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Shabbos Zmanim **CANDLE LIGHTING 8:11 PM**

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| | | |
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| | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
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12 MIN. BEFORE SHKIA

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RABBI DANIEL COREN



Adirei HaTorah

I'm writing this article a few days prior to the Adirai HaTorah event. I'm not a *mekubal*, so I won't pretend to tell you what will be. However, what I can share with you is what the days before the event mean. In this week's *parsha*, the Jewish people complain again about Moshe Rebbeinu, our faithful shepherd and leader. Being a leader or a rav, or even what we might call a simple Jew, is not a simple task. Every one of us who represents the Torah carries a heavy load of responsibility. We are the teachers of the world; our mission is to be a light to the world, and we have done that for generations from the time of the Avos on a personal level and as a nation after the giving of the Torah. This mission will be magnified when Mashiach arrives and shines the light on every one of us and shows us how much light we possess, and at that point, every Jew will have many non-Jews asking them for guidance.

Adirai HaTorah represents not just an illustrious *makom Torah*; it represents the preciousness and honor of Torah. It shines the spotlight on the *talmidei chachamim* and on all of us who represent the light of Torah.

My dear friend Rav Sneh *shlita* shared a beautiful idea from Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelovitch *zt"l*, the founder of Yeshiva Torah Vadaas, with me. The Gemara in *Brachos* 28 relates how Rav Zeira was once feeling weak. He decided to sit at the entrance of the *bais midrash*. This way, every time an elder or rabbi entered, he would get up for them and fulfill a positive commandment. This seems a bit odd. Usually, if someone is weak and tired and needs a break, they take a day off, or if they are more *rebbish*, they go to Switzerland to the Alps and do some *hisbodedus*. Here, Rav Zeira now had to sit and get up multiple times. That doesn't sound like a good break. Rav Mendelovitch explained a big *yesod* in life. Rav Zeira was feeling weak. He thought to himself: How can I feel weak and take a break? After all, if someone was offering hundred-dollar bills for free, and all you needed to do was walk up the hill, you wouldn't be this tired. Therefore, Rav Zeira sought something that would require action and express *kavod haTorah* by getting up for *talmidai chachamim* and elders. This creates an internal message of *chashivas haTorah*.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR in R' Coren's office every Wednesday at 9:00 PM

RABBI AARON LANKRY



Zechariah's Vision

The *haftarah* that we read this week is in *Zechariah* 2:14 till 4:7. Zechariah was the second to the last of the 12 prophets known as *Trei Assor*. He lived during the period of the Second Temple, in the second year of the rule of Darius, the son of Esther.

The *haftarah* relates the following: Hashem shows Zechariah a vision of Yehoshua Kohen Gadol standing in the Heavenly Court, and an angel of Hashem begins to speak negatively about Yehoshua's children. His children have left the ways of Hashem and married non-Jewish women. Hashem comes to the Kohen Gadol's defense with his great mercy, saying that soon, his children will divorce those women. Additionally, Yehoshua has many merits as his forefathers were also kohanim gedolim. In the vision, Zechariah sees Yehoshua wearing soiled clothing, suggesting sin. The angel instructs other angels to separate those non-Jewish women from Yehoshua Kohen Gadol's children, and then they will turn pure and clean. Upon seeing this, Zechariah prays that Yehoshua should continue to be the kohen gadol and that his children should follow in his ways to be kohanim gedolim. Zechariah is told that if they will maintain the proper level of *kedusha* and follow in Hashem's ways, they will merit to continue the chain of kohanim gedolim. The children repented and returned to the Torah's ways, and they, too, became kohanim gedolim.

It is fascinating to see how Hashem judges us. Does our action in the future count for today? We see this when Yishmael, the son of Hagar, was a child, and he was sick and dying. The Heavenly Court requested that he die now because, in the future, he would cause so much sorrow to the Jewish people. Hashem responded, "*Basher hu sham*," we only judge a person at the time of his action. Yishmael is innocent now, and therefore, he can live on.

Here, the children of Yehoshua are currently living in sin, but Hashem judges them as innocent because He knows that later, they will repent. Why would this be so? If the premise is "*Ba'asher hu sham*," we judge a person by how they are today, why did Hashem judge them innocently by looking in their future?

From this, we gain an incredible insight into Hashem's ways. The concept of "*Ba'asher hu sham*" only works in a person's favor. If a person is currently in sin but in the future will be righteous, Hashem will judge Him favorably. If, however, a person is currently innocent of sin, even though the future might bring them to be evil, Hashem will then judge them favorably as they are now. The *haftarah* instructs, "Rejoice and sing the daughter of Zion because I have already come." That statement does not seem accurate, as we are still in exile. Hashem is teaching us to "judge" Him as He "judges" us. Although right now, we are living in the bitter reality of exile, the seeds of redemption have been planted. Hashem wants us to view our current situation with joy, internalizing the certainty of the imminent *geulah*.

