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RABBI YY JACOBSON

BASYA AND THE SPIRIT OF CHESSED
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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 un-touchable 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 specific job that they have been programmed 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 Hasegula partit, 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
Rabbi Aaron Lankry

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12:35, 1:00, 1:30 ,2:00 2:30

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SHABBOS ZMANIM

CANDLE LIGHTING	4:32 ^{PM}
MINCHA ^{ALEF TENT}	4:42 ^{PM}
MINCHA ^{BAIS CHABAD}	4:42 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	4:50 ^{PM}
SHACHRIS ^{VASIKIN- DAF YOMI SHIUR}	6:40 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS ^{ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN}	8:00 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN ^{18 TENT}	9:15 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS ^{20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD}	10:00 ^{AM}
NEW SHACHRIS ^{18 FORSHAY}	NEW 10:15^{AM}
MINCHA	1:45 ^{PM}
PIRCHEI	2:00 ^{PM}
MINCHA ^{SHALOSH SEUDOS}	4:30 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	4:51 ^{PM}
MARRIV	5:31 ^{PM} ^{18 TENT} , 5:36 ^{PM}

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS
20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ
S 6:58 M 6:58 T 6:57 W 6:57 T 6:56 F 6:56
MINCHA & MARIV
12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG
S 3:40 M 3:41 T 3:42 W 3:43 T 3:44
MINCHA & MARIV
12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA
S 4:40 M 4:41 T 4:43 W 4:44 T 4:45
JANUARY 15 – JANUARY 20
NEITZ IS 7:18 – 7:16
PELAG IS 3:52 – 3:56
SHKIA IS 4:52 – 4:57
MAGEN AVRAHAM
9:06 AM
GRA- BAAL HATANYA
9:42 AM

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Rabbi Coren

PARSHAS SHMOS

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF SPEECH

In last week's Parsha we mentioned the special mnemonic for Parshas Vayechi פה אל פה--which as Rav David Feinstein ז"ל explained is the main theme of the Parsha. We elaborated in shul about the importance of communication especially between parent and child.

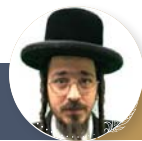
What seems interesting is that the message of פה becomes both the key and prelude to the next stage of the Jewish people as we read and relive the exile of Egypt. In the past, we discussed some fascinating sources concerning dogs and specifically the פה- the mouth of the dogs. Perek Shira points out that the dogs were rewarded with special ability to sing (shira) because they did not utter any sounds with their mouths when we departed from Egypt. This reward for silence is strange. It becomes ever more mysterious when we connect the act of not speaking to that of speaking. There are times where we must use our voices, such as when we cried out to Hashem to take us out of Egypt and we attribute His reason for doing so to our heartfelt pleas. Reb Chaim Vital notes that this is will be true for our future redemption as well. We will be saved from the last Galus through our entreaties and cries. If this is true, we need to figure out how to tap into this power.

We find another interesting connection to the power of speech and its significance with the first introduction to our savior in Mitzrayim and according to different sources for our future redemption too. I'm referring to Moshe Rabbienu also known as מושיען של ישראל who was chosen by Hashem to save the Jews and take us out of Galus. And now in this week's Parsha we can go even deeper into the world of speech. We are introduced to Moshe as he is floating down the Nile River and is crying like a נער, a young man. The Gemara has a dispute between Rav Yehuda and Nechemya (see Elef Hamagen on the Parsha) regarding Moshe's voice and whether he became disqualified from being a Levi since a thick voice for a Levi is a blemish and doesn't allow him to properly sing in the Bais Hamikdash. This discussion seems to be out of place and context. Do we really need to know if Moshe can sing in the Bais Hamikdash or not now?

There is obviously something very deep here regarding voice and speech. Let's try to unravel the mystery.

Shabbat Shalom

RABBI BENTZION SNEH



במשחק הכדור.. אני לא מכיר מספיק את המשחק הזה והייתי שמח מאד לשמוע על מהלך המשחק מקרוב, שמא אני מפסיד דבר מה."

ר' שלום התיישב ליד הבחור וזה החל לספר, בהנאה אישית, על המשחק, כשהדברים קולחים מפיו כאילו הוא מתאר את המשחק עצמו: "אם הרב באמת רוצה אסביר לך" - אמר. "במשחק משתתפות שתי קבוצות ואם נרצה להגדיר מהי הצלחה, על רגל אחת, נאמר שמי שמבקיע את השער ובוטע לתוכו הוא המנצח. הרגע שהכדור נכנס לשער הוא הרגע הקובע". הבחור סיים את דבריו וניכר היה עליו כי הוא מתרגש. הוא לא האמין שהוא ישב אי פעם ליד הרב ויספר לו סיפורי כדורגל.

ר' שלום העמיד פניו תם כמי שאינו מבין ושאל: "מה החכמה הגדולה להכניס כדור לתוך שער? בא איתי ואני אראה לך איך אני בוטע עשרים כדורים לתוך השער בזה אחר זה..." הבחור חייך ואמר: "את העיקר שכחת לספר לרב. ליד השער עומד שומר, בשפה מקצועית קוראים לו שוער והוא משתדל למנוע את הכנסת הכדור לשער ולעצור אותו..." "ואיך מצליחים להתגבר עליו?" - התעניין ר' שלום. "נו, זו החכמה שבמשחק" - השיב הבחור. "זה הסיפוק הגדול של המשחק" - "אני רוצה להבין" - הקשה עליו ר' שלום - "השומר הזה לא הולך לישון? הוא נמצא ליד השער 24 שעות ביממה, אוכל שם וישן שם"? - "מה פתאום" - פורץ הבחור בצחוק - "בודאי שהוא הולך לישון. הוא נמצא שם רק בשעת המשחק. אחר כך הוא חוזר לחייו..." "אם כך" - חמק ר' שלום - "מה הבעיה? נבוא בלילה, כשהוא אינו שם ובקיע את השער ללא כל בעיה". הבחור, שעדיין סבר שר' שלום אינו יורד לסוד המשחק, המשיך להסביר, תוך שהוא מרים את קולו: "דווקא משום כך. דווקא משום שהשומר מסתלק ואין קושי להכניס את הכדור, אין זו חכמה אם מכניסים אותו. החכמה היא בשעה הקשה, כשהשוער עומד ומשגיח. עומדים שם עוד שחקנים שעוזרים לו להדוף את הסכנה. למעשה כל קבוצה מונעת מהקבוצה השנייה להכניס את הכדור לשער שלה". עכשיו נעמד ר' שלום על רגליו, הביט על הבחור ואמר בקול רם: "ישמעו נא אזוניך מה שפיר מדבר. האם לבוא לשיעור בשבוע הבא או שגבורה? אתה הרי רוצה ללמוד ובשבוע הבא אין לך שום מניעה לבוא לשיעור. החכמה ללמוד אז אינה גדולה במיוחד. אבל בשעה שיש מפריע, שוועד בשערי בית המדרש ומונע אותך מלהיכנס אליו, אז צריך לדעת להבקיע את השער. אל תפר את כללי המשחק והכנס לשערי בית המדרש ברגע הקשה, כך תהיה אתה המנצח במשחק... ר' שלום הושיט לו יד לבבית ולמחרת, כשהבחור ויתר על משחק הכדורגל והופיע לשיעור הוא עמד לפניו מתוך הערכה."

