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SHATNEZ INITIATIVE

SEE PAGE 5



OUR BELOVED RABBI SOKAVA REBBE



THE REWARD THAT ACCRUES TO ONE WHO IS CAREFUL TO AVOID WEARING SHATNEZ:

THE CHOCHMAS ODOM WRITES:

“Whoever is careful to avoid wearing shatnez will have the merit to wear the garments of salvation and a cloak of righteousness.”

THE PENAI ZOKON WRITES:

“One who is careful to avoid shatnez will live a long life in this world and in the world to come, will avoid the need for further gilgulim, will rest in peace in his final resting place with ‘light of life’, will give birth to righteous and healthy children, and he will merit to have all that is good in this world as well.”

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תרומה	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00
תצוה	7:10	7:40	8:10	8:40	9:10
כי תשא	7:15	7:45	8:15	8:45	9:15
ויקהל	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30
פקודי	7:35	8:05	8:35	9:05	9:35
ויקרא	7:40	8:10	8:40	9:10	9:40

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Winter 2021/22

Early Friday Mincha

- מנחה גדולה
- 12:30
- 1:00
- 1:30
- 2:00
- 2:30
- 3:00

18 Main Bais Medrash

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THE WEEK IN PICTURES



NEW SEFARADI SEFER TORAH IN SHUL

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BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE OUR SHATNEZ INITIATIVE.

Shatnez can be found not only in the clothing you wear but can occur in everyday items many which will surprise you. Our goal is to educate and inform. Working in close association with Reb Menachem Fogel of the Monsey Shatnez Laboratory and our very own Rav, Rabbi Doniel Coren Shlita, we will try and shed some light on this Torah mitzvah while creating venues where people can get answers to basic questions and find solutions to more difficult situations.

The following is based on an article by the renowned Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Some Shatnez Basics

Question #1:

I keep reading about shatnez showing up in strange places: ladies sweaters, children's clothes, and even baseball gloves. Am I required to take my family's entire wardrobe to a shatnez laboratory to have everything checked?

Question #2:

"What does a shatnez tester look for?"

Question #3:

"The importer told me that the garment was made from a blend of hemp and wool, which should involve no shatnez concern. As there was no authorized shatnez tester in town, I did what I thought was the next-best thing – I brought the garment to a local observant tailor, to have him check it. He carefully checked the threads and guaranteed me that the garment contained no linen. Only after I wore the garment many times did I meet a great Torah scholar and mention this incident in passing. The talmid chacham told me that I should not be so certain, and he offered to compare the material in my garment to linen threads he had available. And indeed, it was clear that he was correct. The threads in my garment were made from wool and linen, not hemp, and I had been violating a Torah prohibition the entire time!"

Does this story sound contemporary and familiar? As a matter of fact, this story happened in 1650 in the city of Vilna — twenty years before the Dutchman van Leeuwenhoek invented the microscope. In those days, the only "scientific" means of checking whether a material was linen or hemp was to take a sample and see if a candle would get it to burn, since hemp is more flammable than linen (Rama, Yoreh Deah 302:2). Others opposed the reliability of this test (Piskei Teshuvah 302:1, quoting Shu"t Penei Yehoshua). Thus, we see that shatnez problems are not exclusively a result of modern manufacture. However, in modern clothing one may find shatnez in everything from sweaters and skirts to scarves; and from bedding and button loops to baseball gloves.

Before delving into contemporary questions, we

must first understand some of the laws taught in the Torah. The prohibition of shatnez exists only if the garment is made from a blend of sheep's wool and linen, but that wool of other species does not make shatnez. Thus, wool made of camel's, rabbit's or goat's hair mixed with linen is not shatnez (Mishnah, Kilayim 9:1; see Rambam, Hilchos Kilayim 10:2). ("Wool" is simply hair that is soft and can be used as cloth.) The Mishnah (Kilayim 9:2) records that certain combinations, such as silk and wool, were prohibited because of maris ayin, since this raises suspicion or may be misinterpreted that someone is wearing shatnez. However, the Rishonim already conclude that this concern exists only when the material that may be confused with wool or linen is not commonly obtainable, but that no prohibition of maris ayin exists once people become familiar with its availability (Rosh, Hilchos Kilayim).

Most people are surprised to discover that a garment made of a blend of linen and either mohair or cashmere is not shatnez! Why is this? Because neither mohair nor cashmere are made from sheep's wool, but from the hair of goats! Mohair is processed from the hair of an angora goat. Although goats of this variety are now raised around the world, originally they were developed in Turkey. (The current capital of Turkey, Ankara, used to be called Angora.)

Cashmere is the wool of the Kashmir goat, which was originally native to central Asia, as its name indicates. Thus, if no sheep's wool thread was mixed into the mohair or the cashmere, the existence of linen in the garment will not make it shatnez.

If a garment contains wool thread on one side and linen in a different place — so that the wool and linen do not touch, is the garment shatnez?

This issue is disputed by the Rishonim. The Rash (Kilayim 9:1, 9) one of the early Baalei Tosafos, (this is Rabbeinu Shimshon, author of the Tosafos commentary to Zera'im, Taharos, Pesachim and Kesubos, and should not be confused with the more frequently quoted Rosh, Rabbeinu Asher, who also authored commentaries on the Mishnah, Gemara and Halacha, and lived somewhat later than the Rash), rules that shatnez requires that the linen and the wool actually touch, but that one is permitted to wear a garment containing wool and linen threads that are on different parts of the garment. According to the Rash, the prohibition of shatnez is that there is a "combination" of wool and linen, but this is avoided when the wool and linen are separated by other materials.

Based on this Rash, a common custom was to attach a linen atarah to a wool talis by having cotton cloth act as the "mechitzah" between the wool and the linen.

However, the Rambam rules that wool and linen threads on different parts of a garment constitutes shatnez min haTorah. In his opinion, the Torah prohibited a garment containing both wool and linen, even if the linen and wool themselves do not touch. Thus, according to the Rambam, the separating cotton does not change the garment from being shatnez, and wearing the above-mentioned talis is a mitzvah habaah

be'aveirah.

Similarly, whether the wool sweater with the cotton green thread containing a core that is a linen thread is shatnez or not is dependent on this dispute between the Rash and the Rambam, since the linen thread does not touch the wool but is surrounded by cotton. According to the Rambam, wearing this sweater involves a Torah prohibition of shatnez, whereas according to the Rash, it is permitted!

How do we rule?

The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 299:2) rules like the Rambam that a garment is shatnez even if the wool and the linen threads are separated by other materials. Thus, Sefardim, who follow the Shulchan Aruch's rulings, are certainly prohibited from wearing this sweater. Among Ashkenazi authorities, the Rosh, the Rama (Yoreh Deah 299:2), the Magen Avraham (9:8) and the Eliyah Rabbah (Orach Chayim 9:6) rule like the Rash, whereas the Mishkenos Yaakov (Yoreh Deah Shu"t #70) Shenos Eliyahu (9:1)[1], Artzos Hachayim rule like the Rambam. I note that Rav Chayim Kanievski notes that the prevalent practice is to rule like the lenient opinion (Derech Emunah, Hilchos Kilayim, Hilchos Kilayim 10:41).

What have we learned so far?

1. We have learned that shatnez exists only when there is sheep's wool, but not when the wool is from other species, and that therefore pure cashmere or mohair blended with linen is not a shatnez concern.
2. We have also learned that some testing for shatnez existed even before the microscope, but there was halachic controversy concerning whether one could rely that this testing is reliable.
3. In addition, we have learned that threads spun from a mix of cotton and linen fibers are considered cotton and when blended in a woolen garment are not shatnez. However, threads of linen woven into a garment that is a cotton/wool blend is shatnez, even when the blend is mostly cotton thread.

What have we not yet learned?

1. Are baseball gloves a shatnez problem?
2. Which garments must be checked for shatnez.
3. How a shatnez tester works.

To answer these and other shatnez questions, we will need to read a future article.



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BET PARASHOT KI TESA

Once upon a time there was a peddler that went to a wealthy neighborhood to sell his simple wooden spoons. He made sure that the price was nice and cheap as he stood there all day trying to sell his goods. He would scream at the top of his lungs trying to make a sale but he had no luck, no one wanted to buy his products. A kind man observing the situation approached the poor peddler and said to him, "you probably thought it is a good place to sell here because the people have money in a wealthy neighborhood." The merchant nodded. The kind man explained to him rich people don't like simple wooden spoons; they only want expensive gold and silver utensils. He directed him to a poor neighborhood and there the merchant was successful.

In the Parasha due to the sin of the eigel, Hashem expresses three times that He is upset at us and uses the term "Am Kashea Oref". Hashem calls us a very stubborn nation, literally a stiff neck. Then in the tefilla that Moshe prays for Am Yisrael, he requests our forgiveness stating "because we are a stubborn people". Why would Moshe use this defective aspect

of the nation in his tefila? The Dubno Magid explains; first Moshe recited the thirteen attributes of mercy and then he asked Hashem where do you need these attributes in the heavens? Why would an angel need mercy? It is clear that all of the attributes are needed for "the people that are stubborn". It is only because we are stubborn that Hashem can express His mercy.

Another way to see stubbornness in a positive light is by viewing it in the future. Moshe Rabainu is saying to Hashem, it is true that their stubbornness now is a negative trait but in the future it will be necessary. When the nation will be in galut-exile amongst the nations of the world this trait will be there to maintain us as a nation through all the challenges of the goyim. It is our attribute of stubbornness that will keep us steadfast in our emuna in Hashem. That will guide us in the time of persecution into holding onto our identity.

A chassid and his wife arrived in New York from Russia, en-route to Eretz Yisroel. The Rav of the shul invited the Russian couple to stay with him until their departure to the holy land. The Russian couple had saved up all their money and would make the lifelong dream of moving to Eretz Yisroel when they had the rest of the funds

they needed. One day in shul a man stood up to make an appeal for the local mikvah that was being built. The Russian chassid quickly pledged all his life savings right then and there. The Rav cried out, "Why are you giving away all your money? You dreamed of living in Eretz Yisroel, without your savings you will be stuck here, penniless!"

