**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas nasso 5771**

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**Chassidic Story #705**

**Ticking Away**

**From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

 Tisha b’Av, 1815. The Seer of Lublin had passed away. All of his Chasidim were grief-stricken, and his son, Rabbbi Yosef (Yossele) of Torchin, most of all.

 Weeks later. The time came to apportion his worldly possessions. His silken Shabbat garments, his belt, and the clock that always hung on his wall these fell to the lot of his son, who in his own right was known as a man of great righteousness.

 More weeks went by. Finally the Torchiner was able to tear himself away from Lublin, in order to move on with his life. On his way home, such a heavy rain pelted down that his wagon could not struggle along any further.

 Soaked to the bone and chilled, he was forced to seek refuge at the first welcoming shelter that he could find. The villager was very hospitable and took him in, built a warm fire, offered him a warm drink, and something with which to cover himself in his discomfort. He spent the night there and then another day and night as the storm continued in its fury.

 When the weather finally cleared some days later, the host requested some payment for the lodgings and food. I haven’t got a solitary coin in my pocket, explained Reb Yosef, but I do have a number of sacred possessions. Perhaps there is something here that would be of value to you.

 He opened up his sack and displayed his treasured inheritance on the table, inviting the villager to choose an object for the value required. The man was no chasid, and none of these things meant anything to him. He turned to his wife for advice, and she replied:

 The clothes are of no use to us; neither is the belt. The clock, though, could be useful: every morning it will tell us what time to milk the cow.

 So they took the clock in settlement of the debt, and the son of the Seer left and continued on his way.

 Years later another tzadik passed through that village. This was Rabbi Yissachar Dov, the Sava Kaddisha of Radoshitz, one of the Seer’s esteemed chasidim, and now a Rebbe in his own right with many followers. Because of the late hour, he too spent the night at the house of the same hospitable couple, -- in fact, in the very room in which that clock hung. But he did not sleep a wink. Instead he danced and sang all the night through.

 Early in the morning his host, who himself had not slept a wink because of the tumult, knocked on the door of the guest room and asked the tzadik what had made him so joyful that he sang and danced the whole night.

 The Rebbe answered with a question: Please tell me, where did you get the clock that is in the room I stayed in? The villager explained that he had received it in lieu of payment from a man who had no money. The Radoshitzer then asked him what this traveler looked like. Aha! I thought so, he exclaimed after hearing the description.

 As soon as I heard this clock tick, explained the Sava Kaddisha, I could tell that it had belonged to our master, the tzadik of Lublin. You see, with every clock in the world, each tick signifies another second of life gone, spent, never again to be claimed. Every hour chimes the message to its owner that he is one hour nearer to his passing.

 Now this is, to be sure, an important message “ but the fact is that its sound is melancholy. However, the clock of our Master, the Seer of Lublin is different. I remember it well from his room. It ticks always exultantly, and tells those who listen that we are one second, one minute, one hour nearer the coming of the Mashiach !

 Even though I was exhausted when I arrived and wanted to sleep, I couldn’t. The tick-tock of the Rebbe’s clock is marching us towards the Redemption, so of course I was too happy to sleep, and I danced all night instead.

 Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the translation by Uri Kaploun in “A Treasury of Chassidic Tales” (Artscroll from Sipurei Chasidim by Rabbi S. Y. Zevin, and from the version on heichalhanegina.blogspot.com in the name of Grand Rabbi Michil Twerski of Milwaukee (see bethjehudah.org).

 Connection: Perhaps ticking/counting towards The Shavuot festival, anniversary of receiving the Torah from G-d at Mt. Sinai.

 Biographical notes: Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz (1745 - 9 Av 1815), known as the Seer of Lublin, was the successor to Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk (1717-1787), and presided over the spread of chassidus in Poland. A significant percentage of the great Rebbes of the next generation emerged from his followers. Many of his insights were published posthumously in Divrei Emmes, Zichron Zos, and Zos Zichron.

 Rabbi Yossel of Torchin (1782-1818) was the son of the Chozeh of Lublin, and some say that the Seer viewed him as his successor. All respected him as a man of great piousness.

 Rabbi Yissachar Dov [1765-18 Sivan 1843], the "Sabba Kadisha" (holy grandfather) of Radoshitz, was a disciple of the Seer of Lublin and of the Holy Yid of Peshischa. Famed as a miracle maker, he lived in poverty as a simple tutor.

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**The Human Side of the Story**

**But Not the Peyot**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 “Come in and take a look at this child!” This was the excited invitation issued by the great Torah Sage Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, of blessed memory (commonly known as “The Steipler”) to the members of his household.

 Standing before him was a seven year-old Bnei Brak boy and his father who had come to this leader of the Torah community to tell their moving story.

 The terrible illness that had struck the child made it necessary for him to undergo chemotherapy treatment.

 When his parents relayed to him what the doctor had warned them about the pain he would suffer and that he would lose all his hair, the boy began to weep.

 “I am not afraid of the pain or the embarrassment of being bald,” he explained, “but how can I give up my peyot (sideburns) which are the mark of a Jewish child?”

 As his parents watched in awe their son then turned his eyes Heavenward and thus addressed his Creator:

 “Father in Heaven, I accept with love the pain and the embarrassment because I know, as my parents have always taught me, that You are merciful and do what is best for me. But how can I give up my peyot!”

 This heartfelt prayer achieved its purpose. All of the boy’s hair vanished with the chemotherapy treatment and only his peyot remained. The hospital staff said they had never before seen such a thing and the father rushed to the “Steipler” to share with him his experience in the power of prayer.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET – The Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine on the Internet –* [*www.orh.edu*](http://www.orh.edu)

**The Problem**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 One day a rich and learned Jew came to one of the great European centers of Torah learning to search for a fitting match for his wise, pious and beautiful daughter. He invited all of the eligible young scholars in the town to the main synagogue that evening, and posed to them a difficult Talmudic problem. Whoever could solve the problem to his satisfaction, he announced, would win his daughter’s hand in marriage, and his own pledge to provide financial support for the couple and their future children for twenty years while the worthy scholar pursued his studies.

 The town’s scholars struggled to understand the problem, and then labored through the night to solve it. Dozens of answers were submitted to the visitor, but he refuted them all. He remained in town for three days, without any further success. Disappointed, he ordered his bags packed for his early departure the next day.

 The next morning he climbed into his carriage, settled into into his seat, and gave the signal to his driver to crack his whip. As the horses trotted off, a young student could be seen running toward the carriage, shouting for him to wait. The man ordered his driver to stop, and the young man looked in the window.

 “Just a minute! Wait!” cried the young man, panting to catch his breath. “You can’t go yet! You must tell me the answer!”

 “Pardon me?” asked the visitor.

 “Ever since you posed the question,” said the student, “I haven’t been able to sleep. I’ve been grappling with it day and night, but try as I might, the solution eludes me. I must know the answer! You cannot go without telling me!”

 “Ah!” cried the scholar, satisfied at last. “You are the one whom I want for a son-in-law!”

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Eternal Gifts**

**By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

 What a person gives away seems forever lost. The Torah, in cryptic fashion, uses proper nouns and pronouns in a mysterious medley that teaches us a little about real property, about what you give and what one really has. The Torah tells us about tithing. "And every portion from any of the holies that the Children of Israel bring to the Kohen shall be his. A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his."

 What the Torah seems to tell us is that the donor has no further right to item given to the Kohen. So why not say it clearly? "What a man gives to the Kohen belongs to the Kohen." Obviously, there is a dual reference attached to the pronoun. What lies within that double allusion?

 Rabbi Betzalel Zolty, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, of blessed memory, related the following story:

 The Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein was in America in 1924, raising much-needed funds for his Yeshiva. During his visit, he received an urgent telegram. The Lithuanian authorities were going to conscript the Slobodka students into the army.

 Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel, the founder and Dean of the Yeshiva, made a decision to open a branch of Slobodka Yeshiva in the ancient city of Chevron in Eretz Israel. He would send 150 students to Palestine to establish the Yeshiva, and in this way free them from service in the apostatizing, ruthless Lithuanian army. That monumental undertaking would require a sum of $25,000 to transport, house, and establish the Yeshiva.

 Rabbi Epstein was put to the task. He discussed the program with a dear friend of the Yeshiva, Mr. Schiff, who immediately decided to contribute the massive sum in its entirety.

 Years later, in the early 1930s, the tide turned for Mr. Schiff. With the crash of the stock market, and plummeting real estate prices, it took only a few months before he was forced out of his own apartment, and was relegated to the cellar of a building that was once his, existing on meager rations.

 At the same time, the health of Rabbi Epstein was failing, and he no longer had the strength to travel. His son-in-law, Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna, made the trip to America, in his stead, to raise funds for the Slobodka Yeshiva. He did not know of Mr. Schiff's situation until the man got up to speak at a parlor meeting on behalf of the Yeshiva.

