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## MISHPATIM- THE NESHOMA OF TORAH

The Medrash brings that Hashem offered the Torah to the different nations in the world and they all refused. When He offered the Torah to the children of Esav they asked, give us an example, and Hashem said "You shall not kill". They answered we can't accept the Torah the Bracha that Yakkov gave our father was "By the sword you shall live" our whole life depends on Murder, and they refused the Torah. Hashem had very similar conversations with the other nations of the world. Aomon refused because "You shall not commit adultery" Yishmael refused because "You shall not steal". The famous question is, had Hashem told them they need to keep Shatnez and they would have answered I love Italian suits I can't accept the Torah. We would have understood their rejection of the Torah. But murder, adultery and stealing are part of the 7 mitzvahs, that all of mankind must keep. How can they reject the Torah for these reasons? They have no choice but not to murder, commit adultery and steal anyway.

When Moshe Rabainu comes to Shamaim the Malachim asked Hashem what's a human being doing between us. This goes on to be a great debate about whether Klal Yisroel should be given the Torah. The obvious question is, that mankind had been learning Torah for a millennium. The famous Yeshiva of Shem and Aver. Avraham Yitzchok and Yakkov had Yeshivas. In Mitzraim the Yidden learnt Torah. The Malachim didn't seem to care then, why the whole uproar now.

The Medrash [in Yalkut Sepurim] tell us a story there was a Yid that spent many years learning Mesachtas Chagiga and reviewing Chagiga, and this was the only Mesachta he knew. When he was Nifter he was alone and no one knew. Came a form of woman and

stood over him and began to wail loudly, gather everyone together and be Maspid him, through that you will be Zoche to Olam Haba. She continued to wail, He took care of me all of my life with great respect. Many people gathered, they took care of him and buried him with great honors. As they covered over the Aron they asked her what's her name. she answered "my name is Chagigah" and she vanished.

We learn from here that Torah has its own Neshama, and it was the Neshama of Mesachtas Chagiga, that came to accord the final honors to the one who was Mekashar himself to Mesachtas Chagiga.

Now we can understand the objection of Bnei Esav, of course we won't kill but if we accept the Torah that means we accept the Neshoma of the Torah, the Neshama of you shall not murder. And that will change us, we will lose our Geshmack in murder and that we can't live with. The same was for Amon and Moav we can hold ourselves back from actual adultery. But the obsession with it we cant give up. The same for Yishmael etc.

This was the objection of the Malachim, sure people learnt Torah, but Moshe Rabaynu came to bring down the Neshama of Torah, to intertwine the Neshama of Torah with Klal Yisrael. This the what Malachim could not grasp. Something as special as Torah should become part of the Neshoma of a human being. Until Moshe Rabaynu explained, that on the contrary the Torah discusses things only related to mankind it must be that a human being can be Mekusher with the Neshama of Torah.

Shabbat Shalom  
Rabbi Aaron Lankry

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY

12:41, 1:00, 1:30 ,2:00 2:30

## SHABBOS ZMANIM

CANDLE LIGHTING	5:14 <sup>PM</sup>
MINCHA <sup>ALEF TENT</sup>	5:24 <sup>PM</sup>
MINCHA <sup>BAIS CHABAD</sup>	5:24 <sup>PM</sup>
SHKIYA	5:32 <sup>PM</sup>
SHACHRIS <sup>VASIKIN- DAF YOMI SHIUR</sup>	6:08 <sup>AM</sup>
SHACHRIS <sup>ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN</sup>	8:00 <sup>AM</sup>
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN <sup>18 TENT</sup>	9:15 <sup>AM</sup>
SHACHRIS <sup>20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD</sup>	10:00 <sup>AM</sup>
<b>NEW SHACHRIS <sup>18 FORSHAY</sup></b>	<b>NEW 10:15<sup>AM</sup></b>
MINCHA	1:45 <sup>PM</sup>
PIRCHEI	2:00 <sup>PM</sup>
MINCHA <sup>SHALOSH SEUDOS</sup>	5:15 <sup>PM</sup>
SHKIYA	5:33 <sup>PM</sup>
MARRIV	6:13 <sup>PM</sup> <sup>18 TENT</sup> , 6:18 <sup>PM</sup>

## WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS	
20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ	
S 6:25	M 6:23 T 6:22 W 6:21 T 6:19 F 6:18
MINCHA & MARIV	
12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG	
S 4:15	M 4:16 T 4:10 W 4:17 T 4:19
MINCHA & MARIV	
12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA	
S 5:23	M 5:24 T 5:25 W 5:26 T 5:28
FEBRUARY 19 – FEBRUARY 24	
NEITZ IS	6:45 – 6:38
PELAG IS	4:27 – 4:31
SHKIA IS	5:35 – 5:40
MAGEN AVRAHAM	8:52 AM - 8:48 AM
GRA- BAAL HATANYA	9:28 AM - 9:24 AM

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מנחה

מנחה גבולות (12:10-12:41)

מעריב

\* Repeat every nightfall

↑ Upstairs  
↓ Main Floor

At: 12:10	Tent א	Tent א
6 MIN, AFTER	Tent ב	Tent ב
10 MIN, AFTER	Tent ג	Tent ג
17 MIN, AFTER	Tent ד	Tent ד
24 MIN, AFTER	Tent ה	Tent ה
31 MIN, AFTER	Tent ו	Tent ו
38 MIN, AFTER	Tent ז	Tent ז
45 MIN, AFTER	Tent ח	Tent ח
52 MIN, AFTER	Tent ט	Tent ט
59 MIN, AFTER	Tent י	Tent י
66 MIN, AFTER	Tent יא	Tent יא
73 MIN, AFTER	Tent יב	Tent יב
8:00	Tent יג	Tent יג
8:15	Tent יד	Tent יד
8:30	Tent טו	Tent טו
8:45	Tent טז	Tent טז
9:00	Tent טז	Tent טז
9:15	Tent טז	Tent טז
9:30	Tent טז	Tent טז
9:45	Tent טז	Tent טז
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1:45	Tent טז	Tent טז
2:00	Tent טז	Tent טז

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Rabbi Coren

## PARSHAS MISHPATIM, SHABBAT SHKALIM AND SHABBAS MEVARCHIM ADAR

Last Sunday was Super Bowl Sunday. Baruch Hashem, many G-D fearing Jews transformed this day into an incredible spiritual opportunity. Instead of wasting precious time and challenging their souls not to watch the spiritually damaging commercials, they were able to participate in the learning programs offered by many shuls and Yeshivos, partake of their delicious food and engage in inspirational Torah learning. A very close young talmid of mine shared with me his story: He wanted to chill with his friends at a Super Bowl party but when he entered the room and saw the atmosphere of debauchery and immodesty he decided the party wasn't for him and he returned to the Yeshiva. I praised his decision and ensured him about the reward he would receive for his behavior. Later that night Hashem gave me the following insight for this coming Shabbas.

The beginning of this week's Parsh'a - Mishpatim almost sounds disappointing. The immediate discussion of monetary laws certainly don't seem to excite a person in the same manner as do the stories of Yetzias Mitzrayim, the splitting of the sea and the highest point of all--receiving the Torah. Furthermore, the first mitzva discussed is that of buying a Jewish slave, a topic that even today seems disconnected from our present lives. Yet the Torah and Rashi remind us that these monetary mitzvos, especially the first one mentioned regarding an Eved Irvi, are part of the holiness of the Torah and Har Sinai and are no different than that of the Ten Commandments.

This week in Kitzur Shulachan Aruch, we began the laws of ethical business. The Kitzur points out that the first question we will be asked when we are brought in front of the Heavenly Court is, "Did you do business with honesty?" Tosfos in Maseches Shabbas 31 asks, "Didn't the Gemara in Sanhedrin 7 say that the first thing we will be asked is whether we studied Torah?" Which one is it?

