

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits.

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

❧ **VAYIGASH** ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

The Tzaddik Is Higher

There are many stories regarding what Rav Levi Yitzchak would say or do before Kol Nidre on the night of Yom Kippur. The following was a favorite of the first Rebbe of Gur, the author of *Chidushei Harim*, who retold it on a number of occasions.

One year, Rav Levi Yitzchak did not appear in the *beis midrash* for Kol Nidre until very late. The people, who were waiting anxiously, were much relieved to see him. They expected him to step before the *amud* and raise his sweet voice in launching the prayers of the holy day. But Rav Levi Yitzchak seemed in no hurry to begin. He looked around at the faces of the people, his eyes settling on no one in particular.

"Is there anyone here," he declared, "who knows the *poritz*, the local squire, of such-and-such a village?"

One man stepped forward. "I know that squire," he said.

"Do you know him well?"

"Quite well."

Rav Levi Yitzchak plied the man with questions about seemingly trivial matters such as the minute details of the squire's daily routine. The people were baffled, but they knew better than to utter any remarks.

"Does the squire have a dog?" Rav Levi Yitzchak asked the man.

“Yes, he does.”

“How does he treat the dog?”

The man was taken aback by the question. “Actually,” he said, “the squire treats his dog exceedingly well.”

“How well?”

“He gives the dog the finest foods and all sorts of comforts. In fact, he spends a great deal of money on that dog.”

“Very interesting,” said Rav Levi Yitzchak. “All right, now we can go to Kol Nidre.”

The people were puzzled by the sudden interest of the Berditchever in the squire’s dog. And what possible connection could this dog have to Kol Nidre. Later that night, a few chassidim approached him and asked to be enlightened.

“Let me tell you the story,” said Rav Levi Yitzchak. “A Jewish beggar had come to a village to collect some money for his family, but the villagers turned him away empty-handed. Heartbroken, this poor man sat down by the side of the road and wept. Just then, the squire passed by and saw the man crying. He stopped and asked him what was the matter. The man poured out his heart to him, and the squire was touched. He gave the man a sizeable amount of money and went on his way.

“Heaven was in an uproar. How could it be that the man’s Jewish brothers turned him away so cold-heartedly while the Polish squire took pity on him? Were these the people who expected to secure a sweet new year on Yom Kippur?

“The danger was great. But how could I defend the Jewish people before the Heavenly Court? How could I show that the squire was not better than they were? I found the answer when I heard how the squire treated his dog. The squire’s act was not motivated by concern for another human being. The Jewish beggar was no more than a whining animal in the eyes of the squire, and he gave him less money than he habitually spent on his dog.



Dvar Torah

The famine in Egypt was supposed to last seven years, but our Sages tell us that when Yaakov descended from Canaan the famine came to an end years before its intended conclusion. The commentators ask how it is possible that Yosef’s interpretation of the dream was not fulfilled.

There is another question, Rav Levi Yitzchak points out, regarding Yosef’s response to Pharaoh. After he finished the interpretation of the dream, he says to Pharaoh, “Now Pharaoh should seek out a wise and intelligent man and appoint him over the land of Egypt.” Wasn’t it presumptuous for Yosef to offer Pharaoh unsolicited advice? Since when had Pharaoh appointed Yosef as a royal advisor?

The answer lies in the power of a *tzaddik* to annul harsh divine decrees. Yosef was telling Pharaoh that the Almighty is communicating to him what He intends to do to Egypt. Why would it come to pass? Because, as Pharaoh reported, in his dream “he was standing on the banks of the river.” This was a significant statement. It indicated that Pharaoh was the

supreme power in the land of Egypt, that there was no *tzaddik* who stood higher than him and was able to annul the divine decree.

The implication of the dream, therefore, was that Pharaoh could avoid the harsh decree if he could find a *tzaddik* who stood higher than him and who possessed the power to annul the decree. That, in essence, was what Yosef was telling Pharaoh. He was telling the extended interpretation of the dream that the only way to avoid the full impact of the decree was by finding “a wise and intelligent man,” a *tzaddik*, and “appointing him over the land of Egypt” so that his power would be supreme and he would be able to annul the decree.

Ultimately, the decree was annulled precisely in accordance with Yosef’s interpretation when he “brought his father Yaakov and stood him before Pharaoh.” Yaakov, because of his exceeding sanctity, stood before and above Pharaoh, who represented the *klippos*, the unclean spiritual husks, of Egypt. Therefore, he was able to annul the decree. Yosef himself, however, could not annul the decree even though he was also a great *tzaddik*, because he was subservient to Pharaoh who had appointed him to his position.



הילולא

The anniversary of the *petira* of a *Tzaddik* is known as a *Hilula*, which means “A Day of Joy”.

One of the tools that *Kabbola* teaches is to connect to a *Tzaddik* (righteous person). The method to connect to a *Tzaddik* is to adopt the following ritual:

1) Learn the anniversary of his *petira* or, if this information is not available, the days of *Erev Rosh Chodesh*, *Rosh Chodesh* and the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month can be utilized for a connection.

2) Light a twenty-five-hour candle in his or her honor. There is no specific *berochah*. Some say the following: This candle is being lit in the merit of _____.

Others say that it is the custom within *Klal Yisrael* to light a *yahrzeit* candle on the day that a relative or a *Tzaddik* has passed away. The lighting has no accompanying blessing, and people would like to express themselves in a *tefilla* when lighting the candle. This is not only true on a *yahrzeit* but on every *Yom Tov* as well.

The author of the *Pele Yo’etz*, Rav Eliezer Papo (1785–1828), did in fact compose such a *tefilla*. Rav Papo was the *Rav* of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The *tefilla* of the *Pele Yo’etz* is reproduced and translated below, as a public service.

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגּוֹן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֻשֵׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעִילוּי נְשֻׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק _____
בְּ/בֵית _____, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרְצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעִילוּי לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפִרְט לְנַפְשׁ רּוּחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /
צַדִּיק _____ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁתִּהְיֶנָּה נְפֻשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים.

Translation:

Behold I am lighting this lamp for the resting and uplifting of the soul of my father/my mother/the *Tzaddik* _____ the son/daughter of _____. May it be Your will before you, *Hashem*, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that all my good deeds whether in thought, speech or action be done for a merit and a resting and an elevation of the souls of your nation Yisrael. It should be especially for the soul of my father/mother/the *Tzaddik* _____. May it be Your will that their souls be bound in the bond of life.

3) Learn about the person including history, culture, writings and teachings.

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

See more at: www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❁



YAHRZEITS BEGINNING SHABBOS VAYIGASH

http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Teves

Biographical information and yahrzeits compiled by Reb Manny Saltiel and www.anshe.org

* 11th of Teves ~ Begins Friday Night (Dec 25th)

- * **Rav Moshe** of Ostraha, *mechaber* of *Arugas HaBosem*, (5545/1784);
- * **Rav Shlomo Eiger**, *mechaber* of *Gilyon Maharsha*, son of Rav Akiva Eiger, (5612/1851);
- * **Rav Shlomo Zalman Ullman** of Makava, *mechaber* of *Yerios Shlomo*. Son of Rav Sholom Charif, Rav Shlomo Zalman served as *Rav* of Rendick for two years and of Makova, Hungary, for thirty-nine years. He fought against any inroads of the Reform movement for much of his life. At the end of his *sefer*, Rav Shlomo Zalman added *Kuntres Bais Yad*, where he expounds on fourteen differences in the *sugya* of *eid echod ne'eman b'issurim*. This *kuntres* is the basis of many *halochos* of *issur ve'heter*, (5626/1865);
- * **Rav Yehoshua Horowitz** of Dzikov, *mechaber* of *Ateres Yeshua*, (5673/1912);
- * **Rav Dovid Twersky** of Zlatipoli, eldest son of Rav Yochonon of Rachmastrivke, the son of Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl. Rav Dovid married Rebbetzin Bas-Tzion Tzipora Feiga, daughter of Rav Aharon of Karlin. With his father's *petira*, Rav Dovid became *Rebbe* in Rachmastrivke, along with his brothers, but moved his court to Zlatipoli, (5675/1914);
- * **Rav Moshe Bergman**, *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Rashbi Yeshiva*, (5738/1977);
- * **Rav Yaakov Yosef Shlomo Halperin**, the Vasloier *Rebbe*, grandson of the first Vasloier *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Halperin. His father, Rav Chaim Dov Halperin, was the *Rebbe's* only son and moved from Romania to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1950 and was *niftar* in 1957. Rav Yaakov Yosef himself was succeeded by his son Rav Avrohom Shimshon Sholom, who lives in Bnei Brak, (5745/1984);
- * **Rav Shmuel Dovid Tzvi Mayer** (known as Rav Dovid Hirsch), *menahel* of *Yeshiva Bais Binyomin* in Stamford, Connecticut, (5764/2003).

* 12th of Teves ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Dec 26th)

- * **Rav Moshe Margulies**, *mechaber* of *Pnei Moshe* on the *Yerushalmi*, (5542/1781);
- * **Rav Moshe** of Pshevorsk, *mechaber* of *Ohr Pnei Moshe*, (5566/1805);
- * **Rav Mordechai Chaim Kastelanitz** of Teverya, known as "Reb Mottel Slonimer", (5714/1953).

