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THE FINAL MOMENTS OF THE LIFE OF RAV ELCHONON WASSERMAN Hy"ד:

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS YAHRZEIT
12TH OR 13TH OF TAAMUZ

The Chafetz Chaim zt'l converses with
Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman zt'l



The Lithuanians were enraged by this sight of Jewish men, especially rabbonim, who were still learning. Aiming their weapons at him, they began screaming, 'Don't move!'

"They ran wildly from room to room, even to the second story, and they gathered all the men they found. Some of the men managed to hide and were not discovered. Roaring like wild beasts, the soldiers gathered thirteen men, including my beloved brother Zev, who was only 21 years old; my uncle, Reb Shabsi Vernikovsky, who was a rebbi at the yeshiva of Lomza, along with his son Mordechai; and, of course, Rav Elchonon Wasserman. We, the women and girls, begged the cruel Lithuanians not to take them away. I was the oldest among the girls and I tried to explain to them that rabbonim were not Communists."

Rebbetzin Wolbe describes how she pleaded with the murderous soldiers to spare Rav Elchonon's life. The soldiers replied that they would accept her claims if she showed them documents to prove them. The young Rivka Grodzensky raced up the stairs to find some sort of evidence that they were not Communist agents. As she looked through the window into the inner courtyard of the house, though, she saw all the men being taken at gunpoint to their deaths.

At the end of that chapter, Rebbetzin Wolbe relates, "We found out only later that on that very day, those 13 rabbonim and bnei Torah met their deaths at kid-dush Hashem. It was the 12th of Tammuz, 5701, and we were told that the place where they were murdered was the Seventh Fort." According to her memories and the accounts they received at the time, the men were taken into captivity on Monday and were murdered that very day, before nightfall. To this day, the rebbetzin observes her brother's yahrtzeit on the 12th

of Tammuz.

The month of Tammuz was one of the times when the anti-Semitism in Kovna reached its peak. Rav Mordechai Zuckerman relates, "Just a few days later, the Lithuanian rioters had reached the pinnacle of their cruelty. On the night between Wednesday and Thursday, the evening of the first of Tammuz, 5701, the partisans crossed the bridge leading from Kovna to Slabodka and began attacking the Jews.

"The rabble that arrived in Slabodka included members of the cream of Lithuanian society: students of universities and gymnasiums who were suddenly transformed from educated, advanced human beings into wild predatory beasts. Armed with rifles, knives and axes, they made their way from house to house, mercilessly slaughtering the young and the elderly, mothers and small children alike. Over one thousand Jews were murdered in cold blood on that awful night. One of the dead was the rov of Slabodka, Rav Zalman Osovsky, who was murdered by a Lithuanian marauder who broke into his home while he was sitting and learning Torah. The glorious sight of the rov sitting before an open Gemara, immersed in his learning, infuriated the beastly murderer...

"Another victim of those riots was Rav Yonah Karpilov, the illuy who was known in the yeshiva world by his nickname, 'Yonah Minsker.' He was a talmid of Yeshivas Mir, who had remained in Kovna after the yeshiva departed for faraway Shanghai. He was murdered at the entrance to the yeshiva building. When our master and rebbi, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, was informed of his death, he wept bitterly and exclaimed, 'Woe to the land, for a great man is gone. We have lost a piece of the Torah!'"

Over the following nights, there were more acts of

"Rav Elchonon." These two words contain a world of meaning. Rav Elchonon Wasserman was a gadol baTorah, leader of his generation, the rabbon shel kol bnei hagolah. Today, when we read the words he wrote over seventy years ago, it seems that he possessed he gift of prophecy.

Rav Elchonon was a talmid of the greatest luminaries of that generation, the pride and joy of Telz and Brisk, the rosh yeshiva of Yeshivas Ohel Torah in Baranovitch, and one of the foremost Torah leaders in the Jewish world. He was a man who waged the battles of Hashem and of the Torah, and whose teachings were collected in such classic works as Kovetz Shiurim and Kovetz Maamarim. The story of his martyrdom has long been recorded in works of history and is read with reverence and awe.

It was the month of Tammuz, after the Shabbos of Parshas Chukas, in the year 5701 (1941). That is what we know, but some details are unclear: Was he taken to his death on Sunday, the 11th of Tammuz, or on Monday, the 12th? And was he murdered on the day he was captured or on the next day? Furthermore, did his death take place before or after shkiah? All of this affects the question of when his yahrtzeit is. In several places, I saw that historians determined that the date of his death was the 11th of Tammuz, 5701, but that is clearly a mistake. Other sources place it on the 13th of Tammuz based on the assumption that he was taken away on Monday and was murdered at night. That may be correct, but some dispute that version of the story.

Rav Elchonon viewed the Chofetz Chaim as his rebbi. In many of his writings, he refers to him as "hakadosh baal haChofetz Chaim zt'l." He once remarked, "It is impossible for us to perceive the full scope of the Chofetz Chaim's greatness, since he used his brilliant mind to determine how to conceal his special qualities. How can we, with our puny intellects, hope to outsmart him?"

The talmidim of the yeshiva in Radin grew accustomed to seeing Rav Elchonon attend the Chofetz Chaim's drashos. Rav Elchonon would drink in his rebbi's words, reviewing them over and over. Once, on the Yomim Noraim, a talmid commented that the Chofetz Chaim had repeated verbatim a drashah he had delivered the year before. Rav Elchonon disagreed. "This year," he said, "there were eight new words."

Everyone agrees on where and how it happened: Rav Elchonon was taken by bloodthirsty Lithuanian soldiers from the home of Rav Avrohom Grodzensky Hy"ד. In her book, Ve'emunascha Baleilos, Rebbetzin Wolbe, Rav Avrohom's daughter, relates, "On one of the days after the pogrom, when we were still holed up in our house behind locked doors, and while rabbonim, yungeleit and bochorim slept and learned in pairs in every room of the house, three Lithuanian partisans with their guns drawn suddenly burst into the house. They opened the front door abruptly, and they were inside the house before we could react. In the entranceway, Rav Elchonon Wasserman Hy"ד was standing (not sitting) and learning with a chavrusah.

violence committed by Lithuanian rioters in other parts of the city. The murders were accompanied by unspeakable acts of barbarity. Homes were torched with their residents still inside. People were drowned in the Viliya River. Over 2,000 people lost their lives in these riots in all sorts of barbaric ways. The men of the chevrah kadishah worked with great mesirus nefesh, literally taking their lives into their own hands as they went from home to home to collect the dead and bury them in the old cemetery in Slabodka.

“At the end of those two dreadful weeks, on the 12th of Tammuz, 5701, the women and children were released from the Seventh Fort, and the 3,000 or so remaining men were mercilessly gunned down in the courtyard by the German Gestapo and their Lithuanian cohorts.”

With that, Rav Mordechai comes to his account of how Rav Elchonon was taken away to meet his death. “Rav Elchonon’s yeshiva had left Vilna for Smilishoki,” he relates. “When he found out that the Bolsheviks were looking for him and planning to torment him, he fled to Kovna and stayed at the home of Rav Aryeh Malkiel Friedman [father-in-law of Rav Shneur Kotler, Rav Chaim Sarna, and Rav Yaakov Volpe], who lived in the apartment above Rav Avrohom Grodzensky.

“Rav Elchonon made tremendous efforts to leave the blood-soaked continent of Europe, but when he finally managed to obtain a visa, his son, Rav Naftoli, broke his leg, which delayed his departure. Meanwhile, the Germans conquered Lithuania and it became impossible to leave the country.

“During the daytime, Rav Elchonon learned at the home of Rav Avrohom Grodzensky which served as a makeshift bais medrash, while the bnei yeshivos who lived in the area would gather there from time to time and take solace in the company of the gedolei Torah who had gathered there.” Those bnei yeshivos included Rav Mordechai himself.

One of Rav Mordechai’s recollections of those days is an incident when Rav Avrohom asked Rav Elchonon to deliver a shiur in halachah. “A shiur?” Rav Elchonon exclaimed. “In these turbulent times?”

But Rav Avrohom was insistent. “I am not asking for just any shiur. I am asking for you to deliver a shiur on the topic of the hour – the sugya of kiddush Hashem!”