There are many beautiful responses to this question. I want to share the words of the Tzlach - Rav Yechezkel Launda. The Tzlach explains that when we were created with a body and a soul it was the ultimate partnership. The body has its needs and the soul, which is the main part of creation since it's eternal, has its needs. The real G-D-fearing Jew is what I would like to term Super Jew--someone who understands that every decision he makes is a business deal and it's a bigger business deal than any monetary deal he will ever make because its effects are eternal.

I was learning with my Talmid Sunday night a book called Space based on a class of Rav Aryeh Kaplan Z"l. The author relates the idea that when Hashem created Adam Harishon it was 'Hashem Elokim' that

created him. Elokim refers to the creation of the physical body which is something we can tangibly feel and relate to. And the 'Hashem - Havaya' relates to our soul within that is transcendent and more difficult to feel and understand.

This is the lesson that the Torah is teaching us in Parshas Mishpatim. The first question we will be asked is, "Did you treat your soul properly?" i.e. "Was your business decisions regarding your soul and body done with true business acumen?"

The Chida in the name of Rav Shimon Prag shares a beautiful idea. He explains based on Tana D'bai Eliyahu a story of Eliyahu Hanavi who met a fisherman and asked him why he wasn't studying Torah. The fisherman explained that he didn't have the head for it. Eliyahu Hanavi proves to him that by using the skillful abilities he uses for catching fish he has the ability to learn Torah and that he will be credited for this learning. The fisherman accepted the words of the prophet.

When we try to be a true businessman we need to tap into what it means to be a true servant of Hashem. The study of the Eved Ivri is a reminder that ultimately Hashem took us out to be the greatest servant of Hashem. There are two types of servants: one is the servant that does things because he has to. The higher-level servant is that which can be equated with Moshe Rabinu and other Tzadikim who not only do what Hashem wants but deeply feels the desire to do so. As the Pasuk says in the Parsha of Eved Ivri אהבתי את אדוני --I love my master. In the context of the pesukim this concept is viewed negatively for a Jew should not desire to be a servant of another Jew. However, on a deeper pshat it refers to every one of us who strive to become a true servant-a true businessman--in Hashem's nation - A Super Jew.

The above idea also sheds light on Parshas Shekalim. Chazal teach us that Hashem showed Moshe Rabeinu a coin of fire. Why is there such a big deal about this coin and what was the difficulty that Moshe seems to have with it? Based on the above idea I think we can explain that the coin of fire represented the choice of using our money for the fire of Torah or misusing it for the imaginary desires of our body and ending up with the wrong fire. Fire also represents our passion and desires. The fire within us is the soul that yearns to be close to Hashem and as the Malbim writes in Shir Hashirim when one is drinking wine it can be the most amazing spiritual experience or Chas Veshalom the source of our downfall. It's either the best deal of our life or the worst and this take us of course to Purim which we will discuss BZH next week.

Shabbas Shalom

*A Short Message From Rabbi Reuven Epstein*

**ONE PURIM NIGHT, AS MY WIFE AND I NEARED THE HOUSE OF THE GREAT RAV ELYASHIV ZT"l, WE DECIDED TO STOP BY AND SEE IF WE COULD RECEIVE A BERACHA.** We knocked on the door and a woman opened up. "Is the Rav available?" we asked. "He lives two doors down," she said. Realizing our mistake, we thanked her and were just about to walk away when she stopped us. "Since you knocked on my door, you have become my guests; you have to come inside!" For the next hour and a half, she extended her warmest hospitality to us. Just imagine. This woman looked at us and said, "You are my opportunity to do chesed; how can I let you leave without offering you something!"  
What a beautiful outlook on life.

**Rabbi Aaron Lankry**

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PARSHAS MISHPATIM

## THE GASHMIYOS TO RUCHNIYOS TRANSFORMATION

It says in Parshas Shekalim – Ki Sisa 30:12 “וַיִּתְּנוּ אִישׁ כֶּפֶר נִפְשׁוֹ לַד'” – Each and every individual in Klal Yisroel had to contribute a Machatzis Hashekel. “Every man shall give Hashem an atonement for his soul.” The Tanchuma says that the Ribbono Shel Olam showed Moshe a “coin of fire” which came from under the Kisai Hakovod, and told Moshe that Klal Yisroel should give a coin like this. Why did the Ribbono Shel Olam show Moshe this coin and what was He teaching him? The Ribbono Shel Olam was showing Moshe that even an item that is inherently Gashmiyos, can be elevated to the utmost level of Ruchniyos which lies below the Kisai Hakovod. (פרי צדיק)

The Malachim did not want Moshe Rabbeinu to take the Torah from Shomayim. They said that they understand the hidden secrets of the Torah and are comprised of complete Ruchniyos, while man is made up of flesh and blood; he is Gashmiyos. The Ribbono Shel Olam told Moshe, “Grab hold of My Kisai Hakovod and respond to them.” Moshe responded that Malachim cannot fulfill the words of the Torah, and therefore the Torah should belong to man.

של"ה – Sanhedrin 59 – “אל תקרי מורשה אלה מאורשה” – Anytime that Chazal tell us “אל תקרי” – do not read a word one way, rather read it another way, Chazal are telling us that in order to read the word which we see – we first need to read the other word. First read the word “מאורשה”, and then you will

properly understand the word “מורשה” in the context. (This rule of the Shlah would apply the same way to the Gemara in Brochos 48b “אל תקרי ובירך אלא” – Do not read the word ובירך, and He will bless, rather read the word בירך , and you shall bless. Any time the Gemara says אלא .... אל תקרי , the Gemara is telling us that in order to understand the word properly, we need to first read another word to understand the word we see).

We learn from the של"ה that the Gemara is teaching us to read the word ובירך, and then בירך. First one must bless the Ribbono Shel Olam for his food. Then the Ribbono Shel Olam will bless him. Moshe was telling the Malachim that while they are correct that they are complete Ruchniyos, that is not the purpose of the Torah. The purpose of this world is for man to take Gashmiyos and transform it to Ruchniyos. The Torah Hakdosha teaches us how to transform all of our Gashmiyos into Ruchniyos. The highest level of Ruchniyos is Gashmiyos which was transformed into Ruchniyos, something which the Malachim could never do. In Parshas Shekalim we learn that each and every Yid had to give a Machatzis Hashekel. One could not give more or less than that. By following the will of the Ribbono Shel Olam exactly as requested, that Machatzis Hashekel becomes a coin of fire, a spiritual action. Perhaps the reason that Moshe did not object here was because the Ribbono Shel Olam was sending a Malach with Klal Yisroel to demonstrate to the Malachim why Klal Yisroel were Zoche to the Torah, versus them. “ועבדתם את ד' אלקיכם ובירך את” – “לחמך ואת מימך”, The Malachim should see that Klal Yisroel serve the Ribbono Shel Olam. They make Brochos before eating their food, and thus turn an act of Gashmiyos into an act of Ruchniyos. May we be Zoche to elevate all of our Gashmiyos acts into acts of Ruchniyos.



Rabbi Steinfeld

## EVED BEING A MAZIK

In Shmos 21:35 we learn about a scenario regarding an ox that gores another person's ox, and the second animal dies. The Gemara in Bava Kama 4a says that the owner of an eved knani who hurt somebody else, despite the fact that he is owned by a Jewish master, is not liable for the damage. The Gemara gives two reasons for this. The first reason is that the owner of the eved is considered an anus (out of his control) since he cannot stop his eved that may want to do damage. This svara is Min HaTorah. The second reason is that we are worried that every eved that will want to take revenge against his master will go out and do damage and cause the master a lot of anguish. Chazal therefore were mesaken that the owner is exempt from paying for those damages in order to protect him. The Maharam miLublin and the Noda Bi'Yehuda say that this is only De'Rabbanan; however, Min HaTorah he would have to pay because the owner does have the capability and the culpability to make sure his eved does not do damage.

