

מאת מנ"ה ברוך הירשפלד שליט"א
רב דקהל אהבת ישראל, קליבלנד הייטס

turn you into a haughty, materialistic and selfish person - something which happens unfortunately all too often to people who come into wealth.

Opportune Time for Requests During Birchas Kohanim. We know from the words of Chazal (4) that during *Birchas Kohanim*, it is an opportune time to ask for our dreams to turn out well and good, as we all do. The **Zohar** (5) states that during *Birchas Kohanim* there is “Heavenly mercy in all the worlds” (this refers to our material world as well as all the spiritual worlds) and a person who asks for relief from distress can change things around from harsh judgment to great mercy. Therefore, it is considered a good time for all requests, not just about dreams (see **Piskei Teshuvos** (6)). For this reason, many people say the long “די רצון” during the third *beracha* of *Birchas Kohanim*, while the *Kohanim* chant their special and unique tune between the words. Much of that request has to do with asking for good *parnassa* in great detail. If one cannot manage to say the whole text in the time when the *kohanim* are chanting, he can make his own personal requests - even in his own words.

NOTE: When one says the text of “די רצון” and comes to the bracketed Kabbalistic combinations of the Holy Names of *Hashem*, he should just visualize those words and not say them.

When the Aron is Opened. The **Zohar** tells us an interesting thing (7). After the *Shachris* prayer is concluded and we take out the *Sifrei Torah* in order to read from them, the Gates of Heaven also open at this very moment, and we say “ברוך שמיה”. On *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* we add another *tefilla*, composed by the *Arizal*, which includes a section about good *parnassa*.

הלכה למעשה

A SERIES IN HALACHA
LIVING A “TORAH” DAY

Laws and Customs that Merit a Good Parnassa (25)

Rosh Hashana (cont.): Birchas Kohanim. The time when the *Kohanim* bless the people is a special time for bringing down good *parnassa*, in a number of ways. There are many *halachos* in **Shulchan Aruch** (1) which are all based on the obligation of the congregation that is being blessed, to concentrate fully on the blessing being bestowed upon them. By doing so, they can increase the effect that the *beracha* will have on them. It would therefore seem reasonable that the people in the congregation should be aware of the meaning of these *berachos*.

The First Word: “ברוך.” The very first word of the Priestly Blessing is “ברוך” - “*He shall bless you.*” Rashi in *Parshas Naso* (2) comments that this means, “*He (Hashem) will bless your possessions.*” In other words, He will give you good *parnassa*. It is important that the people who are being blessed with this *beracha*, should be aware as they listen to the blessing that this word refers to good *parnassa*, and when they say the word “ברוך” they should have in mind that this *beracha* of good *parnassa* should be fulfilled for them.

The Follow-Up: “וישמרך.” After his explanation on the first word of the blessing, Rashi now goes on to explain the following word “וישמרך” - “*He will guard you.*” Rashi denotes that this means that after giving you an abundance of wealth, *Hashem* will guard you from robbers coming and stealing it from you. It is appropriate to mention the explanation of the **Netziv (R’ Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin ZT”L)** (3) on the word “וישמרך”. He explains that it means that *Hashem* will watch over you so that the wealth He is giving you does not

הוא היה אומר ...

R’ Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT”L (Lubavitcher Rebbe) would say:

“*Rosh Hashana* recalls the creation of the world, as it says: “*Today the world was born.*” According to our Sages, however, the world was created on the 25th of *Elul*, so that *Rosh Hashana* actually marks the sixth day of creation, the day on which man was created. Why do our *Rosh Hashana* prayers proclaim that the world was formed on that date? The answer is that the the world’s prior existence to man’s creation is to be considered unfinished. Through the creation of man, *Hashem* revealed a deeper purpose of creation and a higher aspect of G-dliness; thus, the world did not previously exist. The anniversary of man’s creation can therefore be considered the anniversary of creation as a whole.”

The Seforim Hakedoshim teach us:

“*You remember all that is forgotten.*” - “אתה זוכר כל הנשכחות” *In the Mussaf Tefillah of Rosh Hashana*, we say: ‘*Hashem* remembers those things that man has forgotten, but ignores things that he remembers. How? A person commits a sin but later forgets about it. The sin doesn’t truly bother him, and he is able to push it from his mind. *Hashem*, however, has not forgotten about the incident. On the other hand, if a person commits a sin but repents afterward, learning from his mistake and resolving not to repeat it, *Hashem* ‘forgets’ the matter completely.”

R’ Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ZT”L (Kotzker Rebbe) would say:

“On this holy day all of our deeds must be ‘לשם שמים’ (*for Heaven’s sake*). Even our ‘לשם שמים’ must be ‘לשם שמים’!
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זמן קריאת שמע/הגרי"א - 9:49

סוף זמן תפילה / הגר"א - 10:48

שקיעת החמה ליום השבת - 6:39

מוצג'יק צאד"כ/ מעריב - 7:29

צאד"כ/לשית רבינו תם - 7:51

* פלג המנחה - 5:26

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טיב התבלין

רעיונות ופירושים לעורך את האדם לעבודת

הש"ת והתחזקות באמונה ובשחון מאת

ויאמר כל אשר נשמה באפו ה' אלקי ישראל מלך ומלכותו בכל משלה ... (תפלה ר"ה)

אותו על הדבר הרי הורה בכך על מרידה במלכותו ובאדנותו.

