

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	4:47 PM
Friday Night Learning	after 7:00 PM
Daf Yomi— By R' Teichman	<i>Special Time</i> 8:00 AM
Shacharis— Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"ס-	מ"א 9:14 < גר"א 9:50
B'NOS - Hosted @ Ohel Moshe	2:15 - 3:15
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos	4:45 PM
Maariv -	5:57 PM
Avos U'Banim -	6:45 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Daf Yomi— By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis	8:30 AM

~ Followed by *Halacha Shiur*

Mincha / Maariv	4:55 PM
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Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi— By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
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Shacharis

Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM
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Tues, Wed, Fri.	6:45 AM
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Mincha (Mon—Thur)	1:45 PM
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~~Mincha/Maariv~~ - See You Next Year!

Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM
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**Rabbi Teichman's Thursday Night
Shiur After Maariv**

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*In honor of Siyum DafYomi of
Maseches Bechoors*

NEW MASECHES STARTS SUNDAY!

~Erchin~

Group meets M-F 5:45am / Sh & Su 7:30am

Shalosh Seudos

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Gabaim:

Naftali Miller (Rishon) & Yossi Frydman (Sheni)- Gabbai@

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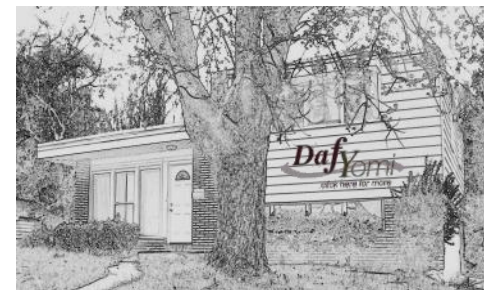
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י"ט טבת

אהל משה



Rabbi Zvi Teichman

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Issue#218

RABBI'S MESSAGE

High Stakes Gambling

In honor of the members of my Daf Yomi Shiur (and all others) who sacrifice much needed sleep to devote themselves to limud haTorah daily without exception!

In the latter part of the nineteenth century a controversy erupted regarding an alleged episode that is recorded in the classic commentary to Mishna, the *Tiferes Yisroel*, authored by the Rabbi of Danzig, Rabbi Yisroel Lipshutz.

There he quotes of a "delightful" tale he once read.

An Arabian king had heard of the wondrous reputation of the illustrious Moshe Rabbeinu. Curious to fathom the depths of his personality the king commissions an artist to paint a portrait of this great leader. The artist returns having fulfilled his mission. The king displays this resemblance to his court physiognomists (the study of facial features as an indicator of temperament) waiting to hear them dissect the details of Moshe's great character.

The physiognomists after studying the painting report that the individual portrayed is thoroughly wicked and possesses every known vice.

Dumfounded, the king decides to see for himself if indeed this is an accurate depiction of this great leader or not.

Upon meeting the Jewish leader the king discovers that the portrait is exact and he expresses his dilemma to Moshe that apparently his advisers interpreted the picture incorrectly.

Moshe responds that their analysis is indeed a competent one. Moshe tells the king that although he has succeeded in transforming himself to greatness, nevertheless, he was born with inherently poor character traits and was initially inclined towards all the vices listed.

His virtue, Moshe reveals, lies precisely in the determined effort it took to convert his deficiencies into assets. (תפארת ישראל מסכת קידושין ד' יד)

The former Maggid of Wilkomir, Rabbi Chayim Yitzchak Aharon Rapoport wrote a scathing attack on this spurious contention that Moshe was born defective, going on to cite many sources and quoting contemporary rabbinic figures that attest to Moshe's righteousness from birth.

He as well as others laid claim that this "fable" has its origins in "pagan literature".

Unbeknownst apparently to these polemicists, this idea, albeit not the actual account, is quoted decades earlier in the name of the Holy Baal Shem Tov by his very own grandson, Rabbi Moshe Chayim Efrayim of Sudylkow, the author of the *Degel Machaneh Efrayim*. (סוף פרישת כי תשא)

There he quotes in the name of his saintly Zaida, that Moshe was born a גמור, "utterly wicked" but transformed himself through much effort into a צדיק גמור, an utterly righteous one.

This idea is indicated in Moshe's very name.

The name משה in its מלוי, "full" form is expressed as מה ש, with each letter of his name thus fully represented (e.g. the letter "מ" is pronounced "mem", i.e. מם)

מם is numerically equivalent to 80, שן is 360, and מה equals 6, forming a total of 446, the numerical equal of מות, death, indicating the inherently flawed essence of Moshe. Yet clearly the Torah seems to imply that Moshe was indeed born into greatness.

