

feel that if they don't grab, they will miss out on life's great opportunities. Impulse buying becomes a way of life not only for trinkets, gadgets, and snacks, but also for major life decisions such as a choice of jobs, schools, friends – even husband or wife.

The opposite of a “now” person is a “never” person. Business deals, as well as social and spiritual choices, do require consideration, but they also cannot be put off forever. Insecurity leads to indecision. Bottom line: fear of making an occasional bad choice causes the “never” person to lose out on all the right things.

When a decision has to be made, don't grab. But don't freeze, either. Think! Weigh the possibilities, consider the future, and make an enthusiastic decision. It may only take a minute, but it will raise your lifetime batting average to superstar levels. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

The Spiritual Energizer

“The sun warms the earth. If it were a little further away, we would freeze. The sun is also the source of energy for the earth. It is the battery that supplies the energy to power everything that takes place on the earth. All the movement- people walking, cars running, anything that is happening in This World – is possible only because the sun's energy has if source of power.

On a physical level, the Sun is a source of energy for our sustenance. On a spiritual level the Torah and its teachings are a Spiritual Energizer for a most productive life. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

No Need to Panic

Although he spent the entire week learning in Tifrach, Yitzchak Lemberger decided that he would like to have one *seder* a week learning in Yeshivat Mir in Yerushalayim. He asked a good friend, who he felt would be an appropriate *habrutah*, if they could learn together once a week in the Mir. They decided to learn on Shabbat morning after *Shaharit*, and made arrangements to meet that coming Shabbat at 10:00.

Yitzchak arrived a few minutes early and began looking in the back of the *bet midrash* for a *Masechet Zevachim*. As he was scanning the shelves he saw an older gentleman make his way to the front of the *bet midrash* and sit down. Suddenly the old man began to cry. Yitzchak heard the crying but was reluctant to approach the man, so he just went about his own business. Having found the *Gemara* he was looking for, he settled into a seat in the back of the room, opened his *sefer*, and began to learn. But then he heard that same crying once again.

Yitzchak was worried, as the loud crying was now accompanied by incessant banging on the shtender. He watched, riveted to the scene as his concern grew. Was someone sick? Perhaps worse – had someone close to him died? The banging and moaning intensified; the old man in the front of the *bet midrash* seemed inconsolable. Yitzchak had never seen anything like it before. This was his first time in the Mir; he looked around to see if there was anyone who would be able to help the man. Just then his *habrutah* Eli arrived, sat down, and opened his *Gemara* to learn. But shockingly, Eli did not react to the crying. He had to have heard it. Why wasn't he reacting?

Eli looked up after a moment and was now facing his bewildered friend. Yitzchak could no longer control his curiosity. “Don't you hear it? Why is that man crying?”

“Oh, that. Why are you surprised? That's just Rav Chaim. He's learning *mussar*.”

This was not an unusual occurrence. In fact, it happened every single day. The *Rosh Yeshivah* Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz was simply having his daily *mussar seder*.

No cause for panic after all – just a moment to cherish. (One Shining Moment)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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SHABBAT SHEMOT ✪ שַׁבַּת שְׁמֹת

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 1:1 - 2:3

JANUARY 8-9, 2021 25 TEBET 5781

Friday Minhah: **4:29 pm**

Shir Hashirim (midrash): **4:19 pm**

Minhah (midrash): **4:29 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:29 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:27 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Rosh Hodesh Shebat will be celebrated on Thursday, January 14.

A Message from our Rabbi

(Shemot 2:11) "וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיִּרְאֵם בְּסִבְלָתָם"

“And [Moshe] went to his brothers and looked upon their burdens”

Rashi explains the above verse, “Moshe set his eyes and heart to feel pain for them.” How did *Rashi* know this? How did he know that Moshe felt their pain? It doesn't say that in the verse! The *Gur Aryeh* points out that *Rashi's* source for this fact is the obvious question: Hadn't Moshe already seen his brothers toiling at labor, since he was already a grown man at this point? The verse, *Rashi* tells us, must therefore be alluding to a deeper understanding of the situation than a mere visual observation – a deliberate effort by Moshe to comprehend and feel the agony of his fellow Jews.

Rabbi A. Henschel Leibowitz says, incredible as it may seem, man can look and not clearly see. He can hear, yet not fully understand. Even Moshe, the greatest prophet who ever lived, with all his sensitivity and perception, can be confronted with a scene of terrible heart-breaking cruelty to six hundred thousand fellow Jews and yet, on some infinitesimal level, not completely feel the tragedy until he makes an intensive effort to totally empathize with their pain. He had to set his heart and eyes to sensitize himself even more, and only then could Moshe truly feel the totality of their pain.

We should not trust our own senses nor our own sensitivities to receive an accurate picture of our fellow man's plight. A person can pass right by us carrying heavy packages and while we notice this fact, we can be emotionally oblivious to his struggling and effort. Only by pausing to focus our eyes and hearts will we feel his discomfort and offer to help.

Many of our brothers and sisters stagger under heavy burdens in life, maybe not

physical packages, but some are even harder to bear. People have emotional, financial and social needs that cry out for help, but we can walk right by them and never hear that cry – unless we try to feel their pain. Helping someone find a job or a *shidduch* – or even just lending a sympathetic ear – can go a long way to ease their burden.

If Moshe *Rabenu* needed a special effort to feel this about his fellow Jews, how much more should we try to become aware of the feelings of those around us.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Lesson of Anonymity

The *pasuk* (verse) in this week's *perashah* says, "And a man went from the House of Levi and he married the daughter of Levi." This begins the most illustrious career in all of Jewish history—the career of Moshe *Rabenu*. This is where it all started.

