

“Rejoice in what Hashem gives you. Remind yourself that everything comes from Him. When you sit to eat, celebrate the pleasure that He is giving you. It is a pleasure to eat!

“Hashem makes food taste good. He gives you the food and He makes it taste good. It is His will that you enjoy the food that He supplies. He has designed the body to maximize the pleasure that you get from eating. As soon as you see or even smell food, your enzymes start to flow to prepare for the intake of the delicious treat. Hashem wants you to be happy. It is a *misvah* to enjoy what He gives you.”

When you are about to partake of one of Hashem’s gifts – fresh air, cool water, delicious food, a good nap – turn that pleasure into a *misvah*. Focus on the fact that Hashem is the one giving you that great gift. Train yourself to say, “Thank you Hashem!” This simple habit can transform your everyday acts into millions of credits in your Heavenly bank account. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

The Two Builders

Though he enjoyed great success with the building of the Ponevezh Yeshivah in Bnei Brak in the early 1940’s, the Ponevezher Rav was not satisfied with merely building a structure of brick, metal, and stone. He wanted to build people as well.

After the war, he chose survivors for the manual labor needed in the yeshivah, and trained them on the job. Eli, who had lost just about everything and everyone dear to him, became the yeshivah’s plumber. Before long, he regained some of his spirit and was fully dedicated to the yeshivah’s cause. He was soon joined by Yossel the electrician, and together they helped with the upkeep of the building and unclogging sinks and fixing broken light fixtures. They felt so proud to accomplish and contribute to the yeshivah’s learning that to them these were no menial tasks.

Perhaps the individual who gained most from working for the yeshivah was Moshe Vaitrick, the carpenter. Another war survivor, Moshe was close to despair on many occasions. However, the Ponevezher Rav would not allow him to give up, instead recruiting him to build the shtenders, bookshelves, tables, and chairs for the *bet midrash*, as well as the bed frames, cabinets, and night tables for the dormitories.

Summers in Bnei Brak can be sweltering, with temperatures reaching well over 100 degrees, along with stifling humidity – and most yeshivahs did not have air-conditioning. On one exceptionally steamy day during *ben hazemanim*, Moshe was giving the shtenders a makeover when he found that he was sweating profusely and needed to sit down for a few minutes. While he took his short break, his mind began to wander. As often happened, his memories took him to a world long gone. He thought of his family and friends and allowed himself to feel the sadness once more.

Suddenly, the Ponevezher Rav walked into the empty *bet midrash* and saw Moshe sitting there. Noting the slump of Moshe’s shoulders and the difficult working conditions that day, he approached his longtime friend. He placed his hands on Moshe’s shoulders and remarked encouragingly, “Moshe, what a *zechut* the two of us must have. We’ve been building Yeshivat Ponevezh all these years. Let’s keep it up.”

Moshe looked up and smiled as he contemplated the Rav’s comment: “The two of us...” Yes, the Ponevezher Rav had placed his broken friend on equal footing with him. One was a world-class *Rosh Yeshivah* and perhaps the greatest builder of Torah in *Eress Yisrael*. The other was a simple carpenter building and fixing tables and chairs.

And yet, it was ‘the two of us...’

Now invigorated, Moshe smiled again, lifted his hammer, and banged a loose nail back into place. There was much work to be done. After all, along with a special partner, he was building Ponevezh. (The Spark Within)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444
West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764
(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT LECH-LECHA ☆ עֲשֵׂת לֶךְ-לְךָ

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 40:27-41:16

OCTOBER 30-31, 2020 13 HESHVAN 5781

Friday Minhah: 5:36 pm

Candlelighting: 5:36 pm

Evening Shema after: 6:34 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: 6:26, 8:15, 9:00 am

Morning Shema by: 9:25 am

Shabbat Class: 4:15 pm

Shabbat Minhah: 5:15 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:33 pm (R"Y 7:05 pm)

Sunday Minhah: 4:30 pm

This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Moshe ben Margie
by Eli & Marjorie Kairey

Remember to move your clocks back one hour on Saturday night.

Mabrook to Rabbi Eliezer and Yvette Zeytouneh on the birth of a baby boy.

Mabrook to the grandparents, Isaac and Karen Braha.

A Message from our Rabbi

”אִם-מְחוּט וְעַד שְׂרוּדֵי-נֶעַל וְאִם-אֶקַח מִכָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ”

“If so much as a thread or shoe strap or if I shall take from anything that is yours” (Beresheet 14:23)

When Abraham heard that his nephew, Lot, had been captured in battle by the armies of four powerful kingdoms, he and his disciples attacked and defeated them. This enabled him to rescue Lot along with all the other captured people and possessions. Grateful for Abraham’s efforts, the king of Sedom told him that after returning the people, he could keep the property for himself.

Despite the fact that Abraham was legally entitled to the money, he boldly refused to take any gifts from the wicked king, lest he take credit for making Abraham rich. However when Abraham and Sarah previously traveled to Egypt, Abraham asked her to pretend that she was his sister so that they would give him presents. Why was Abraham so unwilling to accept any perks from the king of Sedom, but did not have the same compunction about receiving them from the wicked Egyptians?

Harav Shlomo Kluger (quoted by Rabbi Ozer Alport) points out that there was a critical difference between the two episodes. *Rashi* writes (13:3) that when Abraham

was traveling to Egypt, he didn't have enough money to pay for his stays at the inns along the way, so he had no choice but to put the cost of his lodging on his bill. Although King Solomon writes (*Mishle* 15:27) that it is preferable not to take gifts, this concept does not apply to a debtor. King Solomon also writes (27:7) that a borrower is a slave to a lender, and when a person owes money he should feel a burden to pay off his loans. That overrides the stringency of not receiving handouts from others. In such circumstances, the appropriate course of conduct is to accept the present and use it to pay one's bills.