נמצא כי עבודת המלכויות הוא לקבל את התורה מחדש, לקבל כל אחד על עצמו לדאוג שלא יבוא לידי העברת פי ד' אף לא מחוסר ידיעה, שזה גם כן פגם בהמלכות שלא למד את כל חוקי המלכה הנוגעות אליו. ומעתה נקבל על עצמנו כל אחד ואחד מהיום והלילה לקבוע שיעור תמידי בהלכה למעשה לדעת את הדרך אשר נלך בה ואת המעשה אשר נעשה.

ובתור עצה טובה הייתי ממליץ לקבוע שיעור בספר 'קיצור שלחן ערוך' אשר הוא מעט הכמות ורב האיכות ומקף בתוכו את רוב רובן של ההלכות הנוגעות לכל אחד דבר יום ביומו, כמובן שלא באתי לגרוע מן החשיבות של לימוד ההלכה בעיון עם המקורות, אך בכל זאת אין זה סתירה לדברינו האמורים שיש בזה מעלה נוספת שתוך זמן קצר אפשר לעבור על כל ההלכות בתמצית ובקצרה, ובפרט שלאחרונה הדיפוסהו עם סדר לימוד לפי לוח השנה, ולכן מה טוב ומה נעים לקבוע סדר יומי אשר ודאי יהיה לתועלת מרובה להציל ממכשולות רבות הנובעים אך ורק מן אי ידיעת הלכות פשוטות וברורות.

גם בבית יש לשם דגש על חשיבות לימוד וידיעת ההלכות למעשה כי הלא הרבה מן ההלכות הנוגעים גם לבית יעקב אלו אנשים, ועל כל ראש בית אב לדעת כי הוא נושא על עצמו את העול שלא יבואו בביתו לידי מכשול מתוך אי ידיעה, וזכורני אצל אבי מורי שליט"א שהיה נוהג מידי שבת בשבתו ללמוד בעת הסעודה עם בני ביתו שיעור בהלכה בספר קיצור שלחן ערוך, ובסעודה האחרת היה לומד בספר חפץ חיים על הלכות לשון הרע.

ובזכות שנתחזק בלימוד ההלכה ישפיע עליו הש"ת שפע ברכה והצלחה ברוב רחמיו וחסדיו ונוכה כלונו לשנה טובה אכ"ו.

מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט"א
מגיד מישירים בק"ק בית שמש

מאוצרותיו של המגיד

בעניין תענית של תשובה בר"ה ושבת שובה, ובעניין 'שמעו ותחי נפשכם'

תמוהין, שאסר להתענות ביו"ט ראשון של ר"ה, והתיר להתענות בשבת. (והיינו שמקשה איך החמיר ביו"ט הקל, והקיל בשבת החמורה). ותירץ ה'תשובה מאהבה' בשם רבו ה'נודע ביהודה', (הובאו דבריו בשו"ת 'נודע ביהודה', תניינא, קונטרס אחרון, ס' שני"ד), "ושמעתי בילדותי, ממורי ורבי הגאון נחום עדן (הוא רבינו בעל נ"ב זצ"ל), לבאר

כתב הרא"ש (ר"ה פרק ד', ס' י"ד, ד"ה תנא בפרקי וכו'), "הכי אמר מר רב נטרונאי גאון, ביו"ט ראשון של ראש השנה, אי אפשר לישב בו בתענית, משום דמדאורייתא הוא, אבל ביו"ט שני ובשבת לית בהו קושיא, משום דעשרה יומי אינון-אלה' משונן מכל ימות השנה. לפיכך נוהגין רבותינו לישב בהן בתעניות, בין בחול בין בשבת, ע"כ. ודבריו

את דברי **רב נטרונאי גאון**, וגם מה שדקדק לומר, דעשרה יומי אינון משונין מכל ימות השנה, (ולא כתב סתם ד'עשרה יומי אינון הם ימי תשובה), כי כתבו בשם **האר"י ז"ל**, דבכל יום בין ר"ה ליו"כ, צריך האדם לתקן אותו היום של כל השנה, דהיינו, ביום ראשון צריך לשוב אל ה' על כל מה שחטא תמיד ביום הראשון, וכן ביום השני, וכן ביום השלישי וכו', ואם לא עשה כן, ועבר יום אחד משבעת ימים אלו, הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו, והוא מעוות לא יוכל לתקן עוד. אמור מעתה, לגבי יום ראשון של ר"ה, יהיה אותו היום (שם השבוע) גם אחר ר"ה, ולמה לו להתענות ולחלל את יו"ט חיינו, דרך משל, אם חל ר"ה ביום השני, יהיה יום שני אחר בין ר"ה ליוה"כ, וכן אם חל ביום השלישי או בשאר ימי השבוע, וכן אם חל בשבת, יהיה שבת אחר-שבת שובה' בין ר"ה ליוה"כ, א"כ, ביום ראשון דר"ה אין לו להתענות חינוס.

