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Adar

SHABBOS MEVORCHIM ADAR

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Friday Erev Shabbos & Shabbos Kodesh

Molad is : Friday Morning February 12,
19 Minutes and 4 Chalokim after 6



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Rabbi Coren

YISRO, AMALEK, VISIT TO MOROCCO AND ALEX GOLDFARB*

Last week, on the 14 of Shvat, I had a unique opportunity to be at the Kevers of Rav Yitchok Abuchatzera Z"l and Yechiya Ben Baruch Z"l. Rav Yitchok was the son of perhaps the more famous Rav, Yaakov Abuchatzera, known as the Abir Yaakov.

Rav Yitchok was the uncle of the legendary Baba Sali - Rav Yisrael Abuchatzera. The Abuchatzera family began with Rav Shmuel Elbaz who lived in Syria and moved to Tafilat in Morocco. It is believed that his father, Rav Masoud, traveled to Israel on some type of make-shift raft (or mat) which in Hebrew is referred to as מחצלה and in Arabic as Chatzera. Hence the family name. There were certain legendary miracles associated with the travels of this raft. But whether these legends are accurate or not, one thing is true: this dynasty of Rabbis included incredible tzadikim who were known to bring many yeshuos for the Jewish people.



So how does a person become worthy of becoming a פועל ישיעו? Hopefully the answer below will bring us the inspiration we need so we can merit witnessing the yeshuos that are needed today in Israel and the rest of the world.

I heard one answer in the name of the Toshe Rebbe Z"l who was renowned for the yeshuos he did for Klal Yisrael. He was want to point out that people often make the wrong presumptions about tzadikim, believing that holy individuals such as Reb Shayla of Kerestir and other great Rabbis were not really experts in Torah. According to the Toshe Rebbe people often view tzadikim such as Babi Sali as if they arrived in this world with the super powers needed to bless people with brachos. This is far from the truth. A perfect example is the family of Abuchatzera, beginning with the Abir Yaakov who during his lifetime built up a prestigious yeshiva. The Abuchatzera family was made up mostly of dayanim. The Baba Sali, Hacham Israel Abuhatzera, spent five years with his uncle Hacham Reb Yitzchok, mastering Shas with Tosfos and the Maharsha. Rav Yitchok himself was locked up in an attic for years where he immersed himself in the sea of Torah, reaching extraordinary levels.

There are two common denominators that I think is worth focusing on when we speak about tzadikim. The first one is their incredible dedication to learning Shas and its peshat which is the "meat, bread and potatoes" of learning and only afterwards delighting in the dessert of Kabbalah etc. The second denominator is their exceptional commitment to refining themselves as humble and benevolent Jews, recognized for devotion to Klal Yisrael.

We might not become the next Baba Sali but we can learn a very valuable lesson from him. Becoming a true ohev Hashem means humbling ourselves and utilizing every opportunity to study His Torah.

Amalek, on the other hand, is the exact opposite of the tzadikim we discussed above. He was brazen, (Rashi refers to him as

the dog who came to bite the Jewish people) and had no shame or qualms about denying Hashem as the ultimate Creator. His acute power is hinted at in the passuk --go out to war tomorrow. One of Amalek's strongest abilities was to temper any inspiration towards betterment and to postpone all attempts --until tomorrow.

If you recall a few weeks ago we flew to South Africa, stopping off in Qatar. The planned group consisted of 11 men but two were not permitted to board the plane because of passport problems. We debated what to do and as usual, Hashem helped us out. We looked around and noticed one man with a kippah that was preparing to board our flight. We asked him if he would join the minyan and he gladly agreed. This neshama was Alexander Ben Shlomo who, little did we realize, was going to leave the world soon after performing this mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem (davening with a minyan under compromising circumstances). Alex was headed for an adventure, to climb a mountain in Pakistan for a few weeks. He had very little items with him; his main possession, which he proudly carried was his pair of tefillin. Alex reminds us of the lesson of doing what must be done today and not putting it off for tomorrow.

Yisro understood this lesson very well. He heard about the Jewish people and the miracles that occurred to them. He also heard about Amalek and his power. Yisro realized that he must take the serious step of commitment and join Moshe, his son-in-law, a very humbling move for someone of his stature. But this was his way of ensuring continued growth and his contribution to the Jewish people and to the world. For this he merited a full Parsha in the Torah, an everlasting gift.

May we merit to live up to our potential and to take advantage of each precious day because we don't know what will tomorrow will bring.

Shabbat shalom

* A prominent Jewish doctor in Boston died this week while attempting a challenging ascent in the mountains of Pakistan. Alex Goldfarb, an immigrant from the former Soviet Union, was an experienced climber as well as a beloved nephrologist who taught at Harvard Medical School, authored medical texts and traveled to New York last year to treat patients during the first wave of COVID-19 patients there.

His son told the Boston Globe that he also was "a devout Jew" who was animated by the value of tikkun olam, or seeking to repair the world. Rabbi Mendy Uminer of Chabad of Chestnut Hill posted videos mourning Goldfarb this week, as well as pictures showing that Goldfarb brought tefillin, phylacteries used in Jewish prayer, on his climbing expeditions.

ב"ט

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Late Maariv Motzai Shabbos

After Avos Uvanim/Kol Haneorim

Approximately
8:00pm

18 Main Bais Medrash

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יום ה' פרשת משפטים
Thursday Feb 11

1:30pm – Tent ב עם קריאת ויחל – ב
3:00pm – Tent ב
4:45pm – Tent ב 40 min. before shkia
5:30pm – Tent ב at shkia

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February 2021
Early Friday Mincha

> **12:30** (מנחה גדולה)
> **1:00**
> **1:30**
> **2:00**
> **2:30**
> **3:00**



TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE: THE JEWISH VERSION

Why No Steps Ascending to the Altar?

CLIMBING THE HOTEL

Bill, Jim and Scott were at a convention together sharing a large suite at the top of a 75-story hotel. After a long day of meetings, they were shocked to hear that the elevators in their hotel were broken, and they would have to climb 75 flights of stairs to get to their room.

Bill said to Jim and Scott, "Let's break the monotony of this unpleasant task by concentrating on something interesting. I'll tell jokes for 25 flights, Jim can sing songs for the next 25 flights and Scott will tell sad stories for the rest of the way." At the 26th floor, Bill stopped telling jokes and Jim began to sing. At the 51st floor, Jim stopped singing and Scott began to tell sad stories.

"I will tell my saddest story first," he said. "I left the room key in the car."

NO STAIRS

This week's Torah portion, Yisro, capturing the most important and defining event in Jewish history, the covenant crafted between G-d and a people chosen to become the paragons of morality and holiness in an earthly and mundane world, concludes with this strange instruction:

"You shall not ascend My Altar on steps, so that your nakedness will not be uncovered upon it."

Indeed, because of this injunction, both in the Tabernacle (the Mishkan) and the Jerusalem Temple (the Beis Hamikdash), a smooth slanted ramp, rather than stairs, led the priests up to the altar to carry out their services.

This is a difficult law to comprehend. Why would the Torah prohibit steps for climbing up to the altar?

The biblical commentators explain that the priests serving in the Temple wore short pants, spanning from the thighs to the knees. Ascending stairs requires one to take wide, extensive and spacious steps, which would expose more of their body, and would not befit the awe and reverence required in

G-d's home. The Torah, therefore, required a ramp ascending to the altar, since this allows the priest to take small strides in a serene, dignified and respectful manner.