שמו"ת. הנה ידוע עכשיו מתחילים ימי השבועיים לתקן את העבר, והנה מאוד קשה לתקן כי לב יודע מרת נפשו, וזה קשה, אבל שמו"ת ר"ת תכלית מעשה שימים ויארץ. והנה כאן בחומש שמות שמתחילים הנסיונות של קושי השעבוד האם זהו תכלית מעשה שמים וארץ, אלא ההסבר לזה הוא כי ירדנו לעולם הזה כדי לעמוד ולעמוד בנסיונות, כי אם לא היינו יכולים להישאר למעלה, המלאכים אין להם נסיונות רק לנו וזה התכלית שנברא שמים וארץ כדי שאנו נהיה כאן ולעמוד מול הנסיונות, ונפרט זאת על פי הסבר שביאר הרה"צ ר' שלום שבדרון: אחד הבחורים שהשתתף תדיר בשעורי הערב של המשגיח ר' שלום שבדרון, החל להחסיר. כך יום, כך יומיים, שלשה. ר' שלום היה נחוש לאתר את הבחור ולהשיבו ללמוד התורה. בא ר' שלום לבית הורי הבחור, נקש על הדלת והנה הבחור פותח אותה. בתחילה נבהל. ומיד התפתחה ביניהם שיחה מרתקת שבכל פעם שר' שלום היה נזכר בה היה מספר עליה לכל הנמצאים לידו, כאילו הם היו אותו בחור.

ר' שלום: "שלום עליך חביבי. בימים האחרונים לא ראינו אותך. חששנו שמא נפלת למשכב חלילה, או שאירע לך משהו..." הבחור: "לא, כבוד הרב, אני מרגיש ב"ה בטוב. אני גם אוהב ללמוד גמרא, זו ההנאה האמיתית שלי, אלא שהשבוע נאלץ אני להחסיר. בשבוע הבא אחזור להשתתף בשיעור כרגיל ועוד ביתר שאת. ואני מבקש את סליחת הרב על שהטרדתי אותו ובא לראות מה אירע לי". שלום: "זולמה נאלץ אתה להעדר השבוע, מישהו חולה במשפחה?" הבחור: "לא, חלילה. יש לי סבה צדדית שמונעת ממני להשתתף השבוע. אך כמו שכבר אמרתי לרב, אני מבטיח להשתתף בשקידה מיד עם סילוק הטרדה הזמנית". ר' שלום אינו מרפה: "סתם מעניין, אני מאד סקרן לדעת, איזו טרדה יכולה להפריע לבחור כמוך להשתתף בשיעור, שמתקיים בשעה קבועה ומוקדמת, יח"סית". הבחור מנסה להתחמק: "קשה לי לספר. אני מתבייש". ר' שלום מדבר על לבו: "למה להתבייש ועוד ממני. ספר לי יקירי ואני מבטיח רק לעזור ולא לכעוס". הבחור: "לא, איני יכול... זה לא בשביל הרב. בשבוע הבא אשוב לספסלי בית המדרש. אין כל סבה שהרב יהיה מודאג". ר' שלום: "אני לא מודאג. סתם סקרנות. ספר לי רק בקצרה, אם זה לא דבר אישי מיוחד, למה השבוע לא ובשבוע הבא כן. מה יכולה להיות הסבה?"

לבסוף רואה הבחור שלא יוכל לו והוא נענה להפ"צ צרותיו של ר' שלום והחל לספר: "את האמת אומר לרב, כי השבוע מתקיימים המשחקים החשובים של השנה בכדורגל, לא בשבת חלילה, אבל בשעות השיעור מתקיים בהם. ואני, לדאבוני, לא יכול, פשוט לא יכול, לוותר עליהם. אני מכור לכדורגל". ר' שלום שומע את הדברים ושותק שתיקה ארוכה. אחריה הוא מרים את העיניים שופעות אהבת שמים ואדם ואומר: "בני יקירי, שמעתי והבנתי. רק שמעניין אותי מה סוד האושר הזה, שאתה מוצא

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Rabbi Reisman

THE GADLUS OF MOSHE RABBEINU

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Shemos. We start the second Sefer of Chamisha Chumshei Torah and of course we are introduced to Moshe Rabbeinu the greatest of the Yidden that ever lived, and somebody who leads Klal Yisrael out of Mitzrayim to Mattan Torah.

The most significant Limud of Parshas Shemos is not from what it says but from what it doesn't say and it is often missed. The Gadlus of Moshe Rabbeinu, the incredible level Moshe Rabbeinu reached to be at the edge of the 50th level in Torah, Avodah and Yir'as Shamayim, was accomplished when and where? The Torah doesn't tell us.

We find Moshe Rabbeinu shortly after his Bar Mitzvah fleeing Eretz Mitzrayim and we find him at the age of 80 standing at the Sneh. What happened for the majority of the years of his life as we are missing 67 years of Moshe Rabbeinu's life and we know nothing about it?

The answer is that was the Gadlus of Moshe Rabbeinu. The years in which he worked on himself and he worked on himself where? Far away from Klal Yisrael, away from everyone who was around him. The crucial Limud here in the Gadlus of Moshe Rabbeinu, he was unique among those who followed the Avos. He was unique in that he was raised and lived for most of his teenage and adult years away from other Yidden and he still was an Eved Hashem.

The Rambam in the beginning of the 6th Perek of Hilchos Dai'os tells us about human nature (דרך ברייתו של אדם). It is the nature of a human being (להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו) to be pulled in his thinking and his actions (אחר ריעיו וחביריו ונוהג כמנהג אנשי מדינתו). A person has a natural nature to follow the people around him and to be Noheig in the custom of the people in the country in which he lives. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu who grows up far away from all of Klal Yisrael reaches the ultimate Madreiga because he resists the pull, the temptations of the people around him.

Rav Moshe used to say about this topic that we find later in Sefer Devarim that HKB"H says and Moshe Rabbeinu repeats B'sheim Hashem as is found in 18:9 (כי אתה בא אל-הארץ, אֲשֶׁר-יְרוּר אֶלְרִיר נְתַן לך--לא-תִלְמַד לַעֲשׂוֹת, כְּתוּעַבַת הַגּוֹיִם) (ההם). That Moshe Rabbeinu says you are going into Eretz Canaan. Don't serve the Avodah Zorah like the people around you, you are going to want to do like the people around you. It is a Pele because Klal Yisrael comes in and defeats the nations that are in Canaan. The Anshei Canaan, the Avodah Zorah of Canaan is put to shame. What does it mean that Yidden are going to be attracted to do (כְּתוּעַבַת הַגּוֹיִם הַהֵם) like the people around them?

