



Birkat Halebana BH this Mosae Shabbat

8TH OF ADAR 5781
FEBRUARY 20TH, 2021
CANDLE LIGHTING 5:58PM
SHABBAT ENDS 6:58PM



**CHANGING
THE PAST**

**KERUBIM EMBRACING AT
THE TIME OF THE HURBAN**

**SUPPORTING
THE SUPPORTER**

PARASHAT TERUMAH SHABBAT ZACHOR

Synagogue: 310 - 95th Street, Surfside, FL 33154 **Website:** www.hechalshalom.org **Tel:** (305) 867-6024
Mailing Address: Ness 26 Inc P.O. Box 546632 Surfside, FL 33154 **E-mail:** info@hechalshalom.org | oroziel.bookkeeper@gmail.com

THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN HAS BEEN KINDLY SPONSORED LEILUY NISHMAT
 שלמה בן יעקב ז"ל, BY HIS DEAR FAMILY.



Standard time																			
אדר תשפ"א		דף היומי Daf Yomi	עלות השחר 72 דקות Dawn 72 Minutes		זמן ציצית ותפילין Earliest Talis	הנחה Sun rise	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema		סוף זמן תפילה Latest Shachris		חצות Mid day	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	פלג המנחה Mincha Plag	חדלקת נרות Candle Lighting	השקיעת השמה Sun set	לילה לרבינו תם R' Tam's Nightfall	February / March 2021	
		פסחים -	במערות 16.1' דקות שוות	10.2 מעלות -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	במשיור -	
א	שבת	פד	5:47	5:44	6:15	6:57	9:11	9:09	9:45	10:42	12:34	1:05	3:51	5:02	[משפטים]	6:12	6:48	7:22	Sha 7:25
ב	ראשון	פה	5:47	5:44	6:14	6:57	9:11	9:09	9:45	10:41	12:34	1:05	3:52	5:02		6:13	6:49	7:23	Sun 7:26
ג	שני	פו	5:46	5:43	6:14	6:56	9:10	9:09	9:45	10:41	12:34	1:05	3:52	5:03		6:14	6:50	7:24	Mon 7:27
ד	שלישי	פז	5:45	5:42	6:13	6:55	9:10	9:08	9:44	10:41	12:34	1:05	3:53	5:03		6:14	6:50	7:24	Tue 7:27
ה	רביעי	פח	5:45	5:41	6:12	6:54	9:09	9:08	9:44	10:41	12:34	1:05	3:53	5:04		6:15	6:51	7:25	Wed 7:28
ו	חמישי	פט	5:44	5:41	6:11	6:54	9:09	9:07	9:43	10:40	12:34	1:05	3:53	5:04		6:15	6:51	7:25	Thu 7:28
ז	ששי	צ	5:43	5:40	6:11	6:53	9:09	9:07	9:43	10:40	12:34	1:05	3:53	5:05	5:58	6:16	6:52	7:26	Fri 7:29
ח	שבת	צא	5:42	5:39	6:10	6:52	9:08	9:06	9:42	10:40	12:34	1:05	3:54	5:05	[תרומה]	6:17	6:52	7:26	Sha 7:30
ט	ראשון	צב	5:42	5:38	6:09	6:51	9:08	9:06	9:42	10:39	12:34	1:05	3:54	5:06		6:17	6:53	7:27	Sun 7:30
י	שני	צג	5:41	5:37	6:08	6:50	9:07	9:05	9:41	10:39	12:34	1:05	3:54	5:06		6:18	6:53	7:27	Mon 7:31
יא	שלישי	צד	5:40	5:36	6:07	6:49	9:07	9:05	9:41	10:38	12:33	1:04	3:55	5:07		6:18	6:54	7:28	Tue 7:31
יב	רביעי	צה	5:39	5:36	6:07	6:49	9:06	9:04	9:40	10:38	12:33	1:04	3:55	5:07		6:19	6:54	7:28	Wed 7:32
תענית																			
יג	חמישי	צו	5:38	5:35	6:06	6:48	9:06	9:04	9:40	10:38	12:33	1:04	3:55	5:07	6:02	6:20	6:55	7:29	Thu 7:33
יד	ששי	צז	5:38	5:34	6:05	6:47	9:05	9:03	9:39	10:37	12:33	1:04	3:56	5:08	6:02	6:20	6:56	7:29	Fri 7:33
טו	שבת	צח	5:37	5:33	6:04	6:46	9:05	9:03	9:39	10:37	12:33	1:04	3:56	5:08	[תצוה]	6:21	6:56	7:30	Sha 7:34
טז	ראשון	צט	5:36	5:32	6:03	6:45	9:04	9:02	9:38	10:36	12:33	1:04	3:56	5:09		6:21	6:57	7:30	Sun 7:34
יז	שני	ק	5:35	5:31	6:02	6:44	9:04	9:02	9:38	10:36	12:32	1:03	3:56	5:09		6:22	6:57	7:31	Mon 7:35
יח	שלישי	קא	5:34	5:30	6:01	6:43	9:03	9:01	9:37	10:35	12:32	1:03	3:56	5:09		6:23	6:58	7:31	Tue 7:35
יט	רביעי	קב	5:33	5:29	6:00	6:42	9:03	9:01	9:37	10:35	12:32	1:03	3:57	5:10		6:23	6:58	7:32	Wed 7:36
כ	חמישי	קג	5:32	5:28	5:59	6:41	9:02	9:01	9:36	10:35	12:32	1:03	3:57	5:10		6:23	6:59	7:32	Thu 7:36
כא	ששי	קד	5:31	5:27	5:58	6:40	9:01	8:59	9:35	10:34	12:32	1:03	3:57	5:11	6:06	6:24	6:59	7:33	Fri 7:37
כב	שבת	קה	5:30	5:26	5:57	6:39	9:01	8:59	9:35	10:34	12:31	1:02	3:57	5:11	[כיתשתא]	6:25	7:00	7:34	Sha 7:38
כג	ראשון	קו	5:29	5:25	5:56	6:38	9:00	8:58	9:34	10:33	12:31	1:02	3:58	5:11		6:25	7:00	7:34	Sun 7:38
כד	שני	קז	5:28	5:24	5:55	6:37	9:00	8:57	9:33	10:33	12:31	1:02	3:58	5:12		6:26	7:01	7:35	Mon 7:39
כה	שלישי	קח	5:27	5:23	5:54	6:36	8:59	8:57	9:33	10:32	12:31	1:02	3:58	5:12		6:26	7:01	7:35	Tue 7:39
כו	רביעי	קט	5:26	5:22	5:53	6:35	8:58	8:56	9:32	10:32	12:30	1:01	3:58	5:12		6:27	7:02	7:36	Wed 7:40
כז	חמישי	קי	5:25	5:21	5:52	6:34	8:58	8:56	9:32	10:31	12:30	1:01	3:58	5:13		6:27	7:02	7:36	Thu 7:40
כח	ששי	קיא	5:24	5:20	5:51	6:33	8:57	8:55	9:31	10:31	12:30	1:01	3:58	5:13		6:28	7:03	7:37	Fri 7:41
כט	שבת	קיב	5:23	5:19	5:50	6:32	8:56	8:54	9:30	10:30	12:30	1:01	3:59	5:13	[ויקהל-פקודי]	6:28	7:03	7:37	Sha 7:41

Shabbos (Mar 13) 7:03 PM + 5 מולד חודש ניסן: חלקים 5 You text us, you get zmanim! > Send a text to (516) 261-6262

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SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Candle Lighting:	5:58pm
Minha	6:05pm
Shir Hashirim:	6:25pm
Shaharit Netz Minyan:	5:50am
Shaharit:	8:30am
Zeman Keriat Shema	9:08am
2 nd Zeman Keriat Shema	9:42am
Seudat Shelishit should be done at home prior to coming to the Bet Hakeneset.	
Shiur	5:00pm
Minha:	5:50pm
Followed by Devar Torah & Arvit	
Shabbat Ends:	6:58pm
Rabbenu Tam	7:30pm
Avot Ubanim	8:00pm

*We would like to Wish a Hearty Mazal
Tov to Mr. & Mrs. Ronen & Yael Cohen
on the Bar Mitzvah of their Dear Son
Shai Hanania. They should see him grow
in Torah & Yirat shamayim & should see
lots of Nahat from him Amen!
Mazal Tov to the Dear Grandparents Mr.
& Mrs. Cohen & Mr. & Mrs. Ifergan!*

(This Year women are not obligated to come, however, if they wish,) **Parashat Zachor we will be doing four readings.** The first during the Netz Minyan at around 7:30am and then at 8:30am after the Netz. The third reading at around 10:30am and the last one after Shaharit at around 11:15am.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY

Shaharit: 6:10am
 Hodu approx.: 6:25am
Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:30am
 Minha 6:05pm
 Followed by Arvit.

MONDAY TO
FRIDAY

Shaharit	6:10am
Daf Yomi	7:45am
Shaharit #2 Hodu	8:00am
Minha	6:05pm
Followed by Arvit & Shiurim	
Shiur in Spanish	Recess

We would like to remind our Kahal Kadosh to please Donate wholeheartedly towards our Beautiful Kehila. Anyone interested in donating for any occasion, Avot Ubanim \$120, Kiddush \$350, Seudat Shelishit \$275, Weekly Bulletin \$150, Weekly Daf Yomi \$180, Daf Yomi Masechet \$2500, Yearly Daf Yomi \$5000, Weekly Breakfast \$150, Daily Learning \$180, Weekly Learning \$613, Monthly Rent \$3500, & Monthly Learning \$2000, Please contact the Board
Thanking you in advance for your generous support. Tizke Lemitzvot!

Donors Column

בס"ד

We Sincerely Thank you for your generous contributions this Week! We truly appreciate it! Hashem should Bless you all with Health, Happiness, Parnasah Tova, Success, & All the Berachot of the Torah Amen!

- Mr. Benjamin Akkad
- Mr. Salomon Cohen
- Mr. Joseph Tourgeman
- Mr. Maurice Shalam
- Dr. Jean Jacques Edderai
- Mr. Jacky Benoudiz
- Taanit Esther is Thursday Feb 25th.
- Fast Begins at 5:35am and finishes at 6:55pm. Minha at 6:10pm with Tefillin.
- Zecher LaMahasit Hashekel this year is \$8 per person, and will be collected on Minha Thursday, Taanit Esther.
- Our Purim Seudah this Year on Feb. 26th BH. Flyer on Last page of Bulletin!
- As every Year there will be two readings of the Megila at night & two during the day. More Info on Community Announcement page.

If anyone would like to contact our Synagogue, please feel free to email info@hechalshalom.org

Torah Teasers (AISH)

1. Which four letters spell out three different items found in the Tabernacle?
2. Which item in the Tabernacle has three half-measurements in its dimensions?
3. In what context are rings (taba'ot) mentioned? (4 items)
4. Which items, spelled with two letters, have only one unique letter in its name? (2 answers)
5. Aside from the cherubs (keruvim) mentioned in the context of the Tabernacle, where else in the Torah are cherubs mentioned?
6. What had hands (yadot) but no fingers?
7. In this parsha, in what context is the number 50 mentioned? (2 answers)
8. In this parsha, in what context does a man and his brother appear?
9. In this parsha, in what context does a woman and her sister appear? (2 answers)
10. Which 6 parts of the human body appear in the context of the Tabernacle?

Answers

- 1) The letters kaf, peh, raish and tav spell out three different items found in the Tabernacle: The kaporet, the covering of the Holy Ark (Exodus 25:17), the parochet, the partition separating the "Holy" from the "Holy of Holies" (26:31), and the kaftor, the round ball designs found on the Menorah (25:33).
- 2) The Holy Ark is two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits high, and one and a half cubits wide (Exodus 25:10).
- 3) Rings (tabaot) are soldered onto (1) the Holy Ark (Exodus 25:12), (2) the golden table (25:26), (3) and the golden altar (27:6), in which poles were placed to carry each vessel. (4) In addition, the Tabernacle's beams have rings through which a pole was slid to support the structure (26:29).
- 4) (1) The words for vav (hook) (Exodus 27:10) (2) and shesh (flax) (25:4 with Rashi), each contain only one letter (doubled) in its name.
- 5) In parshat Bereshit, Hashem guards the path to the Tree of Life with two cherubs (keruvim) (Genesis 3:24).
- 6) Each of the Tabernacle's beams has two bottom protrusions called "yadot" (Exodus 26:17).
- 7) (1) There are 50 loops on each set of coverings of the Tabernacle. They are attached together with 50 curved hooks (Exodus 26:5-6). (2) The courtyard of the Tabernacle is 50 cubits wide (27:12).
- 8) The Torah states that the cherubs must face each other as "a man to his brother" (Exodus 25:20).
- 9) 1) Each set of coverings of the Tabernacle are attached together as "a woman to her sister" (Exodus 25:3, 6). (2) The protrusions on the bottom of each beam of the Tabernacle are parallel to each other, as "a woman to her sister" (26:17).
- 10) The following human body parts appear in the context of the Tabernacle: (1) A rib (tzela) refers to the sides of many of the objects found in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:12, 26:20). (2) The face (panim) refers to the face of the cherubs (25:20), the "face" of the showbread (25:30), and other items as well. (3) Hands (yadot) refer to the protrusions on the bottom of the beams that locked into the sockets (26:17). (4) A head (rosh) refers to the tops of the beams (26:24). (5) A shoulder (katef) refers to the two shorter sides (of 15 cubits each) comprising the gate to the courtyard. (6) A thigh (yerech) refers to the base of the Menorah (25:31) and the ends of the Tabernacle (26:22).

Community Announcements

(It is *YOUR* Community, make the most of it!)

Miscellaneous Announcements:

- **This Week's Congregational Kiddush/Seudat Shelishit & Breakfast is in Recess.**
- **This Week's Daf Yomi** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **Purim is Thursday night & Friday** the 26th of February. **Keriat Hemegilla on Thursday Night will be approximately at 6:50 pm.** There will be a **2nd reading** in the Bet Hakenesset approx at **8:30pm.** (Final time to be announced)
- **Shaharit Purim Tuesday Morning at 6:10am. Keriat Hamegilla approx. at 7:00am.** There will be the **2nd Minyan at 8:30am & reading** in the Bet Hakenesset at around 9:00am.

Matanot Laevyonim & Mishloah Manot on the day of Purim. **Matanot Laevyonim** is \$10 for two different needy people so a total of **\$20**, and will be collected following the Megila on Sunday morning. SEE HALACHOT Later in the Bulletin.

- We are trying to update our **Congregant's contact information.** We would like to start sending texts about different Events and Shiurim. We would also like to start emailing the weekly bulletin. **We would like to start a list of Nahalot/Azkarot/Yahrzeits.** We would also like to make a **Refuah Shelema list.** Please send your contact information to the Board at info@hechalshalom.org

Important Message!!!

Eruv Update: Surfside: The Eruv in Surfside now includes the walking paths along the beach. Pushing strollers and carrying is permitted on the paths, but not beyond the path or onto the beach.

Bal Harbour: The Eruv in Bal Harbour included the inner (western) walking path only. The pier at Haulover Cut is not included.

- Before hanging up anything anywhere in the Bet Hakenesset, please seek authorization from the Board. This includes flyers etc.
- Please be advised that prior to bringing any food or drinks for any occasion, you must first seek the authorization from the Board.

Special Announcements

- We are pleased to announce that Ness 26 is part of the **Amazon Charity Program**, which would allow our community to collect 0.5% of all the orders made by any of you on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). In order to register you need to log on smile.amazon.com and select Ness 26, Inc as the Charitable Organization you want to support, and from then shop on smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com. It won't cost anything more, and is an easy way to contribute to our budget needs.
- Anyone wishing to receive the **Daily Halacha** please send a whatsapp message to Simon Chocron 786-351-1573

Community Calendar:

- **The program for Teenaged Boys** ages 13-18 Started again with Great Succes with Shiur & Supper on **Sunday Evenings After Arvit at around at 6:30 pm With Supper.** New Participants Welcome! Anyone wishing to sponsor this Shiur Please contact the Board. Tizke Lemitzvot! In Recess
- We have started the **Mishmar Program** Every other Thursday evening at 8:00 pm **with Chulent, Beer, & Snacks. Everyone is welcome!**

Avot Ubanim: This Mosae Shabbat at 7:50pm

Youth Minyan

- We are very proud of our YOUTH/TEEN MINYAN lead by our Dear Dr. Ari Benmergui geared to train and teach our future generations on the different Tefillot and Parashiyot. Please encourage your children to come early & participate. Looking forward to seeing lots of Nahat from them!