COUNTING DOWN UNTIL
UMAN

117 DAYS





The "Days" and "Nights" of Life

"On the day the Tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered the Tabernacle," the Bible records in the Torah portion of *Behaalosecha*. "Then, in the evening, there would be upon the Tabernacle like a fiery glow till morning."

"From then on, it remained that way," the Torah continues. "The cloud would cover it [by day] and a glow of fire by night."

SMUGNESS VS. DESPAIR

The Tabernacle was the edifice erected by the people of Israel in the Sinai desert to serve as a home for the Divine Presence. In Jewish writings, the Tabernacle represents the place in the human heart where the light of G-d resides. The Tabernacle, then, exists timelessly within the human soul.

This sacred and noble place within us must include both a cloud by day and a fire by night. Each person experiences in his or her life "days" and "nights," moments of light and moments of darkness, times of happiness and contentment, as well as times of agony and turmoil. For some, the days are longer than the nights; for others, the nights sadly exceed the days. Yet most humans possess a share of both realities.

When things are going well for us – when we're paying the bills nicely, the kids are healthy, our spouses are there for us, and we're satisfied with our lot – we often forget how vulnerable we really are in this world. We tend to become smug, complacent, and desensitized. We often become apathetic to other people's pain. We don't feel the need for genuine friendships and certainly not for a relationship with G-d. We don't feel the urgent need to be real. At moments of bliss, people often feel that they are on top of the world and they do not need anybody. They forget their humanness and simplicity.

On the other hand, when things become (Heaven forbid) difficult and painful – your company is *"in der erd"* (Yiddish for "in the ground"), a loss in the family, illness of a loved one, a marriage goes sour, the bank is after us, our children are not doing well, or we are overcome by inner mental or physical challenges – we often fall prey to feelings of despair and loneliness. We sink into the morass of life's hardships, as we say to ourselves, "It's dark, and it's getting darker."

MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE

Thus, the Torah teaches us a movingly profound lesson.

If you are to become a human Taberna-

cle, if you wish to discover the grace of G-d within your heart, you must recall the darker cloud hovering above you even during times of brightness and splendor. A person must always remember that, ultimately, he cannot claim ownership over anything in his life. Life is a gift, love is a gift, health is a gift, relationships are gifts, parents are gifts, and children are gifts. Financial success, too, is not a natural symptom of your brilliant investments; it is a gift. One ought never to become blind to the truth that everything can change in a single instance and that there is so much pain in the world. When you remember the clouds, you will never become arrogant, detached, and false.

On the other hand, when night falls upon us, when life exposes its painful and darker side to us, we must recall the glowing light hovering above us. We must remember that every experience we endure is part of our life's mission to serve G-d under these circumstances and to transform the world into a home for goodness and G-dliness. Every challenge contains an opportunity for deeper awareness, growth, and rebirth. It invites us into a deeper relationship with our soul and our G-d. Each cloud contains a flame within.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

MONDAY & THURSDAY Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)
SHABBOS Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)
 PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.



ליהודים שומרי מצוות בד בבד עם ידיעותיהם?"

"כבוד הרב... זה עולם אחר כאן, בחו"ל. השכונה שאני חי בה... החברים שלהם... זה פשוט לא מתאים... אתה מבין..."

"התורה נצחית בכל המקומות ובכל הזמנים!", התעקש הרב. "אמריקה לא שונה כלל בעיניי זה. אתה יכול וחייב לתת לילדיך חינוך יהודי!"

איש העסקים המשיך להתנווכח ועמד על שלו. הרב לא הירפה ממנו ולמרות כל תחנוניו הסוחר נשאר בסירובו.

"אני לא מבין", אמר לבסוף הרב. "לא אני ולא אבא שלי עסקנו מעולם במסחר."

אך בכל זאת הגעת לכאן מרחוק לבקש את עצתי על ההחלטות העסקיות החשובות לך ביותר. ומצד שני, ביחס לחינוך הילדים – שזהו התחום לו הקדשנו את כל חיינו אני ואבותי – אתה לא מוקן לקבל את עצתי?!...!"

קמה פתיחות וקבלה נדרשת בקבלת עצה....

ענה לו הישישי: גם אני כמוך – אינני יודע, כבר שבעים שנה אני תועה כאן, רק דבר אחד אני יכול לומר לך בוודאות: בדרך שהלכתי אני – אתה אל תלך, שבדרך זו טועים. אבל את הדרך הנכונה שיש לך ללכת – את זה עליך למצוא בעצמך...

את העצה הזו אומר החידושי הרי"ם, יכול בן חמישים לתת – "לשמור משמרת" לעמוד על המשמר "לנעילת שערים", איזה שער לנעול כדי שלא להיכנס שם.

כמה הקשבה וקבלת עול נדרשת מאיתנו בקבלת עצה מחכם.