The answer is that that is human nature. Human nature is to be pulled to the people around you, to be influenced by the society around you. The Gadlus, the highest Madreiga that a human being reached was that of Moshe Rabbeinu when he was alone.

I once read that Rav Yaakov Emden writes in the Tzava'a of his father the Chacham Tzvi, that he writes your Avodas Hashem should be so great that if you are the only Jew remaining in the world G-d forbid you wouldn't waiver in your Emunah. It is a high Madreiga and we are not holding there, but it is an important thing to stop and think about because we live in a country in which Jews are welcome despite some of our disappointments in the policies of the government here, but Jews are as free as we have ever been to serve HKB"H, accepted as we ever where among the other nations of the world.

The Chizuk we need to know that when we are out in the workplace, we are out in the business world and we are among people who are not Yidden, we are among people to whom our way of life is strange, and it is hard. There is a tendency to compromise if not in action at least in expression. You have to know that that is where a person achieves Gadlus. When you resist the temptation to be like the people around him. If we can't do it all of the time at least when there are fleeting moments and we are in a place with people who have secular lives and don't understand our lives that we should have the strength and realize that he is a true Madreiga of Gadlus.



Rabbi Steinfeld

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 chesh-bon 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 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 even though 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 many issues against our Religion. The reasons given for these new laws etc. is 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. The government must hear from us to stop with all these toeivah laws!

Do you have a topic or discussion you want to read about? Please send comments or questions to hymanbsdhevens@gmail.com or berachsteinfeldscorner@gmail.com

PARSHAS SHEMOS

SHOES FOR YOUR HANDS?

ויאמר אל תקרב הלם של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום אשר – 3:5
“אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא”

“He said: Do not come closer to here, take off your shoes from your feet, for the place upon which you stand is holy ground.” Why does the Posuk that Moshe was to take off his shoes “from his feet”? Shouldn’t it have been enough to say that he should remove his shoes, and he would have known that it meant from his feet?

Removal of one’s shoes expresses total commitment to the significance of a given place. Similarly, the Kohanim in the Mikdash were obligated to serve barefoot. Nothing was allowed to make a Chatzitzah, to intervene, between their feet and the ground, or between their hands and the vessels with which they were serving, or between their bodies and the priestly garments. If one wishes to act in the service of the Mikdash, one must attach himself to it, and be sanctified by it. The Gemara in Zevachim 24a says that the, “רצפת ר’ שמשון רפאל) – קודש הירש” – the holy ground sanctifies the Kohen.

וירא ד' כי סר לראות, ויקרא אליו אלקים מתוך הסנה ויאמר – 3:4
“משה משה, ויאמר הנני – “And Hashem saw that he turned aside to see, and Hashem called to out to him from amid the bush and said: Moshe Moshe, and he replied: I am here.” The Arizal says that the word, “סר” is the same Gematria as the Shem Havayah ten times (26x10=260). What is the significance of this word being ten times the Gematria of the Shem Havayah? Moshe Rabbeinu elevated himself to such a degree, that he completely removed the Gashmiyos from himself, like Eliyahu Hanavi did, who was a Bechina of ten times the Shem Havayah, as it says in the Yalkut Shimoni 771. פינחס is eight times the Shem Havayah (26x8=208) and אליהו is two times the Shem Havayah (26x2=52) and Pinchos was Eliyahu, so together the two names equals ten times the Shem Havayah, and we know that Eliyahu Hanavi totally removed himself from Gashmiyos. The Yalkut says in Shemos 171, “שלח נא ביד” – that it will be through the hands of Eliyahu Hanavi that the final Geulah will come. Moshe Rabbeinu also had this attribute of the ten Sheimos of Havayah, and in addition, Moshe also had the Shem Elokim, as that was his physical cloak. It was for this reason that Moshe Rabbeinu was called an “איש אלקים”. The Gematria of משה is ten times the Shem Havayah, (26x10=260) plus the Shem Elokim (86), minus one – משה is 345, while ten times the Shem Havayah, and one time the Shem Elokim is equal to 346. Dovid Hamelech says in Tehillim 8:6 “ותחסרהו” – מעט מאלקים – saying that Moshe was slightly lacking from the Shem Elokim, namely that he was short one – as his

Gematria is only 345, for he thought that it was impossible for him to be a messenger for Hashem, and to take Klal Yisroel out of Mitzrayim until he completely removed his Gashmiyos, and became a real איש אלקים – but he was minimally short of it. Hakodosh Boruch Hu responded to Moshe, “ויאמר אל תקרב הלם” – there is no need for you to come closer, for even while you are in a Guf now, you are completely removed from Gashmiyos, and you will be the redeemer of Klal Yisroel. The Zohar Hakodosh says that when the Posuk continues and Hashem says to Moshe, “של נעליך מעל רגליך” – referring to the removal of Gashmiyos. The Torah tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu purified himself to the point that he literally became, “אדמת קודש” – holy ground. Just as the burning thornbush had the Shechina residing on it, and was not destroying it, so too the Shechina could reside within a person and not destroy him. Hakodosh Boruch Hu rested His Shechinah on Har Sinai, which is earth, so too Hakodosh Boruch Hu rests His Shechina on people, who make themselves pure, so that they are אדמת קודש, like Moshe Rabbeinu. (פנים יפות)

Why does Moshe need to be told to take off his shoes from his “feet”? Where else would he take it off from? What people cover their hands with (gloves) are also called, “נעל” and thus it needed to be specific that he takes off his נעל from his feet, and not that he needed to take off his נעל from his hand. (בכור שור)

On the most basic level, נעל, which we call shoes, can also refer to the covering of the hands, what we call gloves. Thus, the Posuk says that Moshe was to remove his נעלים from his feet – telling us that we are speaking about shoes and not gloves. On a much deeper level we can understand that the Torah is stressing that Moshe needed to remove that which separated his Guf, from the floor upon which he stood – the אדמת קודש – holy ground. The Kohanim, when performing the Avodah, must not have any Chatzitzah between themselves and the floor or vessels they are touching. This represents being completely connected to that which they are doing. When one is performing Avodas Hashem, he must close out the physical world around him, and be one with the Avodah, one with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The lesson was for Moshe Rabbeinu and for us to know is that we must learn how to focus on the task at hand. When one is learning Torah, or he is Davening, he is to completely connect to it, so that he is doing it Lishma, and not for any other reason. One must be humble and seek the absolute truth, and not to have his personal desires be in the way. There should not be separation between our Guf and the floor, between out Neshama and Hakodosh Boruch Hu, rather we should be completely connected to the Ruchniyos. May we be Zoche to serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu properly – completely Lishma.



ROAR LIKE A LION!