The chassid then shared his sad story that illustrated his incredible dedication to mitzvos. "My wife and I are childless" the chassid explained, "not due to any medical problems but simply because we had no access to a mikva. Each month my wife would count and complete all the required halachos in preparation for the mikvah, but each month passed and there was nowhere that she could go in communist Russia. Now we finally left that G-dless country but we are both too old to have children. I value mikvah so greatly and never would want anyone to be in the predicament we were in. That is why I want to give all my money to this important mission."

May we all have to fortitude to embrace this mida in it proper application.

Shabbat Shalom

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY
12:41, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi
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TZVI BLECH : Gabbai



SHABBOS ZMANIM

CANDLE LIGHTING	5:16 ^{PM}
MINCHA ^{18 TENT}	5:26 ^{PM}
MINCHA ^{BAIS CHABAD}	5:26 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	5:34 ^{PM}
SHACHRIS ^{VASIKIN- DAF YOMI SHIUR}	6:06 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS ^{ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN}	8:00 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS - YOUTH ^{18 UPSTAIRS}	9:30 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN ^{18 TENT}	9:15 ^{AM}
SHACHRIS ^{20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD}	10:00 ^{AM}
NEW SHACHRIS ^{18 MAIN}	NEW 10:15^{AM}
MINCHA	1:45 ^{PM}
PIRCHEI	2:00 ^{PM}
MINCHA ^{SHALOSH SEUDOS}	5:15 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	5:35 ^{PM}
MARRIV	6:15 ^{PM} ^{18 TENT} , 6:20 ^{PM}

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS

20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ 30 ON YOM TOV

S 6:23 M 6:22 T 6:20 W 6:19 T 6:17 F 6:16

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG

S 4:16 M 4:17 T 4:18 W 4:19 T 4:20

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA

S 5:24 M 5:26 T 5:27 W 5:28 T 5:29

FEB. 20 - FEBRUARY 25

NEITZ IS 6:43 - 6:36
PELAG IS 4:28 - 4:32
SHKIA IS- 5:36 - 5:41
MAGEN AVRAHAM
8:51 AM - 8:46
GRA- BAAL HATANYA
9:27 AM = 9:22

Winter
2021/22

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תשפ"ב

WEEKDAY MINYANIM

18 מנחה ↓

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

↑ Upstairs
↓ Main Floor

מעריב

At 18:15 *	Tent א
At later 18:15 *	Tent ב
At שקיעה **	Tent ג
10 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
20 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	20 ↑
30 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
40 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
50 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	20 ↑
60 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
72 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent ב
7:30	Tent א
7:45	Tent א
8:00	Tent א
8:15	Tent א
8:30	Tent א
8:45	Tent א
9:00	Tent א
9:15	Tent א
9:30	Tent א
9:45	Tent א
10:00	18 ↓
10:15	18 ↓
10:30	18 ↓
10:45	18 ↓
11:00	18 ↓
11:15	18 ↓
11:30	18 ↓
11:45	18 ↓
12:00am	18 ↓
12:15	18 ↓
12:30	18 ↓
12:45	18 ↓

מנחה ומעריב

12 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
12 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent ב
AT שקיעה **	Tent ג
10 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	20 ↑
20 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
30 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent ב
40 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	20 ↑
50 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent א
60 MIN. ^{אחרי שקיעה}	Tent ב

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BLUEBERRY HILL ZMANIM

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

MINCHA **4:15** PLAG **4:27**



KI SISA – A DEEPER LOOK INTO THE GOLDEN CALF AND CURRENT EVENTS

For those who follow current events, you are probably well aware that as I write this article we can be witnessing one of the greatest wars that has taken place in our life time. No one knows what the outcome will be but the potential results can be disastrous. While reading some of the commentary in order to better understand what exactly the dispute is about, I came to the conclusion that indeed it isn't so clear. I did, however, manage to grasp some of the meaning behind the reasons for the current Russian/Ukrainian state of affairs. To begin with, it seems that Russia (not sure if that means President Putin) was never happy about the breakup of the Soviet Union or the idea that Ukrainians have slowly been separating themselves and leaning towards Europe or at least considering joining the NATO alliance.



I found a striking similarity between what I've been teaching on my daily videos which is the story of Megilas Esther with the explanation of the Malbim, with regard to the showdown between Achashverosh and Mordechai and the face-off between President Putin and President Zelensky who is a Jewish man. Here you have a ruler who has his craziness for conquering others and loses himself to the external desire of feeling the power of a king at the expense of thousands of lives and possibly his own. The path of a dictator stops him from contemplating his true inner desires and intentions and he certainly won't question what the almighty King of the World really wants him to do. And who is he attacking? A young vibrant Jew who refuses to bow down to him. What I found quite interesting is the number of NATO members besides the USA, France and Britain total 27. The number 27 certainly rang loud in my ears because as is written in the Megillah, King Achashverosh ruled over 100 and 27 nations. The Vilna Gaon actually points out that the 27 were independent locations that are alluded to at the end of the Megillah which were taxed by Achashverosh. This reminds us who Achashverosh really was and what he represented.

How does this all relate to our Parsha?

The answer lies in the disturbing story of the Golden Calf.

The Jews had just received the Torah 40 days before. They had experienced the Almighty, the creator of the universe Himself and now were on a lofty spiritual level. All they needed to do was wait for their teacher to come down from his meeting with G-D and continue to inspire them with Godly wisdom. The problem was their great desire to be inspired needed to be properly directed. However, instead of taking control and making sure that their heads

controlled their hearts, they allowed their emotions to lead their intellect, deciding to replace their teacher with an artificial figure that they believed would allow them to do all they desired and not what the real G-D desired of them. Rashi says איוו אלוהות הרבה the word איוו means a great desire and it can be used for good like או איוו למושב לו or it can be misused for trouble and self-destruction.

This is what took place with our arch enemy, Haman Ben Hammedatha the Agagite from the nation of Amalek. Amalek couldn't stand the Jewish people who represented consciousness of the soul and the motivation to perform Hashem's requests. Instead they challenged Hashem and declared war against Him and his nation. Haman was the ultimate self-destroyer. He had everything; Chazal actually compares Haman in Maseches Chulin to the tree of knowledge that Adam also could not resist. Haman couldn't suffer even one Jew that didn't bow down to him and eventually his effort blew up in his face, bringing upon himself his own demise.

How many times do we act in certain ways because our external desires push us to do so and if we would only catch ourselves and question whether this represents our real Neshama which is aligned with what Hashem wants or is it what our body desires for a momentary pleasure that eventually will only cause us tremendous sorrow.

This is the lesson of the Golden Calf and the lessons of Purim.

Good Shabbos



BROKEN

WHY BREAKING THE TABLETS WAS MOSES' GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

"The world breaks everyone, and afterwards some are stronger in the broken places." -- Ernest Hemingway

Broken

The simple reading of the story (recorded twice in Torah, in Exodus, in this week's portion, and then again in Deuteronomy) goes like this: After the Jews created a Golden Calf, Moses smashed the stone tablets created by G-d, engraved with the Ten Commandments. Moses and G-d then "debated" the appropriate response to this transgression and it was decided that if the people would truly repent, G-d would give them a second chance. Moses hewed a second set of stone tablets; G-d engraved them also with the Ten Commandments, and Moses gave them to the Jewish people.

Yet a few major questions come to mind.

1. Moses, outraged by the sight of a golden calf erected by the Hebrews as a deity, smashed the stone tablets. He apparently felt that the Jews were undeserving of them, and that it would be inappropriate to give them this Divine gift. But why did Moses have to break and shatter the heavenly tablets? Moses could have hidden them or returned them to their heavenly maker?

2. The rabbis teach us that "The whole tablets and the broken tablets nestled inside the Ark of the Covenant ." The Jews proceeded to gather the broken fragments of the first set of tablets and had them stored in the Ark, in the Tabernacle, together with the second whole tablets. Both sets of tablets were later taken into the Land of Israel and kept side by side in the Ark, situated in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem.

This seems strange. Why would they place the broken tablets in the Holy of Holies, when these fragments were a constant reminder of the great moral failure of the Jewish people . Why not just disregard them, or deposit them in a safe isolated place?

3. In its eulogy for Moses, the Torah chooses this episode of smashing the tablets as the highlight and climax of Moses' achievements.

In the closing verses of Deuteronomy we read: "Moses, the servant of G-d, died there in the land of Moab... And there arose not since a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom G-d knew face to face; all the signs and wonders which G-d sent to do in the land of Egypt... that mighty hand, those great fearsome deeds, which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel."

What did Moses do "before the eyes of all Israel?" Rashi , in his commentary on Torah, explains "That his heart emboldened him to break the tablets before their eyes, as it is written, 'and I broke them before your eyes.' G-d's opinion then concurred with his opinion, as it is written, 'which you broke—I affirm your strength for having broken them.'"

This is shocking. Following all of the grand achievements of Moses, the Torah chooses to conclude its tribute to Moses by alluding to this episode of breaking the tablets! Granted that Moses was justified in breaking the tablets, but can this be said to embody his greatest achievement? How about his taking the Jews out of Egypt? Molding them into a people? Splitting

the Red Sea? Receiving the Torah from G-d and transmitting it to humanity? Shepherding them for forty years in a wilderness?

Why does the Torah choose this tragic and devastating episode to capture the zenith of Moses' life and as the theme with which to conclude the entire Torah, all five books of Moses?!

In the Fragments

We need to examine this entire episode from a deeper vantage point.

Moses did not break the tablets because he was angry and lost his control. Rather, the breaking of the tablets was the beginning of the healing process. Before the golden calf was created, the Jews could find G-d within the wholesomeness of the tablets, within the spiritual wholesomeness of life. Now, after the people have created the golden calf, hope was not lost. Now they would find G-d in the shattered pieces of a once beautiful dream.