The great 11th century French biblical commentator Rashi explains this in greater detail: "Steps require you to take wide strides. Although this does not in actuality expose your nakedness... nonetheless, taking wide steps is close to exposing nakedness. Thus, by taking wide steps, you treat the stones of the altar in a humiliating manner." In a moving sequel, Rashi adds that this mitzvah teaches us an important moral lesson. "If regarding these stones which lack the perception to be hurt by their humiliation, the Torah says, 'Since there is a need for them, do not treat them in a humiliating manner,' your fellow human being who is created in the image of your Creator and is sensitive to humiliation, how much more so must you treat him with respect!"

TWO QUESTIONS

Yet two questions must still be addressed.

1) A well-known axiom in Jewish thought is that every single mitzvah contains, in addition to its literal meaning, a psychological and spiritual interpretation. The physical and concrete dimension of a mitzvah may not be relevant anymore, yet its metaphysical message, transcending the boundaries of a particular milieu or location, remains timelessly relevant in our inner hearts and psyches.

The same is true, of course, concerning this mitzvah. In the absence of a Temple and an altar, the instruction not to use stairs, is, practically speaking, irrelevant. But we must search for the spiritual idea behind this mitzvah, which remains as timely today as it ever was.

2) As mentioned above, this week's portion captures the most significant event in the history of the Jewish people and of the world — when G-d, in a moment never to be repeated again — revealed to an entire nation His existence, charging it with the mission of saturating the world with holiness. This was the moment when the Creator communicated to the world His universal laws of morality and ethics. If we believe that somebody created the world and cares about its destiny, it is fair to assume that at some point this Being communicated with its inhabitants His intent in creation. This is indeed what transpired at Sinai. It was the event that gave human history, in historian Paul Johnson's words, "the dignity of purpose." It paved the road in the jungle of history.

One would expect that the closing sentence of this portion would somehow capture the power and grace of this extraordinary moment, one that in many ways shapes the moral history of humanity. Yet the Torah chooses to culminate this section with what seems to be a simple and mundane law: "You shall not ascend My Altar on steps, so that your nakedness will not be uncovered upon it." Why?

FINDING YOUR OWN TRUTH

It is precisely in these final words that the Torah shares with us a deeply moving lesson regarding the human quest to "ascend G-d's Altar," to climb the ladder of moral and spiritual enlightenment.

Often in life, people are confronted with situations and experiences that inspire them to move their lives to a different level, to live deeper and to love deeper. They are moved to make changes in their habits and behaviors.

Yet sometimes, as a result of a genuine longing to abandon a previous lifestyle of shallowness, falsehood, addiction, promiscuity, loneliness, or sluggishness, people begin to take wide and expansive steps, determined to reach great peaks in short spans of time, craving to master profoundly elevated modes of consciousness and lifestyles.

Thus, immediately following the most spiritually enlightening and earth-shattering event in history, when G-d shared Himself with humanity, the Torah culminates with this declaration: "You shall not ascend My Altar on steps, so that your nakedness will not be uncovered upon it." Do not become who you are not. Do not jump to places beyond yourself. Every movement forward must be internalized

and integrated into your individual identity because when you take steps that overwhelm you, rather than elevate you, you may end up naked and exposed. You might fall down fast and hard. People who overestimate themselves, often end up underestimating themselves.

Never disregard, the Torah is teaching us, the value of one small move in the quest for truth. Wherever you are in life, you can serve G-d genuinely according to your own potential and situation. One can discover the light of G-d on every plane. Challenge yourself to encounter your own inner light and truth; you need not climb on the truths and experiences of others. Grow you must; challenge yourself you must. But take the ramp, not the stairs. Don't jump ahead of yourself, because your authentic self may be left behind. And when you discover that, you may fall down and lose everything. You might end up bare.

King Solomon put it simply: "Do not stand in the place of the great." Why? Not because by stepping into the shoes of the great, you will be robbing somebody else of his or her place of greatness. Rather, by doing so, you will be denying yourself your own individual process, the one that is great for you. Real people are inspired by other people, but never copy them.

Of course, there are moments you make take a big jump that may initially seem frightening. Big things happen when ordinary people muster the courage to actualize extraordinary visions. The path to recovery and to healing always requires a drastic leap. Yet we must ensure that these big steps enhance our true identity rather than crush it; that they embody our inner calling, mission and power, not a superficial emulation of other people's standards and behaviors.

"To Thine Own Self Be True," is also true in the religious and spiritual life. Sometimes even more. G-d wants you to be you, not me. He Wants me to be me, not you.

WINE AND VINEGAR

A Talmudic vignette illustrates this point in a rather interesting way.

The Talmud quotes one of its great sages, Mar Eukva, saying the following curious statement about himself: "I am, in comparison to my father, what vinegar is in comparison to wine. When my father would eat meat, he would wait a full 24 hours until he ate cheese. But I? When I eat meat, I eat cheese during the following meal" (around six hours later

The obvious question is, if this Talmudic sage held his father's behavior in such high esteem, to the extent of seeing himself as vinegar compared to his father as wine, why didn't he change his behavior and follow his father's custom? Why didn't he turn himself into "wine"?

The answer may be that Mar Eukva was keenly aware of the truth that his father was on a totally different spiritual level than he. Waiting a full 24 hours after eating meat before he would eat cheese would in some mystical way enrich his father's soul. For the son to engage in this behavior, it would be merely an act of copying and mimicking his father's behavior. For his soul, this would be a meaningless experience.

Since according to Jewish law, after eating meat one need wait only six hours in order to eat dairy products, this sufficed for Mar Eukvah .

The Parsha begins with the reaction of Moshe Rabbeinu's father-in-law, Yitro, to the miracles that the Jewish people experienced on their journeys out of Egypt. Rashi notes that Yitro had seven names, and one of them was 'Yeser', meaning 'additional'.

Rashi explains that this name was given him because he merited to 'add' a whole section in the Torah, later in the Parsha - which Rashi describes as the section starting with 'and you will see' - when he suggested a new system of judgement to replace the present system whereby Moshe would deal with every case. Thus, this name is a great praise to Yitro for achieving such a unique feat of adding a whole new section to the Torah.

However, a question on Rashi's explanation arises: When Rashi refers to the passage where Yitro made his suggestion; he seems to begin in the middle of the passage. The passage begins with Yitro telling Moshe in Chapter 18, verse 17, "The thing that you do is not good..." Only four verses later in verse 21, does he say, "And you will see". Why does Rashi not describe Yitro's suggestion from the beginning of the dialogue between Yitro and Moshe?

One Great Sage answered that this passage is coming to praise Yitro for his meriting to add a section in the Torah. The first four verses of the passage involving Yitro are not positive words, rather they are words of criticism of what was wrong with the existing system. Only in verse 21, does he begin to propose a new system of judges. The praise of Yitro is not for his criticism because it is very easy to criticize without giving any constructive ideas, rather he is applauded for offering an alternative.

This teaches a very important lesson - seeing what's wrong with the situation does not require any great character traits, indeed, it often indicates an ayin rah - a propensity to focus on the negative in an unhealthy way. However, discerning how to rectify the problems requires an ability to think positively and constructively.

It is apparent that the midda (character trait) of being critical can be used for the good or for the bad. Based on this idea, we see that one aspect of using it for the good is that it should be the springboard for positive change. Indeed, Rav Yerucham Levovits zt"l writes that Yitro was a highly critical person but he used it for the good.