 "My dear friends," he began. "I do not wish my business misfortunes on anyone. I invested literally millions of dollars in all sorts of businesses, and they all failed. I have absolutely nothing to show for them. But there is one investment I made that continues to bear fruit. I gave $25,000 to establish a Yeshiva in Chevron, and that investment is the best one I ever made. One must know where to invest."

 When Rabbi Sarna, heard that Mr. Schiff was literally bankrupt, he cabled Rabbi Epstein, who quickly responded to arrange to give him a $5,000 loan, in order to get him back on his feet and begin doing business again. Through some generous benefactors, Rabbi Sarna got a hold of the cash and went directly to the basement apartment where Mr. Schiff now resided. He explained to him that Rabbi Epstein insisted he take this money as a loan.

 Mr. Schiff jumped up in horror, "What do you want from my life? The only money I have left is the $25,000 that I gave the Yeshiva. Do you want to take that from me as well?"

 In its mystical manner, the Torah teaches us the power of the eternal gift . "A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his." We invest much in this world. We work. We buy. We build. We spend. But what do we really have? At the end of the hopefully long day, we call life, what can we say is eternally ours? Stocks crash, and buildings crumble. How real is our estate?

 The Torah tells us, what the man gives to the Kohen shall be his. It does not say, "... will belong to the Kohen. It says, it shall be his! What we invest in the eternity of spirituality, in order to proliferate Hashem's eternal message, will never be relinquished. For what we invest for eternity, will be eternally invested. It shall always remain ours.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Shabbos Candle Lighting.*

**It Once Happened**

**Moshe and the Angels and**

**The Torah in the Heavens**

 Before the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, G-d brought Moses up to Heaven in order to teach him the entire Torah. Moses, who walked about in Heaven as one walks on earth, was greeted by an angel who asked him, "What are you doing here, son of Amram? What business do you, a mortal who lives in the physical world, have coming to the holy Heavens?"

 "I did not come of my own will," replied Moses confidently. "Our Master has ordered me here in order to receive the Torah and bring it back to the Jewish nation."

 When the angels realized that Moses had come to take the Torah from the Heavens and bring it to the Jews, they raised a mighty cry. Would they now be parted forever more from their beloved Torah?

 G-d therefore told Moses, "Go and speak with the angels. Convince them that they have no need for the Torah and that they have no reason to regret that it is being taken from them."

 But Moses was frightened by the fiery angels. "I am surprised at you, Moses," chastised G-d. "When I first appeared to you from the burning bush, you had much to say. You were not afraid to ask and to argue without end. Why are suddenly frightened by angels who are merely My servants?"

 Emboldened by G-d's words, and holding on to the Heavenly Throne, Moses gathered his courage and began. "Whatever was written in the Torah was not intended for you," Moses told the angels gathered nearby. "What does the Torah say? 'I am G-d your G-d Who took you out of the land of Egypt.' Were you ever slaves in Egypt? Did G-d rescue you from there?" Moses asked the Heavenly servants.

 "The Torah also says, 'You shall have no strange gods before Me.' Do you worship man-made idols? Do you have an inclination to steal, to covet what belongs to others? Do you have parents that you must honor them? If not, what use do you have for the Torah? You cannot observe its positive commandments nor its prohibitions."

 Hearing these arguments, the angels had to concede that Moses was right.

Moses remained in Heaven for forty days and forty nights, learning the entire Written Torah and Oral Tradition. Moses knew when day or night had passed on earth by the activities of the angels. When he saw the angels preparing the manna which the Jews were to eat th e following day, he knew that it was day. When the manna fell, he knew it was night-time on earth.

 One day, Moses saw G-d sitting on His mighty, exalted throne, adding crowns to the letters of the Torah. He asked G-d to explain a reason for these decorations and was told, "In many years to come there will be born a great tzadik by the name of Akiva the son of Josef who will reveal many hidden secrets of the Torah. He will know how to derive laws and Torah thoughts from every letterhead and crown which I am now adding to the letters."

 Moses begged to be shown this tzadik. G-d showed him a building which housed many disciples sitting in rows upon rows. At their head sat a man who resembled a heavenly angel. Moses approached the men but could not understand what they were saying, and he was very grieved.

 Then, suddenly, Moses heard one of the students ask the angelic-looking man how he knew all he had been teaching them. Rabbi Akiva replied, "Everything which I am teaching and innovating before you in Torah is a direct transmission of what Moses received upon Mount Sinai." Moses was comforted by these words but asked G-d, "If You intend to create such a great person, why do You not grant him the privilege of bringing the Torah down to the Jews?"

 "I have especially chosen you to bring the Torah to My children," G-d told Moses. "But because you were so modest in thinking that Rabbi Akiva is more fitting than you to transmit the Torah to the Jews, I will increase your wisdom and knowledge." And at that moment, G-d opened the fifty gates of wisdom, allowing Moses to pass through 49 of them. Moses's wisdom was so great that no other person in the world could compare with him. And it is from Moses, of all our other great teachers, that we will learn Torah when Moshiach comes.

*Reprinted from this week’s issue of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn.*

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**In His Shoes**

 In our Torah portion this week Nasso, the Torah tells us how Hashem commands Moshe to count the Jews. When commanding Moshe to count the Jews, the Torah uses the word *“Nasso."* The word *“Nasso,"* can also mean *"to uplift."* It is therefore possible to understand the verse in the following spiritually uplifting way: Hashem is giving Moshe Rabeinu (our teacher) the power to uplift the Jews. Since the time of Moshe Rabeinu, Hashem has appointed in every generation Tzadikim (the exceedingly righteous) to lead Klal Yisroel.  Just as Hashem gave Moshe Rabeinu the power to uplift the Children of Israel, so too does Hashem gave the spiritual leaders of every generation the power to uplift Jews.  The following story will inspire us to believe in the power of Tzadikkim.

 In a certain area of Jerusalem many years ago, some Jewish stores were open on Shabbos. Rabbis and lay leaders tried to convince the proprietors to close their stores before sunset Friday afternoon. Eventually they were successful with all the storekeepers except one -but no amount of pleading or pressure could get this particular Jewish grocer to close his store. Business was good, and to his mind, profits outweighed any regard he may have had for Shabbos observance.

 Reb Aryeh Levin, of blessed memory, heard about the stubborn grocer and was pained that a fellow Jew would willfully desecrate the Shabbos. One Friday afternoon, R' Aryeh dressed early for Shabbos, donned his shtreimel (fur hat worn on Shabbos), and went to the store. It was well before sunset when R' Aryeh entered the shop.

 He walked quietly through the store, eyeing the goods on the shelves and watching the brisk flow of customers and purchases. He sat down on a chair near the back of the store and observed the activity.

 The owner recognized R' Aryeh but didn't say anything to him, thinking that perhaps the elderly rabbi was resting and would soon be on his way to shul. As sunset drew near, however, the grocer wondered why R' Aryeh made no effort to go. He began to feel a bit uncomfortable at the great rabbi's presence in his store so close to Shabbos. The proprietor was busy with his customers, but every once in a while he would steal a glance at R' Aryeh, who seemed to be sitting there for no apparent reason. Finally the grocer approached R' Aryeh and said, *"Rabbi, I see you have been sitting here for a while already. Can I do something for you? Are you feeling all right?"*

R' Aryeh stood up and, after exchanging pleasantries, said to the grocer, *"I heard that you keep your store open on Shabbos. I know that others have spoken to you about it, but I wanted to come and see for myself how difficult it is for you to close for the holy Shabbos. Now I know without a doubt how hard it is for you to close and give up so much business. Honestly, I feel for you - but what can I say? Shabbos is Shabbos!"*



**Rabbi Aryeh Levin**

The grocer was silent for a moment, and tears welled up in his eyes. He said, *"My dear Rabbi, you are the only one who took the time to come over here to see the situation from my point of view. It means so much to me that you came to my store. Everyone else just criticized me from a distance."* Warmly, he shook R' Aryeh's hand and said, *"I promise you that I will do what I can to see if I can close the store on Shabbos.”* R' Aryeh wished the grocer, *"Good Shabbos.”*

 Within weeks, the store was closed by sunset every Friday afternoon. Only after R' Aryeh was in *"the grocer's shoes"* did he undertake to reprimand him, and even then he did so only with great sensitivity. No wonder people listened to R' Ariyeh's words. (Along the Maggid’s Journey, R. Pesach Krohn, p.113)

 Throughout the millennium, Tzadikim have led the Jewish Nation: the Kohanim Gedolim (high priests), the Prophets, the Kings and the Sages have all served as spiritual conduits to funnel holiness and wisdom from heaven. Our current generation also has its Tzadikim which lead Yisroel. Many of us have the merit to live in close proximity to some of the biggest Tzadikim active today.  Hundreds of thousands of Jews flock to Tzadikim yearly for advice on everything from business concerns, medical issues, family issues, marriage proposals, and suggestions on spiritual growth.

