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י"ג באלול - שבת קודש

יום פטירתו של הגאון הגדול רבנו חכם יוסף חיים מבגדאד זיע"א

בעל "הבן איש חי"



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BET PARASHAT KI TATZI

The Parasha speaks about a man that has two wives; one he loves and one he dislikes. Both wives gave birth to a boy and the Torah declares that he cannot act with preference towards the favorite child over the secondary child. This means he cannot give him the Bechor status in which the preferred child would receive double inheritance.

The Gra in his commentary Kol Eliyahu, points out that the pasuk starts with the loved wife and child indicating the loved child was born first and then the secondary child was born. Why can't the loved child receive his birth right if he was born first? Additionally, one is not allowed to live with a wife that he hates so what is meaning of this?

The Gra explains the incident occurred like this; Reuven married a lady, disliked her and they divorced a week after the wedding. Immediately after, he remarried a second wife who gave birth seven months later, to a boy. This is the love child. Another month passes and wife #1 gave birth to his child at full term of 9 months. Now there is a question as to who will be the bechor? Is it the child from

the first wife that gave birth second, but conceived first? Or is it the child of the 2nd wife that gave birth first, though she conceived later?

The Torah teaches us that the Bechor goes to the child that was born 2nd because we follow conception, not birth. As the pasuk reads: "for he is his initial vigor, to him is the right of the firstborn". It is clear according to the reading of the Gra in this verse, the bechor right follows conception.

According to Halacha however, we don't follow the opinion of the Gra that firstborn is determined by conception, rather the birth determines the bechor right. But if we would we would clearly understand that Yaakov Avinu is the Bechor as Chazal made clear to us that he was conceived first.

In every Halachik ruling there are two or more opinions and the Halacha tells us how to follow in the various opinions. This establishes that one opinion is not incorrect, and the other correct, rather they are both correct but one opinion is 51% correct the other 49% correct. We therefore follow the more appropriate opinion though it is important to learn all the opinions because they all truth. This

means that even though the Gra's opinion is not the halachic ruling, it maintains 49% of a correct view.

The Torah goes out of its way to let us know that Yaakov was holding on to the heel of Eisav to indicate that Eisav was not totally the firstborn. This means Yaakov was tied in first place which creates a doubt to whom is the actual first born bechor. The Torah makes it clear they were not identical twins that would be both conceived at once, rather fraternal twins as they looked totally different. Additionally, Yaakov was conceived first which further gives him status of the bechor. Now it is no longer a 51%-49% opinion in Eisavs favor, as Yaakovs 49% is upped by these other factors giving him the majority opinion and the rights to the bechor.

Yaakov being a man of truth insisted on making a transaction, even though it was not necessary, to eliminate any doubt Eisav could have in the future. Since sale of rights of bechor is impossible (it is something not purchasable), it was a symbolic gesture to clarify the firstborn privileges to Yaakov for eternity.

Shabat Shalom



NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY
1:34, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00

SHABBOS ZMANIM

CANDLE LIGHTING	7:29PM
MINCHA 18 TENT	7:00PM
MINCHA TENT ALEPH	7:30PM
MINCHA BAIS CHABAD	7:39PM
SHKIYA	7:47PM
SHACHRIS VASIKIN DAF YOMI SHIUR	5:33AM
SHACHRIS ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN	8:00AM
BUCHRIM MINYAN 20	9:00AM
SHACHRIS - YOUTH 18 UPSTAIRS	9:30AM
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN 18 TENT	9:15AM
SHACHRIS 20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD	10:00AM
NEW SHACHRIS 18 MAIN	NEW 10:15AM
MINCHA	1:45PM
PIRCHEI	2:00PM
MINCHA	6:00PM
SHIUR ON PIRKEI AVOS PERK ALEPH	6:55PM
MINCHA SHALOSH SEUDOS	7:25PM
SHKIYA	7:45PM
MARRIV	8:25PM 18 TENT, 8:30PM

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS

20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ 30 ON YOM TOV

S 5:53 M 5:54 T 5:55 W 5:56 T 5:57 F 5:58

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG

S 6:07 M 6:06 T 6:05 W 6:04 T 6:02

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA

S 7:32 M 7:30 T 7:29 W 7:27 T 7:26

AUGUST 22 - AUGUST 27

NEITZ IS 6:13 - 6:18
PELAG IS 6:28 - 6:23
SHKIA IS 7:44 - 7:38
MAGEN AVRAHAM
9:00AM - 9:01 AM
GRA- BAAL HATANYA
9:36AM - 9:37 AM

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi

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Tzvi Blech : Gabbai Sheini

Summer 2021

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WEEKDAY MINYANIM

שחרית

6:15AM	Tent 2
5:30	Tent 1
6:45	Tent 4
7:00	Tent 4
7:15	Tent 2
7:30	Tent 1
7:45	Tent 1
8:00	Tent 4
8:15	Tent 2
8:30	Tent 1
8:45	Tent 1
9:00	Tent 4
9:15	Tent 2
9:30	Tent 1
9:45	Tent 1
10:00	Tent 4
10:15	Tent 2
10:30	Tent 1
10:45	Tent 4
11:00	Tent 4
11:15	Tent 2
11:30	Tent 1
11:45	Tent 4
12:00	Tent 4

מנחה ומעריב

12 MIN	Tent 4
12 MIN	Tent 2
10 MIN	Tent 4
20 MIN	Tent 4
40 MIN	Tent 2
50 MIN	Tent 4
60 MIN	Tent 2

מעריב

9:00	Tent 4
9:15	Tent 4
9:30	Tent 4
9:45	18 4
10:00	18 4
10:15	18 4
10:30	18 4
10:45	18 4
11:00	18 4
11:15	18 4
11:30	18 4
11:45	18 4
12:00	18 4
12:15	18 4
12:30	18 4
12:45	18 4

מנחה 18 4

מנחה גדולה (before 1:10-1:30)

1:45	3:00	4:15	5:30	6:45	8:00
2:00	3:15	4:30	5:45	7:00	
2:15	3:30	4:45	6:00	7:15	
2:30	3:45	5:00	6:15	7:30	
2:45	4:00	5:15	6:30	7:45	

FOR MORE INFO: www.a18forshay.com // Secretary@18forshay.com

BLUEBERRY HILL ZMANIM

EREV SHABBOS PLAG MINYAN 30 Dr. Frank Rd. Entrance on Humbert

MINCHA **6:00** PLAG **6:22**



Rabbi Coren

PARSHAS KITETZE - LESSONS FROM AFRICA

One of the most majestic moments when on a Safari is seeing the male lion which Chazal refer to as "The King of the Animals." The question often asked is what makes him the king? After all, he isn't the strongest animal out there. Certainly an elephant is bigger and tougher. Moreover, the Tur quotes Chazal as saying that one "Should arise like a lion" which is especially true during this month of Teshuva and even more so during Aseres Yamai Teshuva. Regardless of whether you are Sfardi or Ashkenazi this is an auspicious time for connecting and returning to Hashem. But when you watch the lion in the wild he can often be found sleeping for literally 20 hours of the day. On what basis then does he deserve the revered title of "The King of the Animals?"

A Pasuk in Mishlai reveals the secret and teaches us a lesson that we can take with us. ליש גיבור בבהמה לא ישוב מפני כל. Shlomo Hamelech calls the lion by his other name-- ליש --as being the king who is ready to take on anyone. So long as there is a worthwhile cause he is ready to enter the conflict. Maybe we can even play with the words of ליש. When the lion wakes up and is hungry, he will overcome his laziness and take on any animal in order to protect himself and his pride. The Taz explains that this is the lesson for us as well in our Avodas Hashem. We are always battling the Yetzer Hara, first upon awakening and then throughout the day to move past our laziness and comfort zone. We must strive to handle any challenge even if it seems beyond our abilities which, according to Chazal in Kiddushin, may often be too much for us to handle. However, if Hashem sent the test our way we must be able to overcome it.

One of my favorite vorts which I saw מעינה של years ago on the beginning of this week's Parsha is כי תצא למלחמה על איבך ונתנו. When you go out to war against the real enemy--the Yetzer Hara-- Hashem will give him into your hand. Why? Because you went out to war. You took the first step and Hashem helps you with the rest. The Baal Tanya says that the very act of going out to war-i.e. using our most prized weapon, Tefila-is our nuclear bomb.

The greatest challenge to success usually is our very selves. We believe that we are unable



to proceed, especially when we feel like our sins are so grave that we have no expectations that Hashem can forgive us.

