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**Rabbi Mordechai Willig –
Old Models, New Challenges**

"If you will listen to my commandments that I command you today, to love Hashem, your G-d, and to serve Him with all your hearts and with all your souls" (Devarim 11:13). "Hasn't the Torah already cautioned 'with all your heart and with all your soul' (Devarim 6:5)? The earlier passuk was a command to an individual [and hence the singular form is used], and this is a passuk is a command for the community [and hence is in the plural]" (Rashi).

There is an additional difference between the two pesukim cited in Rashi, both of which are recited daily in krias Shema. The first passuk adds, "bechol me'odecha - with all your 'me'od'." This phrase is absent in the second parsha. Rashi interprets "bechol me'odecha" to mean with all your money. Why does the second passuk omit the phrase "bechol me'odecha"?

The Gemara (Berachos 35b) reports a famous machlokes between R' Yishmael and R' Shimon bar Yochai that revolves around the same pesukim touched upon by the Rashi cited above. R' Yishmael, based on the passuk (ibid 11:14), "You shall gather your grain, your wine and your oil", understands that Hashem is telling us to work to earn a livelihood, in addition to learning Torah. R' Shimon bar Yochai disagrees with this understanding, and interprets this parsha as referring to a time when Bnai Yisrael do not fulfill Hashem's will. However, when we fulfill His will, our work is done by others and we can focus all of our time on Torah learning. The Gemara concludes: many followed R' Yishmael and were successful; many followed R' Shimon bar Yochai and were not successful.

Tosfos asks, how can R' Shimon bar Yochai interpret the passuk (ibid) as referring to a time when Bnai Yisrael do not fulfill Hashem's will when that section begins by saying, "And it will be, if you will listen to My commandments...!"? Tosfos answers that they don't completely fulfill Hashem's will (kol kach), i.e. that they are not totally righteous (tzadikim gemurim). The Maharsha explains that according to R' Shimon bar Yochai the omission of

"bechol me'odecha" in passuk 6:5 indicates that it refers to a time at which Bnai Yisrael do not serve Hashem with all their money. In other words, by working to earn a living, they are, according to R' Shimon bar Yochai, not fulfilling Hashem's will kol kach - that much!

The Maharsha concludes that there are very few tzadikim gemurim, as R' Shimon bar Yochai himself notes (Sukkah 45b), that he and his son were unique. Therefore, we must follow R' Yishmael, as the mishna states (Avos 2:2), "Torah study is good together with an occupation. All Torah that does not have work with it, at the end will be null (batelah) and lead to sin."

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 156:1) cites this last statement verbatim and adds, "because poverty will cause him to violate the will of his Creator (Eruvin 41b). Nonetheless, his work should not be his main preoccupation. Rather, his Torah should be primary and his work secondary (Avos 1:15), and then both will be successful." The Bais Yosef explains this ruling based on the aforementioned Gemara (Berachos 35b) and cautions: don't say it is better to only learn Torah because, "he will run out of money and he will have to look for a way to earn parnasa, and he will not even be able to set fixed times for Torah. [Poverty] will also lead him to sin."

The Mishna Berura (ibid 2) explains, "work should not be one's main preoccupation." One should work only to earn what is necessary and must be wary of the yetzer hara that seduces him to work all day to earn money. In Be'ur Halacha he notes that the Shulchan Aruch rules for the community at large. In all times there are individuals who only learn Torah. The Gemara states that many followed R' Shimon bar Yochai and were unsuccessful, implying that there are few who can succeed following his approach. The Rambam (Hilchos Shemita V'yovel 13:13) describes individuals who serve Hashem constantly and subsist on bare necessities. These rare individuals are those who serve Hashem, "bechol me'odecha", with all their money, i.e. they do not pursue financial gain. They are the tzadikim gemurim who fulfill Hashem's will totally. However, as the Maharsha writes, one should not assume that he is in this category of those whose work will be done by others. He may be mistaken and will then be among the many who follow R' Shimon bar Yochai and are unsuccessful. He may later be unable to have fixed times for Torah study, or, worse, suffer poverty which can lead to dishonesty and sin.

II.

In the last century, the Torah community has experienced and witnessed a number of major upheavals. First, the major Torah centers in Europe were destroyed, and new were centers established in Israel and America. Second, millions of Jews were killed during the Holocaust, but since then there has been a population explosion amongst Orthodox Jews. Third, full time Torah study, formally the preoccupation of very few over the age of eighteen, is now pursued by tens of thousands in Israel and America. Fourth, drastic economic transformations have changed the definition of a clean and honest profession that one should teach his son (Kiddushin 82a). And finally, women have entered the workplace in the Western world.

How should the community, and individuals, respond to these new realities? The eternal values and directions of the Torah must guide us, and the rabbanim and institutions are duty bound to follow the dictates of the aforementioned passages from the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch. Our sons must be instructed to make lifelong daily Torah study a primary goal. In addition, they must be prepared to pursue a clean and honest profession. Lifelong full time Torah study is appropriate and laudatory for the few tzadikim gemurim who are willing to sacrifice all but basic needs. The responsibility to provide for one's wife and children, as mandated by halacha, must, in all cases, be emphasized.

In America, the Chareidi population has grown exponentially since the Holocaust. The larger, chassidic group strives to replicate its European lifestyle, in dress, language and education. Generally, young men study Torah only, and this is the subject of a recent lawsuit (see, for example, Group Files Suit Against New Exemption for Yeshiva Schools). Upon early marriage, the significant majority go to work, which, given the lack of secular education, is mostly limited to the type of jobs popular in Europe in previous generations. Similarly, the pre-war model of large families cared for by full time mothers remains the norm. Of course, a few scholars continue to learn full time and serve the communities' rabbinic and educational needs.

All these factors combine to place members of this community in the low-to-middle economic strata. The rare wealthy businessmen support their respective chassidic institutions generously. In short, the model accords with the aforementioned rulings of the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch. Men set aside fixed time for Torah study, and view Torah and Chassidus as the most important part of their lives, even as they work to support their families.

The Yeshiva world in America has veered dramatically from the pre-war model. Full time Torah study in a kollel extending beyond marriage, once the practice of a small fraction of the population, has become de rigueur. In most such cases it is the virtuous wife who is the primary earner, as most kollels pay small stipends. While they accept this unprecedented responsibility willingly, as enablers of their husbands' continued Torah study, the role reversal has major implications for the Torah home and family. The sheer number of kollel students makes universal employment in Torah fields an obvious impossibility. When the financial burdens and family size increase, the now not-so-young man who can't find a job in a Yeshiva must look elsewhere, unless the husband's or wife's parents provide financial support for their children and grandchildren.

Many such kollel husbands transition successfully into the workplace. Some earn college degrees and go on to professional schools and careers. Some brilliant minds are admitted directly into prestigious law schools. Others enter the world of business, using ingenuity and creativity to earn a respectable livelihood in twenty hours a week. For them, Torah remains their primary preoccupation even quantitatively, as the Rambam rules (Hilchos Talmud Torah 1:12) that one should work three hours a day and learn nine hours a day! This model is an even more wonderful fulfillment of the rulings of the Gemara and the Shulchan Aruch.

Unfortunately, some view any departure from full time learning and teaching as an inferior, b'dieved option. Some remain in kollel frustrated that they cannot find a job in chinuch. Others go to work but view themselves as second class citizens, despite the Shulchan Aruch's ruling in accordance with R' Yishmael that work, with Torah, is an ideal.

In sum, the Yeshiva world remains insular, even though it relates to the outside world a bit more than the Chassidim. Their value system is informed by Torah and its gedolim. The exponential increase in kollel students, notwithstanding some problematic consequences, is a greatly expanded version of pre-war Europe. Moreover, in America it is easier to transition into the Shulchan Aruch's model, a decade or more later in life than a typical Chassid.

III.

