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בית מדרש אור חיים  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM



OUR BELOVED RABBI  
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# פסח שני

14<sup>TH</sup> IYAR SUNDAY NIGHT APRIL  
25<sup>TH</sup> - MONDAY APRIL 26<sup>TH</sup>



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**YOUTH  
MINYAN**

9:30 SHACHRIS



PARASHAT ACHAREI MOT

There is a minhag in Am Yisrael, namely by the Sefardim, not to cut challah or any bread with a knife but rather rip it by hand. The reason given is that bread represents life and a knife represents the taking of life...

The Zohar on Daf 57a in Parashat Acharei presents a question on the pasuk "Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they approached before Hashem, and they died." The pasuk already said the death of Aaron's two sons, why was it repeated again at the end of the pasuk? The Zohar explained that they had two deaths; one Hashem took them away and second that they did not have

children.

How sad it must have been for Aaron to live through this. How painful it is for a person that has never married and has no children. But there is something even more painful and that is creating life and letting it go to waste. Having children, yet not helping them reach their potential. A wasted life is worse than no life.

As we say goodbye to the month of Nissan and the yom tov of Pesach, the lesson we should take is very clear. The beauty of the Chag is our focus on the children. The holiday commemorates the birth of the Jewish people and is a time when the emphasis is only the children. We need to engage them in conversation of meaning and that is via story telling. Understand that there were always four types of children and each is different but very special. Even the Rasha needs to be answered. Remember, it is "vehegadeta lebincha" don't fall into the trap of "vehegadeta leavicha" that the child does all the talking and explaining. Now that the holiday is behind us we should carry this experience forward. It is our responsibility to educate and we need to prepare and show an example. The challenge of having a school system like today is we forget that it's not the obligation of the Rebbe the Morah or the principal to teach our children.

May we be zoche to see much nachas from our children and may they always follow the ways of Hashem.

Weekday Minyanim
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During the summer months Mincha & Maariv Later Plag Minyan
Sunday-Thursday
פרשת אומר
Mincha 7:10
Maariv 7:20
Tent ג
\*Remember to repeat קריאת שמע

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1:29, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi
EPHRAIM YUROWITZ
Tzvi Blech : Gabbai Sheini

SHABBOS ZMANIM table with columns for service name and time. Includes Candle Lighting, Mincha, Shachris, and Maariv.

WEEKDAY ZMANIM table with columns for service name and time. Includes Shachris, Mincha & Mariv, and Maariv.

WEEKDAY MINYANIM
שחרית, מנחה ומעריב, מצעריב
Includes detailed service times for weekdays and a calendar for April 25-30.

BLUEBERRY HILL ZMANIM
EREV SHABBOS PLAG MINYAN 30 Dr. Frank Rd. Entrance on Humbert
MINCHA 6:00 PLAG 6:20



# LAG B'OMER & SCP

My dear daughter Devora turned to me with a question about Lag B'Omer. Why do we light the fires if we aren't burning anything? I liked the question but found it somewhat difficult to explain the significance of the fires to an 8 year old. In truth, the explanation is not a simple one even for a 50 year old. The issue is discussed by many poskim and parshanim who searched for the true meaning of the fires. Adding to this enigma is the fact that in the past and perhaps still today there is a custom to burn coats in the fires at Meron. This has also lead to a Halachik discussion regarding when and if one can destroy an item for any purpose, especially a spiritual one.

I would like to share a thought that surfaced at our Monday night Semichas Chaver class on Hilchos Shabbas. The topic that we are delving into is fascinating and applicable to the subject presented above. It is brought up in Simchah 302 which discusses what and when one is permitted to wash or clean on Shabbas. Every Shabbas there are spills on tablecloths, stains on dresses and dust on hats and the question always arises as to what can be done about these on Shabbas. The answers differ depending on whether you are Sefardi or Ashkenazi and they are discussed at the weekly shiur. However I would like to focus on the deeper message that is hidden behind the malacha of melaben which is basically interpreted by the Rishonim and Achronim to mean beautification of one's garments. I introduced some interpretations in last week's article but would like to now add some additional thoughts.

The concept of washing clothes is found in the Torah especially when one is trying to cleanse oneself from a Tumah - im-

purity-- that he has contracted. Here is a consideration worthy of contemplating: Clothing in Hebrew is called beged. The same letters can also refer to being a traitor. Rashi brings this idea in the pasuk concerning Yaakov and Eisav " וירח (יעקב) את ריח בגדיו ". Chazal say the reference can be to his בגדיו. What is the connection between the two?

Let's go back to Adam and Chava. After they sinned Hashem gave them clothing made of leather. Before that they had כתנות אור--their skin was so to speak their clothing. In the halachik laws of washing clothing there is actually a discussion amongst the poskim that perhaps one isn't allowed to wash himself just like he should not wash his clothing because after all our skin is a form of beged as I mentioned above. This does not mean that you can't wash yourself on Shabbas. After all how would you wash for Challah? However, there is something very interesting here that we can learn.

I believe that our outer clothing is really a mashal to our spiritual cleanliness. The Mesilat Yesharim has a whole chapter on נקיית and perhaps the idea is that by removing the dirt from our clothing we are removing our spiritual filth or even better returning to the same state as when we "wore" the כתנות אור of אדם ראשון.

We can now beautifully apply this to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who even in the famous song about him mentions his connection to אדם הראשון. It also recalls the strange story of Rashbi and his son who hid in the cave for 13 years and saw incredible spiritual miracles including the carob tree that turned into a date tree. But why, we are lead to wonder, did they take off their

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18 Main Bais Medrash

פרשת אחרי מות-קדושים

10:00pm

clothing when they were learning in the cave and only wore them for davening? Surely it was in order to preserve their clothing. You can say that they didn't want to rely on miracles but maybe based on the above we can look at it differently. While in this special cave for 13 years they were removing their outer soiled garments and donning the more spiritual clothing of Adam Ha Rishon. This may explain the custom of burning even expensive and honorable clothing in the fires of Lag B'Omer to express our yearning and desire to transform from בגדיו--being traitors--and not living up to our mission in life-- to בגדים-- spiritual people on the level of Adam Ha Rishon.

I hope these days leading up to Lag B'Omer and afterwards will become transformative days for all of Klal Yisrael both collectively and individually and may we merit to once again receive the Torah with total purity together with Mashiach Tzidkainu Bimhera Beyameinu, Amen.

Shabbat Shalom

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Rabbi Aaron Lankry  
Marah D'asra

305-332-3311 | alankry@yahoo.com

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דוב"צ - מנכ"ל שיווק

914-645-4199 | rabbidac@gmail.com

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner  
Rabbinic Coordinator,

Rosh Kollel, Kollel Boker & Night Kollel  
845-372-6618 | rabbischeinert@18forshay.com

Uri Follman  
Manager

845 587 3462 | manager@18forshay.com



## RELIGIOUS BUT VULGAR

*A Degenerate Sanctioned by Torah*

### *Four Mitzvos and a Slice of Fish*

In a small town in Eastern Europe, a poor beggar once approached the home of an extremely wealthy but very stingy man. "Sir, I haven't had a morsel of food in more than two days," he said. "Can you please spare something to eat?"