One way of discerning whether a person uses a midda in the correct way is if he only applies it to other people or if he uses it to improve himself. The wrong way of applying one's critical nature is if a person only uses it to see what is wrong with everyone else but does not use it to analyze his own failings or mistakes. Yitro used his critical nature to question whether he was living in the correct way and to search for the truth.

Our Sages tell us that he worshipped every type of idol and he realized that they were all false. And when he recognized the correctness of the Torah, he did not allow himself to ignore the implication of that truth, rather he admitted that he had been wrong in his beliefs and he changed his whole lifestyle and joined the Jewish people.

In Torah, the midda of being critical is essential to one's Torah learning and general life outlook. There is no place in Judaism for blindly accepting what one hears without questioning it and trying to understand it. A person with a critical nature is more likely to come to the truth. Moreover, we learn from Yitro that using a critical eye in a positive way is the platform for achieving necessary changes in the world. Yitro saw what was wrong with the system of judgment and did not suffice with criticizing it, rather he sought and found an alternative.

Indeed, it seems that all the great achievers in Klal Yisrael saw what was wrong with a certain situation and did something positive to rectify it. The following story



PARSHAS YISRO THE POWER OF LOVE

Yisro, Moshe Rabbeinu's father-in-law merited that a parsha of the Torah was called by his name. Why? What did he do that was so special?

From the very beginning of the Parsha we can get a small glimpse into Yisro's greatness.

Yisro heard, the Torah said...Yisro heard and acted.. What did he hear?

Milchemes Amalek Ve Krias Yam Suf.

Two things..He had heard of our battle with the nation of Amalek, the forerunner of all evil in this world and the miracle of our victory therein.And the splitting of the sea.

Yisro immediately left his homeland to come and give the children of Israel chizuk.

In the piece immediately preceding Parshas Yisro the Torah speaks of the sins of Amalek, it uses the phrase "asher karcha baderech.." to describe them. They cooled you off.

Everyone was afraid to hurt us, to start up with the holy nation of Israel.

After all, our G-d was obviously omnipotent.

Everyone that is, except for one startup nation, Amalek.

Bent on our destruction, they knew that if they started up with us - it would show the world that we were not a holy and protected nation anymore...They literally cooled the world off.

They created the space for the whole world to live in denial of Hashem's greatness and made it fashionable to hate Jews.Sound familiar?

Contrast this with Yisro's behavior..

He heard of our travails, our journeys, our G-d.

And he came to bring warmth and show adulation.

He wasted no time once he arrived. Building us up with his knowledge, his experience and his passion and advice.

This is what being Jewish is all about.

He got it...This is the whole Torah, as Rabbi Akiva says.Ve Ahavta le Reacha Kamocha. Be concerned.

Care about the community.. Don't live life halfway.

We must love each other. Not only act as if we care...but truly try to kill the deadly cells of apathy we are inclined to feel sometimes.

In fact as the commentaries point out, that since the Torah is given in Parshas Yisro - wouldn't it have made more sense to call it the parsha of Kabbalas Hatorah .

But no...Yisro symbolized what the Torah is all about. His behavior encapsulated the reason we received our holy mandate.His warmth, his chizuk, his love for our nation

was overflowing.He could not stay home.

We too must fulfill the spirit of the Torah by following in Yisro's path and forging close relationships.

It's our job as parents to notice the good in our children and build them up.

Parenting is not a spectator sport.

We have to not be embarrassed to love, appreciate and cherish our spouses.

It is not out of character for us to bring warmth into this world.

If anything it is a must.

We live today in a world that longs more than ever for our passion and positivity.

Lets look at our DNA through the eyes of hazal

Rachmonim, Bayshonim, Ve Gomlei chasadim.

We are a people who (should) care deeply about each other.

Run away from gaavah (boastfulness)

And spend our time and energy doing good for each other.

Let's start appreciating the characteristics that we were born with.

Yisro as a ger chose our nation. Let's start choosing us too. Let's choose to see all the positives about our community. Every day we have the opportunity to rechoose again. We can choose to see the positive in our children or continue pointing out the negative. We can choose to be happy to be grateful that we have a spouse, a family or we can shut down our feelings because we think it is the manly or socially correct thing to do.

Let's choose warmth and vulnerability. Let's learn from Yisro.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Drinking Fluids

Doctor: "Have you been drinking fluids?"

Patient: "Hey, Doc, that's literally all I drink."

Hillbilly at the hospital...

A hillbilly was making his first visit to a hospital where his teenage son was about to have an operation.

Watching the doctor's every move, he asked, "What's that?"

The doctor explained, "This is an anesthetic. After he gets this he won't know a thing."

"Save your time, Doc," exclaimed the man. "He don't know nothing now."

My Uncle The Umpire

Sue: My uncle is an umpire in a restaurant.

Lou: In a restaurant?

Sue: Yes. When someone orders pancakes, he yells, "Batter up!"

Political Differences

A Republican and a Democrat were walking down the street when they came to a homeless person. The Republican gave the homeless person his business card and told him to come to his business for a job. He then took twenty dollars out of his pocket and gave it to the homeless person.

The Democrat was very im-

pressed, and when they came to another homeless person, he decided to help. He walked over to the homeless person and gave him directions to the welfare office. He then reached into the Republican's pocket and gave the homeless person fifty dollars.

Now you understand the difference between Republicans and Democrats.

Turn Around

My GPS just told me to turn around...

Now I can't see where I'm driving.

The Shopping List

My wife asked me to put ketchup on the shopping list...

Now I can't read anything.

Deadly prophecy...

A medieval astrologer prophesied to a king that his Queen would soon die.

Sure enough, the woman died a short time later. The king was outraged at the astrologer, certain that his prophecy had brought about the Queen's death. He summoned the astrologer and gave him this command: "Prophet, tell me when you will die!"

The astrologer realized that the king was planning to kill him, immediately, no matter what answer he gave. So he said, finally, "I do not know when I will die. I only know that whenever I die, you will die three days later."

Funny Facts

1. Regular naps prevent old age... especially if you take them while driving.

2. Having one child makes you a parent; having two makes you a referee.

3. Marriage is a relationship in which one person is always right and the other is the husband!

4. They said we should all pay our tax with a smile. I tried - but they wanted cash.

5. Don't feel bad. A lot of people have no talent.

6. You can't buy love... but you pay heavily for it.

7. Laziness is nothing more than the habit of resting before you get tired

8. My wife and I always compromise. I admit I'm wrong and she agrees with me.

9. Those who can't laugh at themselves leave the job to others.

10.. They call our language the mother tongue because the father seldom gets to speak.

AND THEY SHALL WASH THEIR CLOTHING (Yisro 19,10)

A garment is clean, pristine and pressed when you first put it on. As you wear it, it can get wrinkled, dusty and even stained. You don't give up on it, you clean it with warm water, steam out the stains, then steam-press it until it looks new again.

This is a lesson for our Neshamah, we say every morning Neshamah shenasata bee, Tehorah hee - The soul that you have given within me, is pure. As life goes on the soul gets wrinkled, dusty and

even stained, from worldly things that negate the will of Hashem. But never give up on it.

By doing Mitzvos with vitality and warmth, davening, learning and giving Tzedakah with a warm heart, this makes the Neshamah beautiful and pure again.

====Based on Darkei Hachayim p154-155

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illustrates one of the most striking examples of this.

There was once a meeting of many of the leading Rabbis of the generation and the descendants of the leaders of the previous one, including the Chofetz Chaim. Rav Yechezkel Sarna, the great Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron stood up to speak and he surprised everyone, saying that there was one person who had achieved more for the Jewish people than everyone who was present, and their illustrious ancestors. Moreover, he confidently asserted that once he would tell the audience who it was, they would all agree.

