

Good Shabbos, everyone.

I want to thank the drasha sponsors:

- Murray and Baila Jacobson, in commemoration of the first yahrtzeit of Baila's brother, Shickie, רפאל חיים ישעיה בן יוסף לוי ז"ל, on the 28th of Nisan.
- Ella and Jesse Levy, in memory of Ella's father, Jacob Geldwert, whose yahrtzeit is the 27<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, and in memory of Jesse's father, Samson Levy, whose yahrtzeit is the 21<sup>st</sup> of Nisan.
- Cantor David Neuman, in memory of his mother, Sarah Neuman, whose yahrtzeit is the 19<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.
- Hillel and Dena Soclof, in memory of Hillel's mother, Ada Soclof, Chaya Bracha bas Tzvi Hirsch HaLevi, whose yahrtzeit is the 4<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, and in memory of Dena's mother, Sophie Bernstein, Zissel Fay bas Avraham Tzvi Hirsch, whose yahrtzeit is the 20<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

May the *neshamos* have an *aliyah* and may the sponsors be rewarded for their support of the shul with *bracha*, *hatzlacha*, and good health!

Thank you to everyone who helped make Pesach in Shomrei Emunah so uplifting and meaningful! After last year's Pesach away from Shul, it felt especially good to be back together this year. Special thanks to our gabbaim, baalei tefilla, baalei kria, and magidei shiur for all their dedication...also to those who wrote for, and edited, the *Kol Hashomrim*, and to all of you for your participation in a beautiful Yom Tov! Also, welcome back to those who were away. May we take all the inspiration with us into the days and weeks ahead leading up to Shavuot.

Pesach is a time of beginnings. Historically, it was the beginning of our national identity, of our spiritual birth as a nation. It can also be the foundation of our individual journeys in our quest to live meaningful lives. Speaking of the month of Nisan, Hashem told Moshe החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם, this month will be the beginning for you. The **Baal Shem Tov** taught that this month of Nisan will always be a chance at a new beginning; it will give us the ability to break free from whatever obstacles are holding us back from achieving our potential.

New beginnings are exciting—filled with freshness, optimism, and hope. When we experience anything for the first time—there is always a joy in the newness, an excitement and mystique about the unknown. And human nature is such that at the beginning, or whenever something is new, we are extremely careful to follow all the rules, and we do not take shortcuts or liberties, or try to put our own spin on the activity.

But what happens after the beginning? Many times, we settle into a routine, and as time goes on—the details blur, the excitement wanes....and we begin to add and change and modify out of a sense of overconfidence or in a quest to keep things exciting.

The Torah records that, after construction of the Mishkan, Aharon and his four sons conducted a special “inauguration ceremony,” a form of rehearsal for seven days. Now, on the eighth day, the inauguration service was about to conclude, and life with the Mishkan was ready to start.

ויקרא פרק ט (א) ויהי ביום השמיני קרא משה לאהרן ולבניו ולזקני ישראל: (ה) ויקחו את אשר צוה משה אל-פני אהל מועד ויקרבו פל-העדה ויעמדו לפני ה': (ו) ויאמר משה זה הדבר אשר-צוה ה' תעשו וירא אליכם כבוד ה':

*It was the eighth day—Moshe called Aharon and his sons, and the elders of Israel. And then everyone else gathered and he said to them “**this is what you should do and the glory of God will appear to you.**”*

The **Medrash** in **Toras Kohanim** asks the obvious question— Moshe does not define or elaborate...he makes a seemingly ambiguous statement- **זה הדבר**—**this** is the thing to do...without stating what that thing is, what specifically did Moshe instruct the people to do?

The **Medrash** answers that his message was to banish “a **specific yetzer hara**” from their hearts...and then the glory of Hashem will descend...אמר להם משה לישראל אותו יצר הרע העבירו מלבכם, ואז וירא אליכם כבוד ה'.

What is the “*specific yetzer hara*” that Moshe Rabbeinu refers to?

**Rav Shimon Schwab** suggests that it was the *yetzer hara* of religious autonomy and innovation in spiritual activities...the desire for religious independence that breaks down boundaries, rules, and regulations...and ultimately removes God from the equation. He says this can come from a good place, a place of excitement and inspiration...but it can lead to spiritual desolation.