I brought up a beautiful idea from Rav Nachman that gives us much chizuk regarding this problem. Rav Nachman asks why is it that most holidays seem to fall out in the middle of the month. Pesach and Sukkos are dead center and even Shavuot is in the first quarter of the month. Only Rosh Hashana is on the first day. One explanation for this is that since it's the day of creation and the start of a new year it should certainly be at the beginning of the month. The truth is that the real date of creation was six days before the 25th of Elul, not on the first day. The question sounds simple but the answer is profound. The day of Rosh Hashana is on Rosh Chodesh. The Gemara in Chulin says that on Rosh Chodesh Hashem asks that we bring a Korban Chatas on his behalf as on atonement for making the moon small. Hashem set Rosh Hashana as the day of reckoning, the day when we approach Hashem prepared to restart and make amends. We should therefore be heartened to know that Hashem himself is, so to speak, engaging in Teshuva too.

In our daily videos on Tefilah, I quoted Reb Shimshon Pinchus Z"l who explains that Gehinom isn't as "bad" a place as is usually portrayed. Reb Shimshon gives a mashal to a 10 floor building. On the top floor a party is going on that offers you the most enjoyment you can ever experience. However, to get there you must pass through each floor. On the first floor, the entrance, there is a clearing station to get rid of the mud and dirt that you brought in from outside. The next few floors demand additional requirements. Without stepping through all of them you can never reach the delightful experience upstairs. The nimshal is clear. Hashem wants us to remember our mission--to enjoy the greatest pleasure possible. The bottom is Gehinom and the first floor demands that we remove the spiritual detritus before moving on. If we do proper Teshuva we can pass easily to the next floor. Chazal teach us there is nothing standing in the way of Teshuva. I suggest that maybe there is another reason for reciting לידוד השם each day. Chazal teach us in Masseches Avoda Zarah that by writing Tehillim, Dovid Hamelech was the ultimate Baal Teshuva. We can all learn and be inspired by him.

May we gather up the strength to be like the lion and be Zoche to a Kesiva Vechasima Tova. Shabbat Shalom

A number of weeks ago we printed a story named "The Abandoned Nest" which prompted an amazing amount of positive feedback.

Regrettably, we neglected to acknowledge the author properly.

The story was authored by the remarkable Linda Levin and originally appeared in AMI Living

RABBI SHIA STERN IS BACK

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9:05am Daily

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to get the shiur every day

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LOOKING FORWARD, MAY OUR TEFILOT AND TESHUVAH BE ACCEPTED WITH LOVE BEFORE עונתנו

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Manager
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Rabbi YY Jacobson

CAN YOU FORGIVE YOUR CHILD?

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH CHILDREN WHO PUT YOU THROUGH THE WRINGER?

THE LAWYER

A grade school teacher was asking students what their parents did for a living. "Tim, you be first," she said. "What does your mother do all day?"

Tim stood up and proudly said, "She's a doctor."

"That's wonderful. How about you, Amie?"

Amie shyly stood up, scuffed her feet, and said, "My father is an electrician."

"Thank you, Amie," said the teacher. "What about your father, Billy?"

Billy proudly stood up and announced, "My daddy steals from people and drinks a lot."

The teacher was aghast and promptly changed the subject to geography. Later that day she went to Billy's house and rang the bell.

Billy's father answered the door. The teacher explained what his son had said and asked if there might be some logical explanation.

Billy's father said, "I'm actually a lawyer. But how can I explain a thing like that to a seven-year-old?"

WHY DEATH?

The law in this week's portion concerning a wayward son seems absurd and horrific.

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey the voice of his father and the voice of his mother, and does not listen to them when they discipline him; then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He does not obey our voice. He is a profligate and a drunkard.'

"Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid."

How are we to understand this Torah passage? First, are we to believe that parents would actually take up the Torah's advice and have their son killed if he acts like a monster in his teens!

Can you imagine a Jewish mother sending her son to the High Court to be punished: "Here, Ben, I want you should take along these cookies I baked for you; and don't forget to wear your cardigan; it gets cold in the death chamber."

Besides, a death sentence for what? For eating meat and drinking wine? For stealing food? Isn't this punishment excessive? He is only a 13-year-old kid? And did his offenses really merit capital punishment?

The Mishnah and Talmud, quoted in Rashi on our portion, gives this answer:

He is not being punished for his current sins. Rather, given his outrageous current behavior, the Torah testifies that it is inevitable that he will grow up to be a robber and murderer. So better to kill him now, before he murders other people and before he destroys his own soul. The patterns of his behavior demonstrate that he is doomed to a life of inevitable evil. Let him die an innocent man.

Yet this seems absurd. All of Judaism is

based on the idea that even a sinner can repent. Certainly, a 13-year-old boy who is at this point not killing yet, certainly he may change his ways. How can we be certain that he will become a murderer?

An axiom in Judaism is, "Nothing stands in the way of Teshuvah." The most evil Jewish king, Menashe, was accepted as a baal-teshuva. And here we say that a 13-year-old troubled boy is destined to grow into a monster? Why?

True, as the Talmud says, this story never happened nor will it happen. This Torah law is theory, not practical. But how are we to understand the law in theory? What is a lesson the Torah is trying to impart in this law?

FORGIVENESS

There is a beautiful answer given by the Shem Mishmuel, authored by Rabbi Shmuel Bornstein (1856-1926), the Rebbe of Sochotshov, Poland. (He was the son of the Avnei Nezer, Rabbi Avraham Borenstein, and grandson of the Kotzker Rebbe).

He raises one more question. The Talmud says, that at any point, a wayward son whose parents forgive him is forgiven and not punished.

But wait. We don't kill the boy because of what he did to his parents. We kill him, as the Talmud explains because the Torah testifies that he is destined to become a killer. So what does it help that his parents forgive him?

THE HOLY CHAIN

The answer contains one of the most critical lessons for our day and age in terms of how parents and educators deal with children who are difficult, challenging, and often take us through the ringer

Every child, even the greatest menace, is inherently holy and good, Divine and sacred. For each of them carries the genes of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—each of them has a Jewish soul, which is eternally connected to the Divine.

To reveal that connection, a father and a mother most keep the bond with their children strong. When we sever our relationship with our children, even if we have good reason to do so, we deprive them of the ability to experience themselves as part of the golden, unbreakable chain from Abraham to this very day.

Says the Shem Mishmuel: When the son feels the love inherent in his parents' willingness to forgive him, despite all of his misdeeds, this keeps him connected to his roots. And since his roots are so deep and sacred, there is now strong hope that he will find the ability to transform himself.

If the parents do not forgive their child, they do not allow him to forgive himself and start his life anew. They ensure that he continues in his destructive path. Conversely, the moment they forgive him internally, the moment they can accept their child and love him despite his terrible and heartbreaking failures, they now allow him to discover his own spiritual power, which is deeper than all of his failings and trauma.

NEVER DISCONNECT

This is the great message the Torah is teaching us. Never ever disconnect from your child, even if it is not easy. Sometimes we are compelled to break the connection, to sever the bond, to alienate him or her. It is simply too painful to be in a relationship.

But the Torah is telling us, this is the primary reason he will never be able to come back.

You need to learn to forgive your children, to see the infinite light hidden in them, that light you saw in the child when he emerged from your womb as innocent and angelic as ever. Yes, there have been disappointments, perhaps betrayal, shame, and serious misdeeds. Your child is broken. So what does he (or she) need to find the stamina to repair himself? He needs to be able to believe in his soul, in his future, in his goodness.

How can we help him achieve that? If we can love him, if we can forgive him, if we can show him that he is not a worthless, helpless case, but a particle of the Divine, a ray of infinity, a fragment of G-d in this world.

Keeping him connected to the chain, will allow him to see himself, ultimately, in the context of a 4,000-year chain, of which he is the next rung.

IMPERFECTION

My brother Rabbi Simon Jacobson, author of *Toward a Meaningful Life*, shared with me the following story:

A number of years ago, at one of my weekly classes I was discussing the fact that each one of us was sent to this Earth with an indispensable mission. And this mission imbues each human being with unique qualities, all the necessary faculties we need to fulfill our respective mission. Even if someone is weak or deficient in one area, even one born with a "handicap," this same person is blessed with other strengths that compensate for and allow this individual to realize his or her calling. Some of these strengths may often be less obvious than others, and then it is our sacred responsibility to help uncover these deeper resources. Nothing is holier and more dignified than to help a person discover hidden potential, allowing him to actualize his unique life calling.

After my class, a striking young man approached me. As he got closer I saw that he suffered from some motor complications. He asked to speak with me privately. After everyone left we sat down, and he began to tell me his story. His words came out slowly, due to a speech impediment, and he shared with me that he was born with a rare disease that affected his nervous system, which also impaired his mental capacity and growth. He later discovered that his parents gave him away as a newborn, after hearing that he was diagnosed with severe mental handicaps. Over the years, it turned out that the diagnosis was not completely accurate, though he still suffered from many problems. At that point, his parents were not willing or unable to handle him and they chose to have no contact with him.