The question can be asked as follows: Do we say that the yesod of the din is based on the explanations of the above gemara? Conversely, do we say the fact that the Torah only mentions an ox causing damage, but does not mention a slave or maidservant causing damage shows that the owner is not responsible since the Torah was never mechayev him? The reasons in the gemara are just an explanation clarifying why the Torah does not mention a slave that caused damage.

The Amudei Ohr 9 and the Chazon Ish in Bava Kama 3:1 for Daf 4a take the position of the second reason that the main reason the owner is pattur is because the posuk never mentioned anything about a slave causing damage. The proof for this is seen in the Mechilta 21:28 that discusses that the posuk only states that an owner is only responsible for an ox that gores. How do we know all animals are included in this? We learn this out from Shabbos; just like all animals are included in the mitzvah of shvisas Shabbos, so too when it comes to hezek, all animals are included. On the other hand, we see that a slave would be exempt

as we see in Bava Kama 54b that when it comes to having two types of animals plowing together, the issur includes all animals as we learn from Shabbos. However, that issur includes a human being doing the plowing together with an animal. We see from this that an eved is not included in the issur of an ox doing damage. The gemara's two reasons why the owner is exempt is just explaining the reasoning of the posuk.

The Noda Bi'Yehuda, in the middle of Choshen Mishpat, siman 7 says that the only exemption of eved knani is that he might take revenge, and therefore the owner is not responsible min HaTorah. The Noda Bi'Yehuda discusses an eved that killed another person after being warned with eidim. The eved is going to be killed, so there is no chashash that the eved will look to take revenge on the master. It therefore stands to reason that the eved did not do this to exact revenge on his master since he will die. The Achiezer 1 (21:7) discusses the case where the eved is going to get malkus. There is no reason to believe the eved did it to exact revenge on the master. In this case, the owner would be responsible. This is in direct opposition to the Chazon Ish and Amudei Ohr who say that the posuk is never mechayev an eved for hezek.

We see the story of the slave of Yanai HaMelech in the gemara in Sanhedrin 19a who killed somebody. Shimon Ben Shatach told the Dayanim to bring the slave to Bais Din with his master, the king Yanai. Why did Yanai have to come? According to the Noda Bi'Yehuda this would make sense since Yanai was the owner and he would have to pay money since his slave killed someone, and the slave did not do it in order to exact revenge on his master. Yanai therefore had to be there for the psak that he might have to pay money. According to the Chazon Ish, Yanai would not be required to pay in any case since the Torah was never mechayev a master to pay for damages caused by his slave. Why did Yanai need to be there? The chiddush could be that since the Bais Din was going to kill the eved, and the master would end up losing a slave and taking a loss in money, Yanai had to be there since Bais Din will only pasken in the presence of the baalei dinim.

May we be zocheh to have Battei Dinim again in Eretz Yisrael.



Rabbi Reisman

# A STORY FROM RAV YAAKOV IN SLABODKA ON WHOSE MONEY IS IT?

This comes from the Emes L'yaakov on Divrei Hayamim. The Emes L'yaakov on Nach in volume 2. Volume 1 was not yet published, but they put out volume 2 on the second part of Tanach first. In volume 2 in Divrei Hayamim Perek 29 there is a footnote regarding Parshas Mishpatim and the whole piece there is just a beautiful piece. I am sure that when you are learning Divrei Hayamim you will bump into it.

Rav Yaakov says the following. He says you would think that after Mattan Torah that the first things that would be taught would be things that have religious significance. In other words, you have Mattan Torah so the first rules you should tell me are the religious rules. How to serve G-d, the Mitzvos of Bain Adam L'makom. The Mitzvos that have to do with serving G-d. Moshe taught them (וְאֵלֶּה, הַמִּשְׁפָּט טִיִּם). He taught them about financial dealings. Rav Yaakov says that what Moshe wanted to teach Klal Yisrael was that financial dealings are also Avodas Hashem. You are also serving Hashem in Dinai Mamon as well.

There are some rules that are a Chok as they have a reason which we don't know. The rule of Bai'lav lmo which I mentioned at the beginning of the Shiur is a Chok. We don't know. There is no reason given. Most categories of Dinai Mamon have one rule that is a Chok. Like a Bor. You dig a Bor and a car gets damaged, you are Patur. Bor is Patur on Keilim. Why? We don't know. They are Chukim. So Moshe Rabbeinu told Klal Yisrael, after Matan Torah we are going to learn Dinai Mamon because you should know that that is Avodas Hashem.

Something similar to what Rav Moshe said about boys starting to learn Gemara from the Perek of Eilu Metzios. There are Yeshivos that wanted to start with Berachos. Rav Moshe said that the custom among the Jewish people was to start boys with Eilu Metzios, to teach them at the very outset that if it is not yours don't take it. That is Torah. Honesty, integrity is Torah.

Rav Yaakov brings a moving incident that he witnessed as a young man in Slabodka. Rav Yaakov was in Slabodka after he got married and he was there for 5 years in the Kollel. At that time, Rav Pam was a 12 year old and was in Yeshiva Ktana. Rav Pam ate by Rav Yaakov the Shabbos meals. Something which in another generation on another continent he paid back when he was in Torah Vodaath and he invited Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky's grandchildren to eat at his house for Shabbos.

While in Slabodka, Rav Yaakov saw a Din Torah. Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein (1866 - 1933) was the Posek of Slabodka. Two people had a Din Torah over a piece of land and Rav Moshe

Mordechai Paskened that the land belonged to one. The other complained that his Psak was not logical. Rav Moshe Mordechai said my Psak is Al Pi Shulchan Aruch. The person said but it just doesn't make sense, it is not logical. Rav Moshe Mordechai took the man by his hand and said I have to explain to you. You think the Din Torah is, is this land mine or is this land his. Wrong! The land is G-d's. G-d gave us a book that tells us who gets which land. That book is called Shulchan Aruch. When G-d gave this land to human beings he said which human being gets it? Here is a book, look it up. Our job is to look it up. We look it up in the book. Whoever the book says it belongs to, he gets it.

That is our attitude towards money. It is G-d's money. Who gets it? Look it up in Shulchan Aruch. Now you may ask what does this have to do with Divrei Hayamim Perek 29? I will answer you. In Divrei Hayamim Perek 29 Dovid Hamelech makes an appeal for money for the building of the Bais Hamikdash that his son Shlomo would build. The people respond generously. 29:9 (וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ) and they rejoice that they gave so much money. Dovid speaks and Dovid says as is found in 29:14 (כִּי-מִמֶּךָ הַכֶּלִּי, וּמִי דָר נִתְּנוּ לַה'). HKB"H it is all your money. When we give it, we are giving yours. Miyad'cha Hi Ul'cha Hakol. It is from your own hand. It is all yours.

Rav Yaakov said these are the two attitudes of a Frum Yid when giving Tzedaka. 1) (וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ). It may be hard to give, but once you give a Yid is happy he gave. 2) The attitude that a Yid has to have towards money is (כִּי-מִמֶּךָ הַכֶּלִּי, וּמִי דָר נִתְּנוּ לַה'). Jews do have that attitude. Jews are extraordinary Menadvim, donors to Tzedaka. As Rav Moshe Mordechai said, you think it is your or his? It is all G-d's. The book tells us who gets it. That is the Yid's attitude towards Dinai Mamon.

