

Recycling

“The sun helps to recycle materials by promoting rust and oxidation. That is why stores that have clothing in the window need to protect them from the sun by means of a plastic shield. When the sun shines on a banana peel, it starts to decompose. The bacteria of the earth help and together they cooperate in causing everything to be recycled back into the earth.”

One of our main missions on this earth is to teach our children Torah and moral conduct. The process of Recycling our values perpetuates our legacy as a nation. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

The Secret Ceremony

In the Russian town of Brazduiv lived an old man by the name of Reb Zalman Lichtzier. He was a professional *mohel*, a rarity in the Soviet Union in the 1960s. Although the government had forbidden the ritual of circumcision, Reb Zalman let it be known that he was willing to ignore the decree and circumcise any Jewish child that was brought to him. Old as he was, he felt he did not have much to lose by defying the government, for the worst they could do was execute him, and he had already lived a long and full life.

Word of this dedicated *mohel* spread among the Jews, and from near and far they secretly brought him their baby boys. Reb Zalman circumcised them all, and refused to accept payment for his services.

One day a “natchalnik,” a high-ranking officer, armed with a shotgun, showed up on Reb Zalman’s doorstep. Reb Zalman invited the officer into his house, sure that he was about to be arrested. Instead the officer said, “I, too, am a Jew. My wife, who is also Jewish, has recently borne me a beautiful son, and we would like you to perform his *berit milah*.”

Reb Zalman was struck dumb. But he did not have to answer yet, for the officer was still explaining the situation.

“It is forbidden for you, obviously a Jew, to enter my home. If you were to be seen, both of our lives would be in danger. Therefore, I worked out the following plan: You will try to cross the border at a place I will designate, without a passport. You will be arrested and brought to me, for it is my job to deal with illegal border crossings. At that point I will take you to my home, and you will perform the *berit* there.”

Was the officer speaking the truth, or was he trying to ensnare Reb Zalman in an elaborately set trap? Reb Zalman did not know. “I have taken upon myself to perform the *misvah* of *berit milah* with absolute *mesirut nefesh*,” he thought, “and so I will take a chance and follow the officer’s instructions, although I may be risking my life.” He hoped his decision was the right one.

Reb Zalman acquiesced to the officer’s plan. He took a valise and packed his *talet*, *tefillin*, and the instruments he would need for the *milah*, and traveled towards the agreed-upon border point. According to plan, he was arrested, admitted to not having a passport, and then taken directly to the Jewish officer who had come to see him. The officer, playing his part to perfection, angrily yelled that he would punish the Jew as he deserved. As soon as the arresting officer left, the “natchalnik” seated Reb Zalman in his car and drove him to his home.

The *berit milah* was carried out according to *halachah*, and after it was all over, the officer drove Reb Zalman back to Brazduiv, where he continued to perform his secret *misvot*. (Glimpses of Greatness)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לֵאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT EKEB ✪ עֵקֶב יָצָא

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 49:14-51:3

JULY 30-31, 2021 22 AB 5781

Early Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:20 pm	Shaharit: 4:54, 6:45, 7:30, 8:25, 9:15 am
Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:45 pm	Morning Shema by: 8:33 am
Late Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 7:30 pm	Shabbat Class: 6:30 pm
Candlelighting: 7:54 pm	Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 7:30 pm
Evening Shema after: 8:52 pm	Shabbat Ends: 8:51 pm (R"Y 9:23 pm)
These times are applicable <u>only</u> for the Deal area. Weekday Minhah: 6:45 & 7:30 pm	

This bulletin is dedicated by the Betesh family
in memory of Mr. Al Betesh

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת אַבְרָהָם בֶּן נִזְיָרָה

A Message from our Rabbi

”הַתְּשִׁיבָה אִשָּׁה עוֹלָה מֵרַחֵם בְּרַב־בְּטָנָה גַם אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחַנָּה וְאֶנְכִי לֹא

אֶשְׁכַּחַךְ” (Haftarah, Yeshayah 49:15)

“Can a woman forget her baby, withdraw from feeling compassion for the child of her womb? Even were they to forget, yet I will not forget you.”

This week’s *haftarah* is the second of the series of *haftarot* of consolation. Hashem says He will never forget us, even more than a woman doesn’t forget her child. Sometimes a mother will not pay attention to her baby. This will never occur with Hashem. He watches us and takes care of us constantly.

Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger tells a true story that clearly illustrates this.

A Jew from England, named Samuel, shared his story with Rabbi Biderman. A few years ago he flew from England to New York to attend a wedding of his brother’s child in Boro Park. Just as the plane landed in New York, he had a heart attack. He was taken to the hospital and spent ten days there. Because he didn’t have insurance in the United States, he racked up a medical bill of \$30,000. He was devastated.

In his moment of weakness, he called out to Hashem with a question. “Hashem, the fact that you caused me a heart attack I can accept as an act from Heaven. But had that very heart attack occurred just eight hours earlier, while I was still in England, almost all of my expenses would have been covered by insurance.”

Samuel related his frustration to his Rabbi, who answered him brilliantly. “Samuel, listen to me carefully. Don’t you realize, on Rosh Hashanah it was decreed for you to

spend \$30,000 on medical expenses. Imagine if the heart attack had indeed occurred in England and thus not cost you very much financially. Think of how much you would have had to endure in order to reach the sum of \$30,000 on medical expenses! Imagine how many doctors you would have had to visit. Imagine how many operations you would have had to undergo. Imagine how much therapy you would have had to deal with. You would have been busy with health related challenges all year! Instead, Hashem had mercy on you and sent you to New York, where you wouldn't have insurance, and you would thus reach the necessary amount in just ten days!"