 It can be very time-consuming to seek the counsel of a Tzadik. In addition, the time we are allotted to speak with the Tzadik may be limited to a few minutes. However, it is well worth the wait. Because, a few minutes with one of the Tzadikei HaDor (the spiritual leaders of the generation) is worth much much more than hours and hours with less qualified people. This is because the words of a Tzadik are the closest thing to divine inspiration that we have today. In other words, the best chance we have to receive heavenly inspired answers to life's issues is by asking Tzadikim.

 Therefore, when we go in to ask a Tzadik for advice, it is important to listen very closely to his holy words. As we mentioned, the advice the Tzadik gives is the closest thing to coming directly from Hashem. Why then should we be so foolish as to contradict this heaven-sent advice? By seeking the advice of Tzadikim we are guaranteed to live happier, less worrisome lives.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**Learning from King Solomon How to Save One’s Life from A Gang of Ruthless Murderers**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 Although this week’s Torah portion is the longest in the book, it contains only 18 commandments and one of them is the commandment of confessing sins to G-d.

 According to Judaism almost any sin can be fixed by genuine repentance and confession. But interestingly there is no commandment to repent - only to confess!!!

 This, of course is very misleading. Confession without regret is not only worthless it is exactly what brought a person to sin in the first place!!

 When Jews feel that Torah is only ‘lip service’ and void of content, they turn to sinning. So how can empty ‘lip service’ confession be the cure for sins when it was the cause?

 Indeed the question should be the opposite. What possible importance can there be in confessing? The essence of repentance is the FEELING of remorse for rebelling against the Creator? Repentance is in the heart - not in the mouth.

 Also, next week will be the holiday of ‘Shavuot’ when the Torah was given over 3320 years ago on Mt. Sinai. Is there a connection between this and the commandment of confession?

 To understand this here is a story. (Ko Asu Chachmeinu vol. 3 pg. 121 from Koheles Raba 3:8)

 This story occurred many hundreds of years ago. A successful Jewish businessman traveled from his home in Caesarea, Israel to a distant country to make money. Usually he traveled alone but this time took his 16-year-old son with him to introduce him to the world of business.

 The trip was successful and in one of their large wooden suitcases they put a small chest filled with precious solid gold coins that they had earned.

 They loaded their baggage in the hold of the ship they chartered to take them home, and were assured by the ship’s captain that no one would touch it. But our hero, who we will call Reb Yitzchak (although in the story he was not given a name), was a bit uneasy, so he figured that when no one was looking he would sneak down into the hold to check in his suitcase whenever possible.

 In the middle of the first night of their journey he tiptoed silently out of his room onto the rising and falling deck under the starry sky when suddenly he heard people talking. He stopped and quietly turned to go back, but what they said caught his attention.

 “Listen mates! You know our two passengers? Well I happen to know that the older one’s got a lot of money in one of his suitcases.”

 “Money?” one of them almost whispered. “Is it a lot? How do you know?”

 Reb Yitzchak recognized the voices; it was two of the sailors that he had heard shouting orders earlier. Obviously unaware that they was being overheard they continued.

 “Heh heh!” the first sailor replied, “This afternoon I was in the hold and he didn’t see me. He went down there; opened one of his suitcases and inside there was a small chest. Well, he opened it and you couldn’t believe it! It was filled with Red Crowns! Filled!! I mean… there must be a fortune there! Maybe….five fortunes!!”

 “Ha ha aaaha!!!” All five of them laughed and chuckled.

 “But what can we do? I mean, they’ll go to the police when we get to port and we’ll get caught for sure!”

 “Not if they happen to,” here the sailor lowered his voice, “sort of….. fall overboard! Get it? Then every one will be happy; we get rich, they get a good sleep and the fish get a good meal! Ha haaaaa!! We might have to give the captain something too…. You know, maybe there are SIX fortunes. Haa Haaaaaa! What do you say mates? Ehhh?? We can do it tomorrow afternoon when the captain is asleep and we are far out to sea. What do you say? Are you all with me??”

 Reb Yitzchak began to tremble as the sailors were laughing and making toasts to their plan. A cold sweat covered his body. He had never faced death before. He had to think fast but what could he do? He was no match for them, they were armed and murderous and there were five of them.

 He tiptoed back to his room, woke his son, told him what he heard and suddenly had an idea.

 Early the next morning shouts and screams came from Reb Yitzchak’s room.

“Lazy bum! Wake up! Wake up I said!!! I’ve had enough of your sleeping! Enough!!”

 The sailors gathered around as suddenly the door burst open and Reb Yitzhcak, dragging his son by the neck of his pajamas pulled him out of the room.

“Here! I want you to see something!” He shouted at the boy, ignoring the spectators. See! Look in the sky!! See! Know what that is? It’s the sun rising! The sun! You lazy good for nothing! How do you think it gets in the sky? Never saw it rise did you! Cause you always sleep! Never earned a penny in your life and you never will! You think you’ll live off me do you? Well, just watch this!”

 Reb Yitzchak threw his son to the deck, ran like a madman through the door that led down into the belly of the ship with his son yelling after him. “Who cares about you or your money! I want to sleep! LEAVE ME ALONE… GO MAKE MONEY!”

 Reb Yitzchak came up with a crazed look on his face carrying the small chest on one shoulder. Then, before anyone could do anything, he ran to the rail of the ship, opened the chest with a key and screamed. “All you want is my money! You bum! Well….. now ….. WORK FOR IT!”

 Saying this he tipped the chest over and the sailors watched in horror as all coins went spilling over the side, splashing unceremoniously into the ocean - forever.

 The wide-eyed sailors held their heads in disbelief, “What a maniac!” One said. “What a temper! Whew! Lucky he didn’t kill his son!” said another. “There goes our plan!” said a third, as one of the others nudged him to keep quiet.

 Yitzchak then pulled his son by the ear back into their room yelling “Now look what you made me do you lazy fool! Because of you etc. etc.!”

 Several days later the ship arrived in Caesarea and after the two passengers emerged safely from the ship Yitzchak’s son turned to his father and said sadly. “Good, father, we saved our lives but now we lost everything we worked for. What will we do now?”

 “Hashem will help!” answered Reb Yitzchak. I think that King Solomon will not let us down.

 “King Solomon?” repeated his son. “What has he got to do with this? How can he help?”

 “Well, it was from him I got the idea how to save ourselves. I just hope the judge agrees. Come! Let’s see.”

 The boy didn’t understand a word but he saw that his father was not worried or sad in the least which encouraged him.

 Reb Yitzchak wrote a note to his wife that they had arrived safely, had his suitcases and the note taken to his house and headed straight for the home of the mayor who was also the judge of the city and told him what had happened.

 The mayor immediately told his police to apprehend the sailors, have them brought to jail and placed in separate rooms.

 The mayor was a clever man and he sensed that Reb Yitzchak was telling the truth. He questioned the sailors one by one telling each one that the others confessed until finally all of them admitted that they had spoken about throwing Reb Yitzchak and son into the sea.

 He then brought them all together to hear their defense.

 “True,” One of them said “We did talk about stealing his money. But, well, we were drinking! Right? And, well….. that’s no reason for him to throw it in the sea. Right?” He looked at his friends who all were nodding their heads and rolling their eyes at the judge, shrugging their shoulders with palms up in innocence.

 “After all,” said another, “HE threw his money away! We didn’t do anything but talk a little. And we didn’t even talk to HIM!! We were just ….. well…. Talking! He’s the crazy one!” He too looked at his friends who were nodding and smiling pathetically as before.

 “True, true” said the judge quietly as though agreeing with them. “All you did was talk. And, after all, this man is from the nation of King Solomon. You must have known that he was familiar with the book of Koheles (Ecclesiastes).

 “Ehhh?” they all said almost in unison “Koheles?”

 “Yes,” Repeated the Judge, “Koheles. In that book written, by the wisest man ever, it says clearly that there is a “Time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones” (3:5). Are you familiar with this?”

 Not understanding what the Judge was getting at and certain that he was agreeing with them they just mumbled various things, shook their heads knowingly and kept smiling.

 “My dear friends,” the Judge continued, “This Jew realized that despite the hard work that he put into amassing that gold, the only way he could save himself from your evil plans was to take the advice of King Solomon and “cast away stones”.