Moses was teaching the Jewish people the greatest message of Judaism: Truth could be crafted not only from the spiritually perfected life, but also from the broken pieces of the human corrupt and demoralized psyche. The broken tablets, too, possess the light of G-d.

Which is why the sages tell us that not only the whole tablets, but also the broken ones, were situated in the holy of holies. This conveyed the message articulated at the very genesis of Judaism: From the broken pieces of life you can create a holy of holies.

G-d, the sages tell us, affirmed Moses' decision to break the tablets. G-d told him, "Thank you for breaking them ." Because the broken tablets, representing the shattered pieces of human existence, have their own story to tell; they contain a light all their own. Truth is found not only in wholesomeness, but also—sometimes primarily—in the broken fragments of the human spirit . There are moments when G-d desires that we connect to Him as wholesome people, with clarity and a sense of fullness; there are yet deeper moments when He desires that we find Him in the shattered experiences of our lives.

We hope and pray to always enjoy the "whole tablets," but when we encounter the broken ones, we ought not to run from them or become dejected by them; with tenderness we ought to embrace them and bring them into our "holy of holies," recalling the observation of one of the Rebbe's, "there is nothing more whole than a broken heart."

We often believe that G-d can be found in our moments of spiritual wholesomeness. But how about in the conflicts which torment our psyches? How about when we are struggling with depression, addiction or confusion? How about when we face despair and pain? How about in very conflict between a godless existence and a G-d-centered existence? We associate "religion" with "religious" moments. But how about our "non-religious" moments?

What Moses accomplished with breaking the tablets was the demonstration of the truth that the stuff we call holiness can be carved out from the very alienation of a person from G-d. From the very turmoil of his or her psychological and spiritual brokenness, a new holiness can be discovered.

It is on this note that the Torah chooses to culminate its tribute to Moses' life. The greatest achievement of Moses was his ability to show humanity how we can take our brokenness and turn it into a holy of holies. There is light and joy to be found in the fragments of sacredness.



PARSHAS KI SISA PARTNERS IN CREATION

31:13 "אך את שבתתי תשמרו, כי את
הוא ביני וביניכם לדרתים לדעת כי אני
ד' מקדשכם"

"However, you must observe My Shabbosos, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations to know that I am Hashem Who makes you holy." The Posuk is telling us to observe Shabbos. Observing Shabbos is a sign between the Ribbono Shel Olam and Klal Yisroel for all generations for us to recognize that the Ribbono Shel Olam made us Holy. How are we to see this sign of becoming Holy through observing Shabbos?

What is the word "את" teaching us in the Posuk, "אך את שבתתי תשמרו"? Why is the word "הוא" written in Loshon Zochor, but read as "היא", which is Loshon Nekeivah? Shabbos Kodesh was established by the Ribbono Shel Olam from the beginning of Creation. Six days are counted, and every seventh day is imbued with Kedushas Hashabbos from the Ribbono Shel Olam. Yom Tov is established by the Bais Din in this world using the guidelines of Kiddush Hachodesh. Klal Yisroel also have a part of Shabbos which they can imbue with Kedushas Shabbos which is called "Tosfos Shabbos." It is a known Halacha that one can take part of a weekday and turn it into Shabbos to the extent that he can eat his Shabbos Seudah during that time and gets S'char for his observing Shabbos during this time called "Tosfos Shabbos". There is an advantage that Tosfos Shabbos has over Yom Tov. Yom Tov only becomes Mekudash through the power of Bais Din, while Tosfos Shabbos can be created by each individual Yid. Shabbos can be divided into two parts: the main part, which is the Chelek of the Ribbono Shel Olam, and goes from nightfall till nightfall. The other part is Tosfos Shabbos, which is the extra part of Shabbos during which a Yid transforms part of his weekday into Shabbos. The Chelek of Hashem is the Zochor, the part which is Mashpia. The part which a Yid is Mekadesh is called the Nekeivah; it is the recipient of the Kedusha of the Zochor. The "את" in the Posuk refers to Tosfos Shabbos. "הוא" is written in Loshon Zochor, referring to the part of the Ribbono Shel Olam, and read as Nekeivah, referring to the

part of the Yid. אך את שבתתי תשמרו – כי את הוא ביני וביניכם – Heed the Tosfos Shabbos because these two parts of Shabbos, Mine (the Ribbono Shel Olam) and yours (Klal Yisroel). (בניהו על התורה)

Shabbos 119b – כל המתפלל בערב שבת ואומר ויכול, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו נעשה שותף – One who Davens Erev Shabbos and says ויכול, the Torah considers it as if he was a partner with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the creation of the world. Hakodosh Boruch Hu completed creation in the first six days. There was still one thing missing in the world, Menucha (rest). באה – Rest was the "creation" of the seventh day. A Yid has the power to create Tosfos Shabbos. When one creates Tosfos Shabbos, he is "creating" Menucha in the world. This is how a Yid can be a partner with the Ribbono Shel Olam in the creation of the world. (בן יהוידע)

31:13,14 "אך את שבתתי תשמרו... ושמרתם את השבת" – Why does the Posuk use the word שבתתי which is a Loshon Rabbim? It refers to the two parts of Shabbos: Shabbos itself, and the Tosfos Shabbos which each Yid can add to Shabbos. (מנחה בלולה)

Why does the Posuk need to repeat that we must heed the Shabbos? It is to be Meramez one Shemira for Shabbos and one for after Shabbos, which is Tosfos Shabbos. (רבינו בחיי)

The Gemara in Shabbos 119b states that one who Davens on Erev Shabbos and says ויכול, the Torah considers it as if he was a partner with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the creation of the world. The key words are "Erev Shabbos". One who says ויכול while it is still technically Erev Shabbos, he imbues Kedusha into the world and changes the day into Shabbos. He created Tosfos Shabbos, and is considered a partner in the creation of the world. The Ribbono Shel Olam is Kodosh, and He gives Klal Yisroel the chance to be Kodosh as well. We must take advantage of this great opportunity to be a partner with the Ribbono Shel Olam. We must make sure to add Kedusha to this world by making Tosfos Shabbos. May we be Zoche to be true partners with the Ribbono Shel Olam in the creation of the world.

PARSHAS KI TISA MAKING EVERY MOMENT COUNT

כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל
לפקודיהם ונתנו איש כופר
נפשו לד'

Lifting our heads to be counted- we give of ourselves; coming closer to Hashem.

In Western culture it's all about winning nothing else matters.

Success is measured by how much you have achieved..how well did you do?

How much money did you make? Or if we are concerned with the spiritual - How much did you learn?

In many cases we have succumbed to a false theology- "it's quantity not quality that counts."

Judaism at its core teaches us that we must go deeper. Rachmonah Libah Ba-ee.

It's important for us to know-

The good L-rd doesn't measure they way we do. Hashem wants quality not quantity..(lit. Hashem wants our hearts).

In the above quoted posuk, the Torah is teaching us- If we want to connect with Hashem we must be totally in...raising our sights..we must be totally honest with ourselves. How far up on our list is spiritual growth?

Let's take a look at what drives us.

On the surface it may seem as if we have achieved much with our lives, but if we haven't magnified Hashem's presence in this world, if we haven't lived our day to day lives as ambassadors of truth and light then we haven't really lived. If we have followed the laws but acted inappropriately to those around us, especially to those we love (sometimes in the name of religion), what have we really achieved?

We followed the script but left out the most important part- our hearts were not really in it, and worse we may have chosen to be cold hearted and stern, when we needed to be warm and accepting

It's an old joke- one that we have all heard.

But it's full of truth.

An Israeli cab driver and a rabbi go up to heaven.

The cab driver gets right in.. no waiting. A hero's welcome.

The Rabbi is told to wait.

"What" says the Rabbi. I learned, I taught, I led a big congregation.

"He was a simple cab driver.. Why must I wait, while he enters heaven immediately?"

"Let me explain" says the angel at the gates.

When you gave your tour d'force, your weekly sermon on Shabbos morning, your congregants slept. When his passengers rode with him.. They prayed with all their hearts that they would survive the drive!!

If davening is a time when we can quietly reflect on the special relationship we have with G-d then we are on the right track.

If we race through the words to "finish" quickly. We have missed the point.

The same goes for our learning. It is a time for us reflect on the greatness of Hashem.

Household chores take on a feeling of the divine when we realize that Hashem's presence fills every corner of our home. What might seem to be mundane can rise to greatness if we would only make it our desire.

It's this marriage of passion and innocence that brings meaning to our lives.

When we live this way we are truly living on the cusp of greatness.

Good Shabbos!

PARSHAS KI SISA

Can you figure out what each picture has to do with the parsha?



Rabbi Dani Staum

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KEY to Parshas Ki Sisa Pix

Delayed – It was because Klal Yisroel thought Moshe was delayed from coming down Har Sinai (due to their miscalculation about when the 40 days began) they panicked, eventually causing the creation of the golden calf – 32:1

Stiff Neck Remedies – Hashem told Moshe that He wanted to destroy Klal Yisroel after the sin of the golden calf because they were stiff-necked/stubborn – 34:9

Mi LaHashem Elai – When Moshe saw the golden calf he declared, as a rallying cry, “Who is for Hashem come to me”. (The Leviim were the only ones who gathered) – 32:26

Please wash your hands – At the beginning of the parsha the Torah writes that a Kohain is obligated to wash his hands and feet from the kiyor (copper wash basin) before beginning the Avodah – 30:18-19
Half Dollar – Every Jew was obligated to give a half-shekel for the census of the nation – 30:13

Shabbos Kodesh – Among the other mitzvos listed at the beginning of the parsha, the Torah instructs the nation to observe Shabbos - 31:12-17
Pile of golden jewelry – When the nation amassed around Aharon and demanded that he do something because Moshe wasn't returning, Aharon advised them to gather their wives' jewelry. They enthusiastically brought back their own jewelry – 32:3

13 – After Moshe interceded on behalf of the nation for sinning with the golden calf, Hashem agreed to forgive them. At that time, He taught Moshe His 13 Middos of Mercy – 34:6-7

Second chance – Hashem informed Moshe that He would forgive Klal Yisroel and instructed Moshe to create the second luchos to symbolize the nation's “second chance” – 34:1

Mask – At the end of the parsha, the Torah relates that Moshe's face was shining and he wore a mask so that the nation wouldn't be blinded by the shine – 34:35

‘Protection from Above’ – 'שמירה עליונה'

This happened when I was beginning to get close to Yiddishkeit. The journey was long & arduous, but I strengthened myself day to day in avodas Hashem, & continuously accepted on myself another mitzvah to keep. The journey was filled with ups & downs, & I always had to renew strength in every holy thing, the same held true for putting on Tefillin, difficult encouragement & difficult battles with the yetzer.