His parents were very wealthy and prominent, and they provided that he be cared for in a quality institution for children with special needs. But they never came to visit him, and for all practical purposes he was brought up as an orphan. A "privileged orphan," he was told. All his physical needs met, except for the most important one: Unconditional love from nurturing parents.

As much as I tried, I could not completely control my feelings from pouring out for his soul. However, more powerful than all his pain was the refined light shining out of this young man. He was simply an exquisite human being. With a special charm, clearly the result of years of struggle, he had emerged with a very rare type of warmth, which basked everything around him in a soft glow.

"And tonight," he tells me, "you said that each one of us has a unique mission despite

appearances. I too, like the fellow in your story, lack certain abilities. But, unlike the wealthy man in your story, I do not know what strengths I have in return. Can you help me discover my special qualities?"...

I was taken. He wasn't aware of his own level of refinement. This tortured man could give more love and kindness than most people I know, yet he was crying for help.

What can I say, my heart went out to him in the deepest possible way, and we began to communicate regularly. He would attend many of my classes and I would converse with him about many things, and he would always elicit in me kindness I did not know I had. From time to time, he would address his own feelings of rejection and his desire to confront his parents. He had tracked them down but was terrified of contacting them.

Mischiefous thoughts began to creep into my brain about contacting them myself. But what would I say? Who am I to call them? I tried not to be judgmental; who knows what they have endured; what caused them to give up and desert their own child? But is it being judgmental to ask whether any parent has such a right - no matter what the excuse? And is it my role to be the one that confronts these parents?

After a few months of hesitation, I got the number and I finally made the call.

"Hello, good afternoon, this is Simon Jacobson. I am a friend of your son and would like to speak to you about him."

Deathly silence on the other end of the line. What do I say now?

"Hello, hi may we speak for a few moments?"

"What can I do for you?" was the brisk and cold response.

"I know your son. He is an extraordinary man and I thought that would make you proud."

Click. The father hung up the phone.

What do I do now? Call back? I decided to wait. A few days later I tried again. This time his secretary did not let the call through, so I left a message saying that "this matter is very personal and can have profound long-term consequences for good or for bad."

I tried again the next day and what do you know, he took my call. Now what? I simply said: "Please understand. I am not in the business of meddling. I am not being critical or judgmental. I simply feel from the depths of my heart that it would be life-transforming for you and your wife to meet your son."

"We don't want to talk about it, we don't want to go there, we did what we felt was best for everyone."

"I am sure you did. Still, today, now, your son has grown to be a tremendous soul. He needs to see you and you need to see him. Please consider that."

"I'll get back to you."

He didn't. But now I was on the war-path. So I called again. He did apol-

ogize for not getting back - almost making me respect his cordiality until I remembered why we were here in the first place - and said that his wife would not be able to do it. Too uncomfortable. He mumbled something about having "long ago buried this." But I persisted.

"So then I'll arrange for you to meet your son without your wife."

"No, not yet."

After a few months, he finally relented, and together with his wife, we scheduled the fateful meeting that everybody dreaded. At their insistence, which surprised me, they wanted me to be present at the meeting, I figured, to serve as a bit of a buffer.

The big day came. We met at their lavish home in the living room, tea and biscuits on the table, all choreographed to the tee, except for the emotions that would be released.

Oh man, this was one of the most heart-wrenching experiences I would ever endure, and I wondered what havoc did I wreak, but it was too late. Here we were. Initially, everybody was cordial, even detached, like strangers meeting about buying a house. "What do you do?" "Where have you traveled?" "Are you a Yankee fan?" "How's the weather?" - you get the idea? After sitting silent, trying to be invisible and letting things take their natural, biological course (or so I hoped), I finally piped in and said the first serious statement of the evening. "Your son told me his story. He must have a lot of anger inside of him, but he hasn't shown it to me, or maybe not even to himself. You must have many feelings yourself. I really don't belong here, but since I am here allow me to say that your son is one of the most beautiful people I know. I have discovered through him new horizons of human dignity and the capacity of the soul to shine in this harsh world. I think it would be truly life-changing for you to get to know each other."

Before I stood up to leave, our hero, turned to his parents and uttered a few words that could melt any heart. With a stutter and a bit slowly - his speech was impeded, as you may recall - he began:

"Mumma, Puppa" - I could tell that he worked long and hard to get those words out (he never referred to his parents that way when he spoke with me).

"Mumma, Puppa... I, I am not perfect. You, too, are not perfect. I have forgiven you. Can you forgive me?"

We all burst into tears. I made my way out the door, leaving them alone...

"Mumma, Puppa... I, I am not perfect. You, too, are not perfect. I have forgiven you. Can you forgive me?" Can you forgive me for not being perfect, their handicapped child asked. Can you forgive me for putting into your life a child who is less than perfect?...

Can you forgive your child for not being perfect? Can you forgive your loved one for not being perfect? Can you forgive yourself for being imperfect?



כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אוֹיֵבךָ וְנִתְּנָה לְךָ דִּיבְרָה תּוֹרָה אֲלֵךְ בְּנֶגֶד יֵצֵר הָרַע (רש"י)

The Yetzer Harah: Master Con Artist

When you go out to wage war against your enemies: Rashi explains that the war being fought is against your evil inclination.

The Chasam Sofer explains, that the destructive force created by sin runs after the sinner and makes every attempt to entice him into doing additional sins. The reverse is true with a mitzvah. This is the way a mitzvah brings about additional mitzvahs and G-d forbid the converse.

There were two neighbors. One had a beautiful gold ring surrounded by rare jewels. It was a thing of beauty. His neighbor coveted this ring and schemed so that he could steal it.

They were talking one time and he asked the owner of the ring for advice about a ring he had purchased and asked him if he thought the price was a fair one.. The unsuspecting person takes out his ring and shows him its beauty and says I paid thousands of dollars for this. The thief looked at the ring and then said quite brazenly, I will now put my ring in my pocket and that is what he did. The owner was incensed and called the thief to court.

The thief said, "I can't go to court as I have nothing to wear". The owner said "I will lend you a suit". The thief said I have no way of getting there". The owner said I will lend you a donkey"

In court the thief stood up and said, "my neighbor is a big liar. I bet he would say that my suit and my donkey are his as well."

The owner stood up and said that of course they are his as well as the ring in question.

After much laughter the judge awarded the thief the ring.

My friends, this is what the Yetzer Hora does. It tricks you slowly and takes away every merit you have worked an entire life to accumulate. You need to be constantly alert and guard carefully against this trickster.

In a small town 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"

The rich man took him home and gave him an old, rotten and smelly piece of fish., He devoured 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 men informed his wife that he would be leaving and would return later that 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.

"What are you so happy about?" his wife asked him.

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 rotten 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."

This is how the yetzer hara works. He convinces you that your sins are actually mitzvos and tempts you with this "mitzvah observance" to dig a hole for yourself that it may be very difficult to climb out of.



WHAT YOU NEED TO QUIET YOUR MIND

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says a third of us aren't getting the recommended seven hours of sleep we need. A growing number of scientists are calling our lack of sleep "an escalating public health crisis." Some aren't getting enough sleep because they are choosing to stay awake until deep into the night, some to work, others to talk, others to watch, and many because they just can't disconnect.

Yet, many others desperately want to sleep, but simply can't. It is estimated that ten to fifteen percent of adults in America have a chronic insomnia disorder. They toss and turn, count sheep, and ultimately many resort to taking Ambien or melatonin, insomnia medications that make up an industry generating \$70 billion per year. Just recently, the FDA ordered that several popular types of prescription sleeping pills, including Ambien must come with a prominent "black box" warning slapped on the box describing the dangerous side effects. Pills are not a sustainable solution. So, what can be done?

Among those sent home from war in our Parsha is the individual described as soft or faint of heart. Who is this person? What disqualifies him from fighting on the front lines? Rashi quotes: Rebbe Yossi said, the one who is fearful is afraid of the aveiros, the mistakes or indiscretions in his hand get sent home. Which violations? What is so severe that it disqualifies someone from fighting for the Jewish people?

The Ohr Ha'Chaim Ha'Kadosh explains that when a person goes out to war, is enlisted to the battle front, it is only natural to be scared, to say to oneself, what if I am unworthy to survive and to triumph? The mind naturally will take the soldier to a bad place, to have doubts and fear. He will think about aveiros, the mistakes he has made, the poor judgment he has shown, the violations and how they are about to catch up with him. But why are they described as b'yado? Don't such thoughts and fears happen in the heart or the head, not the hand?