Rav Elchonon acquiesced to the request and asked for time to prepare the shiur. He closeted himself in his room for a long time, and when he finally emerged, his face was aflame with passion. He delivered his shiur, a profound lecture on the subject of kiddush Hashem, with great reverence. “A few days later,” Rav Mordechai adds, “on Sunday, the 11th of Tammuz,

three Lithuanian murderers burst into Rav Avrohom’s home. Rav Elchonon was standing in the vestibule and learning with Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Zaks. Rav Elchonon and another 12 talmidei chachomim and tzaddikim who were in the house at the time, and who did not have an opportunity to escape and hide, were taken away to the Seventh Fort.

“Throughout this time, Rav Avrohom was lying on the sofa in the room, consumed by sorrow and immersed in his thoughts. The intruders thought that he was ill, and since they didn’t have a car with them, they did not take him away. So it was that he was saved, bechasdei shomayim, for just a few more years, to light up those dark days for the bnei aliyah who gathered around him.”

The group of 13 kedoshim who were seized that day included the bochur Zev (Velvel) Grodzensky, who was 21 years old; Rav Moshe Chaim Zaks and his son; Rav Moshe Reiss, Rav Dovid Goder, Rav Shabsai Vernikovsky and his son, Mordechai; Rav Yitzchok Gefen, and others. They were part of a group of about 3,000 Jews from Kovna and the surrounding areas who were rounded up and herded into the Seventh Fort. The prisoners were held in the courtyard of the fort for about a day and a half, kept in the heat of the blazing sun and lacking any food or drink. They were packed so densely into the courtyard that they were unable to even sit. Only the women and children were allowed inside the building.

Rav Mordechai’s account concludes: “The next day, on the night leading into Tuesday, the 13th of Tammuz, 5701, those holy tzaddikim were murdered in the Seventh Fort, along with 3,000 other Jews who were seized by the Lithuanians. May Hashem avenge their blood.”

Rebbetzin Wolbe is certain that the date of the murders was the 12th of Tammuz, the day when she observes her brother’s yahrtzeit, while Rav Mordechai was confident that the deaths occurred that night. According to his account, the yahrtzeit is the 13th of Tammuz.

“These are the final words which R’ Elchanan spoke to his students when they were interrupted in their study of maseches Nedarim and rushed off to sanctify the Name of Heaven with the surrender of their souls... on that bitter day of the 11th of Tammuz, 5701.

“R’ Elchanan spoke quietly with his usual composure. His voice was no different than always. He looked very serious but altogether normal... He did not attempt to part specifically from his son, R’ Naftali, but spoke to one and all, to Klal Yisrael. He said: ‘In Heaven, they apparently consider us tzaddikim, since we have been chosen to atone with our bodies for Klal Yisrael. Therefore, we must repent wholeheartedly...

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PARASHAT CHUKAT

Does clothing really matter? "If you dress the part you will live the part" is a famous saying, but is it true? We discover in life people dress with extreme piety and they don't live the part or conversely dress in such a simple manner but are pious and learned. What is worse? Looking frum but not acting frum or being frum and not looking frum? When I was a child in 4th grade I asked my Rebbe, what is considered Yeshivish attire? He told me that if your mother would go to the flea market and buy the cheapest clothing possible, that was Yeshivish. How times have changed that it became more expensive to dressed Yeshivish. One also needs to be swathed in black. I am not just referring to men, the women too are all in black and its sad that a wedding looks like a levayah. When being modest means that one cannot be elegant or classy, the test of Tznius is greatly magnified. Being a Tzanuah yet remaining graceful and chic, is complimentary and a Kidush Hashem.

"(21-1)" (וישמע הכנעני מלך ערד יושב הנגב) "The Canaanite king of Arad, who dwelled in the south" Rashi explains this is Amalek and not Canaan because Amalek lived in the south and not Canaan. Amalek changed their lan-

guage and spoke the "mother tongue" of Canaan so that the Jewish people will be confused and pray that Hashem should make them victorious over the Canaan people and not Amalek. They didn't however change their attire but kept the dress of Amalek. Never the less the Jewish people were confused and they prayed without specifying which nation Hashem should save them from. The Almighty, who knows everything, heeded their tefillos and the nation was successful over their enemies.

If you want to confuse your enemy it's probably easier to change your attire rather than learn another language, and if you feel you need to learn the other language, for sure you should dress the part? If you're going to scam me, do a good job and not something half baked.

The Bali Musssar explain that Amaleke could not change their dress code because then they would have become real Canaanite. Because your clothing is everything it's who you are, and the Jewish people would daven to be victorious on Canaan and it would work. This is hard for the Sockover Rebbe to digest as it gives too much credit to the external demeanor of a person. Maybe this is how Amalek thinks but it can't be the way we think. We need to look into the neshama of a per-

son and see his purity, and if we start to think that way we are thinking like Amalek. Do you really think the dor of the midbar looked like a chosid does today? Or was it the dress of a nobleman from Eastern Europe that today has become kodesh kadashim?

In the passing of Aaron Hakohen it says, "ויפשט משה את אהרן את בגדיו וילבש אתם" "את אלעזר בנו בגד לבש". Begeg is the type of clothing that is not befitting to you, from the word boged, to cheat you. Lebush is from the words "lo bush" not to be embarrassed from you clothing. If you go to a wedding in work out gear, it's a begeg and it works against. When you wear clothing that is appropriate then it's called a lebush; no embarrassment. When Aaron's time was up Moshe removed the Kohain Gadols clothing as "begadav his clothing" that is no longer appropriate for him as it was time for his passing. He then put it on Elazar as a "labush" because it was appropriate for him.

Clothing is very important to one's identity but it does not define a person. As one dresses he needs to contemplate does this kind of clothing express who I am or who I wish to be. Although the clothes do not necessarily portray the inner person, it does reveal who you wish to portray yourself as.

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY
1:37, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi
EPHRAIM YUROWITZ
TZVI BLECH : Gabbai



SHABBOS ZMANIM

EARLIEST KABBALAS SHABBOS	6:57PM
CANDLE LIGHTING	8:12PM
MINCHA 18 TENT	7:00PM
MINCHA BAIS CHABAD	8:22PM
SHKIYA	8:30PM
SHACHRIS VASIKIN - DAF YOMI SHIUR	4:53AM
SHACHRIS ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN	8:00AM
SHACHRIS - YOUTH 18 UPSTAIRS	9:30AM
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN 18 TENT	9:15AM
SHACHRIS 20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD	10:00AM
NEW SHACHRIS 18 MAIN	NEW 10:15AM
MINCHA	1:45PM
PIRCHEI	2:00PM
MINCHA	6:00PM
PIRKEI AVOS SHIUR - PEREK HEH	7:30PM
MINCHA SHALOSH SEUDOS	8:00PM
SHKIYA	8:30PM
MARRIV	9:10PM 18 TENT, 9:15PM

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS

20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ 30 ON YOM TOV
S 5:13 M 5:14 T 5:15 W 5:15 T 5:16 F 5:17

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG
S 6:44 M 6:43 T 6:43 W 6:43 T 6:42

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA
S 8:17 M 8:16 T 8:16 W 8:15 T 8:15

JULY 10 - JULY 15

NEITZ IS 5:34 - 5:37
PELAG IS 6:56 - 6:54
SHKIA IS 8:29 - 8:27

MAGEN AVRAHAM
8:42 AM - 8:44
GRA- BAAL HATANYA
9:18 AM - 9:20

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6:30	Tent א
6:45	Tent ב
7:00	Tent ג
7:15	Tent ד
7:30	Tent א
7:45	Tent ב
8:00	Tent ג
8:15	Tent ד
8:30	Tent א
8:45	Tent ב
9:00	Tent ג
9:15	Tent ד
9:30	Tent א
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10:00	Tent ג
10:15	Tent ד
10:30	Tent א
10:45	Tent ב
11:00	Tent ג
11:15	Tent ד
11:30	Tent א
11:45	Tent ב
12:00PM	Tent ג

Tent א - 18 Tent
Tent ב - 20 Tent
Tent ג - 22 Tent
Tent ד - New Tent

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PARSHAS CHUKAS-IN HONOR OF THE UPCOMING SCHEINER/APPLEGRAD WEDDING

The first connection between Parshas Chukas, Parshas Balak and the upcoming special Chasuna is the feeling of love. Love? you may ask. Where is love mentioned in Parshas Chukas and Balak? The answer lies in defining the term 'love' or in Loshon Hakodesh אהבה. There are two important definitions to the term. In one of the lessons of Rav Dessler Z"l's we learn that the word 'love' means 'to give' and that when the Grama is discussing the act of giving it uses the term יתב which connects to אהבה. Rav Dessler Z"l explains that the act of giving promotes our love for the other person. When we contribute to another we are infusing part of ourselves into that person. A great example is the natural love we have for our children when investing our physical and emotional efforts.