And so, two extraordinary thoughts, one on Halacha and Rav Yaakov taking us back what must have been 100 years ago when Rav Yaakov was about 25 years old. Taking us back 100 years ago to an incident in Slabodka where Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein's words, he would have never dreamt 100 years later they would be repeating it on a phone call, something that is going to be typed up and is disseminated. Rav Moshe Mordechai would never have dreamt it but he had a wonderful Talmid Rav Yaakov who looked to pass it to the future generations.

And so, with that, I wish everybody a wonderful Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, a wonderful Chodesh Adar as we enter into the Adar Sh'Marbin B'simcha. Let it be a time of Simcha for all of us. A Gutten Shabbos to all!

## MODEH ANI

The day begins with saying Modeh Ani. This is said before washing negel vaser, even while the hands are "impure." The

reason is that all the impurities in the world do not defile a Jew's "Modeh Ani." He might lack one thing or another, but his Modeh Ani remains intact.

==== Hayom Yom Shvat 11.

UFARATZTA





Over 208 million viewers tuned in at some point to watch last year's Super Bowl. In fact, the big game drew so much attention, that last year a 30 second commercial cost \$7 million, or \$233,333 per second. Consider this - In contrast, only 158.4 million people cast a vote in the 2020 presidential election, which was considered an impressive turnout. Indeed, the last ten Super Bowls attracted more than 150 million viewers while the 2020 election is the only presidential election to hit that mark. This is not just a statement on the country's priorities – data also suggests that people like to watch and be spectators to something big.

Vayishma Yisro kohen midyan chosein Moshe eis kol asher asah Elokim l'Moshe u'lyisroel amo, ki hotzi Hashem es Yisroel mi'mitzrayim. Rashi, quoting the famous statement from the Gemara in Maseches Zevachim, asks, mah shemuah shama ubah? What did Yisro hear that inspired him to come. Rashi answers he heard about the splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek.

The question of the Talmud is perplexing. What do you mean "What did Yisro hear that made him come," did the Rabbis not read the end of the pasuk, where it clearly states what Yisro heard?

But there is something that troubles me much more, that is indeed somewhat staggering. While we read this week of the impressive arrival of Yisro, how he abandoned all of the other religions and modes of worship to join the Jewish people in the desert, we never find out what actually happens to him. The pasuk tells us a little later, Vayeshalach Moshe es chosno, vayeilech lo el artzo. Moshe sends off his father-in-law, and he goes to his land. Why didn't Yisro stay, where did he go off to? What ultimately happens to Yisro?

Indeed, we do encounter Yisro one more time. He reappears amidst the drama and saga of Jewish History. In the book of Bamidbar, Yisro reemerges among the nation of Israel, but again seeks to depart back to his home. This time, in a striking departure from what we would call normal behavior between a son-in-law and father-in-law, Moshe begs, pleads and implores Yisro to stay.

After a brief back and forth, the discussion ends abruptly and we are again left without knowing what happened to Yisro. Indeed, the Torah literally leaves it a mystery: did Yisro ultimately reside among the Jewish people or did he move on? The text is so ambiguous that it leaves room for the commentators to debate the issue. The Ramban explains that Moshe's arguments were so cogent and convincing that Yisro yielded to the request and remained among Bnei Yisroel. The Seforno comments that Yisro followed his earlier pattern and once again split off from the Jewish people and headed home.

The question for us, though, is why would the Torah omit this seemingly important fact, this

very relevant detail? We heard so much about his arrival, why not include whether or not he stayed?

The answer to both questions, I believe, is the same. In truth, the Torah is not concerned with what ultimately happens with Yisro. Where did he live, how many children did he have, what minyan did he daven at, what kind of yarmulke did he wear, all of this is not what we learn from Yisro. The Torah is most impressed with, and wants to impress upon us, how Yisro did not exist in life as a spectator, an observer, but rather lived by listening carefully and by being moved by what he heard. He didn't watch from the sidelines, but he decided to enter the game.

The Talmud wasn't asking what did Yisro hear that made him come, that's clear from the pasuk. Look at the language of the question again. The Gemara didn't ask mah shemuah shama, what did Yisro hear, it asked mah shemuah shama u'bah, what did Yisro hear that made him come, that got him off of his couch, and to live life.

Yisro merits having a Parsha named for him—and not just any Parsha, the one that contains the most seminal event in Jewish History, matan Torah—because he taught us a critical lesson. We must not live as spectators but we must enter the game. All of Yisro's contemporaries heard the miraculous events that occurred to the Jewish people. We recite every day, Sham'u amim yirgazon, they all heard. But Yisro didn't hear as a spectator from the sideline, he really heard the message and was moved to action.

I am a sports fan. There is nothing wrong with being a spectator at times but we have to distinguish between real life and leisure. In his book "The Meaning of Sports: Why Americans Watch Baseball, Football and Basketball and What They See When They Do," Michael Mandelbaum, a professor at Johns Hopkins, argues that we escape our lives and live vicariously through the athletes we watch when we become spectators. He writes, "The word sport is related to 'disport' to divert oneself. Baseball, football and basketball divert spectators from the burdens of normal existence... The prominence of the word play in team sports reveals their affinity with drama, the oldest form of which is in English, the play and the participants in which the actors are by tradition like participants in games called players."

In the 1950s, the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l met with a young man who was about to become a Bar Mitzvah. After meeting with him and giving him a bracha, he had one more question for him: "Are you a baseball fan?" The Bar-Mitzvah boy replied that he was. "Which team are you a fan of — the Yankees or the Dodgers?" The Dodgers, replied the boy. "Does your father have the same feeling for the Dodgers as you have?" No. "Does he take you out to games?"

Well, every once in a while my father takes me to a game. We were at a game a month ago. "How was the game?" It was disappointing, the 13-year-old confessed. By the sixth inning,

the Dodgers were losing nine-to-two, so we decided to leave. "Did the players also leave the game when you left?" "Rabbi, the players can't leave in the middle of the game!" "Why not?" asked the Rebbe. "Explain to me how this works."

"There are players and fans," the baseball fan explained. "The fans can leave when they like — they're not part of the game and the game could, and does, continue after they leave. But the players need to stay and try to win until the game is over." "That is the lesson I want to teach you in Judaism," said the Rebbe with a smile. "You can be either a fan or a player. Be a player."

This escape, this notion of living as a fan is perfectly acceptable for windows of time necessary to relax. The problem is that this mindset, this attitude has pervaded much of our 'real' lives. What might be termed a spectator psychology has invaded virtually every area of human concern. Far too many people sit on the sidelines and contentedly observe others.

People become 'just spectators' to their own lives. They therefore cannot act to improve their lives and to change what is going on in their lives any more than they can act to change what is going on in the movies or the soap operas.

In a reality TV, spectator society, it is so easy to sit on our couch and be critical of others. It is easy to become complacent, satisfied and content watching those around us but not actually seeking to change ourselves, to embrace that which is correct or to make a difference.

We don't know what happens to Yisro, but it is unimportant. What is important is that he taught us how to be a seeker and a searcher. He taught us how to break the mold of those watching from the sidelines and make the decision to join the game.

Hashem tells Bnei Yisrael, Va'Es Eschem al Kanfei Nesharim V'Avi Eschem Eilai, I will lift you up on the wings of eagles and I will bring you close to Me. The first move is made by Hashem; I will bring you close to Me. And in the next pasuk the Torah uses the term segulah: V'Heyisem Li Segulah Mikol Ha'Amim, you will be to me more beloved than all the nations. He makes the first move and we respond. As the pasuk says in the end of sefer Eichah, Hashiveinu Hashem Eilecha V'Nashuva; Return us to You and we will respond with Teshuvah.

In just a few months we will sit at the Pesach seder and when it comes time to welcome Eliyahu HaNavi we will get up and open the door. Let me ask you an obvious question: can Eliyahu not come through the chimney? Can't he crawl through the window or walk through a closed door? Why do we have to open the door? If we want the geulah, the redemption to come, we can't remain seated in our chairs as spectators, but we must get up and respond with action.