The Imrei Emes explains that to understand, we must look at the pesukim that come right before. The Torah tells of three individuals whom we send home from the battle front – someone who built a new home and hasn't lived in it, someone who planted a vineyard and hasn't harvested it, and someone who is in their first year of marriage.

When it says we send home the person who is soft hearted and is carrying something in his hand, it means these three individuals. What they have in common is they are distracted; their thoughts are elsewhere.

How can one be expected to fight, defeat an enemy, triumph in battle, how can they hear orders let alone follow through on them when they are thinking about the house they didn't get to live in, the vineyard whose wine they never got to taste or their loved one who is back home?

We don't just send home someone who can't stop thinking about what they did wrong. The stakes are so high, the consequences so grave that we also send home someone who can't stop thinking about something they did right, but whose thoughts are extraneous to the battle. We need soldiers who can control and regulate their thoughts, who can quiet the noise and distractions in their mind and who can stay focused on the battle at hand, who can consistently execute on what they need to do.

We are living in a time of unprecedented noise; we can hardly hear anyone or anything let alone hear our own inner voice. If we are to experience our revelation, if we are to have or breakthrough, be our best selves and have a greatest relationship with Hashem, we need to quiet so many of the distracting sounds and voices around us and in us.

Like the soldier, each day we go to battle, we fight to succeed at work and in life. We confront enemies in the form of distractions, temptations and our own sense of insecurities or unworthiness. Our minds run wild on overdrive all day long in ways that sabotage our own success. Some are constantly thinking about every possible problem that could arise, every reason they won't succeed, everything that could go wrong. For others, the mind is filled with the noise of trying to juggle a million things, emails to return, phone calls to make, people to visit, tasks to get done, people to make happy. For yet others, the mind is overloaded with keeping up with the news cycle, with social media, pop culture, work, home and more. The common denominator is a cluttered mind, a distracted existence.

Who can find peace while awake or calmly fall asleep when your mind is on overdrive, constantly bombarding you with thoughts, worries and things to do? A person with a scattered mind gets sent home from war and we are losing too many battles in our lives because of the inability to concentrate, to be present, to find peace, we struggle to disconnect and to simply shut it down.

A Chassid was once plagued by negative thoughts that relentlessly intruded upon him. He was sidetracked by temptations and fantasy; he was distracted by worry and anxiety. One evening it was particularly bad. He couldn't stop having negative thoughts and inappropriate thoughts. He couldn't take it anymore, so he went to his Rebbe's house to get advice. He knocked on the front door, but nobody answered. He knocked harder, but still no response. Brazenly, he walked around to the side and looked through the window. He saw the Rebbe sitting at the dining room table learning and so he knocked

on the window. But lo and behold, the Rebbe didn't look up and his efforts to get the Rebbe's attention continued to fail. Disappointed and frustrated, the Chassid went home.

The next morning after shul, he waited patiently until it was his turn and he finally had the attention of the Rebbe. Somewhat exasperated, he said, Rebbe! I desperately needed you last night. The Rebbe said I know. I know what you wanted to ask and I already gave you an answer. Bewildered, the Chassid said, what do you mean? I knocked and knocked but you never answered, and I didn't even get a chance to ask my question. The Rebbe looked at him and explained. Last night you came over to my house. You knocked on the front door, and then you knocked even harder. You came around and knocked on my window. You kept knocking, but the choice was mine whether or not to let you in. These thoughts, these questions, doubts, temptations, worries, they can knock all day on the door of your mind, but never forget, the choice remains yours whether or not to let them in.

I love this story because it is so much more than a story, it is a strategy, it is a solution. Thinking about our thoughts and mind in this way has helped me personally and countless others that I have shared it with.

Like the Chassid, so many of us are plagued by unwanted and unwelcome thoughts. They could be of temptation, of doubt, of our unworthiness or simply of being overwhelmed. Never forget - we cannot control what knocks, but we absolutely can control what and when we let them in.

Stop saying that you cannot control your mind from racing. You don't have to persevere, marinate, stew in a thought, a fear, concern or regret. I am obviously not talking about diagnosed anxiety or mental illnesses that needs therapy and at times medication. I am referring to the ordinary, everyday noise that clogs our brains. You are the judge, and you are the policeman of the gates into your mind. Decide what to let in, what to think about, what to focus on, what is productive, healthy, and positive and what you are going to lock out, what is a distraction, destructive, negative, and unwelcome.

The stakes are high, we cannot win, we can't win the battle to fall asleep, the battle to get ahead, the battle to get everything done, if we let any thought, image or idea storm our gates and take up precious real estate in our mind. David Allen, the great architect and author of an amazing book and system called Getting Things Done, says, "Your mind is for having ideas, not holding them." Let them go, put them down, control them, don't let them control you.

Make this your year to quiet your mind and you will likely have your biggest breakthrough yet, an enormous growth spurt in every area of your life, beginning with a good night's sleep.



SHEHECHEYANU

Reuven buys a new suit but will not wear it until he has it checked for shatnez. When does he make the bracha of Shehecheyanu; when he purchases the suit, or when the begged becomes wearable after it is checked for shatnez?

Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 223:4 writes that when someone buys new kailim, the bracha of Shehecheyanushould be said at the time of buying, despite the fact that he has yet to use them. This is because the bracha is going on the simcha that he has in buying it. Reb Akiva Eiger writes in his hagahos that if we are dealing with kailim that require tevillah in the mikva, does one say the bracha when he makes the purchase or rather after he toivels them since he cannot use it before he toivels it. The same question could apply concerning buying a new house; the owner can't move in unless he puts up mezuzos. Reb Akiva Eiger stays with a tzarich iyun. This would seem to coincide with the above shatnez question. It could be that the question of shatnez is worse than Reb Akiva Eiger's scenarios. When it comes to kailim that require tevillah; since it is something that can easily be done, one could possibly make the bracha at the time of purchase. However, in the case of shatnez, were the begged to be found to have shatnez, one would not be able to fix it but would have to return. The risk is therefore much greater and maybe one should wait to make the Shehecheyanu until after checking for Shatnez.

When the mechaber discusses the bracha of Hatov U'maitiv in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 222:4 he says that a person should make the bracha even if he is worried that from this good something bad will happen. It was the custom that when someone found a lost object, the king used to confiscate it. When the object is found he can make the bracha of Hatov U'maitiv, because at that point he is happy that he found a lost object. It would seem to be that at the time of buying a begged one does not worry about shatnez, therefore he can say the bracha. One may argue that the two cases are not the same. When someone finds a lost object, he is happy at that time, he just might have a future worry if the king hears about his finding. Up until the point that the king hears about it, he can use and enjoy his found object. In the case of shatnez, the begged may not be

worn until he has it checked so there is no complete simcha at the time of purchase.

The Shaarei Tzion 223:21 asks the following question on Reb Akiva Eiger based on Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 225:3 that says if one sees a new fruit that grows in its once-a-year season, he makes a Shehecheyanu. He should make the bracha even if he sees it on the tree or in his friend's hand. The minhag is not to make the bracha until we actually eat it. The Gra explains the reason for making the bracha while it is in your friend's hands is based on the halacha that when someone buys new kailim, even if they require tevillah, one makes the bracha when it is purchased. Why does Reb Akiva Eiger have a safek whether one can make a bracha while it is in the hand of his friend? The Shaarei Tzion answers by differentiating between fruit, which is complete and ready for use despite the fact that it is in his friend's hands, whereas kailim are not usable until they are not toiveled, and clothing is not wearable until checked for shatnez. Therefore, one should not be able to make the bracha. The Biur Halacha in 225 says that even if someone sees the new fruit on Shabbos attached to the tree and he can't detach it until after Shabbos, he still could make the bracha as the fruit is complete. Based on this, it could be that in the case of Reb Akiva Eiger discussing a new home or a new keili that wasn't toiveled, it is worse than a begged that needs to be checked for shatnez. He may not use a keili or live in a new home until he toivels the item or puts up mezuzos. Conversely, in the case of the begged, it is not assur since most begadim don't have shatnez. The obligation is on the person to check the begged, but the begged is complete. This would be similar to seeing fruit on a tree on Shabbos.

There is a differentiation between the fruit and clothing in that a fruit that grows is able to bring simcha to the person even if he can't it. On the other hand, no one has simcha from a begged unless it can be worn. It would therefore stand to reason that Reuven does not make the Shehecheyanu until after the begged is checked for shatnez and alterations are done, so he can wear it and enjoy it!

May we all be zocheh to say Shehecheyanu upon greeting Moshiach!