However, it begins in a very anonymous and inauspicious fashion. The Torah does not even initially identify Moshe's father and mother. The *Oznayim L'Torah* from Rav Zalman Sorotzkin suggests that the Torah is sending us a message that "anybody can have a 'Moshe *Rabenu*.'" Certainly, Moshe was the master of all prophets. But the idea is that there can be people who will reach tremendous stature in spite of the identity of their parents. The reason the Torah anonymously describes Moshe's parents as "a man from the house of Levi" and a "daughter of Levi" is to convey the idea that they did not have to be anybody special to bring a very special child into the world.

It is not a requirement for the "Savior of Israel" to have a father who was the *Gadol HaDor* (greatest man of his generation). If truth be told, Amram was the *Gadol HaDor*; but if in fact the Torah would have written "And Amram went and married..." the message would be "Yeah! What do you expect? His father was the *Gadol HaDor* so now he will be the *Gadol HaDor*!" The Torah therefore says "No!" It was not necessary for Moshe's father to have been Amram. He could have been anybody. The lesson is that the greatest of people can come from the plainest of parents. This is one lesson from this *pasuk*.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky says there is another very important lesson over here as well: The Torah wants to emphasize and make clear that Moshe *Rabenu* was a person who was born of a man and a woman. There was nothing magical or mystical about his genesis and how he came into the world. A man married a woman and they had a baby. That baby happened to turn out to be the savior of Israel.

Rav Yaakov writes that this is a foundational belief in the Jewish faith. This is unlike the prevalent belief in the non-Jewish world. They had to create a savior for themselves. They had to invent the idea that he was supernaturally conceived through a holy spirit and things of that nature. They had to hypothesize the concept of Immaculate Conception—someone who was not a son of man, but a "son of G-d".

This, Rav Yaakov says, points to one of the fundamental differences between Judaism and Christianity. In Judaism, there is no contradiction between spirituality and materialism. We have a physical body, but it is permeated by a soul, a spiritual component integrated with the body's physical component. The soul has the capacity to spiritually elevate the physical body.

Rav Yaakov writes that although they also believe in a soul, it is as if it is in a closed compartment. The body is intrinsically unholy, while the soul is in its own compartment, and never the twain shall meet.

That is not the Torah's theology. Therefore, the Torah makes a specific point here in telling us that a man and a woman bore Moshe *Rabenu*. In Judaism, this synthesis between body and soul allows for a theology in which a holy union between man and woman takes place, through which another potentially holy body and soul is conceived.

Jews can relate to this synthesis. We can handle the belief that we have a savior who was born to a man and a woman. We believe that our eating can be for the sake of Heaven; our drinking can be for the sake of Heaven; our business can be for the sake of Heaven; and our intimate activities can all be for the sake of Heaven. This is the spiritual challenge of a Jew. The Torah began the narration of the story of the birth of the savior of Israel by telling us that "A man went from the House of Levi and married the daughter of Levi..." and they had a child who became the savior of Israel—in order to emphasize this point. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

An Act of Charades

A *talmid* of R' Moshe Shapiro relates the following personal story. "One time my Rebbe was in dire need of money. Knowing that in general Hashem only sends *parnasah* when we do our part, he requested that I go out to raise some funds. I did my part; I spent hours collecting funds, but it seemed that my *hishtadlut* did not bear fruit.

"I was surprised when the next morning R' Moshe Shapiro approached me and profusely thanked me for helping him through this difficult situation. I was perplexed, 'In what way was I of any help?' R' Moshe explained: 'When we do *hishtadlut*, Hashem sends His *berachah*. However, not necessarily is it sent directly through the *hishtadlut*. This morning a wealthy individual came to my office with a large contribution. I am confident that this *berachah* was a result of your *hishtadlut*. Thus, I am thanking you for your help.'"

In such situations it is easy to see that it is Hashem's doing. It is our job to gain the perspective that even when the *berachah* is a direct result of our work, it is still exclusively Hashem's doing.

We see this lesson many times in this week's *perashah*. When Hashem initially sent Moshe to Pharaoh, not only did it not alleviate the problem, it made matters worse. Why was it that Hashem had to make matters worse through Moshe's intervention?

The *sefer Etz Hada'at* brings the following remarkable explanation. We can imagine what would have been if Moshe's intervention would have borne immediate success: skeptics would have said that it was not Hashem's doing, rather, it was to Moshe's credit. They would have accredited Moshe for being a good politician and would have attributed his success to his connections with Pharaoh from his youth. To prevent this, Hashem had Moshe demonstrate what his intervention could accomplish without Hashem's help. Thus, when Hashem brought the redemption, it was clear that it was His doing.

This idea is similar to a concept that is elucidated in the *Derashot HaRan*, where he asks: Moshe *Rabenu* is the representative of Hashem. Why did Hashem orchestrate that Moshe should have a speech impairment instead of him being a flawless orator as befitting for a representative of the Creator?

He answers that Hashem's intention was to make it clear that *yesiyat Misrayim* was His doing. If Moshe would have not had this issue, skeptics would theorize that Moshe, with his great oratory skills, influenced Pharaoh to make an emancipation proclamation and it was not the hand of Hashem. For this reason Hashem arranged for Moshe to have a speech deficiency. With this we can also understand why Moshe's name was omitted from the *Hagaddah*; to be clear that Hashem redeemed us, not Moshe. (*Tiferes Yosef*)

Now and Never

In the Sixties, impatient youth adopted the slogan, "We want the world and we want it now!" Even today, some go through life grabbing with gusto. They want instant gratification and give little consideration to decisions, major or minor. They