

complain, the visitor laughed. "I don't know how *you* handle the pressure of being so short of your goal," said the poor man. "In my life I have accumulated possessions with a net worth of maybe \$25,000, and so I am short the other \$25,000 our Sages say I would need to be satisfied. You have collected millions of dollars for yourself. I don't know how you can sleep knowing you are millions short of your goal!"

When you are pushing a little too hard for the next acquisition, remember that you are not only trying to chalk up a new success, but you are also moving the "finish line" further and further away. Pressing on the "brakes" of desire will help you keep the goal line from leaving your line of sight. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

The Holy Gardener

After Rav Ahron Rokeach, the Belzer Rebbe, fled to *Eress Yisrael* near the end of World War II, he had to make a decision as to where he was going to settle. He decided on Tel Aviv, and his Hasidim followed him there.

Soon his *gabbai* noticed that the Rebbe was exhibiting some unusual behavior. He had taken a strong interest in the garden in front of his home, and not only did he instruct the *gabbai* as to what type of plants should be planted and constantly remind him about trimming the bushes and cutting the grass, but sometimes the Rebbe would even prune the plants himself. Often, he would spend time just marveling at the beautiful garden he had helped to plant. People walked by and watched in bewilderment as the Rebbe himself weeded the garden and removed dried petals from the beautiful flowers. He even directed the *gabbai* to purchase all types of gardening tools and to install a shed, giving careful instructions about caring for the plants.

Some thought that perhaps because the world had suffered such a tremendous loss of life the Rebbe felt it was important to value the beauty and splendor of Hashem's world. But no one dared to question him about his behavior. They simply assumed that he had his reasons, as he did for everything. At the end of the year, however, Reb Ahron suddenly instructed his *gabbai* to put away all the gardening equipment. Now it seemed that as quickly as the Rebbe had gained interest in his garden, he had lost interest. What was going on?

Soon everything became clear. The Rebbe explained that it was a *shemitah* year and, after investing so much effort and energy in his garden, he would now be able to properly observe the laws of *shemitah*! The Rebbe was adamant – nothing could be touched. Soon the flowers dried out and died, weeds overtook the rest of the garden, and it began to look unkempt. And the Rebbe? Because he had put so much effort into working on his garden, one might think that the loss of its beauty and bounty would sadden him. Quite the contrary! Every time he saw it, he smiled.

He was fulfilling the will of Hashem. What could be more beautiful? (Touched by a Story 4)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהֵיכָל

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT EKEB ✪ שַׁבַּת עֵקֶב

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 49:14-51:3

AUGUST 7-8, 2020 18 AB 5780

Candlelighting: 7:46 pm

Morning Shema by: 8:38 am

Evening Shema after: 8:44 pm

Shabbat ends: 8:43 pm (R"Y 9:15 pm)

Watch for an email for full Shabbat schedule of minyanim

**This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell & Robin Antar
in memory of Sam Antar בְּרַחֲמֵי שָׁמַיָּם בְּרַחֲמֵי שָׁמַיָּם**

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

This bulletin is dedicated by Morris Sutton in honor of his son Ricky's birthday.

**The first Hatarah of the season will be this Saturday night at 8:53 p.m.
One should say "Baruch hamabdil ben kodesh l'hol - Blessed are You Who
separates from Holy to mundane" before driving a car.**

Mabrook to Ralph & Esther Sutton on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Mark & Aileen Mizrahi.

Mabrook to Ralph & Sharon Hazan on the birth of a great-grandson.

A Message from our Rabbi

”וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ”

“You will eat and you will be satiated and you will bless Hashem (Debarim 8:10)

The *Ben Ish Hai* asks an interesting question. The *perashah* mentions the *misvah* of saying *Bircat Hamazon* after eating bread. This is a *misvah* from the Torah to recite this *berachah*. The only other *berachah* that has its source in the Torah is the *berachah* we make before studying Torah. The *berachah* on eating bread is after we eat, whereas the *berachah* before, which is *hamotzi*, is Rabbinic. In contrast, the *berachah* on the Torah is before we learn, and the *berachah* after is Rabbinic. Why is the required *berachah* on bread after we eat, while the required *berachah* on learning Torah is before we begin learning?

He says that the Torah is teaching us an important lesson. When you eat, even when you first begin to eat, your mind should be on the end of the eating. It's not good to run to eat, and it's not good to eat a lot. On the other hand, when it comes to Torah study, it is not good to think of when it will end. On the contrary, it is more important to begin learning without thinking about when it will end. It's better not to limit your learning time. The main thing is to begin learning. That's why the *berachah* on studying Torah is in the beginning. The *berachah* on bread is after the bread because even when you begin the meal, you should focus on the end.

It's funny that the nature of man is that when he sits to eat he has plenty of time, but when he sits to learn, his time is suddenly limited. The *Ben Ish Hai* is teaching us that it should be just the opposite. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Steadfast Gratitude

As part of the ongoing recounting of the desert experience this week in *Parashat Ekeb*, Moshe discusses the *Egel HaZahab*, the sin of the Golden Calf. First he tells the Jewish nation about his journey to the top of Sinai, where he remained for forty days and forty nights. "Then I ascended the mountain to receive the Tablets of stone...bread I did not eat, and water I did not drink (*Debarim* 9:9).

