

קול הנערים
Rabbi Fried
-Starts at 7:00-



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Remembering
Rav Matisyahu Salomon zt"l
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Shabbos Zmanim

2023 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 12:30pm-3:00pm

4:30pm Candle lighting	4:40pm Mincha in tent א	4:40pm Chabad Mincha	4:48pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

6:41am Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑	8:00am Shachris 2 18 main	9:15am Shachris 3 Tent א	10:00am Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑	10:00am Shachris 5 18 main
2:00pm Pirchei	4:30pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	4:49pm Shkiya	5:29pm Maariv 1	5:34pm Maariv 2

Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim
Zmanim for the week of Jan 14 - Jan 20

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	7:20am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:05am	3:51pm	4:50pm
Monday	7:20am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:05am	3:52pm	4:52pm
Tuesday	7:20am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:06pm	3:53pm	4:53pm
Wednesday	7:19am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:06pm	3:54pm	4:54pm
Thursday	7:19am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:06pm	3:55pm	4:55pm
Friday	7:18am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:07pm	3:56pm	4:56pm
Shabbos	7:17am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:07pm	3:57pm	4:57pm

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The Miracles of the Staffs

"The staff of Aharon swallowed their staffs." (7:12)

Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon to appear before Pharaoh. Hashem informed them that Pharaoh will demand that they provide a "mofes" – "wonder" to validate their claims that they are messengers of a higher authority. Aharon cast down his staff and it turned into a snake. Pharaoh summoned his sorcerers who replicated Aharon's actions. The Torah relates that "Aharon's staff swallowed their staffs." What is the conflict being waged between Aharon and the sorcerers? What message is Aharon sending Pharaoh and his sorcerers?

The Talmud refers to this episode as a "miracle within a miracle." Rashi explains that Aharon's staff swallowed the sorcerers' staffs after it transformed back into a staff. The Maharsha has difficulty with Rashi's interpretation, specifically with why, according to Rashi, this is a "miracle within a miracle;" the snake changing back to a staff is the first miracle and the staff subsequently swallowing the sorcerers' staffs is the second miracle. Should this not be described as a "miracle after a miracle"?

The Maharsha suggests that the miracle was that the staff of Aharon did not expand after swallowing all the other staffs. This is the Talmud's interpretation of a "miracle within a miracle." The Maharsha's interpretation not only disagrees with Rashi's comments which make no allusion to this miracle, but is not hinted to in the Talmud either.

It appears that Hashem was performing a powerful miracle for Pharaoh's sake. If the purpose was to impress Pharaoh, why did Aharon's staff swallow the sorcerers' staffs, implying that all the staffs transformed back from being snakes? A staff swallowing a living creature would make a greater impression. Would it not have been a greater miracle for Aharon's staff to swallow their snakes? If, in fact, Aharon's staff did swallow their snakes, and the Torah only refers to their snakes as staffs because that is what they originally were, then it is possible that Aharon's staff never transformed back from being a snake either. How would the Talmud know that the miracle was that Aharon's snake in staff-form swallowed the staffs of the sorcerers?

The Midrash states that the ten plagues which Hashem miraculously brought upon the Egyptians corresponded to the ten utterances through which Hashem created the world. What emerges from the Midrash is the understanding that a miracle is not an illusion or a change in man's perception. Rather, a miracle which involves a transformation in the nature of an object actually creates the change, a new act of creation. A staff that becomes a snake actually becomes a snake. Sorcery can make a staff display snake-like qualities, but the "snake" is actually a staff. Aharon's snake reverting to being a staff is itself a new miracle. The staff being capable of swallowing the Egyptians' staffs is the second miracle. This is truly a miracle within a miracle.

The Torah identifies the Egyptians' snakes as staffs, for that is all they ever were. Their display of snake-like qualities was only an illusion. Pharaoh and his sorcerers were being taught that their abilities are only illusory, having no basis in reality. Only the Creator of the world, who is the ongoing source for all existence, has the ability to recreate that which already exists and give it a new reality.



The Weeks of Shovevim

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

We are deep into the weeks of *shovevim*. The Ari z"l explains the connection to the *parshayos* that we read about the servitude in Mitzrayim. *Al pi Kabbalah*, when Adam Harishon separated from Chava for 130 years, he created souls without a body. These souls had to be rectified through the generations of the *mabul*, *haflaga*, Enosh, and finally in Mitzrayim.

To explain this concept on a simple level in order for us to use it practically, we needed to fix matter of *kedushah* and hence these weeks have remained until today as weeks where fixing our own matters of *kedushah* is very doable.

In fact, I received a call from a young man who is struggling with "emuna questions." In truth, over the years, I rarely met anyone who really is struggling with big *emuna* questions, because when one is unbiased and willing to really hear the truth, it's not very difficult to prove God's existence and the truth of our holy Torah. Unfortunately, today the problem is usually depression or trauma or the like that the person went through and until they don't do the work therapeutically, they look to use the *emunah* questions to explain why they do what they do. In this case it was similar; the biggest question wasn't really an *emuna* question, it was with a Zohar that seems to imply that one cannot do *teshuva* for matters of *kedushah*.

