

to Yerushalayim, where we planned to spend the day. We wanted to go to the *Kotel* first and be there for *Bircat Kohanim*, after which we would visit relatives.

About halfway to our destination, two-year-old Chezky began coughing and wheezing. A rattling accompanied each breath, and it was clear that Chezky felt as if he were choking. The toddler's breathing sounded as if there were something obstructing it. We began to worry that a foreign body was lodged in his throat, so as soon as we arrived in Yerushalayim, instead of heading for the Old City, we went directly to Terem, the urgent-care center at the entrance to Yerushalayim.

The children waited in the lobby while my wife and I took Chezky to the emergency room. The doctor on duty ordered a series of X-rays and, when nothing was found, a fluoroscope. Needless to say, the procedure took quite a while, and the other children were naturally becoming increasingly restless. They had planned on enjoying a *hol hamo'ed* outing at the *Kotel*, not sitting for hours in an emergency room. We understood their disappointment, but explained to them that although we thought that the best place for us to be was at the *Kotel*, evidently Hashem had different plans for us. If it was ordained that we spend this time in an emergency room, then that was what was good for us. A Jew should never complain about how things turn out, for everything is planned from Above.

Two hours later Chezky was discharged healthy and whole. The doctors had found an obstruction in his windpipe, a tiny piece of apple, which they removed, and *Baruch Hashem*, his breathing had returned to normal. Despite the late hour, we decided to continue with our original plan to visit the *Kotel*, even though *Bircat Kohanim* was long over. We phoned our relatives to tell them of our delay and were surprised by the anxious tone of voice on the other end of the line.

"What happened? Is everyone okay? Where are you?"

"At Terem."

"What? Were you hit by stones at the *Kotel*?"

After a minute or two we began to get the picture. Hashem, in His great mercy, had led us to Terem instead of to the *Kotel* where, during *Bircat Kohanim*, Arabs had thrown stones and other projectiles upon the worshippers below. I shuddered to think how we, with eight small children in tow, could have managed to escape the great danger.

Despite our personal salvation, we were greatly distressed to learn that Jews were forced to run for their lives from our holiest site. Our compassion went out to those who had been injured, and we prayed that they would have a complete recovery. As for us, our family had the merit to learn firsthand that a Jew never really knows what is best for him. (There is no such thing as coincidence 2)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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שַׁבַּת עֵמֹר * שְׁמֵת אִמֹר

Haftarah: Yehezkel 44:15-31

MAY 8-9, 2020 15 IYAR 5780

Candlelighting: 7:40 pm

Shabbat ends: 8:39 pm (R" T 9:11 pm)

See enclosed sheet for full Shabbat schedule

This bulletin is dedicated by the Hazan family

in memory of Isaac Hazan

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת יִצְחָק בֶּן רִינָה

Lag ba'Omer will be celebrated on Tuesday, May 12.

A Message from our Rabbi

"וְלֹא תַחֲלֹוּ אֶת־שֵׁם קִדְשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל"

"You shall not desecrate My Holy Name and I shall be sanctified among the Children of Israel." (Vayikra 22:32)

Our *perashah* teaches the important obligation to make a *kiddush Hashem*, which means to sanctify His Name. Rabbi Reuven Trop zt"l notes that the verse doesn't say, "You shall sanctify His Name." It says in the passive form, "And I shall be sanctified." This means that we shouldn't feel we are sanctifying His Name but rather we should think that His Name will become sanctified by us not doing a desecration of Hashem's Name.

A great illustration of this was told by Rabbi Yitzchak Hisiger. The Skverer Rebbe of Boro Park t"l was a tremendous *ba'al hesed*. In particular, he helped many people in the medical field, bringing them to the highest quality doctors, and seeing to it that patients were cared for in the best manner possible.

In one instance, a Jewish patient required a surgery during the time of the secular new year holiday. The Rebbe contacted a top-notch surgeon and asked him to perform the surgery.

"I understand that this is your vacation and that it is difficult for you," the Rebbe told him, "but there is a life in danger. Please, you must help this person."

The doctor was moved by the Rebbe's plea and agreed to perform the surgery. The surgery was scheduled to begin at night and was to be six hours long.

As the surgeon entered the operating room, the Rebbe was there to wish him success. The Rebbe then sat down and began saying *Tehillim* along with the family

members, remaining there throughout the night. In fact, he was there as the surgeon emerged from the operating room many hours later.

“Rabbi, the surgeon exclaimed in surprise, “you didn’t tell me that this was your family member!”

The Rebbe shook his head. “No,” he said, “he is not a family member.”

“Then why were you sitting here praying through the night?” the doctor asked.

The Rebbe explained, “I was not going to call you to come here and spend the night doing surgery while I am sleeping at home in bed. If you are spending the night here, so am I! I cannot perform the actual surgery, but I can still be here with you, praying for your success!” Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Misvah-Watch

Observation does not necessarily mean participation – at least in an etymological or grammatical sense. My dealings with Jews who do not keep Torah law have led me to hear one quip, “Of course Rabbi, I am an observant Jew. If someone performs a *misvah* in my presence, I observe a *misvah*!”

Of course, when one is called an observant Jew, he does much more than watch! He or she participates in *misvah* performance; watching is not enough. That is why I was troubled this week, when I noticed a particularly expressive command, *u’shmartem es mitzvosai, v’aseesem osum* — watch the *misvot* and do them.”