The non-Chareidi, modern segment of Torah Jewry faces different challenges. In the last half century, daily minyan and Daf Yomi have become much more popular. Stricter standards of kashrus and tznius have emerged. This "shift to the right" emerged as increasing numbers of yeshiva high school graduates learn in Israeli yeshivos, where Torah and mitzvos are taken very seriously. When they return to America and continue studying in a yeshiva, such as Yeshiva University, they are often more devoted to Torah study than their fathers, and more scrupulous about mitzvah observance than previous generations of their family. This shift, which should be celebrated as a return to a proper Torah life, also reflects the impact of the Chareidim, who constituted a small minority seventy years ago, but now represent the preponderant majority of Torah observant Jewry due to their higher birth rate. Recent studies in Metropolitan New York estimate that half the children entering yeshiva day schools is Chassidic, a third are yeshivish, and only a sixth "centrist/modern" (see A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States).

These improvements are consistent with the major distinguishing elements of the more modern segment of Torah Jewry, namely strong secular education in Yeshivos and near universal college attendance for both men and woman. (Ideological positions, such as religious value given to secular knowledge and the state of Israel, are also consistent with stricter Torah standards, but that is beyond the scope of this practically-oriented discussion).

However, the exposure to post-modern American society poses new dangers. The family values and Judeo-Christian ethic of the 1950's are now viewed as anachronistic, and traditional marriage and even gender identity are no longer recognized as inviolate by American citizens and their courts. Promiscuity in all secular university campuses is rampant. Modern Orthodox youth are exposed to all of this, with the exception of those who attend Yeshiva University or other

such institutions who are not exposed to the radical immorality of secular campuses. Some accept postmodern values and question the morality and/or the eternity of Torah values. Others fall prey to the temptations of the day, such as internet pornography or worse, and some leave Orthodoxy entirely (these phenomena apply to all segments of Torah Jewry.)

Integration with secular culture, a hallmark of modern orthodoxy in the 1950's, is no longer possible because of the debasement of that culture. For those who do not realize this, often, instead of a "shift to the right", there is a "slide to the left" (See Sliding to the Left? Contemporary American Modern Orthodoxy, by Turetzsky and Waxman).

The importance of mesorah and fidelity to great Torah leadership, accepted unquestionably by Chareidim, is debated vigorously in modern orthodox circles. Egalitarianism and acceptance of alternative lifestyles are among the flashpoints of this ongoing battle.

Education is now frighteningly expensive. Tuition in modern yeshivos is much higher because of excellent secular studies and extracurricular activities. College and graduate school costs have also risen dramatically. This places financial pressure on parents, and, unfortunately, reduces family size.

The modern workplace is no longer nine to five. Longer hours and constant access drastically reduce the critical quality time for proper Torah parenting. Working mothers only exacerbate the problem. The upper class lifestyle embraced by professionals requires even more effort to generate sufficient income. (These phenomena, too, apply to all segments of Torah Jewry). Excess spending should be curtailed, and conspicuous consumption and ostentation must be discouraged.

Torah must be restored as the primary value. Fixed daily Torah study is a must, and satisfies the basic ruling of the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch even if it is a quantitative minority of the day. Parents need to model modesty in speech, spending, dress and demeanor. Hopefully, then, the next generation will maintain and enhance the modern version of "Torah study is good together with an occupation".

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Listen, Really Listen

Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Some 20 or so years ago, with the help from the Ashdown Foundation, I initiated a conference at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, on the future of Jewish peoplehood. I feared the deepening divisions between secular and ultra-orthodox in Israel, between the various denominations in the Diaspora, and between Israel and the Diaspora themselves.

It was a glittering array of Jewry's brightest minds: academics from 16 different countries representing all the shadings of Jewish identity. There were professors from Harvard, Yale and Princeton as well as most of Israel's universities. It was a scintillating success, and at the same time, a total failure.

Halfway through the second day, I turned to my wife Elaine and said, "The speaking is brilliant. The listening is non-existent." Eventually I could bear it no longer. "Let's leave," I said to her. I could not handle yet more skilled presentations from minds that were parti pris, lucid, coherent, but totally closed to ideas that lay outside the radius of their preconceptions. Far from being a set of solutions to the divisions within Jewry, the conference perfectly epitomised the problem.

We decided to travel south to Arad, to meet for the first time the great (and very secular) novelist Amos Oz. I mentioned this to a friend. He winced. "What," he asked, "do you hope to achieve? Do you really want to convert him?" "No," I replied, "I want to do something much more important. I want to listen to him."

And so it was. For two hours we sat in Amos's book-lined basement study at the edge of the desert, and listened. Out of that meeting came, I believe, a genuine friendship. He stayed secular. I stayed religious. But something magical, transformative, happened nonetheless. We listened to one another.

I cannot speak for Amos, but I can for myself. I felt the presence of a deep mind, a feeling intellect, a master of language – Amos is one of the few people I know incapable of uttering a boring sentence – and one who has wrestled in his own way with what it means to be a Jew. Since then I have had a public dialogue with him, and another with his daughter Fania Oz-Salzberger. But it began with an act of sustained, focused listening.

Shema is one of the key words of the book of Devarim, where it appears no less than 92 times. It is, in fact, one of the key words of Judaism as a whole. It is central to the two passages that form the first two paragraphs of the prayer we call the Shema,[1] one in last week's parsha, the other in this week's.

What is more: it is untranslatable. It means many things: to hear, to listen, to pay attention, to understand, to internalise and to respond. It is the closest biblical Hebrew comes to a verb that means "to obey."

In general, when you encounter a word in any language that is untranslatable into your own, you are close to the beating pulse of that culture. To understand an untranslatable word, you have to be prepared to move out of your comfort zone and enter a mindset that is significantly different from yours.

At the most basic level, Shema represents that aspect of Judaism that was most radical in its day: that God cannot be seen. He can only be heard. Time and again Moses warns against making or worshipping any physical representation of the Divine. As he tells the people: It is a theme that runs through the Bible. Moses insistently reminds the people that at Mount Sinai: "The Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice" (Deut. 4:12). Even when Moses mentions seeing, he is really talking about listening. A classic example occurs in the opening verses of next week's parsha:

See [re'eh], I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – the blessing if you listen [tishme'u] to the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you do not listen [lo tishme'u] to the commands of the Lord your God. (Deut. 11:26-28)

This affects our most basic metaphors of knowing. To this day, in English, virtually all our words for understanding or intellect are governed by the metaphor of sight. We speak of insight, hindsight, foresight, vision and imagination. We speak of people being perceptive, of making an observation, of adopting a perspective. We say, "it appears that." When we understand something, we say, "I see." [2] This entire linguistic constellation is the legacy of the philosophers of ancient Greece, the supreme example in all history of a visual culture.

Judaism, by contrast, is a culture of the ear more than the eye. As Rabbi David Cohen, the disciple of Rav Kook known as 'the Nazirite', pointed out in his book, *Kol ha-Nevuah*, the Babylonian Talmud consistently uses the metaphor of hearing. So when a proof is brought, it says *Ta shma*, 'Come and hear.' When it speaks of inference it says, *Shema mina*, 'Hear from this.' When someone disagrees with an argument, it says *Lo shemiyah leih*, 'he could not hear it.' When it draws a conclusion it says, *Mashma*, 'from this it can be heard.' Maimonides calls the oral tradition, *Mipi hashemua*, 'from the mouth of that which was heard.' In Western culture understanding is a form of seeing. In Judaism it is a form of listening.

What Moses is telling us throughout Devarim is that God does not seek blind obedience. The fact that there is no word for 'obedience' in biblical Hebrew, in a religion of 613 commands, is stunning in itself (modern Hebrew had to borrow a verb, *letzayet*, from Aramaic). He wants us to listen, not just with our ears but with the deepest resources of our minds. If God had simply sought obedience, he would have created robots, not human beings with a will of their own. Indeed if He had simply sought obedience, He would have been content with the company of angels, who constantly sing God's praises and always do His will.

God, in making human beings "in His image," was creating otherness. And the bridge between self and other is conversation: speaking and listening. When we speak, we tell others who and what we are. But when we listen, we allow others to tell us who they are. This is the supremely revelatory moment. And if we can't listen to other people, then we certainly can't listen to God, whose otherness is not relative but absolute.

Hence the urgency behind Moses' double emphasis in this week's parsha, the opening line of the second paragraph of the Shema: "If you indeed heed [shamo'a tishme'u] my commands with which I charge you today, to love the

Lord your God and worship Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 11:13). A more forceful translation might be: "If you listen – and I mean really listen."