מסופר שסוחר אחד הגיע אל הרב כדי לבקש את עצתו ואת ברכתו. אחרי שהקשיב לדאגותיו של איש העסקים ונתן לו את עצתו בענייני מסחרו. שאל אותו הרב: "מה עם ילדך?"

"מעולה", השיב האב הגאה. "הם מקבלים ציונים גבוהים בבית הספר – ממש מצליחים! אין ספק שהם יתקבלו לאוניברסיטאות הטובות ביותר במדינה..."

"ומה בקשר לחינוך היהודי שלהם? מדוע שלא תשלח אותם ללמוד בישיבה?, וכך יפכו הם

הרב בן ציון סנה

קבלת עצה

"ומבן חמישים שנה ישוב מצבא העבודה ולא יעבוד עוד".

מבאר רשי"י:

אבל חוזר הוא לנעילת השערים.

המשנה באבות אומרת: "בן חמישים לעצה"

מביא רבי עובדיה מברטנורא ראייה מפרשת

השבוע:

שנאמר בלוי"ם: "ומבן חמישים שנה ישוב מצבא

העבודה ולא יעבוד עוד ושרת את אחיו וגו'" ומהו

השירות? שיתן להם עצה.

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שאל אותו: היכן הדרך לצאת מן היער?

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RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



Mozzarella Cheese and Parmesan Cheese MOZZARELLA CHEESE

We have seen that after eating hard cheese, one must wait before eating meat, just as we are required to wait after meat before eating dairy. This is whether it is six months old or has a hard texture that leaves a strong aftertaste.

What is the *halacha* in regard to mozzarella cheese used in pizza, called by the *poskim* “yellow cheese”? If a person had pizza for lunch, can they eat meat for supper? Rav Elyashiv ruled that it has the status of hard cheese, and the person must wait six hours. Other *poskim* hold that it is not necessary, which is the prevalent *minhag* in America.

PARMESAN CHEESE

There is a big question in the *poskim* about hard cheeses that were melted, such as in a soup or the like. A prime example of this is Parmesan cheese, which is often used in soup or melted into eggplant. Do we say that once the cheese became “a six-hour cheese,” it retains that status, or should we say that once it is melted and becomes soft, it no longer has the status of hard cheese?

The reason to differentiate is based on the words of the *Yad Yehuda*, a classic commentary on these *halachos*. He writes that if someone melts the cheese, it is no longer necessary to wait six hours.

But there are different ways of understanding this ruling. Some explain that it is because the cheese became soft and therefore loses its status of being hard cheese, even if there are still pieces of cheese that are noticeable. According to this understanding, eggplant parmesan with melted cheeses would not be considered six-hour cheese, since the cheese is melted. Although the pieces are noticeable, since the cheese is soft, it loses its status of being hard cheese.

Some take this leniency even further and add that once it is cooked, it loses its status of hard cheese, and even if it becomes hard again, one is no longer required to wait six hours.

Others explain that it is not the cooking *per se*, but the fact that it gets dissolved, such as when cooked in a soup. According to this understanding, since eggplant parmesan still has distinct pieces, it will retain the status of six-hour cheese.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

What happens if someone ate hard cheese on Friday afternoon, and if he is required to wait six hours until starting the Shabbos meal, this will cause the family to wait many hours for the meal? In this case, there are *poskim* who rule that there is room to be lenient and not wait six hours. But as with any complicated *halachic* question, when such situations arise, one should be sure to ask a competent rav.

IN SUMMARY

After pizza, Rav Elyashiv ruled that a person must wait six hours, but the prevalent *minhag* in America is to follow the *poskim* who hold that it is not necessary. Some hold that eggplant parmesan with melted cheeses is not considered “six-hour cheese” since the cheese is melted. Others hold that this allowance is only when the cheese dissolves, such as when cooked in a soup, but eggplant parmesan still has distinct pieces and retains the status of a “six-hour cheese.”



SHIUR SCHEDULE

KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

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

NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently: הלכות ניבויב אב ואמ

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45 PM
Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ

THE POINT OF A YESHIVA

Unlike what others think, that the main goal of a yeshiva is to prepare *rabbonim*, *shochtim*, and other *klei kodesh* [teachers, mentors, etc.], the main and top priority is to prepare Yidden who, before they venture out into the world to become *baalei batim* (businessmen, etc.), should be filled and satiated with Torah and *yiras-Shamayim*. Then, later on, when being amongst other people in the world, they will be able to uplift their entire surroundings by bestowing and enriching their brethren around them with the

gift of *ahavas Hashem*, *ahavas haTorah*, and *ahavas Yisroel* in daily life.

==== Igros Kodesh V18 P168. In an address to the students of the Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, which he founded in 5657 (1897), the Rebbe Rashab said that he desired his students to be lamplighters, to inspire and ignite the hearts of others with love and awe of our Father in Heaven, wherever they may be. “They will be,” he said, “throughout the entire world.”





