment spent on the record, it didn't catch on as anticipated. The music was great, but Alex's name was not well-known enough to attract a large clientele. Looking to augment Alex's exposure to fans and the media, the label began making big plans for Alex.

But there was one problem.

In the music and concert world, Friday nights are important nights. But for Alex, they were important for a different reason: Shabbos. But, of course, his insistence on not performing then brought with it less opportunities to spread his name and fame, which his label wasn't the happiest about. Especially when Alex had to turn down the offer to tour with Adele, a renowned English singer-songwriter, because it would conflict with Pesach, his label was especially disappointed. But, despite this all, Alex was still valued and someone they wished to accommodate.

But then Alex received a message one Saturday, which was also Yom Kippur. The label sounded very excited. Of course, Alex waited to listen to the message until after Shabbos, but when he did hear what it was about, he was quite surprised.

"You're not going to believe this!" they said. "Live Lounge, a segment on the BBC radio station, told us that they had a cancellation

and want you to play live! This will be in front of a national audience and be broadcasted over all of Europe. You will receive national coverage and have thousands of listeners. This is it! This is what we've been waiting for. The sales of your record will break through the roof!" Alex listened closely, although he knew that they were forgetting something very important which would nix the entire plan.

"And you won't believe it! They want you to perform Thursday night! We were so scared it was going to be Friday night, but it's not. This will be great... talk soon..." As Alex finished listening to the message, he took a seat. He couldn't believe it for two reasons. For one, this would be the opportunity of a lifetime. It was this concert which would put him on board with other big performers and boost his career farther than he ever imagined. But he also couldn't believe one other detail. Thursday night was the first night of Sukkos. He couldn't perform.

Bravely picking up the phone a little while later, Alex called back and related the circumstances. "This is absurd!" the label stammered. "What do you mean you cannot do it? We already put up enough with you. If you cannot agree to perform this time, we will have no choice but to cut your contract!" Knowing that being released of his contract would result in being blacklisted all over and just about end his career, Alex felt as if the world was caving in.

But then he reminded himself of what he had learned the other day on Yom Kippur. He had read about the unwavering commitment of Rav Amnon of Mainz (author of U'Nesaneh Tokef, the liturgical poem recited on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), who had given up his life rather than renege on his Judaism. Inspiring Alex, he suggested that they look to reschedule to a different night. "I am terribly sorry," Alex said, "but either we reschedule or I do not perform." But the label wouldn't hear of it.

And so, the contract was cut, leaving Alex in a trying and difficult predicament. On top of everything, he still had to repay the musicians he had hired to perform with him. Yet, he had no idea how he would ever do so. Aside from this, he had no means of paying his monthly rent.

Approaching his rabbi (Rabbi Dovid Tugendhaft of Nishmas Yisroel in London) for some guidance, Alex broke down. "Everything was going great until just recently. I was becoming more Torah observant and my career was going well. I was even able to work around performing on Shabbos. But, all of a sudden, this opportunity to perform in England came up and left me now penniless." Looking empathetically at Alex, the rabbi reassured him. "You remind me of Avraham Avinu. He was waiting and waiting for ninety-nine years to have a child, and then he was



asked to sacrifice him. He was asked to give up his most precious and beloved son. You too, at your moment of greatness, gave up everything. But, somewhere hidden in this story, there is blessing to be found."

Alex went on to move to Jerusalem and study in a yeshiva where he could grow in his knowledge and breadth of Torah. By now, Alex had come to terms with his situation. He in no way regretted making the decision to refrain from playing on Shabbos and holidays and bearing the subsequent consequences. Now, life was different, yet meaningful. He had finally found that purpose he had been searching after for many years.

But then the unexpected happened.

One day, Alex received a call from Microsoft. Although Alex had been blacklisted and out of contact with anyone for months, Microsoft had finally tracked him down. They wanted to use his first hit "Too Close" as the soundtrack for an ad launching the new version of Internet Explorer 9. "Could we do so?" they asked. Sure enough, Alex agreed.

The next thing Alex knew, the song was literally all over the world. It was being played on television worldwide and picking up enormous traction. It became the number one hit in Germany, number four on the UK Singles Chart, number seven in the US and received 45 million views on YouTube. And his debut album, which had previously flopped, now sold over six million copies.

And that is the story of Alex Clare.