 “But King Solomon also foresaw how to rectify the situation” the judge continued: “He wasn’t called the wisest man for nothing. Now it’s time for you to complete the saying, “A time to gather stones” “

 “You must gather ‘the stones’ he cast away and repay his loss.

 “But if not” He continued …… then I find you all guilty of attempted robbery with intent to kill and sentence you to life imprisonment at hard labor gathering stones. Take your choice. In any case for you it will be ‘a time to gather stones!”

 Needless to say they did exactly what they took the Mayor’s advice and did what they made Reb Yitzchak do: forfeited their money to save their lives.

 And Reb Yitzchak rejoiced in his regained wealth.

 This answers our questions.

 Repentance; regret for the past and resolution to improve the future, is essential for forgiveness. But repentance can only fix the past and the future. But the damage done in the present (As king David said, “My sin is always before me” Ps. 51:4) has to be rectified in more immediate and physical way. And that is the purpose of confession.

 The DEED; sound and movement of the lips involved in audible confession, is like a body to ‘spiritual’ repentance.

 Something like in our story; the only way Reb Yitzchak could save himself was by throwing away something ‘physical’. But once he did that he was free.

So to in audible confession to HaShem, we do something physical to ‘cast away’ our sins. Because spiritual repentance is not enough.

 This is also the connection to the holiday of Shavuot.

 All the other religions, even those who claim to replace Judaism (G-d forbid) are based on the spiritual revelations of one or a few individuals and, for the most part, what they demand from their followers is spiritual allegiance.

 Not so Judaism. It is based on (and is the only religion to make this claim) the fact that the ENTIRE JEWISH NATION (some 2 million people) heard G-d PHYSICALLY SPEAK.

 And Judaism demands of it’s followers the fulfillment of hundreds of physical commandments.

 And this is the Holiday of Shavuot that we have been celebrating for over 3,320 years: That G-d actually spoke to ALL the people and ALL the people actually did His commandments.

 And just as in our story Reb Yitchak got his money back, so we Jews have been ‘repaying’ G-d by learning His Torah ALOUD for these thousands of years (Go to any Yeshiva to hear what I mean) and G-d has been ‘repaying’ us by miraculously, physically keeping us in existence although the entire world (including perhaps the majority of the Jewish people) has been trying to destroy us.

Indeed, this will be one of the main accomplishments of Moshiach: to bring all the Jewish people back to learning Torah and fulfilling its commandments. (One of the definitions of ‘Tshuva’ is to ‘Return’ to G-d what we owe Him).

 Then the entire world will rejoice even more than Reb Yitzchak did in our story. The Jews return to Israel, the Holy Temple will return to Jerusalem and even the dead will return to life.

 Just one more good deed, word or even thought on our part can make it happen and bring …**Moshiach NOW!**

*Reprinted from this week’s email from Yeshiva Ohr tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Nasso 5770**

**Story #651**

**With Only a Single Page**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

 A young American discovered his glorious heritage and became an observant Jew. He began to learn Torah and to fulfill mitzvot, and even when he returned to his parents' home he continued to observe G-d's Torah and to learn it very diligently.

 His elder father was very distant from traditional Judaism and had no idea what it was all about. He was already retired from his work at that time, and wandered around the house with nothing to do. Watching his son poring over his Talmud, the father was very impressed. His son's life seemed to be so full of content and values. Finally, one day he approached his son.

 Teach me a page of what you're learning, he said.

 This will be very hard for you, the son replied. In order to understand Talmud, you first need to know Hebrew, and you don't even know the aleph-beit. And there's a second language involved: Aramaic.

**The Father Was Dettermined to**

**Learn at Least One Page of Talmud**

 But his father was determined. In spite of everything, he asked his son to teach him at least one page of Talmud. The son began to teach him. However, his visit was a short one and they could only continue during his infrequent subsequent visits. In this way, it took a full year of learning together before they finished the page.

 When they were done, the father cried jubilantly, I want to make a party. I've finished learning a whole page of Talmud!

 There is a custom of making a party for the completion of an entire tractate of the

Talmud, called a siyum, the son admitted, but not for a single page.

 But the father was insistent. He would throw his party.

 At a loss, the son went to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein to ask if such a thing -- a siyum on one page of Talmud -- was acceptable.



**Rabbi Moshe Feinstein**

 Make a siyum, Rabbi Feinstein instructed. Then he added, Let me know when it will be. I wish to take part in this joyous occasion!

 And so it was that a siyum was made on a single page of Talmud learned by a man with his son over the course of a full year. Rabbi Feinstein attended the siyum, heaping praise on the elderly father who had not let any difficulty get in the way of achieving his goal.

 The next morning, the old man did not wake up from his sleep. He had died in the night -- the type of death they call the kiss of G-d. Rabbi Feinstein came to the funeral and delivered a eulogy. In it he declared, The Talmud records that there are those who purchase their World-to-come in a single hour. Now we see it is possible to do so with a

single page.

 [Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Stories my Grandfather told me (Mesorah) by Zev Greenwald.]

 Connection: seasonal the Festival of Shavuot and the Giving of the Torah

 Biographical note: Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895 13 Adar B 1986) was born in Uzdan, near Minsk, Belorussia. He became rabbi of Luban while young and remained there till 1937. After that he immigrated with his family to the United States, to the Lower East Side of Manhattan. There he became Rosh HaYeshivah of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, which became world-famous because of his presence. He became the most important halachic authority of his generation, and his rulings were accepted worldwide. They have been published in a multi-volume collection called Igros Moshe.

Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed

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**RABBIS' MESSAGES**

**The Importance of**

**Blessing Others**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“So shall you bless the children of Israel, say to them, ‘May Hashem bless you and guard you.’” (Bemidbar 6:23-24)

 Our perashah contains the famous Birkat Kohanim, the blessing of the Kohanim to the people. Why does it say in the Torah, “May Hashem bless you?” Can’t we just bless the people ourselves without mentioning Hashem? It’s because we really don’t know how to bless a person. Only Hashem knows what is really good for him.

 If we use our own opinion, we might bless the person with something he doesn’t need, or worse, with something that could hurt him. Therefore, the Kohen says, “May Hashem bless you” with that which needs a berachah. But if Hashem knows what the person needs and we ask Hashem to bless, why do we need to bless the person? After all, Hashem knows!

 Today, in our Pele-Yoetz class, we learned about blessing people. He quotes a pasuk “A person with a good (generous) eye is blessed.” (Mishle 22:9). The simple meaning is that a person who looks generously at the people is a good person (we could write a whole article just on this concept). However, the Gemara says it also means that a good person blesses people. The Pele Yoetz quotes another pasuk in Mishle that says a person should not hold back something that is coming to a person.

**A Time of Divine Love for Another Person**

 It may be a time of “et rason” (a time of Divine love for that person), and your berachah might bear fruit, and the person you are blessing will get what he needs. According to this, we have an answer to our question.

 Why do we bless if Hashem knows? It may be that the person needs one more reason to merit that gift from Hashem and your blessing gets him over the finish line to get his berachah. In addition, that’s why we respond to the blessing “V’chen l’mor - and the same to you.”

 The story in the Gemara (Megillah 27b) tells that once Rav blessed Rav Hunah, and it came true. Rav got upset at Rav Hunah for not saying v’chen l’mor, because if he would have said it, it might have come true to Rav as well.

 Be a good person and bless others. You never know, you might be blessing yourself.

**Being on Guard**

**Against Foolishness**

**By Rabbi Shmuel Choueka**

“If a man’s wife strays” (Bemidbar 5:12)

 The word which is used to denote straying (tisteh,) is the same word which means “folly - shoteh.” Indeed, the Rabbis tell us that a person does not sin unless a spirit of folly enters him first. This means that any rational and sane person would know not to commit a transgression. What happens to a person, however, is that momentarily he is overtaken by a desire or an impulse, and therefore does something wrong. This is akin to temporary insanity. Is it not insane that we argue with our spouses about foolish things, letting everything go to pieces because of a minor issue which is usually resolvable if we wouldn’t stand on ceremony? What about words said in anger or spite? Is that not foolish? If we would go down the line, we would see that there is no logic to most of our transgressions!

 This is the lesson of the wayward woman, the sotah. If we learn to be on the lookout for this “spirit of foolishness,” we can nip it in the bud, and let our reason and common sense keep us in line. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin*

**In Cyprus, Finished Sefer Torah is Joy of the Century**

**By Joshua Runyan**

 Chabad-Lubavitch of North Cyprus’ (part of an island situated in the Mediterranean Sea) first Torah dedication ceremony brought more than 200 celebrants – including visitors from Israel and Turkey – to the city of Kyrenia for a parade down a city street and festive meal.



 The May 2 celebration brought smiles to locals and tourists alike, with longtime resident Elsie Slonim, 96, saying that in her 70 years on the Mediterranean island, she had “never seen such happiness.”