There is another definition to the term אהבה. This is based on the Rambam who, in defining the mitzva to love Hashem, writes the following: Love is the emotional pleasure one experiences when focusing on ones virtues (translation credited to Rav Noach Weinberg Z"l). This

means that love which is experiential is triggered by our choice to focus on one's merits and not on one's negatives.

Let's connect the above to the Parshiyos. We will start with one of my favorite stories for Parshas Balak. The Ohev Yisrael was known for stressing the importance of Ahavas Yisrael. He would point out that every Parsha has in it the mitzva of ואהבת לרעך כמוך. One day a Chasid came to the Rebbe and said to him, "We're coming to Parshas Balak. Where do you see anything about loving another person?" The Ahavas Yisrael responded with surprise. "The answer is staring us in the face." The Chasid didn't understand and so the Rebbe continued to explain. "The name of the Parsha itself—Balak—is actually

an acronym for ואהבת לרעך כמוך." The Chasid was startled but regained his focus and quickly countered, "No, that's totally off. The bais is not a vov and the kuf is not a kof so they don't fit the words ואהבת and כמוך." Said the Rebbe: "If you're going to be so מדקדק than you will never fulfill ואהבת לרעך כמוך." The story is more than just entertaining. The concept is the main ingredient for a healthy and loving relationship. When we choose to identify our spouse, friend, Rav or child with their positive attributes than we are on the right path to growth and positive long-lasting partnerships.

Parshas Chukas begins with Parshas Parah. There is one major lesson that the mysterious mitzva of Parah Aduma signifies: the willingness to sacrifice

one's purity in order to help alleviate someone else's impurity. An additional message within Parah Aduma itself echoes this theme. The passuk says אדם כי ימות באהלה. Chazal expound this passuk to mean אין תורה מתקיימת אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה. If we are willing to give up all physical pleasure for Torah than we will merit discovering and internalizing it's lessons completely. When a person, as the Chovos Halevavos explains, has the middah of knia – humility-- than everything is possible and their spiritually will be elevated.

It's an honor to be part of the simcha of Kayla and Yechiel. May they always have true love and inspire many others to follow suit.



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Rabbi YY
Jacobson

Is Your Anxiety Killing You?

LOOKING UP: THE MEANING BEHIND THE SNAKE ON THE POLE

No Complaining

After seventy years of communist oppression and seven hours of flying, Boris, a burly immigrant from Moscow steps off the plane in a free land to begin his new life in his new home, Israel. Standing at the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, a young and enthusiastic Israeli reporter plunges a microphone in front of him with a level of excitement that is only seen when an inside scoop is about to be caught. The reporter asks with focus: "Tell me, what was life back in Russia like?"

To which the Russian immigrant replies: "I couldn't complain."

An obviously unexpected answer, the young reporter continues to probe: "Well how were your living quarters there?" To which the Russian responds "I couldn't complain."

Not expecting this answer either, the reporter decides to hit him with a question that is bound to get the answer he is looking for: "What about your standard of living?" To which the Russian replies again: "I couldn't complain."

At this point, the reporter's frustration with the new immigrant's answers reaches a crescendo, and so in a derogatory tone the reporter yells out, "Well, if everything was so wonderful back in Russia, then why did you even bother to come here?" To which the new immigrant replies with gusto: "Oh, here I can complain!"

The Serpents

It is a strange biblical episode -- in this week's portion of Chukas.

When poisonous snakes attack the Jews in the desert, G-d instructs Moses to fashion a special healing instrument: a pole topped with the form of a snake. Moses sculpts a snake of copper and duly places it on top of a pole. Those who had been afflicted by the snake bite would gaze on the serpentine image on the pole and be cured.

According to some historians, this was the forerunner of the caduceus, the snake-entwined rod which is today the emblem of the medical profession.

Yet the question is obvious: What was the point of placing a snake on top of the pole to cure the Jews who were bitten? If it was G-d who was healing them miraculously, why the need to look up at a copper snake atop a pole? The question is raised in the Talmud:

"But is the snake capable of determining life and death?!" the Talmud asks. And the answer is this: "Rather, when Israel would gaze upward and bind their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they would be healed; and if not, they would perish." Fixing their eyes on the snake alone would not yield any cure; it was looking upward toward G-d, it was the relationship with G-d, which brought the cure. But if so, why bother to carve out a copper snake in the first place, which can only make people believe that it is the copper snake that is the cause of healing?

In fact, this is exactly what occurred. The copper snake that Moses made was preserved for centuries. In the passage of time, however, its meaning became distorted, and people began to say that the snake possessed powers of its own. When it reached the point of becoming an image of idolatry, the Jewish King Hezekiah (in the 6th century BCE) destroyed the copper snake fashioned by Moses, and that was the end of that special copper snake.

Which only reinforces the question: Why ask people to look up at a man-made snake which can lead down the path to a theological error of deifying the snake?

There is another question. The snake was the reptile that caused the harm in the first place. Healing, it would seem, would come from staying far away from serpents. Why in this case was the remedy born from gazing at the very venomous creature which caused the damage to begin with?

A Tale of Two Snakes

The snake in the biblical story -- as all biblical stories capturing the timeless journeys of the human psyche -- is also a metaphor for all of the "snakes" in our lives. Have you ever been bitten by a "venomous snake"? Poisoned by harmful people, burnt by life, or by abusive situations? Have you ever been crushed by a clueless principal, a manipulative boss, a deceiving partner, a toxic relationship? Were you ever backstabbed by people you trusted? Is your anxiety killing you? Are you weary and demoralized by your life experience?

What is the deeper meaning of suffering? And how do some people know how to accept affliction with love and grace?

These are good questions that cannot be answered easily, if at all. But one perspective is presented in the story of the serpents. G-d tells Moses: "Make a serpent and place it on a pole. Whoever gets bitten should look at it and he will live." The key to healing, the Torah suggests, is not by fleeing the cause of the suffering, but by gazing at it. Don't run from the snake; look at it. Because deep inside the challenge, you will find the cure. Deep inside the pain, you will find the healing light.

But there is one qualification: you must look up to the snake; you must peer into the reality of the snake above, on top of the elevated pole, not on the serpent crawling here below.

The Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), who had three Jewish grandparents and was considered by many to be one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century, once said that his aim as a philosopher was, "to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle." The fly keeps banging its head against the glass in a vain attempt to get out. The more it tries, the more it fails, until it drops from exhaustion. The one thing it forgets to do is look to the sky.

Every experience in life can be seen from two dimensions -- from a concrete, earthly perspective, or from a higher, more sublime vantage point, appreciating its true nature and meaning from the Divine perspective. There is the "snake" down here, and there is the very same "snake" up there. I can experience my challenges, struggles, and difficulties in the way they are manifested down here. But I can also look at these very same struggles from a more elevated point of view. The circumstances may not change, but their meaning and significance will. From the "downer" perspective, these challenges, curveballs, painful confrontations,

and realizations can throw me into despair or drain me of my sap. From the "higher" perspective, the way G-d sees these very same realities, every challenge contains the seeds for rebirth. Within every crisis lies the possibility of a new and deeper discovery.

Many of us know this from our personal stories: Events that at the time were so painful to endure, in retrospect were those that inspired the most growth. Those painful events moved us from the surface to the depths, challenging us to become larger than we ever thought we can be, and stimulating conviction and clarity unknown to us before.

This is not about suppressing the pain. On the contrary, it is about taking the pain back to its deepest origin; going with it back to its primal source, seeing it for what it really is in its pristine state.