The way we view the world depends on us. We can view the \$30,000 spent as a very strict event, or we can view it as a very merciful event.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Glorious Food

Food is the fuel that energizes both man and beast – the great equalizer. If both Fido and I have to eat to stay alive, and we both seem to enjoy eating, is there a fundamental difference between my food consumption and his?

The answer, of course, is yes. We humans are far more picky than animals about what we eat, and how it is prepared. We have a more refined palate, and intellect to appreciate the nuances of what we eat. Animals, on the other hand, will generally eat whatever their natural instincts tell them is healthy for them, or whatever you put in front of them. They don't spend much time considering what to have for dinner.

During the Six Days of Creation, all nature was formed and set into motion by the word of G-d. G-d said "Let there be light," and there was light. He also said that food should provide nutrition, and His creations should be fueled by that nutrition. It is G-d's spoken commands at Creation that prompted Moshe's declaration in this week's portion, "Man does not live on bread alone; man lives on all that comes from the mouth of G-d."

The act of eating offers us a direct connection to our Creator. While eating, a person can intensely feel G-d giving him life. Hunger and thirst cause weakness and fatigue. The rejuvenating effects of a good meal are almost immediate. Our physical energy is restored, and along with that our alertness, attentiveness, and our overall performance. Those nutrients provide a channel between our life-giving G-d and His creation.

We can capitalize on every such moment as an opportunity to appreciate our personal relationship with the Creator. A blessing before and after eating, as prescribed by Judaism, certainly puts us in the right mindset, but eating itself can be infused with holiness if we consider this connection. We can transform the mundane act of eating into a spiritual experience and an enrichment of our relationship with G-d Who gives us life. (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)

Letting Go

In this week's portion Moshe talks about what was perhaps the most traumatic moment of his career. After spending 40 days and nights on the highest level of spiritual elevation, he returned from Mount Sinai to a scene that filled him with horror. At the foot of the mountain the Jews were reveling around a golden calf. Naturally Moshe was appalled. Here he was, holding the *luchot* (tablets), a G-d-given immortal gift, and he faced a nation plunged into an act of idolatry. He smashes the *luchot*.

But if we analyze the narrative there is an interesting word that Moshe inserts as he describes his actions on that day. "I grasped the two *luchot* and I threw them from my two hands and smashed them in front of your eyes."

Moshe was holding the tablets when descending the mountain. Why did he clutch them before throwing them from his hands? Weren't they already in his hands?

A friend of mine told me a story about his great grandfather, a brilliant sage and revered *saddik*. Whenever he saw one of his children commit an action that was harmful to their physical or spiritual well-being he would stop them. But this Sage knew that stopping a child is not enough. The youngster would need a punishment too, whether it be a slap, reprimand, lecture, or the withholding of privileges.

But when harsh rebuke was due, the Rabbi would not give it immediately. He would jot the transgression down in a small notebook and at the end of the week he would approach the young offender. After giving the child a hug and embrace, he reminded the child of the incident and explained to the child that his actions were wrong.

"I should have punished you immediately when I saw you commit your act," he would say, "but I was angry then, and my punishment may have been spurred by anger, not admonition. Now, however, that occurrence is in the past and I am calm. Now I can mete your punishment with a clear head. And you will know that it is given from love, not anger."

He then proceeded to punish the child in a way that fit the misdeed. Moshe was upset. But he did not want to throw the *luchot* down in rage. He therefore grabbed them and held them tight before hurling them. Moshe, in his narrative tells us that he seized the *luchot* before breaking them. He wanted to send a clear message to the revelers below. That the *mussar* (ethical reprove) that he was affording with this action was not born out of irrational behavior or in anger.

Before smashing the *luchot* Moshe embraced them, just as a father hugging a child that he would soon admonish. Because Moshe wanted to tell us that before we let loose, we have to hold tight. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Beat the Clock

Time flies when you're having fun.

This may be a shopworn, trite saying, but experience shows that it is true.

One particularly hectic day, I had to run an errand at the bookstore. Pressed for time, I felt very fortunate to immediately find a parking spot in front of a car dealership directly across the street from where I was going. As I rushed by the showroom, I noticed a salesman pacing back and forth inside, eyeing his wristwatch.

I ran into the bookstore, picked up the item I needed, and raced back to the car. As I approached it, I saw the same salesman again, but now he was outside, pacing in front of the dealership like a caged lion. He just couldn't wait for the time to pass so he could leave work and do whatever it was he did in his free time.

I had an hour and a half before I needed to leave for my next commitment. I drove to the *yeshivah*, sat down in the *bet Midrash*, and began to study a difficult piece of *Talmud*, hoping to clarify a point of *halachah*. It seemed as if only minutes had passed when I realized it was time to go. How I wished the time had not gone by so quickly! How I wanted the clock to stop for a little while so that I could learn a bit longer!

The way you look at the gift of time depends on how you use it. If you want to accomplish – to improve yourself spiritually, or even to build a temporal entity – you find that the asset of time has no price tag. You become involved in the project, and it always seems that the amount of work exceeds the time available. On the other hand, people who don't understand the value of time can't wait for it to pass.

When the clock seems frozen, consider it a signal to evaluate how you are spending your time. If time seems to be moving too slowly, you are probably wasting it on an endeavor of limited value. Switch to something more valuable, and watch the time fly. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)