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Rabbi Reisman

THE REAL CONCEPT OF SHANA RISHONA

I would like to share with an extraordinary Machshava. This week we have the second Parsha in a row with the concept of Shana Rishona. It says in 24:5 (כִּי-יִקַּח אִישׁ, אִשָּׁה חַדְשָׁה--לֹא יֵצֵא בַצֵּבָא, וְלֹא-יַעֲבֹר עָלָיו לְכָל-דְּבַר: נְקִי יִהְיֶה לְבֵיתוֹ, שְׁנָה אֶחָת, (וְשִׂמְחָה, אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-לָקַח). The idea of being Misameich the wife that one has married and Shana Rishona clearly is a very special time. What is the Shoresch Hamitzva what is the Lomdus of this Mitzvah? Most of us would understand that it is important that Chosson and Kallah have the right foundation so they start with a year of great joy.

The Chinuch says that that is not the Pshat. The Chinuch in his explanation of the Mitzvah which is Mitzvah 582 (Taf Kuf Pei Bais). He says the Mitzvah of (וְשִׂמְחָה, אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ) is a Mitzvah to be with your wife the first year so that you have great joy for the rest of your life. In other words the first year is a year of getting used to each other, of preparation. In the Lashon of the Chinuch, Mishorshei Hamitzvah. Shenishaiv Im Ha'isha... Shana Sh'laima... K'dei L'hargil Hateva Ima. To travel, to be with your wife for a full year K'dei L'hargil Ima, to get used to her. Ul'hadbik Haratzon Etzla, and to connect well with her. Ul'hachnis Tzi'yura V'chal Pa'ala B'leiv. To understand her nature, her style, emotionally. Meaning to say that the depth of the understanding of marriage is that Shana Rishona is a year of adjustment, not a year of fun. If it is just a year of fun and not a period of adjustment then it is worthless, or worth little. It is a year of adjustment. Every husband and wife when they get married have to get used to a personality that is different, that has different values, that has different things that they are accustomed to. The greatest error a Chosson/Kallah could make is to think that after marriage things go on self-pilot. It is not

so. Technically the first year is the hardest, the most adjustments. Of course the first year is also a time when everything is new and there is a certain joy which gives the strength to the Chosson/Kallah to adapt to each other. The Chosson/Kallah who get married with the idea that everything is self-pilot are in for a big surprise, as there are a lot of adjustments. Therefore the insight of this Chinuch is extraordinary.

It comes back to the great Yesod of the Chasam Sofer in Parshas Chayei Sara. The Chasam Sofer there writes when Lavan says regarding the Shidduch in 24:50 (לֹא נוֹכַל דְּבַר אֵלַיךְ, רַע). Which means to say that we cannot speak good or bad.

The Chasam Sofer asks if you are for the Shidduch say good and if you are against the Shidduch say bad. The Chasam Sofer answers that when it comes to Shidduchim there is no good and bad. HKB"H makes Shidduchim with two people who are not identical. Where one has one nature and the other has a different nature. The purpose is to build from the combination. He gives an example if both like to spend money the house would be a house of poverty. If both are intent on saving money they would have money but they wouldn't be happy. HKB"H makes a Shidduch of one who likes to spend and one who likes to save and in that way hopefully from the combination a good middle ground will be found. So too with everything else in marriage.

The Chinuch says that is the idea of V'simach Es Ishto Shana, the idea of Shana Rishona. To accustom one's self to it. I would venture to say that the Yesod of this Chinuch which is a Yesod which every married couple must absorb.

These shiurim have been transcribed from an actual drasha. As speed is of the essence, spelling and grammar may be compromised

Elul, YT in the Vochen

revealed state then in the weekdays.

UFARATZTA

In



What's so special about Elul is, that the Yud Gimel Midos Horachamim are in a revealed state. The alter Rebbe* asks, then, why is it not a Yom Tov the entire month, as we celebrate Shabbos and Yom Tov when G-dliness is in a more

The Alter Rebbe answers this with a parable of: "in Elul the king is in the field." [See previous BET P'Shoftim.] Hashem wants to relate to us the way we are in our everyday life. ===== Lekuti Torah P' Re'ay, 32b

return, we make our everyday life fit for: the presence of a king.

===== Based on a Farbrengen, P' Re'ay, 1956.

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Rabbi Shmuel Reichman A Journey of Excitement

A boy ran into a local store and asked the storeowner if could borrow the phone and make a phone call. The storeowner acquiesced and showed the boy to the back of the store, where the phone was. The boy dialed a number and a woman picked up. "Hi," began the boy, "I wanted to know if I can mow your lawn? I'm looking for a job to mow people's lawns. Is there a job available?" The woman replied, "Actually, we already have someone who mows our lawn and he does a great job. We're not looking for anyone; I'm sorry." But the boy stayed persistent. "Let me emphasize, I'm going to do an amazing job!" "It's really okay; the boy who does our lawn actually does an amazing job." "You don't understand," went on the boy. "I'm not just going to mow your lawn; I'm going to pull out the weeds, water it and landscape it. Your lawn is going to be the most beautiful lawn you've ever seen." The woman kept going with her point. "The boy who does our lawn does all that, and he does an absolutely amazing job. We're not looking for anyone; I'm sorry." The boy hung up the phone.

The storeowner, who had overheard the conversation, then asked the boy, "You really wanted that job, didn't you...? I'm sorry it didn't work out." The boy smiled and said, "No, I already have the

job; I just wanted to see how I was doing." This is really what Elul is. It's when we make that phone call and see how we are doing. It's when we

check in on ourselves. One of the biggest challenges with self-development and self-analysis, and by extension with mussar and with Elul, is that we fear the process of acknowledging where we have gone wrong, because with that comes a big hit to our self-worth and self-image. We start to feel bad and say to ourselves, "All the things I wanted to work on since years ago... it's always the same list for Elul."

But there's one idea that can help. And that is when you change your perspective on self-development and you understand that it's not about, "What am I doing wrong?" but rather, "What can I become better at?" When you look at growth as an opportunity, when you learn to enjoy the process, when you fall in love with getting better at your mid-

dos, with your learning, your health, better relationships, with developing your mindset, with falling in love with Torah and with Hashem, it's a completely different experience. When you fall in love with the process of growth, then Elul becomes this most exciting and amazing time of the year, as opposed to a time that we dread. It is not just a time of judgment, but a time when we re-establish our relationship with Hashem. We become our best selves and remember our dreams and visions. It's about tapping into who we know we are destined to become and who we know we are capable of becoming.

So when we check in with ourselves we ought to turn it into a journey of excitement. We must remember who we are supposed to becoming, and learn to fall in love with the process.

Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro

Eternal Happiness

The Gemara (Taanis 22a) says that R' Beroka was once walking in the marketplace when he came across Eliyahu HaNavi and asked if there was anyone there who was a ben Olam Habah (will go straight into the World to Come)? Eliyahu HaNavi looked around and said no. A bit later, Eliyahu HaNavi pointed to two people and said, "Those people, they are worthy of the World to Come." R' Beroka approached them and asked what they do that ensures them a place in the World to Come? They answered that we are badchanim, which means, according to Rashi, "S'meichim u'mesamchim b'nei adam – are happy and make other people happy"

Think about it. You are a ben Olam Habah if you are happy and make other people happy.

Tangentially, it doesn't say that you merit a chelek (portion) in the World to Come, but that you are a ben Olam Habah. The difference is that the latter individuals go straight to Olam Habah without any form of judgment after they pass away. That's not just having a share in the World to Come; it's far more.

When you make people happy, encourage them, when you give someone purpose to live, you earn the title of a "ben Olam Habah." But there's a question. Why does Rashi need to add the words "other people" – b'nei adam –

in his comment.

Why can't he simply say that these people are happy and make happy – s'meichim u'mesamchim – which we would know of course refers to other people.

Rav Elimelech Biderman explains that Rashi could be understood to mean how they made other happy. It was through calling them b'nei adam, by bringing back their self-esteem. So many people lack self-esteem

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and don't feel good about themselves. What did these people do? They looked a person in the eye and made them feel, "You're a ben adam – you're worthy, you have value." They restored faith and self-esteem to that person.

They built others up, by giving them reason to live and reason to accomplish. And if you do that, you are a ben Olam Habah. You really are.