"My home was not made for losers like yourself," the miser replied. "Why don't you go to the synagogue? There they will surely feed you!"

But the poor man pleaded. "Please, I beg you, I have no strength left. If I don't eat something now, I will die. Please, give me any food you have in the home."

The rich man took from the garbage an old, rotten and smelly piece of fish and gave it to the beggar, who consumed it within a few seconds. As the poor man thanked his host and left the home, he collapsed in the street. They rushed him to the local hospital.

That evening, after returning home from the evening services in the synagogue, the wealthy man informed his wife that he would be leaving and return later at night. "The poor man who ate in our home suddenly fell ill, and he was taken to the hospital. I must go visit him and fulfill the great mitzvah of visiting the sick."

The following morning, after returning home from the synagogue's morning service, the man told his wife: "I have a busy day today. In the synagogue they announced that the poor beggar died early this morning, and that his funeral would take place at 2 p.m. I must attend the funeral of this man and perform the extraordinary mitzvah of escorting the dead on their final journey."

That evening, after returning home from synagogue, the wealthy man informed his wife once again that he would be out late. "At the funeral they announced that the deceased beggar was survived by a son. I must go pay him a shivah call and perform the great mitzvah of comforting a person who is in mourning."

When the wealthy man returned that night from the shivah call, his face was beaming with joy. His entire countenance radiated with happiness. The man was simply kvelling.

"What are you so happy about?" his wife asked him. "What was so exciting about visiting an orphan sitting shivah?"

To which the wealthy miser replied: "How could I not be overjoyed when I think of how many tremendous mitzvos I performed with merely one small stinky piece of fish!"

"Think about it. With one decayed slice of fish, I achieved four of the most extraordinary mitzvos: hospitality to the poor, visiting the sick, escorting the dead and comforting the mourning. Ah! How happy I feel."

### *An Ego Trip*

This satirical episode depicts, of course, the profile of a man who may consider himself to be very religious, but who totally doesn't get it; an individual who may technically follow the laws, but who is absolutely alienated from G-d's truth and from the very definition of holiness; a person for whom religion is merely a self-centered obnoxious ego trip, rather than a challenge to transcend the superficial, base and depraved aspects of the human personality and touch the divine within himself and his fellow human beings.

It is against this type of "religious" person that the Bible warns us in the beginning of the second Torah portion of this week, Kedoshim.

"Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel," G-d tells Moses, "and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, your G-d."

What is the meaning of this commandment to "be holy"? What does it mean to be holy? How does one become holy?

One of the greatest biblical commentators, the 13th century Spanish sage, Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, known as Nachmanides or Ramban, maintains that the injunction to be holy is not to observe any particular commandment. Rather, it is an instruction that relates to the entire weltanschauung of the Jew, to the core of his lifestyle, to his very perception of self.

### *In Nachmanides' own words:*

"The meaning of this ("be holy") is that since the Torah has cautioned (in the previous Torah portion) against forbidden promiscuous relations and against forbidden foods, while permitting intimacy in a marriage and eating meat and wine, the gluttonous person can find a place to wallow in fornication with his wife or wives and become one of the guzzlers of wine and the gluttons of meat. He may converse at will about all types of licentious things, since no prohibition against this is specified in the Torah. He can be a degenerate with the permission of the Torah. Therefore, after enumerating the things which it forbids entirely, the Torah declares, 'Be holy.' Constrain yourself also in that which is permitted."

"A degenerate with the permission of the Torah!" What a dramatic and moving expression coming from the quill of a 13th-century sage occupied most of his time with defending his Spanish brethren from Christian Jew-haters. Nachmanides is crying out against religious smugness and egocentricity, against Torah-sanctioned vulgarity. He views this verse as a divine protest against the individual who may technically perform all the laws and rituals, but still remains coarse and vulgar. He

may have learned Torah, but the Torah has taught him nothing. His inner beastliness and selfishness have never been refined; his bias and crudeness never challenged. G-d, for this individual, is an object of his own making, not an invitation to infinity, mystery and transcendence.

Religion, we all know, can be a crutch allowing us to remain stuck in our bubble, secure in the consistency of ritual, yet unready to challenge our core narcissism and listen deeply to another human being. Dogmatic ritual can give us the sense that we are good and holy, while we remain crude, crass and delusional, never asking the ultimate G-dly question, "What have I given up for someone else?" Even our kindness can become superficial, false and self-serving. We engage in kindness, or "chesed," so that we can tell ourselves we are good and that we will merit a seat in "the world to come."

Perhaps we will. But that place in the "world to come" will smell as bad as that piece of fish...

"Be Holy" is the eternal call to challenge the status quo of our nature, to remember that religion may have little to do with G-d and to recall that serving G-d is not merely a ticket to paradise. It is the daily battle for transcendence; a daily battle to go beyond the superficiality of mundane existence, and the confines of the insecure ego; a daily battle to find the unifying light within.

To be sure, self-deception is not the exclusive purview of religious people. All of us, regardless of our level of outer religiosity, find it much easier to engage in a huge amount of self-deception to maintain our self image as "good people" than to actually challenge our baser, more selfish instincts. "Religious people" are not the only ones who sometimes don't get it; all of us are in danger of becoming stuck in the quagmire of our psyche's comfort zones, too lazy or scared to confront the hard questions. Yet, for those of us who call ourselves religious, the injunction "be holy" reminds us that G-d must always be synonymous with truth, integrity and inner refinement. Vulgarity in the name of religion is a sin all its own.

Careful we must be not to use religion as a tool to eclipse our insecurities and selfishness. The first and foremost definition of G-d is that He has no definition and thus must inculcate us with an endless sense of humility and wonder.

## UFARATZTA

**Ani Hashem Rofecha**

*REFUAH: STUTTER*

*At the end of a letter the Rebbe writes:*

*P. S. Adding Betochoh in Hashem has a specific positive effect on a speech stutter.*

==== Igros kodesh V30 P44





## Bein Adam Lachaveiro or Bein Adam Lamakom

In Vayikra 19:13 the posuk tells us that one is not allowed to hold back a paycheck from his worker for even a single night. The Biur Halacha in Hilchos Shabbos 242:1 says that if a person has very little money and his worker is coming to collect his paycheck and by giving him the paycheck, he will not have enough to buy food for Shabbos, he should pay his worker and not have food for Shabbos. The reason for this is that paying a worker on time is a De'Oraysa, whereas eating a meal on Shabbos is MiDivrei Kabala. Even according to the poskim that hold that seudas Shabbos is a de'Oraysa, nevertheless, not paying someone involves a mitzvas asseh and a mitzvas lo sa'aseh. The mitzvas asseh of eating a seuda on Shabbos will not be docheh a lo sa'aseh and an asseh of paying someone on time.