Refuah Shelema List

Men

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosefia, | • Isaac Ben Mesoda, |
| • Yosef Haim Ben Mesouda | • Haim Ben Marcelle, |
| • Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo | • Yizhak Ben Simja |
| • Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli, | • Reuben Ben Eta, |
| • Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana, | • Michael Ben Aliza, |
| • Mordechai Ben Miriam, | • Avraham Ben Leah |
| • Meir Raymond Ben Mathilde | • Ruben Leib Ben Eta |
| • Nathan Moshe Hai Ben Miryam | • David Benichu Bar |
| Jaqueline Sandy | Aicha |
| • Yaakov Ben Simha Alegria | • Menahem Ben Shira |
| • Aviv Ben Luba Miriam | • Moshe Ben Rahel |
| • Mordechai Ben Mercedes | • David Ben Freha Rina |
| • Yaacov Refael Ben Alegria | • Haim Ben Mahlouf |
| • Shalom Gibly Ben Fortuna | |

Women

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Simja Bat Esther, | • Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda, |
| • Rachel Bat Sarah, | • Alegria Simha Bat Esther, |
| • Nina Bat Rachel, | • Naomie Bat Rarel Adda, |
| • Gitel Rina Bat Yael, | • Malka Bat Joyce Simja, |
| • Miriam Bat Sofy, | • Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit, |
| • Rahma Bat Simha | • Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy, |
| • Esther Bat Fortuna | • Abigael Haya Bat Esther |
| • Malka Bat Dina | • Madeleine Bat Esther |
| • Raizel Bat Miriam | • Nurit Jacqueline Bat |
| • Leah Bat Rivka | Rahel |
| • Sol Bat Perla | • Marcelle Mesoda Bat |
| • Chana Bat Bilha | Alegria |
| | • Eva Bat Yael Khayat |
| | • Camouna Bat Fortuna |

Hechal Shalom / Or Oziel

We Would like to Wholeheartedly

Thank our Dear Friends

Harry & Leslie

Benitah

For generously

Donating the Rent of

Adar 5781

In Memory of her Dear Father Mordechai

Ben Itzak Gelrubin z"l. Tihye Nishmato

Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it.

In this Merit,

May Hashem Bless you & your Wonderful

Family with all the Berachot in the Torah Amen.



DAF YOMI SPONSORS



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF THE DAF YOMI
IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

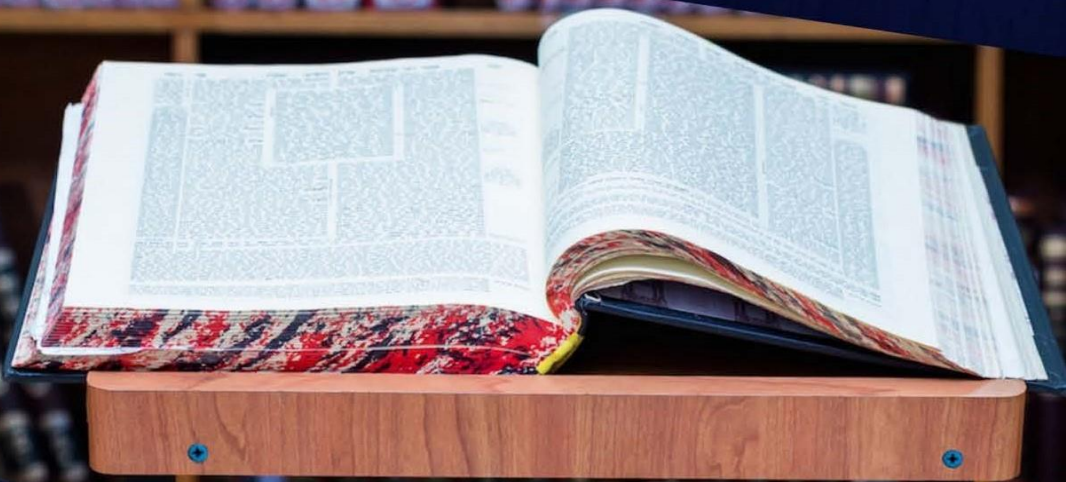
THE KAMHAZI FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR FATHER

SHELOMO BEN YAAKOV Z"L

& FOR HATZLACHA OF THE WHOLE FAMILY.

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI IS
GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE AKKAD FAMILY

LEILUY NISHMAT

אברהם בן גרסי-ה ז"ל, שלמה בן תמם ז"ל, אליהו בן רחל
ז"ל, ותמם בת אורו ז"ל תנצב"ה

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.



We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our Dear Friends,

Mr. Albert Gad

for generously Donating the TORAH LEARNING of

Adar 5781

In Memory of his Dear Father

David Gad Bar Nissan z"l the 4th of Adar.

Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it. In this merit may Hashem Bless you &
your wonderful family with all the Berachot of the Torah. Amen.

We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our Dear Friends,

The Pinto Family

for generously Donating the TORAH LEARNING of

Shebat 5781

In Memory of their Dear Father Shalom Ben Licita z"l

Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it. In this merit may Hashem Bless you &
your wonderful family with all the Berachot of the Torah. Amen.

Happy Birthday To

- Yaniv Shlomo Cohen – Shabb. Feb. 20th,
- Perla Aquinin – Sun. Feb. 21st,
- Mr. Arnaud Sitbon – Sun. Feb. 21st,
- Channah Natalie Allouche – Mon. Feb. 22nd,
- Mr. Mose Benmergui – Mon. Feb. 22nd,
- Raphael Cohen – Tues. Feb. 23rd,
- Michael Gad – Tues. Feb. 23rd,
- Mrs. Perla Edderai – Shabb. Feb. 27th.
- Yosef David Allouche – Mon. Mar. 1st,
- Mr. David Guenoun – Mon. Mar. 1st,
- Eli Sitbon – Tues. Mar. 2nd,
- Mr. Max Aquinin – Wed. Mar. 3rd,
- Norman Cohen – Wed. Mar. 3rd,
- Mrs. Efrat Moran Lahmi – Wed. Mar. 3rd,
- Esther Benmergui – Thurs. Mar. 4th,
- Mrs. Muriel Zonana – Thurs. Mar. 4th,
- Mr. Alberto Belecen – Fri. Mar. 5th,

Happy Anniversary To

- Isaac & Sally Amram February 20th
- Frank & Ilanit Taieb February 21st

Nahalot

- Camila Bat Mazal z”l the 11th of Adar
(Sister of Mrs. Simcha Sayegh)
- Rabbi Raphael Avakra Ammar z”l the 13th of Adar
(Grandfather of Mr. Raphael Ammar)

Next Shabbat:

- Salomon Guenoun Bar David z”l the 16th of Adar
(Brother of Mr. Abraham Guenoun)
- Gabriel Bitton Ben Mesoda z”l the 19th of Adar
(Brother of Mr. David Bitton z”l)
- Haim Werta Ben Aicha z”l the 21st of Adar
(Father of Mr. Jacky Werta)
- Myriam Bsiri Bat Marcelle z”l the 22nd of Adar
(Grandmother of Mr. Stephane Bsiri)
- Joseph Shaul Belilty z”l Bar Mesouda the 23rd of Adar
(Grandfather of Mr. Salomon Cohen)
- Solly Mamane Ben Habib z”l the 23rd of Adar
(Son of Mr. Habib Mamane)

The Proper Time for the Purim Feast This Year

This year, 5781, the holiday of Purim, which is on the 14th of Adar, falls this coming Thursday night and Friday.

The Rama (Chapter 695, Section 2) writes that in this case, the Purim feast should be held at an early hour of the day in honor of Shabbat, so that one will be able to partake of the Shabbat meal heartily and not while one is still satisfied and tired from the Purim feast. Hagaon Mishnah Berura rules likewise that when Purim falls out on a Friday, one should hold the Purim feast in the morning before halachic midday (which is at approximately 12:33 PM).

The great Rishon Le’Zion, Hagaon Harav Yitzchak Yosef Shlit”a writes (in his Yalkut Yosef, Chapter 695) that according to the letter of the law, one may hold the Purim feast even later in the afternoon since this meal is considered a Mitzvah and a Seudat Mitzvah at its appropriate time may be held even on Friday afternoon.

Nevertheless, he quotes the Sefer Yosef Ometz who writes that when Purim falls out on a Friday, having the Purim feast after halachic midday detracts from the honor of Shabbat and thus, the “primary” part of the meal should be held in the morning. This means that the Purim feast should at least be started in the morning so that in the afternoon, one will only eat a small amount, all in honor of Shabbat. He writes that this is indeed the custom in Jerusalem where the Purim feast is held in the morning. The other Mitzvot of the day, namely Mishloach Manot and Matanot La’Evyonim should be performed before the feast.

If one did not have a chance to hold one’s Purim feast in the morning, one should do so as soon as possible; one should try to make it as early as possible in honor of Shabbat.

Summary: The Purim feast must be held during the day, not at night. It is preferable to hold the feast as early on in the day as possible. This is especially true when Purim is celebrated on Friday this year and the Purim feast should be held in the morning in order to be able to partake of the Shabbat night meal with a hearty appetite. If one has not done so, the meal should be held as soon thereafter as possible.

WEEKLY INSPIRATION

Changing the Past

(Rabbi Eli Mansour itorah)

Parashat Teruma begins with G-d's instruction to Moshe to oversee the collection of materials from Beneh Yisrael for the purpose of constructing the Mishkan and all its various furnishings.

The Midrash, commenting to the beginning of the Book of Vayikra, tells that Moshe felt distressed over the fact that he did not contribute anything towards the Mishkan. Although he oversaw the process of collecting donations and building the Mishkan, he did not give any materials, and this troubled him. G-d reassured Moshe, telling him, "Your speech is more beloved to Me than all the donations." The words Moshe spoke were more precious than all the expensive materials which Beneh Yisrael donated for the Mishkan.

What exactly are these words that Moshe spoke, and why were they so precious? Moreover, why, in fact, did Moshe not participate in the donation of materials for the Mishkan?

The Hatam Sofer (Rav Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 1762-1839) offers a remarkable explanation of the Midrash's comments. He writes that Moshe did not participate in donating materials because the Mishkan was necessary in order for Beneh Yisrael to achieve atonement for the sin of the golden calf. Quite obviously, Moshe did not participate in this sin, and so he did not require atonement. Therefore, he did not donate any materials. But if so, the Hatam Sofer then asks, why did Moshe feel uneasy? Why was he distressed about not participating in the donation of materials – if the reason he did not participate in this project is because he did not participate in the grave sin of the golden calf?

The Hatam Sofer answers this question by noting the Gemara's famous teaching about the incredible power of sincere, genuine repentance. The Gemara tells us that if one repents "Me'ahaba" – out of true love for Hashem, and not merely out of fear of

punishment, then not only is his guilt erased, but his sin is transformed into a source of merit. G-d is so compassionate that He does not merely forgive – but He actually credits us for our wrongful actions if we repent for them wholeheartedly, out of a desire to draw closer to Him. Similarly, the Gemara teaches that "the place where penitent sinners stand – even the completely righteous cannot stand there." Ba'aleh Teshuba – sinners who have genuinely repented – occupy a very special place, and are on a very high level, as their sins are retroactively changed into Misvot.

To illustrate how far this extends, the Hatam Sofer writes that if a person ate non-kosher food for many years, and then sincerely repents – then each and every act of eating non-kosher food is transformed into the consumption of the Korban Pesach in Jerusalem on the night of Pesach. Every sinful act becomes a precious Misva if one repents with complete sincerity.

It turns out, then, that Beneh Yisrael's worship of the golden calf, after they repented, was retroactively converted into the devoted service of Hashem. In essence, the golden calf turned into a Mishkan. By sincerely repenting for worshipping the golden calf, Beneh Yisrael made it as though they had done a great Misva by worshipping the Almighty.

This, the Hatam Sofer explains, is why Moshe Rabbenu felt distressed. He saw Beneh Yisrael's repentance and realized that they now achieved a higher level than he could, as he had not committed the sin of the golden calf.

G-d therefore reassured Moshe that his share was no less than that of the rest of the nation. After all, it was his "words" – the words of rebuke spoken to the people, and his impassioned prayers on their behalf before G-d – that facilitated their repentance and allowed them to earn atonement. True, they reached great heights through their repentance – but this was made possible by Moshe, through his strong leadership, his teachings, and his prayers.

One of the commentators to the Megilla writes that the Misva to feast on Purim is intended to commemorate the huge feast hosted by Ahashverosh, as we read in the beginning of

the Megilla. The Gemara teaches that G-d brought upon the Jews the threat of Haman's decree as punishment for their having participated in this feast. And yet, we commemorate, and even celebrate, this feast each year on Purim – because once the Jews wholeheartedly repented, their participation in that feast became a Misva. To borrow the words of the Hatam Sofer, the Jews' feasting in Shushan retroactively became like their consumption of the Korban Pesach in Jerusalem!

Teshuba gives us the ability to change the past. No matter what mistakes we have made, we can change, and Hashem wants us to change. This was true at Mount Sinai, after the sin of the golden calf, and this was true in Persia, after the Jews took part in Ahashverosh's feast – and this is true even today, for each and every one of us. We should never feel discouraged when we fail. Instead, we should feel empowered by the institution of Teshuba – and embrace the opportunity Hashem compassionately gives us to change the past and move forward to a better future.

Don't Ever Stop

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

The Torah in Parashat Teruma describes the Mishkan, at the center of which was the Aron, the holy ark which contained the tablets from Mount Sinai. In describing the Aron, the Torah (25:12) tells us that rings were attached to the four "Pe'amot" of the ark. Poles were then inserted through these rings, and the Leviyim would use the poles to transport the ark.

What is the definition of the word "Pe'amot"?

Rashi explains this word to mean "corners," and thus the Torah refers here to the four corners of the Aron. Ibn Ezra, however, disagrees, noting that the word "Pe'amot" elsewhere in Tanach means not "corners," but rather "legs." One example is a verse in Shir Hashirim (7:2): "Ma Yafu Fe'amayich." Accordingly, Ibn Ezra asserts that, contrary to conventional thinking, the Aron had legs, and the rings for the transport poles were affixed to the legs of the

Ark. The Ibn Ezra notes that it would be disrespectful to have the Aron, the holiest of all objects, sit directly on the floor, and it therefore stands to reason that it had four legs on which it stood.

The question arises, however, according to Ibn Ezra's theory, why did the Torah refer to the ark's legs with the unusual term "Pa'amotav"? Why didn't it use the more common word for legs, "Raglayim"?

The answer, perhaps, is that these two words have different connotations. They both refer to legs, but to different contexts. "Regel" is used in reference to a leg that is stationary and stays in place, whereas "Pa'am" refers to a leg that is walking, that is in motion.

If so, then the Torah's use of the word "Pa'amotav" in reference to the Aron's legs becomes very significant. The Aron, which contained the Torah, had legs that were, symbolically, always moving. The message to us is that in Torah life, we must never stand still. There is never a point where we've learned enough or accomplished enough. Until our final breath of life, we must be striving to grow, to improve, to progress, to advance to the next level.

The Gemara teaches us how the Yeser Ha'ra (evil inclination) attempts to lead us to sin: "Today he says, 'Do this,' tomorrow he says, 'Do this,' until eventually the person worships idols." The simple reading of the Gemara's comment is that the Yeser Ha'ra works incrementally, luring us to make one minor compromise in our religious standards, and then another, until eventually we commit grave sins, Heaven forbid. But there is also another interpretation of the Gemara. "Today he says, 'Do this,' tomorrow he says, 'Do this'" – each day, he tells us to do the same thing we did yesterday, to be the same person we were the day before. The Yeser Ha'ra's greatest asset, according to this reading, is the natural tendency to feel complacent, to remain in one's comfort zone, to continue doing what he has always done, rather than putting in the effort to grow and advance.

There is a saying in the business world that if you're not making money, you're losing money. This is true in Torah, as well. If we're not

growing, then we're falling. The vain pleasures of the world draw us like a magnet, and we resist this pull only by actively pursuing higher aspirations. If at any point we just sit back and relax, we will fall.

This is why great Torah scholars are referred to with the term "Talmid Hacham" – "bright student." Even the generation's leading scholars are called "students" because they still have more to learn and are always trying to reach new levels of achievement. The process never ends, and is never supposed to end. Human beings in this sense are greater than angels. The angels will always be who they already are, whereas we, by definition, have the unlimited capacity to grow. No matter what we've achieved, we can achieve even more, and we must try to achieve even more.