One can almost imagine the Israelites saying to Moses, "OK. Enough already. We hear you," and Moses replying, "No you don't. You simply don't understand what is happening here. The Creator of the entire universe is taking a personal interest in your welfare and destiny: you, the smallest of all nations and by no means the most righteous. Have you any idea of what that means?" Perhaps we still don't.

Listening to another human being, let alone God, is an act of opening ourselves up to a mind radically other than our own. This takes courage. To listen is to make myself vulnerable. My deepest certainties may be shaken by entering into the mind of one who thinks quite differently about the world. But it is essential to our humanity. It is the antidote to narcissism: the belief that we are the centre of the universe. It is also the antidote to the fundamentalist mindset characterised by the late Professor Bernard Lewis as, "I'm right; you're wrong; go to hell." [3]

Listening is a profoundly spiritual act. It can also be painful. It is comfortable not to have to listen, not to be challenged, not to be moved outside our comfort zone. Nowadays, courtesy of Google filters, Facebook friends, and the precise targeting of individuals made possible by the social media, it is easy to live in an echo-chamber in which we only get to hear the voices of those who share our views. But, as I said in a TED lecture last year, "It's the people not like us who make us grow."

Hence the life-changing idea: Listening is the greatest gift we can give to another human being. To be listened to, to be heard, is to know that someone else takes me seriously. That is a redemptive act.

Twenty years ago I sat in a lecture hall in a university in Jerusalem and listened to a series of great minds not listening to one another. I concluded that the divisions in the Jewish world were not about to heal, and would never heal until we understood the deep spiritual truth in Moses' challenge: "If you listen – and I mean, really listen."

[1] Technically, reciting the Shema is not an act of prayer at all. It is a fundamentally different type of action: it is an act of Talmud Torah, of learning Torah (see Menahot 99b). In prayer, we speak to God. In study we listen to God. [2] See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, 1980. [3] Bernard Lewis, "I'm right; you're wrong; go to hell," *The Atlantic*, May 2003.

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There is a subdued sense of frustration and even disappointment in the words of Moshe as he speaks to the Jewish people throughout this entire book of Dvarim. This sense of frustration is akin to that of a parent speaking to a recalcitrant teenage child who simply does not understand the ramifications of his/her behavior and the reality of the ways of the world.

Since perhaps many if not most of us have been in such a situation in our lifetime, we, as parents, can all empathize and sympathize with Moshe. His main complaint to the Jewish people, if it can be summed up in a vernacular phrase, is that they just don't get it. By now, after all the miracles that God has wrought for them; the granting of the Torah and making them a special people with an exalted purpose, they still seem to cherish being ordinary and not in any way special or unique.

This attitude of theirs will later be summed up in the books of prophecy of Israel in the statement "...that the House of Israel is just the same as all of the other nations of the world." It is this inability of the Jewish people to appreciate its true role and to understand its Godly mission of eternity that gnaws at Moshe and is reflected, even subliminally, in his words. He feels personally dissatisfied that this central message of Jewish life did not completely register with a large portion of the Jewish community. To him, the message is so clear that it is beyond debate. Nevertheless, he senses that as far as a large portion of the Jewish people is concerned, this is certainly not the case.

This problem has dogged the Jewish community throughout its long and difficult history. In our generation it has pretty much achieved an acute if not even mortal status. If Jews do not feel special, if they do not maintain their internal self identity and self-worth, then eventually all the forces of assimilation will overwhelm them.

There was a time when Jews could rely ruefully on the hatred and discrimination of the nations of the world to keep them Jewish, so to speak. Although this hatred and discrimination has not disappeared completely, it has abated in much of the Western world. It can no longer be relied upon to keep Jews Jewish.

In our time one must want to be Jewish and be willing to make binding commitments to remain part of the Jewish people. There is no doubt in my mind that even in the eternity of the truth of the words of Moshe, he glimpses the problems in the situation of the Jewish people in our time. I hope that we will somehow be able to alleviate his sense of frustration and disappointment and that he will see within us a generation, especially a younger generation, of Jews who are dedicated and loyal and who in their essence really get it.

Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com> via em.secureserver.net date: Wed, Aug 1, 2018 at 4:31 PM subject: Advanced Parsha - Ekev

Ekev (Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25) Agricultural Dependence
by **Rabbi Ozer Alport**

Moshe stressed to the Jewish people that the land of Israel would be different than the land of Egypt from which they were coming (Deut. 11:10-11). Whereas the fields of the land of Egypt were watered by irrigation from the Nile River, those in Israel received their water from the rain. Although Rashi notes that a natural water supply is advantageous in that it requires substantially less exertion, what deeper message was Moshe trying to impart?

After tempting Eve to eat from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, the serpent was cursed that it would travel on its stomach and eat dust all the days of its life (Genesis 3:14). In what way does this represent a punishment, as other animals must spend days hunting for prey while the snake's diet - dust - can be found wherever it travels?

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that this point is precisely the curse. Other animals are dependent on God to help them find food to eat. The snake, on the other hand, slithers horizontally across the earth. It never goes hungry, never looks upward, and is totally cut off from a relationship with God, and therein lies the greatest curse imaginable!

Similarly, Rabbi Shimshon Pinkus symbolically explains that Moshe wasn't merely relating an agricultural fact. He was teaching that just like the serpent, the Egyptians were a totally "natural" people. Because it never rained in their country, so they never had to look skyward to see what the clouds foretold. As a result, their hearts never gazed toward the Heavens, which effectively cutting them off from perceiving any dependence on or relationship with the Almighty. Everything which occurred in their lives could be explained scientifically and deceptively appeared to be completely "natural."

In light of this, the Exodus from Egypt to Israel wasn't merely a physical redemption from agonizing enslavement, but it also represented a deeper philosophical departure. The Exodus allowed the fledgling Jewish nation to exchange a worldview devoid of spirituality, through which everything is understood and explained according to science and nature, for one in which we confidently declare that God runs every aspect of the universe and we are dependent on Him for every detail of our daily lives.

* * *

BURNING THE SIN

In discussing the Golden Calf (Deut. 9:21), Moshe told the Jewish people, "Your sin which you committed, I took it and burned it in fire." Although Moshe took the physical calf and burned it, what did he mean when he said that he burned the actual sin, something which has no physical manifestation?

The Shelah HaKadosh explains that every action that a person does mystically creates a corresponding angel. Mitzvot generate good angels, while sins produce bad ones. Moshe recognized that simply burning the Calf itself, while necessary, wouldn't suffice to erase the spiritual effects of their actions. He therefore

additionally took the destructive angel that was created through their sin and burned it as well. Moshe related this to teach that when repenting our misdeeds, we must sincerely regret our actions and accept upon ourselves not to repeat them in order to uproot not only the physical consequences of the sin but the spiritual ones as well.

* * *

THE BAR MITZVAH BENTCHER

A 12-year-old boy ate a meal just before sundown on the day before his Bar Mitzvah and recited the Grace after Meals. If the food hasn't yet been fully digested and he is still satiated after sundown, when he legally becomes a Jewish adult and Biblically required to say Birkas HaMazon, must he say it again, as his Rabbinically-mandated recitation was unable to fulfill his new Biblical obligation?

Rabbi Akiva Eiger (OC 186) raises this question and writes that he is unsure of the proper ruling. He adds that his son-in-law compared it to a similar question raised by the Chochmas Adam (153), who discusses a case in which a person whose close family member has died and hasn't yet been buried eats a meal. Prior to the burial he is exempt from reciting blessings over his food. In a case where he is still full after the burial, the Chochmas Adam questions whether he would be required to recite Grace after Meals at that time.

However, Rabbi Akiva Eiger suggests that the two situations are not comparable, as in the other case the mourner is in fact obligated in the mitzvah of Birkas HaMazon at the time that he ate the food, but because he is currently occupied with the mitzvah of burying his family member, we exempt him from doing so. It therefore stands to reason that as soon as the dead has been buried, his obligation would return if he is still satiated. In our case, however, at the time that the 12-year-old boy ate his meal, he wasn't at all Biblically obligated in Birkas HaMazon, and it is quite possible that even after he becomes a Bar Mitzvah, he remains exempt. (Although in practical terms, he doesn't reach a clear conclusion.)