מעין בית השואבה עמ' רמ"ח: וצריך לבאר מהו "אותו יצר הרע". ונראה שהכוונה על אותו יצר הרע של דילוג על פרטי הדינים והציווים מתוך רוב האהבה, בבחינת "אהבה מקלקלת את השורה" כי אהבה בלי צמצומי היראה עלול ליפך מינה חורבא. משל למה הדבר דומה לאמא האהבת בנה אהבה עזה, ובהמלא לבבה בגודל אהבת חובקת אותו לחיקה בכל כחה עד שכונקת את התינוק. . . ובענין זה היה החטא של נדב ואביהוא, שמרוב אהבה נכנסו להקריב קטורת לפני ה' "אשר לא צוה, אותם" וכמאמרם ז"ל בתו"כ אף הם בשמחתם

He explains that this “*specific yetzer hara*” in fact turned out to be a big problem very soon afterward. The Torah records, in the next Perek, that Nadav and Avihu violated this prohibition and were killed because they attempted to serve Hashem in a way He did not command.

ויקרא פרק י (א) ויקחו בני־אֶהֱרֹן נָדָב וָאֲבִיהוּא אִישׁ מִחֶמְתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ כֶּהֱן אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂמוּ עָלֶיהָ קֹטֶרֶת וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֲתֶם:

As the **Shem Mishmuel** explains, the Glory of Hashem descends only upon that which Hashem commanded. The reason that every aspect of the Mishkan was specified *ה' את משה*, was to stress that in the Mishkan—and, indeed, in all *avodas Hashem*—every detail must be dictated by Hashem alone. That was the sin of Nadav and Avihu. Despite their good intentions, they brought something that was not commanded.

שם משמואל ויקרא פרשת ויקרא שנה תרעב

וכן בנדב ואביהוא שהקריבו אש זרה אשר לא צוה אותם, וידוע בספרים אש זרה מה היא, ואינו מובן שהרי הם התכוונו למצוה. אך הוא הדבר, שבאשר לא צוה אותם ולא היו שלוחים ואי אפשר הי' שיחול שם השם במעשה ידיהם שוב שרה בו דבר חיצוני לעומתו. וזה הי' הענין שמרע"ה כתב על כל דבר ודבר כאשר צוה ה' את משה, להורות שכל מה שהוא עושה הש"י הוא העושה, ושלוהו של אדם כמותו, ובלעדי השליחות אינו עושה מאומה שאיננו דבר נפרד כלל. וזהו כבודו של מקום, שהכל בטל אליו יתברך בתכלית. וע"כ הי' שכרו נמי מדה במדה, שלא יהי' נפרד עומד מבחון אלא קרא לו שיכנס:

Their sin was the result of their unbridled love of God. This passion was generated by the events surrounding the inauguration of the Mishkan. Nadav and Avihu approached God in an improper manner. This led them to worship in a way that God had never sanctioned, and as a result, they died.

According to the Medrash *זה הדבר* is referring to “אשר צוה ה' תעשו”—what Hashem commanded is the only acceptable form of *avodas Hashem* and one must not deviate from what Hashem directs, even one iota.

The timing of this sin is significant. By emphasizing that all of this occurred on the eighth day, the Torah teaches us a vital lesson in life. The seven days of dedication were days of exhilaration and accomplishment—the beginning. At the outset, people are willing to work within the proper guidelines. But, in life, there always is the day after, the figurative eighth day, and this eighth day is one of challenge and struggle, when we begin to feel certain autonomy and try to exert control. And it is this eighth day that truly defines and determine one’s life and future.

Moshe was telling the people that they must always resist the temptation of trying to do something they were not commanded to do, even when motivated by a sincere desire to get close to Hashem. They must stay the course, following the guidance of the Torah, even when things seem like they need some more flavor.

But, on the other hand, there is also a danger in settling into routine. There is a reason people try to add their own flavor and spin. As time goes on, it is easy to lose focus, motivation, and excitement. Routine can lead to boredom, monotony, and lethargy in *avodas Hashem*.

I would, therefore, like to suggest another answer to the question of what Moshe meant by—זה הדבר, this is what you must do. Moshe meant by זה “this exact way”—not only about the details, but the manner and attitude in performing the *avoda*. The excitement in doing something for the first time---the sense of wonderment and passion—should continue for a lifetime of *avoda*.

Moshe Rabbeinu was telling them: The first time we perform a *mitzvah*, there is a natural excitement, which comes from doing something new. But for most people, most of the time, the passion wanes with the passage of time and as the *mitzvah* is performed repeatedly. Find a way to do it like it is new and fresh every time...within the routine. Don't lose the focus, passion, and excitement that come with connecting to the *Ribono shel Olam* each and every time. In addition to keeping all the details...as you settle into a routine--make sure to come in each and every day with a sense of mission and purpose and excitement, to be able to do the will of Hashem.