The Aron did not have "Raglayim," it had "Pa'amot," to teach us to always "be on the move." It would be a terrible mistake to feel satisfied with the Rabbi's weekly sermon and reading an occasional English book about Torah concepts. The majority of us can and must do more than that. We have to set our sights higher, and work to achieve more. Like the Aron, we must always be working to move, to progress, reaching ever higher standards of Torah study and observance.

Keruvim Embracing at the Churbon?

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

Unlocking the Mystery of the Keruvim the That Were Locked in Embrace

Among the various physical components of the *Mishkan*, there were two *Keruvim* on top of the Aron (Ark) with child-like faces. One of the *Keruvim* was male in form and the other was female in form. In the Gemara in Yoma 54, Reish Lakish says that when the Romans came in to destroy the *Bet HaMikdash* (Holy Temple), they saw the *Keruvim* embracing one another. The Gemara in fact says that the Romans mocked the Jews for this. They thought the Jews were perverted. "Here in their

Holy Temple, they have a statue of a man and a woman embracing!"

The Ramban and Ritva in Tractate Yoma ask a question: The Gemara [Baba Batra 99a] relates that a miraculous phenomenon occurred with the *Keruvim* in the *Bet HaMikdash*. During a time when *Bnei Yisrael* were fulfilling the Will of the Omnipresent, the *Keruvim* embraced one another; however, during times when *Bnei Yisrael* were not fulfilling the Will of the Omnipresent, the *Keruvim* faced away from each other. The aforementioned Rishonim ask a strong question: The Romans came in to destroy the *Bet HaMikdash* during terrible years for the Jewish people. Jews were not keeping "the Will of the Omnipresent." They were not doing what they were supposed to be doing.

These *Rishonim* therefore ask: How was it that the Romans came in and found that the male-female *Keruvim* were locked in an embrace? There is no greater "time when *Bnei Yisrael* were **not** fulfilling the Will of the Omnipresent" than this moment!

They cite an answer in the name of the Ri Migash (Rav Yosef ibn Migash): A miracle was performed at that moment, to cause embarrassment to the Jewish people.

Another answer is said over in the name of several of the great Chassidic leaders, including the Bnei Yissacher [Rav Tzvi Elimelech Spira of Munkatch] and the Ohev Yisrael [Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apta]. It is a very interesting answer. I will cite the teaching of a Chazal they quote, and then I will try to put this answer into understandable terms.

This is an example of *Chayav adam lifkod et ishto kodem she'yetze l'derech* (A husband is duty-bound to "visit" his wife before setting out on a journey).

The reason the *Keruvim* were in this embrace at this time was because this was - as it were - a "goodbye embrace." Yes, it was a time when the Jews were not fulfilling the Will of the Almighty. But now, the *Ribono shel Olam* was going to leave us for what has become 2,000 years. When you are about to leave someone that you love, you kiss them good-

bye. Therefore, in spite of the fact that it was a time where “they did not do G-d’s Will,” nevertheless, they embraced for that final moment. This was that good-bye kiss which the historical moment demanded. Despite the fact that the Jews had reached this very low level, nevertheless—“A husband is duty-bound to “visit” his wife before setting out on a journey.”

I saw a third answer to this question in a Sefer called *Shabbat u'Moadim*, which has somewhat of a different take on this situation. The Medrash [Vayikra Rabbah, Parshat Emor] cites a situation where one sees a Jew who is being brought to his death - being stoned. A voice calls out: “Why is this happening to you?” The response: “It is because I circumcised my son.” (I am paying for my life for fulfilling the mitzvah at a time when there was a governmental decree against circumcision.) A voice calls out (to another person): “Why are you being burnt at the stake?” The response: “It is because I observed the Sabbath.” Again, “Why are you going out to be beheaded?” “It is because I ate matzah.” “Why are you being beaten by the whip?” It is because I made a *Succah*; I took a *Lulav*, I put on *Tefillin*, or I wore *Techellet*. It is because I fulfilled the Will of Father in Heaven.”

Through the centuries and through the millennia, the Jews have had this capacity that even if it cost them their lives, they still felt it necessary to cling to the Almighty and to His *mitzvot*. They still felt connected to Him. I once heard something which is so mind-boggling to me that it is hard to say over: The Chossid Yavetz (he was part of the expulsions from Spain and Portugal in the late fifteenth century) on Pirkei Avos writes that there was a woman who lost virtually her entire family. She had only one son remaining. She hired a ship to take her and her son away from Portugal. The shipmen took her to an island, killed her son, and left her abandoned there. The woman was heard praying, “Almighty, You are trying to push me away, but I won’t give up my love for You.”

It is mind-boggling that no matter what has happened to Jews, they still felt this connection to the *Ribono shel Olam*. If you remember from Succot, the alphabetic Hoshanna of “*Om*

ani chomah” contains for the phrases beginning with the letters *hay, vav, zayin, chet*, the following expressions: “*Ha’Harugah alecha*” (murdered for Your sake); *V’nechshevet k’tzon tivcha* (and regarded like a sheep for slaughter); *Zeruya ben mach’iseha* (scattered among her provocateurs) but nevertheless—in spite of all of the above—*Chavukah u’davukah Bach* (she hugs and cleaves to You).

Rav Meir Shapiro says that this is the interpretation (albeit not the simple “*pshtat*”) of the *pasuk* “Has a people ever heard the voice of G-d speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard, and survived?” [Devarim 4:33]. Rav Meir Shapiro interprets the *pasuk* as expressing amazement that *Klal Yisrael* has heard G-d speak to them from the fires of persecution and oppression by their enemies, and have yet kept their devotion to Him.

This, he says, is what happened over here with the *Keruvim*. Yes, the *Ribono shel Olam* was kicking us out. Nevertheless, He was kissing us goodbye. The *Keruvim*, who were locked in their final embrace, symbolized this.

Mah Inyan WSJ Aitzel **Parashat Terumah?**

(Rabbi Frand)

I would like to share an observation from an atypical source. It is from an article in this week’s (January 28, 2011) Wall Street Journal. What does the Wall Street Journal have to do with Parashat Terumah? I do not read the WSJ on a regular basis, but there is a Rebbe in Lakewood—Rav Asher Dicker—who called me up and said, “This is an article that you can use.”

The name of the article is, “The Fate of The Kilo Weighs Heavily on the Minds of the Metrologists.”

In a vault beneath the 17th century pavilion on the outskirts of Paris sits a platinum cylinder known as “Le Grande K.” From 1889 until 2019, the Le Grande K was the international prototype for the kilogram, the standard against which all other kilos are measured.

The article explained that this was “the kilogram.” We need to know the exact value of a kilogram, and there is a vault in Paris that has a platinum cylinder that weighs exactly one kilo. Le Grande K was so well protected, that there were three people in the world with the three different keys to the vault. The vault could only be opened with all three people present. It was “the kilo.” However, there was a crisis. Over the years, scientists noticed a problem. The “Grande K” was losing weight. Weigh-ins at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures showed that the bar had shed approximately 50 micrograms, which is the equivalent of one grain of sand.

To you and me, it does not make a great deal of difference that the “Grande K” is off by one grain of sand. However, this was a crisis in the scientific community. “It is a scandal that we have this kilogram hanging around and changing its mass and therefore changing the mass of everything else in the universe,” Bill Phillips, a Nobel Prize winning physicist, exclaimed at a scientific summit in London this week. “No one knows for sure what went wrong with ‘Le Grande K’ but some theorize it lost weight from being cleaned.”

What does this have to do with Parashat Teruma?

My friends, the Torah says about the *Aron HaKodesh* (Ark of the Testimony) in the *Bet HaMikdash*, “You shall place in the Ark the ‘Testimony’ that I shall give to you.” [Shemot 25:16] The *Luchot* (Tablets of the Covenant) and the Master *Sefer Torah* were in the *Aron*. When did they use that *Sefer Torah*? The answer is, “Never!” When did they see that *Sefer Torah*? “Never!” Who went into the *Kodesh Kadashim* (Holy of Holies)? Only the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest). He did not open up the *Aron* and look at the *Sefer Torah*.

If someone has a *Sefer Torah* that no one is going to learn out of and no one is even going to see, then what purpose does that *Sefer Torah* have? The answer is, *le’havdil*, it is like “Le Grande K.” If there will ever be a person that will get a notion – I want to change the *Sefer Torah* – I want to take something out – I want to add something, who is going to know? I will start small – my neighborhood,

then the city, then the country, and then the world. I will change the world!

The answer is – No! There is a *Sefer Torah* by which all other *Sifre Torah* are measured. Therefore, you can never falsify the *Sefer Torah* because there is a master copy that is in the *Aron HaKodesh* that was from the *Ribono shel Olam*, Himself.

This is the interpretation of the Medrash: “When Moshe found out that he was going to die that very day – what did he do? Rav Yannai said he wrote 13 copies of the *Sefer Torah* – twelve copies he distributed to the twelve Tribes, and one copy he placed in the *Aron HaKodesh*. Why? Lest anyone think that he can change anything in the *Sefer Torah* – he needs to know that it will be validated against the *Sefer Torah* that Moshe himself wrote. Every Tribe will be able to look at the alleged text of the falsified Torah and say “No. This is wrong! That is not what the *Sefer Torah* says.” This is why we need a *Sefer Torah* in the *Aron*.

This insight was said over by Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, zt”l, [1881-1966] in the eulogy he gave for the Brisker Rav, zt”l [R. Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, 1886-1959]. The Brisker Rav was, *l’havdil*, “Le Grande K.” When he represented *Da’as Torah*, he was not going to let anything be changed that was against Torah. If it was, he stood up and he fought for it. Everyone feared him, because he would not stand for any nonsense.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin said the Brisker Rav was the master copy of the *Sefer Torah* to his generation, the *Sefer Torah* in the *Aron*, by which to measure all things. If anybody got some bright idea about changing things, he would know that he would have to answer to the Brisker Rav.

This is what every generation needs. Every generation needs someone who people recognize will stand up for what is right and will not let anything false pass him by. When Rav Weinberg, *zichrono l’Vracha*, was *niftar*, Rav Heinemann eulogized him and called him (rightly so) “*Gavra d’mistafeena me-nay*” (the individual who I feared). He was the person in town from whom one had trepidation. One

understood that if he was going to try to change anything, Rav Weinberg was going to let him have it, in no uncertain terms. He was fearless and peerless, and he did not take any garbage.

Every generation needs that and every town needs that. They need the "*Gavra d'mistafeena me-nay*" they need that "*Sefer Torah* in the *Aron*." We do not even need to use it. We do not even need to see it. Maybe it is never looked at in a person's lifetime. However, we know it is there, and because of that, the Torah can never be falsified.

Supporting the Supporter

(Rabbi Zev Leff)

"Take for me an offering" (Shemot 25:2)

The donations requested of *Bnei Yisrael* for the construction of the *Mishkan* are described as being taken rather than given. What does that mean? Moreover, Hashem is the Master of the Universe and all that it contains. Did He need contributions and materials from human beings to construct His *Mishkan*?

The purpose of the contributions was to enable *Bnei Yisrael* to participate in the construction of the *Mishkan*. Thus, the giving was in fact a receiving - "Take for me an offering."

The *nesi'im*, the heads of the tribes, responded to the call for contributions for the *Mishkan* by declaring that they would donate what was still needed after the rest of *Bnei Yisrael* gave all that they could. In the end, all that was left to bring were the precious stones for the *Ephod* and the *Choshen*, the oil and the spices for the incense and the *Menorah*. The *nesi'im* were censured for conducting themselves in this manner and the *yud* was removed their title in *Vayakhel* (32:27). Since they were prepared to contribute whatever was necessary, no matter how great and did in fact contribute valuable items to the *Mishkan*, the question remains, however, why were they censured?

The *Nesi'im* misunderstood the purpose of the giving. There was no deficit to be made up. Hashem has no deficit. The giving was an opportunity for self-development, the

purification of one's soul through attachment to a holy undertaking. Approaching the *mitzah* as if G-d needs our contributions was ludicrous.

The *Gemara* (*Baba Batra* 10a) relates that the wicked Turnus Rufus once asked R' Akiva, "If your G-d loves the poor so much, Why then doesn't He provide for them?" R' Akiva responded that Hashem could easily provide personally for the poor but he chose to give us the merit of giving *Tzedaka* to save us from *Gehinnom*.

For this reason, says the *Midrash* (*Rut Rabbah* 5:9), the poor man does more for the rich man than the rich man does for the poor man. When Naomi asked Ruth who had provided Ruth with the food she brought home that day, Ruth answered, "The man I *did* for today was named Boaz." Boaz provided her with what Hashem could have provided Himself but she provided him with a *mitzvah* - a chance to be G-d-like by giving to another.

In this light, we can understand the words of *Rambam* in his commentary to the *Mishnah* in *Pirke Avot* (3:19), "All is judged according to the number of deeds." *Rambam* explains that it is better to give one dollar of charity one hundred times, than one hundred dollars one time. The more times a person acts in a way that is meritorious and G-d-like, the more he conditions himself to the performance of *mitzvot* and purifies his *neshama*. *Tzedaka* is not performed for the poor person's sake, but rather to enable the giver to emulate Hashem and merit *Olam Haba*.

So, too, with respect to the support of Torah institutions, as the *Chafetz Chaim* explains the verse in *Mishle* (3:18) "*Etz chaim he lamachazikim bah - It is a tree of life for those who grasp it and its supporters are praiseworthy.*" The word *lehachazik* means both to support and to cling or to grasp. Hashem could provide for the Torah institutions without any human help but He chooses to funnel His support through human agents. Those agents must realize that their "support" for Torah is in fact support for themselves. When they recognize that, they will cling to their support for Torah institutions as one clings to a log in a raging river. For them, then, their support is a tree of life. Those who think that they are in fact

supporting the Torah will also be rewarded - as Hashem does not deny reward for any good deed- but for them Torah is not a tree of life.

The *Chafetz Chaim* himself was once approached by a wealthy benefactor who offered to underwrite the entire operating expenses of his yeshiva in Radin. He politely refused. "I cannot permit you to monopolize the merit for supporting my yeshiva and thereby deprive others of an opportunity to do so," he told the man. The *badim*, the staves with which the *Aaron Kodesh* was carried, represent the supporters of Torah. They are an intrinsic part of the Torah community, inseparable from the Torah scholars, just as the staves could not be removed from the *Aaron*. But those who carried the *Aaron* were miraculously lifted off the ground and literally carried by the *Aaron* itself. Their apparent support was in reality that which supported them.

After his marriage, Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, the founder of the Telshe Yeshiva, was supported by his father-in-law, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Neviezer, so that he could devote himself fully to Torah learning and develop into a *gadol*. As his family began to grow, and he was offered various rabbinical positions, Reb Eliezer sought to relieve his father-in-law of this financial burden. He asked his permission to accept a rabbinical position and begin to support himself. Despite difficult financial times, Reb Avraham Yitzchak refused to permit him to do so. When Reb Avraham Yitzchak's wife asked him how long he intended to support their daughter and son-in-law's family, he responded, "My dear wife, who knows who is supporting whom..." Finally, the prestigious rabbinical position in Eisheshok was offered to Reb Eliezer, and his father-in-law could no longer detain him. The day after the Gordon family left for Eisheshok, Reb Avraham Yitzchak was *niftar*. It then became clear who had been supporting whom.

In this light, we can appreciate the significance of the deletion of the "yud" from the title of the *nesi'im*. With a "yud", the word *nesi'im* denotes "those that carry". Without the "yud", the vowels can be rearranged to read "nis'aim"- those that are carried. The "yud" was removed to instruct them that, though they viewed themselves as

making up the shortfall, they were in reality being carried by the merit of the *mitzvah*.

Chazal tell us that we will be redeemed through the merit of tzedakah. May we recognize the great opportunity offered us when we are called upon to support Torah institutions and the poor, and thereby merit redemption.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Love Them

Remembering our mission as parents.
(By Slovie Jungreis-Wolff)

Here I am, basking in Jerusalem's golden light. A magnificent orange sun is rising. I catch its glow as my airport cab enters the holy city. My heart is pounding. In just a few moments, I will be holding my newest baby granddaughter, just four days old.

After what seems like eternity, I finally reach my destination. Though it is early morning and the building is eerily quiet, I race up the stairs, luggage in hand. I knock, barely able to contain my excitement.