 Aryeh and Devorah Yakovson of Israel donated the holy scroll.

 Locals and tourists said that the May 2 celebration was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

*Reprinted from the website of Chabad.Org*

**Talking Points – Naso**

**By Rabbi Elazar Meisels**

***1. BOUNTY IS BEST***

 *"The Kohen shall make one [dove] as a sin-offering and one [dove] as an elevation-offering, atone on his behalf from his sin with a soul; and he shall sanctify his head on that day."6:11*

 His sin with a soul - This chapter speaks about one who took a vow to be a *nazir*, mandating that he refrain from indulging in earthly pleasures such as wine, meat, shaving his hair, and contaminating himself to the dead. This verse refers to an instance in which he allowed himself to become defiled by coming into contact with a dead person.

 Atonement is required because he was negligent about coming into contact with the dead and becoming defiled. Alternatively, Rabbi Elazar HaKapar explains that his sin was that he inflicted suffering upon himself by vowing to abstain from wine. *- Talmud, Tractate Nedarim 10a*

 In a similar vein, the Talmud states that one who fasts excessively is called a sinner, because he adopts a path that is contrary to what the Torah asks of us. We are not bidden to abstain from earthly pleasures altogether, for they were placed here to enhance our earthly existence and to utilize in the service of the Almighty.

 Rather, our mandate is to limit our intake of these pleasures and not to allow them to take control of us. So long as one is careful not to allow himself to indulge without regard for his physical and spiritual health, there is no reason to refrain from appreciating the bounty with which G-d has showered us. One who abstains from it altogether has confused ascetism with piety.

***2. POLLUTION CONTROLS***

 *"The* Kohen *shall inscribe these curses on a scroll and dissolve it in the bitter waters." 5:23*

 Dissolve it in the bitter waters - Although it is generally prohibited to do so, in order to preserve the peace between a husband and wife, the Torah permits erasing a Torah portion that is written in sanctity and contains G-d's Name. *- Sifri*

In truth, another Divine name is *Shalom* [peace]. By erasing the Divine Name written on the scroll in order to promote *shalom*, it is as if another Divine Name is being composed to replace it. *- Maharal*

 *Sifri* derives another interesting lesson from the Torah's willingness to erase G-d's Name for the sake of promoting peace. Just as we must do all in our power, even erasing the Divine Name, in order to promote peace, similarly, we must do all in our power to remove from our midst any books or other mediums that promote disunity among mankind. Possessing material that explicitly or subtly promotes divisiveness is akin to erasing the Name of the Divine.

*Reprinted from this week’s Mentor Talk, a publication of Partners in Torah*

**The Silver Lining of**

**The Rubashkin Saga**

**By Rabbi Pesach Lerner**

**and Rabbi Dovid Eliezrie**



 The tragedy that has been unfolding in America with the Rubashkin family has touched the hearts of Jews worldwide. Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin, renowned for his acts of chesed, is in a battle for his life. A consortium of government officials, labor unions, and groups like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), spurred on by sympathetic forces in the news media, have focused their prosecutorial zeal on a man who made mistakes, but who in no way deserves a life sentence, or even twenty-five years in prison (which is a lifetime for a man in his early fifties).

**The Prosecution Has Crossed All Boundaries**

 There may have been illegalities committed in the operations of Agriprocessors, the firm Reb Sholom managed, but it is clear that the prosecution has crossed all boundaries, raising serious concerns even in the American legal community. Six former Attorneys General of the United States signed a letter that was sent to the sentencing judge, Linda Reade, calling for a lighter sentence that is more in keeping with the offenses for which Mr. Rubashkin was convicted.

 In the midst of this heartbreak, a silver lining has emerged. The Rubashkin story has galvanized Jewish leaders and laymen from across the broad spectrum of the Torah world. Groups that often do not cooperate, and live in separate but parallel worlds, have found common purpose.

 Who in the past could have imagined a kinus tefillah and hisorerus in Lakewood, New Jersey, on behalf of a Lubavitcher chassid, attended by the roshei hayeshivah, with the participation of thousands of Torah yungeleit, and that the video of that kinus would be viewed by thousands of chassidim?

**A Kol Korei Signed by Rabbis Representing**

**Disparate Segments of the Torah World**

 Who could have imagined a kol korei signed by roshei yeshivos, chassidishe rebbes, poskim, and congregational rabbis representing disparate segments of the Torah world? Who could have imagined Satmar chassidim calling up their Lubavitch counterparts and asking for updates, because the Satmar Rebbe is concerned and wants to be kept informed?

 Who would have imagined a meeting in the conference room of a chassidishe yeshivah, whose rebbe participated along with representatives of Agudath Israel of America, Young Israel, the OU, Chabad, with additional organizations and individuals on the conference line? Who could have imagined an online petition, signed by tens of thousands of Jews, from all walks of life?

 Who could have imagined newspaper editorials in Jewish newspapers, from secular to yeshivish and chassidish, in English and Yiddish, calling upon Jews to daven for a Jew, to sign a petition, or to write a letter to the Justice Department? Who could have imagined a video demanding fairness for Reb Sholom Mordechai e-mailed to 120,000 Jews in just one week? Who could have imagined? But it happened!

**An Unlikely Friendship and Nightly Chavrusa**

 And allow us to add, who could have imagined an editor of a yeshivish chareidi weekly newspaper taking a lead public role in support of Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin? Or that this editor and Reb Shalom Mordechai would form a deep friendship, nurtured by a nightly chavrusa in the sefer Chovos HaLevavos over the telephone?

 Or that the editor would dedicate stories and ads, week after week in support of the Rubashkin family? Who could have imagined? But Rabbi Pinchos Lipschutz, editor of Yated Ne’eman, is that editor, and he has done so much more. All segments of the Torah world have found a common cause.

 Each brings different strengths and abilities to the table. Communities and individuals, standing shoulder to shoulder, have joined forces in a monumental effort to champion the freedom of a chassid in Iowa. Years ago, the Lubavitcher Rebbe asked a profound question about the plague that took the lives of the students of Rabbi Akiva: “What does the Gemara mean when it says lo nahagu kavod zeh bazeh - they did not treat each other with respect? These were the students of Rabbi Akiva, whose central principle, klal gadol, was ahavas Yisrael!”

 The Rebbe explained that the students had walked down varied paths in their avodas Hashem. One emphasized ahavas Hashem, the love of G-d; the second, yirah, the fear of Hashem; the third, limud haTorah, etc. The Rebbe answered that “their mistake was that they were so focused on their own approach that they could not see the value in the others’ approaches.”

**Klal Yisrael is Like the**

**Armed Forces of a Country**

 This perhaps was true in the past and, sadly, we see this all too often even today. We tend to see each other through our own prism. We may be so fixated on our own perspective that we fail to see the validity of another approach. The Chofetz Chaim ztz”l often said that Klal Yisrael is like the armed forces of a country.

 Just like the totality of those armed forces is made up of an army, air force, navy, artillery, and intelligence and support services, so too is Klal Yisrael made up of those that focus on Torah, tefillah, kiruv, etc. By combining the different methods utilized in each of these areas, we can be mekadesh sheim Shamayim, and together, bring the ultimate Geulah.

 From across the spectrum of Torah Jewry, and even beyond, we have reached out to each other to work together, to stand up against this terrible injustice. We have discovered in the process that much more unites us than separates us.

 May it be the will of the Ribono shel Olam that this injustice that has brought us closer together, as organizations and individuals, will be the catalyst for a change that will benefit the Klal, and this unity should be a zchus, a merit, for our dear friend and chaver, Reb Sholom Mordechai ben Aharon and Rivka Rubashkin.

*Reprinted from the Matzav.com website and* originally published in [*Mishpacha Magazine*](http://www.mishpacha.com/getPdf/1/308/14/0/)}

**A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller Zt”l"**

**Men in the Kitchen?**

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION:** |

What is the opinion about a Frum man who takes very little part in helping his wife and his children in the kitchen and so on?

|  |
| --- |
| **ANSWER:** |

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| --- |
|  |

And the answer is, it depends on circumstances. Sometimes a man works very hard for Parnoso, and he has to take a lot of ill treatment from his boss or from competitors, or from customers. Sometimes a man comes home so broken that the house is like a hospital for him. And therefore he deserves a lot of consideration.

 However, if it's a man who has a comparatively easy life, and he comes home in good condition, there is no reason why he shouldn't help out a little bit. There should certainly be some token assistance, especially if the wife wants it.

**A “Lucky Man”**

 Now some women don't want the husband to putter around in the kitchen. They tell him to keep out of it. He is a lucky man. But even then he should make some motions as if he is trying to help out, until she tells him to go out. But there is no question at all, everybody should feel it's his duty to help carry the burden of the house.