Now if this were the truth, I and most of us would have a problem with this. Thankfully it's not true. Firstly, there's an explicit Yerushalmi in *Peah* that says nothing stands in the way of *teshuva* (see also Tosfos in *Baba Metzia* regarding Dovid Hamelech, and see also Rambam in *Hilchos Teshuva*). Furthermore, the *sefarim* that discuss this Zohar (see Bnai Yissachar for *shovevim* and the Vilna Gaon) say explicitly that this is not true; it just means that it requires a higher level of *teshuva* that is attainable by anyone who really wants to do *teshuva*. (See also Rav Daniel Frisch in his *Siddur* before *Krias Shma* regarding 'nothing stands in the way of one's will.')

Moreover the fact that these weeks were instituted by the Ari z"l and called the weeks of *shovevim*, which is based on the verse in Yirmiyahu "Return, sons who have gone astray" shouts out to us the idea that Hashem says "Of course you can return and I want you to return, because I love you."

The Ari z"l also reveals to us that the main *golus* of Mitzrayim is *golus* of *dibur* – meaning the ability to speak to call out to Hashem. We can now appreciate why the Vilna Gaon wrote in his beautiful letter to his wife, before he went into *golus*, that the greatest form of fasting and the greatest form of control is the control of our mouth. In fact, he adds that when one holds themselves back from responding improperly, they merit the hidden light that no angel or creation can imagine.

This idea gives us not just hope but practical advice on how to transform these weeks, and especially Shabbos, so that we can really return to Hashem. The letters *Shabbos* are also the letters return – תשב.

If we decide that in shul and at home we will be more careful about what comes out of our mouth, then our *tefillos* will be so much stronger, and we should be *zoche* to *bias goel bimhera beyameinu*.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

Liberation from Tolerance



Rabbi YY Jacobson

It is one of the most intriguing components of the Exodus story. As we pointed out in a previous essay, the first leader of the Jewish people, who would set them free and mold them into a nation, grew up not among his own people, but in the palace of the man who wished to destroy them.

Why did Providence have it that Moses was raised not in a Jewish home, but among non-Jews, in the Egyptian palace?

The English translations of the Torah rarely capture the multi-dimensional underpinnings behind many words. One example in this week's portion (*Vaera*): "Therefore," G-d speaks to Moses, "Say to the Children of Israel: I am G-d, and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their slavery; I shall redeem you."

The Hebrew word for "burdens," *sivlos*, can also be translated as "tolerance" (as in "*lisbol*," to bear, or "*savlanut*," which means patience). Tolerance is a form of burden carrying, of accepting a challenge. If this is correct, then G-d is communicating a potent message: "Say to the Children of Israel: I am G-d, and I shall take you out from tolerating Egypt." I will liberate you from your patience, from tolerating the Egyptian horrors.

The Genesis of Redemption

This is a critical moment because it is the genesis of redemption—physical, emotional, or spiritual.

Many of us, after being subjected to dysfunctional conditions, learn to acclimate ourselves to the bleak reality. This can be worse than the condition itself since it keeps me stuck in my prison.

The beginning of the Exodus could only occur when the Hebrew slaves refused to tolerate the horrors they were enduring. If I am not fed up with being weak and bullied, with being a victim of addiction or fear, my journey of redemption cannot commence.

It is not easy. Learned helplessness runs deep. Denying or repressing the depth of the dysfunction is a way of numbing

myself to the suffering. I must be able to feel the pain of my alienation from self to be able to begin the voyage toward liberation.

The Outsider

Free people, G-d is telling Moses, are people who know how to stop tolerating lies, dysfunction, cover-ups, and abuse. A free nation is one that has the courage to face its skeletons and cast a light on them.

This is why the redeemer of Israel needed to grow up in the Egyptian palace, not among his own people. To quote Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (12th-century Spanish philosopher, poet, and biblical commentator):

Perhaps G-d caused Moses to grow up in the home of royalty so that his soul would be accustomed to a higher sense of learning and behavior, and he would not feel lowly and accustomed to a house of slavery. You see that he killed an Egyptian who did a criminal act [beating an innocent Hebrew to death], and he saved the Midianite girls from the criminal shepherds who were irrigating their own flock from the water the girls had drawn.

Had Moses grown up among the Hebrew slaves, he too might have suffered from a slave-mentality lacking the courage to fight injustice and devoid of the ability to mold an enslaved tribe into a great people with a vision of transforming the world into a place worthy of the divine presence. He would not find within himself the strength to dream of liberty and confront the greatest tyrant of the time. Only because he grew up in a royal ambiance, did Moses have a clear sense of the horrific injustice and feel the power to fight it.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)
After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

UFARATZTA



FEAR AND WORRY: CHOOSE YOUR THOUGHTS

[Continued from last week.] We know that we were given *mitzvos* only for things we can control. So, when we are engaging in the horrors of war, we have a *mitzvah*: "Not to fear and panic," which means that we have control, not to fear. How does this work? Let's continue with the letter of the Tzemach Tzedek.

A person has 3 garments: Thought – Speech – Physical Action. [They are called garments, because just as you can change your clothes, you can change what you are thinking, talking and doing. – Tanya.] A person has free choice of what he thinks about, and does. Even if he is afraid, he can remove this fear by not thinking and talking about it, steering his mind and speech even in the opposite direction. And this is what we were told: *Al yeirach levavcha* - Do not soften your heart – meaning: Do not focus and think of what brings upon you, fear. This is what the Rambam says on this *pasuk* in *Hilchos Melachim*, perek 7 [Halacha 15*]

that someone who frightens himself, violates a *lo sa'aseh* negative commandment.