Swimming Upstream

In *Parshas Beha'alotcha*, we encounter the famous statement that is recited each time we open the *aron kodesh*: “*Vayehi binso'a ha'aron*” (*Bamidbar* 10:35). In the Torah, this paragraph is separated by two inverted letter *nuns*, “ן”. The Gemara in *Shabbos* (116) explains that this *parsha* is cordoned off to highlight that it is its own book. The question then arises: Why specifically is the letter *nun* used to separate this paragraph? What significance can we derive from the use of the letter *nun* rather than any other letter of the alphabet? In addition, why is the letter inverted? If the sole purpose is to form a separation, the letter in its upright position should have sufficed.

Rabbi Norman Lamm, z”l, in his book *Drashot L'Dorot*, offers a deep insight with a message that truly permeates the generations. Rabbi Lamm cites a *Midrash HaNe'elam* (*Kabbalistic sefer* connected to the *Zohar*) that states that the letter *nun* is so significant that Yaakov used it when he blessed his children “*ve'yidgu larov*,” “Let them be plentiful” (*Bereishis* 48:6). The word *yidgu* is derived from the Hebrew word *dag*, which means fish. In Aramaic, another word for fish is *nun*. Therefore, the *Targum* interprets Yaakov's blessing to his children to be as fruitful as the fish of the sea, which multiply exponentially.

Rabbi Lamm extends this interpretation and explains that if *nun* means fish, then our inverted *nuns* come to symbolize fish swimming upstream, in the “inverted” direction. Its relevance to the paragraph of “*Vayehi binso'a ha'aron*” is critical. When carrying forward the Torah, one must be willing, ready, and able to go against the tide, as it were, and swim against the current when faced with influences that are inconsistent with Torah principles. One must dare to be different if necessary and not blend into the surroundings. When we witness Western civilization or even fellow Jews violating the sacred ideals of Judaism, we must become the “*nunim hafuchim*” and not fear our upstream mentality in defiance of the moral and ethical precepts of the Torah.

Similarly, Moshe is known by several names, yet he is most popularly referred to as Moshe. This name symbolizes “*Ki min hamayim mishihi*.” Essentially, he was “pulled from the water.” Typically, water conforms to and assumes the shape of the object into which it is inserted. Moshe was not a conformist. He was “pulled” from the water. Moshe stood up for justice. He was not afraid to express his opinion and defend his ideals in any surrounding. Moshe knew when and how to swim upstream.

This message resonates throughout Jewish history and, in particular, in our generation. Given modern technology, Western culture infiltrates our homes. We need to be steadfast and ensure that our Torah is not compromised. We must be strong enough to go against the tide when outside influences seek to dilute our moral and ethical principles. The inverted *nuns* surrounding *Vayehi binso'a ha'aron* serve to remind us of this most important task, the uncompromising way in which the Torah is to be carried by us along our every journey.

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RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER



Gan HaTorah

SPEAKING MOUTH TO MOUTH VS. MOUTH TO EAR

פה אל פה אדבר בו, ומראה ולא בחידות ותמנת ד' יביט

"Mouth to mouth, do I speak to him, in a clear vision, and not in riddles." Hakadosh Boruch Hu says that Moshe Rabbeinu is unique in that Hakadosh Boruch Hu spoke to him "mouth to mouth." Why isn't the *lashon* "פה אל אוזן" – that Hashem's mouth spoke directly to Moshe's ear, and not mouth to mouth, for one hears words with his ears, not his mouth?

All *nevi'im* prophesize with the *lashon* of "כה", while Moshe Rabbeinu also prophesized with the *lashon* of "זה", as the *posuk* in *Bamidbar* 30:2 says, "זה הדבר". All *nevi'im* were considered like a messenger, like someone one who receives money from one person and delivers it to another. Similarly, the *nevi'im* would receive words from Hashem, and then they would go to Klal Yisroel and deliver those words. The words that Hashem had told them would be repeated to Klal Yisroel, but the words were the words of the *nevi'im*.

This was not so with the *nevuah* of Moshe Rabbeinu, for the *Shechinah* spoke from within his throat. Thus, the words that came out of Moshe Rabbeinu's mouth were not his own words repeating that which Hakadosh Boruch Hu said, but they were the actual words of Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu's *nevuah* is described as "הדבר זה" – "This is the actual word of Hashem." While the other *nevi'im* were like messengers who gave the amount of money they received, Moshe Rabbeinu gave Klal Yis-

roel the actual coins that he was given – the actual words, and not his own words. (אדרת אליהו)

The *posuk* used the *lashon* of "פה אל פה" as opposed to "פה אל אוזן" because Hakadosh Boruch spoke and placed those actual words in his mouth, so that when Moshe gave those words to Klal Yisroel, the words were the actual words of Hakadosh Boruch Hu. When Hakadosh Boruch Hu spoke to Moshe from His mouth, His words went directly into Moshe's mouth, and Moshe Rabbeinu then passed along the words from Hashem's mouth to the ears of Klal Yisroel. When the other *nevi'im* were given words of Hakadosh Boruch Hu, they accepted them, and then when they delivered the message to Klal Yisroel, they gave their own words to Klal Yisroel. In regard to all the *nevi'im*, the *nevuah* was פה לאוזן. The words went from the mouth of Hakadosh Boruch Hu to the ears of the *navi*, and then the *navi* delivered that message in his own words.

