

When you see something happen, don't jump to conclusions. Ask, analyze, and think of all the possibilities – reasonable and unreasonable, physical and spiritual – that could make it happen. It may take more than a minute, but it will lead you away from making incorrect, superficial judgments and guide you towards deliberate, correct conclusions. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### Collaboration

“The lungs work in conjunction with the diaphragm, which is a sheet of muscles that lie across the bottom of the chest cavity. When we inhale, the diaphragm alternately expands the lungs to help pull oxygen into them and collapses the lungs to help pump the carbon dioxide out when we exhale. Because body cells are constantly using up oxygen and producing carbon dioxide, the lungs must work continuously.”

To maintain healthy body functioning, each body part needs another body part to work together. As a nation, each person is an important contribution to his community. We all need each other in Collaboration to achieve the goal of getting closer to Hashem. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael.)

### Total Recall

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger of Brooklyn, New York, was surprised to hear the voice of a former *talmid* on the phone. “It's so good to hear from you, Meir,” said Rabbi Weinberger. “We haven't spoken in ages.” Meir Friedland, who had been Rabbi Weinberger's *talmid* in *Mesivta Bais Shraga* in Monsey ten years earlier, was now married and living with his wife and young family in Belle Harbor, New York.

“Rebbi, I am making a *siyum* on all six volumes of the *Mishnah Berurah* and I would be honored if you would attend,” said Meir.

“*Mazal tov*, that's wonderful! I am so proud!” exclaimed Rabbi Weinberger. “It's so kind of you to remember me and invite me, but why me, of all people?”

“Well, Rebbi, it's only because of you that this whole thing happened,” said Meir.

“Me?” laughed Rabbi Weinberger. “How so?”

“I don't know if you remember this,” began Meir, “but many years ago when I was in your class in *Bais Shraga* you announced that you were giving a test on the *Mishnah Berurah* that we had learned. You said, ‘And I expect every boy to get 100 on the test.’”

“Some in the class laughed, and one boy said, ‘That never happens, how can everyone get 100?’”

“What you said to that boy is something I never forgot. You said, ‘Boys, if you get an 80 on a *Gemara* test, it means you know the material fairly well but there is room for improvement. But if you get an 80 in *Mishnah Berurah*, that deals with *halachah*, that means that you are doing things wrong 20 percent of the time. That's not acceptable.’”

“That always stayed with me and when I went to learn in *Mir* in *Yerushalayim* years later, I started a serious *seder* in *Mishnah Berurah*. It has taken me all these years, but I finally completed it and the inspiration came from you.”

This heartwarming story illustrates the influence a Rebbi or *morah* can have with a well-phrased expression of wisdom and encouragement. Quite often, a student retains words that the teacher has long forgotten saying. Thus, teachers in whatever capacity must choose their words carefully, for once they are uttered they have a life all their own. Rabbi Weinberger's one expression brought about endless hours of learning and adherence to *misvot*. (In the Splendor of the Maggid)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהֵיָה

בס"ד

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT MIKES  שַׁבַּת מִקֵּס

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

**DECEMBER 27-28, 2019 30 KISLEV 5780**

Friday Minhah: **4:19 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:19 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:17 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: **6:19, 6:40, 8:10, 9:10 am**

Morning Shema by: **9:06 am**

Shabbat Minhah: **3:55 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:17 pm (R"Y 5:49 pm)**

Shabbat Class after Habdalah

Sunday Minhah: **4:20 pm**

This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell & Robin Antar  
in memory of her father, Mr. David Shamula לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת דָּוִד בֶּן אֶסְתֵּר

This bulletin is dedicated by Morris Sutton  
in memory of his mother, Rachel Sutton לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת רַחֵל בַּת וְקַטְרוּיָה

We will be having an early *minhah* on Friday at 3:00 pm so that you can pray *minhah* before lighting Hanukah candles. Please be careful to get back to *shul* for *arbit* before 4:35 to avoid violating the Shabbat.

*Rosh Hodesh Tebet* will be celebrated on Shabbat & Sunday, December 28 & 29.

Mabrook to David & Nancy Rothstein on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Steven & Shelly Rothstein.

Mabrook to Solly & Alegria Antebi on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Shlomo & Shavie Abecasis.

### A Message from our Rabbi

“ריבוי הסעודות שמרבים בהם הם סעודות הרשות”

“The festive meals held during Hanukah are purely optional” (*Shulhan Aruch Orach Hayim* 670:2)

With regard to Hanukah, the external components of the *Yom Tob* are relatively minor. Other than spending a few minutes each morning saying *Hallel*, and a few minutes every night lighting the *Menorah*, we can easily go through each day of Hanukah like any other weekday. Before we know it, eight days have flown by without us feeling any connection to the deeper meaning of the *Yom Tob*. We must turn inward

and focus on deepening our connection to Hashem. Thanking Him and praising Him should inspire us to improve our *misvah* performance in the most ideal manner (*mehadrin min hamehadrin*).

As mentioned above, the *Shulhan Aruch* says our festive meals on Hanukah are optional. However the *Rama* adds that “if those assembled sing songs of praise to Hashem, the meal is elevated and considered a *misvah*.” The *Rama* seems difficult because we can do this on any day of the year. Why now?