As soon as he stops thinking of this negativity, automatically the fear will dissolve, or at least it will be as if it is dormant and not felt. Within a few days these negative thoughts won't even enter your mind. This is the *lo saaseh* of "*al yeirach levavcha*." – Do not welcome these thoughts willingly.

==== *Igros Kodesh Tzemach Tzedek P20.*

To be Continued – To substitute the negative thoughts that keep propping up.

*Rambam: Once a soldier enters the throes of battle, he should rely on the Hope of Israel and their Savior in times of need. He should realize that he is fighting for the sake of the oneness of God's Name. Therefore, he should place his soul in his hand and not show fright or fear. He should not worry about his wife or children. On the contrary, he should wipe their memory from his heart, removing all thoughts from his mind except the war. Anyone who begins to feel anxious and worry during battle to the point where he frightens himself violates a negative commandment, as it is written (Devarim 20:3): "Do not be faint-hearted. Do not be afraid. Do not panic..."



I would like to wrap up the topic of not interrupting between the *brocha* of *Ga'al Yisroel* and *shmoneh esrei*.

Smichas Geula L'tfillah on Shabbos

The Rama writes that according to some opinions, on Shabbos, one does not need to be concerned about interruption between *geula* and *t'fillah*. The reason for this is because the requirement to connect *geula* and *t'fillah* is based on the juxtaposition of the words "*Hashem tzuri v'goali*" and the words "*yaanchah Hashem b'yom tzara*." This teaches us that right after we proclaim that Hashem is our Redeemer, we must immediately continue by praying the *shmoneh esrei*, and ask that He save us from all our troubles. Since Shabbos is not a day of distress, the whole concept does not apply.

The Rama rules that it is better to be careful on Shabbos not to interrupt between *geula* and *t'fillah*, unless there is a special need to do so.

Smichas Geula L'tfillah on Yom Tov

The Rama adds that Yom Tov, in this regard, is equivalent to a weekday and one may not interrupt. He explains that although Shabbos is not a day of distress, Yom Tov is. This is because on each Yom Tov there is a judgment going on, as the Mishna tells us in Rosh Hashana. The Mishna Berura adds another reason why Yom Tov is different from Shabbos. The day of Shabbos is always free from distress. On the other hand, the day of the week that Yom Tov falls – Sunday, Monday etc. – is generally a day of distress. Since, generally speaking, it is a day of distress, we should treat it as such, even though it is *yom tov*, and be sure to connect *geula* to *t'fillah*.

The difference between these two reasons would be in a case that Yom Tov falls on Shabbos. According to the reason of the Rama – that Yom Tov is a day of distress – it is true even if Yom Tov falls on Shabbos, and one should not interrupt. However, according to the reason of the Mishna Berura – that the day of the week is usually a day of distress – since Shabbos is never a day of distress, one would be allowed to interrupt if there is a need.

Summing Up the Topic of Smichas Geula L'tfillah

There are a number of reasons for *smichas geula l'tfillah*:

- 1) Immediately after one declares the greatness of Hashem and is close to Hashem is an auspicious time to *daven*.
- 2) By *davening* immediately, one shows that he is indeed Hashem's true servant.

3) If one *davens* immediately, he is proclaiming his full belief and reliance on Hashem.

- *Hashkiveinu* is an extension of *geula* and is not a *hefsek*.
- *Hashem Sifasi* is an extension of *t'fillah* and is not a *hefsek*.
- Some have the custom to recite "*Baruch Hashem L'olam*" or "*V'shumru*," as an extension of the *geula* and it is not a *hefsek*. Others – including the Gra and the Baal Hatanya – rule that it should not be said.
- The Shulchan Aruch rules that the *gabai* can announce "*yaaleh v'yavo*" or the like at *Maariv*, but not at *Shachris*. Others hold that it is a *hefsek*. That is why in some places they just give a "*klap*," and assume that the congregants will get the message.
- At *Maariv*, *davening* with the *tzibur* takes precedence over *smichas geula l'tfillah*, but not at *Shachris*.
- There is *machlokes* if one can answer *amein* after *Ga'al Yisroel*.
- Some allow interruptions between *geula* and *t'fillah* on Shabbos, but Yom Tov is the same as a weekday.

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara
- Currently: מסכת חגיגה
- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
- Currently: הלכות שבת