My daughter opens the door and we happily embrace. Gingerly, she places little Elisheva Shimah in my arms. I kiss her soft silken head and gently put my pinky into her hand. I smile as her fingers instinctively curl round mine. She breathes deeply and I take in this miracle called life. I try to absorb the newborn scent, the eyes that suddenly flutter open, the delicate toes, and the curl of her mouth that becomes a smile. It is overwhelming. I am cradling a precious life – a gift from the Almighty.

As our children grow, sometimes it becomes easy to forget how privileged we are to be called 'mommy' and 'daddy.' Carpools need to be driven, baths wait to be drawn, and hungry children clamor for supper. Our bills pile up as we try to deal with tantrums, mountains of laundry, homework sheets, and fighting siblings in the backseat of the minivan. The sacred

mission of parenting gets lost in the daily shuffle.

We wonder, *"Am I really accomplishing greatness here? Do I genuinely make a difference in this world?"* Each day seems to blend into the next.

You may never be written about on the front page of Yahoo or find yourself in Google Search for 'Greatest Parents of the Universe,' but you must not doubt the impact your presence has on your family. Each soul is touched by your light.

The tear you lovingly wipe away, the bedtime story you make time to read, the patience you surprisingly find when you feel weary and stressed, all teach your child a supreme life lesson. "I am loved." "I am cherished." "I have wings." "I have a soul." It is a lesson that resonates deep within your child's marrow no matter where life's journey may lead.

A woman approached me after a parenting lecture. "I look around this room," she began, "and I feel so inadequate. This mother is a lawyer, this one constantly has company, and this one is involved with charity work while she raises five children. What about me? What do I do that's so great?"

"All you do is love them? Are you kidding? That's huge!"

"Are you there for your children?" I asked. "Do you listen to them? Do you make time for them, guide them, and infuse them with your love?"

She looked at me for a moment. "Well, yes," she said, hesitantly. "But that's all I do. All I do is love them."

"All you do is love them? Are you kidding? That's huge!" I replied. "Do you know how many parents I meet who tell me that they cannot function? They are unable to love; they cannot control their tempers, they cannot get off their cells and blackberries and just find the time to talk to their children. I hear about dysfunctional homes that they grew up in and poor role models so that they cannot be good parents. And you ask me if it is enough to just love your children? If you can give this gift of love to your child so that he knows that he is secure within his heart along with transmitting a legacy of

faith, then you have accomplished greatness here."

It is not easy for today's families to prevail. One out of every two marriages end in divorce and those that remain are often steeped in misery. Follow the news and you never know whose humiliating marital confession you will hear today. Financial pressures eat at away at the serenity and peace that was once found within the walls of our homes. Many parents return from work exhausted, their nerves frazzled. And many do not even return from a job; instead they have worriedly been searching for employment.

At the same time, our children are engrossed in their iPods, laptops, and cell phones. They text their friends at the dinner table and we find it impossible to communicate with them. Dad and mom's blackberries keep buzzing. Instead of growing closer, we grow further apart and hardly speak to each other anymore. The fabric of our home is crumbling.

As parents, we have an incredible opportunity to fill our homes with blessing. We can teach our children how to handle life's challenges with faith. We can transmit to them the ability to stand up for truth and kindness. We can show them that one can go through adversity yet remain strong, and success does not have to breed arrogance. We can take the time to stop whatever we are doing, look at our children, and hear them. We can turn off our cell phones and blackberries and talk to our kids again. And then, we can proudly raise spiritual children who are morally anchored.

My Father's Message

My stay here in Israel has come to an end and I must return to the States. It is extremely difficult to say goodbye. Images of those first few moments when I arrived play in my mind. My heart is heavy; and besides, Israel is a world like no other. Jerusalem's stones speak volumes. The pull of our land and the pull of my children tug deep inside me. What can I say? What am I thinking?

I am holding onto this thought, my friends. Long past the time that you've sang your last lullaby, your melody accompanies your child each night as he goes to sleep. Your image and all that you

stand for accompanies your child throughout his life. As I look at my children and hold my granddaughter close as we say our goodbyes, I know that they will carry my voice with them.

No matter who you are, no matter your child's age, keep close to your heart the message my father gave me when my youngest son was born. "This precious soul is a gift to you from Above. Watch over him. Teach him well. He is the purest of the pure; a gift from G-d Himself."

The Three Fundamental Paradigms of Marriage

Without a clear goal of what a healthy marriage is, we have little chance attaining one. (By Tod Jacobs and Dr. Peter Lynn)

Here's the bad news: marriage is in a desperate state. People are marrying later. Half of those who marry will wind up divorced. And of the 50% of that lucky group that remain married, what percent do you suppose are enjoying sparkling relationships that fulfill their dreams of intimacy, trust and happiness? Hmmm.

Here's the good news. We can change the dynamic. But we have to first change our thinking. Without a clear goal of what a healthy marriage is, we have little chance attaining one. It's a bit like trying to use a GPS without setting a destination.

In our book *Not A Partnership: Why We Keep Getting Marriage Wrong & How We Can Get It Right*, we devote nearly the first half to defining and redefining the paradigms that lay at the heart of a healthy marriage (Part 2 lays out the practical steps to put them into place using a four-part structure). The wisdom draws from the most ancient Kabbalistic and Talmudic sources and aligns beautifully with research driven insights from the world of Positive Psychology. Let's summarize them briefly here...

Paradigm #1: Let's define what a marriage is. The legal/technical definition doesn't help much. Indeed the question stands before many singles: if I don't feel bound by any particular religious law, then why exactly should I *marry* this person as opposed to, say, just

having some sort of a physical relationship with the person, or a close emotional involvement, or living together, or occasionally getting together when it feels right?

Jewish mystical sources define marriage as a unique coming together of two people, each of whom has committed to do everything possible that they can to give that other person the life that they want and deserve. Two individuals, who often could not be more different to each other, can come together with a shared set of ideals and commitment to build something together that transcends the two of them. The unity they achieve can, through thick and thin, offer a lifetime of intimacy, comfort, support, friendship and well-being.

Rather than focusing on what I can *get*, my marriage will largely be defined by what I can *give*.

This flies in the face of the way a lot of people think about marriage. The more common thought process goes something like this: at last, I have found my soulmate – now I have someone who can give to me, take care of me, understand and love me. The Torah view of marriage flips that model on its head. Rather than focusing on what I can *get* (strange coincidence that the Hebrew word for divorce sounds the same!), my marriage will largely be defined by what I can *give*.

Paradigm #2: Marriages don't just happen; they have to be *built*. Personal growth unfolds in two phases. In phase one, we get an explosive and inspiring experience for free. No sooner that it's given, it's taken away. What's the point of that?! Answer: to give us a vision of the goal and to get us involved. But from that point on we have to work to make it real and make it our own. We have to earn that growth.

We see this model everywhere: childhood versus adulthood; first tablets of the 10 commandments followed by the second. Perhaps nowhere is it more salient than in the world of relationships. We know how love starts: inspiration and passion! Just like in the movies: boy meets girl, love at first sight; then conflict, and boy loses girl. Both are lost, searching, regretting. Somehow, in the final scene, they reunite, having overcome whatever odds or

challenges came their way – they collapse into each other's arms as the music swells and the curtain drops... The End!

That's in Hollywood. In real life, we begin Act 2, Scene 1 as the curtain comes up again the next day. Somehow neither seems quite as perfect by the harsh light of day as they did by moonlight and in the absence of celestial music. Oh no! Another dud! Life has fooled me again! I'll have to search once again, and again, for Mr. (or Mrs.) Right...

That's exactly where a choice needs to be made. We were given a glimpse of what a relationship could look like for free. That's called romance. It's enough to get us involved. But to build a marriage, we'll now have to commit to each other and nurture real love through a lifetime of giving and sharing. To be sure, the goal is nothing less than to reclaim that elevated state of love and passion, but this time to make it real and make it our own. Moral of the story: we may *fall* – passively – into love, but marriages are *built*.

Paradigm #3: You love where you give. We are used to thinking receiving somebody's kindness will cause me to love the one who gives to me. If only I had someone to believe in me, take care of me, support me, cook for me, do favors for me, I'd be a loving and happy spouse filled with gratitude toward my giving husband or wife. And now ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do parents love their kids more than kids love their parents?
- Why is my kid attached more to the simple little Lego truck that she built than to a super-fancy and expensive Lego battleship that we gave her that was already assembled?
- Why do I love my plant, or my cat, or the house that I built?
- Why do childless couples often struggle financially and emotionally for years to have or adopt children?
- More odd still: Why, after all that she has done for me, do I still not really feel love for my wife?

The answer is because we have the algorithm backwards. In reality, our Sages teach us that we love where we give. The more I give, the more of myself I invest into the other, the more I expand myself and find myself there. In that process, my (*healthy!*) love of self-expands to include the other and creates real oneness. It is the complete opposite of taking, demanding, expecting... So if you really want to love your spouse, start giving and giving.

These three paradigms lie at the heart of every robust, inspiring, happy and intimate marriage. Without them, it is nearly impossible to succeed in marriage; with them, it is all but impossible to fail.

Getting in the Purim Mood

For a few reasons, it's been rather hard this year. (By Emuna Braverman)

We have just entered the Jewish month of Adar, the month of the holiday of Purim, the month that brings with it additional joy – and I found my sense of celebration sorely lacking.

It wasn't just that I reflected on last Purim and realized that it was probably the super spreader that lead to a lot of illness and death. It wasn't just that it sort of marked the boundary between our before-corona world and our after-corona one; I think there is a non-Covid-related factor as well.

When I teach some of my students about Shabbat (or other holidays), they frequently respond, "I wish I'd known you 20 years ago; my kids are all grown up now; it's too late." To which I reply that the holidays are not just for children and that they should be celebrated even in a home of empty nesters and even if alone (two facts that have certainly been highlighted during this pandemic). The meaning of Shabbat and all of our holidays is deep and connects us to G-d and is not dependent on having small children in the home.

But I think that these words, while true, fell too glibly from my tongue. While accurate, they are yet another example of easier said than done, a fact that was brought home to me this past Rosh Chodesh Adar.

Instead of making hamantashen and planning costumes, my husband and I were looking at each other: "Is today Rosh Chodesh? Is it two days?" We weren't as tuned in to it; we weren't in the same celebratory mood. While our family chat was abuzz with ideas for *mishloach manot* (baskets of food to send to friends), I hadn't even given the idea a second thought.

Yes, I could make excuses. Some of them might even be legitimate! We just moved (how long can I use that one for?) and my life is consumed with unpacking (a problem in and of itself), my husband doesn't go to shul (back to COVID) so isn't as attuned to the holidays, I'm paralyzed by the age-old dilemma of which filling to put in my hamantashen (prune, poppy or chocolate?!) so I end up making nothing...but they are all just that, excuses.

The bottom line is that, while it is absolutely true that the holidays are just as significant, just as meaningful, just as important whether we have small children in the house or not, they are not just as easy.

I don't mean physical effort – that's obviously more difficult with a bunch of small and not-so-small children about. I mean the emotional and spiritual effort. I mean the focus. For my daughters who are young mothers, Purim has been on their mind for weeks – planning and ordering or making costumes, making Purim treats for their many *mishloach manos*, figuring out where to have the Purim meal... it's been all-consuming.

For me, it's been the opposite. I've basically ignored those conversations, ignored the whole idea until all of the sudden Adar was upon me and I had definitely not worked on increasing my joy! And I felt the poorer for it. I had fallen into the same trap I warned others to avoid. Without the pressure (pestering, nagging) of young children, I had made no preparations for Purim. I have not given the holiday its due. And I'm not proud of that.

Especially when I always say that Esther, the heroine of the Purim story (and I like to think of as my namesake since my actual Hebrew name is Esther Emuna – little known fun fact) is my favorite character in Jewish history.

The good news is, like with everything else, it's never too late to change. It's not too late to re-orient my focus, to bake some hamantashen, to plan a costume, to make some nice *mishloach manot* (even if I don't know anyone here yet) and to sit down with Megillat Esther and remind myself why the Purim story is so important – and why it's not just for children!

DAILY HALACHA

Halachot of Purim

(Daily Halacha)

- It is proper to celebrate the Purim meal together with one's family, as it says in the Megila that Purim is observed by "each and every family" ("Mishpaha U'mishpaha"). Additionally, one cannot experience true joy when he is alone. Special care must be taken that the men and women do not mingle, even more so than during the rest of the year, in order to avoid improper behavior on the sacred day of Purim. If there is any concern that the celebration will lead to meaningless frivolity or impropriety, then it is better to have the meal alone and not in the company of family and friends.
- One should change into Shabbat clothes already on Purim night. Some people wear Shabbat clothes only during the day of Purim, but this is improper; Shabbat clothes should be worn already on Purim night, as the special spiritual light of Mordechai is upon us once Purim begins in the evening. Women, too, should change into their Shabbat clothes, and wear jewelry, on Purim night and wear them throughout Purim day. This Halacha is mentioned by the Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in his work Ateret Tiferet.
- The Shulhan Aruch rules (Orah Haim 695:1) that one does not fulfill the Misva of the Purim feast on Purim night; the meal must be eaten specifically during the day of Purim. Nevertheless, the Rama (Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1525-1572)

notes that there is a Misva to have a somewhat festive meal even on Purim night. It is customary to eat seeds on Purim night, as Ester ate seeds in Ahashverosh's palace, since she could not eat the meat. Furthermore, Daniel – who, according to some opinions, was Ester's messenger, Hatach – ate seeds while he served under the Babylonian emperor Nevuchadnesar.

One should be especially careful to avoid fighting and discord throughout Purim, both at night and during the day. The flurry of activity that characterizes the Purim celebration can oftentimes create pressure and tension in the home, and it is thus crucial to make a special effort to exercise patience and forbearance on Purim, in order not to disturb the festive atmosphere.

Additionally, one should make a special effort to make time for Torah learning on the night of Purim. A famous verse describes that at the time of the Purim miracle the Jews experienced "Ora Ve'simha" – "light and joy" – and the Sages teach that "light" refers to Torah study and "joy" refers to festive celebration. "Light" is mentioned before "joy" because the "joy" – the Purim festivity – is observed during the day, and thus the "light" – Torah learning – should be done the previous night. It is therefore proper to spend Purim night engaged in Torah learning, since there often is not much time available during the daytime for learning.

More generally, the Hida (Rav Haim Yosef David Azoulay, 1724-1807) commented that if the Jewish people would conduct themselves with sanctity on Purim day, rejoicing for the sake of Heaven and then spending time learning Torah, we would immediately earn redemption. Most people, unfortunately, do not allocate time for Torah study on Purim, and this itself is reason to make an effort to spend time learning on this day. The Sefer Hasidim (work by Rabbenu Yehuda Hahasid of Regensburg, Germany, late 12th-early 13th century) teaches that one should make a special effort to fulfill Mivots that few others fulfill, and one will thereby earn great reward. Thus, it is appropriate and worthwhile to try to spend

time studying Torah on Purim, as it is a day when few people make a point of fulfilling this Misva of Torah learning.

- If a person forgot to insert Al Ha'nissim in Birkat Ha'mazon on Purim, he does not have to repeat Birkat Ha'mazon. Even if he realizes his mistake immediately after reciting the words "Baruch Ata Hashem" at the end of that Beracha in Birkat Ha'mazon, he simply continues reciting Birkat Ha'mazon as usual
- It is customary to wear costumes on Purim, and this custom has strong basis in Halacha. However, it is forbidden for men to dress up as women, and vice versa. Children, too, should not be allowed to dress up as the opposite gender
- It is permissible to send Mishlo'ah Manot to a mourner on Purim, and a mourner may receive Mishlo'ah Manot on Purim.
- It is forbidden to eat or drink on Purim night and on Purim morning before hearing the Megila reading. One who finds it difficult to refrain from food and drink may eat and drink small amounts.
- The Misva of Mishlo'ah Manot requires sending at least two food items to at least one person. Strictly speaking, beverages count as one food or even as both food items. Nevertheless, it is proper to send at least one Mishlo'ah Manot package that contains at least two dry food items.
- **Purim – Drinking and Conducting Oneself Responsibly (Daily Halacha)**

There is a Misva to eat a large, festive meal on Purim. One fulfills this obligation with a single meal; there is no requirement to conduct more than one meal. Preferably, this meal should consist of bread, and it should be as large and festive as one can afford. One must eat meat at this Se'uda (meal), and it is preferable to eat red meat, as opposed to poultry or fish, as according to some opinions the Misva is fulfilled only through the consumption of red meat. There is also an obligation to drink wine on Purim. One should drink more wine than he is

accustomed to drinking so that he grows tired and falls asleep.