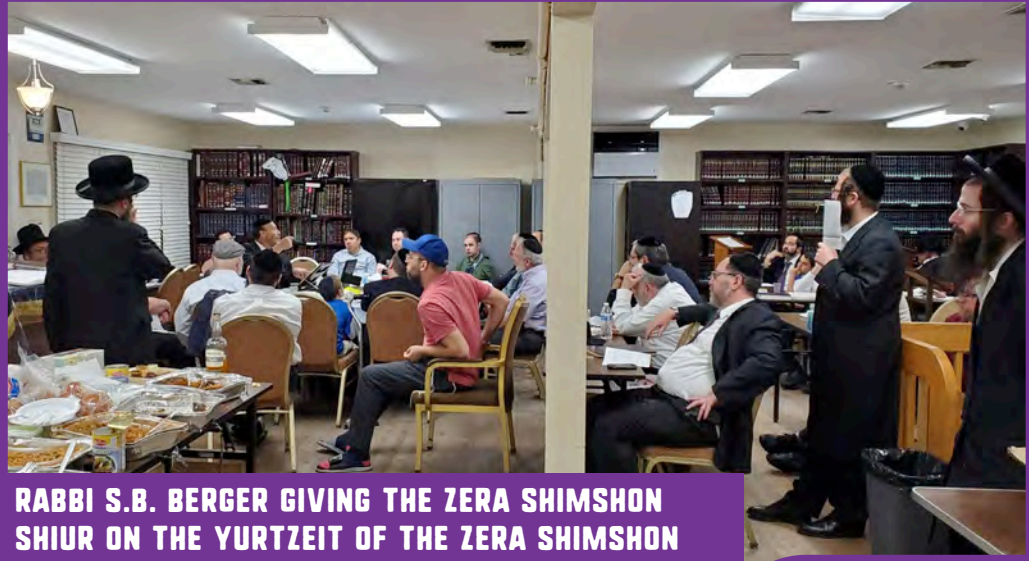
The Expert Doctor or Hashem?

Rabbi Zev Smith recounted that he once attended the brit milah of a boy who was the first child of a couple who had been married for 20 years. The father stood up to speak, and emotionally described the trials & tribulations that he & his wife had gone through. "I'm sure you can imagine," he told his guests, "all the blessings we received from rabbis, & all the heartfelt prayers we recited."

He then proceeded to tell how he heard about a great tzaddik who was visiting the United States. He made it a point to go see him to ask for a beracha. When he asked the rabbi for his blessing, the rabbi asked if he had been praying. The man was insulted by the question. "What does The Rabbi think I'm doing for the last 20 years?" he wondered. However, he swallowed his feelings & respectfully told the rabbi, "Yes, of course I have been praying." "You don't understand," the rabbi replied. "Did you ever pray with the firm belief that Hashem is the Only One Who can help you? Did you ever put out of your mind everything the doctors have been saying, to focus on the fact that this is all the Will of Hashem? Or was Hashem just a side point along with the doctors the whole time?" The man immediately acknowledged that the rabbi was right. He never really prayed with that kind of emunah. "This child," the man said at his son's milah, "is testimony to the fact that when you truly believe that Hashem is the source of your salvation, He comes through for you." **Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes**

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RABBI ZEV HASHISKY SPEAKING AT THE NIGHT KOLLEL



PEOPLE LEARNING ENJOYING THE NICE WEATHER



REB SHIMON ECHSTIEN GIVING A CHABURAH AT THE NIGHT KOLLEL



Adopted Turtle

Deep within a forest a little turtle began to climb a tree. After hours of effort he reached the top, jumped into the air waving his front legs and crashed to the ground. After recovering, he slowly climbed the tree again, jumped, and fell to the ground.

The turtle tried again and again while a couple of birds sitting on a branch watched his sad efforts. Finally, the female bird turned to her mate. "Dear," she chirped, "I think it's time to tell him he's adopted."

Password Reset

I've just reset my password to DelicateLuggageHandler... I was told it had to be case-sensitive.

I was once taught that nothing rhymes with silver... But to this day, I still don't think they sound the same.

What rhymes with donut
Wow, it actually does!

People always tell me my rhymes don't make sense. And they're absolutely right. Pretense.

Boss Issues

A boss was complaining in a staff meeting the other day that he wasn't getting any respect. Later that morning he went to a local sign shop and bought a

small sign that read, "I'm the Boss". He then taped it to his office door.

Later that day when he returned from lunch, he found that someone had taped a note to the sign that said. "Your wife called, she wants her sign back!"

Fun word definitions with medical section Clothes dryer

An appliance designed to eat socks.

Diet soda

A drink you buy at a convenience store to go with a half-pound bag of candy.

Exercise

Walking up and down a mall, occasionally resting to make a purchase.

Grocery list

What you spend half an hour writing, then forget to take with you to the store.

Gartel

Waist Material

Hardware store

Similar to a black hole in space: once he goes in, he isn't coming out any time soon.

Patience

The most important ingredient for, marriage and children. See also "tranquilizers."

Artery, n. The study of paintings.

Bacteria, n. The back door of a cafeteria.

Benign, adj. What you be after you be eight.

Cat scan, np. A search for kitty.

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Colic, n. A breed of sheep dog.

Dilate, v. To live a long life.

Fibula, n. A small lie.

Medical Staff, np. A doctor's walking cane.

Morbid, adj. A higher offer.

Nitrates, A price cheaper than day rates.

Node, v. Past tense of *knew*.

Outpatient, n. A person who has fainted.

Postoperative, n. A mailman or letter carrier.

Seizure,. An alcoholic Roman emperor.

Tablet, A small table.

Mosquito, n. An insect that makes you like flies better.

Raisin, n. A grape with a sunburn.

Secret, n. Something you tell to one person at a time.

Toothache, n. The pain that drives you to extraction.

Tomorrow, n. One of the greatest labor saving devices of today.

Yawn, n. An honest opinion openly expressed.

Wrinkle, n. Something other people have; I have character lines.

THE BEN ISH CHAI

Few Rabbis throughout Jewish History have been called the glory of the generation. The Hakham Ben Ish Chai, Rabbi Yosef Chaim, from Bahdad was certainly one of them. Versed in all areas of the Torah, and beloved by all the Ben Ish Chai was one of the greatest sages of his time. From the age of 10 he left his father's library to study with his uncle Dovid Chai Ben Meir. When he was only 16, he married his master Rabbi Abdullah Somaich's niece, Rachel, and at 25, he took his father's position as leading Rabbi of Baghdad after he died.



His work Ben Ish Chai, who gave him the sobriquet, is a widely accepted reference in Sephardi and non-Sephardi homes everywhere. In his unique approach, Hakham Yosef Chaim taught the halacha according to the weekly Parshiot, beginning with a discussion on a topic of Kabbalah, and then bringing it down to the Halachic ruling.

THE DENIAL OF PLEASURE

The Ben Ish Chai's genius was already well-known during his young years.. It was only after much toil in Torah, praying, and perfecting his middot that he acquired the title Ben Ish Chai.

There's a story in which the great Kabbalist Rabbi Eliyahu Mani (who expounded on the Kabbalah of the Rashash) knew Rabbi Yosef Chaim when the latter was young. They parted ways, but met at Chevron during the Ben Ish Chai's later years. Rabbi Eliyahu Mani was astonished to see the holy figure of his friend, with a fierce and sharp mind, and surrounded by students. After some greetings were exchanged, he asked "in what merit did you get all of this?" The Ben Ish Chai replied "I denied myself all forms of pleasure I could think of. During summer, it is customary for the Jews in Baghdad to bury their watermelons in the sand so they stay cool and tasty. Even that I denied myself."

The negation of pleasure is one of the ideas most misunderstood and neglected in Halacha. Holy people deny pleasures and that's how they can break their desire for physicality. This, in turn, allows them to receive more and more Torah. The body also feels lighter and better suited for Avodat Hashem.

Interestingly enough, there's a type of fast which people can do called "fast of the Ra'avad" (Rabbi Avraham ben David). It consists of leaving a portion of the meal one would carve and not eat it! When a person can subdue his desire for the last bite of something he loves that in itself is considered a form of fasting, is very beloved to Hashem, and can bring great spiritual benefits.

On the wonders of the Ben Ish Chai

Those that knew the Ben Ish Chai were acquainted with his miracles which had become commonplace. His prayers never returned empty-handed and his amulets were sure to bring the much needed salvation. It was related that even the Arabs would close their stores in the local Bazaar and bow down to the Ben Ish Chai when he passed by. This is probably one of the best indications that he was truly awesome and, in fact, after his passing, the arabs began to harrass Jews, leading to the mass exodus from Iran that occurred at the 19th Century.

There was one time when the Jews of Baghdad needed to buy lettuce for Pessach. One of the rulings of the Ben Ish Chai was that it was preferable to eat the stems of the lettuce and not waste too much time inspecting the vegetable. Knowing that the Chag was approaching, the Arabs colluded to sell lettuce at 10 times the normal price. The rich Jews had no problem purchasing it, but the poorer ones turned to the Ben Ish Chai.

Without wasting a moment, the Ben Ish Chai went to one of the Arab merchants, held one of the lettuce heads in his hand and asked "Is this worth 20 coins?" Immediately, bugs began to crawl out of the lettuce head and spread out. The Ben Ish Chai then took another lettuce head and asked the same thing. Again, the miracle happened. The miracle kept happening a few times until the whole stall was filled with bugs and the Arabs agreed to supply the Jews with lettuce free of charge.