✧ **13th of Teves ~ Begins Sunday Night (Dec 27th)**

- ✧ **Rav Moshe** *ben* Dovid Biderman, the Lelover *Rebbe* (1776–1850 or 1851). Born in abject poverty, he married Rachel Rivka, a daughter of the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha. After the latter's *petira* in 1813, he became a *Chassid* of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, along with his friend, Rav Yitzchok of Vorki. In 1843, he finally agreed to a leadership position, agreeing to be *Rav* of the community of Przedborz, Poland. In the last years of his life, he decided to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. He and many of his *Chassidim* arrived at Akko on *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan*. He traveled to Yerushalayim, but immediately took ill. Tragically, between the illness and the Arabs, he was never able to *daven* at the *kosel*, his life-long dream. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Elozor Mendel; a vibrant community of Lelover *Chassidim* still exists in *Eretz Yisrael* today. Sadly, the community in Przedborz – about 4,500 Jews – was liquidated at Treblinka, (5611/1850);
- ✧ **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Vishiva, the *She'eris Menachem*, (5702/1941);
- ✧ **Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon**, *Rosh Yeshivas* Lomza. Among the *Roshei Yeshiva* who traveled to the United States to raise funds during World War II were Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel from Mir, Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon from Lomza, Rav Aharon Kotler from Kletzk, Rav Shimon Shkopf from Grodno, Rav Elchonon Wasserman from Baranowitz and Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz from Kamenetz, (5726/1965);
- ✧ **Rav Yitzchok HaKohen Huberman**, the *Tzaddik* of Raanana. (1896–1977). He was born in Tomashov (Tomaszow Lubelski), near Lublin. An 1895 census reveals that, out of a population of 6,077, over half the citizens, 3,646, were Jews. The first *shul* in this town was built in 1594, but after the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49, only eighteen of the original two hundred families still remained. The most famous Jew of the town was the *Kotzker Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Tomashov, who lived there until he left for Kotzk. Rav Yitzchok became a follower of the *Imrei Emes* of Ger and, after his mentor's *petira*, of his son, the *Bais Yisrael*. In 1940, Josef Stalin deported 200,000 Polish Jews, including Rav Yitzchok, to forced labor camps in Siberia and elsewhere. This saved their lives, since most of those left behind were murdered by the Nazis when they invaded Russia, a year later. After the war, Rav Yitzchok served as a *Rav* for six years in Germany before moving to *Eretz Yisrael*, and settling in Raanana. Rav Yitzchok wrote a collection of *chiddushim* on *Megillas Esther* and entitled it *Higida Esther*, in his mother's memory, (5738/1977).

✧ **14th of Teves ~ Begins Monday Night (Dec 28th)**

- ✧ **Reuven** *ben* Yaakov *Avinu*;
- ✧ **Rav Refoel Meir Penijel** (1804–1894). Born in Bulgaria, he moved with his family to *Eretz Yisrael* when his son was three years old. When Refoel Meir was fifteen, his father died. When he was seventeen, he married the daughter of Rav Osher *HaLevi*. In the early 1840s, he was chosen as one of the *shadarim (sheluchei de'rabbanan)* and sent to Northern Africa to collect funds for the *yishuv*. Following stints in Morocco and Tunisia, he traveled to Italy. While there, he befriended the Pope, who offered to show him the Vatican's archives. There, he saw some of the sacred vessels that Titus had stolen from the *Bais HaMikdosh*. The visit is described in his *sefer, Lev HaMarpei*. When he returned to *Eretz Yisrael*, he founded the *Doresh Tzion Yeshiva* in 1868 and was instrumental in helping to found the *Tiferes Yerushalayim* institutions. In 1881, he succeeded Rav Avrohom Ashkenazi as Yerushalayim's chief *Sefardic Rav*, the *Rishon LeTzion*. In addition to the *sefer* noted above,

he also authored *Sheilos U'Teshuvos Leshon Marpei*, (5655/1894);

- * **Rav Reuven Dov Dessler** (1863–1935), father of Rav Eliyohu Eliezer Dessler, the *Michtav Me'Eliyohu*, born in Libau, Lithuania, to Rav Yisrael Dovid and Chinke Hinde, who, along with Rav Yisrael Dovid's brother, Rav Eliezer, were great philanthropists and who helped Rav Simcha Zissel move his *Yeshiva* from Kelm to Grubin, a small town near Libau. When he was twelve, Rav Reuven Dov was sent to Rav Simcha Zissel's *Yeshiva* and stayed there for eleven years. When it closed, he moved to Kelm to continue learning with the *Alter*. In 1891, he married Henne Freidel Grodnensky, daughter of Rav Eliyohu Grodnensky, a leading *Dayan* in Vilna. Her maternal grandfather was Rav Yisrael Salanter. She gave birth to Rav Reuven Dov's only son, Rav Eliyohu Eliezer. Sadly, she was *niftar* four years after they married, and Rav Reuven Dov married Fruma Rochel Rabinowitz of Telz. A few years later, he moved to Homel, on the Okraïne-White Russia border. Although he was very successful in business, he maintained a rigid learning schedule, and took off every *Elul* and *Tishrei* to travel to Kelm to learn. In 1923, the Communists gained control of the area, and Rav Reuven Dov lost all of his assets. His final years were trying. In 1931, he moved into his son's home in London and immersed himself in *Torah* study, (5696/1935);
- * **Rav Alter Elozor Menachem** of Lelov (1935–2001). Born to the Admor of Lelov, Rav Moshe Mordechai, he learned with the *Chazon Ish* in Bnei Brak as a youth. In 1958, he married the daughter of Rav Shimon Aharon HersHKowitz, the *Ga'avad* of Slavita. In 1965, he founded his *Bais Medrash* on Rabbi Akiva Street in Bnei Brak. After the *petira* of his mother in 1978, he established the *Or Menachem* network of *kollelim*. He also founded *Kehal Ateres Moshe* of the Lelover *Chassidim* of the United States, now headed by Rav Alter Elozor Menachem's son, Rav Dovid Tzvi Shlomo, (5762/2001);
- * **Rav Leib Bakst**, studied in Mir from the age of thirteen under Rav Eliezer Finkel and Rav Yeruchom Levovitz; he also studied with the Brisker *Rav* and Rav Baruch Ber Leibovitz in Kaminetz. He was involved in the miraculous escape of the Mir *Yeshiva* to Kobe, Japan, and Shanghai, China, and eventually came to Detroit. There, he became the dean of the *Yeshiva Bais Yehuda* Rabbinical College. In 1985, he founded the *Yeshiva Gedola Ateres Mordechai* as an independent high school, (5676–5765/1915–2004).

* 15th of Teves ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Dec 29th)

- * The *Amora*, **Mashrisha bar Pekud**, of Bovel;
- * **Rav Refoel** of Bershada, a *talmid* of Rav Pinchas of Koritz, (5588/1827);
- * **Rav Chaim Mordechai Rosenbaum** of Nadvorna (1904–1977). Born to Rav Issomor of Nadvorna, he learned with his father in his youth, and married a first cousin at the age of nineteen, then learned full-time, supported by his father-in-law. He took a position as *Rav* of Seret in 1928. In 1941, Romania allied itself with Germany. Of the 420,000 Jews of Romania, 160,000 were murdered by German and Romanian soldiers, and another 150,000 were shipped by cattle cars to Transnistria in the Ukraine; ten thousand died on the trip and another eighty thousand died in the camps there. In 1942, Rav Chaim Mordechai and his family arrived in the Djurin camp in Transnistria. They survived and arrived in Yerushalayim on *Sukkos* in 1948, but moved to Tel Aviv because of the war. He established *Yeshivas Ma'amar Moredechai* in Yaffo and moved his *Yeshiva* to Bnei Brak in 1961. He was succeeded by his only son, (5738/1977).

* 16th of Teves ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Dec 30th)

- * **Rav Chaim Kreiswirth**, *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Antwerp and son-in-law of Rav Avrohom

Grodzinski. Rav Chaim was well known to have memorized *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*, as well as *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*, (5681–5762/1920–2001).

* 17th of Teves ~ Begins Thursday Night (Dec 31st)

- * **Rav Yaakov Krantz**, *Dubno Maggid* (1741–1804). Born in a province of Vilna, Yaakov *ben Ze'ev* (Wolf) Krantz showed exceptional homiletical and kabbalistic talents at an early age, and by the age of twenty had become the *darshan* of his city. From there he began preaching throughout the cities around Lublin in Poland, finally settling in Dubnow. His reputation as a *Maggid* spread, bringing him in contact with the great *Rabbonim* of the period, including the Vilna *Gaon*. The majority of his works were in homiletics, using stories and parables to transmit deeper ethical and moral teachings, (5565/1804);
- * **Rav Ephraim Fishel Shapira** of Strikov (1743–1822). A *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, the Rebbe Elimelech and the *Chozeh* of Lublin, he was called the *Ola Temima*, (5583/1822);
- * **Rav Aryeh Leibush Lipschitz** of Vishnitsa, the *Aryeh d'Bei Ilai*, (5610/1849);
- * **Rav Pinchas Epstein**, *Av Bais Din* of Yerushalayim (1887–1969). Born in Griva, Lithuania, his primary teacher was Rav Zalman Sender Kahana Shapiro in Bialystok. In 1904, he settled in *Eretz Yisrael* with his father and began studying at *Yeshiva Toras Chaim* in the Old City of Yerushalayim. Rav Epstein was one of the founders and early leaders of the *Eida HaChareidis*, a group that split from the established Yerushalayim community in 1919 in response to the growing influence of the Zionists on the existing religious council. In 1949, he was appointed to head the *Eida HaChareidis*, (5730/1969);
- * **Rav Suleiman (Salman) Mutzafi** of Yerushalayim (1900–1974). Born in Baghdad, his father, Rav Tzion Meir, descended from an illustrious family of *Torah* scholars who first arrived in Baghdad during the Spanish expulsion, (5735/1974).



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

The *Maharil*, in *Hilchos Taanis*, teaches us that the reason why there is a custom to visit the *Bais hachaim* on a fast is because “this place is the resting place of the *Tzaddikim* and is therefore sanctified, pure and holy and our tefillos are more readily heard, accepted and answered when *davened* on holy ground. When you *daven* there, do not make requests of the dead who are buried there; rather ask *Hashem* to answer you mercifully in their merit. Then circle around the graves and donate charity before reciting tefillos.”

בית הקברות הוא מקום מנוחת הצדיקים ומתוך כך הוא מקום קדוש וטהור התפילה נתקבלה שם יותר, אך אל ישים מגמתו נגד המתים, אך יבקש מהשי"ת שיתן עליו רחמים בזכות הצדיקים שוכני עפר, ויקיף הקברות, ויתן צדקה קודם שיאמר התחינות.

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have the custom to go and daven at the kevorim of *Tzaddikim*. The reason for this is that we approach them with fasting, remorse and repentance, and we have in mind that the departed souls ask and *daven* for us before *Hashem* on High, as opposed to the prohibition against speaking to the dead which is an idolatrous practice where the idol worshippers sought out the impure dead souls and bodies using sorcery and witchcraft. Instead, beseech our *Tzaddikim* who, in *gan eden*, are truly alive, and ask through *tefilla* and fasting and *teshuva* alone.

❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Shlomo ben Rav Akiva Eiger, 11th of Teves

Rabbi Akiva Eiger's Berocha

Rav Shlomo Eiger was a genius in *Torah*, even though he was involved in worldly business dealings with heads of state, politicians, merchants and businessmen of the highest ranks, who would come to conduct business deals at all times of the day. Of course, as a *Talmid Chochom* and son of the renowned *Gaon*, Rav Akiva Eiger, Rav Shlomo also ran a *Yeshiva* and taught many *talmidim* with great *iyun* and *pilpul* – intense depth and minute hair-splitting logic. Often an important minister would come for some matter and this would inevitably interrupt their lesson. Fortunately, and almost miraculously, Rav Shlomo always seemed to be able to return and pick up the thread of his logic, argument, *chiddush* or point of debate seamlessly – as if there had been no interruption whatsoever!

Once, after such an occasion and a *shiur* was interrupted, yet Rav Shlomo resumed as if nothing had changed, his *talmid*, Rav Davidson, asked, “*Rebbe*, how

is it that you can resume your *shiur* and pick up exactly where you left off without having to pause and review?! Its amazing!”

“It is all due to my father’s *berocha*!” explained Rav Shlomo Eiger. “When I was a *chosson* under the *chuppa*, my father gave me a *berocha*. He said, ‘You are now marrying into an important, wealthy family, your father-in-law has many business dealings and you will be leaving my care and will inevitably become involved in these matters, which will force you to interrupt your studies and teaching. My *berocha* is that you should be able to immediately resume your learning, study and teaching *Torah* without losing your train of thought and to pick up exactly where you left off without need for review or preparation – and this will give you peace in your *Torah* study!’ *Boruch Hashem*, as you can see,” concluded Rav Shlomo, “my holy father’s *berocha* was fulfilled!” (*Chut HaMeshulash* p. 224 footnotes)



Rav Yehoshua ben Meir Horowitz, 11th of Teves

The Dzhikover Rebbe, Mechaber of Ateres Yeshua

Please Don't Lick the Bones

Once, on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* during the *Rebbe's Rosh Chodesh seuda*, the *Tzaddik* entered, looked around and declared, “I see here many soldiers have gathered, now I wish to admonish you all – although you may be forced to eat *treifos*, I beg you, do not lick the bones in delight!”

The *Chassidim* were very confused by the *Rebbe's* declaration and admonishment, since only *Chassidim* were

present with not a single soldier among them. After several years, however, when the conscription and draft began and many of them indeed entered the army to fight in the First World War, the *Tzaddik's Ruach Hakodesh* and pronouncement rang in their ears, as now they were soldiers indeed. (*Zichron Yehuda*, Dzhikov p. 52)



The General of Gehinnom

The Dzhikover's custom was not to draw out the third *Shabbos* meal too long into the night. One of the *Chassidim* was in Krenitz and was an eyewitness to this custom. He told how as soon as three stars appeared, they would bring candles to the *Rebbe's* table (because the *tisch* was conducted in the dark) and the *Rebbe* related, "Rebbe Reb Elimelech used to

conduct his *Sholosh Seudos* long, long into the night. Once a general came to the *Rebbe's tisch* and tried to press Rebbe Reb Meilech to end the *seuda* and *daven Maariv* but the *Rebbe* paid him no heed. This general was the minister of *Gehinnom!* But Rebbe Reb Elimelech did not fear him. I, however, do fear him, so bring *mayim acharonim* and let's *bensch!*"
(*Mareh Aish* #117)



Rav Moshe Sofer of Pshevorsk, 12th of Teves

Mechaber of Ohr Pnei Moshe

Shirei Menochos

The *Bnei Yissoschor* writes: When I was a young lad I used to sometimes wait on the great renowned *Tzaddik*, Rav Moshe Sofer of Pshevorsk. He was well known as a *Ba'al Madreiga* (of lofty spiritual stature) and *Ba'al Ruach HaKodesh*. He had the custom to keep leftover cakes and sweets

that had been baked and prepared in honor of *Shabbos*, so that when an important guest visited during the week he would honor him with these delicacies, calling them *Shirei Menochos* – the leftovers of the *mincha* offering! (*Bnei Yissoschor, Maamar Chodesh Tammuz-Av*)



Rav Mordechai Chaim Kastelanitz, 12th of Teves

"Reb Mottel Slonimer"

A Niggun Made from a Golden Mitzva

(As told by Rav Kalman Menachem Shapira, the Piaseczno *Rebbe*, on *Motzo'ei Shabbos Parshas Noach*, 5767, freely translated from Hebrew by Yitz)

This story comes from Reb Mottel Slonimer. Reb Mottel Slonimer once passed by a house, from where he heard a very powerful but sad *niggun*, which touched the heart. He wondered, "This feels like a very *heilige* (holy) *niggun*". Upon entering the house, he asked the *ba'al habayis* (master of the house) to explain what this *niggun* was all about. And here our story begins.

He mentioned that he was born in Teverya (Tiberius), and was orphaned from both of his parents at a young age. He

supported himself as a fisherman, who worked through the night, sleeping during the daytime. After several years, he eventually got married, and shortly thereafter, they had a son. Not long after the *pidyon haben* (redemption of the first-born son), his wife passed away. He was left alone with the young child. Fortunately, he had good neighbors in Teverya, who helped bring up his son, as he needed to go out to fish every night. *Boruch Hashem*, they were quite successful.

When his father would come home from work each morning, his young son would serve him a hot cup of tea, help him get undressed and bring him his slippers and a towel with wish to refresh himself. Despite their impoverished living

conditions, the father and son developed a very deep bond with one another.

The boy grew up, got married and moved to a town in the southern part of *Eretz Yisrael*, far away from Teverya. In those days, a journey from Teverya to the south of *Eretz Yisrael* could take several hours, even the good part of a day. The son was financially successful, and from time to time would send his father a golden Napoleon coin, which was worth a lot of money. His father asked him in a letter: “Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?”

His reply: “*Abba*, you gave so much of yourself for me, you did so much for me, and we were so close. I want you to save these golden Napoleon coins, and when you have enough, you’ll be able to purchase a decent house in which to live.” And so it was – he eventually had enough golden coins with which to buy a proper dwelling in Teverya.

Later on, he received an urgent telegram message from his daughter-in-law: “Come quickly, your son is very ill!”

The father made the long journey to the south of *Eretz Yisrael*. Arriving at his son’s home, he stood by the sick man’s bedside, praying for him, as only a father can. (The *Rebbe* then told of the *Chofetz Chaim*, that when his son was very ill, no one told him about it, and the son passed away. He then scolded them, “Why didn’t you tell me? Don’t you know that



the tears of a father can resurrect the dead?”) And indeed here, the father stood and prayed and cried for his son, and the young man recovered.

The father returned to Teverya, and once more, the son began to send him the golden Napoleon coins. And again, the father wrote his son: “Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?”

This time, the son replied, “*Abba*, I want you to save these coins so that you can have a ‘pension fund’ for your old age, when you cannot work anymore.” So again, the father saved these coins. As they accumulated, they indeed became a viable source of ‘pension’ funding.

Sure enough, he again received an urgent letter from his daughter-in-law: “Come quickly, your son is very ill!”

And once more, he made the long journey to the south. This time, however, by the time he arrived, it was too late – his son had passed away. All he could do was to cry at his bedside.

After the *shiva* (seven-day mourning period), he returned home to Teverya – to an empty house. He was back to “square one” – an orphan with no one and nothing in this world. He was so depressed that he wanted to die. One night, he had a dream, in which he saw his son in *Gan Eden*, lying in a golden bed. He began to run toward his son, but his son withdrew – he didn’t want his father to touch him, to come into the *Olam HaEmes* (the next world, the “world of truth” after *petira*).

“I want to be with you again, next to you,” the father told his son.

“No, you need to stay in this world, and do *mitzvos*!” was the son’s reply. “Do you see this golden bed I’m in? This is made from the golden Napoleon coins that I sent you, from the *mitzva* of *Kibbud Av va’Em* (honoring one’s parents).”

“But I just want to be with you!”

Then, in the dream, the son began to sing a *niggun*. And he continued to sing it, as his father joined in. They sang it together for a long time, until eventually the father learned to sing it alone. And then, the son disappeared and the dream was over.

“Then I awoke,” said the father to Reb Mottel Slonimer. “And whenever I’m sad, I sing this *niggun*. This is the *niggun* my son taught me.”

Said Reb Mottel Slonimer: “This is the *niggun* of *Kibbud Av va’Em*.” What is the *niggun*? This is the *niggun* that connected the father to his son, and to the

next world... [Adds Yitz:] A *niggun* made from the Golden *Mitzva* of *Kibbud Av va’Em*.

The Piaseczno *Rebbe* then explained how many of the words of his great-uncle, the first Piaseczno *Rebbe*, written in his *seforim*, are like *niggunim*: they sing to us and connect us to him.

Zechuso Yagein Aleinu, may the *Rebbe’s* merits protect us!

www.heichalhanegina.blogspot.com/2006/10/niggun-made-from-golden-mitzva.html



Rav Alter Elozor Menachem ben Moshe Mordechai Biderman of Lelov, 14th of Teves

100 Percent Character

The *Rebbe* used to tell over that people have a saying regarding *shidduchim* – that finding the right match means to seek three things: *keren tov* (a good person), *keseif rav* (wealth) and *yichus* (good family pedigree). He explained that actually the percentage of how much importance to attach to each of these three is hinted at by the first letter of each one:

keren tov begins with *kuf*, whose *gematria* is 100, implying that your search for a *chosson* with a good character is 100 percent important! *Keseif*, on the other hand, only requires 20 percent, since it is spelled with a *kaf*, which has a *gematria* of twenty. *Yichus*, which begins with a *yud*, is only 10 percent important! (*Ne’imos HaChaim* p. 77)



Rav Refoel of Bershad, 15th of Teves

Talmid of Rav Pinchas Koritzer

Too Much Kovod

Once, Rav Refoel visited Berditchev, where he was received with great honor and much fanfare. Afterward, he vanished. A search party looked for him and found him in the marketplace, encircled by a throng of lowly simpletons and merchants who were all laughing at the “*batlan*”, the good-for-nothing weirdo dressed oddly with a handkerchief over his head.