Moshe Rabbeinu, who was exceedingly humble, totally nullified himself to Hakadosh Boruch Hu. He was an *eved Hashem* in the truest sense of the words. There was no Moshe Rabbeinu as an individual. Rather, there was only Moshe, the *Eved Hashem*, the servant of Hashem; that was his very being. Thus, the *lashon* of "mouth to mouth" means that when Moshe spoke, it was as if Hashem Himself was speaking. Moshe's mouth became Hashem's mouth, as if Moshe himself was not there.

May we be *zoche* to nullify ourselves before Hakadosh Boruch Hu, and may His Will thus be our will.

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS



Camp and Congregation

Our *parsha* speaks about the silver trumpets Moshe was commanded to make: "The Lord spoke to Moshe, saying, "Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [*eidah*] and cause the camps [*machano*] to journey." (*Bamidbar* 10:1–2)

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik explored the difference between the two terms used here to describe the people in his famous essay *Kol Dodi Dofek*. There are, says Rabbi Soloveitchik, two ways in which people become a group – a community, society, or nation.

The first is when they face a common enemy. They band together for mutual protection, knowing that only by doing so can they survive. Humans are not the only creatures to do this. Animals, too, come together in herds or flocks to defend themselves against predators. Such a group is a *machaneh* – a camp, a defensive formation.

An *eidah*, a congregation, is altogether different. Here, people can come together because they share a vision, a goal, a set of ideals. *Eidah* is related to the word *eid*, witness. *Eidot* (as opposed to *chukim* and *mishpatim*) are the commands that testify to Jewish belief, as Shabbat testifies to Creation, Pesach to the Divine involvement in history, and so on. An *eidah* is not a defensive formation but a creative one. People join to do together what none of them could achieve alone. A society built around a shared project, a vision of the common good, is not a *machaneh* but an *eidah*; not a camp but a congregation.

These are two different ways of existing and relating to the world. A camp is brought into being by what happens to it from the outside. A congregation comes into existence by internal decision. The first is reactive, the second proactive. The first is a response to what has happened to the group in the past. The second represents what the group seeks to achieve in the future. Whereas camps exist even in the animal kingdom, congregations are uniquely human. They flow from the human ability to think, speak, communicate, envision a society different from any that has existed in the past, and collaborate to bring it about.

So, a camp and a congregation. Judaism is both. This duality was given its first expression this week in *Beha'alotecha*, with the command: "Make two trumpets of silver; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon the congregation [*eidah*], and cause the camps [*machano*] to journey." Sometimes, the clarion call speaks to our sense of faith. We are G-d's people, His emissaries and ambassadors, charged with making His presence real in the world by healing deeds and holy lives. At other times, the trumpet that sounds and summons us is the call of fate: Jewish lives endangered in Israel or the Diaspora by the unremitting hostility of those who call themselves children of Abraham yet claim that they, not we, are his true heirs.

Whichever sound the silver instruments make, they call on that duality that makes Jews and Judaism inseparable. However deep the divisions between us, we remain one family in fate and faith. When the trumpet sounds, it sounds for us.

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When Someone Cares CHASSIDIC STORY

Every year, on his way from Petersburg to the annual regional fair in Nizhni-Novogorod, a certain wealthy chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek would first make a stop in Lubavitch to see his Rebbe and then in the small village of Dobromishl to visit an aging pious sage who had been his childhood teacher. He would leave a sum of money to help with his upkeep and then continue on his way.

One year, the chassid was delayed, and he left home only after the fair had already begun. Nevertheless, he stopped in Lubavitch to receive a blessing but intended to skip his visit to Dobromishl. He asked the Tzemach Tzedek's opinion on this.

"Since this has been your custom for many years," said the Rebbe, "it is not advisable to diverge from it."

Heeding this advice, the chassid traveled to Dobromishl and visited his old teacher, who greeted him with a warm welcome. Being in a great hurry, however, he planned to leave immediately after praying Mincha, but even before he finished, the sky darkened, and a fierce storm set in.

The teacher invited him to remain at his home overnight, but the chassid insisted on keeping to his original schedule. However, when he was then beset by a severe headache, he had no choice but to agree to his host's redoubled pleas that he stay.

The following morning, the chassid awoke feeling very ill, suffering from what appeared to be a dangerously high fever. A doctor was urgently summoned to the village from the nearby town of Orsha. When he was diagnosed with typhus, a telegram was immediately sent to his family and to the Tzemach Tzedek, that he should pray on the chassid's behalf.