Who was this great person? It was Sarah Shenirer; she was a seemingly ordinary woman who lived at a time where there was no formal Torah education for Jewish girls. Consequently, young women from observant families were leaving Torah in great numbers. The scale of this tragedy was magnified by the fact that many Torah scholars were unable to find an appropriate match given the lack of suitable women. It is no exaggeration to say that the very future of the Jewish people was in great danger.

Sarah Shenirer recognized the threat, questioned the status quo, and, amidst great opposition founded the first network of Torah schools for girls, Beis Yaakov. With the guidance of leading Torah Sages, such as the Chofetz Chaim and the Gerrer Rebbe, she succeeded beyond her wildest expectations and, effectively assured the future of Torah observance. Surely, many people were aware of the serious situation at the time, but only Sarah Shenirer applied the midda of criticism to motivate herself to find a positive solution.

The examples of Yitro and Sarah Shenirer teach us how to apply criticism in a positive way.

THE HERO BEHIND THE "MASK"

By Rabbi Joey Haber

One Friday night, I gave a speech in shul about the importance of maintaining emunah during challenging times. Later, one of the congregants, who I had seen a thousand times in shul and always thought of him as a fairly simple person, came over to me and said he had a story to tell.

A few years prior, he lost his job. He did everything he could to try to find a new position, sending around his resume, networking, and so on, but to no avail. Every day, he turned to Hashem and desperately asked that He send him a job so he could support his family. For a number of months, he had no income, and the debts started to mount. Finally, one day somebody called him with a job offer. He went to the office, and he sat and spoke with the employer for hours. The job was perfect, and paid a respectable salary. After several hours, the employer finally pulled out a contract for the fellow to sign. Just as he was about to sign, the boss said, "Just one thing - you'll have work five Saturdays a year. It's not such a big deal. Just five a year." "What?!" the man said. "I cannot work on Saturday." "Look, you really need a job, and this job is perfect for you. What's the big deal? It's only five Shabbatot a year!" The man refused to sign the contract, and he turned down the offer. As he walked outside, he turned to Hashem and said, "You gave me a special gift - Shabbat - and I'm not going to give it up, for anything in the world." Even if he had to work on Shabbat just once, he said to himself, the job was not for him.

The next morning, he woke up at 6am, and saw a message with a great job offer. He's been working in that job ever since. I always assumed this man was a simple, ordinary, nothing special kind of person, but in truth, he is a hero. He overcame a challenge that is far more difficult than anything I had ever encountered, and I always looked at him as just an average, run-in-the-mill kind of guy.

I made the mistake of forgetting that we know so little about other people. We see only the "mask," and not the person behind it. Let us remember how little we know about the lives of other people, and we will then be less judgmental and critical, and more respectful, accepting and loving in all our dealings with the people around us.



A POWERFUL STORY

By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss

One of the methods by which we can smoothly absorb vital Torah teachings is through the vehicle of a story. I would like to share with you a well-documented vignette which carries some powerful and important lessons.

There was a chossid of the Maggid MiKozhnitz by the name of Reb Yosef. He and his wife were childless for many years. Often, he would ask the Maggid for a blessing but the Rebbe was not forthcoming. Finally, Reb Yosef's wife, who was painfully pining for a child, forcefully told her husband that he should say to the Rebbe, "My wife told me not to leave the Rebbe's presence until he blesses us with a child." Although uncomfortable, Reb Yosef acceded to the wishes of his suffering wife and told the Rebbe in her name that he wasn't going to budge from the spot where he stood until he received a blessing. The Rebbe stared at him and asked him, "Are you ready to become completely impoverished in order to have a child?" Reb Yosef was a responsible man and told the Rebbe that he couldn't honestly answer the question unless he first asked his wife. So, he went home and posed the question to his wife and she immediately responded, "What a question! What wouldn't I do in order to coddle a child in my arms?" Reb Yosef went back to the Rebbe and told him that they were ready to accept his demands. The Kozhnitzer Rebbe then told him, "Travel to the venerable Chozeh MiLublin and he will provide you with instructions."

Dutifully, Reb Yosef journeyed to the Chozeh and told the famous Rabbi that he was sent by the Kozhnitzer to receive instructions on how to go about having a child. The Chozeh gazed at him for a while and then informed him, "When you were a younger man, you were engaged to a girl and then broke off the engagement. You should know that your actions caused her tremendous pain. You never proper-

ly appeased her nor did you ask her for forgiveness. It is because of this that you are not able to have children... Travel now to the great market at Bolta. There you will find her and there you should ask for her forgiveness."

So, Reb Yosef set off to Bolta without having any idea how he was supposed to find a woman he hadn't seen in many years. Indeed, for several days he searched to no avail. One day there was a huge storm and he, together with others, ran for cover into a nearby store to get shelter from the rain. As it was very crowded within this small enclosure, he was pushed very near to a woman. Being a religious chosid, he backed away from her whence she turned to him and said, "Many years ago you backed away from me and now you are doing the same thing!" He looked at her and realized with amazement that this was the very woman he was searching for. Immediately, he revealed the purpose of his mission, apologized profusely and begged for her forgiveness. She responded that she had a very poor brother living in Slovakia who was having trouble marrying off his daughter because of lack of funds. She stipulated to him that if her were to go to her brother and give him 200 golden coins to help him marry off her niece, she would forgive him.

Reb Yosef calculated that if he liquidated all of his possessions he would amass the required 200 golden coins. He went home, procured the money and traveled on to Slovakia. There, he found her brother and indeed his daughter's shidduch was about to unravel because he could not afford the wedding and the dowry. Reb Yosef went over to him and gave him the 200 golden coins. The man looked at him incredulously and said, "I don't even know you. Why are you doing this kindness?" Reb Yosef revealed the whole story to him, and that his sister agreed to forgive him if he would help. The man looked at Reb Yosef as if he were a lunatic. "What are you talking about? My sister has been gone for 15 years. I buried her with my own hands. What games are you playing with me?" Shocked and startled, Reb Yosef went on to describe exactly how she looked to the minutest detail and the brother paled saying that he was indeed precisely describing his sister.

Reb Yosef went home and remarkably within the year, he and his wife were blessed with a healthy son! This is a well-documented story. One of the places you can find it is in the Sefer Aperyon Shlomo. The Jewish Vues..



A GEVALDIGE VORT ON MIDDAH K'NEGEG MIDDAH.

We know that Yisro came as is found in 18:11 (כי בַּדְּבַר, אֲשֶׁר יָדָו עָלֵיהֶם). Yisro was very moved that HKB"H punishes Midah K'neged Midah. Pharoh made a Gezaira to throw Jewish children into the Yam and Pharoh's army was drowned in the Yam. It is nice, but is it so inspiring that it was the same Yam that it is Midah K'neged Midah?

The Ohr Gedalyahu (on page 82) says a Gevaldige Pshat but with a Hakdama. The Hakdama is something that was said regarding the Posuk in Tehillim 117:1 (הֲלֵלוּ אֶת-יְהוָה, כָּל-גּוֹיִם; שְׁבַחְהוּ, כָּל-הָאֲמִיּוֹת) and 117:2 (כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ, חֲסִדּוֹ). We say in Hallel that all of the nations should praise Hashem (שְׁבַחְהוּ, כָּל-הָאֲמִיּוֹת). Why? (כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ, חֲסִדּוֹ) because Hashem's Chesed on us is so strong, is so powerful.