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-Chazon Ish



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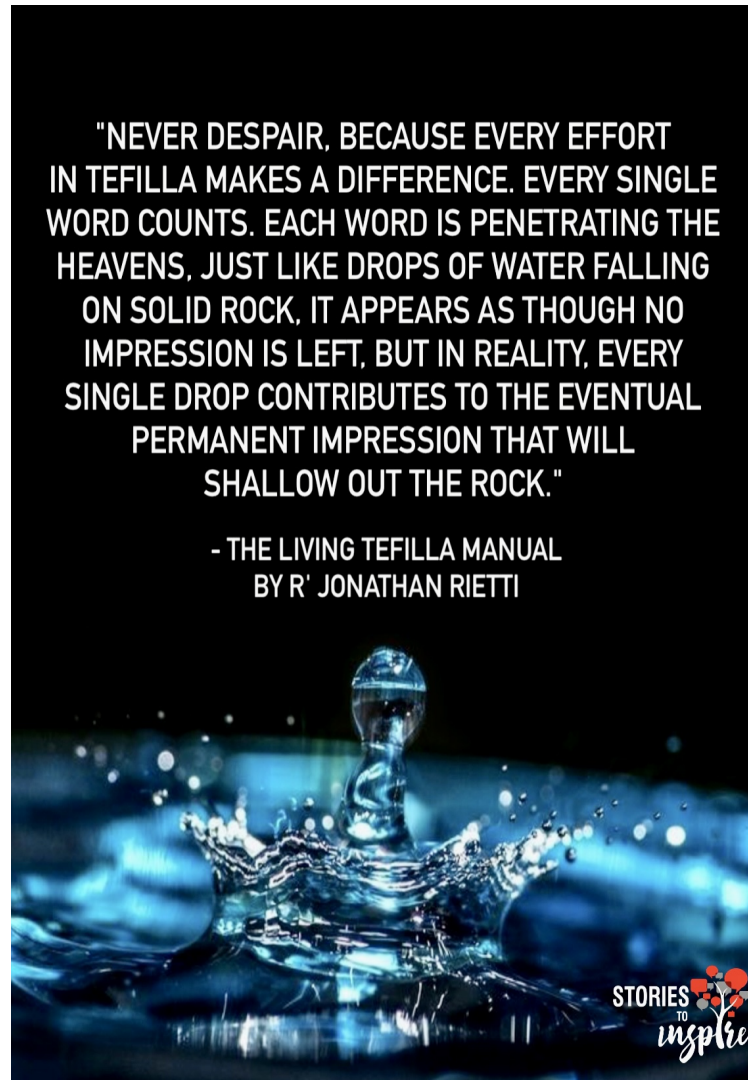
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Moshe Rabbeinu's Soliloquy

“וידבר משה לפני ד' לאמר, הן בני ישראל לא שמעו אלי ואיך ישמעני”
פרעה ואני ערל שפתים” 6:12

“ויאמר משה לפני ד', הן אני ערל שפתים ואיך ישמעו אלי פרעה” 6:30

“Moshe spoke before Hashem saying, ‘Behold, B’nei Yisroel have not listened to me, so how will Paroah listen to me? And I have blocked lips.’” Hakodosh Boruch Hu commanded Moshe Rabbeinu to speak to Paroah on behalf of Klal Yisroel to free them. Moshe replied that Klal Yisroel did not listen to him; undoubtedly Paroah will ignore him. In addition, Moshe had a speech impediment. The Torah then continues to list the genealogy of Shevet Levi, the Shevet of Moshe and Aharon. Afterwards, the Torah goes back to discussing the mission at hand, for Moshe to speak to Paroah concerning freeing Klal Yisroel. “Moshe said before Hashem, ‘Behold, I have blocked lips, so how shall Paroah heed me?’” Why does Moshe repeat to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that Paroah will not listen to him due to his speech impediment? 4:10 “כי כבד פה וכבד לשון אנכי” – “For I am heavy of mouth, and heavy of speech.” The Ribbono Shel Olam previously told Moshe to speak to Paroah, and Moshe already told Him that he had a speech impediment. Why did Moshe repeatedly tell the Ribbono Shel Olam that he cannot speak to Paroah because of his speech impediment?

“ויאמר משה אלד'... לא איש דברים אנכי” – “Moshe said to Hashem, ‘I am not a man of words.’” Man is a synthesis of the physical

and spiritual. The power of speech is the result of the fusion of the body and soul, the physical and spiritual. In ordinary humans, the relationship between man’s physical and spiritual components is basically balanced, the result is normal speech. Moshe had a speech impediment because his relationship between body and soul was unbalanced. He was mostly soul. (גבורות ד)

It says in *Mechilta* in *Parshas Yisro* that at the time of Matan Torah, everyone’s blemishes were healed. Why wasn’t Moshe Rabbeinu healed from his speech impediment? Had Moshe been healed, and had a “smooth tongue”, one could have advanced an argument that the reason that Klal Yisroel accepted the Torah Hakdosh was because of his smooth tongue, and not because the Torah is true. Moshe remained with his speech impediment so that it would be known that Klal Yisroel accepted the Torah for their love of Hakodosh Boruch Hu and the Torah, and not because they were convinced. (דרשות הר"ן)

Moshe Rabbeinu knew that the Ribbono Shel Olam can make anything happen. Certainly, had the Ribbono Shel Olam wanted, He could have made Moshe speak fluently in all languages without any speech impediments. There were reasons that Moshe had the speech impediment. Most importantly is what we can learn from it. Moshe stating that he was “ערל שפתים” was a soliloquy. Moshe was speaking to himself to be *mechazek* himself. Moshe was on a great level of Ruchniyos, yet even he had to consistently work on himself. He continued to repeat, that everything is in the control of the Ribbono Shel Olam, and he was just following His will.

Bringing it all Back Home

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



We exist in this world because Hashem gave us life and keeps us alive. In addition, there are a plethora of relationships that nurture us through all times, both good and bad. These relationships are our life blood.

Why do we have to be thankful?

As we grow older we realize that at every step there has been someone who helped us become who we are today. Acknowledging this brings out the goodness in lives and makes us more aware of the daily goodness that Hashem provides us with, almost with unlimited measure, down to every breath we take.