How can we resolve what we discussed above with the fact that a mitzvah bein adam laMakom takes precedence over a mitzvah bein adam lechaveiro? The Gemara in Bava Metziya 30a says that if a Kohen finds a lost object in the cemetery, he is forbidden to return the lost object to the owner. We do not say that the asseh of returning a lost object will be docheh the lo sa'aseh of a Kohen not becoming tamei. We are not docheh an issur for money. The Ramban explains the reason for this is since hashavas aveida is a mitzvah of bein adam lechaveiro, the owner of the lost object has to be mochel his money so the Kohen should not be oveir on the issur of tumah. Why don't we say in the case of the worker that he should forgive his boss so his boss should be able to eat seudas Shabbos?

In the Pri Megadim 128:3 we see the opposite. In the case where a Kohen is going to do Birchas Kohanim for the first time that day and he has the mitzvah of hashavas aveida available before him, then it will depend on the machlokes of whether Birchas Kohanim is one mitzvah or three mtzvos, since each bracha is a separate mitzvah. If we say there are three mitzvos, then it will take precedence over the one mitzvah of hashavas aveida. If we consider Birchas Kohanim to be a single mitzvah, then the mitzvah of hashavas aveida takes precedence, despite the fact that Birchas Kohanim is bein adam laMakom and hashavas aveida is bein adam lechaveiro.

We could differentiate that in a case where someone borrowed money from a friend in order to bury a meis mitzvah, it would stand to reason that he can't tell the person to whom he owes money to be mochel since he is doing the mitzvah of meis mitzvah. The person who lent him the money could say I want to do a different mitzvah with my money. The same logic would apply in the case of paying his worker on time. The worker is not required to be mochel the fact that he should get his paycheck on time so that his boss should be able to be mekayem a mitzvah. He may say I am ready to do a different mitzvah with my money. But in the case of hashavas aveida, where he is not taking from his friend as he just does not pick up the object, then perhaps his friend needs to understand that the person finding it may have another mitzvah obligation, so he does not need to pick up the lost object.

May we be zocheh to be mekayim Shabbos and hashavas aveida properly!



# Pesach Sheni

April 26 is Pesach Sheni - the 14th of Iyar. During the time of the Beit HaMikdash it on this date that those who were unable to participate in the Pesach service were able to bring a "make-up" Korban Pesach and then, that that evening, (the beginning of the 15th of Iyar), would eat it together with matzah and maror [Bamidbar 9:1-14].

## But what about today, when tragically we do not have a Beit HaMikdash?

Chasidim have a custom to eat matzah on Pesach Sheni. However, while the prevalent custom is to eat matzah on the 14th of Iyar in commemoration of Korban Pesach (just as the afikomen on the night of the seder is a matzah eaten in commemoration of the Korban Pesach) there are those who maintain that the matzah should also be eaten on the same day as they once ate matzah - on the 15th of Iyar [See Darchei Chaim v'Shalom 531]. In fact, some Chasidim (Amshinov, Nadvorna, Kamarna) even drank four cups of wine [Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:57 note 16]. However, the Vilna Gaon did not eat matzah on this date, and Rabbi Ephraim Greenblatt reports that the same was the case in Lithuanian Jewish communities [Maaseh Rav 181, Rivevot Ephraim 2:129].

Most communities do not recite tachanun despite the fact that this custom is not mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch [see Shaarei Teshuva Orech Chiam 131:19 and Aruch HaShulchan Orech Chaim 131:12]. Some communities also omit tachanun on the 15th [Nimukei Orech Chaim 131:6 in the name of the students of the Arizal]; and some even do so for an entire week [Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:57 note 8]!

A lesser-known custom on Pesach Sheni is a Sefardic custom to celebration ("hilula") at the grave of Rabbi Meir Baal HaNes in Tiberias similar to the Lag Ba'Omer celebration at the grave of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai [Sdei Chemed c.v. Eretz Yisrael paragraph 6]. It is suggested that the timing of this celebration is that this is his Yahrtzeit or that the first synagogue at his gravesite was dedicated on Pesach Sheni





## On Saying Tachanun

We know that when Klal Yisrael left Har Sinai after being there for about a year they were criticized for leaving K'tinuk Haborai'ach Mibais Hasefer. That is what Tosafos says in Shabbos 116a (כתינוק (היוצא מבית הספר שבורח לו והולך לו and that is the Pur'onios of the Hefsek in our Parsha as is found in 10:33 (ויסעו מהר) (ירור). That they left K'tinuk Haborai'ach Mibais Hasefer, like a child who runs away from the Bais Hasefer.

Many have already pointed out that they left Har Sinai (על-פי ירור יחנו, ועל-פי ירור) (יסעו) Al Pi Hashem Yachanu Al Pi Hashem Yisa'u. They did not leave a moment earlier than HKB"H commanded them. They stayed at Har Sinai until the Ananei Hakavod signaled that they leave. So what does it mean K'tinuk Haborai'ach Mibais Hasefer?

Many of the Baalei Hamachshava explain and I will quote the language of Leket Sichos Mussar from Rav Isaac Sher on Parshas Behaloscha. He says the Aveiros of the Dor Hamidbar were sins not of action but sins of Kavana of Omeik Haleiv. It was a great generation. To think that those who stood at Har Sinai saw the Shechina and that while still at Har Sinai donated to a Mishkan and put up a Mishkan and saw the Shechina come down upon the Mishkan and after all that they are running away from the Bais Hasefer?

Zagt Rav Isaac Sher if that is the case what chance do we have, we didn't see Har Sinai we didn't build a Mishkan. Zagt Rav Isaac Sher it is a Klal in Limud Hamikra. The Aveiros of the Gedolim are Aveiros in Kavana of Omeik Haleiv. They didn't run away from Har Sinai, but when they left Har Sinai it should have been with more of a Gaguim. They should have been sorry to leave. They were missing the Kasha Alai Pri'daschem, the feeling that when it is time to leave from a place in which such astounding things occurred, it should be hard for me to leave and that was lacking. That was lacking perhaps because Klal Yisrael was eager to get to Eretz Yisrael. Still there should have been a feeling of reluctance. Kasha Alai Pri'daschem.

Rav Druk (in his Sefer Darash Mordechai



page # 108 second paragraph) brings this idea here at the beginning of Parshas B'haloscha and he says the same thing regarding Tachanun. He says our attitude regarding Tachanun is when there is a Chosson or a Bris Milah or a day on which we don't say Tachanun. Wonderful to people is a year on which Tu Bish'vat falls on a Monday or Thursday. No Tachanun. There is a certain joy in missing Tachanun. Zagt Rav Druk, Rau'i Lid'og Al Hefsed Hatachanun, it is appropriate to worry about not having said Tachanun. Who knows how many difficulties or calamities were averted by the saying of Tachanun. It is true, the Shulchan Aruch says don't say Tachanun on such a such day, however, there should be Gaguin, there should be Kasha Alai Pri'daschem on missing Tachanun.