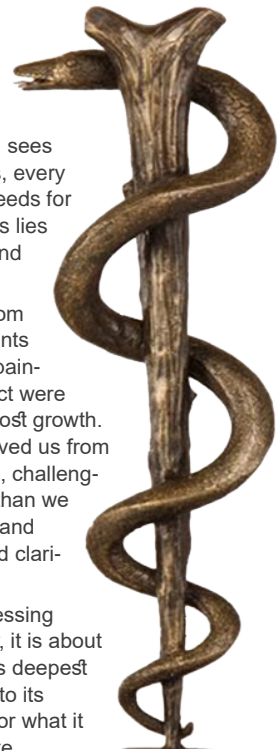
To perceive clarity from the midst of agonizing turmoil we must train ourselves to constantly look upward. When faced with a "snake," with a challenge, many people look to their right or to their left. Either they fight, or they cave in. But there is another path: look upwards. See the "snake" from the perspective above.

And in that upward gaze, you might find a new sense of healing: the questions might become the very answers, the problems may become the solutions, and the venom may become the cure. Remarkably, snake-bites today are cured with anti-venom manufactured from small quantities of snake venom that stimulate the production of antibodies in the blood.

It's the same idea taught by Moses: The source of the affliction itself becomes the remedy. This is true in all areas of life. As viewed by the Creator, from the perspective above, transgression is the potential for a new self-discovery; failure is the potential for deeper success, holes in a marriage are the seeds of "renovation" to recreate a far deeper relationship, the end of an era is always the beginning of a new one, pain is a springboard for deeper love and frustration is the mother of a new awareness.

Bless Me

This is surely the meaning in that famous, enigmatic passage in Genesis 32 in which Jacob, far from home, wrestles with an unknown, unnamed adversary from night until the break of day. The mysterious man maims Jacob, causing him to limp. And yet at the end of a struggling night, a night to remember, Jacob says to the stranger/angel/God: "I will not let you go until you bless me." "Bless me?!" Is this how you bid farewell to a man who attempts to destroy you? Jacob was teaching us the secret of Jewish resilience. To be a Jew is to possess that unique ability to say to every crisis: "I will not let you go until you bless me." I know that deep down your entire objective is to elevate me, to bring me to a higher place, to climb the mountain leading to the truth, allowing me to emerge stronger, wiser, more blessed.





Rabbi Reisman

- A New Understanding in the Cheit Mei Miriva from the Netziv.

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas an extraordinary Parsha with many Mitzvos and the Petira of both Aharon Hakohen and Miriam. I would like to share with you today a new Havana in the Cheit Mei Miriva. As you know, Rishonim bring many Peshatim in what Moshe Rabbeinu did wrong in the Maiseh Mei Miriva and the basic Pshat that the Velt knows is the Pshat of Rashi. Rashi says that Moshe Rabbeinu struck the stone instead of speaking to the stone. It seems at face value to be a very elementary mistake and the Onesh of the Cheit is not very understood.

The Netziv says a Gevaldige Pshat here in the Hamaik Davar (on page Reish Lamed). He ties it in to what he calls a Hakdama in an Ikkur Gadol B'tefilla, of a big rule when it comes to Davening and he says the following Klal Gadol. We will get back to Mei Miriva after we understand this Klal.

Zagt the Netziv אפילו בזמן שרעוה הקב"ה תפילה (גורמת). Even when HKB"H plans to give you something, Tefilla expedites that it will take place. Kach Nitveh B'briya. This is what HKB"H put into the world. He put into the Teva of the Briya that even if you are supposed to get something and Hashem wants to give it to you, there are times that it will only come your way if you Daven. The Raya is a beautiful Raya from Eliyahu Hanavi.

When Eliyahu Hanavi declared a drought on the ten Shevatim, the drought continued for a while and then the Ribbono Shel Olam came and said to him (הראה אל אחאב ואתנה מטר). Genukt, the drought is over. I am going to make it rain. You go to Achav and do whatever you can to help give Mussar to Klal Yisrael because the Ribbono Shel Olam said I had enough, no more drought. Eliyahu goes to Har Hacarmel and does what he does at Har Hacarmel to show that the Aish came from Shamayim and then at the end he Davens and rain comes. The question is why does he have to Daven as HKB"H said that it is time to give rain?

Zagt the Netziv, there are two types of Davening. Bish'as Tzara, when in Shamayim we have no Zechusim, that is one type of Davening. Davening can turn it around. There is a second type of Davening and that is when the Ribbono Shel Olam is ready to give to you, but HKB"H says come pick it up, come here and ask for it, I am ready. Tefilla then makes it happen.

Zagt the Netziv, in a case when the Ribbono Shel Olam is ready to give, there is no difference between the Tefilla of the Gadol Hador and the Tefilla of an ordinary person. When Hashem is ready to give it, all you have to do is come pick it up. Bish'as Tzarah, then you need the Tefilla of an Adam Gadol to be Mehapeich.

The Yesod is that Hashem put into the Briya that Davening makes things happen. Zagt the Netziv,

look what I wrote in Beraishis in 2:5. So I looked. (ונל שיח השדה) the things that grow in the field are referred to as (שיח השדה). Literally, it means the things that grow in the field. But (שיח) also means Davening. (אין שיחה אלא תפילה) it says in Maseches Avoda Zorah 7b (9 lines from the bottom). A field is Parnasa. What grows in a field is called (שיח השדה). It comes because of Tefilla. It comes because of Davening. Kach Nitveh HKB"H. Hashem put it that way into the Briya.

He says more. Davening is called Avodah. Korbanos are called Avodah. Working in a field is called Avodah. Making Parnasa happen comes through Avodah. B'derech Hateva working in a field, but Min Hashamayim if you put in your Davening and your Kavanos you can make it come, you can make it happen. That is why it is called Avodah. The same exact thing.

Elsewhere I remember the Netziv says that even when Klal Yisrael behaved in Eretz Yisrael there were Bamos. How can it be that a king like Chizkiya can make everybody do Teshuva but he couldn't get rid of the Bamos? Zagt the Netziv, because that is Avodah. A Segula for Parnasa he couldn't get the people to stop.

At any rate, this is the Yesod Gadol. The Yesod Gadol is that Tefilla is Po'el Parnasa, it brings Beraicha. When you deserve it, you will find out someday that all you have to do is ask for it. You have Tzar that you don't have a Shidduch, you have Tzar that you don't have Parnasa, you have Tzar that you don't have something else that you want, why didn't you ask? Just ask. That is Tefilla. Ad Kan the Yesod of the Netziv.

Zagt the Netziv, what was the Aveira of the Mei Miriva, you hit the stone, you talk to the stone, ok. No! The Ribbono Shel Olam said Klal Yisrael lived B'derech Neis. The first time that water had to come from the stone, Moshe hit the stone and the water came. No more. Klal Yisrael is going into Eretz Yisrael the Ananei Hakavod are no more. Klal Yisrael has to learn that they are going into a world of Teva. In this world Davening is Po'el. They may think that Davening is only Po'el B'derech Neis. No! Davening is Po'el B'derech Teva.

Moshe Rabbeinu, it is a new Tekufa in Klal Yisrael. Talk to the stone. What do you mean talk to the stone? Daven that the water should come from the stone and then it will come. Moshe Rabbeinu made a mistake. He didn't teach Klal Yisrael. There was a P'gam in his Avodah as the Rebbi of Klal Yisrael and for that reason he lost his Shtella so to speak as the Rebbi of Klal Yisrael. What a beautiful Pshat in the Cheit Mei Miriva. Not a new Cheit, not a new explanation, but a Pshat in Rashi about the difference between talking to the stone and hitting the stone.

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



MIDDOS TREE

BY RABBI COREN

Weddings are filled with "middos opportunities".

The best advice I think I can give when attending a wedding is to think, "what is my job here today." Sometimes just by being present at a wedding one is fulfilling his job, as this is based on an opinion in the Rishonim that each additional person present at a wedding adds to the joy of the Baal Simcha. However, we can use weddings as an opportunity to look around and see where we can be more of a participant than a spectator. When going to the chasson's tisch, see if any of the Rabbis or family members are too busy to get food and bring a small plate for them. Another simple idea is to try to be the first to offer water to the chosson or kallah before they are looking thirsty and overheated from the festivities. Does the father of the chosson or kallah look a little sweaty? Bring him a napkin! May we be zocheh to be mesamayach the chosson and kallah and utilize the opportunities that come along with it.