Moshe Rabbeinu did not strike the ground to bring the plague of lice upon the Egyptians. As we all know it was because the dust of the earth covered the Egyptian that Moshe killed and saved him from being discovered.

But let’s look into this. The body was only covered for a day – and then the Torah says it became known, the very next day, to all that Moshe did the deed.

So for a favor that only lasted a total of 24 hours Moshe was eternally indebted. Amazing...

So much more should we be indebted to our spouses that do so much for us. Think about it!

And to our parents who brought us into this world and have cared for all our needs- how much more so do we need to take

the time to reflect and be thankful to them, if we still can!

Rav Simcha Zissil Broide zt”l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Chevron, was already very old at the time of this story and had a hard time climbing stairs.

Yet one day when a *talmid* came to take him to Yeshiva the Rosh Yeshiva realized when he got downstairs that he had forgotten something in his apartment and was intent on getting it himself- so he climbed up the stairs into the kitchen and breathlessly wished his wife a wonderful day. He had forgotten to say goodbye to her properly!

Being considerate, thankful, respectful- these are guidelines for a good marriage.

Not small things, R’ Simcha Zissel realized that these are quite simply the building blocks of a good relationship.

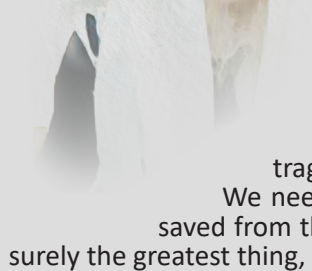
In this age of texting, WhatsApp and a minimum of personal human interaction, we would all do good to emulate this behavior whenever we can. It can bring back the warmth, care and personal touch that are missing in our highly technological world.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Written by R’ Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

What to Do to Be Saved from Chevlei Mashiach

Rav Gershon Edelstein zt"l



The current situation is a difficult time for the *tzibbur*, there's a war in Eretz Yisrael, a war in your country, and besides for the war, I heard that our enemies perpetrated tragedies in the center of the country. We need a lot of *rachamei Shamayim* to be saved from the dangers, and the merit of Torah is surely the greatest thing, because Torah saves us.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 98b) discusses *chevlei mashiach*, the birth pangs of Mashiach, which is a very difficult *tekufah*. They said, what should a person do to be saved from *chevlei mashiach*? The *eitzah* they gave was: Be *osek baTorah* and *gemillus chassadim*, Torah and *chesed*.

And what is *chesed*? *Chesed* does not mean just someone who has a *gemach* and gives out loans. *Chesed* also means to make another person happy and content — both adults and children, all ages — that's called *chesed*. Everyone can give another person a good feeling, smile at him kindly, speak pleasantly to him, ask how he's feeling. Helping someone else with his learning is also *chesed*. If one person understands better than his friend and explains it to him, the second person is like his student, and Chazal said (*Taanis* 7a), "[I learned] from my students more than anyone else." Someone who teaches others and explains the learning to someone who needs help, this is a tremendous merit for *hatzlachah*, more than anything else. And along with this, of course we need *tefillah*, *rachmei shamayim*, and *tefillos*.

But *l'maaseh*, what helps the most is *esek haTorah*, because "*Torah magna u'matzlah*, Torah protects and saves us" (*Sotah* 21a), and this offers the most protection. The *pasuk* states, "Our feet were standing in Your gates Yerushalayim," and the Gemara explains (*Makkos* 10a), "Who caused our feet to stand upright in war? The gates of Yerushalayim, which means *Klal Yisrael* was *osek baTorah*, and *esek haTorah* gave the army the necessary *zechuyos* to be victorious in battle.

If so, we are soldiers, the most elite soldiers, and it's in our merit that they're winning the war. In your *zechus*, in the *zechus* of being *osek baTorah*, soldiers are winning the war. This is something that even secular Jews understand, even though they're irreligious, because they have *emunah*. They want us, they're asking us, to learn Torah — those of them who aren't embarrassed. Of course, some of them are embarrassed to request it straight out, but in their hearts, they want it, and we are soldiers, we are Hashem's army!

Therefore, we are actually duty-bound to be Hashem's army, to be loyal soldiers to the King, the King of all kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu. We must be loyal to do whatever the King demands of us, and the King does not make demands of us that we are incapable of carrying out. He only asks us to do what we are capable of, to be *osek baTorah*, *Toras Hashem*.

Additionally, it's very important to know that when it comes

to strengthening our *emunah*, while we are all *maaminim bnei maaminim*, our *emunah* must be active and practical. We see that during a time of suffering, even secular Israelis strengthen their *emunah* and try to do whatever they know, whatever *mitzvos* they are familiar with, to protect themselves from the *tzaros*. We are presently living in a time of *tzaros rabbim*, communal suffering, many of our Jewish brothers are in danger and live in constant fear of death. Soldiers in the army are suffering and frightened, and so are their parents, everyone's afraid.

If we would think a little, it should be something that disturbs us, it should cause us pain. It's not simple, but if we'd give it some thought, if a person would spend some time thinking how the soldiers feel, and how terrified their parents are, he would start worrying about them a little. And if you worry and care about them, you will immediately strengthen your Torah and *tefillah* and distance yourself from anything against the Torah. It's in our hands to be *shakuah*, immersed, in Torah, to distance ourselves from all other things that are against the Torah. It's not hard, just the beginnings are hard, but afterwards, it becomes easy and very pleasant! And *b'ezras Hashem*, everyone should be blessed with all the *brachos* in the Torah, for many happy, healthy years.

