

must study Torah in order to perfect our *Yirat Shamayim* – fear of Hashem – so that when we are tested, we react in a way that will please Hashem.

Perhaps our potential is not as great as Abraham *Abinu's* or – at least in a relative sense – perhaps it is. One thing is certain: Hashem knows what we are capable of achieving and He will provide the precise, personalized training program to develop each of us into the perfect “me.” Our job is to rise to the occasion – to accept the challenges and build our spiritual muscle step by step to reach our full potential. May we all use it – so that we don’t lose it. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### By the Book

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Pam tells the following story about his grandfather, the late Rabbi Avrohom Pam. The story took place when Rabbi Pam was already quite ill and very weak. He had called his grandson, and asked if he could come over to help put away the *sefarim* that had piled up all over the dining room. “The room is now quite cluttered and your grandmother doesn’t like them all around this way. She like the dining room neat but I don’t have the strength anymore to go down to the basement so many times to put away these *sefarim*. Can you come and help me?”

R’ Menachem Mendel told his grandfather that he would be happy to come and help. “I figured it would take twenty minutes,” he said. “How many *sefarim* could there have been already? Was I in for a surprise!”

When he came to his grandfather’s house, the dining room was indeed cluttered with *sefarim* on the table, on some chairs and wherever there was a flat surface. The *Rosh Yeshivah* welcomed his grandson and said, “You see all these *sefarim*? I have been so busy lately with calls from so many people and I have been so occupied with my health issues, that I have not had time to learn from most of them. But many of them were given to me by the authors – how can I insult these wonderful people who have spent their time learning Torah and writing their *hidushim* (new insights) without even learning one thing from them?”

“So before we put these *sefarim* downstairs, let’s learn at least one thought from each *sefer* and this way we honor the author and show respect for his toil.”

And so for the next three hours Rabbi Pam and his grandson picked up the *sefarim* one by one and studied one thought from each of them! Only then were the *sefarim* piled up and taken downstairs.

The incredible sensitivity of this Torah giant is amazing. Would any of the authors have known if the *Rosh Yeshivah* had not studied from their *sefarim*? Would any of the authors even expect him to do so, in his condition?

That is the sign of true greatness, regarding people with dignity and reverence even if they are not aware of it. (In the Spirit of the Maggid)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

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## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT NISABIM-VAYELECH

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Haftarah: Yeshayahu 61:10-63:9

**SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2017 25 ELUL 5777**

Fri. Shir Hashirim/Minhah: <b>5:50 &amp; 6:40 pm</b>	Shaharit: <b>5:39, 6:40, 8:30, 9:00, 9:15</b>
Candlelighting: <b>6:47 pm</b>	Morning Shema by: <b>8:58 am</b>
Evening Shema after: <b>7:45 pm</b>	Shabbat Class: <b>5:15 pm</b>
	Shabbat Minhah: <b>6:25 pm</b>
	Shabbat Ends: <b>7:44 pm (R"Y 8:16)</b>
	Sunday Minhah: <b>6:40 pm</b>

**These times are applicable only for the Deal area.**

**The second *Hatarah* of the season will be this Saturday night at 7:54 p.m. One should say “*Baruch hamabdil ben kodesh l’hol* - Blessed are You Who separates from Holy to mundane” before driving a car.**

**Condolences to Sammy Kassin on the passing of his father, Mr. Ike Kassin.**

### A Message from Our Rabbi

**”שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה...”**

“...that you renew for us a good and sweet year.” (*Simanim* on Rosh Hashanah)

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, it is customary to perform a number of *simanim*, good omens, to augment the coming New Year. The most important *siman* of them all, though, is not the edible kind, but rather the *siman* that comes from within each and every one of us. It is, in fact, the most essential of all: being pleasant, optimistic, and creating a friendly environment. There should be no sharp or hostile comments during this time period, but only a “sweet-as-the-honey-on-the-table” atmosphere (*Mishnah Berurah* 583:5). In that spirit, family members and guests should all wish each other a good, sweet year as is done in shul.

On the night of Rosh Hashanah, there is a well-known custom to dip a piece of apple into sugar (or honey). The *berachah* of *Boreh Peri Ha’ess* is recited, and we add a prayer for a good and sweet year. One might think that the entire exercise is performed in order to stress upon us the “sweetness” of the new year. However, we do not make a *berachah* on the honey at all. Why? Because the apple is a symbol of life itself, since it comes from a tree, and Torah – our lifeblood – is called *ess-hahayim*, the

tree of life. While we may wish for a life filled with sweetness and happiness, the main object of our prayer is life itself! The *berachah* of *Boreh Peri Ha'ess* that is recited indicates the main ingredient, the main focus of our prayers.

We first petition for life itself, reciting the *berachah* on the apple, and only then do we beg for the “sugar coating,” asking for a “good, sweet year.”

Happy holiday.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## No Standing

”אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִבְכֶם”

”You are standing this day, all of you.” (*Debarim* 29:9)

In the ethical Torah writings it is often stated that angels are referred to as *omdim* (standing), whereas people are referred to as *holchim* (progressing). By this is meant that angels are stationary, because they can never improve themselves. Angels are whatever they are as of the time they are created, and do not have the capacity to become “better” angels. Human beings, by contrast, have great potential for self-improvement, and should always be making progress in perfecting themselves.