PARSHAS CHUKAS

SPEAK TORAH TO THE ROCK

**21:17 “אז ישיר ישראל את”
“השירה הזאת, עלי באר ענו לה”**

“Then Klal Yisroel sang this song, ‘Arise, O well, call out to it.’” At the end of the forty years, Klal Yisroel sang Shira in the Midbar for the באר, well. Klal Yisroel had the well for forty years. Why did they wait until the end of the forty years to sing Shira? Rashi – The Emorites tried to ambush Klal Yisroel and kill them. The Ribbono Shel Olam performed miracles, and caused them to be crushed between two mountains, unbeknownst to Klal Yisroel. The Ribbono Shel Olam wanted Klal Yisroel to know that a miracle was performed for them, so He routed the well into the gorge, which then carried the blood of the Emorites to where Klal Yisroel were encamped. Upon seeing the blood and realizing the miracles that were performed for them, they sang Shira. Throughout all of the years in the Midbar, having a well was a miracle. Why did Klal Yisroel wait until this miracle to sing Shira? The Posuk says that Klal Yisroel sang Shira, and there is no mention of Moshe Rabbeinu. By the Yam Suf, the Posuk says “אז ישיר ישראל”, “then Moshe and B’nei Yisroel sang Shira.” Why doesn’t the Posuk say Moshe Rabbeinu and Klal Yisroel sang Shira as it did by Kriyas Yam Suf? Why doesn’t the Posuk say that Klal Yisroel sang Shira to Hashem, as it says by Kriyas Yam Suf – “את השירה הזאת לד”?

Why did Klal Yisroel sing Shira for the well and not for the מן, which was a miracle as well? The באר represents the Torah Hakdosha. Klal Yisroel were not singing Shira because of a miracle, but rather for the Torah Hakdosha which is compared to water, and is called (אור החיים לד”)

At Kriyas Yam Suf, Moshe sang Shira, and Klal Yisroel repeated word for word after him. After 40 years in the Midbar, Klal Yisroel were able to sing Shira to the Ribbono Shel Olam on their own, as it says in the Posuk – “אז ישיר ישראל.” (ילקוט שמעוני)

Why is Moshe Rabbeinu’s name not mentioned here? At Kriyas Yam Suf, Moshe Rabbeinu sang Shira to the Ribbono Shel Olam for saving the Nefoshos of Klal Yisroel. It was not the physical beings of

Klal Yisroel that he sang Shira for, rather it was the Ruchniyos. Moshe did not sing Shira at the Be’er to see if Klal Yisroel would sing Shira for their Ruchniyos on their own. At Kriyas Yam Suf, Klal Yisroel sang Shira for their physical redemption. Klal Yisroel did not sing Shira for the מן because that was for their physical needs. They sang Shira for the Be’er because it represented the Torah Hakdosha. After forty years in the Midbar, they finally reached the level that Moshe hoped they would. They learned from their Rebbe, Moshe Rabbeinu, how to act. They sang Shira to the Ribbono Shel Olam for the Be’er, for the Torah Hakdosha. (חן טוב)

“ודברתם אל הסלע” – Hashem told Moshe to speak to the rock. What should Moshe have said to the rock? Moshe should have learned one Perek (Torah) and then the rock would have brought forth water. (ילקוט שמעוני)

The Be’er represents the Torah Hakdosha. The Ribbono Shel Olam took Klal Yisroel for a nation and gave them a most precious gift, the Torah Hakdosha. This gift is our direct connection to the Ribbono Shel Olam. More than that, nature is subservient to the Torah Hakdosha. At Shiras Hayam, Moshe sang Shira for being saved spiritually, while Klal Yisroel sang Shira for being saved physically. Moshe Rabbeinu, the great leader of Klal Yisroel, tried to impart this great lesson to Klal Yisroel. The most important thing in this world is the Torah Hakdosha, Ruchniyos. At the rock, Moshe was supposed to teach this first hand to Klal Yisroel by learning Torah at the rock. Klal Yisroel would have seen that nature is subservient to the Torah Hakdosha, and the rock would have brought forth water. At this point in time, Klal Yisroel saw that they did not have to Daven to Hashem for being saved. They had the Torah Hakdosha, which is above nature. This Shira does not say Moshe’s name, which is a great tribute to Moshe and Klal Yisroel. Moshe taught Klal Yisroel well. They knew on their own to sing Shira. The Shira does not say Hashem’s name because they did not have to Daven for this miracle. Klal Yisroel realized that our direct connection to the Ribbono Shel Olam is the Torah Hakdosha. May we be Zoche to appreciate and utilize this great gift, the Torah Hakdosha, our direct connection to Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita, cites an incident that occurred in the city of Slutzk, Belarus, during the Ridbaz’s tenure as Rav (prior to his emigration to Eretz Yisrael, where he became Rav of Tzefas). The butcher in Slutzk was an honourable, G-d-fearing man. He was respected by all, and, as a result, he did quite well financially. The Jews of Slutzk were not all Orthodox. Sadly, a contingent of secular Jews had long reneged on such time-honoured laws as kashrus and Shabbos. In fact, for the most part, these men were heretics who denied the very existence of the Creator. One day, one of the community’s distinguished physicians – a maskil, secular Jew, who believed in very little and observed even less – visited the butcher shop. He certainly was not there to purchase kosher meat. The butcher told him that he would be happy to serve him at another time. He was presently leaving the store to go learn in the shul. “How do you allow yourself to leave on a Thursday which is probably the most lucrative day of the week?” The butcher answered that he had made enough money that day. “What about the people who count on you?” “I am not worried about them, since they will come tomorrow,” the butcher answered. “Furthermore,” he said, “I am more concerned with my portion in Olam Habba, the World-to-Come, than the few extra roubles that I would earn in this world.” When the doctor heard this, he asked, “Since I do not believe in Olam Habba, can I sell you my portion?” “Sure,” the butcher replied. “How much do you want for it?” “One rouble – that is all I think it is worth,” the heretic said. The butcher agreed to the sale and immediately handed over a rouble. The deal was forgotten, as the two men went about their individual lives.

Years passed, and the doctor passed away. One morning, shortly after the doctor had left

this world, a woman presented herself at the butcher store and introduced herself as the doctor’s widow. “I need your help,” the woman said. “My husband passed on to his eternal rest. The last couple of nights he has been appearing to me in a dream with the same request every night; ‘Buy back the Olam Habba

that I sold.’ Apparently, he is about to be sent to Gehinnom, purgatory. He claimed that, as a physician, he had helped many people and even saved lives. Surely, that should count for some merit.” The response was that, indeed, he had some merit, but alas, he had sold his Olam Habba for one rouble. There was nowhere for him to go other than purgatory. After much pleading, his neshamah was given permission to contact his widow, so that she could “retrieve” the Olam Habba he had sold.

The butcher was called to the Rav. After listening to the woman, the butcher said, “Veritably, when I purchased your husband’s Olam Habba, I did not think that the portion was worth more than a rouble. Now that I hear what he has experienced in Heaven, I realise that he had many more merits than I thought. Thus, his Olam Habba is worth much more than a rouble. I will not sell it back unless I receive a premium on my purchase price.” When two Jews present their case to a bona fide Rav, he will convene a bais din to adjudicate and resolve all issues. The Ridbaz instructed both parties to return later that day to present their cases. The three judges listened, then adjourned to a room to discuss the case. Half an hour later, they returned. The Lutzker Rav, who was the rosh, head, of the bais din, spoke, “The final judgment is broken into three parts. First, one cannot sell his Olam Habba, because it is not his to sell. Olam Habba is part of a person. He performs a mitzvah; the mitzvah illuminates his soul and becomes a part of him. It is not an external saleable object. It is he himself! Second, one who is prepared to sell his Olam Habba loses it. Such a person removes himself from those worthy of a portion in the World to Come. He has forfeited his chance. He has demonstrated a disbelief that his neshamah will enter a better world. Third, we cannot ignore that as a result of this entire fiasco, the community of Slutzk’s emunah, faith, in Olam Habba, was seriously elevated and strengthened. This alone is reason for the neshamah to warrant Gan Eden. Indeed, in this transaction, both the butcher and the doctor share an equal partnership. Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum’s Peninim on the Torah.



Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

AMERICA IS IN A STATE OF MORAL DECLINE - WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?

That is not just my feeling, it is the assessment of a majority of Americans. According to Gallup, "Not only are Americans feeling grim about the current state of moral values in the nation, but they are also mostly pessimistic about the future on the subject, as 78% say morals are getting worse and just 18% getting better."

Moral decline can be seen in the deterioration in civility, the increase in litigation, the lack of integrity, out-of-wedlock births and breakup of families, vulgarity, promiscuity, and immodesty. As quickly as we have progressed technologically, medically and scientifically, morally we are rapidly going backwards, confused about basic fundamental values and institutions that much more primitive people understood clearly.

Perhaps this decline can be explained by another recent Gallup poll that reported that belief in G-d among U.S. adults has reached a new low. Belief in G-d provides a moral anchor and a moral compass, rules and regulations from an objective and absolute source of truth and decency. Breakdown of faith breeds relativism, a subjective interpretation of right and wrong. When morality is determined by popular opinion instead of objective truth, by needing to be compatible with comfort and convenience rather than mission and service, by the pursuit of pleasure and happiness, rather than sanctity and holiness, the result is moral decline.

In this morally regressive environment, it is understandably tempting for the Jewish community to turn inward, to focus on protecting ourselves and our families from the increasing dangers of shifting sands around us and we should.

However, we must also rise in this moment to turn outwards. Judaism and Torah were never intended only for the Jews. While we don't believe in proselytizing in the sense of recruiting non-Jews to convert to Judaism, we fervently believe in promoting the Torah's truths, values and ideals to the entire world. That has been our mission since our inception and one shudders to consider what the world would look like if we remain entirely insular.

Consider this letter written in 1806 by John Adams, second U.S. President:

I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other Nation. If I were an atheist and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations. If I were an atheist of the other sect, who believe or pretend to believe that all is ordered by chance, I should believe that chance had ordered the Jews to preserve and propagate to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, wise, almighty sovereign of the universe, which I believe to be the great essential principle of all morality, and consequently of all civilization. They are the most glorious Nation that ever inhabited this Earth. The Romans and their Empire were but a bauble in comparison of the Jews. They have given religion to three-quarters of the Globe and have influenced the affairs of Mankind more, and more happily, than any other Nation, ancient or modern.

The language of the founding fathers came from the Torah. Three names for G-d in the Declaration of Independence — Creator, Judge and Providence — are unmistakably Jewish names for G-d. They did not come from the Greeks or Romans.

As the world is becoming more and more uncivilized, it is time for the Hebrews, the Jewish people, to once again model, teach, preach and civilize man.

To be sure, it is not comfortable today to unapologetically and non-defensively

(albeit sensitively and respectfully) stand for and publicly promote our values, our principles, and our definitions. It is not simple to speak our truths, protect our sacred moral institutions and resist conforming to styles, fads, and mores of our time.

But, as W.C. Fields once said, "Remember, a dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream." Avraham was called Avraham Halvri meaning mei'eiver, on the other side. When the whole world took one position and stood on one side, he had the courage to stand out, remain true to the vision and will of the Almighty and to stand on the other side, even when it meant standing by himself. He was willing to go against the flow, to fulfill his mission, to fight for his truth.

Last Shabbos, 3 Tammuz, was the yahrtzeit of the Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneersohn. While most associate his legacy with a love for all Jews and sending emissaries to any place a single Jew lives, the Rebbe was also a force and influence for the non-Jewish world.

In 1983, the Rebbe launched a campaign to promote the seven Noahide laws. He referenced the Rambam who explicitly rules (Hilchos Melachim 8:10): "Moshe

Rabbeinu commanded from the mouth of G-d to convince all the inhabitants of the world to observe the commandments given to the children of Noach." Said the Rebbe, it is our duty and responsibility to work to influence all people to lead the righteous and decent life which comes from compliance with the Seven Noahide Laws.

Earlier, in 1974, Rav Soloveitchik shared a similar vision:

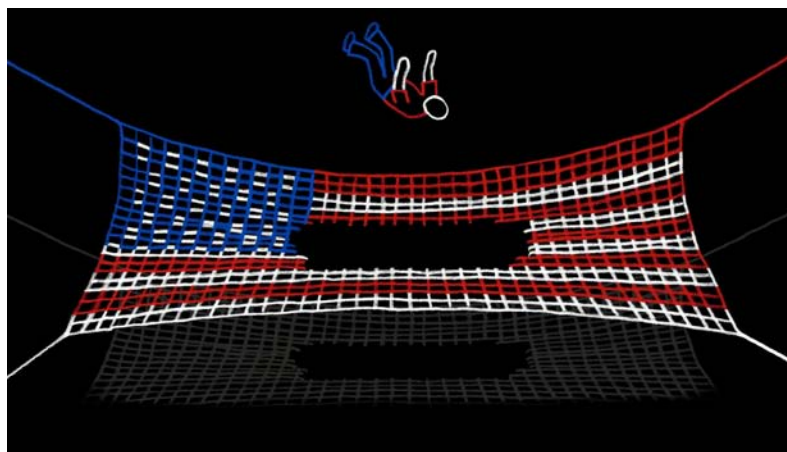
Our task was and still is to teach the Torah to mankind, to influence the non-Jewish world, to redeem it from an orgiastic way of living, from cruelty and insensitivity, to arouse in mankind a sense of justice and fairness. In a word,

we are to teach the world the seven mitzvot that are binding on every human being. But we have also been assigned another mission: to be the message carrier and mentor not only of the seven mitzvos that apply to the descendants of Noah, that is, to the human race as a whole, but also of a total outlook on life, the entire moral system to which Jews are committed. The non-Jewish world is expected to take note of the Torah life we lead, to admire our ways, our customs and mores, our mishpatim and chukim, both our rational and non-rational commandments. The Jews must stand out in society as exemplars; our way of life must impress and attract people and fascinate their curiosity.

Elsewhere, in addressing a social pressure in his time, Rav Soloveitchik writes:

We must not yield — I mean emotionally, it is very important — we must not feel inferior, experience or develop an inferiority complex, and because of that complex yield to the charm — usually it is a transient and passing charm — of modern political and ideological severos. I say not only not to compromise — certainly not to compromise — but even not to yield emotionally, not to feel inferior, not to experience an inferiority complex. The thought should never occur that it is important to cooperate just a little bit with the modern trend or with the secular modern philosophy. In my opinion Yahadus does not have to apologize ... There is no need for apology — we should have pride in our Masorah, in our heritage. And of course certainly it goes without saying that one must not try to compromise with these cultural trends and one must not try to gear the halachic norm to the transient ways of a neurotic society, which is what our society is.

This is no time to retreat, to shy away from our mission, to blend in or conform with the confusion and chaos that is around us. The world is relying on us to set it straight, stand for truth and to once again, civilize man.





LIVE THE LESSON OF THE SNAKES

We Must Integrate the Lesson of the Snakes Into Our Daily Lives

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The pasuk in Parshas Chukas says, "They journeyed from Hor HaHor by way of the Sea of Reeds to go around the land of Edom, and the spirit of the people grew short with the road." [Bamidbar 21:4] Aharon haKohen had just passed away, and the people again became agitated. "The people spoke against G-d and Moshe: 'Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there is no food and there is no water, and our soul is at its limit with the insubstantial food.'" [Bamidbar 21:5] If there seems to be one underlying theme about which they repeatedly complain - it is about the mann. Basically, they say they are disgusted with the mann.

It is important to realize something that is not readily apparent. Thirty-eight years elapsed between last week's parsha (Parshas Korach) and this week's parsha (Parshas Chukas). The incident of the Meraglim (in Parshas Shelach) preceded - at least according to the Ramban - the story of Korach. Those events both occurred at the beginning of their sojourn in the Wilderness. For the next 38 years, nothing dramatic occurred - at least not anything the Torah shares with us. Thirty-eight years later, they are again on the boundary of Eretz Yisrael, and they are complaining again. They complained at the beginning of the 40 years and they complained at the end of the 40 years. What is their complaint? "We can't stand the mann."