Women are included in the obligation of the Purim meal. They should not, however, drink large quantities of wine, and should instead drink slightly more than they are accustomed to.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef rules that if a person becomes intoxicated on Purim, and as a result he acts in a reckless manner, causing damage to other people – such as if spills food on people's clothes, or gets into some kind of accident in which people are hurt or property is damaged – he is liable to pay compensation. The Purim festivities are not an excuse for reckless behavior, and one is fully responsible for his actions on Purim just as he is at any other point throughout the year.

It is very unfortunate that people distort the Misva of the Purim celebration, feeling it gives them license to act in a reckless and unruly manner. People who drink on Purim and then get into their cars to drive violate American law, run the risk of imprisonment, and endanger their own lives and the lives of all motorists and pedestrians in the vicinity. Much to our shame, members of Hatzalah have reported that Purim is the organization's busiest day of the year, as they must tend to people who have fainted or become dangerously ill as a result of drinking, or gotten into serious accidents because of drinking under the influence of alcoholic. Nowhere in Halachic literature does it say that the Purim festivities override Pikua'h Nefesh (concern for the protection of human life). Quite to the contrary, Piku'ah Nefesh overrides virtually all Misvot in the Torah. Although it is a Misva to drink wine on Purim, there is no Misva to act irresponsibly, and in fact, as mentioned above, acting irresponsibly on Purim is no less grievous a sin than it is on any other day of the year.

It is truly shameful that people who are fairly lax when it comes to matters such as the recitation of Shema in its proper time, praying with a Minyan and the laws of

Shabbat, are suddenly "meticulous" and uncompromising regarding the requirement to drink on Purim. Quite obviously, if somebody is not generally meticulous about Halachic observance but insists on getting completely drunk on Purim because of the Misva, his sincerity is highly questionable, to say the least. Many people unfortunately abuse this Halacha of drinking, turning it into an excuse to act without restraint or discipline, which is hardly a Misva, and is, in fact, a sin.

To repeat what was mentioned earlier, the Misva of drinking on Purim is fulfilled by drinking more than one is accustomed to so that he grows tired and falls asleep. This way, one reaches the point described by the Gemara as "where one cannot distinguish between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai.'" Moreover, if there is even the slightest concern that drinking wine will lead one to dangerous or inappropriate behavior, it is Halachically preferable for him not to drink on Purim. This concern is, without question, a valid basis for an exemption from this requirement. Especially in today's day and age, when addictions and alcohol abuse are, tragically, so rampant, even in our community, it is preferable to forego on drinking altogether on Purim if there is even a small risk of irresponsible drinking. Many people mistakenly consider drinking on Purim the primary Misva of the holiday. This is absolutely incorrect. It is just one of numerous Misvot, such as Mishlo'ah Manot, charity to the poor, reading and studying the Megila, and so on, and if one wants to be stringent about the laws of Purim, he should be stringent in these areas, not about drinking. And, as mentioned, if there is any risk of drinking leading to dangerous or improper behavior, one is entirely exempt from the obligation to drink. To the contrary, it would be a Misva not to drink, in order to avoid danger and impropriety.

I have been privileged to observe many great Rabbis and Sadikim celebrating Purim, and their celebration can best be described by the famous verse, "Ibdu Et Hashem Be'simha Ve'gilu Bi'r'ada" – "Serve

G-d with joy, and celebrate with trembling.” The joy of Purim must be conducted with “Re’ada,” with a degree of awe and reverence toward Hashem. As the Sages comment regarding this verse, “Where there is joy – there must be trembling.” True, there are some Sadikim who reach great spiritual heights and speak profound words of Torah as a result of intoxication on Purim. This is because of the concept of “Nichnas Yayin Yasa Sod” – “When wine goes in, the secret comes out.” When people who are filled with Torah and fear of G-d become inebriated, the spiritual depths of their souls are revealed. But for the rest of us, whose inner “secrets” are far less sublime, it would be inappropriate to become intoxicated.

The Purim festivities are not meant to commemorate the feast of Ahashverosh, but rather serve to correct his feast, as we celebrate and enjoy ourselves in an aura of Kedusha. Purim is not a day of Hefker (lawlessness), but rather a day of profound service of Hashem through festive celebration. Let us ensure that this is how we observe it, and we do not distort it into something very different from what Purim is meant to be.

DAF YOMI

Daf Yomi Masechet Pesachim

(Daf Notes)

On the Wings of Eagles

On the pasuk, “I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me” (Shemot 19:4), the Targum Yonatan explains that when Bnei Yisrael offered the Korban Pesach in Egypt, Hashem carried them to Yerushalayim to slaughter their korbanot there, and then brought them back to Egypt. Their miraculous voyage represents the great spiritual levels that they had reached instantaneously. Hashem brought them from the lowest depths of impurity in Egypt to the greatest heights of holiness in Yerushalayim, in just one instant. Why did

Hashem then return them to Egypt? Hashem saw that such a sudden and drastic change was not for their benefit. They needed to grow slowly and steadily, step by step. For this reason he returned them to Egypt, and then led them back to Eretz Yisrael, after the forty-two stages of their journey through the Desert. They then regained the holiness they had experienced on the night of Yetziat Mitzraim (R’ Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apta, Ohev Yisrael Parashat Masai).

The Tzitz Forgiving Powers

The Tzitz had the power to effect forgiveness for Klal Yisrael's public indiscretion. It could also return the kedushah v'taharah, holiness and purity, to the Sanctuary. Likewise, this is the function of those who represent the epitome of spiritual leadership - those who wear the spiritual Tzitz. They too, must be circumspect in keeping the ethical and moral discipline expected of a Jew. One who seeks to wear the mantle of the Tzitz must prepare himself for the personal and communal demands of this position.

While clothes certainly do not make the man, the concept of proper attire, in addition to the Jewish code of dress - attire that brings both honor and glory to the wearer and to Heaven - is central to Jewish life and values. The following "clothing" episode, said Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum, convey an important lesson, which he will leave for the readers to decide.

The story occurred at the Displaced Persons Camp where the Klausenberger Rebbe, z”l, was interned following World War II. It was home to thousands of survivors of Hitler's diabolical assault on Judaism. The Klausenberger understood that even the staunchest believer would be hard-pressed to retain his heretofore unshakable belief. This was a cataclysmic destruction that not only took its toll on the physical body of the Jewish People; it had wreaked havoc with the spiritual/emotional compass of many survivors as well. Taking everything into consideration, the Klausenberger went about his business reaching out with love to all those who would listen.

One day, while walking in the camp, he chanced upon a young teenage girl who was walking barelegged. The Klausenberger made it his goal to minister to the spiritual as well as physical needs of the survivors. He looked at the girl and, in a pleasant, soothing voice, asked her why she was not wearing stockings. The girl cried out that she had none. Therefore, she was relegated to walk around barelegged. The Klausenberger was of the opinion that this was a tzniut issue that required immediate resolution. He immediately took off his shoes, then removed his long black socks - the only pair that he possessed - and gave his socks to the girl! He explained to her that for a man to walk around without socks was not an infringement on tzniut. For a bat Yisrael to walk barelegged was unbecoming.

She never forgot this incident with the Rebbe. Indeed, she saved those socks for years. They represented to her the message: "Someone cares about my neshamah, soul." As a result of this heartfelt act of caring, the girl remained observant, raising a beautiful family devoted to our Torah heritage. More than half a century passed before she removed those socks from their special place. The Klausenberger Rebbe had passed away in Eretz Yisrael. No longer a teenager, and beset with health issues, she made the trip to the house of the Rebbe, where his family was sitting shivah, seven-day period of mourning. With tears streaming down her face, she presented the socks to the family - and related the story to them. They did not know who she was - but, now they would never forget her.

KIDZ CORNER

INTERESTING MIDRASH

(from Torah Tots)

Mishkan Shopping List

Since there were no Walmarts in the *Midbar*, you've got to wonder where *Hashem* expected the *Bne Yisrael* to come up with the many materials needed to build the *Mishkan*. After all, the shopping list included; gold, silver, copper,

wool dyed purple and wool dyed blue, linen, goats' hair, seal skins, *shittim* wood, olive oil, spices, two *shoham* gems and twelve additional precious gems.

Since *Hashem* has a policy not to ask for the impossible, you've got to be wondering:

1. How far was this desert from the north pole?
2. Was Moshe running a major mining operation?
3. Was there actually a Walmart in the *Midbar*?

Actually, *Hashem* made sure that somewhere along the way each of the materials for the *Mishkan* could be picked up. Take the gold, silver and precious vessels, for example. The night that *Bne Yisrael* left *Mitzrayim*, they were commanded to collect their neighbors's valuables. In fact, the Egyptians forced the *Bne Yisrael* to take their gold, silver and precious possessions. But that's not all! The "gold rush" continued at the Red Sea. When the Egyptian army drowned, their ornaments, jewels and treasures washed up on shore and made them even richer!

In the *Midbar*, the morning dew brought more than the miracle of *mann* for the *tzadikim*. Every portion of *mann* was spackled with precious gems - precisely the ones needed for the *Mishkan*!

Now, how about them *shittim*? Certainly cedar-like trees don't grow "like trees" in the *Midbar*. Right? Right!! Actually, *Hashem* - or more specifically Yaakov *Avinu* - "planted" the seed for *shittim* three hundred years before. With his *Ruach Hakodesh*, he saw that his descendants would need *shittim* wood for the *Mishkan*, so he planted trees all over *Mitzrayim*. Before he died, Yaakov commanded his children to take the *shittim* wood with them when they would leave *Mitzrayim* in the future. Imagine the sight - the greatest *tzadikim* of Moshe's generation carrying shoulder full of *shittim* wood across the *Yam Suf*!!

Then there's the 103-foot (72 *amah*) wooden beam. Ever heard of "A Tree Grows In Brooklyn?" Well, here's "A Tree Grows In Be'er Sheva". Actually, that tree had an important

cameo in Jewish history that goes all the way back to Avrohom *Avinu*. He planted the original seed and, throughout his years, prayed and served his guests beneath the shade of its towering trunk. As the *Bnei Yisrael* crossed the *Yam Suf*, the *Malachim* chopped down the tree and dropped the giant trunk on the sea bed before them. The people understood that this huge relic was destined for greatness, so they took it along with them. Indeed, the giant tree trunk became the middle beam in the *Mishkan*.

Finally, there's the *tachash*, a one-horned animal with a multi-colored coat. This animal never even made it onto the "endangered species" list. That's because it was one-of-a-kind and 'tailor created' to appear in the *Midbar* just in time for the *Mishkan*-makers to make use of its beautiful coat of fur. No other *tachash* has been seen since...

Unless you prescribe to the opinion that a *tachash* is a common seal. In which case, there was at least one arctic animal that went way off course!

Kid'z Korner (Revach)

The Palace of the King

(Adapted from *Meshalim Vegam Sipurim*, p. 66)

The Palace Visitor

Jack was touring the capital city when he came across a beautiful complex of buildings.

"What is this beautiful place?" he asked.

"This," a guard announced proudly, "is the king's palace!"

Jack entered inside the palace gates, accompanied by the palace guard. Among the splendid paths and breathtaking gardens, he saw many houses and buildings.

"What are these houses?"

"They belong to various ministers of the king."

Jack continued to walk until he arrived at an exquisite structure, decorated with stunning marble columns and ornate carvings.

"And what is this building?" he asked.

"This is the king's palace!"

"Before you told me that the entire complex is the king's palace, and now you say that this building is the palace?"

"That is true. The entire complex belongs to the king, with houses and gardens for his many servants and ministers. But this building is the inner palace where the king lives. His servants may only enter when they are called, and they must be dressed appropriately."

The Palace of the King

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ, וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם

"They shall build for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8).

It says that "The entire universe is full of His glory," and "The Heavens are My throne, and the earth is My footstool" (Isaiah 6:3, 66:1). If G-d's Presence fills the entire universe, why does He need a Temple?

The Maggid of Dubno explained using the above parable. True, the entire world belongs to G-d. But the *Bet HaMikdash*, the Holy Temple, is G-d's inner palace. That is where the Divine Presence fully dwells.

Not everyone is allowed to enter the inner sanctuary. Only his special servants, the *kohanim*, may enter. And even they must wear appropriate clothing to serve Him.

Rav Moshe Feinstein Doesn't Subscribe

The Steipler once sent a shaliach to Rav Moshe Feinstein regarding an important issue which the Steipler wanted Rav Moshe to become involved in. The shaliach discussed the issue with R' Moshe and told him all the details. When he was finished, he pulled out a *Hamodia* newspaper, explaining that this newspaper happens to have an article about the inyan. Rav Moshe declined to take the newspaper, saying that he had already heard the details so there is no need for him to see the article. The shaliach persisted, explaining that it was possible that he missed one or two important details.

Rav Moshe responded, "I have not held a newspaper in my hands for seventy years. As soon as I read a newspaper, I will no longer be

qualified to pasken because my mind will not be one hundred percent Da'at Torah."

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach - All I Can Do For You Is Cry

The family of Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z'tl recounted a story that occurred one night at a very late hour. A knock was heard on the door of their household in Shaarei Chessed. A chatan and kalla entered, both of whom were baale teshuvah, with a difficult question. Their wedding was a week away, and it had suddenly been revealed that the kalla was passul for marriage, and it was forbidden for them to marry.

They imploringly questioned Reb Shlomo Zalman, "What should we do?" The Posek Hador heard their question, and gestured with his hands that there was nothing he could do. Then he turned to the chatan and kallah and said, "You're asking me what to do, and I know that there's nothing to be done; can I provide a heter for someone forbidden to marry? However, there is something in my power to do for you. I can cry."

The Gaon took all his Torah which he learned his entire lifetime, all the kedushah of his heart, and the taharah of his soul, and burst out in heart-rending weeping. Twenty-four hours had not yet passed, and the chatan and kallah returned to Reb Shlomo Zalman's house. They told him that a man had suddenly arrived from Argentina who knew the kallah's family well. He testified that the kallah is not forbidden to marry, and the information they had received previously was false. (Alenu Leshabeach)

Rav Chaim Volozhin, Shas Is Shas

In the time of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, there was a baal habayis who had completed the entire Shas. Rav Chaim would stand up for him when he would enter the room. The talmidim of R' Chaim felt that it was an affront to his kavod to stand up for a baal habayis. They protested to R' Chaim, saying that although the baal habayis did learn Shas and spent a lot of time learning, he didn't know the Shas in depth, so it was not respectful for a great Gaon like himself to stand up for him.

R' Chaim answered that there are two types

of Shas - the Vilna Shas which was a beautiful Shas with a quality print, and another Shas printed in Poland which was of lesser quality with inferior print. Rav Chaim explained that if one had these two Shasim, he wouldn't say the inferior Shas is not a Shas –he would merely say it was not as beautiful. Similarly, someone who knows Shas is someone who knows Shas, and therefore it's appropriate to treat him with the proper kavod.

PAR LA FRANCOPHONE

(Rav Itshak Nabet)

L'importance de la Pureté

Cette semaine, dans la paracha Terouma, nous commençons la description de la construction du Michkan, le temple portatif. La Torah détaille chaque ustensile, chaque vêtement, chaque partie de cet édifice. De nombreuses explications ont été apportées pour comprendre l'importance du Michkan.

Le Ramban zal explique qu'Hachem voulait donner aux enfants d'Israël la possibilité de voir en permanence la présence divine, comme ils la virent lors du don de la Torah. Ainsi ce temple devait-il être une sorte de témoignage que la Torah fut bel et bien octroyée par Hachem Soimême. C'est pourquoi nous trouvons de suite après le don de la Torah, dans la paracha Yitro, l'ordre de construire un autel en terre afin d'apporter des sacrifices. Cependant, selon cette interprétation, nous devons comprendre pourquoi la Torah ne traita pas directement de la construction du Michkan après la paracha de Yitro. Pourquoi enseigna-t-elle toutes ces lois de droit civil entre l'ordre de construire cet autel et celui de prélever les biens pour sa réalisation ?