I want to quote to you from Rav Shimon Schwab in his Peirush on Sefer Yeschayahu on Perek 43 on page # 473 in the Artscroll Sefer on Yeshayahu. "Contrary to the unfortunately common practice - in which "the long והוא רחום " on Monday and Thursday is rattled off quickly and the days on which it is omitted are looked forward to - this Tefillah should be said carefully and with great concentration. This Tefillah and others like it are Galus prayers that have helped keep the Jewish people alive and to give them hope during the long years of Galus. Reciting such Tefillos hurriedly and without concentration is severely criticized by our Chachamim in an interpretation of כרם זלות לבני אדם (Tehillim 12:9). As follows: אלו דברים שעומדים ברומם של עולם ובני אדם מזלזלין בהן. These prayers are among the things that stand at the heights of the world, but people neglect them (Berachos 6b). It would therefore behoove us all to say "the

long והוא רחום" with great Kavana, concentration, and feeling."

The idea that Tachanun is something to be neglected is a very childish thought. The value of Tachanun, of Nefilas Apaim is something I have discussed in the past. It is sad to miss such an opportunity for Tefilla. Our attitude to Tachanun has to change.

What I do in Shul on Monday and Thursday and I don't say that I have adequate Kavana, but I start והוא רחום and I try to say it slowly and as far as I get I get and when the Chazzan gets to Kaddish I stop. (Perhaps I should say the rest later). But the Shulchan Aruch says, Tov M'at B'kavana Mai'harbei Shelo B'kavana regarding Tachanunim. I try to do M'at B'kavana. When you do M'at B'kavana it is a beautiful Tefilla. Kasha Alai Pri'daschem.

Rav Pam added a Nekuda. Rav Pam said HKB"H created a nature in people that Mi She'yeish Lo Mai'a Ratzah Ma'sayim, if you have 100 you want 200. This Midda should be used for Ruchnios. When Klal Yisrael left Har Sinai they should have had the attitude of Yeish Lanu Mai'a Ratzah Ma'sayim. We had such a wonderful experience at Har Sinai we want more. Because they were lacking that they were criticized. Again, an Onesh on Kavana and Omeik Haleiv.

Rav Isaac Sher calls this idea a Klal for all of Torah She'bichsav that we have to teach our children. The Aveiros of great people, of the Dor Hamidbar, of Tzaddikim Yesodei Olam were Aveiros in Kavana in Omeik Haleiv not in Maiseh.

## The Midnight Mystery & the Halted Plague

By Elchonon Isaacs

During the years when Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels (1555–1631, known as the Maharsha) was the rabbi of Ostroh, a deadly plague broke out. The rabbi and the venerable members of the beit din instructed that a day be dedicated to prayer, fasting, introspection and repentance. The rabbi also announced that if anyone knew of issues in the community that needed to be rectified, they should discreetly notify him.

One of the townsfolk lived on the fringes of society and was never seen at the communal prayers. Up to this point, not much attention was paid to this fact, but after the rabbi's request to share any information that could remedy the situation, two townspeople decided to investigate the man and track his whereabouts. After a few days, they noticed that every night he left his house at midnight and headed to the forest outside the city. They followed him discreetly until he left the town behind, but when he disappeared into the thick forest, they lost him.

Minds racing, the duo imagined that he must be up to some nefarious activities, perhaps even part of a band of thieves. The next day they shared their findings with the rabbi, as well as their suspicions. Much to their surprise, the rabbi said, "Tonight I will join you, and we will follow him together."

The scene repeated itself. At midnight the man left his house and began walking quietly towards the forest. Urged on by the rabbi, the small group followed him until he came to a clearing. There he stopped, sat down on a rock, and lit a candle. He then took out a small prayer book and began reciting Tikkun Chatzot, the traditional dirges lamenting the destruction of the Holy Temple, with great fervor. The three men stood open-mouthed, listening to his prayer. Suddenly he broke out in tears that melted their hearts. But there was something else that struck them; they seemed to hear a second voice reciting the prayer with him. "This fellow is certainly not a highway robber," murmured the rabbi. "But who is the second voice that we are hearing?"

When he exited the forest, the three men approached the man. Apologizing for the surprise encounter, the rabbi explained: "Your conduct piqued the curiosity of some members of the community, so we had to track you. Now we ascertained that our fears were unfounded. But please explain who the second voice that we heard with you was?" The man was perplexed by the question, but out of respect for the rabbi, he answered: "It has been my custom for some time now to mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple, and it seems that my prayers caused great satisfaction on high. Jeremiah, the prophet who foresaw and experienced the destruction, joins me on a nightly basis." The three of them looked at him in amazement. The rabbi broke the silence and asked: "If you have such a merit, why don't

you inquire in heaven as to the reason for the plague in our city? Additionally, why is it that you never join the community in prayer?" "Tomorrow, I will come to the morning prayer and answer both questions together," the man replied and headed home.

The next morning in the main synagogue, the rabbi watched the door, awaiting the arrival of the hidden saint whom he met the previous night. The prayers began on time, but the man did not show. About halfway through, the man entered while wrapped in his tallit and tefillin. Suddenly there was a commotion in the crowd, and an incomprehensible fear fell on those present. Worshipers who tried to look at him were filled with anxiety and had to take their eyes off him, and some of them even went outside the synagogue to calm down. All the while, the man stood in the corner and prayed devoutly, clearly oblivious to the commotion he was causing.

When the prayers concluded, the man removed and folded his tallit and tefillin. The rabbi approached him and said: "Now I have a third question, what caused the fear when you entered?" The man explained: "The Torah states: 'Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of the Lord is called upon you, and they will fear you' (Deuteronomy 28:10). And our sages note: This refers to the tefillin that are on the head. Thus tefillin causes fear, and that is why fear gripped those who saw me wearing my tefillin." "But I also wear tefillin daily," countered the rabbi. "Why is no one awestruck by me?" "It is because I am careful not to speak anything mundane while the tefillin are on me. I respect the tefillin properly; therefore, their sanctity is preserved. You all fulfill your obligation to wear tefillin, but because you are frivolous, the sanctity of the tefillin is compromised." The rabbi listened, as did the others. Then the man added: "This is why I do not come to the synagogue, because the masses are not meticulous in respecting the synagogue's sanctity. I do not want to be tempted to speak while in the synagogue, especially when I wear tefillin."

After a moment of silence, the man continued. "In my opinion, if this problem will be remedied, the epidemic will stop." The story quickly spread and all residents agreed to strengthen their commitment to upholding the sanctity of the synagogue and tefillin, and in a few days, the plague stopped. The residents of Ostroh continued to keep their commitment even after the plague ended and life returned to normal. The synagogue became known as the Maharsha's shul, after the rabbi, and it was treated with the utmost sanctity. Chabad.Org Magazine

## Living in the Moment

Mrs. Shira Smiles

One beautiful concept in Yiddisheit is for an individual to take upon themselves a particular mitzvah which deeply resonates with them and

they feel a special connection to. Whatever it may be, that one mitzvah is something which a person adheres to carefully and closely and holds dear to his or her heart.