 Now I want to say this, when it comes to taking care of the children's Torah education, it's a very big error to let the burden fall on the woman. Some women have to take care of coaching the children in their Torah lessons from the Yeshiva.

 A father must shoulder that responsibility. A father must help out. Very many children need help even Aleph Bais, they need help. Father must help. Chumash they need help. And some fathers neglect that, and therefore the children grow up failures, and sometimes they are dropouts Chas V'shalom from the Yeshiva, with the most terrible consequences.

**The Father is to Blame**

 It's not the children's fault. The blame is on the father. If he can not have patience to do it himself, he must spend money. He has to hire a boy to teach his little child or a girl to teach his little daughter. You must see to it that your children's learning is supervised. Don't rely on the Yeshivos. Don't rely on the teachers.

 Day to day check on your child if he is keeping up with the class. If he falls behind even one lesson, it's a tragedy, because the next day it will be two lessons, and he will be discouraged, and he will loose Chaishek, Chalila. And sometimes he becomes an enemy of learning as a result.

 So it's up to the father to constantly be on guard. This surely he has to shoulder the responsibility of the Chinuch of his children. In Aleph Bais, in Chumash, Hascholas Gemara. If he is not capable, he must hire help.

 *Good Shabbos To All*

 *Reprinted from this week’s “A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt’L” email. This email is transcribed from questions that were posed to Harav Miller by the audience at the Thursday night lectures. To listen to the audio of this Q & A please dial: 732-534-8868*

**Polish Jews 'Coming Out'**

**For Shavuot Holiday**

**By Hillel Fendel**

 A “Guide to the Shavuot Holiday” in Polish was disseminated among formerly hidden Polish Jews.

 The emissaries of the Shavei Israel organization in Poland began disseminating the booklet in recent days. The group published the guide to encourage the many Polish Jews who “went underground” after World War II, and their descendants, to return to the Jewish fold.

 The guide was written by Rabbi Yitzchak Rappaport and Rabbi Boaz Poch, the two Shavei Israel emissaries in Poland. It includes historical background on the Shavuot holiday, explanations of its significance, and even songs and recipes.

 The holiday begins this evening, and lasts until Wednesday night in Israel, and until Thursday night in the rest of the world.

**Jewish Life Has Gotten Stronger Since the Fall of the Iron Curtain**

 “Ever since the Iron Curtain fell,” Shavei Israel Chairman Michael Freund explains, “communal Jewish life in Poland has been getting stronger. We have been witness in recent years to an amazing process in which many hidden Jews in Poland wish to renew and revive their historic identity, including learning about Jewish holidays and customs. This guide is part of our efforts to help them do this, in their own language.”

 Some 4,000 Jews are officially listed as living in Poland, but it is estimated that there could be as many as several tens of thousands who are either hiding their Jewishness or are unaware of it.

 Many of the Jews now “coming out” in Poland left their religion in the face of either ignorance or post-Holocaust anti-Semitism. Others were children – or their descendants - who were hidden from the Nazis in Catholic institutions, and who only now are learning that they are actually Jewish.

*Reprinted from the Arutz Sheva email of May 18, 2010*

**As Heard from**

**Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt’L,**

**By Sam Gindi**

**PERASHAT NASO**

 “*And they shall put my name upon the Sons of Israel and I shall bless them*” (Bamidbar 6:27)

 This was an extraordinary prerogative which Hashem conferred upon the Cohanim, that because of their pronouncing the blessings upon Israel these blessings would be fulfilled. But one important purpose of this arrangement by Hashem is clearly apparent: that the people should desire the approval of the Cohen.

 Of the Cohanim it was said: “They shall teach your judgments to Jacob, and your Torah to Israel; they shall put incense to your nose and whole-burnt offering upon your Mizbeach (Alter)” (Devarim 33:10).

 “And you shall come to the Cohanim, the Levites, or to the judge…and you shall do according to the word that they shall tell you…you shall not turn aside to the right or the left” (ibid. 17:10-11).

**Hashem Blesses Those Who His Servants Favor**

 When Israel’s blessings would depend on the utterances of the Cohen, the nation would certainly seek to find favor in the eyes of the Cohen and obey their teachings with more alacrity. We learn here the lesson that Hashem blesses those whom His servants favor.

 The Cohanim are singled out by the Torah, but in principle we perceive that Hashem hearkens to the blessings of all that serve Him:  “He that has in his home someone that is ill, should go to a Torah Sage to pray for him” (Baba Batra 116A).  Men are thereby

induced to obey the Torah teachers because they understand that Hashem would hearken to blessings of His servants upon other men.  Thus a father urged his son to go to the Sages that had come to town “so that they should bless you” (Moed Kattan 9B). We thereby seek to obey the Sages and to find favor in their eyes, for the Cohanim and the Sages are heard by Hashem when they utter blessings.

 Question:  “Israelites are blessed by Cohanim; who blesses the Cohanim?” (Hullin 49A). One answer (ibid.): “and I shall bless them” means “I shall bless the Cohanim” when they bless My people. Another answer (ibid.) is that Hashem told Abraham “I shall bless those who bless you” (Beresheet 12:3).

 Both answers teach an extremely valuable lesson: To Bless Jews is a deed which is richly rewarded by Hashem.  Even when the blessing was said as a formality, as when a gentile encountered the Nasi , the Nasi declared that the gentile would receive Hashem’s blessing in accordance with the declaration to Abraham “I shall bless those who bless you”.

 Then how much greater is the blessing of Hashem upon those that wholeheartedly bless a Jew! He that passes a Jewish home and utters blessings upon that household, although none but Hashem heard his words, has thereby gained a blessing from Hashem Himself. “For Hashem loves only those that love Israel” (Mesilat Yesharim Ch. 19).

 Quoted from “Journey into Greatness” by Rabbi Miller ZT’L

*Reprinted from this week’s “As Heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller” email which is prepared by Mr. Sam Gindi.*

**Good Yom Tov Everyone.**

**The Inspiring Legacies**

**Of the Novardok Yeshiva**

 Let us begin our discussion with the powerful words of the Mishnah: “Rebi Yossi ben Kismah said: Once, I was walking on the way and a person met me and greeted me and I greeted him back and he said to me: *Rebi, where are you from?* I said to him: *I come from a large city of scholars and scribes.* He said to me: *Do you want to live with us in our place and I will give you thousands of gold coins and precious stones and pearls?*

 “I said to him: *[Even] if you were to give me all the silver and gold and precious stones and pearls in the world, I would only live in a place of Torah. As it is written in the Book of Psalms by King David: “The Torah of Your mouth is better for me than thousands of gold and silver.”* (119:72) *And not only that, but at the time a person departs from this world, neither silver and nor gold nor precious stones and pearls escort him, rather Torah and good deeds only...”* (Avos 6:9)

**The Last Shirt We Wear Has No Pockets**

 The last shirt we wear on this earth has no pockets. We take only our spiritual accomplishments with us to the next world.

 The following two stories illustrate how Jews have learned Torah under the most trying circumstances.

 When the entire Novardok Yeshiva was placed behind prison bars by the Communist government, the main intent was to prevent them from learning Torah and serving Hashem. Religion was frowned upon, especially the intense observance found among the young men in the Novardik Yeshivah

 . The prison guards attempted to weaken the resolve of the students by depriving them of basic physical needs. They were served only enough food to barely stay alive and they were constantly damp and cold due to the stone walls and floors of the prison cells. They had neither coats nor blankets and the temperature was usually well below freezing. But what pained them more than anything else was that they were robbed of their most prized possessions: their Talmud.

**A Clever Plan to Learn Tractate Makkos**

 Amazingly, the boys' families were allowed to bring food packages, and one of the young men came up with a clever plan. At the time of their arrest, the yeshivah students had been learning the tractate of Makkos, one of the shorter tractates. The entire tractate was only twenty-two pages long.

 The "prisoners" sent word to their families that they needed packages of cheese: twenty-two packages to be exact, each wrapped in another page of Gemara (Talmud). In this way they would able to smuggle in the entire tractate and share the Gemara. The unwary guards never suspected a thing and before long the young men from Novardik had their entire tractate.

 The question arose as to how they were allowed to disgrace the pages of Gemara by using them as wrapping paper for cheese if the halachah clearly states that the honor of Torah is even more important than Torah itself. Rav Eliezer Rabinovitch, the Rav of Minsk, answered that not learning Torah for these boys was a matter of life and death and for matters of life and death it is permissible.

**The Roshei Yeshivah are Role Models**

 Perhaps the following story will help us to understand why these yeshiva students learned with such self-sacrifice and resolve. It was their Roshei Yeshivah who were role models and provided the inspiration.