When they questioned his disappearance and odd behavior, Rav

Refoel explained that he was distressed by the outpouring of honor; they had simply inflated his ego with too much *kovod*, and so he had tied his handkerchief over his head and entered a fabric store, asking to buy some snuff. The owner saw a simpleton and a stranger who was certainly acting oddly, and he poked fun at him, taking him from store to store in search of the fictitious snuff, while they all had a hearty laugh. “In this way, they belittled and mocked me,” explained Rav Refoel, “and I was spared all the honor!”

Anger Control

Whenever an opportunity presented itself, the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz would retell this story about Rav Refoel of Bershad's amazing control over his *middos* and character. For example, once after his *tisch* – conducting the *Chassidic Shabbos* banquet where the *Rebbe* presides over his table, sharing songs, stories and words of *Torah* at his meal with his devoted *Chassidim*, which lasted some seven hours, the *Imrei Chaim*, exhausted and weak, walked home in the cold and rain only to discover that the *gabbai* – who had the keys – was nowhere to be found! While waiting an infuriatingly long while for him to show up, the *Imrei Chaim* related this story:

Rav Refoel of Bershad had a burning desire for many years to acquire pure wool from the Holy Land to fashion a *tallis kotton* and *tzitzis* to wear in a *mehadrin*, resplendent and glorified manner befitting such a precious *mitzva*.

After great effort he finally succeeded, and one day he acquired pure, white wool from *Eretz Yisrael*! His joy knew no bounds. Elated, he passed the wool on to one of his *Chassidim* and asked him to take extra special care of the wool and to fashion with it a *tallis kotton* and *tzitzis*. The *Chassid*, who realized the importance of this task and the great lengths the *Rebbe* had gone to in order to procure this wool, approached the task with awe and love. However, his attempt failed and in his haste to tailor the garment he accidentally folded it over twice, so that

when he cut the hole in the middle of the *tallis kotton* to create the opening where the head is placed through, he ended up with two holes instead of one! When he unfolded the garment and held the *tallis kotton* open, instead of one opening for the head, there were now two!

With great fear and trepidation he brought the ruined garment before his expectant *Rebbe*. Rav Refoel was waiting on tenterhooks with excitement, but when he noticed the sad *Chassid* and his downfallen countenance he beckoned him near.

“What is it? What is wrong?”

The *Chassid* was so ashamed that he became dumbstruck and silently, with his head down, he presented the ruined garment before the *Rebbe*, waiting for the *Rebbe's* anger and disappointment to break over him.

What he heard instead was the smiling Rav Refoel's delighted voice proclaiming, “Why, of course this garment needed two holes! Yes, yes, exactly, one hole just as any *tallis kotton* has for the head, and another hole to teach Refoel to suppress and contain his emotions and not be angry.”

When he concluded the tale, the *Imrei Chaim* said with great emotion, “*Kodesh Kodoshim!* Holy of Holies! From where can we learn such lofty holy ways and manners of behavior? This story shakes me up and excites me much, much more than any miraculous tales you could tell me about the *Tzaddik!*”



Rav Chaim Kreiswirth, 16th of Teves

Av Bais Din, Antwerp

Bending and Stretching Ourselves for Torah

Rav Chaim Kreiswirth was well known to dance on *Simchas Torah* with

great *hislahavus*, aflame with excitement and joy! He was careful not to lose time from learning and often danced with an open *Gemora*, a sight that left its

impressions on many.

He once observed a father holding the *Sefer Torah* and lowering it to allow his little boy to kiss the holy scroll. Rav Kreiswirth was not in favor of this practice, and lovingly admonished the father, explaining his reasons for opposing the father's well-intentioned, but in his opinion, misguided actions. "When you bend down and lower the *Torah* to your

son, you're teaching him that the *Torah* can be lowered or bent down to suit his needs, Heaven forbid. Instead, he needs to stretch himself or be lifted to kiss the holy scroll, so that he learns to accommodate and adjust himself to the *Torah* and not the other way around," a profound lesson that became forever inscribed on the father's heart. (*Mayim Chaim* p. 148)



לזכר נשמת אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה
אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות מרת זיסל ז"ל
בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א
ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטיוב זי"ע מבריד
אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

She was a Holocaust survivor who never let that period of time define her life. Although she lost most of her family - she claimed that *Hashem* gave her an amazing life. She had a unique knack of making everyone who encountered her feel like they were the most important loved person. Her inimitable smile never left her face.

She transmitted a strong value system stressing *Emunas Hashem* and *Tzaddikim*. Her love for stories of *tzaddikim* gave her *chiyus* and she conveyed that *chizuk* to anyone who met her. In her eighty-nine years of life, there wasn't one person who had an untoward word or adverse feelings about her. She loved her family deeply and immensely. May *Hashem* console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*,

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,
היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה)
נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק
תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה
ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין מהרה ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

גוט שבת

The Tzaddik Is Higher

There are many stories regarding what Rav Levi Yitzchak would say or do before Kol Nidre on the night of Yom Kippur. The following was a favorite of the first Rebbe of Gur, the author of *Chidushei Harim*, who retold it on a number of occasions.

One year, Rav Levi Yitzchak did not appear in the *beis midrash* for Kol Nidre until very late. The people, who were waiting anxiously, were much relieved to see him. They expected him to step before the *amud* and raise his sweet voice in launching the prayers of the holy day. But Rav Levi Yitzchak seemed in no hurry to begin. He looked around at the faces of the people, his eyes settling on no one in particular.

“Is there anyone here,” he declared, “who knows the *poritz*, the local squire, of such-and-such a village?”

One man stepped forward. “I know that squire,” he said.

“Do you know him well?”

“Quite well.”

Rav Levi Yitzchak plied the man with questions about seemingly trivial matters such as the minute details of the squire’s daily routine. The people were baffled, but they knew better than to utter any remarks.

“Does the squire have a dog?” Rav Levi Yitzchak asked the man.

“Yes, he does.”

“How does he treat the dog?”

The man was taken aback by the question. “Actually,” he said, “the squire treats his dog exceedingly well.”

“How well?”

“He gives the dog the finest foods and all sorts of comforts. In fact, he spends a great deal of money on that dog.”

“Very interesting,” said Rav Levi Yitzchak. “All right, now we can go to Kol Nidre.”

The people were puzzled by the sudden interest of the Berditchever in the squire’s dog. And what possible connection could this dog have to Kol Nidre. Later that night, a few chassidim approached him and asked to be enlightened.

“Let me tell you the story,” said Rav Levi Yitzchak. “A Jewish beggar had come to a village to collect some money for his family, but the villagers turned him away empty-handed. Heartbroken, this poor man sat down by the side of the road and wept. Just then, the squire passed by and saw the man crying. He stopped and asked him what was the matter. The man poured out his heart to him, and the squire was touched. He gave the man a sizeable amount of money and

went on his way.

“Heaven was in an uproar. How could it be that the man’s Jewish brothers turned him away so cold-heartedly while the Polish squire took pity on him? Were these the people who expected to secure a sweet new year on Yom Kippur?

“The danger was great. But how could I defend the Jewish people before the Heavenly Court? How could I show that the squire was not better than they were? I found the answer when I heard how the squire treated his dog. The squire’s act was not motivated by concern for another human being. The Jewish beggar was no more than a whining animal in the eyes of the squire, and he gave him less money than he habitually spent on his dog.

* * * * *

The famine in Egypt was supposed to last seven years, but our Sages tell us that when Yaakov descended from Canaan the famine came to an end years before its intended conclusion. The commentators ask how it is possible that Yosef’s interpretation of the dream was not fulfilled.

There is another question, Rav Levi Yitzchak points out, regarding Yosef’s response to Pharaoh. After he finished the interpretation of the dream, he says to Pharaoh, “Now Pharaoh should seek out a wise and intelligent man and appoint him over the land of Egypt.” Wasn’t it presumptuous for Yosef to offer Pharaoh unsolicited advice? Since when had Pharaoh appointed Yosef as a royal advisor?

The answer lies in the power of a *tzaddik* to annul harsh divine decrees. Yosef was telling Pharaoh that the Almighty is communicating to him what He intends to do to Egypt. Why would it come to pass? Because, as Pharaoh reported, in his dream “he was standing on the banks of the river.” This was a significant statement. It indicated that Pharaoh was the supreme power in the land of Egypt, that there was no *tzaddik* who stood higher than him and was able to annul the divine decree.

The implication of the dream, therefore, was that Pharaoh could avoid the harsh decree if he could find a *tzaddik* who stood higher than him and who possessed the power to annul the decree. That, in essence, was what Yosef was telling Pharaoh. He was telling the extended interpretation of the dream that the only way to avoid the full impact of the decree was by finding “a wise and intelligent man,” a *tzaddik*, and “appointing him over the land of Egypt” so that his power would be supreme and he would be able to annul the decree.

Ultimately, the decree was annulled precisely in accordance with Yosef’s interpretation when he “brought his father Yaakov and stood him before Pharaoh.” Yaakov, because of his exceeding sanctity, stood before and above Pharaoh, who represented the *klippas*, the unclean spiritual husks, of Egypt. Therefore, he was able to annul the decree. Yosef himself, however, could not annul the decree even though he was also a great *tzaddik*, because he was subservient to Pharaoh who had appointed him to his position.

Vayigash

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11th of Tevet 5781

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Hilula

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12 - Rabbi Avraham Chivan, author of
'Torat Hashelamin'

13 - Rabbi Yitzchak HaKohen
Hoberman, the Tzadik of Ra'anana

14 - Rabbi Rafael Meir Panigel,
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15 - Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Rosenbaum,
Admor of Nadvorna

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17 - Rabbi Salman Mutzafi

18 - Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech Shapira,
author of 'Bnei Yissachar'

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Da'at Torah - an Important Principle in Avodat Hashem

"Then Yehuda approached him and said, 'If you please, my lord'"

(Bereishit 44:18)

Our Sages (Midrash Rabba 93:2) quote the following verse, "For behold the kings assembled, they came together...Trembling gripped them there" (Tehillim 48:5), and expound: "For behold the kings", this refers to Yehuda and Yosef. "They came together", both were filled with wrath against each other. "Trembling gripped them there", this refers to the tribes who said, 'Kings are debating with each other, why should we interfere in their conversation. It is fitting for a king to debate with a king'. That is why it says, "Then Yehuda approached him", he alone approached him while the rest of brothers stood to the side."