After eight difficult weeks, the chassid was finally well enough to travel to Lubavitch. He was not able to suppress a sense of grievance toward the Rebbe who had advised him to visit his childhood teacher, for it had been on the way to Dobromishl that he had contracted a cold, which no doubt led to the typhoid fever.

Indeed, as soon as he entered the Tzemach Tzedek's study, he broke into tears: "Rebbe, why did you send me to Dobromishl?"

The Tzemach Tzedek replied by quoting the Talmud: "A man's legs may be depended upon to take him to the place to which he is summoned," that is, to where G-d has ordained that his life should end. The word for 'summoned,' *demisba'ei*, can also be understood to mean 'pray' in Aramaic. That means that 'A man's legs may be depended upon to take him to the place where there is someone who is able to pray for him.' You owe your life to the devoted prayers of your childhood teacher!"



Moshe's Extraordinary Humility

The final section of *Parashat Behaalotecha* tells the story of the inappropriate remarks made by Miriam and Aharon about their brother, Moshe Rabbeinu. They criticized Moshe's decision to separate from his wife, claiming that this was unnecessary, as they, too, were prophets, and yet did not find it necessary to separate from their spouses. The Torah relates that as punishment for this *lashon hara* (negative speech), Miriam was stricken with *tzaraat* (leprosy). The Midrash teaches that Aharon, too, received *tzaraat* because of this misdeed.

We read that Aharon turned to Moshe and pleaded, "*Al na tashet alenu hatat asher noa'lnu va'asher hatanu*" – "Please, do not cast upon us the sin which we foolishly committed, and which we transgressed" (12:11). Moshe immediately turned to G-d and prayed.

The *Or HaChaim* (Rav Haim Ben-Attar, 1696-1743) notes that Aharon begged Moshe to forgive him and Miriam for the wrong that they committed, implying that Moshe felt offended and was angered by their words. In truth, however, Moshe was not affected at all by what Aharon and Miriam said. Immediately after telling us about the *lashon hara* spoken about Moshe, the Torah adds, "And the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more so than any other man on the face of the Earth" (12:3). The *Or HaChaim* explains this verse as informing us that Moshe paid no attention whatsoever to his siblings' disparaging remarks about him. In his extraordinary humility, their words did not affect him in any way. He simply ignored them; he did not feel hurt or angered.

The *Or HaChaim* thus understood that Aharon mistakenly concluded that he and Miriam were punished because they angered Moshe. He assumed that he and his sister were stricken with *tzaraat* because of the anguish they caused Moshe with their words, so to cure the *tzaraat*, they needed Moshe's forgiveness. But Moshe, in truth, did not feel upset by what they said. The reason why they were punished, the *Or HaChaim* explains, is that Moshe had the *halachic* status of a king, and there is a rule that a king does not have the authority to waive the honor owed to him ("*Melech she'mahal al kebodo en kebodo mahul*"). Even though Moshe did not mind that Aharon and Miriam spoke about him disrespectfully, they were nevertheless guilty of the sin of dishonoring a king. The *Or HaChaim* adds a second explanation for why Aharon and Miriam were punished despite not having offended Moshe. He notes that their remarks were also disrespectful to Hashem, Who had approved of Moshe's decision to separate from his wife.

The *Or HaChaim* proves this point from the fact that Moshe responded to Aharon's plea by turning to G-d in prayer. Rather than simply announcing that he forgave Miriam and Aharon, he petitioned G-d on Miriam's behalf (Aharon had already been cured). Had Miriam been punished because she offended Moshe, he could have simply forgiven her. But since she was punished for a different reason, Moshe turned to G-d and begged that He cure his sister. Additionally, the *Or HaChaim* notes, if Miriam were punished for the anguish caused to Moshe, she would have been cured immediately after Moshe forgave her. But as Moshe was not hurt by her remarks, and she was punished for a different reason, Miriam's *tzaraat* lasted for seven days and did not disappear as soon as Moshe forgave her.

Let us learn from the example set for us by Moshe Rabbeinu, the example of true humility, to have the strength and self-confidence to disregard and ignore people's insults, avoid anger and grudges, and forgive rather than resent and fight back.



Focus and Concentration

The Torah instructs Aharon and, through him, all of his successors, the High Priests of Israel, that when lighting the great Menorah, one should make certain that the six outside lamps all face toward the center lamp. There are various opinions amongst the commentators as to how this was to be accomplished: The wicks were bent inwards, or perhaps the lamps themselves were tilted towards the middle lamp, or it could have been that this was only one of the recurring miracles that defined the Mishkan and, later, the Temple in Jerusalem. These are just some of the ideas advanced to explain how this matter was, in fact, accomplished. The greater question, obviously, is what lesson the Torah is imparting to us by this instruction that the outside lamps face the middle lamp. I think that the idea that the Torah wishes us to internalize is that the light of the holy Menorah requires focus.