אבל לגבי יום שני דר"ה, שלא יהיה עוד יום שני בין ר"ה ליוה"כ שיוכל להתענות בו, כיון שיום שני הבא יהיה עיוה"כ שאסור להתענות בו, (ע' גמ' פסחים ס"ה-מ"ר בריה דרבינא, כולה שתא הוה יתיב בתעניתא, לבר וכו' ומועלי יומא דכיפורי וכו', מעלי יומא דכיפורי, דתני חייא בר רב מדפתי, ועיניתם את נפשותיכם בתשעה לחדש, וכי בתשעה מתענין, והלא בעשירי מתענין, אלא לומר לך, כל האוכל ושותה בתשעה בו, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו מתענה תשעי ועשירי), וכן לגבי שבת שבתוך הימים שבין ר"ה ליוה"כ, דאי אפשר לתקן את ימי השבת של כל השנה ביום מימות החול, יש לו להתענות בה, כדי להציל ממוות נפשו.

וזהו אשר דקדק רב נטרונאי לומר, דעשרת ימים אינון משונין מכל ימות השנה, ר"ל, בהם צריכין אנו לתקן כל הימים מימות השנה, (והיינו, שהם משונין, מצד זה שכוללים בתוכם את התיקון של כל ימות השנה), ולפיכך נהגו רבותינו לישב בהם בתענית, בין בחול בין בשבת, ודברי פי חכם חן, ושפתיים יושק". אולם, אף שזאת עצה מחוכמת בשביל להסביר, מדוע לגבי איסור תענית יש להחמיר יותר ביום ראשון דר"ה מבשבת, וגם את לשון רב נטרונאי ד'עשרת ימים אינון משונין מכל ימות השנה', מ"מ, מהא דרב נטרונאי ביאר מדוע אין להתענות בר"ה 'משום דמדאורייתא הוא, ולא 'משום שהתענית בו תהיה בחינם', מוכח שאין זאת כוונתו, וא"כ צריכים אנו ליישב את דבריו בדרך אחר.

כתב ה**ב"ח** (טור אר"ח ס' תקצ"ז), "נראה בעיני ליישב, דביום טוב ראשון דראש השנה אסור להתענות מדאורייתא, דכתיב ו'שמחת בחגך', וראש השנה איקרי חג ומועד, (שהרי כתיב 'אלה מועדי ה' בריש ענינא, ובסוף ענינא ו'ידבר משה את מועדי ה', וקאי אכל ענינא, אפסח עצרת ר"ה יוה"כ סוכות ושמיני עצרת, כולוהו איתקוש להדדי לקרותם מועדי ה' מקראי קודש). אבל בשבת שאינו נקרא חג, מדאורייתא מותר להתענות בו, וזה שאין אנו מבעתנין בו, הוא מדרבנן בלבד, לפיכך, בשבת שובה כיון דמשונה הוא, הקילו חכמים והתירו להתענות בו, וכן לגבי יום שני דר"ה, שחובת השמחה בו הוא רק מדרבנן). ואף על פי דכתיב, ו'קראת לשבת עונג', ודברי קבלה כדברי תורה, מכל מקום

בראש השנה יכתבון

not as the tail” as well? If we are the head, we surely are not the tail! Moreover, why can’t we simply say, “*we be the head, and not the tail*”? On top of that, why does each person say that he should “*be as the head*” - if everyone is a leader, whom would he lead?

The **Satmar Rebbe, R’ Yoel Teitelbaum ZT”L (Divrei Yoel)** provides an understanding of this long-time custom, based on a *Mishna* in *Avos d’Rav Nosson* (פרק ל):

איכא למימר, דהיינו עונג ידידה דיתيب בתענית וכו'".

הרא"ש שהקשה על דבריו, ס"ל דליכא איסור תענית מדאורייתא ביום ראשון דר"ה, כיון שאינו כשאר החגים שנהג בהם חובת ו'שמחת בחגך'. וכבר נחלקו בזה הראשונים, וכיעויין בטור (שם ס' תקצ"ב) שכתב, "ואין אומרים, ותתן לנו ה' אלהינו באהבה מועדים לשמחה חגים וזמנים לששון, לא בר"ה ולא ביוה"כ, (הרי שר"ה אינו נחשב כחג ומועד). אבל **רב שר שלום** כתב, שאומרים אותו בין בתפלה בין בקדושה, שהרי כתיב 'אלה מועדי ה' בריש ענינא, ובסוף ענינא ו'ידבר משה את מועדי ה', וקאי אכל ענינא, אפסח עצרת ר"ה יוה"כ סוכות ושמיני עצרת, כולוהו איתקוש להדדי לקרותם מועדי ה' מקראי קודש. וכ"כ **רב פלטוי גאון זצ"ל**, ותתן לנו ה' אלהינו באהבה מועדים לשמחה חגים וזמנים לששון את יום הזכרון הזה, וכ"כ רב שמואל בן חפני".