RABBI FRAND

## HONESTY IS THE TORAH POLICY

**T**he pasuk states in this week's parsha, "From a matter of falsehood distance yourself" [Shemos 23:7] This is the Torah's admonition about being truthful and honest. The commentaries point out that this is the only midah [character trait] from which the Torah specifically instructs us to distance ourselves ('Tirchak'). We are commanded to stay as far away as possible from sheker [falsehood]. Do not skirt the truth; run away from sheker.

It is well known that if Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky exemplified one particular midah, it was his pursuit of truth (derishas ha'Emes). I once read in a biography that as someone whose name was Yaakov, he took it upon himself to excel in the attribute of pursuing truth in all his dealings as we know the Patriarch Yaakov typified the characteristic of truth (Titen Emes l'Yakov [Micha 7:20]).

I would like to relate two stories about this great Rosh Yeshiva that demonstrate his adherence to the midah of Emes [truth].

A fellow came to Rav Yaakov and asked him the following shaylah [question]: He wished to take off from his job on the day of Purim. Although Purim is only a rabbinic holiday and strictly speaking work is not prohibited, he wanted to celebrate the day as it should be celebrated, not to come home late in the afternoon and run through perfunctory fulfillment of the day's rituals.

Under normal circumstances, his employer allowed employees to take a personal leave day but his company at that time was exceedingly busy and they had made a temporary policy that they were not allowing personal leave days during this busy period. So, he went to Rav Yaakov and asked if he might be able to take it as a sick day. He felt that he had a couple of justifications for requesting such an absence on those grounds. First of all, Purim follows Ta'anis Esther which is a fast day which leaves a person a bit weak and fatigued. Second of all, Purim is a time which, due to all the drinking and feasting done on that day, leaves nobody feeling very good, certainly not by later in the day.

This is bending the truth somewhat because he was not really sick and strictly speaking, sick days are reserved for people who are really sick. How did Rav Yaakov answer this Shaylah? Did he tell him to take off the day and observe Purim as a Jew should observe it and bend the truth, or otherwise?

Rav Yaakov instructed him that Purim is a Rabbinic holiday and "You shall distance yourself from falsehood" is a Biblical command. It is a no brainer. Go to work and fulfill the obligations of Purim before or after work to the best of your ability. Work on Purim rather than say something that is not true.

When I told over this incident in one of my speaking engagements, a person from the audience came over to me and told me another story about Rav Yaakov:

When Rav Yaakov was rav in Toronto, the shul presented him with a silver platter as a Purim present for Purim. A few days after Purim, one of the shul members saw Rav Kamenetsky in a Toronto Pawn Shop with this very same silver platter. The member thought it highly inappropriate. The shul gave their rabbi a gift

and he went to pawn it! The member was shocked. He went back and told other members of the shul and the Board of Directors. The Baale Batim, being Baale Batim, came to Rav Yaakov and asked him "What kind of business is this – you went to pawn our gift in a pawn shop?"

In olden times a Rav did not get a salary. He got "Rabbonishe Gelt". What's "Rabbonishe Gelt"? When you go to the Rav to sell your Chometz, you slip him a little gift. For funerals, weddings, and other special occasions, members gave their Rav money. Rav Yaakov told the "Committee of Inquiry" that part of "Rabbonishe Gelt" is when the congregation gives their rabbi a gift before Purim. That being the case, he told them, this was part of his salary. If it is part of his salary, he felt, he needed to declare it on his Income Tax form as earned income. "I need to know how much the silver platter is worth so I know how much to declare." So, he took it into the pawn shop to assess the fair market value of the platter so that he could accurately record it as part of his income tax declaration.

This is another example of the honesty of Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky. When I told over this second story about honesty of Gedolei Yisrael, another person from the audience came up to me and told me a third such story – this one about Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, z"l.

Rav Aharon Soloveitchik for many years commuted from Chicago to New York. After his brother Rav Yosef Baer Soloveitchik, stopped giving the shiur in Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanon, Rav Aharon used to give the shiur there. He was also the Rav haMachshir for Streits' Matzah. In short, he commuted on a weekly basis between his home in Chicago and New York City.

One time he came to the airport with his mother-in-law, who was travelling with him that day and he came up to the ticket counter and ordered two tickets. The agent behind the counter said "Rabbi, you are in luck! We are having a special – Spouses Fly for Free – today!" Rav Aharon responded, "This is not my wife, this is my mother-in-law." The agent told him, "Do not worry. We do not check marriage licenses." He questioned the clerk – "Do you have permission to do that?" She hemmed and hawed. Rav Soloveitchik then asked to see her supervisor. The supervisor also told him, "Do not worry. We never check. You are a male and she is a female. Take the special." Rav Aharon then again questioned the supervisor: Do you have permission from the company to do that? She could not tell him definitively that she had permission from the company to knowingly give the Spouses Fly Free special to a couple that were not husband and wife so Rav Aharon he refused to accept the discounted tickets.

This is Eirlichkeit [honesty]. This is fulfillment of "M'Dvar Sheker Tirchak."

I am not paskening whether or not we are strictly obligated to turn down such an offer if we are travelling with our daughters or mothers-in-law rather than our wives, but it is certainly an Eirlichkeit. Certainly, when it is an out and out falsehood, when it is clearly bending the truth, we indeed need to distance ourselves.



Rabbi YY Jacobson

## Cherishing Your Failures

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

### 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 timeless 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.

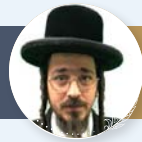
### The Majesty of Returning

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.





האשה הסכימה, האזינה בתשומת לב לכל ההוראות שנתן לה, נטלה את הכסף וצררה אותו בשתי צרורות, הכניסה לתיקה - והלכה.

ההמולה שקדמה את פניה של אשה זו, אשר מעולם לא יצאה מן הכפר, גרמה לה לאבד את עשתונותיה, והיא צנחה תחתיה מעולפת. דקות ספורות שכבה כך, עד שרוחה שבה אליה, ומאחר שידעה שאין לה כל בררה אחרת, קמה והחלה ללכת.

היא טיילה בין הדוכנים, עד שמצאה מוכר, שנראה היה לה שנתן לסמוך על המלה שלו, החלו להתמקח אותו, וכששניהם הגיעו לעמק השוה, פתחה את תיקה כדי להוציא משם את הכסף, ולחזרתה היא מגלה ש... אין כסף... איפה הכסף? ידיה רעדו כששפכה את תכולת התיק על הארץ, אולם כל החיפושים לא העלו דבר.

אין כסף - - - ככל הנראה, כשהתעלפה, נפל הצרור, ומישהו זדון לב נצל את המצב, לקח אותו והלך.

הכסף כלל אינו שלי! - החלה האשה זועקת - מה יהיה על ילדי הרעבים ועל בעלי החולה? צעקותיה משכו תשומת לב משאר הנוכחים, ולא חלף זמן רב, עד שהגיעה עדות מהימנה עלאדם שנראה מרים את הכסף.

כשהגיעו אליו שאלה אותו האשה: "מצאת את הכסף?"  
"כן" - השיב האיש - "אבל הוא שלי".

"הוא היה עטוף בשתי צרורות" - נתנה האשה את הסימנים.

"כן" - הסכים המוצא - "אבל הלכה היא, שאדם שמצא כסף בעיר שרובה גויים הוא שלו, משתי סבות: האחת, משום שמסתבר שהמאבד הוא גוי, והשניה, משום שכלל הנראה המאבד התייאש, כי שער שגוי ימצא את זה ולעולם לא יחזיר. ואם זו ההלכה, הרי שהכסף שמצאתי שייך לי בדיון! ואין שום סיבה שאחזיר לך אותו".