He then discusses the sin of the Golden Calf, where the nation chose to erect a new deity to serve, causing Moshe to descend the mountain enraged and smash the *luchot*. He then tells how Hashem wanted actually to destroy the nation and begin anew. It was only Moshe's interference, praying again for forty days and nights, that led to their absolution.

What seems somewhat difficult to understand is the interjection of Moshe's miraculous sustenance not eating or drinking for forty days. In *Shemot* (Chapter 34) it has a place as Hashem describes the miracles He performed as part of the Torah-transfer process. But here, in Moshe's narrative, it seems self-appreciating.

From the annals of talking with some yeshiva principals, I would like to share the following story, as it may shine a light on Moshe's words:

A number of years ago, one particular yeshiva student entered 9th grade. In his elementary school, this youngster earned a reputation for being very bright, but also being one of the wildest and most innovative troublemakers that a school can afford! The high school was afraid to accept him, but his potential for success and his parent's good standing in the community helped them decide to take a chance.

The dean of the school wanted to place him in a class with a no-nonsense, make-'em-work type of Rabbi, but the high school's principal strongly disagreed. He wanted to put him into a class that had a new teacher, a quiet young man who hardly spoke above a whisper. In addition to his low-key demeanor, the Rabbi looked frail and emaciated. That Rabbi's most outstanding trait, which was inversely proportional to his physical stature, was his love and devotion toward even the most difficult student.

The principal assured the dean that despite this young student's reputation, he would thrive with this Rebbe. Against his better judgment, the dean consented.

What took place was truly remarkable. This young boy not only excelled in his Hebrew studies, but during class he never called out, sat quietly in his chair taking notes, and participated in all the discussions.

The dean asked the Rabbi how he was able to calm him down, and the Rabbi just shrugged. Then the dean decided to ask the boy himself. "What changed your classroom attitude this year?" asked the austere dean. "What formula do we have that made you so successful? I'd love to know so I can share it with all our students."

"Sorry" smiled the boy. "It was not you or even the school. It's Rebbe! You see, I thought to myself, how can I even think of making trouble. Rebbe is such a *sadik*; he cares so much for me. I know that he even prays for my success, and I am almost sure that he even fasts for me! I may be a troublemaker, but I am surely no ingrate!"

Moshe, I am sure, did not take fasting forty days lightly. True, he survived it miraculously, but I am sure that it entailed giving his whole soul and most of his physical being to achieve that level. Hashem gave him the strength to finish what he wanted to actually do if it were humanly possible. He understood that Torah must be transmitted with *mesirut nefesh*, giving one's soul. And that is why he mentions it here. The sin of the Golden Calf was not only against Hashem. The nation should have realized how much strength, effort, and lifeblood Moshe gave to this mission. Their sin was not only a slap in G-d's face, it was also a rebuff of Moshe's efforts as well.

So next time we are about to rebel against G-d, we must realize and remember, we are not only negating G-d's word, but the efforts, the fasting, the tears, and the prayers of our parents, our grandparents, and our teachers. If fear of G-d does not stop us, maybe gratitude for his mortal messengers will. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

All For One

”בְּשִׁבְעִים נַפְשׁ יָרְדוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם”

“With seventy *Nefesh* /soul[s] your ancestors descended to Egypt.” (*Debarim* 10:22)

Midrash Vayikra Rabbah (4:6) observes that Ya'akov's family numbered seventy people, yet they are called “*Nefesh*” / soul (singular). In contrast, even when speaking of a time that Esav's family numbered only six people, the Torah calls them “*Nefashot*” / souls (plural).

R' Yitzchak Shmelkes z"l (1828-1906; rabbi of Lvov, Galicia) explains: A *Rasha* / wicked person doesn't want others to be as wicked as he is, for then they might act wickedly toward him. A thief doesn't want others to steal, for then they might steal from him. Thus, the wise king [Shlomo] says (*Mishlei* 21:10), “The soul of the evildoer desires evil; his companion [in evil] will not find favor in his eyes.” Since evildoers can never truly unite, the Torah calls them *Nefashot*.

In contrast, the ultimate desire of a *Saddik* is that all mankind be righteous, just as he is. This, concludes R' Shmelkes, explains the *Gemara* (*Yebamot* 61a) which says that only the Jewish People are called “Adam”— a word that has no plural form, paralleling the unity of purpose that the righteous desire. (Rabbi Shlomo Katz)

Finish Line

The finish line is an essential component of any competition. Whether it is called the goal line (football), the finish line (bicycle race), or home plate (baseball), it is recognized by the competitors, who know when they have scored and when they can rest after achieving their goal.

While attending a function recently, I overheard two highly successful business people chatting. “You know,” said one to the other, “you really changed my outlook the last time I saw you. You were pretty exhausted from a day of ‘battle’ at your business, and you said to me, ‘Where is the finish line?’”

This is an incisive question all people should ask themselves.

Our Sages teach, “No one leaves this life with more than half of his desires in hand” (*Kohelet Rabbah* 1:13). A story is told of a poor, hard-working soul who went to visit a very ill millionaire. The millionaire commented, “I don't know how you stay in such good spirits, you earn so little. How do you make ends meet?” Rather than