ומכיון שימים אלו משונין מכל ימות השנה, שהם מיוחדים לתיקון העולם הגדול והעולם הקטן-האדם', ובכוחם לתקן את כל ימות השנה שעברה, (וכמובא בשער הכוונות **לארצי"ל**, לכן הותר לדורשים דרשת שבת שובה, ליסר את שומעיהם בתוכחת מוסר בעל כרחם, כדי לעוררם לשוב אל ה' בתשובה שלימה, ובכך יצילו ממוות נפשם, וזאת למרות שתוכחה זו תצער אותם, ואסור להצטער בשבת, (שהרי הוא יום של עונג, וכמו שנאמר ו'קראת לשבת עונג'), משום ש"ל שיש בזה משום פקוח נפש, שהשבת הותרה בשבילו.

ויש ללמוד זה ממשה רבינו, דלדעת ה**סדר עולם** נפטר מן העולם בשבת, והובאו דבריו **ברא"ש** בפרק ערבי פסחים, ובאותו יום אמר כל אלו דברי התוכחה של פרשת האינון, משום שהיה בזה משום פקוח נפשם של ישראל, כיון שידע שהיום ייפטר מן העולם, (כמו שנאמר [דברים ל"א ב'], "ויאמר וגו' בן מאה ועשרים שנה אנוכי היום", וכתב רש"י, "אנוכי היום-היום מלאו ימי ושנותי, ביום זה נולדתי וביום זה אמות", ונאמר [שם ל'] "וידבר וגו' את דברי השירה הזאת וגו'", וכתב ה**רשב"ם**, "היינו פרשת האינון, שמעידה עליהם פורעניות לכשיעברו על המצות וכו'", וכן כתב רש"י [שם כ"ח]), ואם לא עכשיו אימתי.

וזהו כוונת המדרש, מי שחושש באינון, שאינו שומע ברצון דברי תוכחה, האם מותר לרפאותו בשבת, ועל זה השיב, דהיכא דאיכא בזה משום פקוח נפש-היינו בשבת שובה' שרי". ולפ"ז מבוארת השייכות של מדרש זה לפרשת האינון, שבא ליישב, איך הותר למשה רבינו להוכיח את עם ישראל בדברים הקשים כגידין של פרשת האינון, ביום השבת שאסור להצטער בו, שזאת משום, שדבר זה מותר כאשר יש בו משום פיקוח נפש, ובאמירת פרשת האינון ע"י משה רבינו היתה משום פקוח נפשם של ישראל, וכנתבאר.

וכבר נרמו רשיון זה, בשמות הפרשיות האינון-שבת שובה' וזאת הברכה, והיינו ש**עם תאנינו** בשבת שובה אל הדרכת ותוכחת התורה, בכך תנצלו את עשרת ימי התשובה כדי לחזור אל ה' בתשובה שלימה, ו**תזכו להתברך** בשנה טובה של חיים רוחניים וגשמיים מלאי כל טוב.

בראש השנה יכתבון

יהי רצון שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב (סימנים לל ר"ה)

It is customary to eat a sheep’s head as a reminder of the ram that replaced Yitzchok at the *Akeidah*. We recite the prayer: “*May it be Your will that we be as the head and not as the tail.*” (If a sheep’s head is not available, the head of a chicken or fish may be substituted.) A number of question are raised: since we say, “*that we be as the head,*” why is it necessary to mention the opposite, “*and*

Almighty to have pity on us during this serious time of year, we cannot rely on our own merits for mercy. We are so unworthy that we do not even know what we need. Rather, we beg *Hashem* to have mercy for His sake, to take care of us in His own way. As befitting the King of all Kings, we require that He deal with us in a royal manner, with an overabundance of mercy, kindness and goodness, so we can serve Him properly in the coming year with true *Malchus*.

משל למא הדבר דומא

אמר הקב"ה תקעו לפני בשופר של איל כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק בן אברהם ע"כ (ראש השנה טז).

משל: During the period of British rule over *Eretz Yisroel*, many young people who dared to fight the British were arrested and sent to the infamous Latrun Prison. The only person who regularly visited these prisoners, who encouraged them and lifted their spirits during the most trying times of their lives, was **R’ Aryeh Levine ZT”L**, the “Tzaddik of Yerushalayim.” He would pray with the prisoners and learn *Torah* with them. His words of encouragement, which emerged straight from his heart, entered the hearts of his listeners. He treated the prison inmates like beloved children, and the prisoners treated him like a dear father. It is no wonder that R’ Aryeh was commonly referred to as the “Father of Prisoners.”

One morning, R’ Aryeh arrived at the prison and presented his pass to the British soldier stationed there. To his surprise, though, the soldier refused him access. An on-duty Jewish guard was present and said, “Why do you not let the rabbi enter? All he wants to do is assist the prisoners and lift their spirits. Plus, he does have an official pass.”