האשה צעקה: "רחם עלי, הכסף אינו שלי!" אבל הוא בשלך.

לבסוף הלכו שניהם אל רבי יצחק אלחנן ספקטור, רבה של קובנא. הרב שמע את טענות האשה, ולאחר מכן את דברי המוצא, שטען: "היא צועקת שארחם עליה, ואני כמובן, מרחם עליה, אך לא יותר מאשר אני מרחם על ילדי שלי... חלילה לי מלגעת ברכות שאינו שלי, אבל רכוש שמצד ההלכה הוא שלי - אין סיבה שאותר עליה משום רחמים... בביתי ארבע בנות מתבגרות, וסבור אני שרחמים עליהם קודמים לרחמים על אותה אשה זרה".

רבי יצחק אלחנן הורה לו להחזיר מיד את הכסף ואמר כי אחר כך יסביר לו מדוע, ואכן לאחר שהחזיר אמר לו: "כל הסיבה לדיון 'הרי אלו שלי' הוא משום שבודאי הבעלים כבר התייאש, אך במקרה זה הכסף אינו של האשה, אלא של בעלה, ומאחר שבעלה כלל אינו יודע שהוא אבד את הכסף, אין היא בעלת הבית על היאוש כלל! וממילא הכסף אינו שלך".

בשלב זה הרים ה"חזון איש" את עיני קדשו אל הבחור השבור שמולו ואמר: "וכי אתה בעל הבית להתייאש?? וכי אתה בעל הבית על העולם?? הלא העולם הוא של הקב"ה, וכל זמן שהוא הבעלים, הרי שאין מקום לייאוש כלל".

"מכח זה" - סיים רבי יעקב גלינסקי את ספורו - "אזרתי את האמונה והבטחון שאם הקב"ה רוצה שאעלה על המטוס, אין מקום לייאוש! הוא הבעלים - והוא המחליט".

ואף אנו צריכים לדעת, שאין מקום לייאוש על מצבו, הבה ונתן לבורא העולם "לסדר" את העולם באופן הטוב ביותר, ונתמקד במה שאנו צריכים לעשות - בידיעה שאין לנו חיים ללא התורה הקדושה, ובדבקות האמיתית באבינו שבשמים.

**ויאמרו, כל אשר-דבר ד' נעשה ונשמע (כד, ז).** ברגע שמבינים שאשר דבר ד' שהכל מאת ד' יכולים לומר נעשה ונשמע, מובא בומתוק האור, סיפר הרב פרידמן מרכסים, כי הוא הזדמן לנסיעה לארצות הברית דרך אירופה בשנים עברו, כאשר כרטיסי הטיסה היו בעלי ספח המיועד לתלישה בידי הפקיד.

הוא מצא את עצמו עומד מאחורי הגאון רבי יעקב גלינסקי זצ"ל, והנה הוא רואה, שהפקיד מעיף מבט אל הכרטיס וכשמבט חמור סבר בעיניו הוא אור לו: "איך יכול לנסוע, חסרה כאן חתימה".

רבי יעקב לא הבין אנגלית, אבל את הבעיה הבין גם הבין. הוא הסתובב אל הרב פרידמן ואמר לו: "תגיד לו, שאם ה' רוצה - אני אהיה שם".

הרב פרידמן לא אמר דבר, בחשש מה הוא התקרב והגיש את הכרטיס שלו לפקיד, ובאנחת רוחה ראה שהפקיד מאשר לו את הכניסה.

"התפללתי ערבית במנין שהתארגן במקום" - ממשיך הרב פרידמן בספורו - "ולאחר מכן עליתי למטוס, כשלתדהמתי אני מגלה את רבי יעקב ישוב שם.

כשראה אותי אמר: 'נו, אמרתי לך שאם ה' ירצה אני אהיה כאן? אתה רואה שאסור לה-תיאש?'

שב כאן, ואספר לך מנין שאבתי את האמונה הזו".

למדתי בביאליסטוק - פתח ואמר - לאחר הסכם ריבנטרופ-מולוטוב נשארה ליטא חופשית, אך עד מהרה נכבשו הרוסים את המקום והחלו להתנכל לבני הישיבות, ולא חלף זמן רב עד שכולנו הועלנו לרכבת בדרך לסיביר.

נסענו במשך עשרה ימים או יותר כבהמות... הרוסים לא הרשו לצאת מן הקרון אפילו לצרכים הבסיסיים ביותר, והסבל היה בל יתואר. ואז עצרה הרכבת בסיביר, והבנו כי יכול להיות גרוע יותר.

חמש עשרה שנה היינו בסיביר, כלואים ללא כל סיבה נראית לעין. לא ידענו, שהמאסר בפינה הקפואה הזו מציל אותנו ממות בטוח בתאי הגזים של הנאצים האחרים, אשר במבצע ברברוסה נכבשו את כל רוסיה עד סטלינגרד.

בכל אותן שנים ארוכות ומייסרות היה לי חלום אחד שולח אותי תמיד - יום אחד, כך חלמתי, אצא מכאן ואז אפגוש את אמא שלי... אנשק את ידה ואומר לה: "אמא, אמא שלי, תודה רבה לך עלשחטת את פרוסת הלחם האחרונה שלך, כדי לשכור לי מלמד טוב".

אבל כשהגעתי לבסוף לארץ, לא פגשתי את אמא שלי, ולא את אבא, לא את אחי ולא את אחיותי - כולם, כולם נותרו שם, דוממים וקפואים לנצח...

כשהטרדיה נודעה לי - לא רציתי לחיות יותר. לא ידעתי מה לעשות עם עצמי, והייתי אפוף בייאוש מוחלט. לבסוף יעץ לי מישהו ללכת ל"חזון איש", ואני שמעתי לעצתו והלכתי.

ה"חזון איש" שמע את כל מה שהיה לי לומר, ואמר לי: אני רוצה לספר לך סיפור:

בליטא חי יהודי שקט ורגוע, שעסק לפרנסתו במסחר. מידי שנה בשנה היה היהודי לווה סכום כסף גדול, נוסע ליריד לקובנא, שם היה מחדש את כל מאגרי הסחורה שלו, ובמהלך השנה כולה היה מוכר את הסחורה שקנה, מכסה את ההלוואה שלקח, ומפרנס בכבוד את בני ביתו. באחת השנים, לאחר שדאג לעצמו להלוואה, נפל היהודי למשכב, ושוב לא יכול היה לנסוע ליריד כהרגלו. בלית ברירה קרא לאשתו ואמר: ראי נא, יש דברים שאיני יכול לותר עליהם, ובכל זאת אין ביכולתי לנסוע, לכן אבקשך לקחת את הכסף ולנסוע במקומי.