It is necessary to understand why indeed the other tribes did not deem it necessary to be part of the argument between Yehuda and Yosef. There is no doubt that they too had what to say, and they too, would be able to contend with Yosef about the false charge of stealing the goblet, so why did they remain quiet?

To reconcile this, we will take note that throughout these Parshiot it is clear that the crown of kingship was given exclusively to Yehuda. Meaning that the other brothers unanimously decided to crown Yehuda as king and ruler over them. They would unreservedly accept his authority without deviating in the slightest from his opinion in all matters and would proceed according to his direction.

This was the case after the brothers sold Yosef to the Ishmaelites, an act that was carried out according to Yehuda's instruction. The verse says, (ibid 38:1), "It was at that time that Yehuda went down from his brothers". Rashi writes, "This teaches us that his brothers deposed him from his position of leadership when they saw their father's intense grief. They charged, 'You told us to sell him. Had you advised us to return him to our father, we would have listened to you.'" This shows how all the brothers relied on Yehuda's word and considered his every decision as sacred because they had crowned him as king over them.

Ya'akov Avinu, too, trusted only Yehuda because he knew that he was the ruler and leader and that all followed his orders and opinions. When Reuven promised his father that he will take responsibility for Binyamin's return from Egypt and will be a guarantor for his welfare, Ya'akov was not placated by his words. But once Yehuda stepped forward and said (ibid 43:9) "I will personally guarantee him; of my own hand you can demand him", Ya'akov immediately agreed to send Binyamin for he knew that Yehuda was considered as the king of the brothers and he can rely on him.

In the future too with the coming of Mashiach, the scepter of kingship will remain in the tribe of Yehuda, as it says (Bereishit 49:10), "The scepter shall not depart from Yehuda nor a scholar from among his descendants until Shiloh [Mashiach] arrives". For just as the tribes accepted Yehuda as king over them, so too Heaven agreed that the tribe of Yehuda will continue the kingship for eternity, and Mashiach too will descend from him. This is the sovereignty that was unanimously and indisputably accepted by all the holy tribes.

Now we understand why the brothers did not intercede in the discussion between Yosef and Yehuda. This was because they considered Yehuda as their king and themselves as subordinate to him, accepting his authority and opinion as Da'at Torah. The brothers were of the opinion that since they have the sacred Da'at Torah of Yehuda which they unquestionably accept, there is no reason for them to open their mouths and offer their own opinion. In light of this, even were they to have a particular opinion on the matter in question, they would have kept quiet and left the matter in Yehuda's hands because everything was under his authority.

This is an important principle in Avodat Hashem. Every Ben-Torah must be submissive to the Da'at Torah of his Rav and defer to his all-encompassing opinion. Even if it seems to him according to his narrow-minded reasoning, that his Rav's opinion is surprising, difficult to understand or seemingly incomprehensible, he is nevertheless forbidden to object. Rather he must accept his opinion in complete innocence as if it was a command given to Moshe at Har Sinai. As it says (Devarim 17:11), "you shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left". Chazal expound on this (Sifri), "Even if he tells you that right is left and left is right, you must obey him". This is the way in which the holy tribes conducted themselves, seeing only the sacred opinion of Yehuda in front of their eyes and accepting it unreservedly as if it was given at Sinai. Therefore, when they saw him debating with Yosef, they saw no need to intervene for they considered it inappropriate for them to express their opinion and intercede in the matter in front of their king, Yehuda, for they would accept whatever Yehuda would say to Yosef. This is the reason why they stood to the side.

This clarifies why, as if, only Yehuda showed strong opposition to Yosef and risked his life to save Binyamin. Because he was the ruler of the tribes and responsible for Binyamin, that is why he was the one to approach Yosef and in fact, spoke in the name of them all.

It is every Jew's obligation to defer to his Rav's opinion at every step of the way in his life. Even if he does not merit fully understanding his Rav's counsel, this does not exempt him from accepting his authority and behaving accordingly.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

A Blessing in Advance

During one of my visits to Argentina, I was receiving the public in the Beit Hakneset 'Saban'. The wife of the Rabbi of the congregation approached me and emotionally related that her husband and son had been miraculously saved from a horrific car accident. Besides for some minor scratches, they emerged unscathed.

To demonstrate the tremendous miracle, the wife showed me pictures of the car after the crash. It was nothing but a piece of scrap metal. It was very hard to believe that anyone came out alive.

She then removed a piece of paper from her handbag. This was the paper on which I had written, seven years earlier, a blessing for the success of her family. For some reason, on the other side of the paper, I had written the word 'Bamidbar', underlining it twice for emphasis, despite that week being Parshat Acharei Mot.

I was very moved by the sight of this paper. When I had written this word, I had no idea what made me do so. Now, everything fell into place. It was a hint to the car accident that took place during the week of Parshat Bamidbar. And the two lines under the word obviously indicated that there would be two survivors, the father and the son who escaped without a scratch.

The woman added an interesting postscript. They had actually lost this piece of paper, and immediately after the accident, she found it in a most surprising way. She was also amazed by the fact that the accident occurred near the Beit Hakneset 'Saban', where the blessing had been written seven years earlier!

Hashem's ways are hidden from us. How marvelous is His intervention! He arranged that the father and son should be blessed seven years in advance, thereby being saved from certain death.

The Haftarah

"The word of Hashem came to me...Now you, son of man" (Yechezkel 37)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the kingdom of Yehuda and the kingdom of Yosef which will unite in the future, as is written: "Now you, Son of Man, take for yourself one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Yehuda and for the Children of Israel, his comrades; and take one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Yosef...', and they will become united in your hand."

The Parsha too speaks about Yehuda who fought to save his brother Binyamin and how eventually all the brothers united with Yosef Hatzaddik who ruled over the entire land of Mitzrayim.

Guard Your Tongue

When It is Well-Known

Negative words are considered as lashon hara even if the matter is public knowledge. The reason is that the actual act of speaking ill about someone else is forbidden.

For example, it is forbidden to repeat derogative words that appeared in the newspapers about certain Jews. The media often publishes information based on hearsay, therefore it is forbidden to believe the matter if the newspaper is the only source of this information. Even after verifying the matter, it is still forbidden to relate it to someone else.



In Our Father's Path

One Cannot Take Someone's Anchor Without Offering a Replacement

When the heart of the educator and his student merge with the verse, "since his soul is bound up with his soul" (Bereishit 44:30), many educational issues fall into place. We have chosen to focus on an example of this ideal conduct, by relating an incident that took place about fifty years ago. There was a student from the Ponevezh Yeshiva who found no satisfaction in his Torah study. He was attracted to a religious youth movement, finding fulfillment in the opportunity to lead and enjoy various activities. Since the Yeshiva demanded a total commitment to Torah study and the student found himself unable to comply, he soon found himself outside its walls.

He was accepted by a different Yeshiva but there too he continued his involvement in the youth movement which led to a confrontation with the Yeshiva staff. They too demanded emphatically that he leave behind all his outside connections and engage in Torah study alone.

A friend who was concerned for his fate if he would be thrown out of this Yeshiva too, consulted with Maran the Chazon Ish zt"l and asked his permission to bring this bachur to him so that the Chazon Ish could speak to him.

Permission was given and the friend persuaded the bachur to meet with the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish welcomed him warmly and asked him what they are presently studying in the Yeshiva. He hardly knew which Masechta they were studying, for his foremost concern was the youth movement and spent the rest of his time involved in confrontations with the Yeshiva staff.

The Chazon Ish took his answer in stride, and with tremendous sweetness began reviewing the words of the Gemara and opinion of the Tosafot. His words were illuminating and enjoyable.

Suddenly the Chazon Ish surprised them with a significant question on the words of the Tosafot. They tried to reconcile it but did not succeed. The Chazon Ish smiled and said, "Don't worry, go back to Yeshiva and think about it. Ask your Rabbanim, look it up in different sefarim and come back to me when you have an answer".

The Chazon Ish wished them much success and they took leave of him. They made their way back to Yeshiva and as soon as they arrived, the friend returned to the Chazon Ish and expressed his surprise, "I did not bring him to you so that you should speak to him in learning?!" The Chazon Ish replied with a revealing answer: "One cannot take away someone's anchor without replacing it with something else".

"If the youth movement is where he finds gratification and he is told to break off contact, even if he obeys he will fall into depression and despondency. This is not the way. One must direct his passion to accomplish, direct the fire and transform it into the fire of an Altar. How can this be done? If he acquires taste in learning, if the learning challenges him, he will then be capable of forgoing his involvement in the movement, with understanding and in agreement." It is unnecessary to point out that the advice was beneficial and today this bachur is a Rosh Yeshiva.



Pearls of the Parsha

Several Stances in the Descent to Egypt

"They came to Egypt, Ya'akov and all his offspring with him. His sons and grandsons with him, his daughters and granddaughters and all his offspring he brought with him to Egypt" (Bereishit 46:6-7)

These verses seem to be repetitive, points out Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya" a in his sefer 'Or Hachaim'.

He explains that the repetition is a declaration that there was a difference among Ya'akov's offspring in how they came down to Egypt. Some came willingly, wholeheartedly accepting the king's orders, while others were concerned about entering the melting pot of Egypt.

Since this was the case, the verse details who exactly were the ones who willingly went to pay the debt of exile, by saying, "his sons and grandsons with him", meaning these he did not have to bring, they came on their own accord just as he did. After that, it mentions those who did not come willingly and Ya'akov had to bring them down against their will. That is the meaning of "his daughters and granddaughters and all his offspring he brought with him", these were the ones who he brought with him to Egypt for they did not come out of their own free will.

Good News Contains an Aspect of Eliyahu

"Asher's sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serach" (Bereishit 46:17)

Serach, daughter of Asher, was the one who announced to Ya'akov "Yosef is still alive", as the Targum Yonatan explains.