* * *

CARRYING THE TABLETS

Moshe recounted that he descended from Mount Sinai with the second set of Tablets after spending an additional 40 days on the mountain (Deut. 10:5). Rashi writes (Exodus 34:29) that this took place on Yom Kippur. How was he permitted to carry the Tablets from the mountain, which is a private domain, to the Jewish camp, a public domain, on Yom Kippur?

In discussing a different question, Nachmanides (Exodus 18:13) writes that Moshe descended from the mountain with the Tablets on the day after Yom Kippur.

Shu"t Rivash (96) maintains that the Jews weren't obligated to observe the Yomim Tovim until after the Tabernacle (Mishkan) was erected.

The Panim Yafos answers that God gave the Tablets to Moshe after he began walking, which is Biblically permitted since Moshe didn't uproot them.

The Chasam Sofer (Exodus 20:22) argues that just as one may desecrate Shabbos to save another person's life and enable him to observe Shabbos in the future, so too Moshe was permitted to carry the Tablets on Yom Kippur because the acceptance of the entire Torah and future observance of Yom Kippur was dependent upon it.

The Rogatchover (Tzafnas Paneiach) notes that Moshe mentioned that he descended the mountain but didn't say that he carried the Tablets with him, and he suggests that Moshe left them on the mountain because of the prohibition of carrying them.

Rabbi Yitzchok Sorotzkin challenges this explanation from Exodus 34:29, which states explicitly that Moshe did carry the Tablets with him when he descended. Instead, he answers that the Midrash (Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer 45) teaches that the Tablets miraculously carried not only themselves, but also Moshe. In other words, Moshe was allowed to "carry" the Tablets because he wasn't carrying them at all.

The Chavatzes HaSharon suggests that the holiness of Yom Kippur only began at the time that God told Moshe that he forgave the Jews for the golden calf. As this occurred in the middle of Yom Kippur, Moshe was exempt from observing it until the following year.

This article can also be read at: <http://www.aish.com/tp/i/pp/165116986.html>

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Ozer Alport was born and raised in Kansas City, a rare third-generation Midwestern Jew. After graduating from Harvard with a degree in economics, he went on to study in the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem for five years. He now lives in Brooklyn, where he teaches weekly Torah classes and authors Aish.com's Parsha Potpourri column, which were released in book form in 2012. To receive his weekly Torah emails, write to oalport@post.harvard.edu .

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Ohr Somayach :: Talmud Tips :: Zevachim100 - 106 For the week ending 4 August 2018 / 23 Av 5778

Rabbi Moshe Newman

Becoming a Kohen “Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: Pinchas did not become a kohen until he killed Zimri.” (Bamidbar 25:13); “Rav Ashi said: Pinchas did not become a kohen until he made peace between the tribes.” (Yehoshua 22:30) ... Zevachim 101b When did Pinchas, the grandson of Aharon HaKohen, become a kohen? Wasn't he born into a kohanic family? Not really. Since his birth occurred before G-d proclaimed Aharon and his sons who were alive at the time to be kohanim, Pinchas, who had already been born at that time, did not automatically receive the status of kohen by virtue of birth. (Rashi on Bamidbar 25:13) So, when did Pinchas become a kohen? There are two opinions in our gemara. Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina that Pinchas became a kohen after killing Zimri, the Prince of the Tribe of Shimon. Zimri had been publicly sinning in a very immoral manner. This heroic act by Pinchas caused a terrible plague to end, and earned him the status of kohen, as the Torah states regarding Pinchas: “And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal kehuna.” (Bamidbar 25:13) Rav Ashi, however, teaches that Pinchas did not become a kohen until later. Although, after what he did to Zimri he had received a blessing to be a kohen, and, in theory, he could have completed the process to become a kohen immediately, there was a delay in the process. Since he had killed a Prince of Israel, there was dissent from the people to his becoming a kohen at that initial time. But it was only years later, when he acted as a great peacemaker in preventing a civil war between the tribes (see Yehoshua 22:30), did the people consent to finalizing his status of becoming a kohen — a process which involved being anointed, wearing the kohanic garments, and bringing the special Mincha offering that every new kohen was required to bring at his inauguration. (Tosefot © 2018 Ohr Somayach International

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Eikev

On Cue

Not often does G-d Almighty tell anybody to leave him alone. But then again, Moshe isn't everybody.

This week, Moshe recounts the sad tale of the Golden Calf. Moshe had promised to return from Mount Sinai after receiving the Torah in forty days, but the Jews miscalculated. According to their calculations, he was late. Fearing that Moshe would never return from his celestial mission, the Jews made themselves a golden calf and worshipped it while proclaiming, “this is our god that took us out of Egypt.” Obviously, the calculations and miscalculations of the Jewish People are not as simple as they appear on the surface. That, however is an entirely different issue.

I'd like to focus in on the aftermath of the calamity of the Golden Calf. Hashem actually wanted to destroy the Jewish Nation and rebuild a new folk with Moshe, as its patriarchal leader. “Release me,” said G-d, “and I will destroy them and build a new nation from you” (Deuteronomy 9:14). Immediately after the words, “release me” Moshe sprung into action. In the Book of Exodus, it details how Moshe pleaded, cajoled, and reasoned with Hashem with a multitude of persuasive arguments that calmed His wrath. The Jews were spared.

What is troubling is Moshe's chutzpah. Didn't Hashem specifically tell him, “leave me alone”? What prompted him with the audacity to defy a direct command of Hashem?

Herbert Tenzer served as a distinguished congressman from New York in the 1960s. More importantly, he was an observant Jew who was a proud activist and was instrumental in providing relief for many Holocaust survivors. A few months before his passing, some years ago, he related to me the following story:

The energetic and often outspoken Rabbi Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati, Ohio was a prominent force in the Vaad Hatzallah Rescue Committee. He worked tirelessly throughout the terrible war years and their aftermath to save and place the victims of Nazi depravity. In addition to his prominence in the Jewish world, Rabbi Silver enjoyed a personal relationship with the very powerful Senator Robert Taft of Ohio.

Rabbi Silver had a very difficult request that needed much political pressure and persuasion to accomplish. He asked Mr. Tenzer to accompany him to the Senator.

“Shenator Taft!” he exclaimed, mixing his distinct accent in which the s would sound as sh, with a high pitched intoning of emotions. I have a very important and difficult request!”

Rabbi Silver went on to plead his case of obtaining a certain number of visas for some refugees who may not have met all the criteria. Senator Taft looked nonchalant and non-committal. The Senator thought for a while then grimaced. He slowly and carefully stretched his response. “It would be arduous and burdensome,” he began. “but technically,” he continued, implying all the while that he was not the least bit anxious to get his hands dirty, “it can be done.”

But Rabbi Silver did not hear anything except the last three words.

“IT CAN BE DONE?” He shouted with joy. “SHO DO IT!” Needless to say the stunned Senator got to work immediately and obtained the visas for the beleaguered Jews.

Moshe heard one line from Hashem, “leave me alone, and I will destroy them.” That was his cue. The Talmud in Berachos explains that hearing those words, Moshe knew that now it all depended on him. The only way Hashem would destroy His people was if Moshe left him alone. And he didn't. Moshe badgered, cajoled, and pleaded with the Almighty and we were spared.

My Rebbe once quoted legendary slugger Ted Williams, the last player to achieve a batting average of over .400. “Every player gets one pitch that he definitely can hit. To hit .400, don't miss that pitch.” Instead of recoiling at the words “release me” or “leave me be,” Moshe saw his pitch. And he hit it awfully hard.

In life there are many cues. This week Moshe teaches his nation that when you get your cue, don't miss it. Even if it takes a little chutzpah.

Dedicated by B. David & Shani Schreiber in memory of Naomi BasSheva Bas Rav Boruch Yosef of blessed memory Good Shabbos!

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The author is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore. Drasha is the e-mail edition of FaxHomily, a weekly torah facsimile on the weekly portion which is sponsored by The Henry and Myrtle Hirsch Foundation

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?Psalm 33: Our Inner Source of Trust

On all United States currency you can find the short motto, “In God we trust.” What is the source of our trust in God? From where do we draw the resources of faith needed to meet life's challenges?