 Reb Chaim Efraim Zaitchik, the Novardik Rosh Yeshivah, had been exiled to a Soviet labor camp in Siberia for the "atrocity" of learning and teaching Torah. The food rations were sparse and the hunger pains which gnawed at the men were a constant reality. The water which they drank was brought from a spring located three kilometers away in a thick forest. Carrying the water was a thankless job as the pails were heavy and the path treacherous.

 But one day Reb Chaim volunteered for the position of water-carrier. Why? Because he had heard that there was a village at the other end of the forest where there might be another Jew. He made his way through the forest and after a few hours reached the spring, put down his pails and trekked to find the village.

 Seeing a clearing in the distance he made his way to the small town. Searching door to door, Reb Chaim was thrilled to finally find a little hut that had a mezuzah on the doorway. He knocked softly and the door was opened a small crack by a poor middle-aged woman who obviously did not have much extra food in her home.

 Nevertheless, she slipped an extra slice of bread through the small crack and sent Reb Chaim away. But Reb Chaim persisted. "It is not food that I want. Please just give me a sefer to learn from." The woman called her husband to the door and he greeted Reb Chaim. "I'm sorry but I'm not a very learned man. I own only one sefer and I'm not about to part with it."

**Pleading for Just a Page of a Sefer**

 Reb Chaim pleaded with him, "Please just give me a page of the sefer. I'll take any page, even the opening page. I beg you. I'm starving for learning. Don't send me away with nothing!" The sincerity in Reb Chaim's pleas moved the poor villager and finally he brought the sefer.

 "I'll tell you the truth. The sefer is a Gemara, with two tractates in one, Nedarim and Nazir. I'll give you one." Reb Chaim tore the volume in two and gave Reb Chaim the tractate Nedarim. He hid it under his clothing and thanked the man profusely for his priceless gift.

 Returning back to camp with the buckets of water, Reb Chaim's body was sore and his bones ached. But the smile on his face would not go away because as he held onto his Talmud he knew that he had acquired something much more valuable than anything else in the world. ( R' Yechiel Spiro p. 188 Touched by a Story."

 The lesson of these stories are especially important on Shavuos. Shavuos commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. The moment that the Children of Israel received the Torah, we became the Jewish Nation.  Because, it is only the Torah which distinguishes us from the nations.  In truth, every day we have the opportunity to receive the Torah. If we take time out of the day, even for five minutes, to learn a little more Torah, then we will be affirming our membership in the Jewish Nation. Good Yom Tov Everyone.

*Reprinted from this week’s Good Shabbos (Yom Tov) Everyone email.*

**A Message from the Kalever Rebbe - Shavuos 5770**

**Our Holy Torah**

**“Finite Words, Infinite Meaning”**

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**The Kalever Rebbe**

 The world’s libraries are filled with, perhaps, millions of books. Some of these books are very profound and require additional commentaries to fully explain their meaning. Occasionally one book might spawn several other books which are inspired by the original. But, after a time, the number of ideas and explanations that can be written about any particular book will become exhausted and history will “close the book” on it.

 There is one book, however, that stands apart from every other book ever written. It is a relatively small volume and yet it has generated an endless and ever growing body of literature expounding upon its seemingly infinite layers of depth and meaning. Entire libraries are filled with thousands of thick volumes solely focused on this one single book. The book we speak of is our holy Torah.

**This Merely Begs the Question**

 This merely begs the question, how can one book span the historic continuum and speak to mankind in every generation and moreover, inspire new insights and explanations never before revealed? What is so unique about our holy Torah?

 At its simplest level, this phenomenon proves the divine nature of the Torah. After all, which human could have incorporated so much wisdom into a single volume that tens of thousands of the greatest scholars throughout history could spend their entire lives studying its contents and publishing ever-fresh ideas regarding its meaning? Only G-d, the infinite Creator of Heaven and Earth could have authored a book containing infinite knowledge and wisdom.

 On a deeper level, we Jews subscribe to the dictum that “Yisroel, Oraisa V’Kudsha Brich Hu Chad Hu.” “Israel, the Torah and the Holy One Blessed Be He are one.”  That is to say, Hashem created this world for the purpose of the Children of Israel to study and live according to the teachings of His Holy Torah. This is the only way that the world can be elevated toward achieving perfection.

 Additionally, the essence of the Jewish people is the Torah and the Torah actually comprises each and every Jew. Each Jew has his/her unique letter in the Torah and it is the privilege and responsibility of every Jew to reveal to the world his/her unique Torah message to the world.

Can Only Be Accomplished

Through Studying the Torah

 This can only be accomplished through studying the Torah and committing to live by its holy teachings. So, in fact, the Torah is as infinite as the Jewish people themselves. Each succeeding generation of Jews uncovers new levels of understanding and light in its sacred text.

 On Shavuos, as we celebrate our receiving the Torah from Hashem, let us wholeheartedly dedicate ourselves to its study as we endeavor to demonstrate our own unique role in its holy and infinite message to the world.

 May you all be blessed with a happy and joyous Yom Tov.

Special Thanks to: Rabbi Avraham Shalom Farber & Yehuda Leib Meth, for the translation of the Kalaver Rebbe’s Shavuos message

Reprinted from the email sent by the Kalever Rebbe’s gabbai (mail@kaalov.org [www.kaalov.org](http://www.kaalov.org))

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**The Power of Kind and Thoughtful Words**

 In our Torah portion this week Nasso, the Torah tells us how Hashem commands Moshe to count the Jews. When commanding Moshe to count the Jews, the Torah uses the word *“Nasso."* The word *“Nasso,"* can also mean *"to uplift."* It is therefore possible to understand the verse in the following spiritually uplifting way: Hashem is giving Moshe Rabeinu (our teacher) the power to uplift the Jews.

 Since the time of Moshe Rabeinu, Hashem has appointed in every generation Tzadikim (the exceedingly righteous) to lead Klal Yisroel.  Just as Hashem gave Moshe Rabeinu the power to uplift the Children of Israel, so too does Hashem gave the spiritual leaders of every generation the power to uplift Jews.  The following story will inspire us to believe in the power of Tzadikkim.

 In a certain area of Jerusalem many years ago, some Jewish stores were open on Shabbos. Rabbis and lay leaders tried to convince the proprietors to close their stores before sunset Friday afternoon. Eventually they were successful with all the storekeepers except one -but no amount of pleading or pressure could get this particular Jewish grocer to close his store. Business was good, and to his mind, profits outweighed any regard he may have had for Shabbos observance.

**Pained by the Story of the Stubborn Grocer**

 Reb Aryeh Levin, of blessed memory, heard about the stubborn grocer and was pained that a fellow Jew would willfully desecrate the Shabbos. One Friday afternoon, R' Aryeh dressed early for Shabbos, donned his shtreimel (fur hat worn on Shabbos), and went to the store. It was well before sunset when R' Aryeh entered the shop.

 He walked quietly through the store, eyeing the goods on the shelves and watching the brisk flow of customers and purchases. He sat down on a chair near the back of the store and observed the activity.

 The owner recognized R' Aryeh but didn't say anything to him, thinking that perhaps the elderly rabbi was resting and would soon be on his way to shul. As sunset drew near, however, the grocer wondered why R' Aryeh made no effort to go. He began to feel a bit uncomfortable at the great rabbi's presence in his store so close to Shabbos. The proprietor was busy with his customers, but every once in a while he would steal a glance at R' Aryeh, who seemed to be sitting there for no apparent reason. Finally the grocer approached R' Aryeh and said, *"Rabbi, I see you have been sitting here for a while already. Can I do something for you? Are you feeling all right?"*

**What Can I Say? Shabbos is Shabbos!**

R' Aryeh stood up and, after exchanging pleasantries, said to the grocer, *"I heard that you keep your store open on Shabbos. I know that others have spoken to you about it, but I wanted to come and see for myself how difficult it is for you to close for the holy Shabbos. Now I know without a doubt how hard it is for you to close and give up so much business. Honestly, I feel for you - but what can I say? Shabbos is Shabbos!"*

The grocer was silent for a moment, and tears welled up in his eyes. He said, *"My dear Rabbi, you are the only one who took the time to come over here to see the situation from my point of view. It means so much to me that you came to my store. Everyone else just criticized me from a distance."* Warmly, he shook R' Aryeh's hand and said, *"I promise you that I will do what I can to see if I can close the store on Shabbos.”* R' Aryeh wished the grocer, *"Good Shabbos.”*

 Within weeks, the store was closed by sunset every Friday afternoon. Only after R' Aryeh was in *"the grocer's shoes"* did he undertake to reprimand him, and even then he did so only with great sensitivity. No wonder people listened to R' Ariyeh's words. (Along the Maggid’s Journey, R. Pesach Krohn, p.113)

 Throughout the millennium, Tzadikim have led the Jewish Nation: the Kohanim Gedolim (high priests), the Prophets, the Kings and the Sages have all served as spiritual conduits to funnel holiness and wisdom from heaven. Our current generation also has its Tzadikim which lead Yisroel. Many of us have the merit to live in close proximity to some of the biggest Tzadikim active today.  Hundreds of thousands of Jews flock to Tzadikim yearly for advice on everything from business concerns, medical issues, family issues, marriage proposals, and suggestions on spiritual growth.