In this connection the sefer 'Me'or Einayim' (Parshat Vayeitzeh) offers the following Kabbalistic explanation: "If a person receives good tidings, including when he is baffled over a difficult matter when learning, before the idea comes to his mind, he feels a form of notification entering him. He feels senses that a certain raw element has entered his mind, and this is called 'the aspect of Eliyahu'. This is followed by 'the earth will be filled with knowledge'. Meaning that his mind expands and is filled with vitality, and then it becomes easy for him to devote his different properties, including the aspect of his legs, to the good.

For in truth, one who relates good tidings, is as if he is clad with a spark of the aspect of Eliyahu, because he is the one who announces all good tidings in the world and this spark simply slots into the one who is relating the news, because the aspect of Eliyahu is a concept from the Six Days of Creation which later on was enrobed in Pinchas, as we know.

That is why when one has the opportunity to relate good tidings, every person should fortify himself to run and tell them, for his soul feels an aspect of Eliyahu and wants to establish it within himself. Even though people do not feel this, nevertheless the mazal feels it, and if he would have the wisdom to use this inspiration to serve Hashem with that aspect of Eliyahu that he is now adorned with, he can use it to reach ever-higher levels.

Similarly, a spark of Eliyahu also enters the one who is informed of the good tidings. His mind and perception expand and he too can easily cleave to the Creator."

The Selling was Carried Out with a Hidden Hand

"He saw the wagons that Yosef had sent" (Bereishit 45:27)

The Admor of Gur zt"l, author of 'Beit Yisrael', offers the following allusion: After Yosef Hatzadik revealed himself to his brothers he sent his father wagons, and as Rashi points out, "Yosef directed his brothers to say that the last topic he and Ya'akov had studied together was that of 'eglah arufah' [the calf whose neck was broken in expiation of an unsolved murder]. The word 'עגלות', wagons, can also be translated as calves, thus alluding to that topic. Therefore, it is written, 'And he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent' and does not say ...that Pharaoh had sent".

What message was Yosef trying to relay? In the section of 'eglah arufah' it says "it was not known who smote him" (Devarim 21:1). This is what Yosef was implying to Ya'akov: Even if it seems to you that the brothers sold me, the truth is that we cannot know. You will never know who smote me and who sold me, for everything emanated from Hashem's hand.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



The Essence of Life is Eternal, Spiritual Life

"I am Yosef your brother, it is me, whom you sold into Egypt" (Bereishit 45:4)

It is necessary to understand why Yosef repeated the words "I am Yosef". In the previous verse, Yosef announced, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" and immediately afterwards he again said to them, "I am Yosef your brother, it is me, whom you sold into Egypt". Why was once not enough?

As we know, Yosef Hatzadik was taken to Egypt, a place full of the impurity of avodah zara and sorcery, as a young lad of seventeen. He was all alone, without any support from his family, cut off from his father and mother. Simple logic assumes that the natural outcome would be for him to embrace the impurity of Egypt and leave behind his religious way of life, forgetting all the Torah that he learnt from his father in his youth. But with tremendous self-sacrifice, Yosef closely guarded the holiness and purity of his soul and despite finding himself in a land full of lewdness and abomination, he was extremely careful not to draw close and learn from the evil ways of the Egyptians.

Yosef Hatzadik remained close to Hashem during his entire sojourn in Egypt. He also courageously withstood the difficult test with the wife of Potifar, for Yosef knew that Torah, mitzvot, and Yirat Shamayim are not acquired offhandedly, but only with self-sacrifice and dedication to one's goal. This is the only way to merit the spiritual acquisition of Yirat Shamayim and holiness and purity of the soul. By saying "I am Yosef", he was implying, "I continue drawing on the live connection to my father, as in 'I am Yosef. My father is still alive [within me]'.

After that Yosef once again repeated to his brothers, "I am Yosef your brother, it is me, whom you sold into Egypt". I am Yosef who spent time in our father's presence, studied Torah from his mouth, and imbibed his holiness. And even now in Egypt, I am the exact same Yosef. "I am Yosef" before you sold me, and "I am Yosef" after the selling too. Yosef who is utterly attached to Hashem and His pure Shechina, is standing before you.

When the brothers heard this they were astounded at the extent of Yosef's self-sacrifice. Even though twenty-two years of being subjected to the impurity of Egypt had passed, he nevertheless guarded his holiness and religion, and Torah and mitzvot remained his way of life. That is why, "But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him". His holy face testified to the holiness of his pure body.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



The Mussar commentaries describe at great length the penetrating message that can be derived from Yosef's rebuke to his brothers, to the extent that they were left disconcerted and could not answer him. For example, this incident teaches us about the laws of rebuke between man and his fellow. The Torah describes "but his brothers could not answer him", and we must learn the correct form of accepting rebuke.

In Yerushalayim, there was a veteran melamed and eminent educator called Rabbi Nechemya Beker zt"l. He passed away at a ripe old age, after meriting raising upright students over tens of years. In his youth over seventy-five years ago, Rabbi Nechemya studied in the Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikva. The Rosh Yeshiva at that time was Rabbi Eliyahu Dushnitzer zt"l, about whom the Chazon Ish zt"l declared that he was one of the thirty-six hidden tzaddikim of the generation.

Rabbi Eliezer Turk shlita, in his sefer "Otzroteihem Amaleh" quotes Rabbi Nechemya who relates an incident that he was involved in at that time:

One Shabbat afternoon, Rabbi Nechemya was walking through the paths of the moshava settlement (as it was in those days) on his way to Yeshiva. After a few minutes, he noticed Rabbi Eliyahu standing next to a building and raising his eyes to one of the apartments, while one could make out on his pure face that something was bothering him.

Rabbi Nechemya greeted his Rav with Shabbat Shalom and asked politely: "Is there any way that I can help?" Rabbi Eliyahu looked at him

and asked, "Maybe you can tell me who lives on the second floor of this building?"

The young Nechemya apologized and replied that he has no idea who lives in that apartment, but could not contain his curiosity as to why Rabbi Eliyahu was interested in finding out the identity of the occupants. In answer to his bewilderment, Rabbi Eliyahu turned to him in deep pain, "Every Shabbat I pass this street and every Shabbat I hear sounds of chilul Shabbat, r"l, coming from this house. I want to protest and I need to protest."

R' Nechemya did not understand the problem: "I am prepared to do this right away. I will go up there right now and make a big protest," his youthful spirit bubbling up, ready for action...

Rabbi Eliyahu was most alarmed on hearing this. He shook his head and told R' Nechemya with a severity that engraved itself in his heart and soul forever:

"This is not the way to make a protest! This kind of protest I can also do. But protesting is forbidden if it is not performed for Heaven's sake"...

"Sometimes," continued Rabbi Eliyahu in pain, "A person sets up a big protest against some organization or certain activities, and it could be that in truth there is a reason for concern and admonition. But the protestor is not acting for Heaven's sake! He is doing it only because he belongs to a certain group and the other one belongs to a different group. Or he is religious and the other group is not religious; he is from here and they are from there. There are all kinds of reasons why he is not pleased with their conduct, and although it seems that he is reproofing him for this matter, his true intention concerns something else entirely. This is not the way to offer rebuke!"

"If so," asked Rabbi Nechemya, "how can a person assess if he deeds and rebuke are appropriate?" In other words, Rabbi Nechemya wished to hear how the Rav himself was accustomed to offering rebuke.

Rabbi Eliyahu answered, "Indeed, this is one of the hardest kinds of service! I myself am accustomed to writing my words of protest on a paper and leaving it with me for a day or two. If after that I see that the situation still truly pains me, I look at the note once again and verify thoroughly that the wording is still correct, not exaggerated or combined with personal matters. Only when I am convinced that the rebuke is sincere and true, do I send the note to its address."

"In this way", Rabbi Eliyahu concluded his instructive words, "I can indeed testify that my words serve their purpose and good things result from them. But if one does not rebuke appropriately, the matter is far from being beneficial at all."

From the wording of the rebuke that Yosef offered to his brothers, we see to what extent he acted out of love and affection for them. Immediately following the rebuke he continued speaking to them, "And now, be not distressed, nor reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that Hashem sent me ahead of you" (Bereishit 45:5). For on the one hand one must give rebuke where it is required, as Yosef did with all the intensity, sharpness and clarity, to the extent that they were unable to answer him and felt disconcerted before him. But on the other hand, he proceeded out of compassion for his brothers, his heart was pained to see them in this situation. This kind of rebuke indeed had a deep effect on the brothers!

The 20 Years that Yosef was away from Home

ויקרא פרעה שם יוסף צפנת פענח ויתן לו את אסנת

Pharaoh called Yosef's name Tzafnas Paneach (41:45)

Yosef HaTzaddik was away from his father for 22 years. **Rashi** writes that the reason why Yaakov Avinu had to be separated from his son for 22 years is because Yaakov Avinu also left his father for a period of 22 years. The **Eshkolos HaGefen** offers a different reason to explain why Yosef HaTzaddik was away from his father for 22 years, he explains as follows.

The reason that the Shevatim sold Yosef HaTzaddik was because he brought derogatory reports to Yaakov Avinu about them. This was a sin that done with words. In the Alef Beis, there are 22 sounds¹. Therefore, Yosef HaTzaddik was punished for the amount of years corresponding to the amount of sounds he misused.

In the Alef Beis there are 9 letters that have single digit numerical value - א' ב' ג' ד' ה' ו' ז' ח' ט' - . The next 9 letters that have double digit numerical value - י' כ' ל' מ' נ' ס' ע' פ' צ' - and 4 letters that have 3 digit numerical value - ק' ר' ש' ת' - .

Out of the 22 years that Yosef HaTzaddik was separated from His father, he was only a slave for 13 years. After that, he enjoyed a very high position. The reason why he only had to suffer for 13 years was because when he was sold he received atonement for 9 on the 22 letters that he had flawed through his derogatory words. This is seen in the passuk that says (Amos 2:6) על מכרם בכסף צדיק ואביון בעבור נעלים, "For their selling a righteous man for money, and a poor man for shoes,". The Gemara says that this refers to the brother's selling of Yosef HaTzaddik since with the money they received for selling him, they purchased shoes. (By being so degraded) this immediately atoned for 9 of the 22 letters that Yosef HaTzaddik used to formulate the derogatory reports he brought to his father about his brothers. This is seen in the very words of the passuk. The words כסף נעלים, are made up of 87 letters from the double digit letter group - י' כ' ל' מ' נ' ס' ע' פ' צ' , and the way the passuk refers to Yosef is by calling him צדיק (צ) makes up for the last letter of this group. Thus the words כסף נעלים צדיק makes up all the letters of the double digit group.