Avant de répondre à cette question, intéressons-nous à un des enseignements de notre paracha. Parmi la liste des matériaux demandés par Hachem, nous trouvons des pierres précieuses, des peaux d'animaux et du bois de Chitim... Rachi zal s'interroge: où les

bné Israël trouvèrent-ils du bois dans le désert ? Et il répondit au nom du Midrach que lorsqu'Yaacov avinou descendit en Egypte, il vit par prophétie la construction du temple. Alors il prit avec lui des arbres qu'il planta en Egypte. Puis, lors de leur libération, les bné Israël déracinèrent ces arbres et les transportèrent pour fabriquer le Michkan. Cependant une question demeure: pourquoi Yaacov avinou eut-il besoin de se munir de ce bois? N'y avait-il pas assez de forêts en Egypte?

La guémara, dans le traité Baba Metsia (85, b), raconte que Rabbi Hiya, un des plus importants sages du Talmud, trouva une solution afin que la Torah ne soit pas oubliée des enfants d'Israël. Il partit acheter des graines de lin et les planta. Quelques mois plus tard, il prit ces gerbes de lin, les tissa puis fit des pièges de chasse. Ensuite, il plaça ses filets et attrapa quelques animaux cachers. Il leur fit la Che'hita, puis travailla leur peau afin d'en faire des parchemins. Puis il écrivit la Torah et les six parties de la Torah orale. Enfin, il commença à enseigner à des enfants tout ce qu'il y avait écrit. En outre, la guémara témoigne que tout ce que ces enfants apprirent, jamais ils ne l'oublièrent. Lorsque nous lisons cette histoire, nous ne comprenons pas pourquoi Rabbi Hiya passa autant de temps pour fabriquer ce sefer Torah. Il lui avait fallu au moins cinq ans pour faire ces livres: pourquoi n'avait-il pas, dès lors, tout simplement acheté un sefer Torah ?

Nos sages expliquent qu'il avait souhaité nous enseigner une leçon fondamentale : lorsqu'une chose est faite depuis le début dans la pureté, pour Hachem, alors cette chose perdure dans le temps. C'est pourquoi Rabbi Hiya passa des années afin que chaque étape de la fabrication du sefer Torah ne le soit pas dans un but lucratif, mais réellement, et exclusivement, pour Hachem.

Le Michkan, contrairement au Bet Amikdash, ne fut jamais détruit. Il fut enterré par le roi Chlomo à l'endroit du Temple, à Jerusalem. Le Midrach enseigne par quel mérite ces planches traversèrent le temps et furent protégées. Yaacov avinou ne prit de simples arbres pour le fabriquer. Il emporta avec lui les

arbres qu'Avraham avinou avait plantés près de sa tente afin de faire de l'ombre aux gens qu'il invitait. Afin que ce temple traverse le temps, il ne pouvait pas être construit avec du bois planté par des Egyptiens impurs. C'est pourquoi il fit descendre ces arbres qu'Avraham avinou avait spécialement fait pousser pour sanctifier le nom d'Hachem.

Désormais, nous pouvons répondre à notre question initiale. Bien qu'il ait été plus logique de faire suivre directement la paracha Teruma après Yitro, Moché voulut leur transmettre un message important : avant de prélever vos dons pour le temple, assurez-vous que cet argent soit propre de toute interdiction. Ainsi, il leur enseigna les lois concernant l'interdiction l'interdiction de voler, les emprunts, les réparations en cas de dégâts... Car si le temple avait été construit avec des matières premières interdites, il aurait été voué à la destruction. De même, lorsque nous faisons des dons, nous devons nous assurer que notre argent soit propre. Chez les juifs, l'argent a une odeur, il peut sentir bon ou mauvais. Si nous désirons recevoir les bénédictions promises par la Torah, il faut que nos actes de charité soient acceptés par Hachem. C'est pourquoi nous devons fuir les fausses déclarations d'impôt ou d'assurance, nous devons payer nos employés comme convenu avec eux et nous devons rendre tout l'argent qui ne nous revient pas selon les lois de la Torah. En faisant ainsi, il est évident qu'Hachem nous récompensera et nos dons porteront leurs fruits dans ce monde et le monde futur, amen ken yéhi ratson...

Donner de Nous-Même.

Nous assistons, dans la paracha Térouma, au début de la construction du Michkan, le Temple portatif. Hachem demanda de collecter les matières premières de cet édifice. C'est ainsi que Moché Rabenou ordonna de prélever de l'or, de l'argent, du cuivre, de l'azur, de la pourpre, de l'écarlate, du lin et du duvet de chèvre, des peaux de bœuf et de tchélim, du bois de Chittim, de l'huile, des encens, des pierres de choam et de milouim (pierres précieuses destinées à orner l'habit du cohen gadol).

Le Or aHaim akadoch s'interroge sur la place de ces bijoux dans cette liste. En effet, il aurait été plus logique de les placer en tête puisqu'ils représentaient les biens les plus chers. Alors pourquoi la Torah les désigne-t-elle en dernier?

Ce rav répondit qu'il est enseigné dans la masseret Yoma (75, a) que ces objets de luxe avaient été offerts par Hachem en même temps que la Manne (nourriture spirituelle). Ainsi, les princes des tribus qui avaient apporté ces pierres n'avaient pas subi de perte financière. C'est pour cela que leurs offrandes se trouvaient diminuées. A l'inverse, les matières données par le peuple provenaient de leurs biens. Leurs dons représentaient un véritable sacrifice de leur part. Ainsi, la Torah cite en dernier les pierres précieuses pour nous dévoiler qu'elles étaient moins importantes aux yeux d'Hachem que les autres matières.

De là, nous pouvons tirer un enseignement pour notre service divin. Hachem recherche avant tout notre investissement personnel, nos efforts. Un juif n'est pas jugé sur ce qu'il est, mais sur l'exploitation de son potentiel. Par exemple, une personne qui a des difficultés pour se lever et aller prier, mais qui se bat tous les matins contre son lit recevra une récompense plus grande qu'une autre qui se lève tôt naturellement. Car, et c'est là une règle, le salaire dépend de l'effort.

C'est ainsi que le rav Moché Feinstein zrouto yagen alénou explique la guémara de Baba Batra (10, b). Un jour, Rav Yossef, fils de Rav Yéochoua, tomba gravement malade et subit une mort clinique. A son réveil, son père lui demanda: "Qu'as-tu vu là-haut?" "J'ai vu un monde à l'envers, de grands rabbanim avaient des places moins importantes que des hommes simples. "

Ce commentateur expliqua que ces grands sages avaient reçu des capacités intellectuelles importantes, une éducation dans la Torah... et finalement les efforts qu'ils avaient fournis étaient légers face à l'énergie déployée par certains juifs plus simples.

C'est pourquoi chacun doit s'efforcer de fournir tout ce qu'il peut pour effectuer la volonté de notre créateur. Même lorsqu'il éprouve des difficultés, même s'il sent qu'il n'avance pas.

Car nous devons savoir que ce n'est pas le résultat qui compte, mais l'investissement. Il faut aussi être patient, car ce qui est dur aujourd'hui devient plus facile avec le temps. La vie est longue et chaque jour nous donne la possibilité de nous améliorer.

On raconte qu'une nuit le Rav Israël Salanter zrouto yagen alénou rentrait chez lui à une heure tardive. Soudain, il entendit des bruits provenant de la cordonnerie. Il s'approcha et aperçut l'artisan travailler à la lumière d'une bougie. "Tu ne vas pas dormir?" demanda le rav. "Vous savez, Monsieur le rabbin, tant qu'il y a de la flamme, on peut réparer." C'est ainsi que le Rav Israël Salanter se renforça dans son étude de la Torah et dans l'accomplissement des mitsvot et répétait chaque jour: "tant qu'il y a de la flamme, on peut réparer!"

De même devons-nous prendre courage et conscience que, tant que nous sommes vivants, nous pouvons nous améliorer, faire Téhouva et grandir. Mais pour cela, il faut être patient et ne pas Betser les bras devant les épreuves. Au contraire, nous devons garder à l'esprit l'enseignement de notre paracha: plus on ressent de la difficulté, plus notre sacrifice est important et plus l'offrande se trouve appréciée par notre créateur. Alors, qu'Hachem nous donne les forces afin de profiter de chaque jour pour nous améliorer.

REFLEXION SEMANAL

(Rav Yonatan Gefen)

El Balance Correcto

La Torá declara, respecto a las paredes del Tabernáculo: "La barra central debe pasar por el medio de las dos vigas, de un extremo al otro" ⁽¹⁾. El Targum Yonatan escribe que la barra central estaba hecha de madera proveniente de los árboles que Abraham había plantado con el objetivo de hacer bondad con los viajeros. ¿Por qué fue utilizada esta madera en particular para una función tan prominente en el Tabernáculo? Rav Zelig Pliskin explica que es para recordarnos que, incluso cuando

nos dedicamos a Di-s, nunca debemos olvidar tener compasión por nuestro prójimo, quien fue creado a imagen de Di-s ⁽²⁾.

Esta idea es acentuada en las enseñanzas de grandes eruditos de Torá. Una de las grandes contribuciones de Rav Israel Salánter fue que, si bien es altamente encomendable otorgar un gran cuidado a nuestra observancia en el ámbito de *Ben adam la-Makom* 'entre el hombre y Di-s', uno debería cuidar mucho que esto no sea a expensas de los demás.

Hay muchos ejemplos de cómo él puso esta enseñanza en práctica. Camino a obtener agua para *netilat yadáim* (el lavado ritual de manos), un estudiante pasó por varias habitaciones en las que había personas durmiendo. "*Netilat yadáim* es una mitzvá instituida por nuestros sabios", comentó Rav Israel, "pero robarle horas de sueño a los demás está prohibido por la Torá" ⁽³⁾. En otra ocasión, en un día caluroso, un estudiante comenzó a rezar una apasionada *Shemoná esré* (la plegaria silenciosa) parado junto a una ventana abierta. Rav Israel lo regañó por bloquearle el aire a otras personas en la sinagoga.

Otro de los grandes maestros en el área de crecimiento personal, el Álder de Slobodka, también puso un gran énfasis en las mitzvot *ben adam le-javeró* 'entre el hombre y su prójimo'.

Toda persona debe ser consciente, en el contexto del cumplimiento de las mitzvot, de no causarles involuntariamente dolor o molestias a los demás. Por ejemplo, cuando una persona se pone el *talit* en la sinagoga para las plegarias matutinas, debería poner atención especial en que los hilos de su *talit* no golpeen a nadie. Otro caso es cuando se saca el *Séfer Torá*, momento en que es muy alabable besarlo, pero, si es muy probable que uno empuje a otro en el camino, entonces las autoridades escriben que la mitzvá de besar el *Séfer Torá* es dejada de lado por el requisito de no dañar al prójimo ⁽⁴⁾.

Otro aspecto en el que es importante enfatizar nuestro *Ben adam le-javeró*, al igual que el *ben adam la-Makom* ('entre el hombre y Di-s'), es en el área de las rigurosidades. El Rambán explica, en el versículo al comienzo de la

parashá Kedoshim, en donde la Torá nos instruye a "ser santos", que no es suficiente con respetar las leyes básicas, sino que debemos esforzarnos para alcanzar niveles altos en nuestra relación con Di-s más allá de la observancia técnica de las mitzvot.

Hay otra sección, en la que el Rambán hace un comentario similar respecto a *Ben adam le-javeró*. La Torá dice: "Y harás lo que es recto y bueno a los ojos de Di-s". Los rabinos dicen que este versículo nos enseña que deberíamos ir más allá de la letra de la ley en nuestros tratos con otras personas. El Rambán explica que no es suficiente con sólo respetar las leyes básicas en el ámbito de *Ben adam le-javeró*, sino que debemos saber que Di-s quiere que tratemos a los demás con una mayor sensibilidad.

Puede que una persona tenga una tendencia a enfatizar las rigurosidades en mitzvot *Ben adam la-Makom*, como kashrut, algo que tiene una gran importancia si es aplicado correctamente. Sin embargo, el Imrei Emet (el Rebe de la dinastía jasídica de Gur) entendió que las rigurosidades aplican tanto a nuestro trato con los demás como a nuestra relación con Di-s. Un jasid le preguntó en una ocasión si podía tomar prestado un par de tefilín, dado que había perdido los suyos. El Rebe le prestó un par, pero no cualquier par, sino el suyo, que había pertenecido a su padre, el Sfát Emet. Cuando le preguntaron por qué le había dado al jasid su par máspreciado, respondió que "la Torá dice: '*ze Kelí ve-anvehú*'", de lo que aprendemos que debemos hacer una mitzvá de la más hermosa manera posible. Esta idea aplica también a la bondad. Por eso le presté los valiosos tefilín ⁽⁵⁾.

La barra central del Tabernáculo quedó como un recordatorio eterno de que hay dos pilares en el servicio a Di-s: *ben adam la-Makom* y *ben adam le-javeró*, y que incluso en los momentos de la más alta devoción a Di-s, es esencial recordar nuestras obligaciones para con nuestro prójimo. Que todos ameritemos encontrar el balance correcto.

Notas: (1) Trumá, 26:28. (2) Pliskin, "*Growth Through Torah*", parashá Trumá. (3) Zaitchik, "*Sparks of Mussar*", pág. 21. (4) "*Piskei Teshuvot*", 2da Parte, simán 148, pág.209. (5) Kaplan, "*Major Impact*", pp.161-162.

¿Cómo Vencer la Flojera?

Al comienzo de la parashá de esta semana, Di-s le ordena a Moshé lo siguiente: pídele a la gente que lleve la materia prima necesaria para construir el Mishkán (Tabernáculo). "Esta es la porción que deberás tomar de ellos: oro, plata y cobre; lana turquesa, púrpura y carmesí; lino y vellochino de cabra; pieles de carnero teñidas de rojo, pieles de *tajash* y madera de acacia; aceite para la luminaria, especias para el aceite de la unción y para el sahumerio de especias; **piedras de ónix y piedras de engaste** para el *Efod* y para el Pectoral" ⁽¹⁾.

EL *Or HaJaim* señala que es difícil entender por qué los materiales son mencionados en ese orden, dado que las piedras de ónix y de engaste son los ítems más caros de la lista y, por lo tanto, deberían ser mencionados primero, y responde con un Midrash, el cual nos cuenta la historia de la donación de las piedras preciosas; las piedras fueron traídas por los *nesiim* (príncipes) después de que todo lo demás ya había sido donado.

Los *nesiim* habían planeado esperar a que todo el pueblo hiciera su contribución para el *Mishkán* para luego donar lo que faltara. Sin embargo, su plan les salió mal; el pueblo donó con entusiasmo todo lo necesario menos las piedras preciosas. Luego el Midrash dice que Di-s estaba disgustado con los *nessiim* por haberse demorado tanto en hacer una donación al *Mishkán*. Su 'castigo' fue que la *iud* de su nombre fuera omitida en un punto en la Torá ⁽²⁾.

Consecuentemente, el *Or HaJaim* explica que las piedras preciosas aparecen mencionadas en último lugar porque su donación involucró un error. A pesar de su alto valor material, el fracaso espiritual resultante de la donación de los *nesiim* hizo que fueran inferiores a los otros materiales de la lista.

Rav Jaim Shmulevitz pregunta por qué Di-s se disgustó con los *nesiim*; el razonamiento para postergar la donación pareciera ser muy entendible. ¿Por qué fueron castigados por este aparentemente inocente error de cálculo? Y responde citando la explicación que Rashi da al castigo: "porque al principio fueron perezosos, perdieron una *iud* en su nombre" ⁽³⁾.

Rashi nos revela que la verdadera razón por la que los *nesiim* se demoraron en llevar los regalos fue por pereza. Debajo de todas sus explicaciones aparentemente válidas estaba el rasgo de la pereza.

El *Mesilat Iesharim* (*La senda de los justos*) escribe extensamente sobre la forma en que la pereza puede evitar que una persona cumpla con sus obligaciones como corresponde. Escribe: "Podemos ver con nuestros propios ojos muchos ejemplos en los que una persona está consciente de sus obligaciones y tiene claridad sobre lo que necesita para el bien de su alma... pero sin embargo se debilita [en su *avodá*], no por una falta de reconocimiento de sus obligaciones o por otra razón, sino por el hecho que se ve superado por la poderosa pereza".

Continúa diciendo que lo que es tan peligroso sobre la pereza es que uno puede encontrar muchas *fuentes* para justificar su inacción. "El perezoso citará muchas frases de los Sabios, versículos de los Profetas y argumentos 'lógicos', todos ellos para justificar ante su confundida mente la necesidad de aliviar su carga... pero no ve que esos argumentos no vienen de su pensamiento lógico, sino que emanan de su pereza, la cual supera a su pensamiento racional" ⁽⁴⁾.