We were on maneuvers and we were travelling every day, so I did not have time to put on Tefillin. I felt bad about it but I had no choice until just about sunset when we stopped to rest a little from the long trip. Immediately when we stopped, I told the driver to come with me to put on Tefillin. He tried to refuse because he was exhausted and he wanted to rest a little, but he could not refuse my insistence knowing that I would not let him be until he put on Tefillin. Since I left him no choice, he accompanied me to the back of the military vehicle and I took out my Tefillin bag and we put on Tefillin, me first and then helped him put on the Tefillin & when he said the first posuk of “Shema Yisrael” a missile exploded destroying the front half of the rier, exactly where the driver was going to rest and gather strength to tinue.

We all got out without a scratch, except a ringing in the ears. It was to us that the merit of the Tefillin saved our lives. From that day on, stood by me in line every day, close friends putting on Tefillin, and it great encouragement to all to see how the mitzvos protect us.

It is important for me to point out that I do not usually push myself others. Whoever does not want to do something loses out, but here, it from Heaven that I was a nudnik & I urged him to put on Tefillin, thing that is totally against my nature.

(By A.B.D.) *Tiv Hakehila.*



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Rabbi Reisman

EVERY JEW HAS A CONNECTION TO THE RUACH HAKODESH OF HASHEM

Something fitting that Rav Moshe used to say. We find at the end of Parshas Ki Sisa 34:30 (וַיֵּרָא אֶהָרֶן וְכָל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶת-מֹשֶׁה, וְהָיָה קֶרֶן, עֹר פָּנָיו; וַיִּירָאוּ, (מִגִּשְׁת אֱלֹו). There was a shine emanating from the face of Moshe Rabbeinu and they were afraid to approach him so he put on a mask. Despite this we find that when Moshe Rabbeinu learned with the Yidden he took off the mask. As the Posuk says in 34:33 (וַיִּכַּל מֹשֶׁה, מִדְּבַר אֱתֶם; וַיֵּתֶן עַל-פָּנָיו, מִסּוֹה) that when he finished learning with them he put on the mask back on his face. The question is if he couldn't take the light on his face what is the difference if it is when he is teaching or when he is just walking around?

In the second volume of Darash Moshe on page # 47 Rav Moshe says that when Yidden are learning every Yid on his Darga has an ability to come close to (קֶרֶן, עֹר פָּנָיו) of Moshe Rabbeinu. Of course Moshe was on a higher level, but each Jew is obligated to learn on his level and every Yid when he learns and he understands fully or he struggles to understand has an M'ain of the (קֶרֶן, עֹר פָּנָיו) of Moshe. Therefore, when you are sitting and learning then the shine of the face of Moshe is something you can absorb.

This fits well because Rav Moshe would often say and he mentioned it during Yomim Noraim after Selichos. We say in the Selichos of Shema Koleinu, Al Tashlichainu Mil'fanecha V'ruach Kodshecha Al Tikach Mimeni. Don't throw us from before you and don't take away from us your spirit of holiness. The Kasha is the Pesukim in Shema Koleinu were originally said by Dovid Hamelech in Lashon Yachid. As it says in Tehillim 51:13 (אֶל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלִּפְנֵיךְ; וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ, אֶל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי). Don't throw me from before you and your holy spirit do not take away from me.

In Shema Koleinu we take a number of such Pesukim and we change it to plural tense because we are talking for all of Klal Yisrael. Rav Moshe asks I understand Pesukim like 19:15 (יְהִי לְרֹצוֹן אִמְרֵי-פִי, וְהִגִּינוּ לְבִי לִפְנֵיךְ):

(יְרוּר, צוּרֵי וְגֹאֲלֵי) which when said in the plural would be Yitu L'ratzon Imrei Finu V'hegyon Libi L'fanecha Hashem Tzurainu V'goaleinu. Certain Pesukim whose meaning lends itself to an interpretation or to a change of tense to be in the plural tense. So that all Jews could be included in the statement. But (וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ, אֶל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי), and your holy spirit do not take away from me, not every Jew has Ruach Hakodesh?

Rav Moshe answered that it is Farkert. We see that every Jew when he is sitting and learning he can connect to the Ruach Hakodesh of Hashem on a simple level. He is not going to say Chiddushim that he is going to print in Sefarim. Nevertheless on his level he is Shai'ich to Ruach Hakodesh.

This Yesod is also in the Sefer Sheim Olam of the Chofetz Chaim Perek 13. It says V'sain Chelkainu B'sorasecha, he says that every Yid has his Cheilek, has his place in Torah. Whatever level you are on even if you are not capable of learning Gemara, and you are learning Chumash, You have a Cheilek (a portion) that you have to accomplish so that Lo Neivosh V'lo Nikaleim L'olam Va'ed (שְׁלֹא נִבוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכְלָם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד). So that in Olam Haba you will be able to take your Cheilek (בְּתוֹרַתְךָ חֵלְקֵנוּ וְתָנוּ). So that every Jew has a Cheilek on his level in the (כִּי קֶרֶן, עֹר פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה).

This idea, this closeness to the Ribbono Shel Olam where every person should feel that he has the ability to have that connection is a tremendous tool in serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

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



Rabbi Steinfeld

TANACH

If a person reads Tanach but does not understand what he is reading is he yotzei the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah? In Shulchan Aruch 50:1 it says that Chazal were mesaken to say Eizeh Mekoman and Reb Yishmael Omer after the parsha of korban Tamid so that every person should learn Pesukim, Mishna and Gemara. The Mishna Berura brings in the name of the Magen Avraham that this reading of Braisah and Mishna does not count as limud HaTorah unless you understand what you are reading. If one reads it without understanding then one is not considered that he is learning,

Reb Chaim Kanievsky quotes his great uncle the Chazon Ish who was asked that if one said Birchah HaTorah and followed it by saying the Birchah Kohanim and Eilu Devarim and did not have in mind to understand what he is reading he is nevertheless yotzei. It would seem from this that the Chazon Ish would argue with the above Magen Avraham.

The Shulchan Aruch HoRav in Hilchos Talmud Torah 2:12,13 differentiates between Torah SheBiksav and Torah ShBaal Peh. If one says the words but does not have in mind the meaning he is Yotzei Limud HaTorah only if it is Torah SheBiksav but if it is Torah SheBaal peh it is not considered learning. With this Shulchan Aruch HoRav one can say that the Magen Avraham and Chazon Ish are not arguing. The Magen Avraham is talking about Torah SheBaal Peh which one is not yotzei if one says it without understanding. The Chazon Ish on the other hand is speaking about a case where he is saying Torah SheBiksav so he would be yotzei even if he does not understand it. The Chazon Ish was only referring to Birkas Kohanim which is Torah SheBiksav. The question was if he was yotzei Birchah HaTorah and the answer was that since he said Torah SheBiksav he was Yotzei.

It would stand to reason that reading Nach which is Torah SheBiksav one would be Yotzei Limud HaTorah even without understanding.

Some want to argue that one would not be Yotzei based on the Maharil Diskin that explains the Gemara in Megillah 3a which says we are mevatal Talmud Torah to read the Megillah. The question is how could we consider the Megillah bittul Torah? The Maharil Diskin explains it with Gemara in Megillah 18a that says we don't know all the translations, of all the words, of the Megillah. There are words "HoAchashtanim benei HoRamachim" these are words we don't know what they mean and during the time we read it we are mevatal Torah.

We can argue against the above based on the premise of Reb Shloma Zalman Auerbach that he says, if one hears Divrei Torah from another person has to say Birchah HaTorah despite the fact we pasken that hirhur alone is not mechayev Birchah HaTorah. The hesber is that when people learn it is normal for one to say and the other to listen and it has nothing to do with the concept of Shomea KeOneh. When one hears he is required to say Birchah HaTorah. When hearing the Megillah one is yotzei with Shomea KeOneh. So, we could explain that one who says the words of Torah SheBiksav is Yotzei Limud HaTorah even if he does not understand it. Whereas one who hears someone else say Torah SheBiksav and does not understand it he would not be yotzei Limud HaTorah even though he would be yotzei Krias HaMegillah via Shmea KeOneh. Since we don't know the meaning of some words those who come to hear the Megillah will be mevatalTorah as they are not reading, but rather listening, thereby not being Yotzei Limud HaTorah for those words.

We see the great value of every second of learning Torah, that for those seconds we read some words we don't understand the ones who are listening are being mevatal Torah. May we all be zocheh to learn Torah and not waste our precious time!



By: David Gurwitz (www.davidgurwitz.com)

Megillas (483) *Esther* (661) - which literally means *revelation of hiddenness* - has a value (483 plus 661) of 1144. The numbers 1 and 1 and 4 and 4 add up to 10, which reduces in *mispar kattan* to 1.

Purim's message of Hashem's hidden *hashkacha* and oneness - with so many events and thoughts occurring over a nine year time period - teaches us to see differently. In our age of information overload, we can easily fall into the mindset that life is comprised of disparate elements. In the *megillah*, Haman said to Achashverus "there is a scattered people". He was talking to us today as well. Our brains are scattered.

Purim and Shema

Infact, when saying *Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad* (1118), we cover our eyes - just like the events of Purim seemed covered. Then, when we open them, we are hopefully more inspired to see Hashem in the hiddenness - also like Purim.