This leaves 13 letters that were still left to atone for. This is why Yosef HaTzaddik had to suffer in Egypt as a slave and in jail for a total of 13 years². It was only then, that his sin of Lashon Hara was atoned for, and it was only that that he was called צפנת פענח, "The revealer of the hidden," by Pharaoh and was given אסנת as a wife. This is because the words צפנת פענח אסנת have the numerical value of 1,495, which is the exact numerical value of all the letters of the Alef Beis together, symbolizing that Yosef HaTzaddik had finally atoned for his sin of telling Yaakov Avinu derogatory things about the Shevatim³ (see footnote).

¹ There are 27 letters in the Alef Beis but only 22 sounds since כנעצכ have doubles.

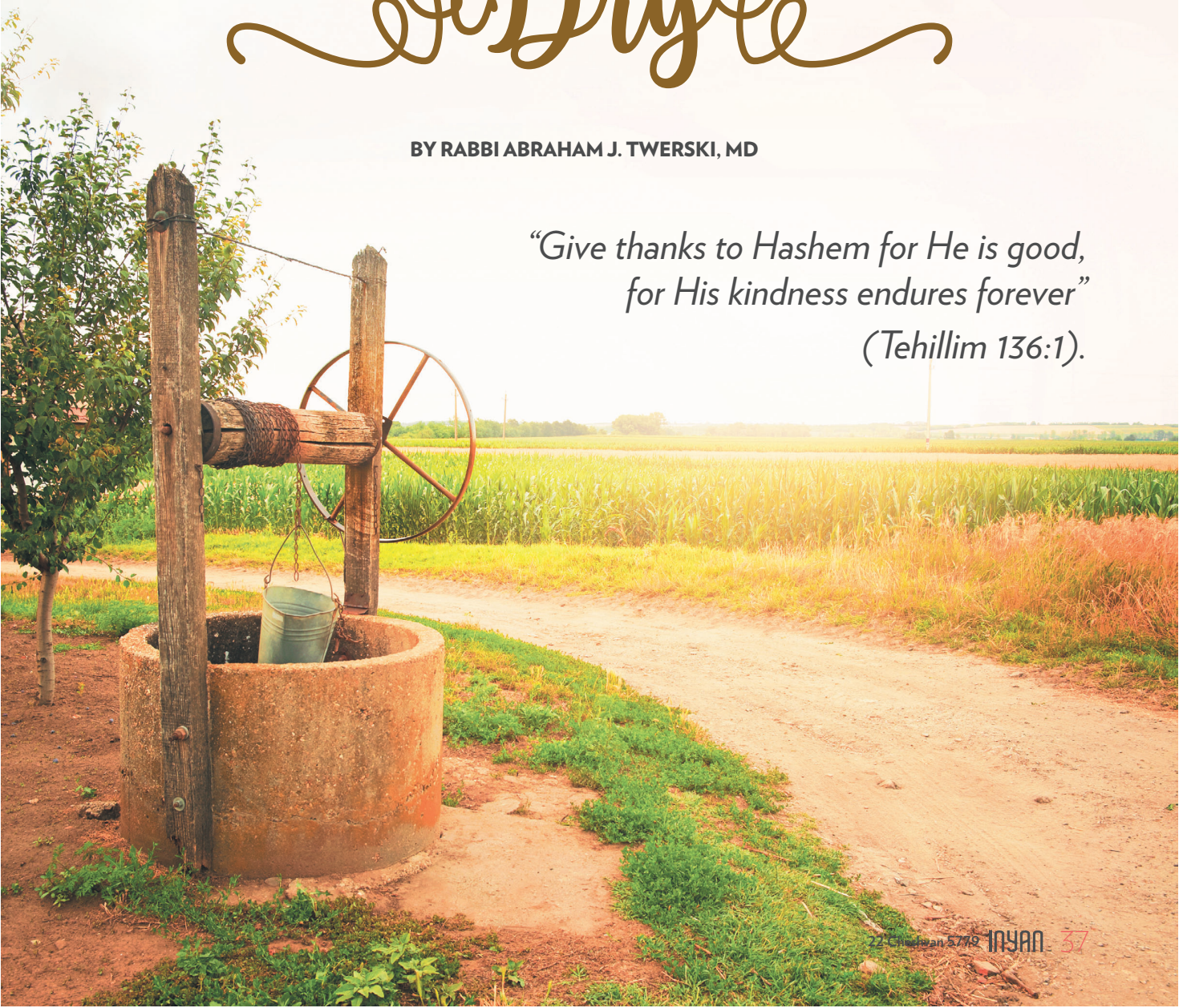
² He was sold at age 17 and became second to Pharaoh at 30 years old.

³ It seems that that although the 9 letters that were atoned for immediately when Yosef HaTzaddik was sold did not need the same level of rectification that the other 13 letters did (slavery and jail time), nevertheless they still needed some sort of punishment of being separated from Yaakov Avinu. This is why during the following 9 years in Egypt, although Yosef HaTzaddik was second to the king, he still suffered by being separated from his father - a total of 22 years, for 22 letters.

My Well Has Run Dry

BY RABBI ABRAHAM J. TWERSKI, MD

*“Give thanks to Hashem for He is good,
for His kindness endures forever”
(Tehillim 136:1).*



I shall be eternally grateful to Hashem for His abundant kindness to me. The fact that I am now disabled and suffering both physically and emotionally does not diminish my gratitude in the least. But I have come to some new realizations that I wish to share.

I did a fair amount of writing in my active life, both books and many articles. As a psychiatrist, I gained many insights from my patients which provided me with material for writing. My current condition not only greatly limits new ideation, but the aging process has also affected my memory for events beyond my youth. Whereas I always had ideas to address, my well has now run dry. This deprivation is no less painful than my physical distress and disabilities.

I began looking for answers to explain my suffering. We have much Torah material on suffering, beginning with *Sefer Iyov*, followed by essays in the *Gemara*.

Later Torah scholars wrote on *yissurim*, and while their ideas are valuable, they provided little comfort. Yes, I was able to accept that *yissurim* are from Hashem, and that a loving father may chastise a child for the child's own good, but this did not relieve the emotional distress. I lived an active life, and now that is diminished.

Then I came across an episode in the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 101a). The great Sage Rabi Eliezer ben Hyrkanus fell ill, and four of his disciples came to visit him: Rabi Tarfon, Rabi Yehoshua, Rabi Elazar ben Azariah, and Rabi Akiva.

Rabi Tarfon spoke up. "You are better to us than the rain, because the rain provides for us only in This World, but our master has provided for us in This World and in the World to Come." Rabi Eliezer did not acknowledge the statement.

Rabi Yehoshua then said, "You are better to us than the orbit of the sun, because the orbit of the sun provides for us only in This World, but our master has provided for us in This World and in the World to Come." Rabi Eliezer did not acknowledge his words.

Rabi Elazar ben Azariah then said, "You are better to us than a father and mother, because a father and mother provide for us only in This World, but our master has provided for us in This World and in the World to Come." Again, no response from Rabi Eliezer.

Rabi Akiva then said, "Suffering can be precious." Rabi Eliezer said, "Help me sit up so I can hear the words of my student Akiva."

It is of interest that Rabi Eliezer did not react to the words of the first three disciples, who praised his teaching. To Rabi Eliezer, life had value only if he could fulfill the will of

Hashem. Now that he was bedridden and could do nothing, he did not see any value to life. His great achievements of the past did not give any value to his current life. Thus, the praises of his disciples about what he had done for them did nothing for him.

Rabi Akiva came up with a novel idea. What Hashem expects of a person is to serve Him with the capacity and abilities he has at any given moment. When Rabi Eliezer was in good health, his assignment was to teach Torah, which he fulfilled admirably. Now that he was ill, his obligation changed and he could no longer teach Torah. All he could do was to accept his suffering with the *emunah* that this was Hashem's will. This acceptance was no less *avodas Hashem* than his teaching Torah when he was able to do so. Both modes of *avodas Hashem* were of equal importance. Rabi Eliezer now had a new goal, which gave his life meaning.



This idea resonated with me. I cannot lecture the way I used to. I must search for words. I do not remember things I wish to discuss. I cannot reach for a *sefer*, nor can I recall where in the *sefer* I can find the item I want. I must change my idea of what is important to me.

I recall reading (although I don't remember where) that on the Judgment Day I will be asked, "Did you enjoy My world?" When I am asked whether I fulfilled the *mitzvos* properly, I will

unfortunately come up short, but I will be able to state that I enjoyed Hashem's world in full measure.

In my younger days, I got to see much of Hashem's magnificent world. We spent time in the bush of Alaska, where we were treated to a dazzling display of the Northern Lights, and we went on safari in South Africa. We visited England, Spain, the Swiss Alps, Italy, and saw the tulip fields of Holland. We were in the Canadian Rockies, and we went alligator hunting on the Amazon. We were in the Garden of the Gods in Colorado and the redwood forest of northern California. We were in the *Gan Eden* of Hawaii and flew over an active volcano.

I was able to recite the *brachah* praising Hashem for the marvels of Creation many times. These memories escaped the forgetting, and the pictures we took helped preserve them.

I must realize that had I retained the vigor of my younger years, I might not have done justice to the wonderful memories I have.

Yiddishkeit places much importance on the appreciation of nature. The all-important *mitzvah* of declaring the Oneness of Hashem in *Shema* is preceded

with “He Who illuminates the earth and those who dwell on it with compassion, and in His goodness renews daily the work of creation. How great are Your works, Hashem, You make them all with wisdom, the world is full of Your possessions.” In *Tehillim* 19, Dovid Hamelech extols the greatness of Torah but precedes it with the marvels of nature. “The heavens declare the glory of Hashem, and the expanse of the sky tells of His handiwork.” Torah study is indeed the greatest of all, but the beauty of nature should not be ignored.

The *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* closes with “Blessed are You, Hashem, Who heals all flesh and acts wondrously.” Not until medical school did I appreciate the wondrous function of the body.