In chapter 33, the psalmist reflects on God's supervision and control of the world:

“From the heavens, God looks down and sees all of humanity. From His dwelling-place, He watches over all of the earth's inhabitants; He Who

fashioned the hearts of all, Who perceives everything they do.” (Psalms 33: 13-15) After reflecting on the Divine providence governing all aspects of the universe, the psalm concludes with an elevated affirmation of trust in God:

תהילים ל"ג:א א. כִּי-בוֹ יִשְׂמַח לְבַבּוֹ; כִּי בַשֵּׁם ה' דָּשׁוּ בְּטַחְנוּ

“For in Him our hearts rejoice; we trust in His holy Name.” (Psalms 33:21) Simchah and Bitachon

Rav Kook explained that this verse is actually describing two different psychological states. There is a lofty state when the “heart rejoices in God,” and we experience pure, elevated simchah and joy. And there is a lower state, one of bitachon, when we trust that all is in God’s hands and all is ultimately for the best.

These two levels correspond to different aspects of the soul. At its highest level, the inner soul is tightly bound with God. In this state, the soul is filled with boundless joy; it is beyond all worldly constraints and concerns. Unburdened by worry and fear, the soul has no need for trust in God. It is content in transcendent happiness, in its eternal joy in God.

However, even the greatest of mystics cannot always remain on this lofty level. There are times when we must contend with the vicissitudes of life, when we must struggle with change and uncertainty. In this lower state, we no longer experience the pure joy of the inner soul. We no longer enjoy a connection to God so pure and so intimate that the psalmist describes it with the word 'bo' - as the soul rejoices, as it were, “in Him,” in the Divine Essence. Rather, we can only relate to “shem kodsho”, “His holy Name” - only a glimmering, a reflection, of the lofty holiness emanating from the inner soul and its pure state of joy.

Yet, even in this lower state, we may draw from the wellspring of holiness flowing from the soul’s higher state. Even in ordinary life, we benefit from this source of bitachon and faith as we confront life’s challenges, which appear to us as a threat to the soul’s inner stronghold.

"I will not fear, for You are with me"

The more distant we are from the elevated source, the greater our fears. Still, we do not completely lose our inner joy. Even in our lower state, when we only connect to God indirectly, by name, it is still “His holy Name.” There always remain traces of elevated holiness.

This is the basis of our trust in God, whatever path we take. “Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear, for You are with me” (Psalms 23:4). Even in our worldly state, when we must contend with the challenges and vicissitudes of life, we benefit from the soul’s inner joy and are able to place our trust “in Your holy Name.”

(Adapted from Olat Re’iyah vol. I, p. 218) See also: ?Eikev: Two Loves for Eretz Yisrael

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Since this week’s parsha, Eikev, includes the sources for the laws of brochos, it is certainly appropriate to discuss:

Is this Considered a Mixture? Some details of the Halachos of Ikar and Tafel By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: What bracha do I recite on a fruit salad?

Question #2: What is the difference between a mixture and an enhancer?

Question #3: Why should I sometimes recite the brochos of ha’adamah or shehakol before I recite the brocha of ha’eitz?

Answer: In a different article, currently available on RabbiKaganoff.com under the title Important Eating or the search word “ikar,” I noted that there are two general categories of ikar and tafel; (1) enhancers and (2) mixtures.

(1) Enhancers: This category includes food items where the tafel food makes the ikar food tastier. Some common examples include: eating cereal with fruit and milk or latkes with apple sauce; stirring herbal tea with a cinnamon stick; breading fish or meat (schnitzel). In all of these cases, one recites the bracha for the ikar; that is, the cereal, latkes, tea, or meat; and the tafel is included.

(2) Mixtures: This category includes cases where one food is not specifically enhancing the other, but both foods are important. Examples of this type of ikar and tafel: macaroni and cheese, blintzes (they always contain a filling), cholent, kugel, stew, soups. These mixtures are considered one complete food item and

therefore have only one bracha. Thus, the concept of ikar and tafel is very different here - it is the rule used to determine which bracha we recite on this food.

WHAT IS A MIXTURE?

Does a “meat and potatoes” roast require one bracha on both ingredients, or is it two items that require separate brachos?

Is the bracha on a mix of raisins and peanuts ha’eitz or ha’adamah?

Is a fruit salad containing melon or pineapple in addition to pears, apples, and peaches a mixture that requires one bracha or separate brachos?

When dealing with the correct bracha on a food mixture, one of the key questions one must ask is whether the food is indeed a mixture that requires one bracha or if it is considered two (or more) separate foods each of which requires a separate bracha.

Here is an obvious example: Suppose you dine on a chicken dinner with side dishes of noodle kugel and string beans. Although you are eating them all at the same time, these foods are not a mixture. Therefore, each item requires its own bracha.

FRUIT SALAD

Do the ingredients of a fruit salad that contains both ha’eitz and ha’adamah items require two separate brachos, or is the salad a mixture requiring one bracha? Whereas in a soup, peanut bar, or tzimmes, the foods were cooked or blended together and are difficult to isolate from one another, in most fruit salads the different fruits can be clearly distinguished and separated from one another. On the other hand, because the pieces are small, one usually eats the different varieties together. The poskim dispute whether fruit salad warrants one bracha or two. According to most poskim, one should recite only one bracha over a mixture of this type. Following their opinion, one would recite a bracha on the majority item in a fruit salad. However, the Chayei Odom contends that when the items can be clearly distinguished from one another, they are not to be considered a mixture, and one should recite separate brachos on the components of the dish. Thus, in his opinion, one should recite a ha’eitz on the tree fruits and then ha’adamah on the melon in the fruit salad.

(I noted in other articles, entitled “Topical, Tropical Fruits”; “A Sweet Change of Pace”; and “Papaya”, that although we recite ha’adamah on bananas, pineapples, and strawberries, and shehakol before eating chocolate, there are poskim who contend that one should recite ha’eitz on these fruits because they are perennial; that is, the root remains from one year to the next. Because the poskim dispute whether the correct bracha on these types of perennial fruits is ha’eitz or ha’adamah, we recite ha’adamah [and, in the case of chocolate, shehakol] to resolve the doubt. In all of these instances, we recite the more general bracha, because one who recites a ha’adamah when he was to have recited ha’eitz fulfills his obligation, since trees grow from the ground. Shehakol is the most general of all brochos on food, and fulfills the requirement bedei’evid whenever it is recited on any food.

However, since we recite this bracha only to resolve a safek, there are several ramifications of this ruling, one of which directly affects our case. If one will be eating both these fruits [bananas, pineapples, and strawberries] and definite ha’eitz fruits, one should recite the ha’adamah first and taste them before one recites ha’eitz. This is because, according to the opinion that the correct bracha on any perennial is ha’eitz, if one recited a ha’eitz on the tree fruits, reciting a different bracha afterwards on the banana, pineapple, or strawberry is a bracha levatalah, a bracha in vain. Although we do not rule according to this opinion, we should not ignore it.

Similarly, if you are going to recite shehakol on the chocolate, you should recite this bracha first and taste the chocolate before eating the tree fruits. This is because there are halachic authorities who rule that the brocha on chocolate is ha’eitz, as I explained in the above-referenced article, A Sweet Change of Pace.)