For one elderly 87-year-old grandfather, that mitzvah was tefillin. Since his bar mitzvah, a day had not gone by in which he missed the cherished opportunity to don his precious tefillin. One day, though, his tefillin were accidentally swapped with the tefillin of another man in shul, leaving each of them with the other's tefillin. And as it so happened, the other man decided that day to have his tefillin checked, as he had not done so in many years. But of course, little did he know, that they were really not his own.

When the report came back about his tefillin's status, he was obviously taken aback. They were invalid, and in fact had never been valid even to begin with. Yet rather quickly, it was realized that a slight mix-up had occurred. They were not his own tefillin, but rather those of the 87-year-old man.

Now, the obvious dilemma arose as how to break the news to the elderly man, whose entire life had been marked by devotion to this special mitzvah. With a group of family and friends gathered around him, they proceeded to gently relay the news, slowly but surely.

And then there was silence.

Worried that he hadn't heard them clearly, one of the family members repeated the news about the invalid tefillin, raising his voice just a bit louder. But that wasn't the problem. "I heard you the first time," replied the grandfather. Unsure what to make of everything, the family remained silently still.

And then the grandfather began to dance. Now thinking that he had really lost it, just about everyone looked at each other with a blank and confused stare. But then the grandfather began to explain the motivation behind his behavior.

"For my whole life, I was under the impression that I was performing the mitzvah of tefillin to the utmost degree of refinement. Yet now I have discovered that such has not been the case. But you know what? Now I have much reason to rejoice. For the first time in my life, I will finally be able to perform the mitzvah of tefillin correctly with a kosher pair of tefillin. Shouldn't I be happy and dance?"

Here was a person who lived in the moment. He understood his past, yet more importantly, understood his future. Part of living in the moment includes not carrying the heavy baggage of past experiences and lost opportunities. We must never forget and disregard our past, yet simultaneously, we can never let it hamper us from optimistically moving forward. Life is not all about sighing, "What if...I should have... I could have..." Where you are today is exactly where you need to be. All that you are asked to do is pick yourself up, hold your head high and look brightly and vibrantly towards the future. Because without question, many wonderful opportunities await you...



## Did This Year Knock You Down or Save Your Life?

Recently, those watching the men's NCAA basketball tournament game between Gonzaga and USC saw something that made them gasp, and it wasn't any play on the court. In the corner of the screen, in the middle of play, Bert Smith, a veteran referee, passed out. He toppled over and lay on the ground, still, eyes open but unresponsive. For a moment, people present and those watching around the world feared the worst.

It wasn't long before he came to, but even then, he had no idea what had happened. He remembered the previous play, how he struggled to catch his breath and felt wobbly, but he doesn't remember passing out. He described what it was like when he came to:

I look to my left, and it's a doctor. I say, "What's going on, man?" And he goes, "Bert, you passed out. You blacked out." I said, "What?" I look to my right, and I see a stretcher. "What's that for?" The doctor says, "That's what I'm taking you out on."

I said: "Listen, Doc, I'm walking out of here. You're going to get on one side, he's going to get on the other, we're going to wave to the fans, and I'm walking out of here." The doctor said, "Listen, tell you what, why don't you just sit on the stretcher?" I said "OK, I can do that."

The doc says, "Swing your legs around." I swing my legs around, and they go: Click-click-click-click. They strapped me in! I looked at him and said, "Oh no you didn't..."

Bert Smith is in great shape. Growing up in Buffalo, he was a high school small forward, receiver and 400-meter runner, who then played some junior college basketball. He rarely uses an elevator, prefers the stairs, he parks in the farthest spot so he has the longest walk, and he exercises regularly. This season, he was up and down the court in ninety games, so it made no sense that he suddenly passed out.

He was treated at the stadium for two hours, but once his vitals were normal, and he wasn't wobbly, dizzy or blurry, the NCAA announced that Bert was doing well. So well in fact, that he went back to the hotel and was talking and laughing with friends, eating dinner when one of them said, "I heard the sound of your head hitting the court from 30 rows away, maybe you should get examined for a concussion just to be sure." Bert agreed and proceeded to IU



Health Methodist hospital.

They tested him for a concussion, and it turns out he didn't have one. But he did have something worse. The doctor on call told Bert that she saw the fall and something didn't add up. She wasn't satisfied that his pulse, blood pressure, oxygen level, were normal and that he didn't have a headache. She called for more tests.

When they came back, she told Bert, I have the answer to the question of why you passed out. You have a blood clot in your lung. He was admitted to the hospital, put on blood thinners, and a couple of days later, the clot was gone, he was discharged, and Bert Smith had a new lease on life. It turns out that passing out was the best thing that ever happened to him because if he hadn't discovered that clot, it could have gone to his heart or brain and killed him.

Instead of being resentful or bitter that he had a health scare, Bert is grateful that he passed out during the NCAA Tournament, when people were able to respond and help immediately, and not when he was driving or sleeping. Reflecting on the episode, he said, "It puts in perspective the value of each day, because we all go through our lives – we're all guilty of it – and we just live, right? But do we say 'I love you' enough? Do we give an extra hug enough? Do we do the things with our family and friends that have value to them? When you live something like I did, it hits you square in the eyes that you really have to value each day."

Bert Smith's fall didn't kill him. It saved his life.

As I read this story, I couldn't help but think what Smith endured physically, most of us encounter emotionally and spiritual-

ly. In a famous letter written to one of his students, the great Rav Yitzchak Hutner zt"l wrote (Pachad Yitzchok, Iggerot U'Kesavim, #128):

Know, however, my dear, that the root of your soul is not the tranquility of the yetzer tov but rather the war of the yetzer tov. Your heartfelt letter attests like a hundred witnesses that you are indeed a faithful warrior in the army of the yetzer tov. In English they say, "Lose a battle and win the war." You certainly have stumbled and will stumble again . . . and in some battles you will fall, be conquered. But I promise you that after losing all these battles, you will emerge from the war with the crown of victory upon your head . . . "Lose battles but win wars." The wisest of all men said, "A righteous man falls seven times, and rises up again" (Mishlei 24:16). Fools think that this means—even though he falls seven times, he rises again. But the wise know well that it means the nature of the tzadik's rise is through his seven falls.

In life, we sometimes fall, even collapse. It can be a disappointment or failure at work, a challenge to our health, a relationship in distress or a crisis of faith. In those moments, we can stay on the ground, wallow in our circumstance, see ourselves as victims or we can embrace the challenge, extract its lessons, come back stronger and better.

This year has knocked many of us down. But for most of us, it has knocked us out of our routine and our comfort zone in ways that if we choose, we can learn an enormous amount about ourselves, our families, our lives and our lifestyles. If we want, we can transform the experience of Corona knocking us down into it saving important aspects of our lives.