Therefore, it makes sense that the value of the Shema (1118) plus the additional mention or awareness of Hashem (26) - equals that of *Megillas* (483) *Esther* (661)! Saying Shema is a Purim lesson.

Let's look at some very deep aspects of Purim - and look for Hashem's presence there. This theme of hiddenness is part of our *avodah* - in fact, "*adon olam*" literally means *master of the world* and *master of hiddenness*, since the word *olam* - world - also means hidden. *Adon Olam* is also *begematria* 207, same as that of *ohr* - light! We create great illumination in ourselves and others and, per the Nefesh Hachaim, in the higher worlds by our thoughts and actions.

Hopefully, as a takeaway, we can try to find Hashem in everything we do and think and say today and try to see the *hashkacha pratit* in our

lives. Let's prepare for the holy day of Purim when our prayers and *tshuvah* and love of other Jews and ability to change are so able to be powerfully accepted.

Purim and Archaeological Proof

In *Purim and the Persian Empire - an Historical, Archaeological and Geographical Perspective*, Rabbi Yehuda Landy provides overwhelming evidence of clothing, furniture and cosmetics from the megillah, and thrones of the king, golden drinking vessels, king's gate, courtyard of woman's residences, king's treasuries, the inner courtyard, and the king's gardens and entrance. There are dozens of incredible photos of artifacts and excavations. Purim really happened.

Purim and Tshuvah

Let's start our own archeological journey with the following discovery: the spelled out letters of *Purim* - *pey* (80) and *yud* (10); *vov* (6) and *vov* (6); *reish* (200), *yud* (10) and *shin* (300); *yud* (10), *vov* (6) and *dalet* (4); and *mem* (40) and *mem* (40) total, with the *kollel*, 713, which is the value of *teshuvah*. Purim is a time of for great *tshuvah*.

We see from the book of Esther that, when a judgment cannot be changed or rescinded, a new one can supersede the previous decree - making it in effect null and void. *Tshuvah mi'yireh* - from fear of punishment - has the retroactive power of turning purposeful sins into inadvertent mistakes. When motivated by love - *tshuvah mi'ahavah* - then it can even turn past purposeful sins into merits.

This is perhaps the main secret of Purim - the power of *tshuvah*. Therefore, the Talmud says that *Yom HaKippurim*, the culmination of the ten days of *tshuvah*, should be read *Yom (a day) K'(like) Purim* - the chance to completely turn around our lives even when all seems lost.

We learn from the incredible power of one person - *Esther* - to influence the entire Jewish community which was subject to powerful decree to change a seemingly unchangeable judgment with *tshuvah*

and *mesiras nefesh*. This total reversal of fortune is called *nahafach* - "to completely turn around;" meaning that the day of Purim was changed from a day of possible destruction to one of celebration. Our lives have that possibility as well.

Purim and Vena'hapach

During Purim, we focus the word meaning overturned, *venahapach*. We also see this word several times in the Torah, in *Tehillim*, and even in the third paragraph of *Lecha Dodi*, where it means upheaval.

There is another use of this word that is not commonly known, which relates directly to the word - and a great lesson of - *Purim* - via the concept of *At-Bash*.

Purim and At-Bash

The use of *venahapach* relates to the *Alef-Bais*, which, according to *Kabbalah*, starts with the highest letter and number, *sof*, and heads downward towards the *aleph*. This is the order that the world was created with, not starting with the *Alef-Bais*. In effect, what we think is already backwards. Therefore, from our point of view, this system of the *Alef-Bais* is called the *sefer hahepuch*, since this is the order that contrasts with the *sefer hayashor*, the system of straight order, from *alef* to *sof*.

Now, there is a combination of the two orders, known as *At-Bash*, which reconciles these two orders and provides deep lessons. In essence, we combine the first letter from each direction - *alef* and *sof*, *bais* and *shin*, etc. - to show how seemingly disparate ideas and events, even what appears opposite, are connected.

Let's look carefully at the word Purim - *pey*, *vov*, *reish*, *yud* and *mem*. The side letters, *pey* and *vov*, as well as *yud* and *mem*, also share the fact that they are each the corresponding "At-Bash" letter of each other: The *pey* is *At-Bash* of a *vav*, and the *yud* is *At-Bash* of the *mem*!

Therefore, our head - the *reish* or the *rosh* - is in the middle of the word Purim. When we look at the right and see the *pey* and *vov*, we can ask: Which is it, the *pey* or its related *At-Bash* letter, the *vov*? In life, we can learn from this, from this *Purim* mindset: What is reality? What I think I see clearly or its related opposite point of view? Do I choose A or B? Or both?

There is another lesson here. The right side combo, *pey* and *vov*, add up to 86, which is the value of *hateva*, which is *begematria Elokim* as well. This is a focus on Hashem hiding in the natural world as *Elokim*, and the story of the Megillah seems completely natural, without even a mention of Hashem's name.

The same holds true to the "left letters" - *yud* and *mem*. Do I first see the *yud*, the most spiritual of letters, in people or events, or do I see its related opposite, physical, four-sided *mem*? Am I seeing properly with all of the possibilities, or do I just assume that I am right - or left?

There is another teaching here as well, of course, from the positioning of the pair, *yud* and *mem*. They add up to 50, which refers to beyond nature, as well as *nun*, 50, *shaarei binah*, gates of understanding. It also hints at the tree of 50 *amos* on which Haman was hanged as a result of a seemingly natural set of circumstances.

These are great *Purim* lessons and a Purim mindset to maintain all year. Purim is a plural word, meaning lots. Everything seems dual - but Hashem is not.

Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l says that the *yud* and the *mem* form the word *yom*, day, and the word *yam*, sea. What is the connection? They teach the endless possibilities, like being on the sea, in each day, each *yom*, for us to seek out and bridge the gulf separating the spiritual and the physical in our lives.

Purim and Poseach Es Yadecha

The most important verse we recite in the *Pesukei DeZimra* section of our prayer service is the verse

in *Ashrei*, "*Posei'ach Es Yadecha U'masbi'a Le'chol Chai Ratzon*." This verse literally means, "He opens His hand and graciously satiates all living creatures." It expresses our sense of dependence on Hashem for our daily sustenance, and our belief that it is He who provides all living creatures, man and animal alike, with their basic needs.

The *roshei hateva* of the seven words - (*peh*-80) *poseach* (*aleph*-1) (*es*) (*yud*-10) *yadecha* (*vav*-6) *u'maspia* (*lamid*-30) *le'cal* (*ches*-8) *chai* (*reish*-200) *ratzon* teaches us an astounding lesson - the *gematria* of the *rosh hateva* of this *posuk* - *im hacollel* - is 336 - which is the *gematria* of Purim!

Hashem's names are also hidden here as well. How? First, the value of the first letters of "*Posei'ach Es Yadecha add up to 91*, which combine Hashem - 26 and Adenus - 65. Second, the last letters of "*Posei'ach Es Yadecha*" form the word *chatach*, which is Hashem's name governing *parnassah*. Amazingly, the next word - *U'masbi'a* - graciously satiates - has the same value as the last letters of "*Posei'ach Es Yadecha*" so "*U'maspia*" equals Hashem's name governing *parnassah*!

Purim and Amaleik/Esther/Mordechai/Haman

The following hints in the Torah are well known.

Where is Haman alluded to in the Torah? (Rashi: the account of Haman.) As it says [when G-d addresses Adam after the sin], "Did [you eat] of [ha-min, identical in spelling to the name Haman] the tree?" (Genesis 3:11) (Rashi: alluding to Haman's being hanged on a tree.). Where is Esther alluded to in the Torah? (Rashi: the account of Esther.) As it says, "And I shall surely hide [haster astir, similar to the name Esther] [My face on that day]" (Deuteronomy 31:18). (Rashi: In the days of Esther the Divine countenance will be concealed, and many troubles and evils will befall the Jewish people.)

Where is Mordechai alluded to in the Torah? (Rashi: the greatness of Mordechai.) As it says, "Pure myhrr" (Exodus 30:23), which translates [into Aramaic, Onkelos] *mara dachia* [which sounds

like *Mordechai*]. (Rashi: The pure myhrr is referred to in this verse as 'the head of all spices.' The righteous Men of the Great Assembly are compared to fragrant spices, and their head is Mordechai.)

However, where is Amaleik alluded to? Rabbi Nachman of Breslov explains that, in the last letters of the four words at the end of parsha Bereshis - *posuk* 6: 5 - *rak rah cal hayom* - every product of his thoughts of his heart was but evil always, these last letters of *rak rah cal hayom* - *kuf*, *ayin*, *lamud*, and *mem* - spelling Amaleik. He was - and remains - a planted enemy of the Jews.

Purim shows us in a related way that there is an entire nation whose entire reason for existence is to challenge our mind-heart connection. This is Amaleik, the ancestor of Haman, whose essence is the separation of head from heart. (Amaleik = *am*, nation, and *malak*, like the word *melikah*, referring to the bird offering act.) Amaleik is a nation of *melikah*, of "heads that are severed." This quality was inherited from their ancestor Eisav, whose head was buried with his brother, but who did not allow any wisdom to influence him. His name Eisav literally means "done" - he thought he knew it all.

Purim and Amaleik/Haman

It is quite fascinating to me that the combined value of Haman (95) plus Amaleik (240) equals, with the *kollel*, 336, the value of *Purim*! Haman/Amaleik represents the apparent disappearance of Divine presence and providence, which is offset by Moshe and his day of birth - Adar 7 - providing the zetus to offset the pur or lottery for our destruction.

Purim and Shechinah

Esther represents the deep awareness in the Jewish soul, so that, even though Hashem's presence seems to have "disappeared," His Divine countenance - or *shechinah*, never leaves. This focus on *shechinah* is articulated when we say *hamachazir schechinav l'tzion* in the *shemonah esray*, meaning "may our eyes see your *shechinah* return to Tzion".

It is fascinating that the first letters of the three words *hamachazir schechinav l'tzion* - *Heh*, *Shin*, and *Lamud* - add up to the value of *Purim*, with the *kollel*! Purim teaches us about the presence of the *shechinah*.