Indeed, the *pasuk* describes Aharon Hakohen as bringing the second *korban chatas*...and it says he did it like the first. Why would we have thought otherwise?

ויקרא פרשת שמיני פרק ט פסוק טו

(טו) וַיִּקְרָא אֶת קָרְבָּן הַעֵם וַיִּלְחַח אֶת־שִׁעִיר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר לָעֵם וַיִּשְׁחָטְהוּ וַיִּחַטְּאֵהוּ כְּרִאשֹׁן:

**Rav Yaakov Galinsky** explains that כְּרִאשֹׁן means with the same excitement and wonder and passion

ה'ר' גלינסקי עמ' 131

ויש להבין מה ההדגשה "כראשון"? ובכן בראש ובראשונה יש כאן התפעלות עצומה. החטאת שהקריב אהרן היתה קרבנו הראשון. אחרי כן הקריב את עולתו קרבן אחר והקרבנו אחרת. ומבאיים שוב חטאת נוספת. אה חטאת כבר הקריב לפני שעה קלה.

אבל לא, אלא וישחטתו ויחטאהו כראשון. באותה התלהבות כאלו היתה זו החטאת הראשונה...

והלא טבע הוא באדם, שמעשים חוזרים ונשנים נשחטת התפעלותם. וכמו שאמרו שה"קורא הלל בכל יום הרי זה מחרף ומגדף ומדוע משום שבהגיע מועד התרוננות ונס יכהו רגשותיו ולא יוכל להתעלו ולהתפעל כדבעי.

He writes that human nature is for routine to make things stale. Habits form us and guide us, but also create monotony. Aharon Hakohen was so committed to serving Hashem that every time he did a *mitzva*—he approached it with the same sense of calling and passion and excitement.

Rav Galinsky says we see this elsewhere with Aharon Hakohen. . When he lit the *menorah*, Rashi writes, Aharon didn't change. Why would we have thought that he would modify a commandment?

רש"י במדבר פרשת בהעלותך פרק ה פסוק ג: ויעש כן אהרן - להגיד שבחו שלה אהרן שלא שינה:

Rav Galinsky and others explain that when Rashi writes “*lo shinah*” it wasn't a reference to Aharon's behavior, but to Aharon himself. He explains that Aharon maintained the same level of excitement and enthusiasm—throughout his life--that he felt the first time he lit the *menorah*. The greatness of Aharon is that he was able to approach the *menorah* each day with the same level of excitement that he felt the very first time he lit it.

This is certainly an extraordinary achievement, deserving of recognition. When we think about how many times we have performed certain *mitzvos* - daily *davening*, weekly Shabbos obligations, annual Yom Tov rituals - it's certainly worth considering whether we live up to the lofty standard set by Aharon. It's not easy, to be sure, but Aharon remains a role model for sustained passion in *mitzvah* observance.

Pesach is called הג שבועות ימים—literally a holiday of weeks.

יחזקאל פרק מה פסוק כא: כְּרִאשֹׁן בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם הַפֶּסַח תֵּג שְׁבַע יָמִים מִצּוֹת יֵאָכְל:

This is because it serves as a beginning--starting a routine of the *avoda*—taking the inspiration from Pesach to Shavuot. The **Tur** writes that each of the *shalosh regalim* corresponds to one of the three Avos. Pesach is Avraham, who represented new dawn. Shavuot is Yitzchak, who ensured the beginning would continue.

**Rav Shaul Yisraeli** writes that Yitzchak gave permanence to Avraham's new mission. He ensured that it wouldn't just be a blip on the screen of history. He gave it a future. That is the purpose of routine and habits.

שיח שאול עמ' ע"ב: ערכו נראה בזה, שהוא זה שהפך את התופעה של אברהם לברת קיימא. לכוז שלא תעבור מן העולם כאפיצודה בודדת, כהברקה בת חלוף, אלא שתהפוך להתחלה של תקופה חדשה בעולם. יצחק נולד בשעה ששמשו של אברהם התחילה שוקעת, התחלת השעבוד נמינת מזמן הולדת יצחק.

How does one infuse and instill within the habits and routine passion and excitement?

The Baal Shem Tov's grandson, **Degel Machane Ephraim** quoted in his name that he interpreted the *pasuk* in Tehillim 71:9 זקנה לעת תשליכני לעת זקנה "do not let my *avodas Hashem* become old and stale and uninspired."