The British soldier was mean and spiteful and barked at the guard, “His pass is worthless in my eyes! As for all of his ‘help’ - I have no doubt that he is getting paid by some organization somewhere for his ‘selfless’ actions. Otherwise, why would he keep coming back so often?” The soldier snorted dismissively, “Tell the rabbi to go home and find another way to earn some money! He’s finished here!”

R’ Aryeh didn’t say a word. He just turned around and walked away. But rather than head back home, he walked around the prison walls to another entrance, where he presented his pass to the guard stationed there and was immediately allowed entry. He then proceeded to the hall

... לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת וגו' (האינון לב-טז)

משל: A fellow was walking on the beach when he saw a local native who kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it in the water. When he got closer he noticed that the native was picking up the starfish that had been washed up on the shore, and one at a time was throwing them back in the water, so that they wouldn’t die.

The fellow told the native that he was wasting his time; there must be thousands of starfish on this beach as well as all along the coast. You can’t possibly get to all of them. Don’t you see that you can’t possibly make a difference?

where the inmates were kept and began his usual rounds.

At one point during the day, R’ Aryeh was walking from one building inside the compound to another, when the same British soldier happened to be standing nearby and noticed R’ Aryeh passing by. He was surprised at first, but after a moment, he became philosophical.

“This rabbi is really something,” he commented to his fellow soldier. “He truly gives of his time and does not expect a thing in return. For had he been receiving some sort of remuneration for his visit, he would have surely not exerted himself to get inside the prison walls after I refused to let him in earlier today. He would have gone home, happy to not have to do any work. The fact that he didn’t do so proves that his intentions are pure!”

משל: **Chacham Rabbeinu Yehudah Tzadka ZT”L** would use this story as an example to explain why we blow the horn of a ram on *Rosh Hashana*, instead of symbolizing the magnitude of *Akeidas Yitzchok* with another object, like the knife that Avraham used to sacrifice the ram. The act of binding his son on the mountaintop, in and of itself, does not prove Avraham’s fealty or self-sacrifice to *Hashem*, for perhaps he only did so out of fear that *Hashem* would punish him if he didn’t. No, said the Chacham, the proof of Avraham’s loyalty was in the fact that after the angel told him not kill his son, Avraham did not immediately race home out of joy that his son was spared. Rather, he looked around and found a ram which he offered up as a *korban to Hashem*. He refused to leave until he brought a sacrifice - any sacrifice - to prove the extent of his *Avodas Hashem*. For this reason, we use a *shofar* - the horn of a ram - to indicate that Avraham’s pure intentions were even greater than his actions.

שימו לבבכם לכל הדברים אשר אנכי מעיד בכם היום

The local native smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish and and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, “Tell you what - made a difference to that one!”

משל: As Jews, we must understand that even if we can’t always do everything right, each little thing that we do accomplish makes a big difference. The mere fact that we are trying, shows *Hashem* that we care and are concerned about being better Jews. *Hashem* is very patient. As long as he sees that it bothers us and we are making an attempt - that itself could help us merit a *shana tova* - a good year. (**R’ S. Price**)

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unscrupulous Jews, who had abandoned *Torah* and *mitzvos*, and caused untold trouble for the Orthodox community. This group was headed by a number of influential and wealthy community leaders, *parnassim* who robbed the poor in order to increase their own wealth. No act of extortion, no matter how heartless, was beneath these *parnassim*.

One day shortly before *Rosh Hashana*, these malicious men approached the authorities and drew their attention to a “worrying” trend: the city’s Jewish population was increasing rapidly, and the city would soon become unbearably crowded. They therefore suggested that the government banish from the city all Jews who had arrived after the year 1846. Only Jews who were born in the city or were long-time residents would be permitted to remain. The authorities agreed to the suggestion immediately and issued the decree. The entire city was in an uproar.

Soon after the edict was issued, the *parnassim* employed various agents to publicize that as community leaders, they had drawn up a list of approximately one thousand Jews to be deported. However, out of the “goodness of their hearts,” these unfortunate Jews had the option of purchasing documents attesting to their validity as long-standing members of the community. Of course, the sum the *parnassim* demanded for such documents was astronomical.

The wealthy citizens on the list, many who had amassed their wealth through robbery and trickery themselves, paid the ransom and received an official document from the community ledger stating that they were upright citizens who had been born in the city. The poor people who could not afford to pay the ransom, were arrested to await deportation.

That year, on *Rosh Hashana* the Bucharest community gathered in the main synagogue to beseech the King of Kings to grant them a blessed new year. Before *shofar* blowing, the Malbim ascended the *bima* to address the community and deliver words of rebuke, as was the custom.

“Listen, my brothers,” he began, “and I will tell you about a vision that I saw last year, on *Rosh Hashana*. In the Heavenly Court, all the kingdoms and countries in the world passed before the Almighty to be judged like sheep before a shepherd. I saw our city Bucharest, come before the Heavenly Throne. The record books were opened and the deeds of the inhabitants were weighed on the Heavenly scale. Two angels - one for the defense and the other for the prosecution - stood before the King of Kings. The defending angel placed a sack full of gold coins on the side of the scale marked ‘merit’ and said, ‘Here is the astronomical sum of one thousand dinars which the people of Bucharest collect from the meat tax and set aside for acts of charity and kindness, *Torah* study, visiting the sick and various other good causes.’”