The same dispute about making one or two brachos on a mixture exists regarding a mix of raisins and peanuts; most poskim contend that one should recite the bracha of the majority item, and the Chayei Odom rules that they require two separate brachos. The Mishnah Berurah (212:1) concludes that safek brachos lehakeil: when in doubt, we do not recite a bracha, and therefore, one should recite one bracha on both items. The bracha should follow whatever bracha one would recite on the majority of the mixture, even if it consists of different fruits (Mekor Haberacha pg. 182). If one cannot determine whether the

majority is borei pri ha'eitz or borei pri ha'adamah, then one should recite borei pri ha'adamah, since when one recites pri ha'adamah on an item that is pri ha'eitz, one fulfills the requirement, but not vice versa. Following the majority opinion that a person recites one bracha on the mixed fruit salad or the peanuts and raisins, we still need to clarify a very important issue. At what point do we consider the two items to be different foods requiring separate brachos? In the case mentioned above of a chicken dinner with side dishes of noodle kugel and string beans, it is obvious that they are different items. But is a roast of meat and potatoes or a shepherd's pie (usually consisting of alternating layers of ground meat and potatoes) considered one item, or does it require two separate brachos? The poskim rule as follows: When the two items are eaten together in one spoonful, he recites one bracha, even if there is an occasional spoonful where he is eating only one of them. However, if each spoonful usually contains one item exclusively, the two items should have separate brachos. Thus, meat and potatoes cooked together would have two separate brachos, since the meat and potatoes are usually not eaten together in the same forkful. However, shepherd's pie or soup would require only one bracha, since each forkful or spoonful will probably contain parts of at least two different foods. In this case, he recites one bracha, even if an occasional forkful/spoonful has only one of the ingredients (Aruch Hashulchan 212:2).

WHAT ABOUT CHOLENT?

A cholent consisting of barley, kishka, meat, potatoes and beans contains some items whose bracha is mezonos (the barley and kishka) and others whose bracha is shehakol (the meat) or ha'adamah (potatoes and beans). Is cholent a mixture like a soup requiring only one bracha, or can it be compared to eating a meat and potatoes roast, where several brachos are recited on the components? Truthfully, it depends on the consistency of the cholent. If the cholent that includes barley or kishka is made in such a way that each forkful contains a mix of the various ingredients, its bracha is mezonos. However, if the potatoes or meat are large, discernable chunks, they will require their own brachos (Pri Megadim, Pesicha Kolleles, Hilchos Brachos s.v. klal amru; Vezos Haberacha pg. 110). Conclusion Not everything we do in life qualifies as our ikar purpose in life; often we must do things that are tafeil to more important things. However, paying attention to the halachos of ikar and tafeil should encourage us to focus on our priorities in life, and not allow the tafeil things we must do become more important than they really are.

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toratravaviner@yahoo.com to: ravaviner@yahoogroups.com
<http://www.ravaviner.com/> Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim From the teachings
of the Rosh Yeshiva Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:
Thoughts about Someone's Death Q: I thought about a particular person dying.
Can this person die because of my thoughts? A: Certainly not. Ignore all of
these badgering thoughts.

Stone that Fell From the Kotel Q: A stone fell from the Kotel, and it is really
bothering me. What does it mean? What should we do? A: Thank Hashem
that no one was injured.

Netilat Yadayim by a guest Q: Should a guest avoid using large quantities of
water for Netilat Yadayim, since it is at the host's expense? A: It is an
insignificant amount of water and the host forgives the cost with all of his heart.

Taking a Shower Q: Is there a Mitzvah to take a shower? A: It is a positive
character trait of cleanliness and health. Rambam, Hilchos De'ot Chapter 4.

Davening by a Soldier Q: I am a soldier and work as a driver for a high-ranking
officer. Sometimes we leave early and I do not have time to Daven. Should I
drive faster in order to make it to Davening? A: No. 1. Pikuach Nefesh (life-
threatening situation). 2. One who is engaged in one Mitzvah is exempt from
another Mitzvah. You can Daven before you leave, however, even if it is early
(ShutYechaveh Daat 2:8).

Crib Death Q: I just read that in order to avoid Crib Death, one should lay the
baby on his back. My grandmother told me to lay a baby on his stomach. What
should I do? A: This is a medical question. You should therefore ask doctors.
If the doctors said one way and then changed their opinion, the latter opinion is

followed, just as in all scientific research. We still do not know what causes
Crib Death, but the doctors do say that laying a baby on his back is beneficial in
this case.

Dormitory or Home Q: Which is better for Yeshiva high school by, a
dormitory or home? A: Each one has its advantages. It depends on the child,
and is therefore a personal decision.

Book in the Geniza Q: Is it permissible to take a book from the Geniza, or is it
stealing? A: It is permissible. It is Hefker (abandoned).

Woman Reciting Kaddish Q: Is it permissible to help make a Minyan in a
mourner's home where a woman is reciting Kaddish on her own? A: No.

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>to: Peninim
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Parshas Eikev Peninim on the Torah

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

PARSHAS EIKEV

As a father will chastise his son, so Hashem, your G-d, chastises you. (8:5)

The Torah clearly states that afflictions, hardships, misery, pain and troubles are all aspects of a loving Father's relationship with His son. While this might be difficult to accept amidst one's pain and misery, if we could possibly isolate ourselves from all of the emotional pain, we might consider that what we are experiencing is from our Father in Heaven, Who certainly does not want to hurt us. If that is the case, why are we suffering so much? Is that the way a loving parent acts toward his child? Sometimes it is necessary. As with all parental-based chastisements, it usually hurts the parent more to see his child suffer than it hurts the child himself.

There is, however, more to it. We must acknowledge the fact that there is another world, another life, in which spirituality reigns supreme. The physical realities to which we are privy in this world are meaningless in the world of the spirit. It is an entirely different life - something we cannot understand. For a moment, let us remove the material aspects of the world that blind us to the truth, so that we can view life from a spiritual perspective. Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, quotes an incredible analogy from the Chafetz Chaim which should inspire us to open up our eyes to what we cannot yet see, that in which we can and should believe.

There was a Jew who was devout and pious. He was also an erudite Torah scholar who was proficient in all areas of Torah law and literature. No area of Torah was foreign to him. He had one problem: for some reason, he had an issue which he could not control. He hit people with his right hand. He did not know what compelled him to act in such an aberrant manner, but, try as he did, he could not control his swiping at people. He was acutely aware that this was considered sinful behavior. Indeed, one who strikes a fellow Jew transgresses two prohibitive commands. Teshuvah is insufficient unless one asks forgiveness from the victim. He was really in trouble.

No man lives forever. This individual passed from this world with a heavy heart. What would he do if Heaven decided to punish him for his one failing? He discovered quickly enough that the Heavenly Tribunal adheres to a different set of rules. Indeed, the entire game plan is different - as we will all soon discover. The Tribunal decided that, as a result of his striking people, he would have to return to this world reincarnated, to live a life of decency and respect for his fellow man. The only other alternative was Gehinom, Purgatory.

When presented with the choice of punishments, he opted for Gehinom, since he did not feel comfortable returning to this world. What if he would again be unable to control his urge to strike people? Indeed, it is well-known that whatever failing one had in his earlier existence returns with a vengeance the next time around. The angel escorted him to Gehinom where he lasted a very short time. It was impossible to bear. He would have to opt for the alternative. He turned to the Heavenly Tribunal and asked for a special dispensation. After all, he had been deficient in only one area. Otherwise, he was a righteous, upright Torah scholar. He asked that, given his "problem," would it be possible that he be born without his right hand? Thus, he would be unable to hit anyone. The Tribunal replied that this would defeat the purpose of his return. His penance would be served only under such condition in which he overcame his urge to strike, with his hand. The man did not give up. Could the Tribunal take into consideration his many years of diligent Torah study? Perhaps, if he would relinquish all of the merit due him for his Torah study, they might consider allowing him to be born without one arm? The Tribunal acquiesced, and the neshamah returned to this world, sans one arm.

Can we imagine the scene in the birthing room as the beautiful baby was born missing an arm? The parents were hysterical. The family lamented. The child was destined to live a difficult life. He would survive and, quite possibly, thrive. It would be challenging at first, but, with the proper support, he would lead a completely successful life. People would feel bad. He might even be depressed at times, asking, "Why me?" but, as the Chafetz Chaim concludes, "He asked for it. In fact, he begged for it. These are the types of yissurim that a loving Father gives, because He cares."

We have now been availed a completely new perspective on misery. Who are we to question Hashem? His reasoning goes beyond our scope of understanding.

At that time Hashem said to me, "Carve for yourself two stone Tablets like the first ones, and ascend to Me to the mountain. (10:1)

Moshe Rabbeinu relates to the Jewish People that Hashem acquiesced to his entreaty and instructed him to "carve for yourself" and, afterwards, to "make a wooden Ark for yourself." Rashi adds to Moshe's monologue: "But I made an Ark first, for when I would return from the mountain with the Tablets in my hand. Where would I put them?" This is not the Ark made by Betzalel, for the Jewish People did not deal with the construction of the Mishkan until after Yom Kippur. For upon Moshe's descent from the mountain, he commanded the nation concerning the Mishkan. Betzalel made the Mishkan first and then made the various vessels and furnishings.