One December, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l, asked his students what their New Year's Resolutions were. The students were shocked: "Rebbe, this isn't the Jewish new year!" He responded, "The entire country is using this as a time for self-reflection and self-improvement, and we won't?!"

We are more than a full week into our New Year's resolutions for 2023. How are yours going so far? What did you resolve to change? If you decided this is your year to lose weight and get healthy, you are not alone. In fact, according to a recent survey, these are this year's most popular resolutions (participants could elect more than one):

1. "Exercise more" – 52%
2. "Eat healthier" – 50%
3. "Lose weight" – 40%
4. "Save more money" – 39%
5. "Spend more time with family/friends" – 37%

Do you know who the biggest beneficiaries are of new year's resolutions? Not the people who responded to the survey, or the tens of millions of people who took on new resolutions. It is fitness retailers and gyms who see an enormous spike in sales and membership come the first week of January. Statistics show that by the beginning of February, almost 80% of the gym's new members have stopped coming.

This attrition is hardly limited to weight loss or exercise resolutions. While 45% of Americans make New Year's resolutions, only 8% are successful at keeping them and meeting their goals. What is the difference between the 8% who succeed and the 92% who fail? Is it conditions around them? Are they programmed differently?

As Yaakov anticipates that his days are coming to an end, he gathers his children to bestow berachos upon them. He likens his son Yehuda to a lion, the King of the animals and with that metaphor foreshadows that the monarchy will descend from Yehuda: "Gur aryeh Yehuda mi'teref b'ni alisa, kara ravatz k'aryeh, u'chelavi mi y'kimenu, a cub and a grown lion is Judah. From the prey, my son, you withdrew. He crouched, rested like a lion, and like a lion, who will rouse him?"

Indeed, last week's Haftorah tells the story of Dovid Hamelech a descendant of Yehuda,

and the progenitor of the Davidic dynasty.

In describing Yehuda as a lion, Yaakov is highlighting that Yehuda's personality radiated power, strength, authority, courage and prominence. Like a lion, he was an invincible warrior, a triumphant King.

But what is Yaakov communicating with the imagery of karah ravatz, the lion crouching down and mi yekimenu, nobody can awaken him? The simple understanding is that he is so powerful, so strong, that even when he is resting and crouched down, nobody dares to rouse him.

However, the Kotzker Rebbe interprets the pasuk differently. He suggests Yehuda's greatness and worthiness to be the source of Jewish monarchy is not his invincibility and infallibility, but exactly the opposite. Says the Kotzker Rebbe, karah ravatz. He is not only a lion when he stands upright, but even when he falls, when he fails or makes a mistake. Mi yekimenu, who can rouse him from his fall? Nobody but Yehuda, who has the internal strength, resolve, tenacity and drive to pick himself back up and return to his relentless pursuit of success.

Rabbi Soloveitchik quoted this insight from the Kotzker and added that at Yosef's sale, Yehuda acted not like a lion, but a coward. He crouched to the ground and failed to show leadership. Yet, he rose by himself without anyone extending a helping hand. He made a terrible mistake with Tamar, but he repented with a contrite heart. He was not embarrassed to publicly confess, to admit the truth in front of all his friends and associates and say, Tzadka mimeni, she was more righteous than I.

Do you know what it means to see yourself as a lion? You are not just a lion when you are on top of the world, things are going your way, you are in control, disciplined and living your best life. Being a lion means even when down and out, even when undisciplined and falling, even when failing on resolutions and goals, you nevertheless still believe there is a lion in you, waiting to roar. It means picking yourself up, rededicating yourself to the goal, the resolution, the commitment, the relationship, the promise or pledge.

Look around us. We live in a time of lambs, not lions. When the going gets tough, people bail on relationships, jobs, commitments and goals. We are living in a disposable society and in a time of CDD. We all know ADD – attention deficit disorder. Many are suffering CDD – commitment deficit disorder.

But that is not us. We are a stubborn peo-

ple. We have a sense of stick-with-it-ness. The Sfas Emes quotes the Targum Yonasan on our Parsha who says this is in fact why we are called "Yehudim." Each one of us is a Yehudi, a descendant of Yehuda. Even if you are a Kohen or Levi, you also descend from Yehuda. We are called Yehudim because we have internal strength to elevate ourselves after we have fallen. We have the will to stand back up and roar. Says the Sfas Emes, the uniqueness of Yehuda was that after the episode with Tamar, he didn't feel doomed, hopeless or despondent. He wasn't disappointed in himself or resigned to failure. He was always ready to start anew, begin again and, as Yehudim, it is that strength and that conviction that he instilled in us.

Do you know what the difference is between the 92% who fail to fulfill their New Year's resolutions and the 8% who succeed? It is their belief in themselves as a lion, not only when all is going well, but even or especially when they hit a bump in the road. It is the belief that if they are knocked down, if they miss a week at the gym, or cheat on their diet, or lose their patience, or have an impulse buy, that it isn't all over, it just means, like Yehuda, having the will and strength to begin again.

Mi yekimenu - nobody can rouse the lion but himself. Steve Salerno, author of "How the Self Help Movement made America Helpless," demonstrates how believing the solution is outside of ourselves is not only not a solution, but actually promotes and reinforces the problem. Certainly, there are tools, values, people, classes and books that can help us accomplish our goals and become the best version of ourselves. But the changes that we are looking for must come from within ourselves.

Yehuda's dignity and majesty were the result of his drive and determination. If this is to be our year of making our resolutions come true, the answer is not anywhere but inside ourselves. Research shows that you are 42 percent more likely to achieve your goal if you write it down. Articulate it, make a plan to achieve it, ask others for help making you accountable with it, and most importantly, resolve in your heart that not if, but when, you get knocked off of it, you will roar like a lion and get right back on.



RABBI FRAND

KINDNESS AND TRUTH — THE SEQUENCE IS CRITICAL

BASYA & THE SPIRIT OF CHESSED

The Torah tells us that Pharaoh’s daughter went out to bathe in the Nile and saw a little basket floating among the reeds. She retrieved the basket and opened it, and saw the crying baby inside. She had pity on him and realized that it was one of the Hebrews’ babies. [Shemos 2:5-6]

The pasuk [verse] describing this incident seems somewhat inverted. The sequence should be, “she opened the basket and saw the baby and recognized that it was a Jewish child; she heard that it was crying and had pity on it”. In that way, seeing the baby would have been connected to recognizing that it was a Jewish child. The pasuk reads, however, that after seeing the baby, Pharaoh’s daughter first hears the crying and has pity. Then she recognizes that the child is a Jewish child. The identity of the baby came only after the fact that Pharaoh’s daughter had compassion for the child — not before.

Rav Nissan Alpert shared an insight into this pasuk when he delivered a hesped [eulogy] at the funeral of his teacher, Rav Moshe Feinstein. Rav Alpert illustrated this pasuk by explaining one of Rav Feinstein’s philosophies of life.