For this reason, Abraham had no qualms about taking gifts from the Egyptians because he needed to pay off his debts as soon as possible. Subsequently when Abraham was dealing with the king of Sedom, he was self-sufficient and was able to turn down the offer.

This concept has much application in our society. If a generous person offers a gift, it is correct to turn it down. However if one owes money, the gift should be accepted to pay those debts, and of course not to use the money for a luxury or a vacation. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Under the Influence

The following observation is from Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv, the Alter from Kelm.

The Torah describes the story of Sarah and Hagar. Sarah was not able to have children so she suggested to her husband, Abraham, that he should marry Hagar. When Hagar sees that she became pregnant, she begins treating her mistress, Sarah, with disrespect. Sarah demands that Abraham do something about this situation and Abraham responds that Sarah can do with Hagar whatever she pleases.

Sarah treats her harshly and Hagar runs away from her. An angel finds Hagar in the wilderness and asks her: "Where are you coming from and where are you going?" Hagar responds that she is running away from Sarah. The angel tells her to return to Sarah and suffer under her hand no matter how harshly she may be treated.

What is this dialog? The *Seforno* elaborates on the nature of the conversation between Hagar and the angel. The angel tells Hagar – Just think for a minute. From whom are you running away? You are running away from the house of Abraham. Do you know what a merit it is to be from the house of Abraham? Do you know what type of better person you are by virtue of living in the house of Abraham? You were in an environment of holiness and purity and now you are headed to a place 'outside the Land' towards evil people.

Hagar responds, "I am simply fleeing. I cannot take it anymore; it is too painful. I am not headed towards anyplace in particular; I am just leaving an intolerable situation." The angel tells her "Go back anyway, no matter how bad it is."

Rav Simcha Zissel explains that there is another level to the dialog as well: Hagar responded to the angel, "You do not have to worry about me. Since I have been living in the house of Abraham, I am now immune to negative influences. I have reached this level of holiness from the years I have spent in Abraham's holy environment, so now nothing bad can happen to me. I will not be corrupted."

To which, the angel responds: "Hagar, you're wrong. It does not matter that you spent many years in the House of Abraham. A person's current environment always has an effect on them. Today, your value system may be straight and pristine; but no one can say I am immune and I can go live on my own and be unaffected by my new environment. Rav Simcha Zissel continues: the best proof of this phenomenon is Lot. Look what happened to Abraham's nephew who faithfully followed him from Haran to Canaan and then to Egypt and then back to Canaan. Abraham took care of

him; he nurtured him; he taught him about *hesed* and living a proper lifestyle. Yet when Lot headed to Sodom, his value system totally turned around. In the words of *Hazal*, Lot said, "I no longer desire either Abraham or his G-d."

No person is immune from his environment. People are social animals. They are affected by their peers and their neighbors. So many times in life, we experience tests and temptations. Opportunities tempt us that will perhaps take us to places that are not the best of environments. We tell ourselves, "Listen, I can handle it. I am strong enough." Everyone needs a good environment.

This was the story of Noah and the Flood. We saw the effect that an environment has, not only on people but on animals as well. *Hazal* say that even the animals were engaged in improper behavior. The waters of the flood washed the first few inches of the surface of the Earth away because of the corrosive effect of the corrupt environment that existed at that time. It was like a toxic waste site. Merely removing the factory that produces the toxic waste is not sufficient. The toxic effect creeps into the soil and creeps into the water because of the negative environment.

No one is immune from corrupting influences. This is the lesson of the dialogue between Hagar and the angel. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Pay Day

”אֶל־תִּירָא אַבְרָם אֲנֹכִי מִגֵּן לְךָ שְׂכָרְךָ הִרְבֵּה מְאֹד”

“Fear not, Abraham, I am a shield for you; your reward is very great.”
(*Beresheet* 15:1)

Hashem promises those who fulfill His *misvot* that they will be rewarded commensurate with their good deeds. We understand of course, the rule that “reward does not apply to This World.” The ultimate reward that one will receive will materialize in the World of Truth, *Olam Haba*. The *Ben Ish Hai* questions this rule. There is a Torah injunction that a Jewish worker must be paid on the day that he completes his work. One's wages may not be delayed – not even overnight. Why then does Hashem not reimburse us immediately for our *misvah* observance?

He explains that there is a technicality in the law that one who hires workers through an agent does not have to pay them at the end of the day. Therefore since *Klal Yisrael* accepted the Torah through the agency of Moshe *Rabenu*, the prohibition against delaying a Jewish worker's payment does not apply.

However, *Klal Yisrael* accepted the first two of the Ten Commandments directly from Hashem. These *misvot* are *Anochi* – referring to *emunah*, and *lo yihyeh lecha* – idolatry. Thus, one who believes in Hashem and shuns idolatry is worthy of receiving his reward in This World. This, says the *Ben Ish Hai*, is alluded to in this *pasuk*. Hashem says, “Do not fear, Abraham, because *Anochi magen lach*. The *Anochi* (faith in Hashem) will serve as a shield to protect you. A Jew who is faithful, who believes in Hashem with all his heart, will merit great reward – in This World. (*Peninim* on the Torah)

Build Up Credits

Many people have a love-hate relationship with food. First they partake of a myriad of multi-course meals and extravagant deserts over Shabbat, a holiday, or another special occasion. But almost before the last delectable morsel is swallowed, a guilty backlash sets in. What a terrible wrong they have committed by indulging! They immediately proceed to make resolutions about changing their eating habits.

A friend of mine, who was a devotee of the late Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt"l, gave me a copy of the following lessons that he had heard from the Rabbi.

“Rejoice you righteous in Hashem – and give thanks and praise to His holy Name!