Consecuentemente, nos advierte que cuando tengamos dos opciones frente a nosotros, debemos ser muy cuidadosos al elegir la opción más fácil, ya que es altamente probable que la razón de fondo por la cual tomamos dicha decisión sea la pereza.

El *Mesilat Iesharim* nos enseña que incluso los argumentos más *válidos* pueden ser tan sólo velos que esconden el verdadero deseo de la persona de no esforzarse para ir más allá. Vemos un sorprendente ejemplo de esto en la introducción de la grandiosa obra sobre ética *Jovot HaLevavot* (*Obligaciones de los corazones*). Allí, el autor escribe que después de planear escribir el libro cambió de opinión basado en una serie de razones: "Creí que mis poderes eran demasiado limitados y que mi mente era demasiado débil para entender las ideas. Más aún, no tengo un estilo elegante en árabe, que es el idioma en que sería escrito el libro... Temí estar asumiendo una tarea que sólo expondría

mis falencias... Por lo tanto, decidí abandonar mis planes y revocar mi decisión".

Sin embargo, él reconoció que sus motivos quizás no eran completamente puros: "Comencé a sospechar que había elegido la opción cómoda, buscando paz y tranquilidad. Temí que lo que había motivado la cancelación del proyecto hubiera sido el deseo de auto gratificación, un deseo que me había llevado a buscar lo fácil, a optar por la inactividad y quedarme quieto".

Para beneficio eterno del pueblo judío, finalmente él decidió que sí escribiría el libro. Las razones que citó inicialmente por las que no debía escribir el libro parecían justas y lógicas, pero él fue capaz de darse cuenta que, para su nivel, estaban manchadas por el deseo de comodidad.

Si alguien tan grandioso como el autor de *Jovot HaLevavot* casi fue víctima del *letzer hará* (inclinación negativa) de la pereza, cuánto más estamos nosotros en riesgo de ser atrapados por este rasgo destructivo. Una persona generalmente tiene razones aparentemente válidas por las que elige ignorar caminos que la podrían ayudar a mejorar su Servicio Divino, pero debe estar sumamente atenta para asegurarse que su motivación verdadera no sea la pereza.

El *letzer hará* de la pereza es tan sagaz que puede disfrazarse de uno de los rasgos más admirables, como lo es el rasgo de la humildad. Rav Moshé Feinstein escribe que las personas suelen subestimarse afirmando que tienen muchas limitaciones en sus talentos y que nunca podrían alcanzar la grandeza. En su opinión, este tipo de humildad emana en realidad del *letzer hará* ⁽⁵⁾.

Esta actitud al parecer deriva en realidad de la pereza, que es una manifestación del deseo de comodidad. No es fácil alcanzar la grandeza; se requiere de mucho esfuerzo y fuerza de voluntad para enfrentar caídas e incluso fracasos. Y eso es sumamente difícil, por lo que resulta muy tentador *descartarse a uno mismo*, eximiéndose de esta forma incluso de intentarlo; esta es, con seguridad, la opción más cómoda.

Una persona recibe, constantemente, la oportunidad de mejorarse a sí mismo y de alcanzar una gran elevación en su Servicio a Di-s y en su influencia sobre los demás. Vemos de la lección de los *nesiim* que el factor más poderoso que evita que una persona materialice su potencial es el deseo de comodidad que emana de la pereza. Esto hace que una persona invente muchas "razones" por las que no puede avanzar más en algún camino que en realidad sí podría recorrer. El *Mesilat lesharim* nos enseña que deberíamos reconocer esas excusas que a menudo se originan con el *letzer hará* y descartarlas, para proceder en nuestros esfuerzos de crecer y lograr cosas.

Espero que todos ameritemos superar este poderoso *letzer hará* y que podamos tomar las decisiones correctas, incluso si son difíciles.

Notas: (1) Terumá 25:3-7. (2) Vaiakel 35:27. Ver Sijot Musar de Rav Jaim Shmulevitz para una explicación de la importancia de perder una *iud* en su nombre (p. 214). (3) Rashi, Vaiakel 35:27. (4) Mesilat lesharim, Final del Cap. 6. (5) Darash Moshé, Parashat Nitzavim.

NAHALOT

Nahala of the Rav Hid"á zt"l this Tuesday 11th of Adar

Rav Chaim Yosef David Azoulay, (the Chida), (1724-1806). Arguably the Sephardic equivalent to the Vilna Gaon, the Chida, was born in Jerusalem. At the age of 18, he learned under Rav Chaim ben Atar (the Ohr Hachaim). His works include a collection of responsa known as Yoseif Ometz, the Shem HaGedolim (a biographical work on 1300 authors and 1200 writings, dating back to the Gaonim), and many others. He passed away in Livorno, Italy.

In the month of Sivan in the year 5484 (1724), the oldest son of Rabbi Yitzchak Zerahya Azulai and his wife Sarah was born in the old city of Jerusalem.

He was named Yosef, from the name of his maternal grandfather, and the names of Chaim and David were given to him to well. When later he became famous as an adult, people were

content to call him “the Chida”, after the initials of his complete name Chaim Yosef David Azulai.

The Azulai family was considered among one of the oldest and most respected of those in Eretz Israel. The Chida was a descendant of the famous Tzaddik Rabbi Avraham Azulai, author of Chesed leAvraham, who immigrated to Eretz Israel from the town of Fez, Morocco around the year 1620.

From his most tender age, one could discern exceptional traits in the young Yosef. Frail by nature, he nevertheless studied with great concentration and without respite from morning till night.

At the age of 8, following an epidemic, his mother rendered her soul to her Creator. This death tremendously affected Yosef. He matured ahead of time and became serious for his age. He didn't play with other children, but rather put himself to studying our holy Torah day and night. At hardly 9 years of age his father enrolled him in the Beit Yaakov Beit Midrash, an institution renown for the quality of its instruction, and from which the majority of Jerusalem's scholars emanated. It was in this house of study that the incredible talent of the young prodigy blossomed.

Already, at the age of 12, he put into writing some original laws concerning Kashrut and also composed responsum on some aspects of Halachah.

Moreover, the young boy revealed a brilliant ability as a speaker, appearing in public to give uplifting drashot.

Not long after his marriage in 5502 (1742), Jerusalem was visited by the extraordinary Gaon and Kabbalist Rabbi Haim ben Attar (known by his nickname Ohr HaHayim Hakadosh), who set up his Knesset Israel Yeshiva.

The Chida became a member of his Yeshiva, and this brief period was time enough for him to enter into a profoundly deep relationship with the Tzaddik Rabbi Haim ben Attar.

In the works that he wrote afterwards, the Chida very often cites the teachings and customs of Rabbi Haim ben Attar, whom he considered to be his teacher par excellence.

Soon after this period in his life, the Chida managed to become one of the disciples of Rabbi Shalom Sharabi, (the Rashash) in his Beit El Yeshiva. This Beit Midrash was the headquarters

of great Tzaddikim and Kabbalists who, by completely consecrating themselves to Torah study, aspired to hasten the arrival of the Messiah.

The saintly Rabbi Shalom Sharabi and two of his disciples, the Chida and Rabbi Haim de la Rosa, felt that the time was right to hasten the final redemption. These three Tzaddikim, great men of their generation, removed themselves from all earthy matters and chose to live an ascetic life of fasting and self-mortification in order to sanctify and purify themselves.

The following story takes place in winter, when a thick blanket of snow covered the city of Jerusalem. These Tzaddikim rolled about in the snow, praying with incredible devotion and fasting afterwards for three consecutive days. At the end of the fast, they went to an isolated place and began to concentrate on the “Yehudim” in order to hasten the coming of the Messiah.

However, they were suddenly petrified by the sound of a heavenly voice: “My sons, you don't have the right to hasten the Geula [Final Redemption]. The hour has not yet come, and to prevent you from together attempting to do it again, one of you will be exiled abroad.”

Since the heavenly voice did not declare who among them would suffer this fate, they drew lots and designated the Chida.

Without hesitation, the Chida accepted the verdict and put himself on route for a long exile, during which time he would meet the great men of his generation and travel to many countries, including Egypt, Italy, France, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Sicily, Crete, and Turkey.

It is not without reason that the Chida acquired a reputation, while still alive, as a man possessed of supreme holiness, towards whom everyone looked. It is not only through his numerous praiseworthy books that he gained perpetual renown. He was a truly complete man, one who with remarkable harmony combined in himself traits and virtues that are rarely found in a single person.

Certainly, with the Chida everything was exemplary: His eminence in all domains of Torah, the influence he had on his contemporaries, the depth of his knowledge in worldly matters, and the prestige he garnered that commanded the respect and esteem of the great men of the

nations. And yet his most remarkable trait was, incontestably, his characteristic humility.

We have a faithful witness in his journal, entitled Ma'agal Tov, in which the Chida recorded his personal observations as a keepsake, without any intention of publishing it. The following can be found in his journal.

"As for myself, the least of the inhabitants of the Jerusalem and Amsterdam, G-d made me find grace in the eyes of the ministers and deputies – me, the least of my brothers. I praise G-d, blessed be He, Who made my name grow even though I am devoid of all abilities."

This is but an infinitesimally small portion of the thousands of entries abounding in his personal journal, entries that attest to his great modesty. Looking over his works, when we examine the greatness of the Chida's genius we are left breathless before the abundance of talent that Heaven bestowed upon him. It is almost impossible for us to evaluate this spiritual giant by our own gauge. He had acquired a mastery of character that he constantly used to elevate himself in the scale of perfection.

The Chida wrote more than 100 books. One can hardly imagine how so many quality works could have been written by a single man, a man that was otherwise constantly devoted to so many other things.

The Friday night of Shabbat Zachor, on the 11th of Adar 5566 (1806), Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai rendered his pure soul to his Creator. May his merit protect us. Amen.

Nahala of Rav Moshe Feinstein This Thursday the 13th of Adar

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein was born in the year 1895 in Uzda, near Minsk, Belorussia where his father was Rabbi. In 1921, he became Rabbi of Luban, near Minsk, where he remained until he came to the United States in 1937. In America he became the Rosh Yeshiva (dean) of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, a yeshiva in New York.

Rabbi Feinstein became the leading halachic (religious law) authority of his time and his rulings were accepted worldwide. Rabbi Feinstein was a

dedicated and selfless leader for the Jewish people to whom anyone could approach at any time with any problem.

Rabbi Feinstein's halachic decisions have been published in a multi-volumed collection titled Igrot Moshe (The Letters of Moshe). He also published several volumes of in depth discussions about the Talmud called Dibrot Moshe.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein was one of the last of the great leaders and sages from Europe and was a representative of the greatness the Jewish people had before the destruction of the Jewish communities during World War II. We were greatly privileged to have such a giant here in America. When he passed away in 1986, the Jewish people lost a great and caring leader and one of our last connections to the greatness of European Jewry.

PURIM

Torah Teasers on the Megilla

1. Aside from Achashverosh, which other kings appear in the Megillah?
2. Which two people in the Megillah have names that begin with the letter Vav?
3. Aside from wine, what other item mentioned in the Megillah is served at the Passover seder?
4. The gallows that Haman intended to hang Mordechai on were 50 cubits long (Esther 5:14). Where in the book of Genesis do we find wood measuring 50 cubits?
5. What golden item appears in the Megillah four times, but nowhere else in the Bible?
6. Aside from the month of Adar, what other months are mentioned in the Megillah?
7. "I killed my wife because of my friend, and killed my friend because of my wife." Who am I?
8. What is the connection between the first verse of the Megillah and the first verse of Parshat Chaye Sarah?
9. About whom and about what does it state, "And the matter pleased [him]"? (3 answers)

Answers

- 1) Yechanya the king of Judah, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Bavel (Esther 2:6).
- 2) Queen Vashti and Vayzasa, the tenth son of Haman (Esther 9:9).
- 3) Karpas, the vegetable dipped in salt water, is mentioned in the Megillah, albeit with a different meaning (Esther 1:6).
- 4) In Parshat Noach, the width of the ark was 50 cubits (Genesis 6:15).
- 5) A golden scepter is mentioned four times but nowhere else in the Bible (Esther 4:11, 5:2, 8:4).
- 6) Esther was taken to the king in the month of Teves (Esther 2:16). Haman arranged the lottery in Nissan (Esther 3:7). Mordechai's letters allowing the Jews to destroy their enemies were sent in Sivan (Esther 8:9).
- 7) Achashverosh killed his wife Vashti upon the advice of Memuchan (Haman), and later killed Haman upon the words of his wife Esther.
- 8) The first verse of the Megillah states that Achashverosh ruled over 127 provinces. The first verse of Parshat Chaye Sarah states that Sarah lived for 127 years (Genesis 23:1).
- 9) It pleased Achashverosh to execute Vashti and to send letters declaring that every man should dominate his household (Esther 1:21). Achashverosh was also pleased by the idea of choosing a new queen (Esther 2:4). Haman was pleased to make gallows to hang Mordechai (Esther 5:13).

The Choice of Adar

Purim teaches us to appreciate the world's awesome beauty, amidst so much chaos and horror. (By Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller)

Everyone knows that the Jewish year begins in Tishrei, with Rosh Hashana. But surprise, surprise -- there are actually two ways of calculating the order of our calendar. The more familiar version follows the calculations made by Hillel the Elder in the Talmudic era, and refers to the months by their Babylonian names -- Tishrei, Cheshvan, etc.

The other method is that used by the Torah itself. The Torah text does not assign names to the months, but rather refers to the "first month," "second month," etc. The "first month" is Nissan, featuring Passover, the anniversary of our liberation from Egypt. In the other calendar, Nissan would be the seventh month!

Jews seem to have a knack for complicating things. Actually, it is the natural result of looking at things deeply. From that perspective, something fascinating emerges from the two ways we count time:

Tishrei is the month that marks the creation of mankind. For us mortal beings, this is the central event of human history. Thus, Tishrei is the first month.

G-d, however, sees things from a different angle. As expressed by His Torah, the emergence of the Jewish nation is the beginning of meaningful history. Thus, Nissan is the first month.

Adar, the last month, is often described as the "month of darkness." Through the miracle of Purim, the darkness turned to light.

Which brings us to Adar, the month of Purim, the month that directly precedes Nissan. From the Torah's perspective, Adar is the last month of the Hebrew calendar. Adar is often described as the "month of darkness," because during Haman's time we were closer than ever to suffering total annihilation. The light of Nissan, the light of liberation, could have been extinguished, had Haman's plot succeeded. Through the miracle of Purim, the darkness turned to light.

Fish and Fertility

Adar is the Jewish month of good fortune. In fact, Purim is the most joyful time of the entire year. "When Adar arrives, we increase our joy," say the Sages. How did Adar get its well-earned reputation for joy?

The astral sign of Adar is the fish (Pisces). Fish are very fertile, and for that reason are seen as a sign of blessing and fruitfulness. The Hebrew word for blessing is *bracha*, from the root letters bet, *reish*, *kaff*. In Jewish numerology (gematria), the letter *bet* has a value of 2, *reish* is 200 and *kaff* is 20. Each of these is the first plural in their number unit. What this tells us is that the Jewish concept of "blessing" is intertwined with fertility, represented by the fish of Adar. After all, if there is something good, why not let it increase?

The opposite of blessing is constraint or limitation. Adar is the month in which Haman

threatened to not only limit our presence, but to erase it entirely. But destiny had a different plan.

Moshe' Birth and Death

At the time of the destruction of the First Temple, the Jews were exiled to Babylon, which was later ruled by the Persian Empire. This empire eventually included most of the known world, placing the entire Jewish population under Persian authority, regardless of where they lived.

Haman, the wicked prime minister of Persia, threw lots and came up with a designated day to make his entire kingdom *Judenrein*, cleansed of Jews.

Haman's "lucky day" was the 13th of Adar. And when he observed that this day came up, seemingly by chance, he rejoiced -- because the 7th of Adar was the day that Moshe died. Moshe was the quintessential Jew; the Sages say that he is equal to the Jewish people collectively -- the head that controls the "body" of the nation, providing it with vision, articulation and direction. To Haman, the lot falling in Adar meant that his plan to destroy everything that Moshe built was bound to succeed.