What does “watch *misvot*” mean? Why does the Torah tell us to watch the *misvot* in addition to performing them?

Last winter, it was decided to give recognition to the community *Chevra Kadisha* (burial society). Rabbi Paysach Krohn addressed a large gathering at Brooklyn’s *Bais HaChaim* Chapel. His inspiring talk concerned the delicate issues of death, dignity, and decorum. He related the following story:

Rabbi Yehuda Laib Lewis is the Rav of a beautiful *kehilla* in Amsterdam. As in every *kehilla*, the community has a *Chevra Kadisha*. Membership is a privilege and only outstanding members of the *kehilla* are selected. There is one group of people who, no matter how outstanding they are considered in the community, are never asked to serve as part of the *Chevra Kohanim* (priests) are not allowed to come in contact with a dead body, so burying the dead is one *misvah* that they rarely perform!

It so happened that Rabbi Lewis’s community purchased a plot of land to consecrate a new cemetery for the *kehilla*. The *Kohanim*, as well as other members of the community participated in this great *misvah* and designated the first plot that was to be used. Not long after the purchase, a member of the *kehilla* passed away. He would be the first to be buried in the new cemetery. The next day the friends and mourners arrived with the deceased at the cemetery. Shovels in hand, they approached the grave to begin burying the inaugural plot for the deceased.

They were shocked to see that the plot had been dug!

After burying the man, they found out the true story. Moshe Cohen, a member of the community and a *Kohen*, wanted to participate in the great *misvah* of burying the dead, all his life. However, *Kohanim* are restricted from coming in contact with a dead person. But when Mr. Cohen heard that there was a new cemetery being consecrated and that there was no one interred in it yet, he saw the opportunity that he had watched and waited for. And the first one buried in the new cemetery had his grave ready and waiting, dug by none other than Moshe Cohen!

The *Hatam Sofer* reminds us of another time the Torah uses the word watch. The Torah tells us of Yosef’s dreams of glory and that his father Ya’akov, “watched the incident.” *Rashi* explains that watched means waited in anticipation of fulfillment.

The *Hatam Sofer* explains that the Torah in this week’s *perashah* tells us to do more than perform *misvot*. It tells us to watch for them. It exhorts us to anticipate their fulfillment. It teaches us to wait for the opportunities that arise, ready and able to perform when opportunity knocks!

The Torah tells us this week, Watch for the *misvot* and then observe them! It is not enough to be a Jewish observer, rather one must be a Jewish anticipator as well! (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Equal

“וַיִּתֵּן אֶהָרֹן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים גִּרְלוֹת גֹּרֵל אֶחָד לַה' וְגֹרֵל אֶחָד לְעִזָּאֵזֶל”
“Aharon shall place lots upon the two h-goats; one lot ‘for hashem,’ and one lot ‘for Azazel.’” (Vayikra 16:8)

Hazal teach us that both he-goats must be equal in height, appearance, and value. There can be no difference between these two animals other than their ultimate end, which is determined by the lots. *Al Hatorah* offers a thoughtful exposition of this equality. Human nature dictates that people spend money on many personal and secular pursuits. Regardless of the price, people always find the money to spend on themselves. For some it is the theater; for others, sports-related amusements; for still others, it is trips that spare no expense – the money is always available. Then there are those humanitarians who feel they must empty their coffers for charities that are of a secular nature – i.e. animal shelters, protecting the rainforest and environment. These causes take precedence over such *sedakot* as Jewish education, assisting the needy, finding shelter for Jewish immigrants, helping the sick, and feeding the poor. We somehow always find a rationale to justify our selection of charities, relegating Torah-oriented *sedakot* to a distant second place. The Torah tells us that there should be “*goral echad*” – one lot for Hashem and one lot for Azazel. The least we should do is give an amount of assistance to Hashem’s charities equal to that which we give to ourselves and others. (*Peninim* on the Torah)

Ethics of the Fathers

It is customary to study *Pirkei Abot* (Ethics of the Fathers) during the six weeks between Pesah and Shabuot, one chapter every Shabbat.

“בֶּן זֹמָא אוֹמֵר...אֵיזְהוּ עֵשִׂיר הַשְּׂמַח בְּהַלְקוֹ”

“Ben Zoma said...Who is rich? He who is content with his lot.” (*Abot* 4:1)

Why didn’t Ben Zoma say, “Who is rich? He who is content with his money?”

The word עֵשִׂיר *ashir* (rich) is an acronym for הַנְּלִים, יָדַים, שְׁנַיִם, עֵינַיִם, טַיְטִים, אֶזְרִים, אֶשְׁרִים, אֶשְׁרִים, אֶשְׁרִים - eyes, teeth, hands and feet. Hashem has given these as a gift to human beings and expects us to use them for Torah study, prayer and good deeds.

The eyes should be used for reading Torah and looking favorably at other Jews. With the teeth one should eat kosher food and speak well of others. The hands are to be used to give charity and extend help to anyone in need. With the feet one should go to shul and yeshivah.

A person who has “healthy” eyes, teeth, hands and feet is indeed rich and should be grateful to Hashem. A man who is content with G-d’s gift and who utilizes his body exactly as Hashem intended is truly an *ashir* - a wealthy person. (*Vedibarta Bam*)

A Deep Breath

The following story occurred during *hol hamo’ed Succot*, at the start of the second Palestinian terrorist mini-war. Our entire family was in the car and we were on our way