From a sichah delivered in Yeshivas Orchos Yehudah in Elad during the war in Southern Israel, 5773 (2013).



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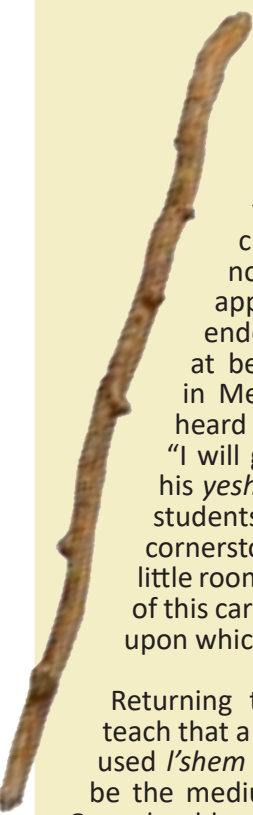
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What “merit” did the *mateh*, staff, have that it was used as the medium for carrying out some of the plagues against Pharaoh and the Egyptian people? *Rabbi Go’el Alkarif* suggests a powerful *mussar*, ethical lesson, to be derived from here. Prior to *Horav Yisrael Salanter’s* public emergence as the preeminent founder of the *mussar* movement, he lived quietly in Memel, Germany, with an idea, an idea that would transform the Jewish world. His innovation was to focus on *mussar* also. In addition to studying *Gemorah*, Jews should also work on their *middos*, character traits, refining and honing them, so that they would become better people, better Jews.



At that juncture in time, the *mussar* concept was not accepted in the *yeshivah* world. He needed to establish a *yeshivah* whose guiding principles would include the study of *mussar* in its curriculum. Unfortunately, his dream did not coincide with the reality of finding an appropriate venue and supporting such an endeavor. Obtaining a physical structure was at best difficult. One day, a Jewish carpenter in Memel, a simple, unlearned man who had heard of Rav Yisrael’s plight, made him an offer: “I will give the *Rav* a small room to be used for his *yeshivah*. I will make tables and chairs for the students to study. This room could serve as the cornerstone of his honor’s *yeshivah*.” Indeed, that little room, provided to him through the good graces of this carpenter, was the foundation of his *yeshivah*, upon which the *mussar* movement was founded.

Returning to the *mateh*, staff, Hashem sought to teach that a simple staff – a wooden stick – can also be used *l’shem shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven. It can be the medium for eliciting *kiddush shem shomayim*. One should never put down even the smallest, most

insignificant entity, especially a person. The *mussar* movement taught us the significance of actions which appear to be insignificant.

Three aspiring *yeshivah bachurim* in Baltimore, Maryland, wanted to go to Europe to study in *yeshivah*. It was prior to World War II. At the time, they had no reason to believe that learning Torah in Europe would ever be a problem. Their desire to learn was great. One impediment prevented them from realizing their dream: money. They had already been accepted—two had been admitted to *Telshe*, and one to *Slabodka*. Money was tight in America. Jews who observed *Shabbos* had an even greater challenge. Yet, some *yechidim*, individuals, were willing to take that “one step” for *Yiddishkeit*. A Jewish grocer in Baltimore, Philip/Uri Gundersheimer, had, despite tremendous financial pressure, refused to remain open on *Shabbos*, even during the depression years. He came forward and undertook the responsibility to pay for all expenses incurred by the three young men. They went to *yeshivah* all because a simple Jew took that first step.

Philip Gundersheimer died in 1943, at the age of ninety-five years old. He never did see his investment achieve complete fruition. Surely now, ensconced in *Gan Eden* receiving his just reward, he is unaware of what his one step accomplished. The three young men were: *Horav Mordechai Gifter, z'l, Telshe Rosh Yeshivah*, who transformed the lives of thousands of *yeshivah bachurim*; *Horav Aharon Paperman, z'l*, who, while serving as an army chaplain, inspired thousands of Jewish soldiers. This was followed by *rabbanus* in Plainfield, New Jersey, a principalship in Scranton, Pennsylvania, being Executive Director of *Telshe Yeshivah* and Director of *Chinuch Atzmai*; and *Rav Mendel Poliakoff, z'l*, a *Rav* in Baltimore.

It is our task to act. Hashem determines the significance of our actions. One never knows.

Successful Leaders Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt"l



At first, Moses’ mission seemed to be successful. He had feared that the people would not believe in him, but God had given him signs to perform, and his brother Aaron to speak on his behalf. Moses “performed the signs before the people, and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.” (Ex. 4:30-31)

But then things start to go wrong, and continue going wrong. Moses’ first appearance before Pharaoh is disastrous. Pharaoh refuses to recognize God and he rejects Moses’ request to let the people travel into the wilderness. Then he makes life worse for the Israelites. They must still make the same quota of bricks, but now they must also gather their own straw. The people turn against Moses and Aaron: “May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” (Ex. 5:21)

We sense the pressure Moses is under. After his first setback at the end of last week’s *parsha*, he had turned to God and bitterly asked: “Why, Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Is this why You sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and You have not rescued Your people at all.” (Ex. 5:22-23)

In this week’s *parsha* of *Vaera*, even when God reassures him that he will eventually succeed, he replies, “If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?” (Ex. 6:12).