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# Stories for Shabbos



## The Power of Reciting Birkat Hamazon from a Bentcher

Rabbi Yoel Gold told a story about a sofer—scribe who had an incredible experience with Hashgacha Peratit—Divine Providence. Shortly after the stampede tragedy in Meron, Chaim Ganz, the sofer, took it upon himself to visit some of the people that had lost family members at the event, because he had recently lost his five-year-old daughter and wanted to give them some *nechama—comfort*. The first family he went to visit happened to be his neighbors, the Zeckbach family, who lost their young son Menachem. He was a 24-year-old kollel boy who was recently married. When Chaim got to the house, he saw Birkat Hamazon cards on the table, and printed on them were the words: “The last will of Menachem Asher Zeckbach was to pray Birkat Hamazon out of a bentcher.” asked the family, “How could such a young boy have a will?” His family explained that Menachem took this upon himself 8 years before, and he was so meticulous about it, he never ever washed without knowing he had a Birkat Hamazon card available. Chaim was amazed, he went there to give *chizuk—strength*, and he ended up leaving strengthened. He decided to take on this mitzvah in memory of Menachem. Fast forward a few weeks later. Chaim was currently trying to find sofer opportunities, but every time he gave publishers a sample of his scribing, they told him it’s nice, but there’s something missing in his writing style. Dejected from all the rejection, he stopped in Bnei Brak at a bakery and bought a bagel for lunch. He went to the apartment that was provided for community sofrim to write. He washed, ate, and quickly realized he didn’t have a Birkat Hamazon card or siddur. He looked all through the apartment to find one, and finally found a card printed in sofer scribing. The writing and symbols were a vintage style and really interesting. After he prayed, inspired, he rewrote a page from his book sample and copied the letters from this Birkat Hamazon card. He spent hours copying them over. Not even five minutes after he finished, another sofer knocked on the door and entered the apartment. He saw Chaim there and said, “I was offered a project, but I’m swamped; I can’t do it. Do you want it?” Chaim said, “Of course, I’ve been looking for a new project!” The friend said, “Okay, but they need a sample of your work. Do you happen to have anything on you that I could give them today?” Amazed, Chaim handed over the freshly completed page, and his friend said he would go drop it off and let him know soon. Half an hour later, the friend called Chaim, “I’m here with the family and they’re absolutely blown away from your writing. They want to hire you to write a Sefer Torah.” Chaim was ecstatic! He said, “I’m in! What is this for?” His friend said, “There’s a rabbi in Boro Park, Rav Shmuel Dovid Friedman. He wants to help the families whose loved ones passed away in Meron. Every family who lost someone will get a Sefer Torah in their memory. You’ll be writing one for the Zeckbach family, in memory of Menachem Asher Zeckbach.” It was unbelievable! The whole story came full circle! It is written in the Sefer HaChinuch, “Anyone who is careful with saying Birkat Hamazon, will have his needs provided with honor and dignity.” Let’s all take a few minutes a day to say Birkat Hamazon with concentration to help instill our sense of gratitude, and to help remember that Hashem is in control. *Jack E. Rahmey as based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

## A Chicken in Every Pot

Mrs. Epstein was waiting in line at the butcher shop, and when at last her turn came two youngsters entered the store. “You won’t mind waiting a few more minutes, will you, Mrs. Epstein?” the butcher asked. “I’ll be done with these kids in a moment.” She did mind, as she was very tired, but didn’t say anything. She watched as the butcher proceeded to gather up chicken legs, gizzards, necks and other leftover parts, weigh the entire mess and scoop it all into a bag. He handed the bag to the children, and the older of the two said, “Please put it on our account.” Mrs. Epstein was appalled. Didn’t the butcher earn enough without having to charge obviously needy people for the garbage he would have discarded? Too weary to engage in a heated discussion, she allowed the issue to pass...until the following week, when precisely the same incident transpired. “How can you do such a thing?” Mrs. Epstein demanded of the butcher. “I’ll tell you,” the butcher replied. “Their mother had been a good customer for many years, when suddenly her husband fell ill. He couldn’t pay his bills, mine included, but I couldn’t allow a family with nine children to starve, could I? I carried them for month after month, until their account stretched back over three years. It was a tidy sum, and I couldn’t afford to carry them much longer. So I started saving all the trimmings that would normally be discarded, and I’d give it to them for Shabbat. Each week, they tell me to put it on their account, and each week I...don’t. Oh, sure I weigh it and make a show of entering the amount in my book, but only to maintain their dignity.” Tears welled up in Mrs. Epstein’s eyes - tears of pity for the needy family and tears of shame for misjudging the kindly butcher. She opened her purse and pulled out her checkbook. “I want you to send two chickens to them at once,” she said, “not only today, but every Friday. But you must never reveal my identity to them.” The butcher happily complied, and knowing Mrs. Epstein was a woman of very modest means herself, charged her well below the wholesale price. But the story doesn’t end here. When Mrs. Epstein related her tale to a friend, that friend also withdrew her checkbook, anxious to participate in this beautiful misvah. “It’s funny you should do that,” Mrs. Epstein said, “because this story actually took place a number of years ago, and everyone to whom I’ve related it has reacted in an identical fashion. Baruch Hashem, I now have nineteen families whom I supply with Shabbat chickens, and countless anonymous people who generously share my misvah with me. And all because of my failure to judge my fellow man favorably! All too often, failures like Mrs. Epstein’s do not have such positive results. Our Sages have affirmed that the way one judges his fellow man is the way G-d will judge him. This, along with the fact that it is a positive commandment from the Torah, should be sufficient incentive to judge others favorably. Inevitably, observance of this misvah also makes for a happier life. (*A Midrash and a Ma’aseh*) Rabbi David Bibi’s *Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace*

## Incident in a Book Store in Meah Shearim in Jerusalem

A man, who we’ll call Reuven, was shopping for sefarim in a book store in Meah Shearim. He picked up a sefer and started flipping through it. Then he noticed, out of the corner of his eye, that a man (who we’ll call Shimon) was facing him from the other side of the store, and appeared to be staring at him. Reuven looked into the sefer and tried to ignore him, but he began to feel uncomfortable. A few moments later, Reuven felt a tap on his shoulder. He looked up and saw Shimon standing right in front of him, with that same staring look. Shimon said, “Excuse me, but are

you planning on buying this sefer? Reuven was a bit startled, and said, "Yes. Do you have a problem with that?" Shimon said, "Please forgive me. I don't want to be nosy, but if you are planning on buying it, please let me pay for it." This caught Reuven by surprise. "Why would you want to do that?" he asked. Simon answered, "I am blind. I will never again be able to study Torah from the sefarim that meant so much to me. I want to pay for your sefer so that you will learn from it as much as possible. When your eyes become tired and you are ready to close the sefer, please think of me and keep it open a little longer." Reuven's eyes began to tear, and he accepted Shimon's offer. The storekeeper later confirmed that Shimon would routinely do this a few times a week to various customers. This was his way of continuing to learn Torah. Reuven resolved that he would not put that sefer down lightly. When he would be tired, he would push himself to learn a little more. After a while, this attitude spread to his other learning as well. He had a new appreciation of his ability to see, and the value of learning from a sefer took on a new meaning for him. Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.

### Switching the Shiur (Class) to English

At one of the Shabbos meals at an Agudah convention, Rabbi Shlomo Soroka, the director of government affairs at the Agudah of Illinois, introduced his Rebbi, Rav Elya Brudny, Shlit"a, with a story. He had been a Talmid in Rav Brudny's Shiur in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn, and as is typical in many Yeshivos, the Shiur was given in Yiddish. However, one day Rav Brudny suddenly switched the language of the Shiur to English, which surprised the Talmidim, & some of them even protested. The next day, some Bochorim organized an official letter asking Rav Brudny to resume giving the Shiur in Yiddish, which was passed around to all the boys in the Shiur for them to sign. When the letter reached Shlomo Soroka for his signature, he was stunned that this was being done. He reprimanded the organizers and said, "Rebbi didn't forget how to speak Yiddish. If he decided to switch to English, he must have had a good reason for it," and the matter was put aside. Rabbi Soroka then explained to the convention that in fact, he knew there was a Bochor in the Shiur who had been struggling to keep up with the Shiur, precisely because it was delivered in Yiddish. When Rav Brudny found out this, he called over the Bochor & told him that he would be switching the Shiur to be in English. Rav Brudny explained, "By me, Yiddish is a Hiddur Mitzvah, but it's not the only way it has to be. If a Talmid will only be able to grasp the Shiur if it's in English, then that will be the language it will be delivered in." "I know this story," Rabbi Soroka said, "because I was that Bochor!" Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.



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# JOKES

## THE END OF THE BRISKET

A young woman was preparing a brisket dinner. After she cut off the end of the brisket, she placed it in a pan for baking.