**The Great Value of Speaking to a Tzadik**

 It can be very time-consuming to seek the counsel of a Tzadik. In addition, the time we are allotted to speak with the Tzadik may be limited to a few minutes. However, it is well worth the wait. Because, a few minutes with one of the Tzadikei HaDor (the spiritual leaders of the generation) is worth much much more than hours and hours with less qualified people. This is because the words of a Tzadik are the closest thing to divine inspiration that we have today. In other words, the best chance we have to receive heavenly inspired answers to life's issues is by asking Tzadikim.

 Therefore, when we go in to ask a Tzadik for advice, it is important to listen very closely to his holy words. As we mentioned, the advice the Tzadik gives is the closest thing to coming directly from Hashem. Why then should we be so foolish as to contradict this heaven-sent advice? By seeking the advice of Tzadikim we are guaranteed to live happier, less worrisome lives. Good Shabbos Everyone.

*Reprinted from this week’s Good Shabbos email*

**It Once Happened**

**The 300 Ruble Gift**

 Rabbi Meir of Premishlan was a great tzadik (righteous individual) whose holiness was acknowledged by Jews from far and wide who sought advice and blessings from him.

 One day a woman was admitted into his study. As soon as she set eyes on the Rebbe she burst into tears. "What is troubling you?" Reb Meir asked. The sobbing woman could barely speak, but she managed to get out the words, "Rebbe, I have no children; please give me your blessing."

 The Rebbe was full of compassion for the woman's pain and he replied to her, "May it be G-d's will that your request be fulfilled."

 Armed with the holy man's blessing, the woman confidently went home and waited for his words to be realized. Not a year had passed when Rabbi Meir received a letter from a distant city from a person he did not know.

**Shocked to Find a Tremendous Amount of Money**

 When he read the letter and removed the papers contained in the envelope, he was shocked to find a bank note for the tremendous sum of 300 rubles. The letter read: "My wife has just given birth to a child thanks to the Rebbe's blessing. I beg the Rebbe to accept this gift in gratitude."

 Far from being pleased, Rabbi Meir's distress was apparent, as he extended his hand to put the bank note on the far side of the table as if he wanted to remain as distant from it as possible. Then he called his sons to come to him at once to discuss an important matter.

 When they arrived, he brought them into his room and pointed to the letter: "Today I received a letter which is brimming with errors and falsehoods. For one thing, it refers to me as a holy man and that is patently false. Secondly, the entire premise of the letter is false, for this man credits me with the birth of his son. How ridiculous! What do I have to do with such lofty matters as birth and death? Am I a holy man that I have control over these things? I have therefore decided to return the money to him at once."

 His sons were shocked. The eldest spoke first. "Father, we are very poor. Perhaps G-d has taken pity on us and decided to end our poverty through this man. Maybe it would be wrong and ungrateful of us not to make good use of it."

 Everyone agreed. Only the Rebbe staunchly maintained that the money must be returned to the misguided sender.

 They turned the matter over this way and that, but it became clear that no consensus could be reached. The family decided to bring their dilemma to a rabbinical court, a beit din. The judges listened to both sides of the case and then reached their decision:

 The Rebbe should keep the money. It was true that Rebbe Meir was such a modest man that he denied being a tzadik whose blessings could have helped the childless woman, but the woman and her husband obviously thought differently. In their estimation it was the Rebbe's prayers that brought about the birth of their child, and they gave the money purely as a gift from their hearts. Therefore, it was perfectly fine to keep the gift.

**The Problem is Given to the Rebbetzin**

 The Rebbe and his sons left the rooms of the beit din in very different moods. The sons were satisfied that their opinion had been upheld by the judges. The terrible poverty in which they lived would be alleviated at least for a time. Their father, however, was brought no peace by the decision. For although the rabbinical court had ruled that he was completely justified in keeping the money, his own heart was uneasy. He decided to take the problem to his wife, the Rebbetzin. As his life's companion and a woman whose vision was always clear, she would be the final arbiter of this case, for he trusted her judgment completely.

 The Rebbe and his sons entered the house and asked the Rebbetzin to come and sit with them; they had something of great importance to discuss with her. When the family was seated around the table, the Rebbe filled her in on all the details of the problem, leaving out nothing, but stressing his own unease with the reason for receiving the gift.

**The Sons State their Case**

 Her sons, on the other hand, stressed how much easier their lives would be now, since G-d had clearly wanted to help them out of their troubles by sending them this money.

 She listened wordlessly to both sides and then turned to her husband. "My dear husband, all your life you have guarded yourself from even tasting food that had a question about its kosher status. Even when you discovered that it was 100% kosher you refrained from eating it, because its permissibility had been in question. Now we are faced with the same situation, the only difference being that the question is on the permissibility of money and not on food. Why should you act any differently now?"

 Rabbi Meir smiled at her. He stood up, walked into his room, took the bank note and put it into an envelope which he addressed to the sender. That very day it was deposited in the post and the hearts of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin were content.

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**The Human Side of the Story**

**The Extra Letter**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 The author of a scholarly Torah work brought his manuscript to the renowned Torah giant Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky in Bnei Brak for his review. In this work he repeatedly quoted things that he had heard from the Sage and wanted his approval that he had faithfully cited his words.

 To his surprise Rabbi Kanievsky made no corrections in the text but did erase one letter of his own name wherever it was mentioned as the source. Dozens of times he eliminated an extra letter yud from his name.

 The author wondered aloud why such a correction was necessary since it did not affect the actual scholarly text. "The extra letter is a lie," replied the Sage, "and it cannot remain even if it will not lead to any misunderstanding of your text."

 "But why bother making the correction dozens of times, "asked the author, "when I could have made all the corrections with one press of a button on the computer?"

 "A lie cannot be skipped over while I am reviewing," answered the Sage, "so I couldn't continue reading until I made each correction."

Reprinted from this week’s website of Yeshiva Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim, ohr.edu

**Movement**

 Did you ever do a double-take when you were in a store and you noticed a mannequin that looked alive? Or maybe you were in a wax museum and sat down next to a person only to find out that it was a wax figure.

 In either case, what gives the mannequin or the wax figure away is the lack of even a small, slight, almost imperceptible movement. It could be the blink of an eye or the ever-so-faint rise and fall of the chest. Or maybe a nose twitch. But it is always some kind of movement all the same.

**A Giveaway for the Existence of Life**

 Movement is a dead giveaway for the existence of life. Which is one of the reasons why, according to Jewish teachings, people are called "movers" whereas angels are called "stationery."

 A person moves, stretches, bends, reaches, climbs, falls.

 A person moves both physically and hopefully - and more importantly - spiritually.

 The noun "mover" when applied to people as compared to angels is specifically referring to spiritual matters. And it is in spiritual matters as well that a person stretches, bends, reaches, climbs and sometimes falls, but gets up again to climb once more.

 Just as physical movement is a sure sign of life, spiritual movement is a true indication of the vitality of the soul.

**How Do You Move Your Soul?**

 How do you move your soul? Simply by making an even small, slight, almost imperceptible move.

 By learning Torah concepts that stretch you. By reaching out to another person with love and compassion. By bending your will to G-d's will. By climbing, one step at a time, through the mitzvot. By falling once in a while, but then by getting up again.

 Torah study (and Torah as used here is not confined to the Five Books of Moses but encompasses all areas of Jewish teachings) is limitless. It is full of joy and life and movement and excitement and mind-expanding concepts.

 Mitzvot (commandments), as well, give us a chance to move. With mitzvot we cleave to G-d, we connect to another Jew, we help shoulder a friend's burden, we laugh and sing and dance.

**The Dove’s Initial Complaint to G-d**

 A Midrash relates that when the dove was created she complained to G-d, "It is not fair. I am so small and I have no way of outrunning my many pursuers who would like to capture me."

 So G-d added wings to the delicate body of the dove.

 But once more the dove objected. "These wings are so heavy. Now I certainly have no way of escaping my predators." G-d taught the dove that the wings are not a burden but can be used to fly.

 Torah and mitzvot are not lifeless weight that we have to shlepp along but rather are wings to help us access heights otherwise unattainable. They can help us reach higher and higher. They can help us grow. They help us move in the most graceful, exhilarating way possible.

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