

Synergy Page

“The heat of the sun causes water to evaporate from the oceans and then rise to form clouds. The winds cooperate to blow the clouds over continents where they release the water in the form of rain. The force of gravity cooperates with the rain so that it falls to the earth. The sun shines again on the earth and causes vegetation to grow.”

Hashem created us to be dependent on each other for emotional, physical, spiritual, and financial support. Bonding relationships is a cause of Synergy with one another. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

A True Blessing

The Davis family (name changed) is a prominent family in a large Jewish community in Argentina. One day a famous speaker, R' Meir Michoel Greenwald from Yerushalayim visited Argentina to share words of inspiration. Mrs. Davis attended the lecture where they heard Rabbi Greenwald expound on the importance of saying *Berachot* slowly with concentration as well as the importance of answering *Amen*.

Mrs. Davis left the speech inspired and motivated to implement that which she had learned. She returned home and shared with her children what she had heard. As a family they focused on putting it into action. They said their *berachot* slowly with *kavanah* and all those around listened carefully and answered *Amen*.

The Davises lived in a neighborhood that was adjacent to an area that had a high crime rate. They thus had top security at their home. There was a tall fence surrounding their house that was outfitted with high-tech cameras that were connected to a security firm. Yet, as they would find out, it was not foolproof.

It was late one evening; Mrs. Davis was in her kitchen preparing supper and giving her children attention. She felt thirsty so she prepared herself a cup of water. Her children were standing nearby waiting to answer *Amen* when all of a sudden the kitchen door opened up and in walked two thieves brandishing weapons. They had somehow outsmarted the security system.

The family stood there frozen in fear expecting the worst. Then, Mrs. Davis noticed the cup of water in her hand. Slowly and with deep concentration and devotion she made a *berachah* and her children attentively answered *Amen*. What happened next stunned them; the robbers mysteriously turned around and left the house.

Their top security system had proved itself insufficient to ward off the thieves, but they discovered that they had a different security system that was more powerful.

The *berachah* of *Shehakol* is not merely thanking Hashem for a cup of water. It is declaring our faith that everything that transpires in this world is dictated by Hashem. Saying this *berachah* properly has the power to bring salvation as it asserts that we recognize that we are not bound by the laws of nature; everything is dependent completely on Hashem's will. (*Tiferes Yosef*)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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SHABBAT VAYHI ☆ חַג הַמִּלְחִימָה

Haftarah: Melachim I 2:1-12

JANUARY 1-2, 2021 18 TEBET 5781

Friday Minhah: 4:23 pm	Shaharit: 6:20, 6:40, 8:00, 8:15, 9:00 am
Shir Hashirim (midrash): 4:13 pm	Morning Shema by: 9:07 am
Minhah (midrash): 4:23 pm	Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 4:00 pm
Candlelighting: 4:23 pm	Shabbat Ends: 5:21 pm (R"Y 5:53 pm)
Evening Shema after: 5:21 pm	Sunday Minhah: 4:25 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

This bulletin is dedicated by Steven Levy
in honor of his wife, Linda, a true *eshet hayil*.

**Mabrook to Rabbi Morris & Frieda Mizrahi on the birth of a baby boy.
Mabrook to the grandparents, Solomon & Denise Torgueman and Valerie & Andre Rofe.**

Mabrook to Sammy & Elizabeth Sitt on the marriage of their son, Albert, to Betty Ghonoja. Mabrook to the grandparents, Morris & Stella Sitt.

A Message from our Rabbi

“אָרוּר אָפֶם כִּי עָז וְעִבְרָתָם כִּי קִשְׁתָּהּ”

“Accursed is their rage for it is mighty, and their wrath for it is harsh.”
(*Beresheet* 49:7)

It is brought down in the *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shimoni*) that Ya'akov cursed the rage of Simon and Levi because they didn't consult with their father when they killed the people of Shechem.

Rabbi Reuven Trop tz"l notes that it is implied that this was the reason Ya'akov was angry with Shimon and Levi – that it didn't dawn on them to ask Ya'akov. However it is clear that they consulted with each other because when the *pasuk* says: “They answered Shechem and Hamor with cunning,” the *Targum* translates “with wisdom,” which means they thought about it and they came to a decision with calm and with deep thought. The only problem was that it didn't occur to them to ask Ya'akov, and that was what angered Ya'akov.

A proof to this is that it says in the *Midrash on Parashat Bamidbar* that the flag of Reuben had a picture of the “*duda'im*” that Reuben brought, on the flag of Yehudah was a lion, on Levi’s flag were the *Urim V’tumim* and Shimon’s had a picture of Shechem. Does it make sense that an evil act would be displayed on their flag? Therefore it must be that it was a good act, except that they didn’t consult.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

I’m With You

After Yosef acceded to his father’s request and swore to him that he would bury him in the family gravesite in the Land of Canaan rather than bury him in Egypt, the Torah records that “Yisrael prostrated himself toward the head of the bed.” [*Beresheet* 47:31]. *Rashi* brings the teaching, “From here we have a source for that which the Sages said – that the Divine Presence of G-d is present above the head of one who is ill.” Therefore, Ya’akob *Abinu*, despite the fact that he was ill and weak, turned around and bowed to the head of the bed (the location of the *Shechinah*’s Presence).

