

Behold It Is Very Good

On the day Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt"l, passed away, I listened to many eulogies commemorating his life. As each speaker delivered his heart-rending insights into the true greatness of this humble Sage, the Torah giant grew taller and taller in our minds. Many speakers dwelt on his special approach to Torah and life, which Rabbi Miller viewed as inseparable.

“He who possesses an understanding of the goodness of the world always rejoices. Life is full of intense pleasures that are available to all people, but many fail to appreciate them because of mistaken mental attitudes. ‘The Almighty saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good!’ The Creator Himself declares that everything is not only good, but very good!” (Rabbi Avigdor Miller, *Sing, You Righteous*)

Rabbi Miller saw good in everything. On a cool, drizzly day, as he was savoring the refreshing sensation of the spray hitting his face, two women passed by him. “What a nasty day!” he overheard one woman comment to her friend. Rabbi Miller was shocked. How could someone take a negative view of what Hashem was providing?

When you are about to complain, stop and look for the positive in the situation. Taking this brief pause may cause you to turn around and go from disgruntled to happy! (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

To Each His Own

“For thousands of species of mammals, each one’s milk is exactly suited for that species. The milk of human beings is the very best milk for children. Even cow’s milk is exactly suited for cow’s, although it can be readily adapted for human use. We therefore see the miracle that Hashem performs in providing milk.”

Our strict dietary laws in the Torah is an elixir for our spiritual and physical health. Each person is designed by Hashem to enjoy his own food. Some like meat, some like dairy etc. When we digest the milk of the Torah it is beneficial for our souls. (By Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller's, Duties of the Mind.)

The Poor Millionaire

A poor, ragged man, the victim of many hardships, was wont to visit R' Pesach Frank of Jerusalem on a regular basis. During each visit he poured out his heart to the Rav, and the Rav listened to his problems over and over again, consoling him anew every time.

One day a member of R' Frank's household was looking out the window and saw this man approaching the house. "Here comes the *nudge*," he said mockingly. "Now the Rav is about to waste an hour of his precious time!"

R' Frank heard this comment and confronted the speaker. "Tell me the truth," he demanded. "If you knew that this man was carrying a package containing one million dollars, would you still have made fun of him, or would you have welcomed his arrival?"

The Rav paused, but there was no answer.

“Well, the fact is that this man possesses a treasure of much greater value. He owns a package of pain that, according to *Hazal*, wipes out all sins and assures the bearer of *olam haba*, something that millions in currency could not obtain. So why then do you mock this poor millionaire?” (Glimpses of Greatness)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition
 $\varpi''\eta\eta f\varpi\square\chi,\square X\varpi\diamond\tau\square\kappa,\diamond v\clubsuit\alpha\leftrightarrow^\circ\beta\eta Y\kappa\eta\square\gamma\square\kappa$

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444
West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764
(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT KI

$$\tau \blacklozenge \leftarrow f, \eta \square \Phi \square, \square X \heartsuit \uparrow$$

Haftarah: Melachim I 18:20-39

Friday Minhah: **5:21 pm**

Candlelighting: **5:21 pm**

Evening Shema after: **6:19 pm**

Shaharit: **5:40, 6:40, 8:10, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:45 am**

Shabbat Classes: 3:50 pm

Shabbat Minhah: **5:00 pm**

Shabbat Ends: 6:21 pm (R"Y 6:53 pm)

Sunday Minhah: **5:25 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

**This bulletin is dedicated by Steven Levy
in honor of his wife, Linda, a true *eshet hayil*.**

Mabrook to Isaac & Elana Abadi on the engagement of their son, Shlomo.

Mabrook to Abie & Sarah Sasson on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, Mark & Aileen Mizrahi and Sol & Lulu Sasson.

Mabrook to Jaime & Ana Biton on the engagement of their daughter, Miriam, to Mikey Cohen. Mabrook to the grandparents, Armando & Luisa Behar.

Mabrook to Rachamim & Francine Safdieh on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Danny & Marilyn Safdieh.

A Message from our Rabbi

וַיֵּרָא אֶהָרֹן וְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְהָיָה קָרֹן עֹזֹר פָּנָיו׃

“Aharon and all the children of Israel saw Moshe and behold! The skin of his face had become radiant.” (*Shemot* 34:30)

When Moshe *Rabenu* came down from Har Sinai after his final forty-day stay in Heaven, he brought the second *luhot* (tablets) with him. His face had a holy, supernatural shine to it. *Rashi* says that this was the result of Hashem's Divine Hand, which had sheltered Moshe when Hashem showed him a glimpse of His glory (33:22).

The *Gemara* (*Baba Mesi'ah* 84a) says that R' Yohananan was endowed with a spiritual radiance that was reminiscent of the unique celestial shine of Moshe. Rav Pam zt"l says one would think that he would do everything possible to preserve this unique privilege for himself and thereby be distinguished in the annals of history as one of the

most handsome people. It is only natural that a person would protect the Divine gift of unique attainment that makes him special.

Nevertheless, the *Gemara* says that R' Yohanan would sit at the entranceway to the *mikveh* so that when women would emerge from their ritual immersion, “they would see me and would retain an image of me in their minds. They would have children as handsome as me who would become as learned as me.”

What is truly remarkable about R' Yohanan's behavior is that once children would also have his radiant, holy features, there would no longer be anything special about R' Yohanan's glow. That did not concern R' Yohanan. He would be very happy if his unique attribute became the norm for Jewish children, even if it came at his own expense.