Rav Alpert recalled that people had a complaint about Rav Moshe Feinstein. Rav Moshe wrote more approbations on Torah books than we would want to count. Rav Moshe was known as a “big maskim” since he wrote so many letters of approval (haskamas) for other people on their Torah literary output. He did this to an extent that people felt that a letter of approval from Rav Moshe Feinstein was “cheap”. It was as if anyone who could sign his name could get a ‘haskama’ from Rav Moshe.

The same was true regarding letters of recommendation or letters attesting to need, etc. Often, these letters did not have the impact that one would have expected, because there were so many such letters. Rav Alpert related that people came to Rav Moshe with the complaint that he was cheapening his name and his letters by issuing them so freely.

Rav Alpert explained that there are two mutually exclu-

sive concepts — Chessed [Kindness] and Emes [Truth]. Chessed is performed without thinking and considering — it is just a favor, a good deed. Truth is an absolute quality — right or wrong, true or false.

It is no coincidence that the word Chessed always precedes the word Emes wherever the two terms are used together in the Torah. (For example: Bereishis 24:49; Shemos 34:6; Yehoshua 2:14) If Emes would precede Chessed, we would never reach Chessed. If our perspective on life would always be ‘Truth’, then no one would ever be worthy of receiving any Kindness. No school would receive support, no institution would receive a donation, no poor person would receive a hand out, nobody would receive an approbation. No one stands up to the test of Truth. The only approach in life must be “And do with me Kindness and Truth” [Bereishis 47:29].

Rav Moshe’s philosophy in life was that a person’s natural reaction must be Chessed first. It may subsequently be tempered with Emes, but the initial response must be Chessed.

When Pharaoh’s daughter picked up the basket, the first thing she saw was a baby crying that needed help. If she would have started asking “Who? What? Where does he come from? Does he deserve help?” the kindness would never have started. That is what we learn from this pasuk.

The Medrash says that Moshe was called by ten different names, but G-d would only address him by the name given to him by Basya, daughter of Pharaoh — in order to emphasize the reward deserved by those who do acts of kindness.

What was Basya’s approach, which was so deserving of reward? “You see the baby crying? — Have mercy. Ask questions later. Later you can stop to think ‘Who is he?’ A Hebrew.”

That was Basya’s spirit and that was the spirit she imbued into Moshe Rabbeinu. For that is the spirit a Jewish leader must have — the spirit of ‘Chessed’ and then ‘Emes’. If we allow Emes to come first, we will never reach Chessed.



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Souls On Fire

Irritation, Aggravation, and Misery

A boy asks his father to explain the differences between irritation, aggravation, and misery.

Dad picks up the phone and dials a number at random. When the phone is answered he asks, "Can I speak to Ralph, please?"

"No! There's no one called Ralph here." The person hangs up.

"That's irritation," says Dad.

He picks up the phone again, dials the same number and asks for Ralph a second time.

"No--there's no one here called Ralph. Go away. If you call again I shall telephone the police." End of conversation.

"That's aggravation."

"Then what's 'misery'?" asks his son.

The father picks up the phone and dials a third time:

"Hello, this is Ralph. Have I received any phone calls?"

The Yartzeit

The 24th of the Hebrew month of Teves, marks 210 years since the passing of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), known as the Alter Rebbe, one of those rare individuals who revolutionized the landscape of Jewish thought, synthesizing the rational, legalistic and mystical streams of Judaism into a unified, comprehensive program for life, in a system known as "Chabad Chasidus.

The Vision

The inaugural vision in which Moses was appointed to become the molder of the Jewish Nation and its eternal teacher, we should assume, contains within it the essence of Judaism.

Moses, shepherding his father-in-law's sheep in the Sinai wilderness, suddenly sees a blazing thorn-bush. "G-d's angel appeared to Moses in a blaze of fire from amid a thorny-bush," we read in Shemos. "He saw and behold! The bush was burning in the fire but was not consumed. Moses said to himself, 'I must go over there and gaze at this great sight—why isn't the bush burning up from the flames.'" When Moses approaches the scene, G-d reveals

Himself to him, charging Moses with the mission of leading the Jewish people to redemption.

What was the spiritual and psychological symbolism behind the vision of a burning bush?

Human Trees and Bushes

"Man is a tree of the field," states the Torah. All humans are compared to trees and bushes. Just like trees and bushes, we humans contain hidden roots, motives and drives buried beneath our conscious self. Just like trees and bushes, we also possess a personality that is visibly displayed, each in a different form and shape.

Some human beings can be compared to tall and splendid trees, with strong trunks enveloped by branches, flowers and fruits. Others may be compared to bushes, humble plants, lacking the stature and majesty commanded by a tree. Some individuals may even see themselves as thorn-bushes, harboring unresolved tension and unsettled turmoil. Like a thorn, their struggles and conflicts are a source of constant irritation and frustration, as they never feel content and complete within themselves.

All people—all trees and bushes—are aflame. Each person has a fire burning within him or her, yearning for meaning, wholesomeness, and love. Just as the flame of a candle is forever licking the air, reaching upward toward heaven, so too each soul longs to kiss heaven and touch the texture of meaning and eternity.

Yet, for many human trees the longing flame of the soul is satisfied and ultimately quenched by their sense of spiritual accomplishment and success. These people feel content with their spiritual achievements; complacent in their relationship with G-d, satisfied with the meaning and love they find in their lives.

The human thorn-bushes, on the other hand, experience a different fate. The thorns within them never allow them to become content with who they are, and they dream for a life of truth that always seems elusive. Thus their yearning flames are never satisfied. Their thirsty palates never quenched. They burn and burn and their fire—their longing, passion, and thirst—never ceases. Since the ultimate peace they are searching for remains beyond them,

and the ultimate sense of oneness eludes them, their internal void is never filled, leaving them humbled and thirsty, ablaze with a flame and yearning that is never sated.

With the sight Moses beheld in the wilderness, he was shown one of the fundamental truths of Judaism: More than anywhere else, G-d is present in the flame of the thorn-bush. The prerequisite to Moses' assuming the role of the eternal teacher of the people of Israel was his discovery that the deepest truth of G-d is experienced in the very search and longing for Him. The moment one feels that "I have G-d," he might have everything but G-d.

When Moses observed this spiritual truth, he exclaimed: "I must depart from here and go over there and gaze at this great sight—why isn't the bush burning up from the flames." This vision inspired a transformation even in Moses himself. This saintly man, the greatest prophet in history, recognized the infinity one encounters only in the void, in the longing, in the hunger, in the fire that never ceases to burn, because the thorns refuse to quench the flames.

The Master Key"

A story:

One year, the Baal Shem Tov said to Rabbi Ze'ev Kitzes, one of his senior disciples, "You will blow the shofar for us this Rosh Hashanah. I want you to study all the kabbalistic meditations that pertain to shofar, so that you should meditate upon them when you do the blowing."