Rabbi Reisman explains that to appreciate the significance of these festive meals, we must first understand more deeply the nature of our victory over the Greeks. The Greek value system only respected the exterior. They constructed magnificent structures, created beautiful art and glorified the human body. The Greeks did not physically destroy the *Bet Hamikdash*, they specifically wanted it to remain standing, for they appreciated its external greatness, like a museum.

To undo their attempts to hollow out the inside and leave only a beautiful façade, we do the exact opposite, taking the mundane physical acts of eating and drinking, and elevating them. By transforming an ordinary meal into an occasion to sing songs of praise to Hashem, we uplift the food and drink by imbuing them with greater meaning.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

## Payback

”לָמָּה שְׁלַמְתָּם רָעָה תַחַת טוֹבָה”

“Why do you repay evil for good?” (*Beresheet* 44:4)

Yosef’s choice of words, “Why do you repay evil for good?” is questionable. One who does evil in place of good is not “repaying.” He either did not do good, or he performed evil. The term simply does not apply when one is acting wrongly. One does not pay evil for good. Rav Yitzchak Goldwasser explains that when we delve into the psyche of a *kafui tob*, one who denies the gratitude he owes and instead acts inappropriately, we note a remarkable phenomenon of human nature. One who has benefited from another fellow is literally indebted to him. By failing to recognize the debt of gratitude which he owes, he thinks it will disappear. This is not, however, an easy task. The favor which he received stares at him, demanding appreciation, compelling him to respond in some way. He attempts to hide from this debt, to cover it up. Hence the phrase *kafui tob*, which is derived from the word *kafah*, to cover. This concept is not that simplistic, because the idea of “*tobah*” is very compelling.

How does one deal with this “problem”? Psychologically speaking, a person’s emotions respond to his actions. In other words, if one acts inappropriately or in a vulgar manner, in due time his personality will begin to conform to his actions. He will become a vulgar, negative person. While the *kafui tob* may not be a psychologist, he still feels that if he acts towards his benefactor in a disgusting manner, he will ultimately break the emotional hold that he has on him, and he will no longer feel beholden to him.

Indeed, it is said in the name of the *Hatam Sofer*, that he once passed by a Jew who made it a point to make life miserable for him. He remarked, “I do not know why he causes me such anguish. I never did him a favor!” The understanding is that a perverted mind that does not want to return a favor, will instead be inconsiderate to that individual. Thus, we now understand the underlying meaning of Yosef’s statement. One who is a *kafui tob*, who refuses to recognize and appreciate the favor he received, will pay back his debt of gratitude with a disservice. (*Peninim* on the Torah)

## Udder Defeat

”וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַתִּפְעֶם רוּחוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־כָּל־חַרְטוּמֵי מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־כָּל־חֲכָמֵיהֶּ וַיִּסְפֹּר פִּרְעֹה לָהֶם אֶת־חֲלֹמוֹ”

“And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was anxious, and he sent and called all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men, and Pharaoh told them of his dream.” (*Beresheet* 41:8)

Pharaoh’s attitude towards his dream demands explanation. Does dreaming about cows and ears of corn warrant immediate interpretation by the wisest men of the country? To the average person, these dreams seem to be nothing more than the inane musings of the subconscious. What impressed Pharaoh to the extent that he was shaken by its covert message? Rav Shimon Schwab z”l suggests that these dreams had an underlying message which gave Pharaoh a rude awakening.

Pharaoh followed the atheistic perspective that in any altercation the minority will inevitably fall into the hands of the multitude. Similarly, the weaker party will surrender to the stronger adversary. Consequently, Pharaoh reigned in comfort, confident about the future and what it held for him. Was he not the most powerful ruler of that time? Did he not control the largest, most ruthless army? Could anyone succeed in deposing him from his position of power?

What Pharaoh saw in his dreams disconcerted his delusions of grandeur and “awakened” him to reality. He saw the weaker, thinner cows/corn devouring and overshadowing the fatter, stronger ones. This spectacle stunned Pharaoh and shook the very foundations of his “imaginary” stability. He began to realize that despite the size and power of his army, he could be defeated. These dreams that challenged his purported sense of success required immediate interpretation.

Rav Schwab adds that it is no mere coincidence that *Parashat Mikess* “coincides” with Shabbat Hanukah, the festival which celebrates the defeat of the “mighty in the hands of the weak and the many in the hands of the few.” (*Peninim* on the Torah)

## WYSIWYG!

“What you see is what you get!” seems harmless and even true. But, in actuality, “WYSIWYG” is contrary to the way Jews should look at the events that happen around them and in the world at large.

We live in a time when the Master Puppeteer is truly hiding from us. He is pulling the strings, and we children think that the puppets are actually living, breathing, independent individuals who can affect what takes place in our lives and in the politics of the world.

More times than not, when something happens – an accident, an illness, victory, defeat – we are quick to analyze the causes of the event. What we see makes us believe that we understand exactly the way events followed one another, leading to the result. The story of Yosef and his brothers and the Purim story are classic examples of “what you see is probably incorrect.” And our Sages teach that the mighty Nebuchadnezzar and his armies were not the destroyers of the *Bet Hamikdash*; the sins of the Jews actually brought the destruction.

The lesson is not to accept things at face value. First impressions are usually wrong. This world, *Olam Hazeah*, was created in such a way that the truth about most things is hidden from us. The agents of concealment are our eyes. We believe we see with them, but actually what we see blocks the truth and the true essence of what we are looking at.