

(Monsey, NY)

5:38 פלג המנחה ע"ש –
5:36 הדלקת נרות לשבת –
10 זמן קריאת שמע/ מ"א –
46 זמן קריאת שמע/ הגר"א –
7 סוף זמן תפילה / הגר"א –
52 שקיעת החמה ליום השבת –
42 מוצע"ק צאצ"ב/ מעריב –
8:04 צאצ"ב/ לשיטת רבינו תם –

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(1) שמות לד:ה (2) תקפא:ד (3) דף פו. (4) שו"ת מקדש ישראל נג' (5) אגרות משה יו"ד ג:כא (6) כף החיים קלא:כז

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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

שובה ישראל עד ה' אלקיך כי כשלת בעוניך וגו' (הושע יד-ב, שיך לשבת שובה)

A *Chabad* emissary living in Paris, France, was heading home one Friday afternoon. It's close to *Shabbos* and raining heavily, and the pavement is slippery. He slows down his motorcycle and adjusts his helmet, when suddenly a sports car enters the intersection, approaching at high speed. The situation is dangerous. The biker brakes hard but on wet pavement and at 80 KPH, he skids and falls to the ground. Cars are approaching at high speed and he fears these are his last moments.

Then ... silence. One car stops and blocks the road. A woman jumps out and runs toward the man. "Are you alright?" she asks with urgency in French. "Can I help you?" The *Chabad* emissary is groggy but manages to sit up.

"I think I'm alright," he answers, removing his helmet. The woman looks surprised, perhaps not expecting a bearded man. There aren't many in Paris. "Is everything alright?" she asks again, this time in Hebrew. Now, he is taken aback.

The woman introduces herself as Madam Katia Dahan. "I live nearby and happened to be passing by," she says. "I am Jewish, although not religious. I didn't expect to see a Jew riding a motorbike, never mind a rabbi."

Katia wants to talk, but he apologizes and explains, "It's almost *Shabbat* and I need to get home." Then, with a sudden inspiration, he asks, "Do you light *Shabbat* candles?" Katia pauses for a moment before muttering, "No, I don't."

"Well, then, can I invite you to our home for *Shabbat*?" The rabbi is smiling warmly now.

Katia smiles as well. "I don't think I can come tonight, but I will be happy to come another *Shabbat*," she says. The *Chabad* rabbi and the French woman exchange phone numbers, and part.

A few weeks pass. One clear morning, the rabbi's phone rings. "Rabbi? It's Katia Dahan. Do you remember me?"

"Of course," he said, welcomingly. "We are still waiting for you to come for *Shabbat*."

Just the words she wanted to hear. "When can I come?" she asked excitedly. That Friday night, Katia was seated at the rabbi's table. She was very emotional throughout. When people asked who she was and where she was from, the rabbi smiled and told them the story about the accident. "She was a messenger from Above to help me during those scary moments."

Katia looked wistful before she spoke. "I think it's time for you to hear my version," she began slowly. "I am forty-five years old and live alone. I have a sister and mother, but I haven't spoken to them for over twenty years. My parents were traditional; we made *kiddush*, celebrated holidays, and fasted on *Yom Kippur*. But since I've been living alone I stopped observing. There is no family to have a meal together and it's hard to go to synagogue alone. About two years ago, after years of being disconnected from Judaism, I found a job in a Jewish environment, in a shoe store in the Pletzel. All the workers were Jewish. The people were nice and I thought I would make friends, and maybe get invited for *Shabbat* and holidays.

"But to my disappointment, when Friday came around, they would wish one another 'Good *Shabbat*' and leave for the weekend. No one paid attention to me. Every week, I hoped for an invitation, but every week brought more disappointment.

"Can it be that Jews don't accept me anymore?" I asked myself. 'How can they be so inconsiderate?'"

Katia's voice became choked with emotion, "I became very angry with Jews and Judaism. I decided it wasn't for me. I left that store and found another job. But the memories of the *Shabbat* of my childhood - the candles, *kiddush*, meals and songs - filled my head and wouldn't let me rest. I thought. 'How can I stop these memories?' and decided to find something else to do on Friday nights. A nearby church choir was looking for a singer on Friday nights and I signed up for the job."

Silence prevailed around the table. "It's been a year now that I'm singing in church on Friday nights. I come home so tired that I don't have time to think about *Shabbat*," Katia lowered her eyes in shame.

"Everything went smoothly until that Friday afternoon when I saw the motorcycle rolling over on the road. I ran to help the rider and was shocked when he reminded me that it was *Shabbat* eve and he even invited me! And he didn't even know me!"

Turning to the rabbi, Katia concluded, "Rabbi, do you think that I was sent to save you? I think it was you who was sent to save me and bring back my soul."

חזקו ואמצו אל תיראו ואל תערצו מפניהם כי ה' אלקיך הוא ההולך עמך לא ידפך ולא יעזוב וגו' (לא-ו)

משל: A *Torah*-observant person was head of the bacteriology department of a California university. One day he was walking with a non-Jewish colleague who saw the *mezuzah* on his office door and asked him what it was. As he was about to answer, he was called to the telephone. A non-Jewish student who was there took over and explained the whole idea of the *mezuzah* to the professor, in great detail.

The Jewish professor couldn't understand how she knew so much about Jewish things. He asked her, and she told him that for the past two years she had taken an interest in

Judaism for no apparent reason and had read about it alot.