Her friend asked her, "Why did you cut off the end of the brisket?"

And she replied, I really don't know but my mother always did, so I thought you were supposed to.

Later when talking to her mother she asked her why she cut off the end of the brisket before baking it, and her mother replied, I really don't know, but that's the way my mom always did it.

A few weeks later while visiting her grandmother, the young woman asked, Grandma, why is it that you cut off the end of a brisket before you bake it

Her grandmother replied, Well dear, otherwise it would never fit into my baking pan.

## LONG WINDED

A man was giving a speech at a corporate meeting. He got a bit carried away and talked for two hours. Finally, he realized what he had done and said, "I'm sorry I talked so long. I left my watch at home."

A voice from the back of the room replied, "There's a calendar behind you..."

## IF THE PILGRIMS WERE ALIVE

In class, the teacher was trying desperately to get the students to think. He asked, "If the Pilgrims were alive today, what would they be most famous for?" "One student quickly responded, "Their age."

## IT'S ONLY HUMAN

"I've created a new computer that is almost human."

"You mean that it can think, feel and reason just like a human would?"

"No, but when it makes a mistake it blames it on another computer."

## CAR ID

A man was annoyed when his wife told him that a car had backed into her, damaging a fender, and that she hadn't gotten the license number. What kind of car was he driving? the husband asked.

I don't know, she said. I never can tell one car from another. At that, the man decided the time had come for a learning course, and for the next few days, whenever they were driving, he made her name each car they passed until he was satisfied that she could recognize every make.

It worked.

About a week later she bounded in with a pleased expression on her face. You'll be so proud of me, she said. I hit a Buick!

## CANNIBALS...

Several cannibals were recently hired by a major PR firm.

"You are all part of our team now," said the HR rep during the welcoming briefing. "You get all the usual benefits and you can go to the cafeteria for something to eat, but please don't eat any of the other employees."

The cannibals promised to be good. Four weeks later their boss remarked, "You're all working very hard, and I'm satisfied with you. However, one of our secretaries has disappeared. Do any of you know what happened to her?"

The cannibals all shook their heads no.

After the boss had left, the leader of the cannibals said to the others, "Which one of you idiots ate the secretary?"

A hand raised hesitantly, to which the leader of the cannibals continued, "You fool! For four weeks we've been eating Managers and no one noticed anything, but noooooo, you had to go and eat the secretary!"

## THE SAINT

There were two evil brothers. They were rich and used their money to keep their ways from the public eye. They even attended the same synagogue and looked to be perfect. Then, their Rabbi retired and a new one was hired. Not only could he see right through the brothers' deception, but he also spoke well and true, and the synagogue started to swell in numbers.

A fundraising campaign was started to build a new building. All of a sudden, one of the brothers died. The remaining brother sought out the new Rabbi the day before the funeral and handed him a check for the amount needed to finish paying for the new building.

"I have only one condition," he said. "At his funeral, you must say my brother was a saint."

The Rabbi gave his word and deposited the check.

The next day at the funeral, the Rabbi did not hold back. "He was an evil man," he said. "He cheated in business and was completely corrupt." After going on in this vein for a small time, he concluded with, "But, compared to his brother, he was a saint."





Rabbi Fried

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# HOW BEST TO HEAR MEGILLAH

## FROM A MEGILLAH OR FROM A CHUMASH?

### HEARING EVERY WORD FROM THE MEGILLAH

There are different halachos that pertain to reading and listening to Megillas Esther. Some of them are only preferable – lichatchila – and some are a must, and one is not yotzei otherwise.

The Shulchan Aruch (690:3) writes that there are two important points that one must know for reading the megillah. Firstly, one must be sure to hear the entire megillah – every single word – otherwise he is not yotzei. In addition, it must be read from a kosher megillah. However, the Mechaber adds that if up to half of the megillah is missing, or if the baal korei read up to half by heart, they are still yotzei. In other words, reading every word is a must, but reading the entire thing from a megillah is not, and up to half can be read by heart.

In regards to the first rule, the Mishna Berura (690:5) tells us clearly: if the baal korei missed even one word he is not yotzei. Further on (690:48), he adds that the same would apply if the listener missed a word, he is also not yotzei. In both of these cases, one has to hear the megillah again.

Does the second kria need to be with another brocha? The Biur Halacha (690:4) writes that this may depend on which word was missed. If it was a word that changes the meaning, such as if he skipped the word “לא” from the phrase “לא יעברו”, which changes the meaning, he is definitely not yotzei and must read over with a brocha. On the other hand, if he missed a word that doesn’t change the meaning, then some hold that you are yotzei, and one should still read again, but without a brocha.

### ASERES BNEI HAMAN

Since one must be sure to hear every word, the Yesod V’Shoresh Ha’Avoda points out that this may be the reason for the minhag that many have that everyone recites the aseres bnei haman, and then the baal korei reads them. The halacha states that the aseres bnei hamna should all be read in one breath. In order to accomplish this feat, the baal korei often reads it very quickly, and it is hard to hear every word, which will be a problem, since hearing every word is a must. In order to ensure that everyone is yotzei, everyone reads it first, that way every word was heard, at least from a chumash.

However, as we explained the correct way to be

yotzei is from a kosher megillah, and that is why the baal korei repeats it, so that we can hopefully hear every word from the megillah. This is similar to what the Rama writes (690:4) in regards to the four special pesukim that everyone reads before the baal korei. Since we want to fulfill the mitzvah in the correct way, the baal korei reads over these pesukim, so that everyone will hear the pesukim read from a kosher megillah.

Similarly, the Kaf Hachaim (690:97) points out that the baal korei should be careful to read each “v’es” from the megillah, and to be sure that he reads the correct “v’es” for each one of the bnei Haman.

### SUMMARY

We have thus far established that the reading of every word is a must, but although one should read every word from the megillah, one is yotzei if he reads up to half not from the megillah.

*Comments and questions are welcome and can be sent to: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com.*

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תצוה - כי תשא  
7:15 pm - 9:15 pm

ויקהל/פקודי - ויקרא  
8:30 pm - 10:30 pm

צו - חול המועד פסח  
9:00 pm - 11:00 pm

In 18 Main Beis Medrash

**בית מדרש אור חיים**  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

**BESURAH TOVA!**

**NEW MOTZEI  
SHABBOS MAARIV  
AT 60 MINUTES  
AFTER SHKIAH**

This will be in addition to all of the other Maariv Minyanim

**בית מדרש אור חיים**  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

**שובבי"ם**

מנחה עם קריאת ויחל

Every Thursday  
1:00pm  
Tent ב

For more information about this Minyan reach out to  
R' Asher Benedict at 845 659 3982

**בית מדרש אור חיים**  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

**יום כיפור קטן**  
ערב ר"ח אדר

יום ב' פרשת תרומה - Monday Feb 20

12:30pm  
1:00 - with Krias Vayechal Tent 7  
1:30  
2:30  
3:30  
4:30  
5:00  
5:30 - Shekia

**Tent ב**  
Open עזרת נשים

**בית מדרש אור חיים**  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

**שובבי"ם PROJECT**

סדר לימוד שעות רצופות  
בערבי שבתות שובבי"ם לפנות בוקר

בבית המדרש אור חיים  
18 Forshay - Tent T

**4:00 - 7:00 am**

מתן שכרה בצדה  
יחלק בכל שבוע

For More info call 845-587-3462 ext. 7  
For Transportation Press 7-3-2

**כולל זכרון אפרים**  
תלמידי אפרים בן יצחק שנתמכד"ק

Just so you should know....

**WE LOVE CHASSIDIM!**

by "The Segments"

**בס"ד**

**211 DAYS UNTIL UMAN**

**בס"ד**

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please email us at [betsuggestions@gmail.com](mailto:betsuggestions@gmail.com)