Purim and Hashem's Name

Rav Eliezer Ashkenazi points out in his *peirush Yosef Lekach* on the Vilna Gaon's commentary on *Megillas Esther* that Hashem's name - while not appearing anywhere directly in *te*h *Megillah* - is hinted at both the highest point of Haman's rise to power, when he alone was invited to attend a private party with the king and queen, as well as at his downfall, when Esther revealed her identity as a Jew and King Achashveirosh ordered that Haman be hanged.

How do we see this?

The first letters of each of the four words of the phrase "Yavo haMelech veHaman hayom - Let the King and Haman come today [to the private party that Esther prepared - *Megillah* 5:4]" spell the name of Hashem. Later on in the story, when Haman fell from grace in the eyes of King Achashveirosh and realized "ki chalsah eilav hara'ah - that the [King's] evil determination against him was final" (*Megillah* 7:7), the last letters of each of those four words once again spell out Hashem's Name!

The Skolya Rebbe in *Chachima B'remiza - Wisdom in Hints* - brings an absolutely amazing observation from the Arizal Hakodesh about Hashem's "hidden" names in the *Megillah*:

"The *neis* of Purim revealed the light of the letter *yud* above with the *hey* below, from the *posuk* in the *megillah* *balaya hahei nedada shinas hamelech vawayom leheivie es sefer hazichronos divrei hayomim*. "On that night the king's sleep wandered and he said bring me the book of memory and words of chronicles" (*Esther* 6:1). The hint is *balaya hehei* which is the *rosh hateva* es *hashamayim v'es ha'aretz*, since the creation of the world was for the sake of Israel. It was Hashem

king of kings who was disturbed. "Lehavei es" - and was brought - is *rosh hateva* Hashem's name *Aleph lamud*, and *sefer hazichronon* is *rosh hateva samech heh* which is *begematria* 65 - *adenus*. In addition, *divrei hayomim* is *sof hateva gematria* 50, hinting to the 50th level of *binah*. Hashem revealed the crown of kingship and *binah*, and all the world saw that to Hashem is the kingship!"

Purim and 54

We continue our excavations! Rav Shmuel Brazil writes:

"Let's examine a Purim number formula presented by the Vilna Gaon. The key number here is 54. There are 54 mentions of Haman's name in the *Megillah*, the ten sons of Haman contain in total 54 letters, and the *tefillah* of Al Hanissim on Purim contains 54 words. We can explain: 54 is *gematria* of *nod*, which means wall. A wall is a protection and a concealment from the contents inside. The wall of Haman symbolizes nature and all its numbers that conceal the *emes* of Hashem's seal, which sustains and nurtures it constantly. 54 is *gematria* of *emcheh*, *timcheh*, and *mocheh*, whose acronym is *emes*. When we successfully rid the world of *Amakeik*, we will allow the *emes* of Hashem to come forth and shine in the world of *sheker*."

Purim and 70

The Torah was given in 70 languages. There are 70 nations. Yaakov Avinu went to Mitzrayim with 70 souls. King Achashveirosh made a 180-day feast to celebrate the "miscalculated" passing of the 70-year prediction of the rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash*. Regarding wine, we know that "nichnas yayin, yotzah sod - wine in, secrets out." Both *yayin* and *sod* have a value of 70. There are more 70s to consider. Some are quite amazing, actually. To be hidden does not mean that what is

The Story of Eliyahu and the Prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel

The famous story of Eliyahu on Mount Carmel is read as the haftarah for this week's parsha. In it, Eliyahu, the prophet of G-d, puts to the test what was at the time perceived as the most supreme and powerful of all the gods—Baal. The central story in the Torah portion is that of the Golden Calf, and thus the story of the haftarah serves as an obvious sequel to this unfortunate episode.

The time was that of Achav, king of Israel. Historically, most of the kings who ruled the state of the Ten Tribes (known as "Israel") were far from virtuous. Achav, however, took this to an unprecedented low: "Achav did more to anger the L-rd, the G-d of Israel, than all the kings of Israel who had preceded him."

Achav's behaviour was influenced in no small measure by his wicked wife, Jezebel. As a princess of the neighbouring kingdom of Sidon, she led both her husband and his kingdom into the thick of the pagan culture in which she was so immersed. Upon marrying her, Achav fell entirely under her spell. During the period of the First Temple, which includes Achav's reign, prophecy was still available and widespread. The principal prophet and sage of the time was Eliyahu (Eliyahu). It was Eliyahu who singlehandedly undertook the opposition to Achav and Jezebel. In view of Achav's terrible conduct, Eliyahu came before the king and swore in the name of G-d that rain would cease to fall in the entire region. This decree would remain in place until he, Eliyahu, would revoke it.

Sure enough, after some time a fierce drought raged in the region. Eliyahu went into hiding, as Jezebel was bent on killing him as well as all the other prophets of G-d. Three years had passed, and G-d spoke once again to Eliyahu. This time he was to appear again before Achav, in the hope that the time would be ripe for the harsh decree to be rescinded.

The situation had grown so desperate that Achav had personally joined his chief of staff, Obadiah (Ovadyahu), in a search for animal fodder. They divided the territory between themselves, and each of them continued alone in the field. Now, Obadiah was a very righteous man: under the very noses of Achav and Jezebel, he hid one hundred prophets of G-d and taken responsibility for their sustenance.²

While on the search, Obadiah met Eliyahu as he came towards him. Eliyahu instructed Obadiah to tell Achav that he had arrived. Seeing how terrified Obadiah was to do this, Eliyahu swore to him that he would indeed appear before Achav and not disappear as he had done before. Obadiah conveyed to Achav that Eliyahu was in the vicinity, and Achav made his way towards Eliyahu.

After an initial sharp exchange between the two, Eliyahu said that if the king wanted any rain to fall, he was to gather the entire people on Mount Carmel. Joining them were to be the entire cohort of eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Asherah (another one of the primary gods/goddesses of the time). Having no choice, Achav conceded. The people gathered in excitement and anticipation. As for the cohort

of prophets that Eliyahu spoke of, only the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal made it to the gathering. The four hundred prophets of Asherah were actually supported by Jezebel, and she, in whichever way, made sure they would not be in attendance.

Eliyahu stepped forward and began haranguing the people: "How long will you be dancing between two ideas? If the L-rd is G-d, go after Him, and if the Baal—go after him!" The scene was utterly surreal. The people were quiet. They were torn. In their heart of hearts they knew who was the true G-d—the G-d of their fathers, whom they had forsaken. On the other hand, the influence and lure of the popular culture



was so immediate and powerful. Could it all be just tossed away as nonsense?

Knowing exactly what was going through their minds, Eliyahu continued. He asserted the fact that he alone had publicly remained faithful as a prophet to G-d, while standing right there were hundreds of prophets of Baal. But he was ready to go to the test. Eliyahu proposed that two sacrifices should be brought, and the god who would answer the call by sending a fire to consume it, He would be deemed the true god. The people eagerly agreed.

While most of the people were of the wavering sort that Eliyahu described, it is hard to know what the thoughts of these Baal prophets were. Were they simply lifelong con artists? Brainwashed? Self-deceptive? A mixture of the above? This may relate to the question of whether these men were actually Jewish, or imported "mavens" from the neighbouring nations.

Regardless, what remains incredible is that they all sheepishly followed every proposition of Eliyahu, even as he made them a total laughingstock. It is readily demonstrable that Eliyahu, with nothing but the power of the faith that he projected, took command of the entire event, even though quantitatively he was totally outnumbered. A lesson for all generations!

The bull for Baal was slaughtered, cut in pieces and placed on the altar. Over the course of the entire morning the prophets paced up and down, calling and praying that Baal answer them. As noon came, Eliyahu began poking fun at them: "Call with a loud voice... Perhaps he is talking, or he is pursuing enemies, or he is on a journey; perhaps he is sleeping and will awaken." The Baal prophets whipped themselves into a frenzy, lacerating themselves with swords and spears—anything to get Baal to respond. But nothing came.

Now it was Eliyahu's turn. He called all of the people close, and began by mending "the torn-down altar of the L-rd." Rashi, quoting the Midrash, tells us that Saul, the first king of Israel, had built an altar for G-d on Mount Carmel after returning from his war with Amalek. The kings of Israel had destroyed every altar

that had been built for G-d, replacing them with altars for idol worship. Eliyahu now went about repairing this altar.

In building the altar, Eliyahu took twelve stones, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. Around it he dug a trench, 100 by 50 amot (cubits)—equivalent to at least 1200 square feet. After slaughtering the bull, cutting it up and setting it on the firewood, Eliyahu instructed that four pitchers of water be filled and poured over the sacrifice. He repeated this three times, making a total of twelve pitchersful—again corresponding to the twelve tribes.³ Not only was the sacrifice drenched, but the entire trench was also filled with water. This was all in order that the spectacle of the consuming fire should be magnified all the more.

The time of the afternoon offering came—the time when today we pray the Minchah prayer. The verse makes an obvious reference to this, from which the Talmud infers that "one must always be vigilant with regard to the afternoon prayer, as Eliyahu's prayer was answered only at the afternoon prayer."⁴ Eliyahu stepped forward and prayed that he now be answered, and that through this the people would know the true G-d.

In his prayer Eliyahu adds a request that through the miracle the people will know that he is truly the agent of G-d, and that G-d had instructed him to do all this. The commentaries actually differ whether G-d had actually instructed Eliyahu to perform this demonstration. Some say that this was the case, while others contend that Eliyahu had done this on his own accord, this being the most efficient way by which he could get the Jews to return to G-d. The Talmud says that this was also a prayer that the people should recognize that the fire was a G-dly answer, and that it had not come by means of magic and sorcery.⁵ Eliyahu's prayer was answered. A G-dly fire came down and consumed the entire offering, including all the water, and even the stones and earth of the altar. The people fell on their face and cried out "The L-rd, He is the G-d! The L-rd, He is the G-d!"