The question is, why should the Goyim praise Hashem. All right, maybe we are talking about the Goyim L'asid Lavo but the Jews should also praise Hashem (כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ, חֲסִדּוֹ). What is (הֲלֵלוּ אֶת-) (כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ, חֲסִדּוֹ) ?

So Rav Yitzchok Volotzhiner who was called Rav Itzikel says the following Teretz and I think that it is

well-known that HKB"H is Metzareif a Machshava Ra to a Maiseh. When Goyim have Machshavos Ra'os on Klal Yisrael, they are punished for it. Many times Goyim have Machshavos Ra'os against Klal Yisrael, they have plans (עֲצוּ עֵצָה), they have all kinds of Eitzos against us and HKB"H destroys the Eitzah.

Jews never find out about all of the Chesed that HKB"H does for us. Why? Because a lot of the Chesed is not known to us. (הֲלֵלוּ אֶת-יְהוָה, כָּל-גּוֹיִם). The Goyim who know how many times they had evil plans against the Jewish people. (עֲצוּ עֵצָה וְתַפְּר. דְּבַר דְּבַר וְלֹא יָקוּם). Many times they said to do things and it didn't come to fruition and Jews don't even know about it to praise Hashem for it. (כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ, חֲסִדּוֹ). The Goyim should praise Hashem on these things (כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ, חֲסִדּוֹ). A Gevaldige Vort.

What does that have to do with this week's Parsha? Zagt Rav Schorr, Gevaldig. Who knows how many Eitzos Ra'os Pharoh had against the Jewish people? Rashi told us that Pharoh had three Yo'atzim, three people who gave him Eitzos. Bilam, Iyov and Yisro. Yisro knew about all of the diabolical schemes and plans and thoughts that Pharoh had against the Jewish people. The Jews didn't know about it. But Yisro knew.

Then Yisro saw the 10 Makkos, Dam, Tzefardei'a,

Kinnim. Where does it come from that you punish them with frogs, you punish them with lice? Only Yisro understood. Because Pharoh had made plans against the Jewish people, evil plans, and the 10 Makkos were Middah K'neged Middah. Because HKB"H punishes for the evil plans against the Jewish people so he realized (כִּי בַדְּבַר, אֲשֶׁר יָדָו עָלֵיהֶם). In the punishments that they had, the Ma'izidim, the things that they had against Klal Yisrael (כִּי בַדְּבַר, אֲשֶׁר יָדָו עָלֵיהֶם). They understood. Yisro saw the Gadlus Hashem (כִּי בַדְּבַר, אֲשֶׁר יָדָו עָלֵיהֶם) in all those things.

So what did Yisro do? Yisro said wow, G-d works Middah K'neged Middah. I was a Yo'eitz to Pharoh, I gave him Eitzos, let me go to the Midbar to Moshe Rabbeinu and I will give him Eitzos. That is why Yisro comes and he looks around. What advice could he give his son in law. Usually it is a no-no for a father in law to give advice to a son in law, but Yisro was trying to do Middah K'neged Middah to get a Kapparah. That is why he came and gave a good Eitza and goodbye, he did what he had to do. What a Gevaldige Vort on the Middah K'neged Middah.

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



COLLECTING CRUMBS

Last week, within the span of just a few days, two individuals both became extraordinarily wealthy in an instant. A Powerball ticket-holder in Maryland won the \$731 million jackpot and a Mega Millions ticket-holder in Michigan was the winner of \$1.05 billion. While that may seem like a dream come true, winning instant wealth overnight in a public way can come with many challenges including the loss of anonymity, frivolous lawsuits, addiction, divorce, bankruptcy and even death.

Now, I am fully aware that most people would welcome the test and take their chances but it is worth pointing out there is another type of wealth, and another way to accumulate it, that comes with a lot less risk or danger.

For fifty years, Moshe Bruckstein lived in Bushtyno, Hungary (now Ukraine) with great honor and prominence. His family, including his great-grandson—my father-in-law—were familiar with the story of his successful business, his role in the community, and how it was all then lost during the war. However, it was only recently, when someone shared a book about the Jews of Maramures (Romania), that we discovered what, in fact, Moshe attributed his wealth and success to.

Moshe's father, Yisrael Nosson Alter Bruckstein, was the Rebbe of Pistin and author of Minchas Yisrael and Emunas Yisrael. His grandfather, Chaim Yosef, was a close Chassid of the Baal Shem Tov, a close friend of the Alter Rebbe, and the Shpoiler Zayde and the author of Tosafos Chaim. Moshe himself was a loyal Chassid who frequented the tables and courts of great Chassidic masters.

Bushtyno was near a forest and Moshe had a lumber business. It provided for his family but wasn't particularly lucrative. One Shabbos, Reb Moshe's wife had the great honor of providing a kugel for the Nadvorna Rebbe (1824–1894), Rav Mordechai Leifer's Friday night tisch. As was customary, the Rebbe enjoyed a small portion of the kugel and then immediately distributed the rest to the chassidim eager to taste of the shirayim, the holy leftovers of the Rebbe. By the time Reb Moshe got to the tray, all that was left were tiny scraps and crumbs. The Rebbe, sensing the disappointment and frustration of his Chassid, turned to Reb Moshe with a big smile and said, don't worry about it, from the shards of the broken luchos, Moshe Rabbeinu became wealthy.

Moshe Bruckstein didn't understand the reference but enjoyed the rest of the Shabbos and the following week went back to work at the lumberyard. Just a few days later he noticed something: When the large trees were chopped down and cut into lumber, small pieces of wood were regularly discarded as worthless scraps. He took a closer look at them and realized that while those small pieces weren't useful for construction or even for firewood, they were perfect for something else. At the time, canes and walking sticks weren't just for the elderly or infirm, they were trendy among people of all ages and particularly sought after by the wealthy and aristocratic. Immediately, he opened a factory to transform the discarded scraps from lumberyards into canes and walking sticks and in a short time became one of the largest distributors across Europe. After World War I ended, his business sold hundreds of thousands of canes and crutches to those injured in the war.

The subtle beracha of the Rebbe had come true - from the scraps, Moshe Bruckstein became a wealthy

man.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהֵי מֹשֶׁה פֶּסֶלֶךָ שְׁגִי־לַחַת אֲבָנִים וְכִרְאֲשֵׁינִים וְכִתְבֹתַי עַל־הַלְחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הִנֵּי עַל־הַלְחֹת הָרִאשִׁינִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַרְתָּ:

Hashem said to Moshe: "Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered."

Rashi quotes the Midrash (Tanchuma 3:9:29) which comments on the words psal lecha, carve for yourself: "He showed him a quarry of sapphire in his tent and said to him: 'The pesoles, the shards, shall be yours.' It was from this that Moshe became so rich."

Some become extraordinarily wealthy by making a lot of money overnight. Others gain wealth by collecting the small, seemingly insignificant and inconsequential things, moments and experiences that others are prepared to discard and throw away.

I have a dear friend who keeps a notebook for each of his children. From when they first begin to speak, he writes down and collects the most adorable, witty and insightful things they have said. At each of their bar and bat mitzvahs, and later at their weddings, he has pulled out their book and with a mix of nachas, emotion and nostalgia shared things he has collected from them throughout the years. When he wants to reflect on his "wealth," he doesn't look at his financial statements or holdings, he simply needs to open any of those notebooks and start reading.