Rabbi Ze'ev applied himself to the task with trepidation over the immensity of the responsibility. He studied the kabbalistic writings that discuss the significance of the shofar and its mystical secrets. He also prepared a sheet of paper on which he noted the main points of each meditation he needed to reflect upon while blowing the shofar.

Finally, the great moment arrived. It was the morning of Rosh Hashanah and

Rabbi Ze'ev stood on the platform in the center of the Baal Shem Tov's synagogue, surrounded by a sea of worshippers. In a corner stood the Baal Shem Tov, his face aflame. An awed silence filled the room in anticipation of the climax of the day -- the piercing blasts and sobs of the shofar.

Rabbi Ze'ev reached into his pocket and his heart froze: The paper had disappeared. He distinctly remembered placing it there that morning, but now it was gone. He searched his memory for what he had learned, but his distress over the lost notes froze his mind. Tears of frustration filled his eyes as he realized that now he must blow the shofar like a simpleton, devoid of spiritual meaning and ecstasy. Rabbi Ze'ev blew the litany of sounds required by Jewish law and returned to his place, an emptiness etched deeply in his heart.

At the conclusion of prayers, the Baal Shem Tov approached Rabbi Ze'ev, who sat sobbing under his tallis. "Gut Yom Tov, Reb Ze'ev!" he exclaimed. "That was a most extraordinary shofar-blowing we heard today!"

"But Rebbe... Why?..."

"In the king's palace," said the Baal Shem Tov, "there are many gates and doors leading to many halls and chambers. The palace-keepers have great rings holding many keys, each of which opens a different door. The meditations are keys, each unlocking another door in our souls, each accessing another chamber in the supernal worlds.

"But there is one key that fits all the locks, a master key that opens all the doors, that opens up for us the innermost chambers of the Divine palace. That master key is a broken heart."



Rabbi Coren speaking at the Thursday night Mishmore



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Stories for Shabbos

Shabbos Table Stories

Insult at the Car Rental Line in Florida By Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn

During one freezing winter in their hometown of Buffalo, NY, Rabbi [Moshe] Taub took his wife and children to Florida for a few days to get away from the hostile Buffalo weather. Their trip took much longer than expected. The plane was delayed on takeoff, it was a crowded plane, and eventually the children became impatient and cranky. By the time the Taubs landed in Florida seven hours later

and collected their luggage, they were drained and exhausted. As winter is the height of the vacation season in Florida, the line at the car rental office in the airport stretched from inside the building to the sidewalk. The sun and humidity were stifling. By the time the family entered the building to continue waiting on the endless line, Rabi Taub was uncomfortably hot and his nerves were frazzled. There were at least 15 people ahead of him. As the Taubs stood in line for the car rental, a couple walked up with their luggage, apparently ignoring the long line, and cut in front of them. Rabbi Taub was shocked! What made it worse was that the man now standing in front of him was wearing a yarmulka. Rabbi Taub lost his patience, furious that the man was making a chilul Hashem by disregarding the people standing behind them. Rabbi Taub impulsively said to the man, "Perhaps when you do such a thing it would be better if your yarmulka was not on your head!" Rabbi Taub immediately regretted his harsh comment. When they finally got into their car, Mrs. Taub gently told her husband, "A Yid should never reprimand another Yid and tell him to take off his yarmulka. Maybe he was too overwhelmed by his trip and didn't notice the line. Be dan l'kaf z'chus. Maybe he had a reason for what he did." Reason? Rabbi Taub could not imagine there was a reasonable reason. But he felt terrible about the comment he made. For years, he could not get this matter out of his mind. Every Erev Yom Kippur, he thought about the unknown Jew he had scolded and would probably never see again. He wanted to apologize and ask for forgiveness, but it was not going to happen. Or so he thought... Four years later, once again the family planned a trip from snowy Buffalo to sunny Florida. This trip was even more harrowing than their first one, as not only was their plane delayed, but they had to make an emergency landing at Kennedy Airport. Their plane was again delayed by many hours at JFK, and they were put up in a hotel for the night. It took them a full 24 hours to reach Florida. As Rabbi Taub waited patiently on the rental car line, he was shocked to see that man – the one whom he had spoken to so harshly four years ago – standing behind him. Rabbi Taub, at first at a loss for words, blurted, "I can't believe I am seeing you. Do you recognize me?" The man replied, "I never forgot you. You were so harsh with me. I was humiliated. I never meant to get ahead of you on that line. The line was so long and I saw a frum fellow, so I figured I would just come over and make some conversation. You misjudged me. I was going to go back to my position on line after we spoke." Rabbi Taub told the man that he thought of him every Yom Kippur, and asked for forgiveness. The man smiled, "It's been years, and

of course I forgive you." They shook hands, made some small talk, and then went their own ways. *Excerpted from the ArtScroll book "The Grandeur of the Maggid."*

The Lifesaving Blood Transfusion in Yerushalayim

By Rabbi David Ashear

I read a story which took place in the earlier half of the 1900's when a medical complication known as RH incompatibility was not yet understood. A certain family in Yerushalayim had this condition and child after child born to them passed away within mere hours of birth. No one could figure out the problem and they were suffering tremendously from it. Eventually, the case came to an eminent European professor who concluded that the blood types of the mother and baby were incompatible. And he was convinced that the only hope of saving a baby born in that situation would be if it received an immediate blood transfusion right after birth. At that time, there were no blood banks with blood available like we have today. A blood transfusion required the donor to be present to give the blood at the time of the transfusion. This meant they needed to find someone with the blood type that the doctor specified who would be willing to give a substantial quantity of blood at the time when their next baby was born. The couple advertised in newspapers in Israel and abroad until, finally, a man from America who matched the blood type agreed to give his blood to save a life. Finally, that long anticipated day arrived when this mother went into labor and that man had already come after making the long, difficult journey to Israel. The transfusion was made on the spot and was a success. The parents' joy knew no bounds. When they celebrated their first brit milah, they honored their benefactor at the milah and showered him with gifts and heartfelt thanks, as did their extended family and friends. The man dismissed all the fanfare, modestly explaining that what he did was something any Jew would do. They named the baby Moshe and little Moshe developed into a fine Ben Torah. On every one of his birthdays and every time he reached a milestone, his parents would write a heartfelt letter of gratitude to the donor and enclose pictures of their son so that he could rejoice with them. When Moshe turned three, they sent pictures of him getting his first haircut. They did the same when Moshe got his first siddur at his siddur party. As well when he started learning Mishnayot, and then when he had his first Siyum Masechet. Every happy occasion was shared with the donor. The donor even made a special trip to Israel to celebrate Moshe's bar-mitzvah in person. Eventually, Moshe was accepted into one of the most renowned yeshivot in all of Israel and was one of the best boys in the entire yeshiva. When the time came for him to get married, his Rosh Yeshiva suggested a shidduch for his prize student – an American gvir (wealthy man) who was looking for an outstanding bachur for his daughter. As soon as the names were mentioned, both families were in awe. It was none other than the daughter of this man who donated blood to save Moshe's



life. That boy became his son-in-law. It was then that he saw the amazing hashgacha that Hashem brought about to show him how much his efforts were appreciated. Besides the joy in having such a great son-in-law, the man was overjoyed with the knowledge that Hashem appreciated and rewarded his efforts. He had such satisfaction from this episode. The satisfaction that is awaiting each person in the Next World for every one of their good deeds will far surpass any satisfaction they could possibly get in this world. *Living Enunah*.