We know that in the physical world, the more intense and concentrated the focus of

the light, the greater is its ability to illuminate and reveal. Diffused light creates mood and atmosphere, but it does not really show what lies before us. The light of the Menorah is symbolic of Torah in Jewish life. Torah and its study, support, and observance require focus and concentration. It cannot serve its true purpose in our lives when it exists amongst us only in a diffused and generalized sense. Our rabbis taught us what the focus of Jewish life is and should be: Torah, G-dly service, human kindness, and consideration for others. Other causes are only to be granted diffused light, and they, by themselves, will not serve to erase the darkness of our existence and society. Every human life, every family, even every educational and commercial enterprise, requires focus and concentration in order to be successful and productive.

We all have priorities in our lives. These priorities become the plans, actions, and ideas that we focus our attention, talents, and resources on. Judaism demands that we focus on love and the study of To-

rah and its observances. We should concentrate on our daily conversation, so to speak, our prayer services with our Creator.

We are required to serve G-d and do His bidding. And that requires effort, sacrifice, and devotion. It is perhaps the most challenging area of our religious life and demands total focus and concentration. Kindness towards others certainly requires focus. In theory, in a world of diffused light, we all subscribe to the notions of good behavior, social responsibility, and charitable ideals. However, when we are faced with the individual test of performing a specific human kindness to a specific human being, we oftentimes shirk that responsibility. Our focus is not present, and thus, we are prevented, not out of malice but simply out of lack of concentration, from performing the necessary act of kindness that lies before us. The lesson of the Menorah is one of focus, the focus that will allow the spirit of G-dliness to light our way throughout our lives.

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RABBI EFREM GOLDBERG



Torah and Tefilla

Parshas Behaaloscha begins with the *mitzva* of the kindling of the menorah. Hashem told Moshe to instruct Aharon, the kohen gadol,

בהעלותך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות.

The work *Shulchan Ha'Shabbos Im Rabbi Nachman* suggests an explanation of this *pasuk* based on Rav Nachman of Breslav's comments in the first chapter of *Likutei Moharan* regarding the critical importance of Torah learning.

Rav Nachman writes there that our *tefillos* are accepted through the merit of our Torah study. He cites the *pasuk* in *Sefer Mishlei* (28:9): "He who turns his ear away from listening to Torah, even his prayer is an abomination." If a person "turns his ear away from Torah," showing lack of interest in learning, walking out when the rabbi gets up to speak, or looking at his phone during a *shiur* instead of eagerly seizing another opportunity to learn, not only does he forfeit the precious *mitzva* of Torah learning, but his prayer is a תועבה,

an "abomination." The explanation, I believe, is that we have no right to speak to Hashem, to communicate to Him our needs and wishes, if we show no interest in hearing what He has to say to us.

I often advise singles that an important factor to consider when dating is whether one's date spends the evening talking about themselves or shows interest in the other person, inquiring about their life, aspirations, and ideas. In order to build a relationship, one must not only talk but must also listen with interest and attentiveness.

This is true of our relationship with Hashem, as well. We cannot build a relationship with Him only by speaking to Him, by sharing with Him our concerns, needs, and wishes, telling Him what we want. We must also listen to what He has to say to us, which is done through learning Torah. When we learn, we, in essence, hear Hashem speaking to us, explaining to us what He wants and expects of us. Only if we show interest in what He has to say to us can we then come before Him to express our needs. Otherwise, our prayers are a תועבה.

Due to the particular importance of Torah learning, Rav Nachman writes, the *yetzer hara* makes it very difficult for us to learn. Even people who eagerly perform other *mitzvos* often find it hard to devote time to study. This is a challenge that we must struggle to overcome because, as mentioned, Torah is critical for Jewish living.

The Shulchan Ha'Shabbos Im Rabbi Nachman suggests explaining the *pasuk* at the beginning of our *parsha* on this basis. The Torah turns to the "kohen gadol," to the spiritual guides and teachers, and tells them, בהעלותך את הנרות, they want to uplift the "candles," the souls of the people, which are likened to candles (נשמת אדם – *Mishlei* 20:27), then אל מול פני המנורה יאירו, they should direct the people's hearts toward Torah. Our souls cannot be ignited and uplifted without Torah learning. Studying Torah is a prerequisite for having our *tefillos* answered and an indispensable component of the effort to "kindle" our souls and ignite spiritual passion within ourselves.

RABBI NACHMAN WINKLER

The Eternal Menorah

Our *haftorah* is ALWAYS read on Shabbat Chanukah and on *Parashat Beha'aloscha* – always twice each and every year. And yet, despite its regular reading, it is a reading difficult to fully understand. In fact, Rashi opens his commentary to the sefer with the words: "[This Book] is very unclear ("stuma") as it contains dream-like visions that are difficult to interpret..." Well, if it is difficult for Rashi, how much more so for us?