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# Jumping To Conclusions

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

## A Haunting Thought About Jumping To Conclusions

This week's Parsha contains a positive Biblical commandment, which we often do not think about as such. The Talmud [Shavuot 30a] gives two different interpretations of the verse [pasuk], "With Justice you shall judge your fellow man" [Vayikra 19:15]. According to one opinion, this verse is giving direction to Judges. When a person comes to a Din Torah [Judgment in a civil case according to Torah law] the judge must treat the litigants equally. He is not allowed to have one litigant stand and the other one sit, one speak at length and the other urged to speak briefly, and so forth. However, according to a second interpretation in the Gemara, the verse is directed at every Jew. Its intent is that we must judge our fellow man favorably, always giving him the benefit of the doubt.

In other words, "Give your friend the benefit of the doubt" is not "merely" a teaching from Ethics of the Fathers, it is an explicit verse in the Torah! If we see a person doing something that apparently seems to be an act that he should not be doing, there is a full-fledged Biblical command to give him the benefit of the doubt. This is something which is codified by the Rambam, by Rabbeinu Yonah, and by the Chofetz Chaim: A person who we know to otherwise be outstanding and upright must be given the benefit of the doubt. This is not just so that we can be considered "charitable". This is a positive Torah commandment.

In addition, there is a practical advantage that a person accrues by judging his fellow man positively. The way in which a person treats and judges his friend is the way that he will be judged in Heaven. The Mishneh [Avos 3:16] teaches that

"Nifrain min ha'Adam m'daato v'shelo m'daato" a person receives his punishment in ways that he knows about and in ways that he does not know about. The Ba'al Shem Tov (1698-1760) explains the idea that a person will be punished without his knowledge (shelo m'daato) as follows: If a person witnesses an incident involving his fellow man and jumps to the conclusion that his friend is a thief, a liar, a wicked person – the "witness" will be judged similarly in the World of Truth.

Rav Pam cites a famous story of Dovid HaMelech [King David], who took Bas Sheva as his wife. Bas Sheva had previously been the wife of Uriah the Chittie. (Uriah was in the army of Dovid, where the practice was that soldiers going out to battle would first divorce their wives.) Despite the fact that she was technically not a married woman, our Sages note that this was an unbecoming act on the part of Dovid HaMelech.

Nosson HaNovi [Nathan the Prophet] came to Dovid and told him a hypothetical story of a rich man and a poor man. The poor man had only one little sheep, while the rich man had everything. The rich man, however, came and took this sole possession of the poor man away from him. Nosson asked the King for a ruling in this situation. "Dovid became very angry and said 'As G-d Lives, this man who did this is deserving of death!'" [Samuel II 12:5]. The prophet then responded "You are that man." He declared that Dovid would be judged according to his decree in the hypothetical case. "The very same sword that you proclaimed upon him will come back to haunt you and your household."

The Baal Shem Tov says that this dialogue between Dovid HaMelech and Nosson HaNovi is exactly how it will happen to each of us in the World of Truth. We will come before the Heavenly Court and we will be given a 'hypothetical case' to judge. We will be told "There was this person and he did such and such. He desecrated G-d's Name; He was not honest; and so forth. What is his fate?" We

will show righteous indignation and offer all the appropriate condemnation of such a person. We will proclaim him deserving of harsh punishment. And then we will be shown that we, in fact, committed all of these sins and that we just declared our own fate.

That is the result of being unwilling to give people the benefit of the doubt. Such an attitude will eventually come back to haunt us. This is the meaning of the Mishneh that says that a person will be punished "without his knowledge". We would not have imagined that this particular trait of ours would come back to haunt us and seal our own fates.

The Gemara [Shabbath 127b] records that "One who judges his fellow man favorably, will in turn be judged favorably". This is more than "measure for measure"; this is just the way it happens. The way we 'rule' (pasken) about others – the same words, the same approach – is the way that we will be judged.



The next time that we have a doubt about someone, let us not immediately jump to conclusions. It is well known that people often like to jump to conclusions, specifically regarding the more distinguished members of the community – the Rabbis, the Torah Scholars, the leaders of the community. The "bigger" one is, the more people are apt to jump to the opposite conclusion rather than giving them the benefit of the doubt. However, one day this tendency will, Heaven forbid, come back to haunt us.

# Jokes

## First time in the big city...

Two small-town merchants were visiting New York City for the first time to attend a conference. There was a large party thrown, with lots of food and drink. At the end of the party, they both staggered outside. One guy crossed the street, while the other stumbled into a subway entrance. When the first guy reached the other side of the street, he noticed the other emerging from the subway stairs.

"Where ya been?" he slurred.

"I don't know," gushed the other guy, "but you should see the train set that guy has in his basement!"

## Safety First

My sister has a lifesaving tool in her car which is designed to cut through a seat belt if she gets trapped...

She keeps it in the trunk.

## Would you watch my car?

A tourist climbed out of his car in downtown Washington, D.C. He said to a man standing near the curb, "Listen, I'm going to be only a couple of minutes. Would you watch my car while I run into this store?"

"What?" the man huffed. "Do you realize that I am a member of the United States Senate?"

"Well no," the tourist said, "I didn't realize that. But it's all right. I'll trust you anyway."

## The Birthday Gift

A grandmother sent her grandson a shirt for his birthday. The only trouble was that he had a size 14 neck and the shirt was size 12.

When the grandson sent a thank you note, he wrote, "Dear Grandma. Thanks a lot for the shirt. I'd write more, but I'm all choked up."

## Pun With Monks

Lost on a rainy night, a guy stumbles across a monastery and requests shelter there. Fortunately, he's just in time for dinner and was treated to the best fish and chips he's ever had. After dinner, he goes into the kitchen to thank the chefs. He is met by two brothers, "Hello, I'm Brother Michael, and this is Brother Charles." "I'm

very pleased to meet you. I just wanted to thank you for a wonderful dinner. The fish and chips were the best I've ever tasted. Out of curiosity, who cooked what?" Brother Charles replied, "Well, I'm the fish friar." He turns the other brother and says, "Then you must be...?" "Yes, I'm the chip monk."

## Thief In the Night

Someone broke into my garage last night and took a bunch of stuff, including my limbo stick!

Seriously, how low can you go?

## Candy store wisdom

One salesgirl in a candy store always had customers lined up waiting while other girls stood around idle.

The store owner asked for her secret.

"It's easy," she said. "The others scoop up more than a pound and then start taking away. I scoop up less, and then add to it."

## Points to ponder...

If a man is standing in the middle of the forest speaking and there is no woman around to hear him - Is he still wrong?

Is there another word for synonym?

Isn't it a bit unnerving that doctors call what they do 'practice'?

When you open a bag of cotton balls, is the top one meant to be removed?

What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?

Would a fly without wings be called a walk?

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?

How do they get the deer to cross at that yellow road sign?