HIS HALACHIC APPROACH

The Ben Ish Chai is the main authority for many Jews that came from Iraq. His magnum opus called Ben Ish Chai never compromises on the strict adherence to Halacha.

Once, the Jews of Iraq couldn't get Etrogim in time for Sukkot. Only one orphan alone in the entire country had one tree in his garden with only one good Etrog. According to Halacha, the Etrog for the first day of Sukkot needs to be fully owned by the one doing the Mitzvah of shaking the 4 species. Technically speaking, we can use an Etrog and pass it around to everyone to do the Mitzvah, but it has to be considered a full-fledged gift with no intention of return.

However, since the boy was young and an orphan, he could not sell anything halachically. The Jews went to the Ben Ish Chai for a ruling and after much research, he sadly concluded the Mitzvah of shaking the 4 species could not be done in the first day of Sukkot.

May the merit of the holy Ben Ish Chai protect us!

This article was written and published in the zechut of all Emuna Builder Partners. May they have complete emuna and continue spreading emuna!

BEN ISH CHAI ON KI SEITZEI

"Ki sivneh bayis chadash ve'asisa maakeh le'gagecha, ve'lo sasim damim be'baisecha ki yipol hanofel mimenu."

"When you build a new house, create a fence around its roof, for blood may befall on your house lest someone falls from your roof." Deuteronomy 22:8

The Jew is referred to as "Adam" or man in the Torah. When he sins, he splits this word "adam" into aleph and "dam," blood. Chazal teach that Adam brought blood and death into the world because by sinning, he shore off the aleph from his name, leaving blood in its wake. The shape of the letter aleph is that of the Hebrew letters vav with two attached yudim; therefore the aleph shares the same gematria as the word "gagecha," your roof (26). When one repents properly it is very similar to him building a new house because his body and soul are considered newly formed. And much as a roof protects a physical house, one's mind protects his "spiritual house." To summarize, the knowledge of one's sins and awareness of Hashem are excellent deterrents to sinning. Both the aleph and the word gagecha share the same gematria as the four letter name for Hashem, the tetragrammaton. Man must therefore strive not to sin because sinning separates the aleph from adam which brings death (sin) into the world and removes himself from his Maker.

Furthermore, there are four traits that are termed "mayim" (water) that a baal teshuvah must keep himself distant from. These traits are arrogance, anger, argumentativeness and lust. Arrogance is called water because the verse states the waters on high which separate. Argumentation stands for the waters of argument. The third, anger, is represented in the Book of Nahum as waters of anger and lust is symbolized by water as Proverbs teaches that stolen waters are sweet. When we return to Hashem properly, we recreate ourselves. To armor ourselves, we are enjoined not to place "damim" in our house. "Damim" is the combination of dalet and the word mayim, "four waters." This verse subtly teaches us to avoid those four character traits which may distance ourselves from Hashem.

Nothing But the Truth

Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

The Torah tells us in Parshat Mishpatim, “M’dvar sheker tirchak – From something that is not true, stay far away.” The commentaries point out that of the many mitzvot, this is the only one where the fence itself is part of the commandment.

The Mishnah (Avot 1:1) tells us that we should make a fence around the Torah. In example, the Torah commands us to keep Shabbat, or give tzedakah, or avoid from marrying certain people. In these cases, it’s not enough to not just commit the sin, but we must create a fence, a sort of DMZ (Demilitarized zone) so as not to violate the mitzvah. In example, one is not allowed to ride a horse on Shabbat lest he pull off a branch from a tree and encourage the horse to run faster. This falls under the banner of making a fence for the Torah.

When it comes to telling a lie, it is noteworthy that the fence itself is built into the very commandment. If the Torah decided to do this, to build into the body of the commandment the fence itself, it is emphasizing something. Truth must be pursued at all costs, and falsehood, stayed far, far away from.

Rav Zusha from Anipoli, the brother of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, once remarked on this above Pasuk that the words “M’dvar sheker tirchak” can be understood to mean that when a person engages in something that is not true, he will be distant from G-d. This is because the signature of G-d is truth (Shabbat 55a), and one who engages in speaking or acting in ways that are not true is distancing himself from this very way which G-d stands for at His very core, at His very essence. Hashem embodies truth to such a point that any lack of it does not allow that person to be close.

When the angels came to visit Avraham and Sarah and report the upcoming birth of Yitzchak, the Torah relates that Sarah laughed upon hearing this news. When asked, “Why did you, Sarah, laugh?” Sarah replied that she did not laugh. What immediately does the Torah say after that? The angel stood up and left. When we read this, we would assume that they just had to go. Rav Zusha explains, though, that when Sarah laughed, there was an element that was untrue, and the angels could not stand being where an untruth was said, and they therefore got up and left. Now consider for a moment. If for the angels they repulsed such an infraction of truth, to a minor degree, then we can just imagine what a full untruth is like.

If this is the power of speaking something that is not true, then we can extrapolate that one of the ways of having Hashem close to us is to be an ish emet, a man of truth. The Gemara (Sanhedrin) states that the first question a person will be asked after they pass away is if they set aside times to learn Torah. Tosafos questions this premise, because the Gemara (Kiddushin) says that the first question is if you dealt honestly in your business dealings. How can the two passages be reconciled?

Rav Yitzchok Levi of Berditchev says that the desire to be untruthful in business is very great, given the benefits that can be gained by being subversive and focusing on how you can gain, even at the expense of the other party. While this person may be a generous and righteous man in other areas, such as donating money to important organizations, when it comes to one’s source of livelihood, it’s different. Whatever is needed to bring in money is done, even if the efforts towards that goal are less than one hundred percent honest. The comment given in return is often, “Rabbi, tzedakah is tzedakah. Business is business.” Whenever I hear this, I jokingly add, “And Gehinnom is Gehinnom.” There are no games here.

When a person is guided by Torah and sets aside a time to study every single day, with a strong sense of commitment and discipline, it affects the person. If a person, in example, attends a class or reads an article about the truth, and then an opportunity arises for a person to do chesed, you will be in a frame of mind that, “The way I want to live my life is in the way Hashem wants me to,” and that will lead the person to act in a way according to Torah values and ideals. The studying of Torah and the integration of its values, regardless of the topic at hand affects a person, which in turn will yield the result of one being honest and holding himself with integrity in business. The two are thus interrelated.

The son of the Ponovezher Rav once approached his father and asked for an explanation for a minhag that he had of eating alone on the first night of Rosh Hashanah. “Is there some place this is stated in halacha? I looked everywhere and I couldn’t find it.” The Ponovezher Rav replied

that this halacha is in fact not stated anywhere. The reason he did so, he explained, is that when he was a young boy, he was studying in a town and was invited out by someone for a meal on Rosh Hashanah. “I wasn’t sure of his level of religious observance and Kashrus stringency, and so I felt uncomfortable accepting the invitation and eating at his home, especially on Rosh Hashanah,” explained the Ponovezher Rav. “On the other hand, I didn’t want to embarrass him, as he didn’t come across as someone who didn’t present himself as being any less careful or scrupulous in the laws of Kashrut.”

Thinking of what to say, I replied, “Thank you very much for the invitation. I have a minhag that the first night of Rosh Hashanah, I eat alone.” The man was not aware that there is no such minhag and accepted the Ponovezher Rav’s response, and left him alone.

“Since that day,” said the Ponovezher Rav to his son, “in order that the words which came out of my life should not be a lie, for the past 50 years, I have eaten the first meal of Rosh Hashanah alone.”

That is how far being honest goes.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky too was very careful about telling the truth. He was a paragon of integrity and honesty. He had a close student who was considered to be like a son to himself. Rav Yaakov once came to visit this student and his son and began playing with the toddler. Observing this, and noting that his son had just started walking, the father held up a lollipop, encouraging his son to take a few steps in his direction. “Come to Abba,” he said. The boy began to take a few steps across the room, as Rav Yaakov could be seen smiling and clapping for the boy.

As the boy continued approaching and nearly reached his father, the father glanced in the direction of Rav Yaakov, and seeing the joy and cheering on his face, took a few more steps back so as to prolong the father-son engagement and have his son take a few more steps in his direction. But Rav Yaakov was no longer smiling and his brow furrowed. The student didn’t know what had happened.

“Rebbe, did I do anything to upset you?” asked the student. “I don’t understand,” said Rav Yaakov. “You held out the lollipop to your son indicating that if he would walk to you, you would give it to him. And then when he did walk to you, you moved! That’s not emet (the truth)!”