The first six of the fourteen *p'rakim* of *Sefer Zecharya* contain eight visions, two of them included in our *haftorah* (from Chapters 3 and 4). We will focus on the last vision, the one of the Menorah, as it is the connection to the opening topic of our *parasha* and to the holiday of Chanukah.

Our *parasha* begins with the *mitzvah* of Aharon, the kohen gadol, to kindle the golden Menorah in the Mishkan/Mikdash.

Rashi quotes the Midrash that this *mitzvah* was meant as a comfort to Aharon, who was not included in the inaugural *korbanot*

of the tribal leaders. Hashem reassured Aharon that his task of lighting the Menorah twice a day was a greater meritorious act than the *korbanot* offered by the *nesi'im*. The Ramban clarifies the Midrashic approach, suggesting that it referred to the future lighting of the Menorah by Aharon's descendants, the Chashmona'im, during their *Chanukat Habayit* in the Second Temple era.

HaRav Baruch Gigi of Yeshivat Har Etzion, troubled by the Ramban's comment that "the lights will always illuminate the Menorah," suggests that this does not refer to the Menorah of the Beit HaMikdash (which, ultimately, would be destroyed) but, rather, the menorah lit by all Jews on Chanukah, the menorah kindled in all homes, marking the miracle Hashem brought for the Kohanim/Chashmona'im. And, Rav Gigi continues, saying that just as the Menorah's light was not meant to illuminate the Inner Sanctuary but to brighten all who were outside of it (see *Shabbat* 22b), so, too, this

menorah lights up the home and, by doing so, makes every home into a "mikdash m'at," a miniature sanctuary.

When applying this approach to Zecharya's vision, we may better understand his revelation from Hashem. Zecharya lived at the beginning of the Second Temple era. Although it was a time of great anticipation for a rebuilt Beit HaMikdash, a renewal of the sacrificial rite, and the hope for a restoration of the Davidic dynasty, it was also an era of challenge, fear, and doubt. It was at this particular time, therefore, that Hashem relayed to His prophet an essential message, that the light of the future will not be emanating from the Menorah in the Temple but from the small menorah surrounded by all the family members. The glow of religious fervor must first be kindled at home before it can hope to spread into the Temple.

The hope for a shining future must find its source in the home.

A message for us all!

RABBI SIMCHA GOFFMAN OHR.EDU

Basic Training A STORY FOR KIDS

Hup two three four! Hup two three four!

About face!

Left face!

Right face!

Forward, march!

Hup two three four!

Okay, you guys, tomorrow we're getting up at five a.m. for a twenty-mile hike with a twenty-pound backpack. You're in the army now!

Dis-missed!

What did you learn about in class today, Avi?

Funny that you should ask, Chaim. Today, we learned about soldiers and the army. Basic training in the army is very rough. They train the soldiers to take orders from their superiors.

Avi, our ancestors underwent their own basic training in the desert before they entered the Land of Israel. They camped in tents for forty years. They traveled from place to place, never knowing their schedule or destination. G-d guided them each step of the way. They learned to listen to His instructions. After that, observing the commandments was much easier. Try to imagine what it was like, over three thousand years ago in the desert . . .

Here we are in the desert, packing up camp again, getting ready to travel. This is a lot of work, packing up all of our belongings and placing them onto our wagons, donkeys, and camels. The *anan* (cloud) rose up from its place on top of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). That is our sign from G-d to break camp. We will keep traveling in the direction of the cloud until it comes to rest upon the Tabernacle again.

We have arrived after a long journey. The cloud has settled, signaling that this is our new encampment. Unpacking is a lot of work, but we will be able to rest when we are settled. This seems to be a very nice place to camp.

Look at that, the cloud has risen again after only one day! Time to pack up again. This is not easy. I was hoping that we would be staying for a longer time.

We have reached our destination. This place is actually not so nice. I hope we do not stay too long. Should we unpack everything? Perhaps we are only going to stay for a short time.

The cloud has settled down. It has not moved for quite a long time. This traveling has taught me a lesson. G-d is guiding us. We each have our own ideas about where and when we should travel. However, we travel according to G-d's wishes.

Chaim, that's amazing. Now I understand a little better why the Jewish people had the discipline to observe the *mitzvos* for over three thousand years through all kinds of trials and tribulations. Discipline is something that you have to work hard to acquire. They had a great basic training course in the desert.

And don't forget, their superior officer, Chaim. The Almighty got the point across better than any drill sergeant did in history. He never even had to say, "Hup two three four!"

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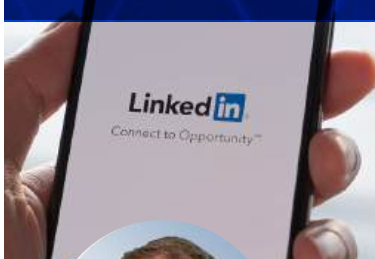


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