While the likelihood of winning the lottery is exceedingly small (there is a greater chance of your



OUT OF THIS WORLD

In Parshas Yisro we see the topic of respecting your father and mother so that you merit to live a long life. The Chinuch in Mitzvah 33 says that the reason why one should respect his parents is to recognize that he owes a debt of gratitude for bringing him into this world. The parents worked very hard to raise the child. By recognizing this, the person will learn to show proper hakoras hatov to Hashem. The Chayei Adam Vol 1:67 brings a Yerushalmi Peah 1:5 that says all mitzvos a child is required to do for his/her parents is a payment of debt for all the good the parents did for him. One who is not mechabed his/her parents is called a rasha, the same way a person who borrows money and does not repay is called a rasha.

Bais Shamai and Bais Hillel argued for two and half years, as discussed in Gemara Eiruvin 13b, whether or not it was good for a person to have been created. They came to the conclusion that it would have been better for a person not to be created. Now that the person was created, he is required to keep all mitzvos properly. This is the reason we say the bracha "shelo asani isha" and we don't say it in the positive way "she'asani ish," to show that it is better for the person not to have been created. The Chasam Sofer points out, based on this gemara, that it seems contradictory to the above requirement of hakaras hatov for parents as part of the mitzva of kibud av va'aim as seen in the Ramban in Parshas Kedoshim and Rambam Peah 1:1. Why does a person have to show hakaras hatov to his/her parents who brought him into this world when it would have been better if he/she had not been created at all?

In order to answer the first question, we can add another question: how could Chazal say it is better not to have been created when the Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva says the punishment is greater when a person's nefesh is destroyed completely from this world? A person is born with a yetzer hora and will sin; nevertheless, a person is never judged for more than twelve months and afterwards the neshama goes up to Gan Eden. The exception to this is Poshei Yisroel begufan, whose body is destroyed and will never come back for tehiyas hameisim.

getting hit by lightning twice on the same day), we can all become very wealthy, if not overnight, over time. For many, this year has been financially challenging, draining savings and depleting hard earned moneys. For many, it has been emotionally exhausting; depriving us of many things we were looking forward to or previously took for granted. And yet, in other ways it has been rich with opportunity to remember the difference between what is essential and unessential and to be grateful for that which we most often have taken for granted.

How many moments, experiences, people and things have we dismissed and discarded as insignificant? How many cute or witty lines did we hear from a child we would not have heard had we not been spending more time at home? How many opportunities have we had to participate in something online – a shiur, a concert, an out-of-town relative's graduation – that we would not normally have been able to be part of? Imagine the "savings" we can accumulate by taking note – either in a journal, or on an app, or at a minimum just spending a reflective moment at the end of the day – of something meaningful, something enjoyable, however small it may seem, that happened to us that day.

Take the time to think, reflect and recognize that if we only hold onto that which we previously discarded, like Moshe Bruckstein and Moshe Rabbeinu before him, we can become very wealthy indeed.

It would seem that it is good for a person to be created for he will ultimately go to Olam Haba. That is the reason, says the Rema in 376, that one does not say kaddish for a parent for more than eleven months so as not to implicate and to show that the parent is considered a rasha. As a matter of fact, we say that the Gehinom's fire cannot obliterate a Yid. We see this from the Mizbeach hazahav that had a thin layer of gold and yet the fire never destroyed it. We therefore must explain that the machlokes between Bais Shamai and Bais Hillel is only referring to those neshamos that come back on this world as a gilgul. Is it better for the neshama to become better on this world, or maybe the opposite happens, and it would have been better for the person just to be in Gehinom and be cleansed once and for all? A person is obligated to show hakaras hatov to his parents for bringing him into this world. The parents may also be from a previous gilgul. By educating and raising their child, the parents may be doing the child a favor so as not to have Gehinom cleanse him, but rather by doing mitzvos and becoming a better person and avoiding Gehinom altogether. That is the hakoras hatov one should show his/her parents. A second tirtutz could be based on Tosfos in Eiruvin 13b which says that the Gemara that says that it is not good for a person to be created is speaking about the average person. On the contrary, a tzaddik is praiseworthy and so is his generation. It would seem that the only way a person is not better off being created is only because of his own activities, but as far as the parents are concerned, they want to and try to raise a tzaddik, so therefore one has to show hakaras hatov.

The third tirtutz is based on Reb Yisroel Salanter that says there are two ways of serving Hashem. Everyone agrees that a person must be born and created. The difference is how one should serve Hashem. There are two different ways to do so. He may close himself up in a room and just serve Hashem alone and the world will not get any

benefit from him. In this case, it would seem that it may have been better were he not created. Another way would be for a person who is me'urav bein habriyos and would be an asset to the world at large to get involved with the people and world around him. In this case, it is better for him to have been created. At the end, both Bais Shamai and Bais Hillel agree that now that a person was created, he must serve Hashem by being meurav bein habriyos. Additionally, he would have a chiyuv of kiruv. Finally, he has an obligation of showing hakaras hatov to his parents!

The fourth tirtutz is that we find that we show hakaras hatov to Mitzrayim for hosting us, despite the fact they caused us a lot of pain. Parents give us so much good, despite the fact that maybe it would have been better not to have been born. Nevertheless, one must show hakaras hatov!

The fifth and final tirtutz is that kibbud av is listed on the luchos on the side of bein adam lamakom and therefore it is not just hakaras hatov to the parents, but rather hakaras hatov to Hashem. This is the reason that Yaakov was punished for the twenty-two years he was not mechabed Yitzchok, despite the fact that Yitzchok was mochel him. Yaakov was lacking in the fact that kibud av v'aim was also a mitzva bein adam lamakom, and therefore he was still punished.

May we be zocheh to do the mitzva of kibbud av ve'aim and hakaras hatov to Hashem properly!

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DEAF ANGELS & FAILED DATES

BY ELCHONON ISAACS

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809) is one of the most beloved Chassidic leaders, renowned for his compassion for every person. In 1785, R. Levi Yitzchak arrived in Berditchev, where he led the community for nearly 25 years, until his passing. There are many stories about his love and advocacy for Jews, no matter their spiritual state.

Our story is a personal one, about his own life. When his children were of age to be married, R. Levi Yitzchak hired a matchmaker to suggest potential suitors for them. R. Levi Yitzchak would give a pitak (a five kopek coin) for every suggestion, even if nothing materialized from the suggestion. With all the responsibilities of a town rabbi, R. Levi Yitzchak was a busy man. In addition, he was known for his tremendous excitement to serve G-d, and his intense ardor often caused him to act without consideration for his surroundings. Certain portions of prayer would send him into a state of such rapture; it was not unusual to see him jumping on the tables. This made it difficult for the matchmaker to secure an appointment with the rabbi. The matchmaker figured that while R. Levi Yitzchak was folding his tallit and tefillin after prayers would be an excellent time to suggest his ideas. The appointment was not fixed, and at times the matchmaker had to wait until R. Levi Yitzchak was ready.

One day, he offered several suggestions and received his compensation. None materialized, however, and, feeling disheartened, he stopped bringing ideas to the rabbi. Some time passed and R. Levi Yitzchak summoned the matchmaker. "Why did you stop coming?" he asked. "The suggestions themselves play an important role in setting up a Jewish home. Moreover, part of the great mitzvah of ahavat Yisrael is to take an interest in the welfare of a fellow Jew, specifically if you will be able to earn a livelihood

by doing so." The matchmaker replied with his own question, "What is the point of making suggestions if they do not pan out anyway?"