The Malbim said, “My friends, the sack of coins tipped the scale in our favor.” The congregants smiled, pleased.

“But then, the prosecuting angel rose and brought forward a ragged seventeen-year-old boy with wild, unruly hair. The angel took two paltry coins from the youth’s hand and placed them on the other side of the scale. Amazingly, the two coins outweighed the thousand dinars. The Heavenly Court was in an uproar! How could it be?

““This boy,’ said the prosecution, ‘is from a family of *maskilim* who live in Bucharest, and like the others, they have thrown off the yoke of *Torah* and *mitzvos*. One *erev Shabbos*, this young boy was wandering the streets when he realized that he had no money in his pockets save for these two coins, and he knew he did not have enough to purchase both food and tobacco with so paltry a sum. He therefore decided to fast on *Shabbos* and bought only tobacco. On *Shabbos* he smoked publicly and no one protested.’ Here, the prosecuting angel turned to the Heavenly Court and declared, ‘There are others like him who profane *Shabbos* and trample upon all things holy. How can a city like that be judged favorably?’

““Why should the entire city bear the sin of this boy or his family who are just like him?’ countered the defending angel. ‘They were neither born nor raised in this city. They have only settled there recently.’

“The Heavenly Court deliberated and then announced its decision: ‘We cannot destroy the city because of these wicked people since they are strangers to the city. However, in the coming year, all sinners from this city must be banished!’”

The townspeople listened earnestly to the Malbim’s words. What an interesting tale; but what did it have to do with them?

“*Rabbosai!*” the Malbim suddenly shouted, “It is one year later and once again, I see the same vision I saw on *Rosh Hashana* of last year. But oh, how I tremble! The prosecuting angel is once again presenting the same youth with the two coins in his hand, and these two coins are tipping the scales The shocked defending angel shouts, ‘But we already told you that this boy and his friends are not natives of the city!’

‘At this point, the prosecuting angel quickly steps forward and presents a document signed by the important community leaders stating that the boy and his family have been residing in the city for generations. Apparently, they had enough money to buy such a coveted document and it is this very document that is about to sink the entire city of Bucharest!’”

The Malbim concluded his speech, and a deadly fear fell upon the congregants. Even the community leaders were shaken and afraid. Apparently, the speech had the desired effect upon the congregants, because on the day after *Rosh*

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myriad doctors and treatments - to enable them to have children. Alas, to no avail. The Lev Simcha listened to the man’s plight and advised him to stop smoking.

“I noticed that you have this habit and it is a bad thing. You must break this habit for when you break things, i.e. change habits or tear yourself away from negative acts that

you have grown used to,” he explained, “it is possible to break things up in Heaven as well.”

The *chasid* took these words to heart and with great effort, he succeeded in breaking his habit. He quit smoking permanently and *Boruch Hashem*, his prayers for a child were soon answered.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF
דן לכף זכות

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

וכל מאמינים שהוא דין אמת (תפילת מוסף ברא"ה)

have to do is come up with an acceptable excuse and voila’ - you have fulfilled the *mitzvah*! How great is that?! Not only that, but even if the excuse you came up with is not true, you still fulfill the *mitzvah* as long as you believe it and you have no negative feelings toward that person!

It is said in the name of the famous **Kotzker Rebbe ZT”L**, that everything in this world has a purpose, even "קרומער שכל" - distorted logic. It is meant to be used with a vivid imagination to figure out a way to get people off the hook and judge them favorably!

During these very special days of preparation for the Day of Judgment, and even on the holy day of *Rosh Hashana* itself, there is probably nothing more important than applying this *midda*. We must remember that *Hashem* works “*midda k'neged midda*” - measure for measure. Thus, if one will “sit in judgment” and look down at others, *Hashem* will sit on His Throne of Judgment looking carefully and even harshly at him. However, if one looks away from people’s faults and focuses only on the positive, *Hashem* will do the exact same thing for him! So here’s a bit of “legal” advice: Be smart and “hire” *Hashem* as your attorney for the *Yom Hadin* - by judging others favorably!

I wish a *Ksiva V'chasima Tova* to all of *Klal Yisroel*, and if I have ever offended anyone in this column with my words, I ask for *mechila*. May we all merit a year of happiness and goodness and the coming of *Moshiach*.

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

The damaging winds of Enlightenment and the Reform Movement were felt in many cities throughout Eastern and Western Europe during the nineteenth century, but none more so than in the Romanian capital of Bucharest. Few *Rabbanim* had the ability and the fortitude to stand up to this plague that menaced the values of *Torah* judaism, and those brave rabbis that tried did not end up faring well in their respective communities.