The text of the haftarah finishes here, but the story continues... After the fire came down, Eliyahu immediately instructed that the Baal prophets be seized. The people, led by Eliyahu, dragged them down to the Kishon brook and killed them on the spot. Now that Baal and its prophets had been dealt with, it was now time for another prayer. Eliyahu told Achav that he could go, eat and drink, for rain would soon come. Eliyahu himself ascended to the summit of Mount Carmel, crouched to the ground, and put his face between his knees; another miracle had to happen, and it had to happen now. He sent his attendant seven times to look to see if any cloud had appeared over the sea. Finally, by the seventh time, a tiny cloud was spotted. Eliyahu knew he had been answered. He sent a message to Achav that he should rush home so that the rain would not hinder his travel. Soon after this the skies grayed, and a downpour of rain descended on the Land of Israel.

Achav arrived home and related the entire episode to his wife. Jezebel, however, was not to be fazed by this; on the contrary, she was incensed at the slaying of the Baal prophets, and swore to take revenge upon Eliyahu. Now again the faithful and courageous prophet had to flee. The story of Eliyahu continues...

Reconstruction and Deconstruction

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

In about the year 1800, a fire broke out in the city of Maerkisch-Friedland, where the illustrious Rabbi Akiva Eiger was chief rabbi. A large segment of the Jewish quarter was destroyed as a result of the fire, & many homes had to be rebuilt. Rabbi Akiva Eiger issued a proclamation advising all those planning to rebuild their homes to stipulate in their contracts with the builders that no work was to be performed on Shabbos or Yom Tov. All members of the community complied with the Rabbi's directive, except for one man, who was the president of the community & its wealthiest member. He wanted his new house built without delay.

To this end, he hired workers to do the work non-stop, Shabbos & Yom Tov included. All protestations from the Rabbi & members of the community fell upon deaf ears.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger himself then announced publicly that he was certain that whoever had his house built on Shabbos would not see it stand for long, yet the work on the rich man's house continued unabated. The president's new house was not only the first to be completed, but also the largest & most magnificent of the reconstructed buildings. The Jews of the city were appalled by this flagrant display of insubordination to their great rabbi. However, the episode did not end there. Not long afterward, one of the beams of the president's house suddenly collapsed & crashed to pieces. It was subsequently discovered that the entire wooden frame of the house had become infested with timber-decay, & the building would have to be completely demolished & rebuilt. The builders & engineers were at a loss to explain why only that particular house became infested, while the other houses built at the same time from the same timber supply remained intact. But to the Jews of Maerkisch-Friedland, there was no doubt as to the answer of this puzzling question.

The Segulah of The Number 138

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, zt"l, the Lelover Rebbe, was once approached by a Bachur who asked for a Brachah, because he was about to be drafted into the army. The Rebbe said to him, "When people come to me with their problems, I recommend that they donate the value of 138 rubles to Tzedakah, because the word Hatzlachah, which means success, has the same Gematria, numerical value, of 138. But you are a Bachur and you don't have so much money. So instead, I request that you learn 138 pages of Gemara." The Bachur listened to the advice of the Rebbe, and on the day this boy finished the 138th page, the army notified him that he was exempt from service! Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.



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BENTZION HATZ GIVING A CHABURAH AT THE NIGHT HOLLEL

TWO ADARS STAY POSITIVE FOR SIXTY DAYS

UFARATZTA



Our dear Gabay of the Minyoney Shacharis, Mordechai Pinkas, said to me in the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe that: In a year when there are 2 Adar's and you get it right, keeping yourself happy for 60 days than, all negativity is batel b'shishim. [Like it does not exist.]



THURSDAY NIGHT MISHMER



FIVE COMPLIMENTS FOR EVERY ONE CRITICISM

Many years ago, I took my children to the Museum of Natural History in Manhattan. A guide took us around and was patiently describing the history of the world, showing us fossils with great enthusiasm, and talking in detail about prehistoric times. About 15 minutes into the tour, one of my daughters, four years old at the time, raised her hand and asked if she could ask a question. With a gleam in her eye and a big smile on her face, eager to interact with a young child taking an interest in her life's work, she said, absolutely, ask me anything. I, too, was very curious what fascinated my little girl so much and what question she would ask. I will never forget, my daughter looked up and said, "Um, I love your earrings, where did you get them from?" I wanted to hide behind the tyrannosaurus rex, but while it wasn't exactly the question she was looking for, the guide couldn't help but smile from the compliment.

March 1 is international compliment day. First initiated in the Netherlands in 2001, this holiday has gained in popularity and spread across the world, with people making a concerted effort to offer others compliments specifically on that day. The founder of international compliment day explained why he started it: "Nothing stimulates more, gives more energy, makes people happier and, as far as business is concerned, increases productivity and commitment faster than sincere appreciation. So why not use it a little bit more?"

Last weeks Parsha describes how the Kohen Gadol wore a robe that had bells and woven pomegranates along its hem. In 2011, archaeologists in the City of David found one of the little golden bells from the end of the Second Temple period.

Chazal tell us that the bells atoned for lashon hara, the misuse and abuse of the power of speech. Indeed, there were seventy-two of these bells in total, not coincidentally the same number of possible shades of white that could make someone a metzora, the result of speaking gossip.

If you were trying to bring awareness to the importance of not misusing speech and inspiring people not to gossip and speak lashon hara, wouldn't it be more fitting to institute a moment of silence in the Beis HaMikdash each day, rather than design a garment filled with bells that make noise?

Perhaps we can answer based on

an insight from the Shemen HaTov, Rav Bernard Weinberger. Later in Parshas Metzora, the Torah says that the process of purification for one who suffered tzara'as as a result of speaking gossip is to offer two birds. If the offering is an atonement for abusing speech, why not simply bring one bird for the one violation? The Zohar explains that there are two because one bird corresponds with bad speech and one with good speech. What does that mean?

The Shemen HaTov explains that sometimes we have the opportunity to offer positive reinforcement, to give a compliment or say something nice, and yet we remain silent. You might think - what have you done wrong by staying silent? You didn't say anything negative, you didn't put down or criticize. The Torah is teaching this important lesson. The lack of positive reinforcement, the failure to offer a compliment or say something nice, can be just as demoralizing as negative speech, or sometimes even worse. One bird atones for saying the wrong thing, and the other sacrifice, equally important, atones for remaining silent and failing to say the right thing.

The garment that atoned for speech specifically had bells because the answer to wrong speech is not to remain silent, rather it is to use the power of speech to positively impact people's lives. Our compliments should ring like bells, our appreciation, recognition, admiration, and positive words should reverberate like chimes. Being positive should be the default and be effortless, not the opposite.

If we want to inspire our spouse, our children, co-workers, or friends, they will respond much more positively to positive words than to criticism and reproach. A Harvard Business Review article asked - Which is more effective in improving team performance: using positive feedback to let people know when they're doing well, or offering constructive comments to help them when they're off track?

Obviously, as Torah Jews, we believe in both. We don't engage in false flattery, and we do subscribe to the mitzvah of tochecha, sometimes giving rebuke or reproof. The question isn't which, the real question is in what proportion?

The article quotes researchers who studied sixty leadership teams and measured them based on profitability, customer satisfaction, and 360-degree feedback ratings of the team members. They found the factor that made the greatest difference between the most and least successful teams was the ratio of positive comments ("I agree with that," for instance, or "That's a terrific idea,") to negative comments ("I don't agree with you," "We shouldn't even consider doing that") that the participants expressed to one another.

The average ratio for the highest-performing teams was 5.6 (that is, nearly six positive comments for every negative one). The medium-performance teams averaged 1.9 (almost twice as many positive comments than negative ones.) But the average for the low-performing teams, at 0.36 to 1, was almost three negative comments for every positive one.

They concluded that the ideal ratio of positive feedback to negative, to have the most effective, motivated, and inspired teams is 5.6 to 1.

The Chasam Sofer suggests that Hashem understood the importance of offering positive words and compliments in getting the most out of the people around you.

Speak to those wise and talented artisans and tell them: "Asher mealaisiv ruach chochmah." Tell them that they are people who are filled with a Godly wisdom. Give them that positive reinforcement... And if you do that and give them encouragement then, "Vasus bigdei Aharon l'kadsho l'chahano li." - Then they will be able to accomplish and create great things, the clothes of the Kohen Gadol.

Compliments matter. They motivate people to continue doing the right things they are doing and to grow more. They show appreciation and draw people closer. Dr. John Gottman has spent his career studying healthy marriages and has scientifically identified the behaviors that contribute to dysfunctional ones. He can spend a short time with a couple and predict with over 90% accuracy if they will still be married in 5 years from that point.

He found that the single biggest determinant to a happy and healthy marriage is the ratio of positive to negative comments the partners make to one another. And the optimal ratio is amazingly similar—five positive comments for every negative one. For those who ended up divorced, the ratio was 0.77 to 1—or something like three positive comments for every four negative ones.

What is true for leadership teams is true for marriage and is true in parenting. On a given day, we say stop procrastinating from doing your homework, pick up your shoes, stop fighting. But how often do we say, you were playing so nicely, thank you for doing that without being asked, good job carrying your plate to the sink, or I love the way you are so loyal to your friends. Constructive criticism, feedback, honest feelings are all important and necessary, but for healthy marriages and motivated children, they need to remain at a ratio of one time for every five compliments or positive things.

Finally, be sincere with your compliment, and don't exaggerate or go overboard. Be specific: "I admire way they handled a situation, I am impressed by your patience or generosity, I appreciate the delicious meal or the wonderful way you interacted with the children." Be creative, look to compliment, offer a positive word and it will bring out the best in others and make you feel good about yourself.

We don't have to wait for March 1 to make it compliment day. Before the end of the day, offer the people you love at least five compliments or positive words for any negative feedback you might give. If you need help, you can always ask where they got their earrings.

STAYING IN SHAPE

You have to stay in shape. My mother started walking five miles a day when she was 60. She's 97 now and... we have no idea where she is.

PROCRASTINATION

My mother said, "You won't amount to anything because you procrastinate." I said, "Just wait."