In the month of Nisan, we recite a beautiful *brachah* on seeing a fruit tree blossom. “Blessed are You, Hashem, King of the universe, for nothing is lacking in His universe, and He created in it good creations and good trees, to cause

mankind pleasure with them.” When we take pleasure in Hashem’s universe, we are doing a *mitzvah*.

Tehillim 104 is a beautiful ode to nature. In the midst of this psalm, after listing many of nature’s lovely features, Dovid Hamelech abruptly interjects, “How abundant are Your works, Hashem,” and then continues with his praise of nature.

Why the interjection? Because Dovid was so overcome by the beauty of nature that he could not contain himself until the end of the ode. This is the feeling one has at the underwater aquarium when one sees the stunning colors of many fish and the marvels of the coral. And there are many pictures of the supreme artistry of the colorful birds that Hashem created “to cause mankind pleasure with them.”

These are some of the thoughts we should have when we recite the *brachah* of “*Shehakol nihyeh bidvaro* — through Hashem’s word, everything came to be.”

Yes, my well has run dry, but Hashem’s well is overflowing. ■

RESPONSE TO

My Well Has Run Dry

BY DR. GAIL BESSLER-TWERSKI

Often I get to see what you have written before it is sent for publication, and I had a strong reaction to this article. My concern was at the exaggerated view you have of your diminished abilities. Yes, there is change, but not even close to your experience of it.

You said that I did not understand, that I “didn’t get it.” Perhaps, but what I did understand, and for which I am very grateful, is the message of acceptance and the need to change the focus of what is important now.

Yes, acceptance will ease our journey, but I have an additional perspective. If I were to title this article, it would be “My Well Is Half Full.” You are right — we have to work harder and bend deeper to reach the well water. But when we do, it is as satisfying as ever.

For me, the steps to reach the waters are gratitude. The gratitude of sharing our lives together, the gratitude for my

children and your children, for the grandchildren, for the great-grandchildren, for your fifth generation — a healthy, beautiful son born to your great-grandson. I am grateful for our extended families, for our friends, for the *zechus* of living in Yerushalayim, for planting a beautiful garden, for the capacity and ability to do the work we love, even diminished. Most of all, I have gratitude for the ability to give, receive and share love — which really fuels all the above.

You have often told me that *sefarim* say that This World is a preparation for the Eternal World. I have this theory that G-d gave us the capacity to love and the ability to practice and perfect it in this life, so that we will have better skills for the ultimate love.

My hope for the next phase of our lives is to use our gifts to the fullest.

Editor: The essay that was written by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski and his wife elicited many emotions and responses. Being that I know them both, I felt it would be suitable to provide some commentary and chizuk on this circumstance. We welcome responses and if an essay is meaningful – we would publish it in the MeOros.

Brief remarks from Rav Dani Coren:

After reading the poignant article, we come to the realization that the greater a person's influence is in this world, the more challenging it is. It brings to mind the *Ba'al HaTurim* in *Parshas Korach* (ad loc): וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם גַּם־קִהְיֶנָּה - The *Ba'al HaTurim* cites the *mesora* – tradition that there are three *pesukim* that contain the same language of seeking – *ubikashtem*, here in *Parshas Korach*: He drew you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi with you, and now you seek the *kehunah* as well? (*Bamidbar* 16:10).

[Related *pesukim*: “And **you will seek Me** and find [Me] for you will seek Me with all your heart.” (*Yimriyah* 29:13) & “And **from there you will seek the Lord your God**, and you will find Him.” (*Devarim* 4:29)]

From there we learn, that *Hashem* wants us to serve Him from where we are – not from where we think we can or should be.

Although it is difficult to read and we empathize, however, Rabbi Twersky has the great opportunity to continue to teach us that we all need to serve *Hashem* from wherever and whatever place *Hashem* put us in. This might be the greatest lesson in *Emunah* and *Avodas Hashem*.

Based on what his *Rebbitzen* is writing, she recognizes this and also acknowledges this lesson: As great as a person's *avodah* was when he was sharing light with other people, it does not stop. As a life partner and caregiver, her *avodah* also does not cease or stop, therefore, there isn't a diminished *avodah* from either of them. In fact, *nashim* have a much greater *koach* to see this as partners who are not necessarily *mefitz torah la'rabim*

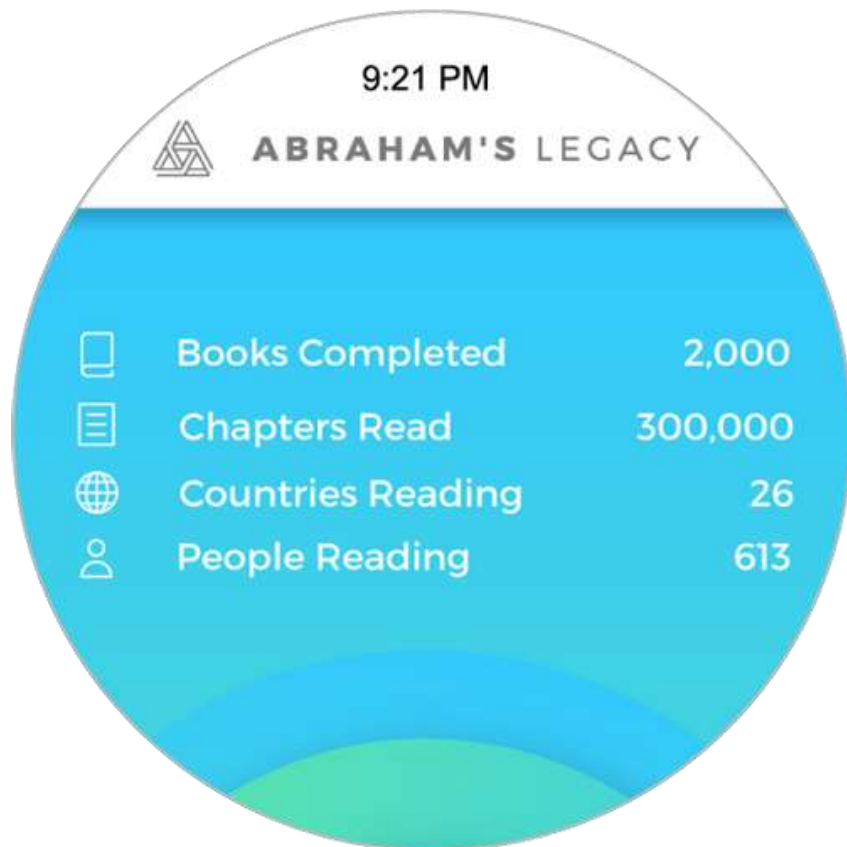
A related story on the above-mentioned *Ba'al HaTurim*: My great uncle Reb Chanyana Yom Tov Lipa Dryzinger was a great *talmid* of the Galanta *Rav*. There was a *shaila* if he should leave during the *churban* and he ended up departing from Europe and made his way to America. After accepting a position as a *Rav* in the Bronx, he realized that the spiritual *matzav* in America was bleak and he wrote a letter to his *rebbe* after a few weeks saying “*Rebbe*, I have to go back to Europe since it's so dark here.”

The *Rebbe* wrote him back an incredible letter that it says regarding *Korach* the *mesora* cited by the *Ba'al HaTurim*, what's the connection between these? *bikashtem gam kehuna* – *bikashtem osi* and *bikashtem osi misham* – you are saying if only I was in a different position I would be greater – no, now you are in the Bronx, if you seek Me, seek me from there – from wherever you find yourself that's where *Hashem* wants you to seek him from. [It probably saved his physical being too.]

A person has to know if you truly *bikashtem osi*, then *bikashtem osi misham* – **if you truly seek Me says Hashem - seek Me where you find yourself. From there, that's where Hashem wants us to seek Him!**

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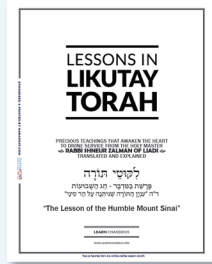
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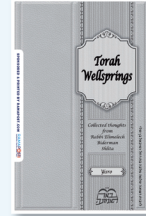
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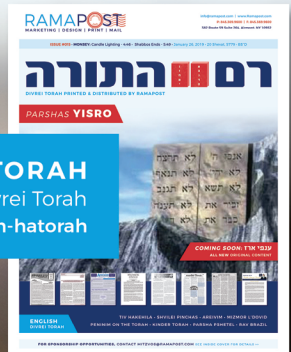
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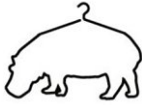
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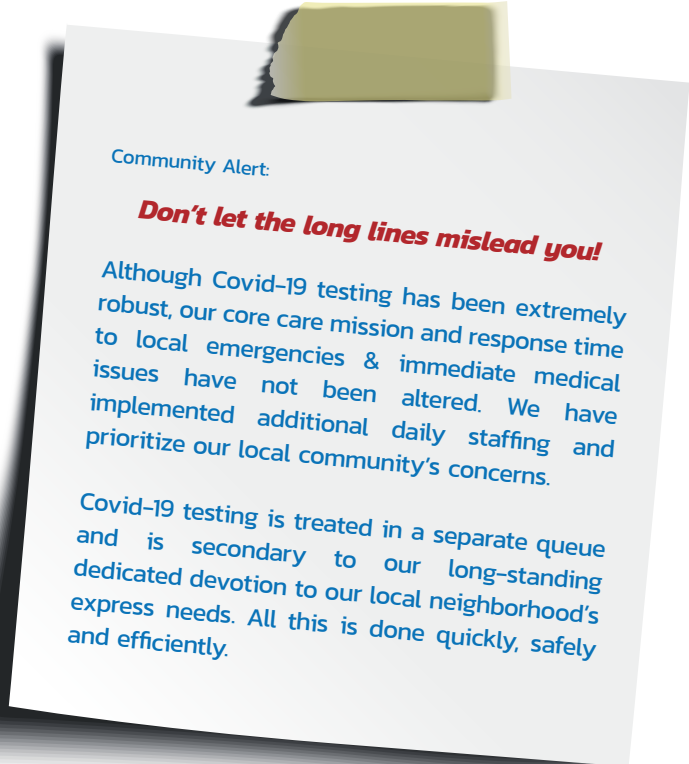
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