When Moshe enters this world, the Torah relates:

(ב) ותרם אתו כי טוב הוא... *She saw that he was good...* Rashi relates that this טוב, good, refers to the house filling with light, reminiscent of that first טוב, recorded in Torah at Creation, (בראשית ב ג), וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב (בראשית ב ג), *God saw that the light was good.*

When Basya, the daughter of Pharaoh opens the floating basket and discovers the child Moshe the verse states (שמות ב ו) ותראו ושמעתו ב ו) *and she saw him*, Rashi again quotes the Talmud that interprets "Him" as referring to the Divine Presence that accompanied Moshe.

Seemingly, Moshe was born endowed with perfection.

How do we understand these verses in light of the Holy Baal Shem Tov's contention?

How does one overcome a predisposition to moral weakness?

Everyone has a basic desire for good but so often the overpowering pull of instinct doesn't allow us to escape the comfort of "pleasure" for a higher moral purpose. It takes a willingness to risk giving up what comes so natural and easy for a greater value that is not yet in hand.

What holds us back is the fear of taking the leap.

In all the heroic efforts described prior to the birth of Moshe, from the remarriage of Yocheved to Amram, after he separates from her lest she bear a child that will inevitably be murdered, to the placing of Moshe in the basket amongst the reeds and the courage of Basya in saving the baby, there is one common denominator:

Despite the odds against them they were willing to take a gamble for a noble goal.

Sure there were risks.

Would it be worth going through pregnancy and childbirth to have the baby casually discarded when born?

Would they risk their lives by attempting to hide the child from the authorities?

Was there really a chance of the fragile child surviving the crocodile infested waters?

Wouldn't Basya jeopardize her position as princess were she to be discovered harboring a Jewish child?

Success in life warrants the ability to take chances to achieve a higher goal.

Moshe despite his predilection towards evil grew up among individuals who instilled within him the confidence that it pays to gamble for a greater success. It empowered him to overcome the temptation to abide by his natural inclination and risk "giving it all up" for something much more powerful and pleasurable, although not yet tangible.

Perhaps the observing of the Divine Presence alongside Moshe was a product of Yocheved and Basya's powerful positive attitude that gazed into the eyes of this fragile child, who was perhaps endowed with challenges, yet they perceived that light that radiated from him.

It was the example they set and the confidence they instilled within Moshe that enabled the "original light" to penetrate through the clouds and shine so brightly.

The Talmud (בכורות ה) relates how Kuntrukus a Roman general accosted Rabbo Yochanan ben Zakai with a claim that the Torah's account of the amount of silver Moshe allegedly collected for the purpose of building the Mishkan doesn't jibe with the sum actually used in the construction. The general facetiously asks Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, "was then Moshe a קוביאטוס, a dice player, a gambler (פ"ה בתוס' שם), who squandered the money for his own gain?"

This, he is intimating cynically, would reconcile the discrepancy.

There could have been a myriad of reasons for his "abusing" the funds, why the accusation of being a gambler?

Moshe was indeed born with an instinct to gamble, to risk the loss of a portion in the world to come for the instant gratification of this tangible world. But through the influence of those that raised him he went against even greater odds. Moshe risked it all for the greatest achievement of all time.

Moshe begins his adult life risking time and again the security of the "palace" for eternal values.

Taking on the Egyptian taskmaster, confronting the mocking Doston and Aviram and solely and in total isolation standing up to protect the daughters of Yisro from the abuse of the male shepherds.

The Baal Shem explains that when God summons Moshe at the Burning Bush, He calls out: *Moshe Moshe*. This represents the affirmation of the dual nature of Moshe, the tendency towards evil and the power and courage to overcome it and transform it into absolute good.

God is conferring the exemplar of service to Hashem to serve as the leader of the Jewish nation. It is in this quality that God hopes we will emulate in our lives as well.

Moshe responds enthusiastically: *הנני, "Here I am!"*

How much do we "risk" in our lives in order to grow spiritually?

How much time are we willing to sacrifice to spend learning or engaging in acts of kindness?

What are we willing to gamble on and possibly lose so that we can get closer to God?

Too often we jeopardize opportunities for greatness in exchange for transient and valueless objectives.

Life is about risk taking, without it we stagnate.

The stakes are indeed high, but the rewards are even greater.

If we bet on the side of God we are assured to win the jackpot!

הנני, Here I am!

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