Thus, this wooden Ark was distinct from the golden Ark made by Betzalel after the completion of the Mishkan. Moshe's Ark accompanied the nation in battle, while Betzalel's Ark did not go into battle except in the days of Eili Kohen Gadol, for which they were ultimately punished.

Let us go back to the original command Moshe received from Hashem to ascend the mountain. At that time, he was not told to construct an Ark. Yet, this time, Hashem told him to prepare a wooden Ark for the Luchos, Tablets, with which he would be returning. Moshe, of course, complied, so that prior to ascending the mountain, he prepared the receptacle which would contain the Tablets. Why? What distinguished the second Luchos from the first?

Horav Elyahu Marciano, Shlita, distinguishes between the composite nature of the first Luchos and that of the second Luchos. The first Luchos were given to Klal Yisrael on the heels of their seminal declaration, Naase v'nishma, "We will do and we will listen." This assertion of commitment elevated the nation to an unprecedented spiritual plateau, previously unrealized by mortals. Indeed, a Heavenly Voice emanated and asked, "Who revealed the secret (Naase v'nishma) to my children? This was suggestive of an attitude evinced only by the Ministering Angels. In other words, Klal Yisrael was so spiritually elevated, that they were like angels. Thus, Hashem Himself made the Luchos which they received. Composed of black fire on white fire, these Luchos were suited for a nation which had reached the level of paskah zuhamassan, the noxiousness which prevailed over them (as a result of Adam's sin) had ceased.

The second Luchos reflected a different story altogether. After the nation had sinned with the Golden Calf, the zuhamah, noxiousness, returned. As a result, they were no longer worthy of Luchos constructed by G-d. As mortals, they required Luchos made by a mortal. Therefore, Moshe was instructed to fashion the next set of Tablets.

We now understand why, concerning the second set of Luchos, it was necessary to have an Ark prepared ahead of time. The Ark symbolizes the concept of preparation for accepting the Torah. One must prepare himself, so that he is spiritually suitable to accept the Torah. He must refine his character, eradicate his gross attitude and expunge his base frame of mind. While the Torah certainly refines a person, it is necessary that one prepare himself to the best extent possible, so that he is attuned to the Torah's purifying influence.

Given the above, we can understand why Hashem commanded Moshe to make an Ark of wood. Why not gold? Certainly, Torah is sufficiently precious that it is worthy of being housed in a golden Ark.

The Netziv, zl, explains that the second Luchos are an allusion to Torah She'Baal Peh, the Oral Law, whose mastery is dependent upon the toil and diligence of individuals. One does not achieve Torah scholarship by sitting back and waiting for an inspiration. It takes work. In Pirkei Avos Chazal teach: Kach hee darkah shel Torah, "This is the way of the Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation - but toil in the Torah." Wood symbolizes simplicity; gold does not. One begins Torah study with extreme commitment, ready to relinquish his material/physical comforts, so that he will excel in Torah erudition. Ultimately, his knowledge becomes the source of great spiritual riches, his greatest treasure.

Rav Marciano supplements this with the notion that wood implies growth. It is the product of planting, fertilization, care and devotion. A tree grows only after the ground has been properly prepared. As it grows, it must be weeded, tilled, rid of bugs and irrigated often. Only then does it grow tall and strong. Torah study is very similar. One does not just make it overnight. It takes years of work - before, during and after - to study, understand and maintain his knowledge. Perhaps we might apply the simplicity and unfinished nature of wood to another aspect of growth in Torah: the will to succeed. We all too often find young people who give up all too quickly, not allowing themselves the chance to complete their quest for success. Some cannot handle the obstacles; others erroneously think they handled the obstacles. Both are wrong. When there is a will, there is a way. Horav Shlomo Friefeld, zl, one of the most successful Roshei Yeshivah of this generation, was a man who almost singlehandedly spearheaded the baal-teshuvah movement. He once interviewed to a close student, "I faced many obstacles, and I triumphed over all of them. I have faced difficult hurdles, but they never overtook me. Do you know why? It is because I had one chasid, close follower, who never stopped believing in me. Myself!"

Rav Friefeld applied this psychology in his dealings with his students, many of whom were recent "migr?s" to Torah Judaism. They were starting at the foot of a tall mountain. How could they

reach the pinnacle? How could they scale the mountain of Torah that stood before them? In his biography of Rav Friefeld, Rabbi Yisrael Besser reveals the Rosh Yeshivah's secret, what he saw in people, and how he was able to encourage them to growth in Torah. He quoted his revered Rebbe, Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl, who once chastised a student, "How can you speak about yourself that way?" This emotional reaction to a negative statement the student made about himself indicated how upset the Rosh Yeshivah was. One has no right to "knock" himself.

Rav Friefeld understood this concept as a key to understanding the meaning of lashon hara, slanderous speech: why people speak it and what it reflects about them. People see themselves through a jaundiced eye. The ayin ra, negative perspective, affects them so that they speak badly of themselves, and, eventually, the "cup runneth over" to everyone and everything around them. There are many talented people out there who have great difficulty in noticing anything positive about themselves. Regrettably, this reaction does not remain within the parameters of oneself. In Sefer Shmuel I 22:2, the Navi relates about the unstable period prior to David Hamelech's ascension to the throne of Klal Yisrael. At that point, the man who would be king was hiding in a cave in Adulam. A group of men gathered around him. These were his "supporters." The pasuk's description of them indicates that they were a sorry crew. Kol ish matzok; v'chol ish asher lo noshe; v'chol ish mar nefesh. An ish matzok is a man in distress; everything he touches has a habit of turning sour. Ish asher lo noshe is a man who has a creditor. In other words, he is debt-ridden, probably bankrupt, with his creditors chasing after him. Ish mar nefesh, a man with an embittered spirit; is a depressed person: one who is down and out; someone upon whom the sun rarely shines; someone who does not know how to smile, because he is out of practice. This was the motley crew with whom David surrounded himself. How does one work with such an embittered, depressed group of self-rejected individuals?

Rav Friefeld quoted the Alexander Rebbe, who explained that David's success was his ability to call each man an ish, a man. As the lev, heart, of Klal Yisrael, the heart of each and every Jew. He saw into the penimiyus, internal essence, of a person. He saw beyond the external circumstances, past the false facades. He saw the ish, true person.

"David was a yifei einayim, beautiful eyes." Do you think that this means that he had blue eyes? No! It means that he had a good pair of eyes. He knew how to see; I think we may add that he also knew where to look.

This was Rav Friefeld's secret to his success. He saw beyond appearances. He saw into the hearts of each and every one of his talmidim, students.

Rav Friefeld successfully motivated a generation of students who were relying upon a commodity which over the years has become increasingly rare: sincerity on the part of the student. He could encourage, cajole, motivate and inspire, but, unless the student had a genuine desire to succeed, it would not work. Once, a student who was not blessed with great learning abilities, approached his rebbe in tears. Every line of Gemorah was a struggle for him. He toiled to understand what little he could, but saw very little success from all his effort. He told his rebbe, "I cannot go on. Everyone else is moving forward, growing in Torah, while I am at the exact place as when I started. It is just too overwhelming."

The Rosh Yeshivah replied, "You can be a gadol ba'Torah just as a certain talmid chacham, if you really want to."

The student began to laugh, implying that while he appreciated his rebbe's words of encouragement, he was not buying into it. His rebbe must be joking

Hearing this, Rav Friefeld arose from his chair and grabbed the student by the lapels of his jacket, "The Torah writes, v'lfnei iveir lo sitein michshol, this means that it is forbidden to misguide someone. I would never tell you something which I do not completely believe in possible!"

When a Rosh Yeshivah/rebbe believes in a student, and the student realizes it, they generate hope for success. It is definitely something to think about.