What Haman didn't know, however, was that the same 7th of Adar was also the day that Moshe was born. What Haman presumed would be the day of Jewish national death, turned out to be a day of national rebirth.

Humility and the Fish

There is yet more significance to the fish as the astral sign of Adar.

Fish live their entire lives underwater, unobserved by the human eye. Our Sages tell us that blessing does not come to something that is under close observation, but only to something that is hidden from the eye. This is due to the direct relationship between modesty and blessing.

Of course, from a Western view, where fame and success are identical twins, modesty seems *inversely* related to blessing.

The Torah teaches, however, that the cost of all this exposure -- rather than a blessing, i.e. maximizing oneself -- is to risk becoming the

sort of person who has no self, other than the mask that is donned in order to be the person that you think others would like to see.

Moshe is described in the Torah as "the most humble person." He lived with modesty, and this became engrained in our national Jewish identity. We have always prized humility over pride. For this reason, the fish, the sign of Adar, is the penultimate sign of the Jewish people.

Celebration of Hidden Miracles

One might expect the Megillah to be replete with descriptions of the miracle of Haman's defeat, giving credit to the Author of all miracles. Yet what we find is very different. G-d's name is not mentioned even once in the entire narrative. The Megillah is a great dichotomy, where the Hero is always off stage, but yet the most central figure of the entire drama.

Of course, not everyone who reads the Megillah will notice G-d's subtle yet compelling presence. The events that He orchestrated are covered with many layers of seeming coincidence, political machinations, natural cause and effect. The Sages refer to this event as a "hidden miracle," meaning that it is within our ability to appreciate the multi-layered reality unfolded before us -- or just as easily to deny it and attribute everything to chance.

Which brings us to an important question: Why would G-d simultaneously conceal and reveal His presence? Why not rescue the Jews through a thunder and lightning extravaganza that would merit an MGM movie on the scale of The Ten Commandments?

To answer this question, we must first ask a far more fundamental one: Why is the world so complex, so full of apparent contradictions? The world has intricate order and awesome beauty, yet at the same time there is so much chaos and unspeakable horror. Why?

The answer is that the choice is up to us to look deep and acknowledge both aspects of reality. It is tempting to take refuge in superficial simplification, to ignore the cracks in the facade of perfection that we like to see when we look in the mirror. Of course, this requires its own bit of effort, like avoiding the news and ensconcing ourselves in the secure refuge of our

comfortable cars and homes. All this entails some major denial.

Every so often G-d opens the gates wide enough to give us a message that can sustain us when things seem hopeless.

The opposite approach is to take masochistic pleasure in painting the world black. The toll that such people pay in bitterness and jaded cynicism is high, but they feel they are getting something precious in return, which is "seeing things as they are." The problem is that such people are as much in denial of reality as the first group.

The Jewish view is to see that chaos and order in fact do co-exist, and that each one has a purpose. We are meant to meet the challenges presented by life's hard side, and to find inspiration in the beauty and joy that we see just as readily when our eyes are open. Every so often G-d opens the gates wide enough to give us a message that can sustain us when things seem hopeless. The message is: "I am here now, as I have been all along, and I will always be here for you. Not just when the sea splits, or when My presence overwhelms you, but when you elect to *choose* to see Me."

And this is the essential message of Purim. It is about making that sort of choice -- the most significant and joyous choice you will ever make.

Purim Practices

1) We read the Megillah twice, both at night (to celebrate the faith that we found in the midst of darkness) and during the day (to celebrate the fact that our faith was validated openly and joyously).

2) We give two kinds of food to at least one friend. This gift is not meant to alleviate need, but rather to create unity. We celebrate being part of a people who lives on miracles.

3) We give money to the poor. This spreads the pleasure of feeling cared for, and opens the hearts of both giver and recipient.

4) We strengthen our belief in G-d's presence in the real world by having a whopper of a feast. Invite all your friends. Wear a costume to celebrate the fact that things are not always as they seem. Drink until you are so intoxicated

that you recognize there are no longer heroes and villains -- just characters in G-d's unending play that reveals His love and presence.

Teens, Drinking & Purim

Giving your teens helpful, safe guidelines.

(By Adina Soclof)

Purim is right around the corner and it is one of our most joyous holidays. Along with all the revelry comes drinking and often unsafe behavior ensues. Some parents are at a loss how to talk to their teens about drinking. But we need to find the way to do so, not only on Purim, but all year round.

According to the NIAAA (The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism), teen drinking has been steadily increasing in recent years and alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among teens in America. There are many negative consequences to this trend. Drinking impairs judgment, causing teens to make poor decisions making them more susceptible to physical or sexual attacks. Injuries and death can result from alcohol poisoning and drunken driving incidents. Our brains develop well into our 20's, alcohol can hinder brain development, causing learning and cognitive issues. According the NIAAA, people who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.

According to Rabbi Abraham Twerski, there is no mitzvah on Purim to drink irresponsibly. Rabbi Twerski has been alerting the community of the increasing problem of alcohol abuse and marijuana smoking among Jewish adolescents. Due to the gravity of the problem he entreats parents to avoid encouraging intoxication.

Rabbi Twerski says that "many people drink to excess because of the mistaken notion that there is a mitzvah to get drunk on Purim. Rabbi Shneur Zalman in his Shulchan Aruch (529) says, "It is impossible to serve G-d either in levity or drunkenness." One of the final authorities on halacha, the Chafetz Chaim in Mishna Berura (695) states clearly that the proper thing to do is not to drink to intoxication,

but rather to drink just a bit more than is customary (which would be a glass or two of wine), and go to sleep. This is the proper way to fulfil "not distinguishing between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordechai.' There is certainly no justification for drinking anything but wine. Aruch Hashulchan (695) condemns drinking spirits (liquor) in very sharp terms."

Now that we are aware of the issues, what is a parent to do? Here are four simple ways to talk to your teens about drinking and other unsafe behaviors on Purim and throughout the year:

1. Don't talk just, role model:

Sometimes it's best if we don't talk. Children do as we do, they do not do what we say. That means that lectures usually fall on deaf ears. Kids learn best by example. If we want our kids to have a healthy attitude about drinking, then they need us to model a healthy attitude towards drinking. Rabbi Twerski advocates that parents should set a model on Purim for their children and not drink to excess.

According to the NIAAA, parents can do the following:

- Use alcohol moderately.
- Don't communicate to your child that alcohol is a good way to handle problems. For example, don't come home from work and say, "I had a rotten day. I need a drink."
- Let your child see that you have other, healthier ways to cope with stress, such as exercise; listening to music; or talking things over with your spouse, or friend.
- Don't tell your kids stories about your own drinking in a way that conveys the message that alcohol use is funny or glamorous. (Understand that the media and peers portray alcohol in a glamorous ways.)
- Never drink and drive or ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

2. Agree to Disagree:

Teens have a hard time listening to their parents. Many times parents will give their child advice and are annoyed when their child does not listen. It is even more frustrating when their

child's friend or mentor gives the same advice and their child listens readily, even if it was the same exact advice.

Our teens can hear us if we can deliver the message in a kind and diplomatic way. We need to let our children know our values in a way that does not demean them.

Jim Fay of *Love and Logic* encourages parents to agree to disagree. When a child says something that goes against our values, rules, or our better judgment, like "Drinking is no big deal. I can handle it!" we can say:

"I am glad you told me your thoughts and feelings about drinking. I am glad you feel like you can handle it. But I am concerned that drinking is illegal under 21 years of age. And I don't agree that 'drinking is no big deal.'"

In this way, our true message, "drinking is illegal under 21 and it is a big deal" is couched by respectful language, so that our teens can truly hear it. It is a kind and gentle way to help our teens understand our values and rules.

3. Talk about yourself and take little opportunities to talk:

Many times our conversations with our teens end up in anger. Our teens can push our buttons. Why? Because they need to test their independence and they need to push us away in order to do that. In a normal bid to grow to be healthy adults, teens need to reject what parents say so that they can define and refine their sense of self. Their egos are fragile and they are overly sensitive as they navigate this tough time in their life.

It is difficult for parents to watch their teens grow up, make their own decisions (sometimes not very smart decisions) and struggle for their independence. In their frustration, parents often use language that rankles teens, putting them in a position where they need to defend themselves and their decisions. Parent will say:

You better not do anything stupid when it comes to drinking! You need to pick a better group of friends!

To avoid placing our teens in a corner where there only recourse is to fight back, we want to talk about ourselves using "I" messages:

"I don't like to read about kids drinking themselves sick." "I get upset when kids use drinking to feel cool, I wish they could find other things to do that would help them feel good about themselves."

We also don't want to lecture. There is nothing a teen hates more than when parent gets on a soap box. Instead it is better if we take little opportunities to talk when things are calm, when we are reading the newspaper, watching TV, or when we witness another person engaging in unsafe behaviors:

When reading the newspaper: "Here is an article on the effects of drinking on your mind, what do you think about what it says?"

On TV: "Those kids are making some bad decisions about drinking and drugs."

What do you think is making him do that? What would be a better way to handle that?"

Witnessing a person's bad behavior: "Smoking is a hard habit to break! I am glad I never got started!"

It is at those times that we can also ask our teens:

"What do your friends say about smoking, drugs, drinking?"

"What plans do you and your friends have in place if you are put into a difficult situation with drinking?"

4. Be your teens safety net:

Kids need to know that if they find themselves in a sticky situation they have a way out. It's important to tell your teens that if they are ever in trouble they can call you at any time of the day or night. Reassure them that you will not be angry just happy that they called you when they needed you.

5. Invite them to come up with some rules for themselves:

Teens need to learn to think for themselves. If they come up with rules and regulation for their own behavior they are more likely to stick with them. We want to use language that is encouraging and affirms our belief that they can make good decisions. We can ask them the following questions:

"You know the challenges of drinking and drugs. What rules should be in place for teens like you?"

"How can parents help kids make good decisions? What do you need from us?"

"What guidelines do you think you need to help keep yourself safe?"

Before Purim and any other social event where there might be drinking make sure to go over the rules that you have put in place with your teens. Rabbi Abraham Twerski encourages close supervisions of teens on Purim. Have your teen tell you where they are going and who they will be with. Make sure that they have a cell phone and remind them that they can call you at anytime if they are in a bind or if they feel at all uncomfortable. Reiterate the dangers of drinking and driving and that they may never get into a car with someone who is not sober.

Teens need us to be supportive and loving as they move through these years towards adulthood. Talking to them in respectful ways about tough issues and having rules in place can help.

Facemasks and Purim **Masks: The Pandemic's First** **Anniversary**

We're all looking forward to the day when masks will no longer conceal G-d's presence, nor be required by a soon-to-be conquered pandemic.

(By Rabbi Benjamin Blech)

The Covid-19 pandemic which so horrifically changed our lives this past year remains inextricably linked with the holiday of Purim.

It's true that history books will record that the outbreak was initially reported to the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019. The first confirmed death took place in Wuhan on January 9, 2020 and it was on January 30 that the WHO declared Covid-19 a global health emergency. But for most of us, it wasn't until

Purim of last year that we first realized the severity of the pandemic.

It was the first time we were forced to think about whether we needed to change our plans for the Purim festive meal. Purim ended up becoming a super spreader and many people, unaware of the severity of the virus, contracted it at large neighborhood parties. It was the first time we seriously had to reconsider attending shul and figure out alternative venue for hearing the reading of the Megillah. And then we had to think the unthinkable – we might have to cancel our Passover plans and who knows what else was meant to be in our future.

It is a year later and I can't get over the fact that Jews around the world traditionally observed Purim by putting on a mask. But this time masks would not come off at the conclusion of the holiday. Masks became necessities. Masks became the law. Not a Purim custom but a pandemic requirement.

Although Purim masks and protective facemasks are different, there may be a profound connection. To grasp its deeper meaning, let's reflect on the reason masks made their way into celebrating Purim in the first place.

Masks hide what's behind them. And that's why masks became identified with the story of Purim. The Scroll of Esther has a unique characteristic. It tells us all about Esther and Mordecai, yet it omits the name of G-d. G-d is hidden in a book commemorating a miracle for which He is clearly to be credited. How strange!

Stranger still is the name of the person who is accorded the honor of the book's title. It is known to this day as *Megillat Esther*. The Talmud asks a peculiar question: where is Esther to be found in the Five Books of Moses? The query makes no sense. The Torah predates Esther by many many centuries. There is no way Esther could possibly be found in the Torah. Yet the Talmud answers that there is a biblical verse which alludes to her – and to her significant role as savior of the Jewish people from the genocidal plans of Haman in later day Persia. In Deuteronomy 32:20 G-d prophetically tells the Jewish people there will come a time when “I will hide my face from

them.” In Hebrew the phrase for hiding is *haster aster* – the very root letters of the name Esther. That was the genius of the Talmudic rabbis. They recognized Esther as a “hidden” way of identifying G-d's presence.

In the Megillah, ostensibly the story of a miracle performed by G-d, His name is absent, hidden by the countless “coincidences” that are really the results of concealed divine intervention. The very word “Megillah” means not only scroll but also “to reveal.” The mitzvah of reading *Megillat Esther* is in a more profound sense meant to inspire us to uncover G-d when he chooses to test us by remaining hidden.

When G-d wears a mask, our task is to acknowledge His guiding presence even when we can't clearly make out His face.

There are times when G-d wears a mask, and our task is to acknowledge His guiding presence even when we can't clearly make out His face.

Purim is not like Passover. The Passover miracles were clear and indisputable. Purim requires a greater level of wisdom and understanding. All other holidays, says the Talmud, will eventually be eliminated – except for Purim. Purim is the paradigm of our challenge to maintain our faith even when His face is hidden behind a mask of seeming indifference to our plight.

We need to remember that the Jews of the Purim story spent agonizing years as spectators to frightening events. The party in Shushan recorded at the beginning of the Megillah was held by the king to celebrate his conquest of the holy items of the temple. The rise of Haman and his genocidal plot against the Jewish people played out over a lengthy period of time which surely tested faith in G-d and his continued presence.

We've spent a year in distress, incomprehension and agony. Some of our greatest spiritual giants were taken from us in this year of horror. Families witnessed the untimely – and sometimes exceedingly painful – death of loved ones. The world has changed in so many ways that we can hardly begin to count them or even to be fully aware of their extent and future influence.

On this first anniversary that coincides with Purim, let's reaffirm that although we do not understand, we continue to have faith. Like Purim, at times G-d puts on a mask and conceals His presence and His purpose. But as Purim also teaches us, miracles of salvation are part of the story as well, and we have every certainty that the day will come when masks will no longer conceal the Almighty's presence – nor be required by a soon-to-be conquered pandemic.

Recipe Corner

Purim Bread



Moroccan Jews bake a special type of bread in honor of Purim, called "Einei Haman" or "Haman's eyes." The custom is to distribute this delicacy for mishlo'ach manot as well. The bread is adorned with almonds and unpeeled hardboiled eggs. The eggs are sunken into the dough and held down by two strips of dough in an X shape.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons dry yeast	1 tablespoon salt
2 ¼ cups lukewarm water	9 1/4 cups flour
½ cup sugar	½ cup oil
4 eggs beaten	

Directions:

Dissolve the yeast in the water with 1 teaspoon of the sugar. Beat well and leave 10 minutes, until it froths.

In a very large bowl, lightly beat the eggs. Then add the salt, sugar, and oil and beat again. Add the frothy yeast mixture and beat well. Now add the flour gradually, and just enough to make a soft dough that holds together, mixing well, first with a large spoon, then working it in with your hands. Knead vigorously for about 15 minutes, until it is very smooth and elastic, adding flour if the dough is too sticky. Pour a little oil in the bowl and turn the dough, so that it is greased all over. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and put it in a warm place to rise for 2-3 hours, or until it has doubled in bulk. Punch the dough down and knead again, then divide into four pieces to make 4 loaves.

To make round challah: Take 1 piece of dough, roll it between your palms, and pull it out into a long fat rope 18 Take the fatter end and put it in the middle of an oiled baking sheet, then coil the rest of the rope around it like a snail. Continue with the remaining pieces. Put you boil egg in the middle do an x on top if you'll like. Put in the oven to bake.



Please join our

Seudat Purim

Friday, February 26 at 11:45am

Karne

3585 NE 207th St.
Aventura, FL 33180

Members

\$25 Adults \$15 kids

Non Members

\$45 Adults \$25 kids
(Kids 10 & under)

Animal Show
Face Painting
Balloon Artist

Ming at 1pm

RSVP to 305-206-7675