One *Rav* who would not bow to the pressures of the *Maskilim*, was the renowned *iluy* of Volhynia, **R’ Meir Leibush Malbim ZT”L**, who became the Chief Rabbi of Bucharest in 1859 and spent the next five years in a constant battle that cut his tenure short in 1864, when he was forced to resign his position and compelled to leave Romania. During this time, the Malbim was a vocal opponent to the building of the Choral Temple, with choir and organ, which would soon become the main neo-orthodox synagogue in Romania. He also condemned the foundation of the first two elementary schools with general knowledge curriculum aimed at the Jewish children in Bucharest, which resulted in friction between the Malbim and the enlightened intellectuals in the Jewish community, who were actually wealthy, foreign nationals.

Although he was eventually forced out of his position, he did claim victory on one occasion. There was a group of

“*Rabbi Akiva says, ‘One who joins transgressors will be punished along with them, even if he himself does not join them in committing a sin.’*” It is safe to say that whoever joins people who do *mitzvos* will likewise be rewarded along with those people even if he does not actually perform the particular *mitzvah* himself. One should, therefore, become a follower of the righteous *tzaddikim* and join together with them in all that they do.

Unfortunately, there are certain people who maintain a dual personality: When they are in the presence of a *tzaddik*, they try to demonstrate how devout they are, and become a part of the righteous man’s camp. However, when they find themselves in the company of wicked evildoers, not only do they not object to the evil taking place, but they feel the need to befriend and emulate these wicked people in all that they do.

Now we may understand the seemingly redundant phrase. We ask *Hashem* to allow us to be a “head” and not a “tail” but not because we insist on being a leader. Rather, we are praying that *Hashem* assist us to commit our hearts to following His ways, and enable us to associate with *tzaddikim* who are the true “heads” of the people, so that we may also be righteous. At the same time, we also beg the Almighty that we should not be faced with the challenge of having to appease *reshaim* - the “tails” - by desiring to emulate them. As a result, this is truly a type of prayer that is appropriate for every individual to recite.

שובה ישראל עד ה' אלקיך כי כשלת בעוניך (לשבת שובה)

It is interesting to note that until the more recent generations, people died mainly from plagues or bacterial diseases. They themselves had been perfectly healthy, except for the effects of attacks from outside forces, such as germs and disease-bearing bacteria; only then did they succumb. Today, **R’ Yechezkel Levenstein ZT”L** the *Mir/Ponovezher Mashgiach* pointed out, we find that it is not the “outside forces” that claim human lives; rather, man falls victim to the products of his own body. His system becomes filled with excesses - cholesterol clogging the arteries, fat pockets constricting blood flow, or malignant cells crowding out the vital organs and interfering with their life-sustaining processes - which finally kill him.

How closely this reflects the shift in spiritual patterns, reflected R’ Chatzkel. For many generations people were apparently “healthy” in a spiritual sense, yet a sudden assault by a *Shabsai Tzvi* or a wave of *Haskalah* (in its early stages) came and claimed hundreds of thousands of souls, paralleling the physical situation. Today, though, the problems arise from within us. While we are able to cope with destructive forces emanating from the outside to a

certain degree, spiritual debilitation takes place as a result of the inner “extras” that accumulate over the years, quietly starving the “heart” of its necessary “oxygen” and slowly disabling the vital “organs.” Our spiritual “bodies” have become wastelands from the inside out until one day, the seemingly healthy organism that is the holiness and divinity of a Jew, will simply crumble away.

When a person commits a sin, he inflicts a spiritual wound on himself, as the *posuk* states: “כי כשלת בעוניך” - “*For you have stumbled (injured) by your sins.*” This wound is no less grievous than a physical bruise, in fact, maybe even more so. The injury can be healed by a process called *kaparah* - forgiveness. A person must want to repent in order to attain this necessary medication. However, people generally are unwilling to accept the thought that they suffer defects, so instead of embarking on the time-consuming and laborious path of *teshuvah*, they apply a touch of cosmetic to disguise the wound, and continue on with life as usual. But covering up a wound permits the infection to fester further, requiring even more touch-up, plus a generous dosing of perfume to mask the foul odor emanating from the wound. Thus, they continue to fool themselves and others, not realizing that if they continue this way, they will eventually succumb from the progressive “rotting” of their souls. (**A. Scheinman**)

ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזירה ...

The words in the *musaf* prayer: ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה “*Repentance, Prayer, Charity, can remove (rescind) the harshness of the decree,*” are shouted in unison by every member of the congregation and in fact at this moment each person believes that he is on the track of repentance which will merit him a good year. In fact, writes the **Lev Simcha, R’ Simcha Bunim Alter ZT”L (Gerrer Rebbe)**, the *Ribono Shel Olam* Himself does *teshuvah*, כביכול, as it says in the *posuk*: “ויעב ה' אלקיך” - “*And Hashem your G-d will return.*” What does *Hashem* do *teshuvah* for? For creating the *Yetzer Hara*, as *Chazal* tell us (סוכה נב:) that *Hashem* said to the *Navi Micha*, “*On that day, I will gather in that which was bad to Me.*” (מיכה ד-ו) This is a reference to the *Yetzer Hara* that *Hashem*, כביכול, regretted creating. So, if *Hashem* is doing *teshuvah*, surely we must follow in His ways. The Lev Simcha would instruct his *chassidim* that by not giving in to one’s natural desires, this is a way to emulate the Almighty, thereby causing a positive reaction in the Heavens which can ultimately change harsh decrees.