It could have been worse
Fifteen minutes after the Titanic sank, Mick and Patrick find themselves on the same overturned lifeboat. The water is freezing, sharks are cruising by, and the boat is slowly sinking.
"Oh, well" said Mick, "It could have been worse".
"Worse? How could it be worse?" screamed Patrick.
"Well, we could have bought return tickets!"

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

A woman phones up her husband at work for a chat.

HIM "I'm sorry dear but I'm up to my neck in work today."
HER "But I've got some good news and some bad news for you dear."
HIM "OK dear, but as I've got no time now, just give me the good news."
HER "Well, the air bag works."

FAMILY MATTERS

It seems I have spent a lifetime of mouthing mechanically, "Say thank you... Sit up straight... Use your napkin... Close your mouth when you chew... Don't lean back in your chair..."
Just when I finally got my husband squared away, the kids came along.

THE DYSLEXIC RABBI

Q: Did you hear about the dyslexic Rabbi?
A: He walks around saying "Yo."

My wife says I'm hopeless at fixing appliances.
Well, she's in for a shock.

A man showed up for a duel armed only with a pencil and paper.
He then proceeded to draw his

weapon.

Thanks for explaining the word "many" to me.
It means a lot.

What do you call an imaginary color?
A pigment of your imagination.

My wife isn't talking to me because apparently I ruined her birthday.
I'm not sure how I did that – I didn't even know it was her birthday...

I left my Adderall in my Ford Fiesta.
Now it's a Ford Focus.

My friend has got a butler who only has one arm.
Serves him right.

My wife told me she was leaving me because I keep pretending to be a Transformer.

I said, "No, wait! I can change."
My friend is a structural engineer.
He's always complaining about stress at work.

I used to be a narcissist.
But now look at me.

I built an electric fence around my property yesterday.
My neighbor is dead against it.

I haven't owned a watch for I don't know how long.

I almost got caught stealing a board game today.
But it was a Risk I was willing to take.

What's the difference between a hippo and a Zippo?
One's really heavy; the other's a little lighter.

My wife asked me to pass her lipstick. I gave her superglue instead.
She's still not talking to me.

Every single morning I get hit by the same bike.
It's a vicious cycle.



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MITZVAH IN THE TORAH TO GIVE SHKALIM

In the beginning of this week's parsha, Parshas Ki Sisa, we read about the mitzvah of giving a machtzis hashekel – half a shekel. This mitzvah is spelled out in the beginning of the parsha (30:12): "זָה יִתְּנוּ כָּל הָעֶבֶר" – על הפקדים מהצית השקל – this is what should be given – a half a shekel." As the Rambam writes (Sefer Hamitzvos – Mitzvas Asei 171), this was the communal effort to provide the money for purchasing korbanos, and was only applicable when the Beis Hamikdash was standing,

THE PROHIBITION TO GIVE LESS

The pasuk in Parshas Ki Sisa (30:15) then adds: "הַעֲשִׂיר הָאֶלֶּף וְהַדֶּלֶל לֹא יִמְעִיט מִמַּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל – the rich shall not add and the poor shall not lessen the donation of half a shekel." The Ramban explains that this is a negative command, not to give more or less than the amount of half a shekel. He adds that one should not make the mistake to think that the Torah means that the rich man does not have to give more, but it is not an issur to give more, because that would not fit in when it comes to the poor man. Just as it would make no sense for the Torah to tell us: "he doesn't have to give less," but rather that "he is not allowed to give less," the same should be for the rich man, and "he is not allowed to give more."

It seems clear that, according to the Ramban, this is a negative commandment: not to give more or less. Yet, it is strange that the Ramban, in his counting of the mitzvos, does not make mention of this being on his list of the 613 mitzvos.

There is another question raised on the Ramban's understanding. We already have a general prohibition, not to add or detract from the mitzvos of the Torah, known as bal tosif and bal tigre. For example, one cannot take 3 species or add another species to the 4 species taken on Sukkos. Since it is already forbidden to do more or less than the way the Torah tells us, why it is necessary for the Torah to spell out such a prohibition specifically here, not to give more or less?

One could answer that the issur of bal tosif would not apply in this case, and it is indeed necessary for the Torah to tell us not to add to one's donation. This is based on the opinion of Tosfos (Rosh Hashana 16b) that doing a mitzvah twice does not violate bal tosif. It is only when someone adds onto the actual mitzvah – such as putting 5 parshios in the tefillin or taking another species with lulav – that there is a transgression of bal tosif. But if someone takes the lulav multiple times or gives more money than half a shekel, there would be no issur of bal tosif involved. That is why the Torah told us not to add to one's donation.

One could suggest that, as we find elsewhere, it is given to add on an additional issur.

But the question of bal tigre still remains. Why is it necessary for the Torah to spell out a prohibition not to give less, if we already have a prohibition not to detract from the mitzvos? Additionally, one can ask, why is it even necessary to prohibit giving less? It is self understood that you can't give less, because then you didn't fulfill the obligation of giving half a shekel. To be continued...

SUMMARY

There is a mitzvah in the Torah to give a machtzis hashekel in the times of the Beis Hamikdash. The poor shall not give less – according to the Ramban this means a prohibition to give a smaller donation.

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

To receive updates of upcoming shiurim, to receive a link to current shiurim, or to access archived shiurim, please send a request to: Secretary@18forshay.com, or follow the prompts on our website 18Forshay.com.

Recorded shiurim are also available on CD at the shul – 18 Forshay Main Lobby.

All shiurim delivered at the Kollel Boker, Night Kollel, or any of our various programs, such as Legal Holidays and Yeshiva Bein Hazmanim are open to all. Come and join the many who enjoy these informative and intriguing shiurim!

Rabbi Scheiner

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NIGHT KOLLEL
8:15-9:45pm

CHAVRUSALEARNING – HALACHA

Currently: הלכות יום טוב הלכות חול המועד

SHUIRIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

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8:45-9:45

- Mishna Yomis
8:45-9:00

- Daf Hashovua
8:15-8:45

- ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR
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- Shovevim Program / Early Friday morning learning b'retzifus. o Evening Shuirim in Halacha and Hashkafa by prominent Morei Horah

~Night Kolloel~

COMMUNITY KOLLEL NEWS WEEK OF KI SISA

Night Kolloel

Rabbi Moshe Langer, Rav of Bais Medrash Torah U'Tefilla of Scotland Hill, in Chesnut Ridge area of Monsey, gave a shiur at the Night Kolloel, on the halachos of techumin – how far one can walk – on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Looking to bring more Torah into your life? Come join a great chevra in a group discussion, led by Rabbi Yossi Fried, every Wednesday night 8:55-9:55pm, in 20 Forshay, upstairs. Explore the laws of Shabbos, and get a deeper understanding of the halachic process and the practical applications of the halacha.

Rabbi Simcha Bunim Berger gives a number of weekly shiurim. On Thursday night, from 9:45-10:15, he gives a shiur on the parsha, with insights of the Maharal. The shiur takes place in 20 Upstairs.

Kolloel Boker

In connection to the learning of Meseches Megillah I gave a shiur at the kolloel, on the topic: "Honoring a Kohen – any Exceptions?"

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 chaverim, with kugel and cholent. This past week the guest speaker was Dr. Charles Fleischner.

SHOVAVIM INITIATIVE:

Last week, was the grand finale of the Shovavim-Tat Program, which took place every Friday morning, from 4AM-7AM, of the last 8 auspicious weeks, followed by Shacharis and breakfast, with Matan Scharah B'tzidah.

For the last week of the program the place was overflowing. We simply had to keep adding more and more tables. There were people who came in just for a few minutes just to be a part of this massive kiddush Hashem. A father came for the last few minutes to learn with his son.

We were able to give many bonuses for those who came for the full 8 weeks – both to bochorim and yungerleit/

In honor of the final week, we had a guest speaker, Rabbi Blum, Siska Rav. Rabbi Blum spoke about the greatness of this program, the learning that took place during these auspicious days, and how they are the days which lead into the simcha of Chodesh Adar.

We would also like to share with you some of the actual notes and thank-you comments that were received. In true Ohr Chaim style – where people of all walks of life feel comfortable – these notes were written in many different languages: English, Hebrew, and even some in Yiddish:

Wishing you a Wonderful Shabbos,

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

What an amazing program!

It is so geshmak to learn here!

יישר כוח – אין לי מילים

Thank you for giving money and getting rid of the yetzer hara to sleep, which allowed me to learn in such a heilige time!

Thank you! The vibe here is out of this world!

Is there any way you can continue this program throughout the year??

Thank you for starting off my week-end in such a magnificent way!

שכר הרבה מאוד!!

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

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Goldshmidt

about rabbi benjamin goldschmidt

Born in Jerusalem and raised in Moscow, Rabbi Benjamin Goldschmidt studied in Bnei Brak's Ponevezh Yeshiva, Jerusalem's Chevron Yeshiva, and continued his post-graduate studies at Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, New Jersey, and at Yeshivas Ohr Reuven in Suffern, New York. He received rabbinic ordination from Rav Dovid Cohen and Rav Yosef Chevroni of the Chevron Yeshiva (Givat Mordechai) and Rav Betzalel Rudinsky of Yeshivas Ohr Reuven.

For the last decade, he has served Mannhattan's Jewish community at the NYC synagogue Park East Synagogue. Today, he teaches Torah classes, offers pastoral care and leads vibrant Shabbat NYC services.

Rabbi Goldschmidt and his work has appeared in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Haaretz, Mishpacha, Kikar Shabbat, Kan TV, the Headlines podcast, and the Forward, among others. He lives in Manhattan's Upper East Side with his wife the journalist Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt with their children. Read his sermons and follow him on Twitter.

Friday Evening

What could yeshivish communities learn from the Modern Orthodox and vice versa? Lessons from my life journey between Moscow, Bnei Brak & Manhattan

Shabbos Day

The wandering emissaries of Eretz Yisrael. The untold story of the greatest and longest Jewish fundraiser of all times.

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