This is truly a great goal to have, that everyone should have the good things that we have.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Omens from Heaven

The sin of the Golden Calf has remained in the background of Jewish history for thousands of years. It seems inconceivable how it is possible that a people who only several weeks earlier had stood around Mount Sinai, heard the prohibition against idolatry, and said “We will observe and we will listen” (*na'aseh v'nishma*), could now worship a Golden Calf.

As all the classic commentaries point, especially the *Ramban*, this was not real *abodah zarah*. They were merely looking for a figurehead to lead them, because they were under the impression that Moshe *Rabenu* had died.

Rashi cites a teaching of *Hazal* that *Klal Yisrael's* assumption that their leader was dead was not based merely on a figment of their imagination, but on what would be considered empirical evidence. *Rashi* says that they also made a specific calculation. Moshe told them that he would be back in forty days. According to their count, the forty days had elapsed, and Moshe *Rabenu* was not the type of person who came late. They were convinced that something must have happened to him. To compound that, *Hazal* say that the *satan* came and made the conditions appear as though the world was coming to an end. Moreover, according to the *Midrash*, the *satan* made it appear as if the coffin of Moshe *Rabenu* was floating in the air.

So we have a combination of factors: (1) Moshe's delay in returning; (2) the confusing conditions that appeared in the world; (3) the people actually saw an image of Moshe's coffin floating. The people panicked, and came to Aharon, who first tried a delaying tactic. Finally, he threw a gold ingot into the fire, and out came a Golden Calf.

Put yourself in Aharon's position. He just threw in gold. He did not form it. He did not make it into the shape of a calf. A Golden Calf came out. Talk about a Heavenly omen! Is this not a sign from Heaven that there must be something to this?

If we put all these factors together, was it not only natural that *Klal Yisrael* should commit this *averah*? When Moshe *Rabenu* pleads on behalf of the Jewish people, why doesn't he use all these “omens” and valid rationalizations as a defense? “What does Hashem want from these people? They thought I was dead, they saw the coffin, the Golden Calf miraculously emerged from the fire,” etc., etc. And yet we see that despite all the things that Moshe *Rabenu* could have said, he did not use any of these excuses. Why not?

The answer is because it says in the Torah that we should not bow down to graven images. End of discussion. When the Torah states a prohibition black on white, we can have all the compelling excuses in the world, but the rules can never, never be

broken: If it says in the Torah that something is *assur* [prohibited], then it is *assur*, despite all excuses and omens.

Sometimes in life there are extenuating circumstances, and there are situations with all sorts of signs. But the bottom line always is, “What does it say in the Torah?” “What does it say in *Shulhan Aruch*?” “What is the Will of G-d?” If it is clear that “This is what the Law demands,” then the rest of the calculations have to be ignored. If the Torah says “Do not make for yourself a graven image” [*Shemot* 20:4] then that is the ultimate consideration. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Breaking the Glass

There is a universal Jewish custom that the *hatan* breaks a glass under the *huppah* at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony. The conventional reason is that this is *zecher l'hurban* – a commemoration of the Temple's destruction. Anytime we celebrate a *simcha*, we must remember the *hurban haBayit*, and therefore no *simcha* is complete while the *Bet HaMikdash* and *Yerushalayim* remain desolate. Therefore, the *hatan* breaks the glass, “*zecher l'hurban*.”

One of the *Geonim* (I believe it is Rav Hai Gaon or Rav Sadiah Gaon) gives a different reason for breaking a glass under the *huppah*: It is to remind us that Moshe *Rabenu* broke the *luhot* [tablets].

At first glance, this does not seem to make any sense. Why is it that a *hatan* or *kallah* under their *huppah* need to remember that Moshe broke the *luhot*? What message is contained in that historical event that must be commemorated at every Jewish wedding? I believe it is because the breaking of the *luhot*, and more specifically, the strength it took for Moshe to take that action, represents one of the great keys for success in any marriage.

At the end of the Torah, when the Almighty records the epitaph of Moshe *Rabenu*, the crowning glory, the last item that the Almighty says about Moshe *Rabenu* is...“Before the eyes of all Israel.” *Rashi* interprets: That his heart inspired him to break the *luhot* before their eyes, as it says, “And I smashed them before your eyes.” Why was the breaking of the *luhot* Moshe's greatest act?

The answer is that it took tremendous strength of character for Moshe to break the *luhot*. It is the nature of humans that when we invest in something, and put our hearts and souls into something, it becomes so dear to us that we rarely, if ever, want to walk away from that accomplishment. That is the way we are. Once we become invested in an item or a project, we do not want to abandon it. The last thing a person ever wants to do is to admit that he was wrong, and to walk away from something in which he has invested a great deal of time and effort.

Moshe *Rabenu* spent literally forty days and forty nights on the mountain — drinking no water and consuming no food. He exhibited tremendous self-sacrifice to receive the *luhot*. But when he came down from the mountain and he saw *Klal Yisrael* dancing around the Golden Calf, he said “Guess what? This is not for them.” He did not rationalize and he did not procrastinate. It was now necessary for these *luhot* to be broken. It took a tremendous amount of strength of character for Moshe to say “I'm walking away from this.”

One of the most difficult things for a husband to do in a marriage — after having long argued a certain issue with his wife — is to walk away and say “You know, maybe she's right.” Maybe her way of looking at this is in fact the more correct way.” This is why we break a glass under the *huppah*. We break the glass to remind us that Moshe broke the *luhot*. It is the ultimate reminder that sometimes it is necessary to step back from deep investment in a certain project or position, and say, “Guess what? I am not

right.” In the case of marriage, this represents having the strength of character to say,
“Maybe I am wrong, and she is right.” (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)