Please help me live with a sense of renewed excitement and passion every day of my life. Help me to see every day as a new opportunity and a new chance at life; every day we are given new life.

דגל מחנה אפרים דברים פרשת עקב נכד הבעש"ט

וזהו שאמר אא"ז זללה"ה על פסוק (שם ע"א, ט) אל תשליכני לעת זקנה פירוש שיזקין הדבר אצלו כי כמו הזקנה גורם חלישות בכל איברי האדם מחמת שתש כוחותיו ולחלוחו ומריצות הדמים המחיה את האדם כמו כן ברוחניות שדבר ישן וזקן אין לו בו תענוג וחיות גדול ולא דבר חדש, וזהו בכל יום יהיו בעיניך כחדשים (פסיקתא זוטא ואתחנן ו', ו') כי חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך (איכה ג', כ"ג) פירוש כי על ידי שחדשים לבקרים היינו שאתה מחדש בכל יום מעשה בראשית ועל ידי זה רבה אמונתך נמצא עיקר כל התפילה והמצוה היא האמונה:

Similarly, the **Imrei Emes** writes that Aharon realized that Hashem creates everything anew each and every day, and within that context he appreciated his ability to fulfill his mission and purpose, and Hashem's expectation that he connect to the *ratzon Hashem*. He was conscious of the reason he was engaged in the *mitzva*. As he performed the *mitzvah*, he never lost sight of his connection to Hashem—and the continued privilege to do *avodas Hashem*--and that perspective kept things fresh and exciting.

אמרי אמת במדבר פרשת בהעלותך שנה תרצ

אהרן הכהן היה כולל כל נשמות ישראל, וזהו שנאמר לו בהעלותך את הנרות, ואיתא בספרים שעל ידי ההדלקה היה מכוון ההלכה שהקב"ה מחדש בכל יום, והיינו שלא שינה שהיה לו תמיד התחדשות, שהיה מקריב בכל יום מנחת חביתין מה שכהן הדיוט מקריב רק בעת שנתחנך לעבודה (מנחות עה. וברש"י ד"ה מקיש, ע"י שפ"א צו תרמ"ז), איתא (אבות ד ג) אין לך אדם שאין לו שעה, שלכל אחד מישראל יש חלק בשע"ה נהורין, ואהרן הכהן היה כולל את כולם, שהוא היה השליח לקשרם בההלכה שהקב"ה מחדש בכל יום, וזה דכתיב (מלאכי ב ו) תורת אמת היתה בפיהו, כי למה נאמר זה דווקא עליו, אולם הכוונה לתורה שבעל פה שהיה מכוון תמיד לרצונו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ולא שינה, וזהו תורת אמת.

The **Shulchan Aruch** rules in *siman* 61 that one must accept שמים שמים, anew every day—as every day is really a new beginning...

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות קריאת שמע סימן סא סעיף א – ב

(ב') אשר אנכי מצוך היום היינו לומר: בכל יום יהיו בעיניך כחדשים, ולא כמי שכבר שמע אותו הרבה פעמים שאינו חביב (ה) אצלו.

We must find excitement in doing things that are true and meaningful...not just in the unknown and the new.

This perspective is necessary to do *avodas Hashem* properly.

This week, we will be celebrating Israel's 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Seventy three years is a long time. By now, we are used to having a state of our own. Most people alive today have never lived at a time when there was not a vibrant Jewish state. This is wonderful. We see Israel as a necessity, and cannot picture a world without Israel.

But at the same time, we take it for granted. We don't thank Hashem with enough passion and excitement for the gift of a Jewish state. In my second year in Kerem B'Yavneh, Rav David Kav, who was a Ra'm in the Yeshiva but did not identify as religious Zionist, spoke. And his words made an impression on me. He said: you may wonder why they asked me to speak. When I was a young boy during the War of Independence in 1948, I was handed a revolver and sent on many missions. He still remembered the fear and anxiety and also the exhilaration of the creation of the new state and the victory in the war. In his words "In the early years--who didn't celebrate? "not for a political reason, not for a halachic reason, but because the excitement and gratitude were overwhelming." In our days, we still need to find ways to thank Hashem anew—for the gift of Israel, and for all the bracha in our lives...and inspire ourselves to keep the routine, the details, and guidelines, but with excitement and passion. May we be *zoche* soon to see the *geula shleima, bimhera viyamenu, amen*.