Why did kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Is it true that cannibals don't eat clowns because they taste funny?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?



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# Pesach Sheni:

## The Holiday of Second Chances

by Karen Wolfers Rapaport

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO COME HOME.  
*Sometimes we have to experience missteps before we can travel in the right direction.*

We make a left when we should take the road on the right; we say yes when we should say no; we stay when we should leave, and we withdraw when we should engage.

A step forward, a step back, a side step, and an inching forward slightly once again. This is the dance of life and embedded within this dance are second chances.

On the 14th day of the Jewish month of Iyar, one month after the holiday of Passover, Pesach Sheni, a second Passover makes its appearance. It's time for a second chance.

On the day before Passover, the Paschal Lamb was brought to the Holy Temple to be offered as a sacrifice. Anyone who came into contact with a dead body and became ritually impure could not bring this sacrifice to the Holy Temple. Nor could someone who was stuck too far away to make it to the Temple in time.

But there was an issue. These citizens also wanted to participate in this pivotal holy service. They wanted to be part of something bigger than themselves, something that would connect them to their community and to G-d. So they approached Moshe and Aaron and declared, "Why should we be deprived, and not be able to present G-d's offering in its time, amongst the children of Israel?"

Moshe asked G-d what to do, and G-d replied, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: Any person who is contaminated by death, or is on a distant road, whether among you now or in future generations, shall prepare a Passover offering to G-d. They shall prepare it on the afternoon of the 14th day of the second month, and shall eat it with matzahs and bitter herbs...." (See Numbers, 9:6-12)

G-d said I will give you a second chance despite your status, despite your present state. When you do what you need to do to change, I will change the rules. I will wait for you until you are ready.

What does being "contaminated by death," and a traveling on a "distant road" have to do with us?

These terms point to deeper concepts. A state of disconnection from G-d is a type of death. A distant road is place where we are far away from who we really are supposed to be. This is something most of us can identify with.

When we are influenced by "death", when we are traversing along a distant road, cut off from our truth and our source, we have the power to change directions and come home.

How? By accessing this unbelievable gift of second chances.

Life gives us many second chances.

How do we know when we are far away from our homestead, when we are wandering and cut off?

A sense of disconnection is a place where we have lost touch with our essential self. On this road there is a chasm between what we really are and what we are becoming.

When we are not the person, partner, or parent we should be, often, somewhere deep inside, we know we are far from home. Maybe it's a vague feeling, detached and blurred. Perhaps it's an explicit feeling, weighty and robust. In all cases it often leads to confusion and a robotic way of life.

Disconnection is often a byproduct of unconscious living. When we let our conditioning be our compass so that our paths never change,

neither will our landscape. Whether it's in relation to ourselves or to others we will feel disconnected from the inroads that lead to our essential self.

But life gives us many second chances. And each time we choose to live consciously and move from judgment to compassion, apathy to care, idleness to activity, we begin to reconnect and travel towards home.

Pesach Sheni, the Second Passover, thus represents the power of rerouting to our core, to our Divine connection. This is the essence of teshuvah – the power of return. Teshuvah is defined as repentance but it encompasses something far greater. It is the power to embrace comprehensive change, the power to shift from one state to another. It is the power to change our dance.

Changing our waltz, samba, or freestyle is not easy. But it can be done. No matter how distant, no matter how disconnected, G-d gives us the power to repair and rebound. Our brush with "death" can give us life. Our "distance" can lead to greater closeness to both ourselves and to G-d.

Pesach Sheni, the holiday of second chances, reminds us that we can always change our steps and return home.



# Defining Yourself

## A Grandfather's Defining Moment of Truth

There is an incredible story about a man named Joe Wallis. Joe was on his way home from work when he stopped by The Elephant Steakhouse, an non-kosher restaurant in Tel Aviv, to get take-out for his wife and children. He could hear the sizzle of grilling meat and frying onions. He looked up at the pictures of food displayed above the counter, "Pork in pita," he thought. "The kids are going to love it." He waited on the line to place his order, and as he stood surrounded by laughing people, he began to daydream.

The steakhouse slowly faded away while a story he heard when he was a young child popped into Joe's head. It was a story about his mother's father, Rav Winkler. When

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when the SS officer in charge began to speak. "Germany has lost the war," he said. "The Russians will be here momentarily. You are about to become free men again. You will be reunited with your wives and children if they're still alive. But before you leave, before we unlock the gates, we have one final test. We've heard your Rabbiner Winkler is a man of principle. We need to find out just how strong-willed he is." The Nazi grabbed Rav Winkler and maneuvered him forcibly to the center of the circle. "Rabbiner," the Nazi addressed his prisoner, "You want to go home like everybody else, don't you?" The Nazi motioned to one of the officers, who walked over carrying a plate with a solitary piece of pork. "Rabbiner, the moment you take a bite of this pork, you'll be freed. You'll walk through the gates and go home. Otherwise you will be killed in this camp. The choice is yours. One bite is all it takes."

No one breathed as they waited. One bite of pork suddenly equaled life. What would the Rav do? "I will not eat this pork," he said. The German shot Joe's grandfather on the spot, and he crumpled to the ground, the final Jew to perish at that camp.

Joe came back to himself. "What on earth am I doing here, waiting to purchase meat my grandfather would rather die than eat? And I'm feeding this food to my wife and children when I have the means to buy any type of food?" Joe stood in the middle of that busy, cheerful, non-kosher restaurant, unaware of anything but the incredible argument taking place within him. On that humid summer evening, something changed in his heart, and Joe Wallis walked out of The Elephant Steakhouse with empty hands.

Joe, now Rabbi Yossi Wallis, became CEO of Arachim, the ultra-successful global kiruv organization. Rabbi Wallis has touched and transformed the lives of tens of thousands of Jews and has developed personal, warm relationships with many of our greatest Torah leaders, all because of an unexpected discovery of his Torah heritage while waiting in a restaurant for his treif sandwich.

May we all realize that Hashem truly runs the world and learn from Aharon Hakohein to immediately accept Hashem's Will with joy. May we also strive to keep the kashrut laws as it is written in our holy Torah, because those laws elevate us both in body and soul. May we see the arrival of Mashiah speedily in our days! Amen! *Rabbi Amram Sananes as written by Jack E. Rahmey*

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the Nazi came to Hungary and took the family away, his grandfather was sent to a labor camp instead of Auschwitz. The Rav was condemned to backbreaking work, terrible abuse, and starvation. Although almost everyone around him ate whatever they could lay their malnourished hands on, Joe's grandfather never defiled his mouth with non-kosher food. Time passed, and the inmates were gathered in a circle



**SEFIRA**

**BEING MOTZI SOMEONE ELSE WITH THE BROCHA OF SEFIRA**

If someone missed a day of sefira and is unable to recite the brocha, we have seen that it is possible that he can recite a brocha on behalf of someone else. But the rule of thumb is that one can only recite a brocha on behalf of someone else if he himself is also required in the mitzvah. Is someone who missed a day considered still required in the mitzvah?