It would seem to be that the mann is the greatest thing going. It tasted like whatever each person desired. Someone wants milchigs one night - it tastes like dairy. Someone wants fleishigs the next night - it tastes like meat. There was no bodily waste created by it. It was great! Yet, it seems that when Bnei Yisrael start complaining, they always complain about the mann. What is the message here?

The pasuk continues, "Hashem sent the snakes, the burning ones, against the people, and they bit the people, and a large multitude of Israel died." [Bamidbar 21:6] Throughout Sefer Bamidbar, the Almighty punished the people in different ways. Here, Hashem uses a new method - they are attacked by snakes. Why snakes? Why could they not just drop dead? Why did the earth not swallow them up like last week? Why did fire not come down from heaven and consume them like in Parshas Shmini? Why snakes?

"The people came to Moshe and said, 'We

have sinned, for we have spoken against Hashem and against you! Pray to Hashem that He remove from us the snakes.' Moshe prayed for the people." [Bamidbar 21:7] What was the remedy for this plague? What was the cure for someone who was bitten by the snake? "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Make yourself a burning one and place it on a pole; and it will be that anyone who has been bitten will look at it and live.'" [Bamidbar 21:8]. The remedy for snakebites was to look at a snake! This has to be the most peculiar anti-venom serum ever created! Just look at the snake and you will be cured.

In fact, the international symbol of medicine has become the caduceus, a staff with two snakes wrapped around it. The source for that is this Biblical passage - the cure was the snakes. What is the message here? The plague is strange and the cure for the plague is even stranger.

My son, Reb Yakov, told me he heard an interpretation from a Rabbi Bukspan, which provides an interesting answer to this question. The Gemara [Yoma 76a] says that the disciples of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai asked him, "Why did the mann not descend for Israel once a year (in a quantity enough to last them for a whole year)?" Rabi Shimon bar Yochai answered them with a parable to a king who had an only son. He provided his son with his needs of sustenance once a year, for the whole year. Therefore, the son only came to see the king once a year, when he needed money.

When I went off to Yeshiva, my father used to send me a weekly allowance. Every week he would send me a check - five dollars a week. This way I could buy toothpaste and pay for any other miscellaneous expenses. The Yeshiva provided meals as part of the room and board. My father sent that check like clockwork. Every single week, I received a check for \$5.00. Today, parents give their children a credit card. When does the father hear from the son? Maybe never. When the father sees that the son has overdrawn the credit card, then the son hears from the father!

The Gemara says that when the king gave his son enough money for a whole year, he heard from him once a year. Therefore, the Gemara continues, the king changed his method of financing his son. He provided for his daily needs, one day at a time. This way the king heard from his son every day.

So too it was with Bnei Yisroel. Every single day people would worry - how am I going to feed my family? Every day they were afraid - maybe the mann will not fall tomorrow and my entire family will be wiped out in famine. The result was that everyone had their hearts focused on their father in heaven. The mann came from heaven so they needed to pray every day: "Master of the Universe, give us food." That is why the mann came down every day.

This Gemara is saying something that the Sefas Emes articulates in a different context. The Sefas Emes says that Hashem cursed the Snake - "You shall eat dust all the days of your life." The world asks - what kind of

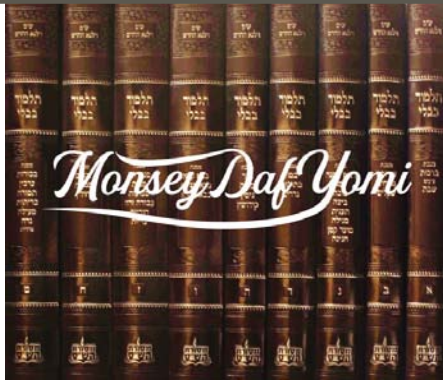
curse is that? Dirt is available ubiquitously. The Snake will never worry about the source of his next meal. However, the curse is that the Almighty is, in effect, saying to the Snake: "Here is your sustenance. Do not bother me again. I do not want to see you ever again." The contact that every other living creature needs to have with its Creator does not apply to the Snake. This is not a blessing. It is a curse.

This is why Hashem gave mann every single day. He wanted Klal Yisrael to realize that we are dependent on Him, and that "He is the one who gives you strength to act with valor..." [Devorim 8:18]. That is precisely why they did not like the mann. Human beings do not like to feel their dependence. We like to delude ourselves and think we are independent. That is why they kept on complaining about the mann. The Ribono shel Olam had this calculation - you should know that you are dependent on Me. The people resented that. They did not want to admit this fact.

"Modim Anachnu Lach..." Modim does not only mean 'we thank.' Modim means 'we admit...' that our lives are given over to Your Hand, and that our souls are delivered to You, and that Your miracles are with us every single day. We need to admit these facts, as much as we do not like to do so. That is why they did not like the mann.

Now the punishment they received makes sense. The punishment came from snakes because the people were acting like snakes - they did not want to be dependent on Divine handouts. That was the fate of the Snake. The Ribono shel Olam was sending them a message: Snakes. You want to be like the primordial Snake? Then the snakes will bite you. Do you know what the cure for this is? "You shall stare at the copper snake and be cured." The Talmud [Rosh Hashannah 29a] comments that it was not a matter simply of looking at the snakes - because snakes cannot cure. The idea was that they put the snake on a high place and raised it on a flagpole. When they lifted their eyes towards their Father in Heaven, they were cured. The cure was in looking upwards and figuring out from where their Help came from, and upon whom they were dependent.

That was the aveyra [sin]. That was the punishment and that was the cure. The aveyra was saying, "I want to be independent. I do not want to realize my dependence on the Almighty." The punishment was: You are acting like snakes - you will get bitten by snakes! The cure came when Israel cast their gaze up toward heaven. This is a lesson that is as important today as it was then. We think that with all our wisdom, we can go and we can come, and we can invent and we can function independently. However, it is "He who gives you strength to act with valor." We dare not say, "It is my strength and the power of my hand which has made for me all this valor." [Devorim 8:17] We need Him for every step and breath we take. The lesson of the snakes is one we need to integrate into our daily lives.



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PARSHAS

CHUKAS

THE POWER OF THE UNKNOWN

This week's Parsha and it's central Mitzvah of the Parah Adumah, deal's with the esoteric. Let's take a short introductory course in Chassidic philosophy to better understand the themes here.

Chassidic tradition teaches that the Torah is more than a document. It is a living entity by which G-d channels good to the world.

That being said, there are two parts to the Torah. One part meant to be understood in this world (Torah D'Isgaliah)..what we see read and learn from. This part of Torah remains our domain, given over for us to understand to the best of our abilities.

The Meor Einayim, a talmid of the Baal Shem Tov, identifies another part of Torah, separate from the words, the letters and the stories. Beyond our reach and above our understanding, this Torah has the power to heal. It is called primus Hatorah- The secret power that lies behinds the simple words.

The Mitzvah of the Parah Adumah, keeps our nation pure and rests squarely in this section that we cannot understand, but that heals us.

"Zos Chukas Hatorah", don't try and explain the unexplainable, our Parsha begins.. let us not seek to understand why the ashes of the Red Heifer purify us, for this is G-ds Holy grail. We can only hope to catch a glimpse of its eternal truth by strengthening our belief in the Creator by inner exploration and developing our Eemunah- This emunah can make us great, if we only let it soar.

But why is this Mitzvah written about here? It would seem more in place in the book of Vayikrah, together with the other laws of Purity and sacrifices.

The answer lies in last weeks Parsha. When Korach challenged the authority of Moshe Rabbeinu- the world was shaken to its core. Hashem decreed that Heavenly medicine was needed to restore the balance and refresh the divine connection, as it were, between Moses and G-d. Hence the Mitzvah of Parah Adumah.

Korach believed that Moses had injected his own reasoning into the Commandments and therefore they were not infallible.

He tried to trip Moses up by asking him several conundrums. For example, he asked, "If one blue string of Techeles, is enough to

make a Tallis of white wool kosher- what would happen if the entire Tallis was made of this blue wool?

In fact he was asking these questions to prove that Moses was an imposter and not a true messenger of G-d. But of course, the opposite was true and the fact that Moses could not answer these questions was proof positive of his divine connection to G-d, for their relationship was so strong and personal that Hashem would later intercede and deal with the rebels and their challenges in an unearthly way.