There is an enduring message here. Leadership, even of the very highest order, is often marked by failure. So it is with leaders. Lincoln faced countless setbacks during the Civil War. He was a deeply divisive figure, hated by many in



But What about Our Appliances?

Rabbi Yissacher Frand



The verse says "...And you will know that I am the L-rd who brings you out from under the sufferings of Egypt" (*tachas sivlos Mitzraim*) [*Shmos* 6:7]. The *Chidushei HaRim* and the Kotzker Rebbe both say a very interesting thought. The words of the verse mean something else. '*Sivlos*' doesn't mean suffering, rather it comes from the expression "I can be '*sovel*' this", meaning I can take it. (I have the patience.) The *Chidushei HaRim* says that the first step of redemption is for the people to say, "I can't take it anymore." As long as one can be complacent in the Exile, redemption can never occur. "I bring you out from the '*sivlos*' Mitzraim" means that G-d implanted in the Jews the concept of "No more! We have had enough of this rotten Galus!" Up until this point they were '*sovel*' it. They bore the burden; they felt they could take it. The *Geulah* doesn't come to one who can take it.

I saw a *Chassideshe* story about Reb Nochum Chernobler. Reb Nochum was once in an inn and he arose at midnight to say *Tikun Chatzos*. (These are prayers that holy Jews say at midnight, imploring G-d to bring the Messiah and end the Exile). The innkeeper, a very simple Jew, heard Reb Nochum reciting Psalms in the middle of the night and went down to him and asked him "What are you saying?" Reb Nochum explained, "I am saying *Tikun Chatzos* that the Master of the World should end our bitter *Galus* and that we should all go to Eretz Yisroel, and it should be finally over". The innkeeper was impressed. He went back upstairs, woke up his wife and told her, "You know, there is a Jew downstairs who is praying that the *Galus* should end and that we should all go to Eretz Yisrael." His wife turned

over and said, "Go to Eretz Yisrael? What is going to be with the farm? What is going to be with the cows? What is going to be with the horses?"

The innkeeper was bothered by his wife's questions. He went back to Reb Nochum and said, "But Reb Nachum — what will be with the farm and the cows and the horses?" Reb Nachum said to him "You're worried about the cows and the house and the barn? — And when the Cossacks come and the Tartars come and they pillage and plunder — then you're happy? Is that what you want? G-d will take us to Eretz Yisrael — no more Cossacks, no more Tartars!" Again the innkeeper was impressed. He ran back upstairs and related Reb Nachum's response to his wife. The wife said "Go tell Reb Nachum that G-d should take all the Cossacks and all the Tartars to Eretz Yisroel and we'll stay here with the farm and the cows and the horses!"

This is what it means — "One is '*sovel*' the *Galus*". If one doesn't leave the '*sivlos*' of Egypt — if one can still tolerate it — then Redemption is still far away.

Today we may not have barns and cows and horses. But we do ask — what's going to be with our appliances, and what's going to be with our mortgages, and what's going to be with the great life that we have? If we are still attached to all this, the *Geulah* will not come for us. We have to reach the level of saying, "We've had it! No more bitter *Galus*!" When that is how we feel, then the *Geulah* will come, may it be speedily in our day.

266 DAYS UNTIL UMAN

his lifetime. Gandhi failed in his dream of uniting Muslims and Hindus together in a single nation. Nelson Mandela spent twenty-seven years in prison, accused of treason and regarded as a violent agitator. Winston Churchill was regarded as a spent force in politics by the 1930s, and even after his heroic leadership during the Second World War he was voted out of office at the first General Election once the war was over. Only in retrospect do heroes seem heroic and the many setbacks they faced reveal themselves as stepping-stones on the road to victory.

Rabbi Yitzhak Hutner, zt"l once wrote a powerful letter to a disciple who had become discouraged by his repeated failure to master Talmudic learning:

A failing many of us suffer is that when we focus on the high attainments of great people, we discuss how they are complete in this or that area, while omitting mention of the inner struggles that had previously raged within them. A listener would get the impression that these individuals sprang from the hand of their creator in a state of perfection... The result of this feeling is that when an ambitious young man of spirit and enthusiasm meets obstacles, falls and

slumps, he imagines himself as unworthy of being "planted in the house of God." (Ps. 92:13)

Know, however, my dear friend, that your soul is rooted not in the tranquility of the good inclination, but in the battle of the good inclination...

The English expression, "Lose a battle and win the war," applies. Certainly you have stumbled and will stumble again, and in many battles you will fall lame. I promise you, though, that after those losing campaigns you will emerge from the war with laurels of victory on your head...

The wisest of men said, "A righteous man falls seven times, but rises again." (Proverbs 24:16) Fools believe the intent of the verse is to teach us that the righteous man falls seven times and, despite this, he rises. But the knowledgeable are aware that the essence of the righteous man's rising again is *because of* his seven falls.

Rabbi Hutner's point is that *greatness cannot be achieved without failure*. There are heights you cannot climb without first having fallen.

Harav Matisyahu Chaim Salomon, zt"l



Harav Matisyahu Chaim Salomon, zt"l, Mashgiach of Bais Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, was revered worldwide for his tremendous knowledge and how he was able to transmit the yesodos of Yiddishkeit and mussar to a wide audience, both old and young, learned and unlearned, talmidei hayeshivos or baalei batim. With his clarity of thought and

eloquent delivery, he reached the minds and hearts of Yidden and inspired them to enhance their Torah learning, performance of mitzvos, and improve their middos.