It is much easier said than done, but here was someone who was not only ready to give up everything for Shabbos and Yiddishkeit, but actually did. And without question, Hashem handsomely paid him back. The renown he was ready to give up forever came back to him. But this time, it was even greater than before. He was not merely spreading his own name; he was spreading Hashem's name in the profoundest of ways and making a grand Kiddush Hashem.



DESIGNATING EIDI KIDDUSHIN II

We previously discussed the problem discussed by the Rishonim: since at every chasuna there are, inevitably, relatives in attendance, the entire testimony should be invalidated. We discussed some of the answers given. We will now discuss some more answers given to this question:

1. Tosfos and the Rosh give another answer to this question: They posit that the issue of non-kosher eidim is not dependent on if they witnessed the scene, even if they have plans to testify; that will not render them a halachic witness. Rather, one is only considered a witness, halachically speaking, if they actually come and testify in Beis Din. Thus, the relatives who are at the chupa, will not pose any problem to the eidus. The Ritva also concurs with this explanation. According to this reasoning, it would be unnecessary to make any announcement, since their seeing the kiddushin is not a concern

2. The Avnei Milu'im (42:6) suggests yet another answer. He writes that the eidus for kiddushin and gitin is fundamentally different than the eidus required elsewhere. In general, the requirement of eidus is just to verify that the event actually took place. However, in regards to the eidus for kiddushin and gitin, the witnesses are necessary in order to make the kiddushin and gitin take place. Therefore, in other testimonies, anyone who witnessed the event is a potential witness and can invalidate the others. On the other hand, when it comes to kiddushin and gitin, since the choson and kalah must have in mind who they are using to be witnesses, it is self-understood that they only want kosher witnesses and the non-kosher witnesses are automatically not part of the testimonial.

Once again, according to this reasoning, it would be unnecessary to make any announcement, since the choson and kalah only want kosher witnesses.

3. One final explanation for why the entire testimony is not invalidated by the non-kosher eidim, is found in the Shu"t Chasam Sofer (E"H 100). In a fascinating teshuva, he discusses at length a scenario where they had designated eidim, and it was discovered later on that one of the designated eidim was a relative of the kalah. The Chasam Sofer was asked if it was necessary to redo the kiddushin or if they can rely on the testimony of the others who were there.

The Chasam Sofer writes that we can rely on the others and there is no problem of the non-kosher eidim invalidating the testimony. He explains that, in essence, every time the eidim cannot really testify that they saw the ring given by the choson to the kalah, since her face is covered, the only reason that

they can testify is based on an umdana, a clear-cut assumption that she is, in fact, the kallah. That being the case, says the Chasam Sofer, they can testify even if they did not actually witness the ring handed over. He adds that based on the fact the eidus is based on an umdana, not on their testimony per se, the non-kosher witnesses will not have any bearings on the testimony and will not invalidate the umdana.

Based on this concept, the Chasam Sofer explains an interesting nuance in the words of Tosfos (Makos 6b). As mentioned earlier, the Rishonim ask how can any get or kiddushin be valid if there are relatives there. Interestingly, Tosfos, when discussing this question, only asks about a get and does not ask about kiddushin. Why didn't Tosfos ask from kiddushin? The Chasam Sofer, based on the above notion – that the eidus of kiddushin is based on an umdana – explains that non-kosher eidim will not have any bearings and the non-kosher eidim will not invalidate the testimony.

COMMUNITY KOLLEL NEWS:

Special for the month of Adar: As the night kollel is wrapping up the zman, we will be having a major review of the various topics learned this zman, about the Jewish wedding. So, even if you missed the first round, you can still catch up and gain clarity on the "ins and outs" of what goes on at a chasuna. Come join us and we will set you up with a wonderful chavrusa.

The Night Kollel will be hosting another shiur from the esteemed Rav Yitzchok Lichtenstein, on Sunday evening, Feb. 18, in continuation of the topic: "Seder Kiddushin and Nissuin – Halachah L'maaseh."

There will be an MP3 available in the shul of all of the shiurim given on this fundamental topic.

I will be giving a shiur this Friday, in connection to Parshas Shekolim and its bearing on Tefillas Mussaf, including whether or not women are required to daven Musaf. See Halacha Corner for more details.

Last call for the Shovavim Learning Program: The Shovavim Program will be having its final learning session on Friday morning, from 4AM- 7AM. So, catch your last chance to come and join, and be a part of this grand Kiddush Hashem. In honor of the last week of the program, the esteemed Forshay Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Leibish Rottenberg Shlita, will be speaking.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos,

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

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