This untenable faith in G-d and his Torah is best exemplified by the Mitzvah of the Parah Adumah. Totally beyond our understanding, it tugs at the strings of uncertainty that can sometimes be found in the cloth of our faith. But in reality, this Mitzvah can serve to strengthen our observance by giving us a glimpse into the Heavenly ways of our Creator. We cannot possibly fathom all the reasons for the commandments, but if we acknowledge that there is a difference between our minds and the Heavenly program we will have succeeded in entering the world of the Divine where all is possible.

Consider the story of the Tractor Trailer driver who transported large amounts of gas with his truck to far locations that had very little fuel. This Jewish driver asked his Rabbi- "I say many chapters of Tehillim every day before I go to work- do I still have to pray the Pesukei De Zimrah- the first part of the regular Shacharis service (composed of tehillim)? The Rabbi asked him, "If your truck carries fuel- does you still have to fill up its gas tank before you drive?"

"Of course," the driver answered, "the 2 fuels are distinct and different from each other".

So too the Techeiles (the blue wool) in Korach's question and so too our perception of the divine. Let us not make the mistake of relying only on what our eyes can see. There is a higher and more powerful world that we can only experience through the strength of our Eemunah. We can develop this faith by making our relationships more real. Family is important- a strong connection between husband and wife, between parent and child- makes our life more cogent. We must also keep our relationship with Hashem honest. One cannot hope to achieve spiritual growth with half an effort or with an attitude of "I am better than my neighbor." Strengthening the bonds we have with each other and with our Creator will help us achieve greatness.

Translated by Rabbi Reich
Good Shabbos!

BY: DAVID GURWITZ

Chazal teach that Adam ki yamos b'ohel refers to how we must act when learning -dead to outside world

> Talmud is begematria 480

> Sof hatave of Adam - mem- 40- ki

- yud - 50- yamos - saf 400 and b'ohel - lamud - 30 adds up to ..480...Talmud!

גימטריה

20 = כ	11 = א"י	1 = א
30 = ל	12 = ב"ב	2 = ב
40 = מ	13 = ג"ג	3 = ג
50 = נ	14 = ד"ד	4 = ד
60 = ס	15 = ה"ה	5 = ה
70 = ע	16 = ו"ו	6 = ו
80 = פ	17 = ז"ז	7 = ז
90 = צ	18 = ח"ח	8 = ח
100 = ק	19 = ט"ט	9 = ט
200 = ר		10 = י
300 = ש		
400 = ת		

MARRIAGE: ONE COMPLETE SOUL

... Marriage, which is a union of two people, is a union of two halves of the same soul*. Each one, when born, possesses but half of that soul which becomes one at marriage.

To a certain extent, therefore, the marriage marks the beginning of a complete and full life, while the pre-marital life of either the bride or groom may be considered a preparatory period.

==== Based on Rebbe's letter dated the first day of Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5,750 - 1950.

\ Chabad.org
*Zohar Vayikra
Daf 7,2.

Yud Beis Tammuz, Chag Hageulah. The RaYatz, 6th Chabad Rebbe - Father-in-la of the 7th Chabad Rebbe, was released by the communist regime. Changing from Capital punishment to exile, on Gimel Tammuz. On Yud Beis Tammuz, he was told that he is free to go home.

UFARATZTA



JOKES

A RABBI'S SAD ANNOUNCEMENT

A Rabbi shocked his community when he announced that he was resigning from and moving to a drier climate. Afterwards, a very distraught lady came to the Rabbi with tears in her eyes, "Oh, Rabbi, we are going to miss you so much. We don't want you to leave!" The kind-hearted Rabbi said, "Now, now, don't carry on. The Rabbi who takes my place might be even better than me." "Yeah," she replied, with a tone of disappointment in her voice, "that's what the last Rabbi said, too."

DEFINITIONS....

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

CHICKENS: The only creatures you eat before they are born and after they are dead.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

GOSSIP: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN: Grape with a sunburn.

SECRET: Something you tell to one person at a time.

TOOTHACHE: The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labor saving devices of today.

YAWN: An honest opinion openly expressed.

WRINKLES: Something other people have. You have character lines.

BOTTLED WATER

How did we get to the point where we are paying for bottled water? That must have been some weird marketing meeting over in France. Some French guys sitting there, like, "How dumb do I think the Americans are? I bet you we could sell those fools water."

BORED WITH RETIREMENT

I was not ready for retirement and was looking for a new adventure.

So I decided to take up FENCING.

My neighbors have threatened to call the police if I don't put it back.

THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

The school of agriculture's dean of admissions was interviewing a prospective student, "Why have you chosen this career?" he asked.

"I dream of making a million dollars in farming, like my father," the student replied.

"Your father made a million dollars in farming?" echoed the dean much impressed.

"No," replied the applicant. "But he always dreamed of it."

AFTER LIFE REQUESTS

3 buddies discuss what they would like said about them when they pass away.

The first guy says, "I would like to hear them say that I was a great doctor of my time, and a great family man."

The second guy says, "I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher which made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow."

The last guy replies, "I would like to hear them say, 'LOOK! HE'S MOVING!!'"

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ROSH KOLLEL

Women Davening Mincha after Candle Lighting

As discussed previously, there is a requirement of adding on to the Shabbos and Yom Tov. Can a person still daven Mincha even after he was mekabel Shabbos? This is a question which applies to both women who accept Shabbos at the time of the candle lighting and to men who wish to accept Shabbos before shkia, as they are required.

The Shulchan Aruch (O”C 263:10) quotes the Bahag, who rules that the lighting of the candles is considered a kabalas shabbos and one can no longer do melacha after candle lighting. The Shulchan Aruch continues that other Rishonim disagree and do not consider lighting a kabalas shabbos, and one can continue to do melacha even after candle lighting. The Rama writes that the minhag is for the women who light the candles to accept Shabbos at that time.

The Eliyahu Raba (263:17) points out that, being that they are accepting Shabbos with their lighting, they should be sure to daven mincha before candle lighting. The Mishna Berura (263:43) adds that if she did not daven Mincha and already lit, since she was mekabel shabbos, she can no longer daven Mincha and would have to daven Maariv twice.

The Rivivos Ephraim discusses this question, and adds that this can be a problem, since women don’t always have time to daven before candle lighting. What about if she makes a t’nai, a stipulation that she still wants to daven? This concept is based on the Rama, who writes that since there is a difference of opinions if the lighting is considered a kabalas Shabbos, if need be, a woman can stipulate that she does not wish to accept Shabbos.

However, this is not so simple. The Magen Avraham asserts that this stipulation is only allowed in a situation of necessity. Is the fact that she wishes to daven Mincha qualify as a bona fide need? Although the Mishna Berura does not seem to allow it, there are many poskim who do allow her to make a t’nai and then daven, including the Kaf Hachaim (263:35), Minchos Shlomo (2:35:8), Be’er Moshe (1:15), and the Divrei Yatziv (1:121). The Divrei Yatziv adds that this is only if she is indeed vigilant to daven Mincha every day, making it a bona fide necessity.

Thr Be’er Moshe and Divrei Yatziv take this a step further and add that if she does daven Mincha every day, then it is self understood that she is still planning on davening Mincha and it is as if she made the stipulation.

The sefer Eishel Avraham adds that this t’nai can be specifically for davening Mincha and not for doing melacha. This is because a t’nai for davening Mincha is much simpler than a t’nai to allow doing melacha. He explains that davening a weekday tefilla is not a contraction to Shabbos, per se. We find this concept in regards to one who mistakenly started davening the weekday shmoneh esrei on Shabbos. The Shulchan Aruch rules that one finishes that brocha that he started and only then returns to the Shabbos davening. The reason for this is, as the poskim explain, that the weekday davening is, in essence, appropriate on Shabbos as well, so it is not considered a brocha that is in inappropriate on Shabbos.

In conclusion

Women who accept Shabbos at the time of the candle lighting should definitely daven Mincha before. If they did not, many poskim allow her to daven Mincha after she lit candles, if she makes a t’nai. Some allow her if she always davens, and we can assume that she was still planning to dven, which is the halachic equivalent of her actually making the t’nai.

What about a man who davens Mincha on Friday evening right before Shkiah, or even after sunset? Is that a contradiction to turning Friday afternoon into Shabbos?

To be continued...

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