He Cheated the Angel of Death

By Rabbi Aharon Loschak

Reb Shmaya was a venerable chassid of the Rebbe of Kotzk, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern. Shmaya's friends knew him as sincere, pious, and humble, more so than anyone else they knew. And then, disaster struck. Shmaya fell deathly ill. His situation deteriorated, and before long, the end was approaching. He lay on his deathbed, frighteningly pale, holding onto the very last threads of life. Those at his bedside noticed that he was murmuring to himself. Eager to hear the last words of this renowned and esteemed chassid, they quickly moved closer to bask in what was sure to be a deeply meaningful and awe-inspiring lesson. Imagine their disappointment when they heard nothing of the sort. With the last vestiges of energy left in his frail body, Reb Shmaya turned to them and said, "You see, the evil inclination is always right there, ready to pounce and capitalize on my every move. Even now, as I lie here ready to meet my Maker, that wily and noxious creature is at my side, whispering: "Reb Shmaya, now's your chance! You're about to die, and everyone is eager to hear what you're going to say. Take the opportunity and go out like a star. Say Shema with all your might and make sure to really draw out the last word as is your habit. People will be so impressed, and they'll remember you forever as a chassid of unparalleled piety and devotion. For centuries, people will say, "With such concentration, Reb Shmaya died with the last words of Shema on his lips!" Go for it; make your mark! " "I can't give the evil inclination such a victory," said Reb Shmaya, "so everyone leave me alone and let me die in peace." To everyone's surprise, Reb Shmaya made a miraculous recovery. Word in Kotzk was that because he had denied the Angel of Death his big victory, he had given up and left him alone. *Chabad.Org Magazine*.

The Turning Point

Rav A. L. Scheinbaum writes a story. A young man, a budding talmid chacham (Torah scholar), became engaged to a young lady, and they both shared the same focus on living a Torah life. It was truly a wonderful match. Shortly after the engagement, the Chasan told his Kallah that a number of years earlier he had gone through a difficult period in his life. He was seriously at risk of turning his back on the observant lifestyle that he was raised in. At the age of sixteen, he was about to drop out of Yeshivah and take a job. He took the required tests, filled out the papers, and was on the door-

step of a new way of life, when suddenly, for no apparent reason, he woke up one morning and was overcome by a desire to return to the Yeshivah. He had no idea where this new source of inspiration came from, but it was definitely the turning point in his life. From then on, he became a Masmid, someone who learned diligently, and he let nothing stop him in his quest to achieve greatness in Torah. When she heard this, his Kallah asked, "Exactly when did this occur?" Since this was a pivotal moment in his life, he remembered the exact year and day that this had taken place. When she heard the date, her face lit up. Apparently, she had kept a diary where she had written on that exact day, when he felt this inexplicable inspiration, that she had gone to the Kosel (the Western Wall) and davened passionately to Hashem, that her future husband should be a talmid chacham! She was only thirteen years old at the time, yet, this is what she had davened for! Her tefilos (prayers) had clearly been accepted, and helped her Chasan when he needed the help. Rav Scheinbaum comments that we can never underestimate the power of our tefilos, or the timing of them. The time for tefilah is now! *Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah*.

The Night the Chazon Ish Went to Sleep Early

By Rabbi Mordechai Levin

A Rosh Yeshiva once came to the Chazon Ish, ZT"l to request permission to expel a student who wasn't following the rules of the yeshiva, and was a bad influence on others. Reluctantly, the Chazon Ish allowed it. However, he told the Rosh Yeshiva to ask the student if he would agree to learn with the Chazon Ish, as he was "looking" for a study partner. Thus began a seven-year relationship between the young man and the great Chazon Ish, in fact for a number of those years he actually lived in the Chazon Ish's home. He carefully observed the Chazon Ish and wrote down all that he witnessed. The Chazon Ish was a tremendous masmid, one who studied Torah with all his physical strength. His nightly routine was that he famously learned until he had no more strength, and then collapsed onto his bed to rest. He leaned his head against the wall and left the lamp burning. As soon as he felt his strength return, he would resume his learning. One day, a bochur from the Mir Yeshiva came to stay overnight in the home of the Chazon Ish. As he prepared to go to sleep, a strange thing occurred. The Chazon Ish also began preparing for bed and changed into pajamas. When the bochur got into bed, the Chazon Ish asked his student to put out the lamp. The room was dark and all three inhabitants went to sleep. The next morning, the student asked the Chazon Ish about his unusual behavior the night before. He had never before seen the Chazon Ish change clothing and prepare for sleep, nor had he ever seen him lay in the dark. The Chazon Ish explained that he was concerned that the Mirrer bochur wouldn't sleep properly if the Chazon Ish was learning and with the lamp on in the room; therefore, he went to bed and asked that the lamp be extinguished. Although the Chazon Ish lived in a spiritual world, he concerned himself with the welfare of others. He gave his precious time to facilitate the well-being of his fellow Jew. (*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayigash 5783 email of Torah Sweets*)

JOKES

TRAFFIC LIGHTS CAMERA

A man was driving down the road. He passed a traffic camera and saw it flash.

Astounded that he had been caught speeding when he was under the speed limit, he turned around and, going even slower, he passed by the camera.

Again, he saw it flash. He couldn't believe it! So he turned and, going at snail's pace, he passed the camera.

AGAIN, he saw the camera flash. He guessed it must have a fault, and home he went.

Four weeks later he received 3 traffic fines in the mail, all for not wearing a seatbelt.

THE INTERVIEW

A Chelmer goes for a job interview in an office. The interviewer

decides to start with the basics. 'So, Miss, can you tell us your age, please?'

The Chelmer counts carefully on her fingers and toes for about 30 seconds before replying, 'Ehhhh .. 22!'

The interviewer tries another straightforward one to break the ice. 'And can you tell us your height, please?'

The young lady stands up and produces a measuring tape from her handbag. She then traps one end under her foot and extends the tape to the top of her head. She checks the measurement and announces, 'Five foot two!'

This isn't looking good so the interviewer goes for the real basics. 'And uhh, just to confirm for our records, your name please?'

The Chelmer bobs her head from side to side for about twenty seconds, mouthing something silently to herself, before replying, 'Mandy!'