The book of *Debarim* is essentially one of chastisement, and here Moshe tells the Israelites, “Look how lax you are. You are all standing in a stationary position before G-d, instead of progressing. Everyone seems to have found a niche in which he or she feels comfortable, and no one is making an effort to elevate himself of herself beyond the level of spirituality which has already been achieved.”

There is a folk saying that the worm that infests the horseradish must think that this is the sweetest place in the world. It is human nature to idealize the status quo, and making the necessary effort to change requires motivation. The motivation to work harder is usually the product of the desire to acquire more assets or to achieve a position of greater prestige. In the pursuit of spirituality, the motivation to improve oneself must come from a desire to become closer to G-d and to maximize the spiritual potential within oneself. Too often, people lack the aspiration to achieve greater spirituality.

Moshe was particularly sensitive to this issue, and he sought to inspire the Israelites not to be content with anything less than the maximum level of spirituality attainable. (Living Each Week)

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## Walking the Walk

*Parashat Nisabim* provides an important lesson in *hinuch* (pedagogy). After very harsh warnings about what will happen to us if we do not keep the Torah, the Torah concludes with the *pasuk*, “The hidden things are for Hashem, our G-d, (*ha'nistarot la'Hashem Elokenu*) but the revealed things (*ha'niglot*) are for us and for our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah.” (*Debarim* 29:28).

I saw a homiletic interpretation of the expression “*ha'nistarot la'Hashem Elokenu*” which interprets “the hidden things are for Hashem...” to refer to the *misvot* that are between man and G-d. There are sins where “nobody knows the difference” – no one saw you do it, no body heard you doing it; it remains strictly something that happened between you and Hashem. For sure, it is something that requires repentance and something for which he will need to give an accounting, but it remains hidden between the sinner and his G-d.

However, the “*niglot*,” which we do in public are “for us and for our children.” They have an influence not only on us, but on our children as well. A person must

always realize that how he acts will have an influence on his children. Whether it is how a person acts in shul or how he interacts with his fellow man, his children are watching and learning from this behavior. “*Ha'Niglot*” (that which is revealed) is “*Lanu*” (impacts oneself) and “*u'lebanenu*” (impacts our children as well)! Not only will they have an effect on our children but also the effect will be “*ad olam*” – it will have an eternal effect on our children and on their descendants forever more!

The job we do raising our children lasts with them and perpetuates throughout future generations, because how we raise them directly influences how they raise their children. Rav Wolbe writes that a person’s biggest motivation to be a *baal midot tobet* (kind and generous person) is his children. Even if a person knows that he is not the biggest *saddik* in the world and his natural inclinations would not be to go out of his way to show kindness to a neighbor, nonetheless, everyone wants to have “good children”. The surest way to accomplish that is to “talk the talk and walk the walk.” In that way, the *niglot* will be “*lanu u'lebanenu*.”

Someone once posed the following question to the *Hazon Ish*: He has the option of praying in a shul on Rosh Hashanah where he would be able to take his child with him or to pray in a Yeshiva, but since the Yeshiva is so crowded, he would not be able to take his child with him. However, the praying in the Yeshiva is a superior religious experience for the father – it would be a more intense prayer and he would have greater *kavanah* (focus). The *Hazon Ish* told him that it is preferable to pray with his child next to him. It is important to show the child how his father cries on the *Yamim Nora'im* (Days of Awe). This leaves an everlasting impression on the child.

This is precisely the intent of the *pasuk*. The way we act in private (*ha'nistarot*) remains strictly between the person and G-d. However, that which is public (*ha'niglot*) has an impact not only on the person but also on his children and on all future generations of descendants. This should give everyone pause as to how they behave. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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## Workout

“Push! Push! Don’t give up!” The coach’s face turned red as he screamed at the aspiring athlete. The young man poured his strength into the workout until he could hardly go on – but instead of surrendering to exhaustion, he exerted himself just a little more. When he successfully completed the exercise routine, he fell to the floor and lay there for a few moments, short of breath, yet smiling. He had done the job. He felt the satisfaction that accomplishment brings.

Tests of strength are not limited to the physical realm of sports competitions. At every turn – day to day and hour to hour – a person faces challenges. In business, people must develop the principles that will enable them to meet the test of honesty. In relationships, people must build up their spiritual muscle to defeat jealousy, anger and greed. In order to fulfill our obligations to Hashem, we must become strong enough to overcome innate laziness and selfishness. Life is a series of tests.

We may complain when things get rough, because we feel life is not fair. When we think that we are getting a raw deal – when our efforts are being expended with no payback – we may grunt and express disapproval. But we must believe that Hashem is in charge and He does everything for our welfare. The tests he sends are exercises to help us improve and grow to our full potential. Just as the coach pushes the athlete, nudging his innate talents towards physical success, so, too, Hashem tests us to help our potential develop into reality.

We all have our individual ingredients for greatness instilled in us when we are born. Hashem knows what tests we need to turn our potential into real powers. We