R. Levi Yitzchak explained, "Our sages taught, 'Forty days before a baby is formed, a heavenly voice announces who this person will marry.' Each Divine announcement gives vitality to the angels, and the angels repeat what they have heard. "When a person studies Torah and does mitzvot, it creates angels above. But if a person does not have the proper intentions and enthusiasm, the angels born of his actions have defects—some are blind, and others are deaf, etc. "So when the announcement is made regarding who will marry, these impaired angels do not hear correctly, and they confuse the names. When an angel speaks, it has an impact, and the person does not reach their intended match until all the names of those impaired angels have been suggested. Only after all the suggestions have been brought up and do not pan out can the person meet his or her true soulmate." With this newfound insight, the matchmaker got back to work.

This story was related in a letter by R. Yechezkel Feigin, the Previous Rebbe's secretary, to his dear friend Reb Mendel Cunin. Reb Mendel, one of the founding members of Chabad in America, immigrated to the US in 1927. The letter is from 1931.

From the letter, it is evident that Reb Mendel had asked for a blessing to find his soulmate. When the match did not materialize, he penned a letter to Reb Yechezkel sharing his frustration. Reb Yechezkel responded: I received your letter, and am sending you the crux of the Rebbe's answer. Do not overthink the last episode, and in due time new ideas will come, and you should consider them. The Rebbe did not answer you himself because he is waiting for the engagement to be announced I would be remiss

if I did not recount what I have heard from the Rebbe in response to your letter. The Rebbe gave me oral instructions and I forgot a detail, so I reentered to ask again. I said to the Rebbe, "It seems that Mendel is bothered that you gave your blessing for the shidduch [match] and it did not materialize." "When I was fourteen years old," the Rebbe responded, "I heard this story from my father, the Rebbe Rashab." ... This is the story, and the lesson is self-explanatory. In his response, Reb Mendel wrote, "I received your letter and the Rebbe's answer, and I am eternally grateful as you really lifted my spirits. The letter itself is dear to me, all the more so with the lofty and holy words of our Rebbe."

I LOVE MY IN-LAWS

RABBI JAY KELMAN

"Moses went to greet his father-in-law, bowing down low and kissing him" (Shemot 18:7). Unfortunately, relations between children- and their in-laws are not always so rosy and are often marred by jealousy, power struggles and outright animosity. One need look no further than the eternal king of Israel, Dovid Hamelech, and his troubles with his own father-in-law, Shaul. In fact, the Talmud tells us that even in a case of an agunah, where Jewish law accepts the testimony of relatives, a mother-in-law's testimony regarding her daughter-in-law is not accepted in a court of law.

Moshe Rabbeinu, serving as a role model for us, not only displayed respect and affection for his father-in-law, he valued his advice and his presence amongst the Jewish people. "Moses said to his father-in-law, the Midianite, 'We are now on our way to the place that G-d promised to give us. Come with us and we will share the benefit of all the good things that G-d has promised Israel'" (Bamidbar 10:29).

This warm relationship began soon after Moshe married Tziporah. "Moshe tended the sheep of his father Jethro, sheik of Midian" (3:1). It was Yitro who advised Moshe regarding the proper running of a judiciary. Amazingly, "Moshe took his father-in-law's advice and did all that he said" (18:24). Moshe, who had successfully led millions of people out of Egypt, the man who would speak face-to-face with G-d, did not feel it was beneath his dignity to take advice from a heathen and to publicly acknowledge this fact.

Why was Moshe so close to his father-in-law, a heathen priest, that the Parsha of the Divine Revelation bears his name? It is almost as if Moshe, in his greatest moment of glory, takes a back seat so that Yitro can be in the limelight. Even before Moshe leaves Midian to return to Egypt to start his mission, he requests permission from Yitro. "Moshe left and returned to his father-in-law, Yitro 'I would like to leave and return to my people in Egypt'... 'Go in peace', said Jethro" (4:18). It is almost as if the redemption was dependent on Yitro's good wishes. This is all the more startling if we accept the Midrashic teaching that Yitro was actually one of Pharaoh's advisors, and was really bothered by the destruction of Egypt.

It appears to this writer that Moshe's indebtedness to Yitro can be explained by Moshe's tremendous feelings of gratitude toward Yitro. Moshe, after killing an Egyptian who was attacking a Jew, Moshe is forced to flee Egypt. Where was he to go? Moshe fled to Midian, stopping at the well—presumably to evaluate his limited options. Seeing an injustice perpetrated against a group of young women, he rises to their defense and, risking further problems, draws water for them. Thinking only of their good fortune and not wanting to risk revenge, the women leave him there and go home. Yitro, their father, would not accept such ingratitude. "'Where is he now?' he asked his daughter. 'Why did you abandon the stranger? Call him, and let him have something to eat.'" (3:20). Yitro, at least in Moshe's mind, had saved his life. Furthermore, Yitro gave Moshe his daughter as a wife. A man who would welcome a stranger into his home and care for him is one who merits association with revelation. It is the reward for "greater is the welcoming of guests than receiving the Divine presence."

This sense of gratitude was evident in all that Moshe did. To cite just one example, Moshe did not participate in administering the first three of the plagues. The first plague struck at the sea, the same sea that saved Moshe from certain death. The next two emanated from the ground, the same ground that Moshe used to bury the Egyptian. Despite the cruelty of the Egyptians and the justice behind their suffering, Moshe would not allow himself to be the instrument to bring that pain about. It was more important that he not harm the things that saved him.

Matan Torah and Yitro are practically synonymous. To accept the Torah means to respect and value the advice of others and, if cogent, to accept it regardless of its source. Furthermore, it means that we must be permanently grateful to the many who have helped us. The Torah is a gift to the Jewish people. We must be ever grateful that we have the privilege to observe the Torah as we fulfil G-d's plan in the creation of the world.

The Unpleasant Life-Saving Operation for a Maggid Shiur

A few short years after arriving in Eretz Yisroel and becoming a Maggid Shiur in the Mirrer Yeshiva, which had relocated from Shanghai, China, during WWII, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zt"l, began experiencing considerable pain in his throat every time he spoke. At first, he dismissed it as simply a sore throat and refused to seek any sort of treatment, but when the pain became increasingly sharp and it began affecting his ability to deliver his Shiurim in Yeshiva, he decided to seek the advice of a doctor. He was sent to one of the most knowledgeable specialists in the field who conducted a thorough examination, and even did a biopsy of the throat. When the results came back, the doctor informed Rav Chaim and his family that he was suffering from a malignant tumor in his throat, R"L. Rav Chaim's family took the news hard, and questioned the specialist about the effectiveness of potential options and treatments.

The doctor, attempting to break the news easily, said, "I can operate to remove the cancerous growth from the Rav's throat, and this will hopefully save his life. However, it is pretty certain that even if the surgery is a complete success, he will never be able to speak properly again. The tumor is in his voice box, and the entire organ would need to be removed to ensure the success of the operation." Rav Chaim listened to the doctor's account and understood the ramifications. Still, he refused to give up hope. He went to speak with the great Mashgiach, Rav Elya Lopian, zt"l, to seek his guidance and advice. Rav Elya listened carefully as Rav Chaim gave over the words of the specialist. "What should I do?" he asked urgently. He said, "Right now, I do experience great pain and difficulty when I speak, but I am still able to speak. If I do this surgery, the doctor believes that I will no longer have the ability to speak at all!"