I saw an interesting thought in a *sefer* called *Tiv HaTorah*: Why is it that the *Shechinah* is on the top of the bed of a sick individual? The *Tiv HaTorah* suggests that the reason is that when a person is lying sick in bed, he thinks that perhaps the *Ribono shel Olam* has abandoned him. He thinks that the Almighty is angry with him and is punishing him. *Hazal* say that this is not the attitude a person should have. A person should have the attitude that in spite of my illness and in spite of my suffering, it is NOT because the *Ribono shel Olam* hates me. For whatever reason it may be, He wants me to go through this – either as atonement or for whatever reason – but regardless, this is for my good!

Therefore, *Hazal* tell the sick person – you should know that in this debilitating state that you may be in, the *Ribono shel Olam* is still here with you. Do not give up hope and do not feel abandoned. Do not feel like an outcast.

The author brings an incident (I actually know the person with whom this happened). There was a Jew named Rav Herschel (Tzvi) Kowalsky. He was a big *Talmid Hacham*. He once learned *b’Chavrutah* (one on one study partner) with the *Hazon Ish*. He was the *Rosh Kollel* of the Socochover Kollel in *Eress Yisrael* in Bnei Brak. He was a holy man. At the end of his life, when he was sick, he suffered. When people came into him, they gave him *kvitlach* (small pieces of paper such as are inserted between the cracks of the *Kotel*) containing their names and personal prayer petitions. He would take the *kvitlach* and put them near the top of his bed. He said the top of a sick person’s bed is like the Western Wall. Just as our Rabbis say the Divine Presence has never left the *Kotel haMa’aravi*, so too they tell us the Divine Presence is located by the top of the bed of a sick person.

The point we are trying to convey is that a person should never feel abandoned by G-d at the time of illness or frailty that confines them to bed. On the contrary, *Hazal* tell us that the Divine Presence rests at the top of the bed of a sick person. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Old News is Good News

As an introduction to the Torah’s narration of the blessings Ya’akob gives Yosef’s two sons, the *pasuk* says, “Now Yisrael’s eyes were heavy with age, he could not see; so he brought them near him and he kissed them and hugged them.” [*Beresheet* 48:10] Prior to blessing Ephraim and Menashe, Ya’akob tells Yosef “I did not imagine seeing your face, and here G-d has shown me even your offspring.” [*Beresheet* 48:11]

Now let us ask, when did it first happen that Ya’akob *Abinu* found out that Yosef was alive finally saw him after their long separation? It happened at the end of *Parashat Vayigash* — 17 years prior to the Torah’s narration in Chapter 48 where Ya’akob takes ill and Yosef brings in his two sons to their grandfather to receive his blessing. What is going on now that suddenly, 17 years later, Yaakov is commenting to Yosef that he never expected to see him again and G-d was so good to him that he showed him even Yosef’s children!?! This is old news! Why is he saying it now?

The answer is that to most people, something that happened 17 years ago is old news. We tend to forget it. Man’s nature is that despite the magnitude of an event, as time goes on, it tends to become less and less memorable. We forget how amazed we were. We forget how grateful we were to the Almighty at the time for His kindness to us.

Do we remember our wedding and how grateful we were at that moment that we got married? Do we remember the first time our wife had a baby, how thrilled we were when we had our first child? Do we remember how thrilled we were that we had the merit to march our children down to the Chuppah? Yes, we remember – but it becomes ‘Old News.’ Perhaps on an anniversary, these events come to mind, but the excitement of the moment certainly fades with time.

The *pasuk* is trying to teach us that to Ya’akob *Abinu*, in spite of the fact that this happened 17 years ago, nevertheless, every single day he was in a constant state of giving gratitude to the Almighty for His Kindness to him. It was constantly on his mind. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Sorry!

It’s easy to say “I’m sorry” to Hashem. After all, He is the One in charge. He controls the fate of everyone and everything. “If I’ve done anything to upset Him,” most would say, “I must be quick to appease Him.”

It is quite a different matter with another person. Most people have a hard time with the two words “I’m sorry.” If you hurt another physically and unintentionally, perhaps the words of apology will slip smoothly out of your mouth. But if you embarrassed someone intentionally or did something that you knew would cause financial damage, that is another story. Your tongue lies at rest and refuses to budge. Should it break down and move, the ivory gates of the teeth and flesh walls of the lips keep the well-intentioned words inside the mouth.

Intellectually, we may understand that it should be more difficult to “face” Hashem than a fellow mortal. However, it is a sad commentary that the fact that we don’t “see” Him makes it easier for us to “deal” with Him when there is a problem, while the eyes of another person looking back at us is just impossible – well, almost impossible – to ignore.

Our Sages teach that Yom Kippur can atone for sins, but only those between man and Hashem. Before Hashem will forgive a sin committed by one person against another, He demands that the transgressor compensate and appease the person who was hurt.

You may unsuccessfully try to do your “best” to mend fences with your colleagues. But remember, in this high-speed, wireless world, it only takes a minute to contact another. The most effective tool for appeasing an angry or hurt person is right at the tip of your tongue – or fingertips. Just say – or write – the two words that can save your own life: “I’m sorry. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)