Hashem, your G-d, you shall fear, Him shall you serve, to Him shall you cleave. (10:20)

In the Talmud Kesubos 111b, Chazal wonder how a human being can possibly cling to Hashem. He is described as eish ochlah, a consuming fire (Ibid. 4:24). Can a human being cling to fire? Chazal reply that it is all about relationships. When a man marries off his daughter to a Torah scholar, engages in commerce on behalf of a Torah scholar, or in some way benefits a Torah scholar with his possessions, these deeds are considered and counted as if he were clinging to Hashem Himself. Sustaining what is important to Hashem warrants the reward of eternal life in Olam Habba, the World to Come.

Additionally, the Sefer HaChinuch writes that when one associates with a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, it rubs off. A closer relationship with a talmid chacham avails one of the opportunity to be exposed to his greatness of spirit, refinement of middos, character traits. Thus, his life is inspired, making him a better, more righteous Jew. This is what Shlomo Hamelech alludes to when he says in Sefer Mishlei 13:20, "One who walks with the wise will grow wise."

In his anthology of divrei Torah from Horav Avraham Pam, zl, Rabbi Sholom Smith cites the Chafetz Chaim who, in his Pesichah to Sefer Hamitzvos Ha'Katzeir, Asei 6, notes a practical application. A man walks into a shul between Minchah and Maariv. He confronts the usual scene. Many in the shul are listening to the Rav's shiur. Some are sitting in the back hall

discussing the problems confronting the world, the Torah camp in general, or issues in their immediate community. Yet another group is speaking lashon hora, slanderous speech, about their friends or neighbors. The person now entering the shul is confronted with a "choice": Does he join the moshav leitzim, enclave of scoffers, in the back of the shul, or does he go up to the front of the shul and listen to the shiur? If he remains in the rear of the shul, the Chafetz Chaim asserts that he is guilty of violating the mitzvah of U'Bo sidbak, "To Him you shall cling," because he has clearly indicated where he would rather be. He has no interest in attaching himself to Hashem. He would rather sit in the back and shmooze.

Clearly, we do not realize this when we decide to shmooze in the rear of the shul. While we accept the notion that it might be offensive to the congregation, and certainly to the Rav, who would think about Hashem? No one in his right mind would knowingly - if he had the opportunity - detach himself from the Almighty. Yet, many of us do so on an almost constant basis.

Such a negative move, albeit innocuous and unintentional, can lead to a much worse outcome. Rav Pam suggests that this is what occurred concerning Lot. When an argument broke out between the shepherds of Lot and the shepherds of Avraham Avinu, Avraham suggested to Lot that they part ways. Things had gotten out of hand, and, rather than risk an all-out machlokes, controversy, between them, Avraham had offered to Lot to move first. He could choose for himself any available parcel of land. Lot selected the lush, fertile plain of Jordan. The Torah writes about Lot's move, Vayisa miKedem, "And Lot journeyed from Kedem." The Midrash interprets Kedem as more than a geographical description, but rather, as a reference to Hashem. MiKadmono shel olam, "From the Ancient One of the world." By separating himself from Avraham, Lot indicated that, Ee'efshi lo b'Avraham v'lo b'Elokav, "I have no use/want, nothing to do - not with Avraham, nor with his G-d." This move, this negative choice, which at the time did not seem so negative, was the beginning of Lot's spiritual decline. When one has the opportunity to be in the proximity of Avraham and he chooses to leave, it is a clear message regarding his priorities in life. From the heights of spirituality to the nadir of evil and disgrace, Lot showed the way.

Rav Pam explains why the Midrash attributes Lot's decline to apostasy as a result of his move from Avraham. If, for any reason, Lot could leave the company of the individual who was the pillar of chesed and righteousness in the world, this could be because he was thoroughly evil and had long ago begun to reject the Almighty. Otherwise, how could he leave Avraham?

This is a frightening message. Every Jew, regardless of his background in Torah knowledge, requires a rebbe, Torah mentor, with whom he can discuss vital - and sometimes even mundane - issues that affect him. One needs objective guidance that focuses on the Torah's perspective of what is proper and what is iniquitous. Since the lines of demarcation between these two extremes are not always clear, it is essential that one has a mentor whom he respects and to whose words he will adhere. Regrettably, some of us listen to a rebbe as long as his line of thinking coincides with ours, as long as he says what we want to hear. We do not seek advice, but rather, blessings that acquiesce with our decisions. One who has a rebbe not only receives proper guidance, he also fulfills the mitzvah of U'bo tidbak, "To Hashem shall you cling."

You should know today, for it is not with your children who did not know and who did not see the chastisement of Hashem, your G-d... Rather, it is your eyes that see all the great work of Hashem. (11:2,7)

Hashem addresses the original group that left Egypt, instructing them to be attentive and accept His rebuke. He emphasizes that they, unlike their offspring, personally witnessed the liberation followed by the Revelation. Therefore, it was to them that Hashem was speaking. He expected more from them Horav Arye Leib Bakst, zl, cites the words of the Chovas HaLevavos in Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh to explain these pesukim. "The endeavor of men concerning their Torah study and life in general changes with the degree of their recognition, common sense and the merit of their understanding. Each and every one is commanded to introspect concerning what he personally is obligated to Hashem. This is in accordance with his acknowledgment of Hashem's favors to him." The Chovas HaLevavos employs our pasuk to substantiate his thesis. Hashem expected more from the original nation that was liberated than from their children who had not been privy to such overwhelming miracles and wonders. Eineicham ha'ro'os, "It is your eyes that see."

Hashem's rebuke is stronger to the senior generation. They are in His debt. Rav Bakst posits that the obligation concerning adherence to certain mitzvos is not the same. There are some individuals who have greater responsibility, greater obligations. Veritably, the Torah was given equally to all Jews, and, therefore, all Jews are obliged to observe the Torah and carry out its mitzvos. Some Jews, however, are different. They must do more, because they owe Hashem, having benefited greatly from His favor. In accordance with their obligation to Him, so, too, is their responsibility towards mitzvah performance. In addition, the Jew who has a profound understanding of Torah and mitzvos also has a greater responsibility concerning their execution. The Chovas HaLevavos in Shaar Avodas Elokim underscores the fact that Hashem has distinguished His favor among nations, among people and among families. He chose Klal Yisrael from among the nations of the world. He then divided the Jewish People into three groups - : Kohen, Levi, Yisrael. Among the individual groups are certain families and individuals who have

clearly been blessed. They are Hashem's chosen ones. The Rosh Yeshivah adds that bnei Torah who are able to spend their lives immersed in Torah study are especially fortunate. As with all good things, however, with blessing comes responsibility.

A powerful lesson may be derived from here. One who has benefited from Hashem becomes a baal chov, debtor. He owes Hashem and is, thus, obliged to do more, serve better, observe mitzvos meticulously. One who has been blessed with yichus, exceptional pedigree, has a stronger responsibility than one who is not the scion of an illustrious lineage. It goes with the territory.

Va'ani Tefillah Amen. Y'hei Shmei rabba mevorach.

Amen. Y'hei Shmei rabba mevorach is one of the most powerful verses in the Tefillah. In the Talmud Berachos 3a, Chazal relate that Rabbi Yosi once walked through one of the ruins in Yerushalayim. He stopped to pray. Elyahu HaNavi met him and waited until he concluded his prayer. After greeting each other, Elyahu asked Rabbi Yosi, "What sound did you hear in this ruin?" Rabbi Yosi replied, "I heard a Heavenly echo lamenting like a dove, saying, 'Woe to the children, that for their sin I demolished My House, burned down My Sanctuary, and banished them among the nations.'" Elyahu said, "I swear that not at this time alone does the Heavenly Voice say this, but every single day, three times, it says that. Yet, this is not all. At the time that the Jews enter batei knesses and batei midrash, and they respond, 'Amen, Y'hei Shmei rabba mevorach,'" Hashem nods His head and says, "Happy is the King Who is so lauded and praised in His House, but what has a Father Who banished His children into exile? And woe to the children who were banished from the table of their Father."

Chazal are teaching us the incredible impact engendered by saying, Amen. Y'hei Shmei rabba mevorach. Perhaps the next time we are in shul and we hear Kaddish recited, we will stop to think Who is listening to us.

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