The interviewer is completely baffled at this stage, so he asks, 'Just out of curiosity, Miss. We can understand your counting on your fingers to work out your age, and the measuring tape for your height is obvious, but what were you doing when we asked you your name?'

'Ohh that!', replies the Chelmer, 'That's just me running through 'Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you....''

INSIDE JOKE

My friend recently separated from his wife.

They decided to split the house.

He got the outside.

SPECIAL COW?

There was a Rebbe whose old body began to surrender to time. His doctor prescribed for him a shot of whiskey three times a day to relax him. Not to be lured into the evils of "drinking", he huffily declined.

But, the Shamash knew the elderly Rebbe loved milk. So he instructed the kitchen to spike the milk three times a day.

After a few more years, even that spiked milk couldn't help and the aged Rebbe approached his final hour. As several chassidim gathered around him at his bedside, the shamash asked if he wanted to leave them with any words of wisdom.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "Never sell that cow!"

LOST BOOTS

There was a little boy in kindergarten. At the end of one cold winter day, when all the other children were leaving, the teacher found him crying, so she asked him what was wrong.

He sobbed, "I can't find my boots."

The teacher looked around the classroom and saw a pair of boots. "Are these yours?"

"No, they're not mine," said the little boy, shaking his head.

The teacher and the boy searched all over the classroom for his boots.

Finally, the teacher gave up, "Are you SURE those boots are not yours?"

"I'm sure," the boy sobbed, "mine had snow on them."

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WHAT IS BEHIND THE SFEIKOS IN EMUNAH

I have received your letter... that you recently became aware of a feeling of apathy and indifference to the religious rites and practices, due to a perplexing doubt to the authenticity of the Jewish Tradition, by which you undoubtedly mean the Torah and Mitzvos, and you wonder how this may be logically proved.

I hope that this is indeed your only difficulty which

has weakened your observance of the Mitzvos Maasiyos in daily life; in most cases the true reason is the desire to make it easy for oneself and avoiding a "burden" and then seeking to "justify" this attitude on philosophical grounds. In the latter case the problem is more complicated. In the hope that you belong to the minority, I will briefly state here the logical basis of the truth that the Torah and Mitzvos have been given to us Jews by Divine Revelation.

This is not very difficult to prove, since the proof

is the same as all other evidence that we have of historic events, in past generations, only much more forcefully and convincingly...

[The Rebbe continues to explain the historic proof of the giving of the Torah.]

==== For the complete letter: Chayenu P'Shmos, P179. chabad.org Logical proof of the revelation at Mt. Sinai

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SOMEONE NOT FASTING – Getting an Aliyah on other Fasts

TISHA B'AV AND YOM KIPPUR

In regards to getting an aliyah when one is not fasting, the Chasam Sofer has a fascinating teshuva (O" C 1:157), about one year on Tisha B'Av when he was unwell and was required to drink. He writes that he was allowed to get an aliyah at Mincha, with three reasons for his ruling:

1. Even if one is unable to fast entirely, he is still required to fast as much as he can. Even if he needs to drink, he cannot eat, and even if he must eat once, he cannot eat more than necessary. Thus, he is still very much required to keep the fast.
2. He is required to keep the other requirements of Tisha B'Av, such as washing and wearing shoes.
3. The leining of Tisha B'Av is not dependent on the fast at all, but similar to all the yamim tovim, when we lein because it is yom tov. Just as someone can get an aliyah on Shabbos and Yom Tov, even if he is not eating, he can get an aliyah on Tisha B'Av even if he is not fasting.

This ruling – and the three reasons – of the Chasam Sofer should apply to Shachris of Tisha B'Av, as well as Yom Kippur. Even if someone is unable to fast entirely, he is required to keep part of the fast, as well as the other requirements of Yom Kippur, such as washing and wearing shoes. And if the leining of Tisha B'Av is not because of the fast, certainly the leining of Yom Kippur is not because of the fast. Thus, according to the Chasam Sofer, someone who is sick can get an aliyah on Yom Kippur, even at Mincha

However, Rav Akiva Eiger (1:23) seems to have a different perspective than his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer. He discusses the question of giving an aliyah to someone not fasting on Yom Kippur. He writes that for Shachris, someone not fasting can definitely get an aliyah, as it is no different than every yom tov. However, when it comes to Mincha, he writes that he is in doubt as to the status of the leining. If the leining at Mincha is also because it is a yom tov, then even one who is not fasting would be allowed to get an aliyah. But, if we leining is because it is a fast day, then one who is not fasting would not be allowed to get an aliyah.

From the words of Rav Akiva Eiger it would seem clear that, on other fast days, such as Mincha of Tisha B'Av, when we read the leining for a fast day, he would only someone fasting to get an aliyah.

OTHER FAST DAYS

Based on the above, it is clear that the aforementioned words of the Shulchan Aruch, that one who is not fasting cannot get an aliyah, is applicable to all fast days, such as Asarah B'Teves. Rav Shlomo Kluger, in his sefer Shnos Chaim (342), and the sefer Kinyan Torah (7:43) spell this out clearly in regards to the other fast days, and since one who is not fasting is not taking part in the fast day, he cannot get an aliyah.

However, the Aruch Hashulchan (O" C 566:11) and the Minchas Elazar (2:74) argue. They understand that the Shulchan Aruch who does not allow someone not fasting to get an aliyah, is only for the non-established fast days, when not all are required to fast, such as Bahab. On such a day, one who is not fasting cannot get an aliyah to read vayichal. However, on the established fast days, such as Asarah B'Teves, and the like, anyone can get an aliyah. Once there is a requirement lein, all are required, regardless if a particular person is fasting.

Halachically speaking, the Mishna Berura rules that one should not get an aliyah or daven for the amud, even on the established fast days.

SUMMARY

Someone who is not fasting should not daven for the amud and recite anenui or get an aliyah in the reading of vayichal. This is definitely true for the non-established fast days, when not all are required to fast – such as Bahab – and according to most poskim it applies even for the established fast days, such as Asarah B'Teves, and the like. In regards to Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur, some allow getting an aliyah.

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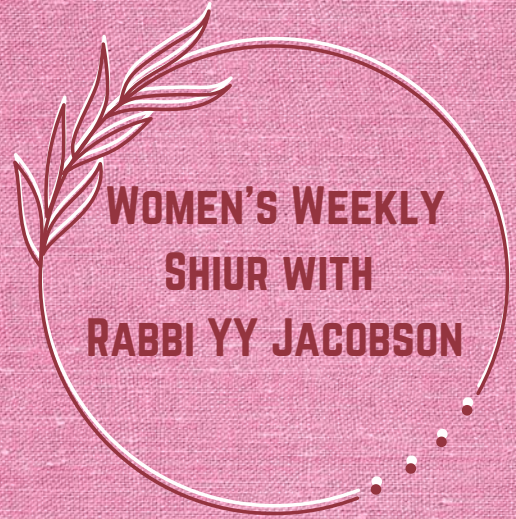
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