A man who was childless after many years of marriage came to the Lev Simcha for a *beracha*. His wife and he were heartbroken and tried many avenues - including

Hashana, the instigators rushed to the governmental authorities and arranged for the decree to be rescinded. All the Jews of Bucharest who had been facing deportation were freed from prison.

אבינו מלכנו עשה למענך ולא למעננו (תפילה של ימי הרצון)

At his *Shabbos HaGadol drasha* this past year, 5771, the **Kossoner Rebbe** of Forshay, **R’ Chaim Leibish Rottenburg Shlit’a** related an impressive tale. A few months previous, he was in Paris where he was told a story about a wealthy Parisian Jew who lived in an exclusive and luxurious high-rise apartment building. Some of the wealthiest people in all of Paris lived in this building, and the Jewish man and his family lived on the top floor, in the penthouse.

Although there were only two apartments on the top floor, the man did not know his neighbor very well. The man was a wealthy Parisian but he was also a bit secretive. One day, when the two neighbors met in the hall, he found out why.

In the midst of a passing conversation, the neighbor confided that he is currently married to the previous Queen of Morocco, and that the present king, Mohammed VI, is his stepson! In fact, the man said, the king comes on occasion to Paris and stops in to visit his mother. Of course, security is paramount and the entire visit is usually conducted with the utmost discretion, so not many people even know that the king was there.

The Jewish man found this quite interesting and wondered if it would be possible to meet the king if and when he came the next time. The neighbor thought about this for a moment and then said he’d see what he could do.

Some time later, the Jewish man received a phone call at home. It was his neighbor informing him that his stepson, the king, was in his house at this very time and if he wished to come over, he can meet the king. The Jewish man was intrigued and brought his 13 year-old son along to meet the monarch.

After undergoing routine security measures, they were allowed inside where the king was very cordial and friendly. He shook the man’s hand and even engaged the boy in conversation.

“How old are you?” he asked the boy. The boy replied that he had just turned thirteen a few days ago.

“That is a milestone in the Jewish faith, is it not?” asked the king.

The boy explained that when a boy turns thirteen, he is called a “*Bar Mitzvah*.” The king was impressed.

“Tell me, what does it mean to be a ‘*Bar Mitzvah*’?” he asked. “What must you do to celebrate this milestone?”

The boy explained that a *Bar Mitzvah* meant that he was now responsible for his actions by Jewish law and that he is required to fulfill the commandments as outlined in the *Torah*. It is usually celebrated with a party, said the boy, amidst festive music, food, guests and presents from his family, friends and well-wishers.

The King of Morocco was visibly impressed with the young boy and his mature words. They conversed on the topic a bit longer. Then the audience concluded and the Jewish man and his son were led out of the apartment.

The next day, the man received another phone call from his neighbor down the hall informing him that the king requested that he come over once again with his son. The two arrived just as the day before, and this time, the king took out an envelope with the royal seal of Morocco emblazoned on it, and he handed it to the boy.

“Congratulations on your *Bar Mitzvah*,” said the king. “Here is a little gift for you to celebrate your achievement. Go ahead, open it.”

The boy was hesitant. His hand quavered slightly as he opened the envelope handed to him by the actual King of Morocco. His surprise turned to disbelief when he looked inside to find a check made out to his name in the amount of \$50,000! He showed it to his father, who registered a look of absolute shock.

“Your your highness,” stammered the father. “You are too kind! A check of this amount is ... is ... far beyond what is normally presented as a gift! My son surely does not require a gift of this magnitude - it is far too extravagant for such a young boy. Perhaps a lesser amount would be more appropriate for a thirteen year-old?”

The King of Morocco smiled at the man’s words. “Sir, I understand your concerns completely and in truth, a boy of thirteen does not need such a large amount. He understands that, you understand that - and even I understand that as well. However,” the king looked at the man with the authoritarian look of a monarch, “the reason I gave your son such a check is because the ‘King of Morocco’ cannot possibly give less! As befits the honor of my station, I am unable to present a gift of a lesser amount. Doing so, is beneath the honor of my office and beneath the stature of my position as a king!”

R’ Rottenburg relates that this French Jew was visiting *Eretz Yisroel* not long after, and he told over this story to none other than **R’ Chaim Kanievsky Shlit’a**. Rather than be amused, R’ Chaim used this incident to explain the words we say on *Rosh Hashana* and during *Aseres Yimei Teshuvah*, in “*Avinu Malkein*u”: “אבינו מלכנו עשה למענך ולא למעננו” - “*Our Father, our King, Do for Your own sake, and not for our sake.*” He explained that when we beseech the Almighty