Rav Elya responded without hesitation. "I cannot imagine that the Ribono Shel Olam would take away the ability of Rav Chaim Stutcher (Rav Chaim came from the town of Stutchin and was known to many by his nickname Rav Chaim Stutcher) to continue to say Shiurim to his Talmidim. There is still so much Torah and Musar that you have yet to give over to this world. My opinion is that you do not do the operation." The words that came out of the Mashgiach's mouth were said with such absolute and unequivocal certainty, that Rav Chaim accepted his

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decision on the spot. Rav Elya asked for Rav Chaim's full name and his mother's name, and promised that he would Daven for him to have a complete and speedy recovery. Rav Chaim returned to his normal routine and over time the pain in his throat lessened. He later went back to the specialist to inform him of his decision to forgo the surgery. As soon as Rav Chaim entered the doctor's office, however, even before he had a chance to say one word to the doctor, the specialist decided to take another quick look into his throat to determine the urgency of the situation and how soon the life-saving operation must be performed. What he found when he looked inside shocked him. Rav Chaim's throat and voice box were absolutely clear! No trace of any disease could be found, and Rav Chaim said that his throat wasn't even sore anymore!

Eight years later, when Rav Elya Lopian passed away, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz was one of the people who delivered a eulogy. Rav Chaim cried bitter tears, and in his eulogy, he called out, "When I became deathly ill eight years ago, it was none other than Rav Elya who saved me and returned me to the land of the living. There is no doubt that it was due to him that I am here today. I wish to take this public opportunity to offer my most sincere and heartfelt appreciation to the great Tzadik Rav Elya Lopian!" *Torah U'Tefilah*

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MILAH AND PRIYA
TWO LEVELS

It would be appropriate to end off the topic of the shiur on milah and priyah with the words of the Beis Halevi. The Beis Halevi quotes the ris-honim, who discuss the proper understanding of the mitzvah of milah. Is the mitzvah of milah to take away the "bad," the arla, which is a blemish, or is milah similar to other mitzvos, and cutting off the skin brings kedusha to the person?

He suggests that both dimensions are true. Milah removes the arla, which is a blemish, and cutting off the skin also infuses a kedusha in the person.

The Mishna writes that the arla is disgusting, and removing it takes away the blemish. The Mishna also tells us that there are 13 bonds made through the mitzvah of milah, which brings a person closer to Hashem and infuses a Jew with sanctity. So we see that milah removes the blemish, and also infuses kedusha.

Based on this concept, he explains the pasuk in parshas Lech Lichah (17:1-2): "התהלך לפני והיה תמים, ואתנה בריתי לפני וביןך - Go before Me and you will be complete, and I will put My bond between Me and you." Go before Me and you will be complete - this is referring to the removal of the blemish, which makes a person complete. "I will put My bond between Me and you" - which refers to the infusion of sanctity. So we see in the pesukim both concepts, removing the blemish, and infusing kedusha.

He adds that these two dimensions come through the milah and the priyah. The milah is the removal of the blemish, which makes a person complete, and the priyah is the bond which brings sanctity to the person. That is why: "Go before Me and you will be complete is written in present

tense, because this part of the mitzvah - the cutting of the milah - was given to Avraham. On the other hand, "I will put My bond between Me and you" is written in future tense, because this bond is referring to the extra infusion of kedusha which comes from the priyah, which was only given later.

He also adds that this is why the mitzvah of priyah is not applicable for the bnei Yishmael and bnei Ketura, since this infusion of kedusha is not relevant to them.

SUMMARY

The mitzvah of milah was given to Avraham Avinu. According to the Gemara in Yevamos, the mitzvah of priyah was given to Yehoshua. Some say that Avraham received the mitzvah, or fulfilled it without being commanded.

The fact that Yehoshua introduced the mitzvah of priyah is not considered something new, which cannot be done by a navi, because it was already given on Har Sinai, or because it is only forbidden to introduce a new mitzvah. But to add to a mitzvah which they already had is allowed

Milah and priyah removes the blemish and adds kedusha, and is only applicable to Jews.

There is a Kuntres of shiurim on the topic of milah available. If you would like a copy of any of these shiurim, or for any comments and questions, please send a request to: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com, or call 845 372 6618.

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.

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Night Kolloel

CONCERN THAT THE NON-JEW WILL ADD NON-KOSHER INGREDIENTS

We previously discussed that food which can be eaten raw or that would not be served at a royal meal is not subject to the issur of bishul akum. The simple reason is that these foods will not bring closeness and there is no concern of intermarriage. But, there is also another concern: that the non-Jew may add in something not kosher. If that is the concern, why do these conditions play a role? One can explain that since it is uncommon to cook food for others that can be eaten raw or is not served at a fancy meal they did not make a decree in such a case.

The Chelkas Binyamin offers another explanation. As explained in the previous shiur, we are not concerned that he will do something to make this specific food not kosher, but that in a future cooking, he will become close and come to add non-kosher ingredients. Being that foods which can be eaten raw or not eaten at a royal meal are not normally given to others to cook, and we are not concerned that he will come to add non-kosher ingredients.

TWO CONDITIONS FOR THE TWO CONCERNS

In a previous shiur we mentioned that the Bach and the Chasam Sofer explain that the two reasons – intermarriage and adding non-kosher ingredients – are both needed for them to have made the decree against eating bishul akum.

The Acharonim add that according to their understanding we can explain why we need the two conditions, not something eaten raw and also served at a royal meal. If it is food that it is eaten raw, there is no concern that he will come close and add non-kosher ingredients. If it is food that it is not served at a royal meal, there is no concern that he will come close and come to intermarry. That is why they only made a decree when both concerns exist: it is food that it is not eaten raw – so there is a concern of adding ingredients – and food served at a fancy meal – so there is a concern of intermarriage.

SUMMARY

There are two conditions which can allow bishul akum: if the food is eaten raw or it is not served at a royal meal. These foods will not bring closeness and there is no concern of intermarriage or eventually adding non-kosher

ingredients.

COMMUNITY KOLLEL NEWS

The Night Kolloel, learning the topic of Yayin Nesech, hosted a fascinating shiur, on Wednesday, Jan. 27, given by Rabbi Nachum Rabinowitz, Senior Rabbinic Coordinator at the OU. Rabbi Rabinowitz has been here a number of times in the past, sharing his kashrus expertise. His topic was: “The Bottom Line of Kosher Wine – Small Schmooze about Booze.” In his over-time shiur, he walked the spellbound audience through – step-by-step – every facet of the wine making process. This was extremely helpful in getting a proper understanding of when there is an issue of yayin nesech in wine and shnops, and which parts non-Jews can be involved.

This past week, at the Kolloel Boker, in honor of Tu B'Shvat, I gave a shiur on the topic: “Tu B'shvat: Saying Shehecheyanu over Esrog – Correct or Not?”

Rabbi Daniel Coren continues his popular three week series of lectures on Hilchos Nida and an Overview of Taharas Hamishpacha & Shalom Bais, on Thursday evenings at 9:30. The final shiur in the series will take place on Feb. 11.

MISHMAR

Ohr Chaim's new 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's guest speaker was Rabbi Shea Stern, Magid Shiur at Beis Medrash Ohr Chaim,

SHOVAVIM INITIATIVE:

Our Shovavim Program continues each Friday morning of these auspicious weeks. This learning program takes place in the 20 Forshay tent, every Friday morning, from 4AM- 7AM, followed by Shachris and breakfast, with Matan Scharah B'tzidah.

The popular “Chazara of the Daf Shiur” – a fast-paced review of the week's dafim, given by Rabbi Berger, is an incredible opportunity to “Grab Hold of the Daf – Before it Floats Away.” There was even someone who was unable to attend in person, and called in to participate in the shiur!”

Wishing you a wonderful Shabbos,
Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



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