Still unconvinced, the professor turned to **R' Simcha Wasserman ZT"L** and asked what he thought. R' Simcha told him that he should try to find out about her family lineage and where she came from. The professor looked into it and learned that she came from a pious Catholic family in Mexico. In fact, her family had a trace of Marranos in its history, and when they fled Spain hundreds of years ago, they settled in Mexico. Since it is known that in some villages today in Mexico, women still go down to the basement on

הסתדתי פני מדם ודיה לאכל ... ואמר ביום ההוא הלא כי אין אלקי בקרבי מצאני הרעות האלה (לא-ו)

The purpose of life is to be connected to *Hashem*. Every *aliya* and *yerida* (up and down) of a person is connected to the attribute of *dveikus*. No matter what a Jew does, he is either attaching himself to *Hashem* or, if his action is not pleasing, detaching himself from *Hashem*. The most important thought that a Jew must have before he does any act is to determine if it will bring him closer or further from *Hashem*.

Similarly, says the **Nesivos Sholom, R' Sholom Noach Barzovsky ZT"L**, all the trials and tribulations in life are not necessarily a punishment for impure desires or thoughts of heresy, but rather the *yetzer hara* puts in front of a person all sorts of trials of both body and mind, until it appears as if from Heaven he is being pushed away from the source of life, and his prayers are not being heard because he has become unwanted in the eyes of Heaven. It is as if an iron wall has gone up between him and his Father in Heaven. This is the most difficult tribulation of all, and a Jew must employ every tactic of *kedusha* to strengthen his belief in *Hashem* even more. "As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I do not fear evil for *You are with me*," (תהלים כג) The understanding of any *nisayon* is to determine; if his *dveikus* to *Hashem* is permanent then this temporary trial will not break his bond; but if his closeness is only temporary, then any passing tribulation can easily separate him from His Creator.

Yesod V'shoreish Ha'avodah quotes from the **Rambam** that all the negative incidents that occur to respectable and righteous individuals - prophets and the purest of *chassidim* - only come about at a time when the bond of *dveikus* is weakened or cut short, and only then, while he is separated from *Hashem*, is the evil able to affect him. However, at any time that the *dveikus* is strong and he feels a deep connection to *Hashem*, no evil is able to befall him. This is based on the *posuk*, "And they will say on that day, woe for it is because My G-d is not with me that these evils have found me."

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

תשובה

There are four periods of *teshuvah* that are alluded to in the *parshiyos* that we read during the month of *Elul* and through the beginning of the new year. **R' Moshe Wolfson Shlit'a** points out that there are 30 *posukim* in *Parshas Vayelech*, which can be compared to the 30 days of *Elul*, after which the perfectly righteous are signed and sealed in the Book of Life. There are 40 *posukim* in *Nitzavim* which are linked to the 40 days from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* until *Yom Kippur*, when the *Beinonim* - those of average merit - can repent and be inscribed for a good year. And there are 52 *posukim* in *Parshas Haazinu* which allude to the 52 days from the beginning of *Elul* until *Shemini Atzeres*, when extra time is given for everyone, even those of minimal merit to return to *Hashem* and receive a positive judgment. The combined total of all the *posukim* in these three *parshiyos* is 122. This is an allusion to the 122 days from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* until "Zos Chanukah" - the last day of *Chanukah* - when *Hashem*, in His Mercy still leaves a window open for even the lowest *neshamos* to come home.

R' Wolfson further points out that *Parshas Ki Savo*, which also contains 122 *posukim*, is filled with many curses that will come to those who do not serve *Hashem* properly. But these curses must come to an end, as it says, "תכלה שנה וקללותיה" - may the year and all its curses end. From these 122 *posukim* of *Ki Savo*, we go on to read the 122 *posukim* of *Nitzavim, Vayelech* and *Haazinu*, which we hope will replace all the terrible curses with the most wonderful blessings for the coming year. This *Shabbos Shuva*, may we merit to be among the perfectly righteous who are already signed and sealed in the Book of Life.

זה חליפתי זה כפרתי זה תמורתני זה (התרנגול) לך למיתתו ואני אכנס ואני לחיים טובים ... (סדר פסח)

During the *Aseres Yimei Teshuvah*, we perform the well-known custom of "Kapparos," when we "transfer" our sins onto another object (some use money, many use a live chicken). Although to the untrained mind and the unbelieving heart, this custom looks primitive and even detrimental to a live animal, the *seforim* tell us that there is a specific purpose for the whole ceremony. A person should contemplate thoughts of *teshuvah* during the *kapparos* ceremony, as he transfers over his sins. He should think in his heart that he deserves to experience all that is done to the chicken, which corresponds to the four types of capital punishment administered by *Beis Din*. The *shochet* grabbing hold of the chicken's trachea before the *shechita* resembles "חנק" (strangulation); the slaughtering itself parallels "הרג" (execution by the sword); throwing the chicken to the ground corresponds to "סקילה" (stoning); roasting it symbolizes "שריפה" (execution by burning). By imagining these things occurring to himself, one earns the forgiveness of *Hashem* - whose hand is always outstretched and prepared to accept those who return.

It was *Erev Yom Kippur* 1944, in the Buchenwald concentration camp. A Jew was standing around with a few other men when a Nazi guard came over and asked what they were doing. All were silent until the man spoke up and said, "Why, we were just thinking how good you'd be!" With that, he grabbed hold of the Nazi's arms and started spinning him around the men, all the while chanting, "*Zeh chalifoseinu, Zeh HaNazi yelech l'misa v'anachnu l'chaim tovim*." ("This [man] is in exchange for us; this Nazi will go to his death and we will go to good life.") Outraged, the Nazi broke free and smashed the man in the mouth. Somehow, the man and the rest of the group got away and were never apprehended. The next day, on *Yom Kippur*, that very Nazi was shipped out and sent to the war front to fight - basically a death warrant. On the other hand, the entire group of Jewish men survived!

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

וילך משה וידבר את הדברים האלה אל כל ישראל (לא-א)