The Shaarei Teshuva quotes a machlokes in the poskim. The Pri Chodosh was asked this very question, and rules that he is no longer considered required in the mitzvah, and cannot be motzi others. However, there are many poskim who maintain that he is still considered required in the mitzvah, and rule that he can be motzi others.

The Pri Chodosh explains that once he missed a day, and he can no longer perform the mitzvah of counting sefira, he is not considered required in the mitzvah. Once he cannot fulfill the mitzvah, he can no longer be motzi others.

The achronim explain that the other poskim who do allow one to be motzi others hold that the person is still considered required in the mitzvah. It is just that he is unable to fulfill the mitzvah for technical reasons.

**HALACHICALLY SPEAKING**

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ruled that one can rely on the opinion that allows the chazzan or rav to be motzi someone else with the brocha. The Har Tzvi quotes a story where the Beis Halevi actually did so, and when he missed a day, he asked someone else to be yotzei with his brocha.

On the other hand, the Sefardic poskim, such as the Chida and Kaf Hachaim, follow the ruling of the Pri Chodosh and do not allow this practice.

**ALLOWANCE TO SAVE FROM SHAME**

The Shevet Halevi and Rav Moshe Halbershtam add that when it comes to a rav, there is another possible heter. Since he may suffer embarrassment from the fact that he missed a day of sefira, to save the honor of the Torah, one can rely on those who allow him to be motzi someone else with the brocha.

Interestingly, this scenario of missing a day of sefira once happened to the Satmar Rebbe, Rav Yoel Teitelbaum. The Chasidim were very concerned that it would be embarrassing if he would not be able to count out loud, as was his custom. They went and asked a rav, who ruled that the Rebbe can continue to count with a brocha, and rely on those who allow him to be motzi someone else with the brocha. However, when they related this to the Rebbe he re-

plied that he did not plan to use this heter. It is important for people to see, he added, that a Rebbe is also human and can miss a day of sefira.

Rav Moshe Feinstein even took this idea a step further and, as quoted in my father's sefer, Darkei Moshe, he allowed any chazzan to recite the brocha. He ruled that one can rely on those who allow him to be motzi someone else with the brocha, even if not a rav, in order to be saved from the embarrassment that he missed a day of sefira.

**ALLOWANCE FOR A RAV TO RECITE THE BROCHA WITHOUT BEING MOTZI ANYONE**

Rav Moshe Halbershtam takes the concept of shame even further. He adds that it is possible that a rav, who will be ashamed by the fact that he missed a day of sefira, can recite the brocha even if not being motzi someone else. They explain that, in such a case, one can rely on the many rishonim who allow reciting the brocha if one misses a day of sefira, even if he is not being motzi someone else with the brocha.

**SUMMARY**

In a case that an entire day of sefira was missed, one must continue to count, but not recite the brocha. Preferably, he should hear the brocha from someone else. There is a machlokes if one can recite the brocha to be motzi others. Some allow it in a case that the rav will be ashamed. Some allow it even in a case of any chazzan who will be ashamed. Some allow the rav to recite the brocha, even if he is not being motzi others.

*Comments and questions are welcome and can be sent to: [RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com](mailto:RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com).*

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# ~Night Kolloel~

## THE ISSUR TO DRINK MILK OF A NON-JEW

As we count the days to the yom tov of Shavuot, when many have the custom to eat dairy, I would like to share some highlights of a recent shiur given in the Night Kolloel, on the topic of Cholov Yisroel.

The Mishna (Avoda Zora 35b) tells us that Chazal decreed that one not consume milk that was milked by a non-Jew, without Jewish supervision. The Gemara explains that there is no concern that the kosher milk will be replaced with non-kosher milk, such as pig milk, because kosher and non-kosher milk look different. Rather the concern is that the non-Jew may mix in a substantial amount of non-kosher milk, which will not be bateil in the kosher milk, and will also not be noticeable.

This is why milk of a non-Jew is different than bishul akum – food cooked by a non-Jew. When it comes to food cooked by a non-Jew, there is no heter even if a Jew watches the cooking. But when it comes to milk, even if the non-Jew milked the cow, it is permitted, as long as a Jew watched the milking. The reason for this distinction is due to the difference between the prohibitions. A non-Jew cooking the food is what makes it prohibited (since this can bring to intermarriage), and supervision will not change anything. Milk, on the other hand, is only because of the concern that he will add non-kosher milk, and if there is proper supervision that will not be an issue.

There is an obvious question that must be addressed. If there is indeed a concern that the non-Jew will add non-kosher milk, it should be self understood that one cannot put something in his mouth if the kashrus is questionable. Why then would Chazal need to make a special decree about milk, if there is a question if the milk is kosher? The answer is that it is such a remote concern of adding non-

kosher milk, and if not for the decree of Chazal, we would not have had any concern on the milk. It is only because Chazal were concerned and made a decree.

## WOMEN FOUR PART SERIES

During these auspicious days of sefira, Ohr Chaim is having a 4-part series of inspirational speeches for women. The shiur takes place on Wednesday nights at 8:15pm, in 18 Forshay Tent Daled. This week's speaker was Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein. The other speakers will be Rabbi YY Jacobson, Rabbi Daniel Mechanic, and Mrs. Jackie Biton.

## KOLLEL NEWS

The Kolloel Boker started the 6th perek in Meseches Brochos. This intriguing perek – Keitzad Mevarchin – goes into great detail of all the hilchos brochos on foods and drinks. Every person is supposed to recite 100 brochos daily. But do you really say the correct brocha? What brocha you are really supposed to make on pizza or mezonos bread? These and many other halachic quandaries will be explored. Come and seize the opportunity to become proficient in this fundamental area of halacha! The Kolloel Boker meets every morning from 7:00-8:00.

The Night Kolloel is covering hilchos sheva brochos. Who qualifies as panim chadashos? Do you need a minyan to recite the sheva brochos? These are just some of the halachos which will be covered. Come join us and learn what it is all about! The Night Kolloel is from 8:15-9:45, with Mincha or Maariv available before or after.

As in the past, we will b'ezras Hashem, have experts and professionals with featured shiurim on these fundamental topics. Now is the time to join one of our many learning programs and keep the momentum going! Come join the Ohr Chaim family, and the many that start off



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their day or end their day with some exciting and invigorating Torah learning.

## MISHMAR

Ohr Chaim's Mishmar program takes place every Thursday night, at 10:15, giving young men in the workforce an opportunity to get together and enjoy each other's company, in true spirit of ahavas chavirim, with kugel and cholent. This past week's guest speaker was

Rabbi Betzael Alpert. This week will be Rabbi Avi Kahan.

For more information about the Kolloel Boker, Night Kolloel, and much more – please call 845 - 372 - 6618, or email: Rabbisheiner@18forshay.com.

Wishing you a Wonderful Shabbos,

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



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**6 SECRETS TO A BEAUTIFUL MARRIAGE**

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