Rav Matisyahu was born in Gateshead, England on the first day of Chanukah, 25 Kislev, 5697 to his father, Reb Yaakov and Etil, and entered Eitz Chaim Yeshiva in London around 5709/1949. At the time, Harav Elya Lopian, zt"l, was still in the yeshiva, and although Rav Elya moved to Eretz Yisrael a year later, Rav Matisyahu considered him as his rebbi muvhak. He learned together with Harav Chaim Kaufman, zt"l, the founder of Yeshiva Gateshead L'tze'irim for sixteen years.

In 1960, he married Miriam née Falk, a"h, the sister of Harav Eliyahu Falk, zt"l, the mechaber of Machazeh Eliyahu, Oz Vehadar and other seforim.

Rav Matisyahu was appointed as the assistant Mashgiach under Harav Moshe Schwab, zt"l, and held that position for over thirty-five years. In 1998, he was invited to be the Mashgiach in Bais Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, and worked alongside Harav Nosson Wachtfogel, zt"l for several months until Rav Nosson's petirah.

At the levayah, Rav Matisyahu said that when he arrived in Lakewood, he mentioned to Rav Nosson that they were both tamidim of Rav Elya Lopian, and he would very much like to arrange a seder limud together.

They began learning Sefer Tomar Devorah, and Rav Matisyahu noticed that at the end of each perek, Rav Nosson would close his eyes and think for a few minutes, and then break out in a smile.

"When I asked Rav Nosson what he was thinking about and why he smiled, he did not answer," said Rav Matisyahu. "I suggested that he was making a cheshbon hanefesh if he was koneh (acquired) the middah that the perek discussed, and his smile was because he indeed saw that he had acquired it."

"Rav Nosson smiled and answered, 'Mir ken alle mohl besser veren,' one can always improve."

In his shmuezen and vaadim which he delivered both in yeshiva and elsewhere, Rav Matisyahu offered encouragement and advice in all aspects of Yiddishkeit and chinuch. Thousands of people availed themselves of his shmuezen and his seforim, titled Matnas Chaim, which have become classics in his own lifetime.



— Hamodia

Believe in Yourself

Rav Salomon ztl pointed out, "We have all heard a thousand times that the Temple was destroyed because of sinas chinam, baseless hatred, and we have received countless reminders through the words of the Chafetz Chaim, that if we would stop speaking lashon hara we would be redeemed. And yet, somehow, we have failed to internalize the message!"

In Sefer Matnas Chayim, Rav Salomon reveals the root of our failure to maintain holy, elevated speech: a lack of faith in ourselves. Faith in ourselves is essential, because when we feel good about ourselves and are confident in our own stature, we can recognize the value and good in others as well. To strongly harness the power of speech, however, we still must realize that our words leave a mark in this world and in the world Above. We have an awesome potential to build or destroy, to draw close or chalilah, to create distance. The gift of speech represents the infinite trust that Hashem has in us, and in creating us in His image. Knowing that every word we speak actualizes the nishmas chayim that we were imbued with in our creation is a powerful starting point for maintaining dignified speech.

— Torah Tidbits



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JOKES

I Never Tried

Rivka is having lunch with Hannah, the world's most perfect "Princess." Rivka says, "My husband David is just impossible. Absolutely nothing pleases him. Tell me, Hannah, is your Shlomo hard to please?" Hannah shrugs and replies, "I wouldn't know. I've never tried."

Sad Story

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."

Truck Crash

A truck loaded with thousands of copies of Roget's Thesaurus crashed yesterday losing its entire load. Witnesses were stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, stupefied, confused, shocked, rattled, paralyzed, dazed, bewildered, mixed up, surprised, awed, dumbfounded, nonplussed, flabbergasted, astounded, amazed, confounded, astonished, overwhelmed, horrified, numbed, flummoxed, speechless, and perplexed. Meanwhile, those waiting for the shipment were at a loss for words.

The Anesthesiologist

Bill received a bill from the hospital for his recent surgery, and was astonished to see a \$4,000 charge for the anesthesiologist.



He called his office to demand an explanation.

"Is this some kind of mistake?" he asked when he got the doctor on the phone.

"No, not at all," the doctor said calmly.

"Well," said Bill, "That's awfully costly for just knocking someone out!"

"Not at all," replied the doctor. "I knock you out for free. The \$4,000 is for bringing you back around."



Can't Complain

A Russian Jew wanted to immigrate to Israel.

The local commissar calls him in for questioning and asks:

Q. Haven't we allowed you the right to worship in your Synagogue?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we let you live in peace with your fellow Jews?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we allowed you to travel freely within and beyond the village?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we allowed you to teach your children Torah?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we let you practice your profession?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Then why do you want to go to Israel?
A. "There, I can complain!"

Request

A poor man walking in the forest feels close enough to God to ask, "God, what is a million years to you?"

God replies, "My son, a million years to you is like a second to me."

The man asks, "God, what is a million dollars to you?"

God replies, "My son, a million dollars to you is less than a penny to me. It means almost nothing to me."

The man asks, "So God, can I have a million dollars?"
And God replies, "In a second."

One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know at least somebody's listening

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