There’s no contract, there’s no agreement, so you would say, what truth is there to be here? But it is intimated. The Torah says, “M’dvar sheker tirchak,” from something which is not true, stay away. Something implied which is not true is not true. If you imply that an employee will receive benefits or a bonus, that is enough. If it’s implied and it’s untrue, it’s simply not true. There’s no way to bend out of it. In years gone by, giving a handshake was a man’s word. Your honor was on the line. Your word was your bond. It should be no different today, because frankly, nothing has changed. Truth and integrity are not affected by any changes in society. It is a timeless quality.

Years ago, people would give up their job if it demanded that they compromise on their values of integrity and honesty, and today, those virtues have not changed one bit.

From Rav Yaakov, the takeaway is that if you promised to do something, you must follow through. Keep your word. Your honor and integrity are on the line. Be a man of honor, a woman of truth and don’t veer at all. From the Ponovezher Rav, the takeaway is that if you said something or even intimate something and you can stop it from being untrue by changing your plans going forward, do it. In the Ponovezher’s case, before the man approached him for that Rosh Hashanah meal, he had not eaten alone. But once he was invited and he declined, giving the reason that he eats alone as a matter of minhag, he strove to make that a truth and, for the next 50 years, kept to his word. He made it come true in the future, moving forward.

If you promise something to someone, including and especially your children, you are setting an example of the truth. If you want your children to tell the truth, it starts with you.

If you are driving home, don’t say you’ll be home in 2 minutes if you will not be home in 2 minutes, but 5 minutes. Be exact and be direct. It may sound as if it’s a social colloquialism to say two minutes and mean five, but the truth is exact and it doesn’t consider 2 minutes to be 5 minutes. If you say you’re going to do something, such as call someone at a certain time, calling them one minute late is not keeping your word. It’s that simple.

Being a man of truth requires discipline and unwavering commitment to nothing but the truth. But it’s the sign of a real man of honor. And we all want that. So be it.



MITZVOS TZRICHOS KAVANAH – INTENTION TO FULFILL THE MITZVAH

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

ROSH KOLLEL

When making an early shabbos, there is another important point that comes up, in connection to the fulfillment of the mitzvah to recite krias sh'ma.

There is a machlokes in the Gemara whether mitzvos tzrichos kavanah, if one must have in mind when fulfilling a mitzvah that he is doing this action in order to perform Hashem's command. The Magen Avraham rules that when fulfilling a Scriptural mitzvah it is indeed a prerequisite in the fulfillment of the mitzvah, but not for a rabbinical mandate. Therefore, if one did not have in mind that he is performing a Scriptural mitzvah specifically because Hashem commanded us, he would be required to perform the mitzvah again with the proper intent. For example, if one was practicing shaking his daled minim on the first day of Sukos, since he did not have intention to fulfill the mitzvah, he must shake them again with the proper intention. However, if this took place on the other days, which are only rabbinically mandated, he will not have to shake again.

However, the Mishna Berura quotes the Chayei Adam who writes that there is an exception. If the only reason one would do this action is for the sake of the mitzvah, and it is self-understood that this is why it is being done, it is as if he had the proper intention, and he has indeed fulfilled the mitzvah. This is known as maasav mochichim, his action is proof of his intention. Therefore, if one says krias sh'ma during maariv, it is quite clear that he is trying to fulfill the mitzvah and not just practicing. Therefore, even if he forgot to have the proper intention prior to his recital of sh'ma, we can say that he has fulfilled the mitzvah.

On the other hand, in a case where one usually davens before nightfall

this may not apply. When one often davens maariv before nightfall, his usual recital of krias sh'ma during maariv is not fulfilling the mitzvah of saying sh'ma (and he must therefore repeat sh'ma after nightfall). That being the case, the Biur Halacha points out that even on the occasion that he does daven after nightfall, his action is no longer proof of his intention to fulfill the mitzvah of krias sh'ma, since he will often daven at a time that he does not fulfill the mitzvah. Consequently, if he does not have the proper intention to fulfill the mitzvah, even according to the Chayei Adam he has not fulfilled his obligation and he will have to repeat krias sh'ma.

IN CONCLUSION

When one often davens maariv before nightfall, even if on a particular night he is davening after nightfall, he is not automatically fulfilling the mitzvah of saying krias sh'ma. Since his action cannot serve as proof of his intention to fulfill the mitzvah of krias sh'ma, he does not fulfill the mitzvah without having the proper intention.

There is now a Kuntres of shiurim on the topic of "Early Shabbos" available, including topics such as:

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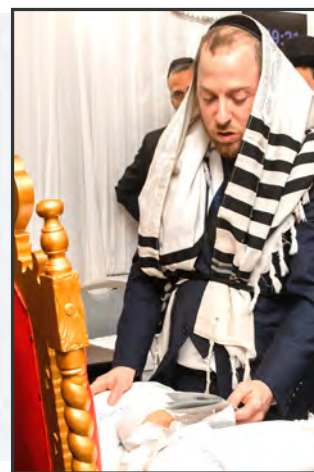
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PRACTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE REASONS WE REQUIRE A MINYAN AT A SHEVA BROCHOS

We previously discussed that some explain that sheva brochos needs a minyan because it is a davar shebkdusha. Others explain that it is to show respect, to enhance the joy, or to publicize the marriage. There are a number of possible halachic differences between these reasons.

HOW MANY PEOPLE NEED TO LISTEN

One difference would be in regard to how many people need to listen to the recital of the brochos. If sheva brochos is considered a davar shebkdusha, we would need at least 6 – or possibly 9 – people to be listening to the recital of the brochos, as we find in regards to a davar shebkdusha, such as borchu or kaddish. This is indeed the ruling of the Rav Moshe Shternbuch. On the other hand, according to the other reasons mentioned above – for honor, joy, or publicity – it is possible that the mere fact that a minyan has gathered will suffice even if they don't hear the actual recital of the brochos.

IF SOME OF THE MINYAN LEFT

It is possible to suggest that there may be another difference in regards to the halacha about continuing the sheva brochos if someone left in the middle of the sheva brochos, and there is no longer a minyan present.

In regards to a davar shebkdusha, such as reciting kaddish, the halacha dictates that if they started with a minyan, they can finish whatever they were saying, even if there is no longer a minyan present. If we consider sheva brochos to be a davar shebkdusha, the same rule should apply, and they can finish reciting the sheva brochos, even if there is no longer a minyan present.

On the other hand, according to the other reasons mentioned above – as a greater honor, joy, or publicity – one could argue that, there is no longer a greater honor, joy, or publicity. That being the case, if there is no longer a minyan present, one should need to stop in the middle,

However, from the Aruch Hashulchan we see that this is not the case, and even though he understands that the reason for a minyan is not because of davar shebkdusha, they can still finish reciting the sheva brochos, even if there is no longer a minyan present. As discussed above, the Aruch Hashulchan follows the opinion that sheva brochos is not considered a davar shebkdusha. Yet, he still writes that if they started with a minyan, they can finish the recital of the sheva brochos, even if there is no longer a minyan present. He seems to understand that anytime something started, it can be finished, and this allowance is not limited to a



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davar shebkdusha. Therefore, they can finish the recital of the sheva brochos, even if there is no longer a minyan present.

On the topic of having started, the Netziv points out that starting means if they actually started reciting the sheva brochos. However, if they merely started bentching with a minyan, but by the time they got to the sheva brochos there is no longer a minyan present, that is not considered starting with a minyan, and sheva brochos cannot be recited.

SUMMARY

There must be a minyan to recite sheva brochos, either because it is a davar shebkdusha, to show respect, to enhance the joy, or to publicize the marriage. A possible halachic difference will be how many have to hear. However, all agree that if one began to recite sheva brochos with a minyan, even if people left, the sheva brochos can be finished.

To be continued...

ELUL ZMAN AT THE KOLLEL BOKER AND NIGHT KOLLEL

As has become the custom, both the Kolloel Boker and the Night Kolloel are learning inyana d'yoma: hilchos netilas daled

minim and yeshivas sukah, respectively. As always, there are featured guest speakers, on the topics being learned.

I gave a shiur at the Kolloel Boker on the topic: "Mitzvas Sukkah – My Sukkah, My Home – In Which Way?"

Reb Zev Kashitsky, Rosh Kolloel of Dexter Park, gave words of inspiration on Thursday night at the Night Kolloel. His powerful words brought to light different ways of achieving a connection to Hashem during these auspicious days of Elul, especially through studying Torah, which is how we can be found worthy on Rosh Hashana.

Reb Shimon Eckstein gave a chabura on the topic: "Shaking the Daled Minim – Which Way is Up and Why?"

Now is the perfect opportunity to come and prepare for the yomim tovim, gaining clarity in these important subjects. Feel free to contact me by email: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com, or reach out to me @: 845 372 6618, and I will try to set you up with the best chavrusa.

Wishing you a Wonderful Shabbos,

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

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Shabbos morning 9 am

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