

## *This Boy is Different*

There was a Jew who passed away in his nineties. This Yid was responsible for Yiddishkeit, and specifically Torah Yiddishkeit, in a small town somewhere in America. He was the “go to” person for all matters of Torah communal life in that town. He built the shul, the Day School, not only financially but administratively. He was the layman that took care of everything. Today this community is a flourishing Jewish community because of his efforts decades ago.

He was not originally from that town. He was originally from another town. He told his children what motivated him to become this “*Askan*” (community leader), assuming the responsibility with all that it implies to build Torah in a small community. He said it is something that happened at his *Bar Mitzvah*.

Eighty-plus years ago in a small town in America, a *Bar Mitzvah* consisted of the following: You were called up for *Maftir*, you read the *Haftarah*, and that was it! That was a *Bar Mitzvah* in small town America circa 1930.

This *Bar Mitzvah* boy received *Maftir* in shul that day. After the prayers, he overheard two of the congregants talking to one another. One said – “the *Bar Mitzvah* boy did a really good job.” The other one said back – “Yeah, he did a really good job, but let’s see whether he comes back for *Minhah*!”

In those days, you had a ceremony in the shul in the morning, but very few came back for *Minhah* in the afternoon. The first congregant said “He will come back for *Minhah*, because this boy is different!”

This *Bar Mitzvah* boy told his own children, decades later, that those words he heard that day “This boy is different” kept ringing in his ears his entire life. He always told himself “I am different! People expect more from me.” It was these words that he heard when he was 13 years old which motivated him his entire life!

I happen to know the family – his siblings were not religious. This boy went off to *Yeshiva*, which was not a common practice in those days. Why did he do it? Because “this boy is different.” He married a religious woman. Why? It was because “This boy is different!” He assumed the responsibility of building a community. Why? Because “This boy is different!”

Four words: THIS BOY IS DIFFERENT. They made a difference in a person’s lifetime that changed a city. It changed a family. It changed generations. I know his children. I know his grandchildren. All *Shomrei Torah u’Mitsvot. Bnei Torah*.

Another lesson from this story goes back to the Jew in shul who made that comment. When he passed away and he went to Heaven, he was shown all the merits he accrued during his sojourn in the world below. This surely included the shul in this other fellow’s town, and the school there, and all the people who became religiously observant there. They will tell him: These are your merits. He will say “What are you talking about?” I never stepped foot in that city! How can I get credit for those institutions? There must be a computer glitch here. You have the records mixed up!”

The *Ribono shel Olam* will tell him “I do not mix up records!” He will be told – it was the words you said at so and so’s *Bar Mitzvah* “This Boy Is Different.” They made all the difference in his life and in all that he accomplished.

These are the two important lessons of this story. (1) If a child knows he is different, it can make an impression and (2) saying even the smallest compliment can change a person’s life. (Rabbi Yisrocher Frand)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לֵאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## *Congregation Magen Abraham*

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שַׁבָּת תְּרוּמָה ☆ תְּרוּמָה

*Haftarah:* Melachim I 5:26-6:13

**FEBRUARY 4-5, 2022 4 ADAR I 5782**

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 4:45 pm Upstairs

Minhah: 5:00 pm Main Shul

Candlelighting: 5:00 pm

Evening Shema after: 5:58 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: 6:00, 6:45, 8:10, 8:30, 9:00 am

Morning Shema by: 8:59 am

Shabbat Class: 4:00 pm

Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 4:40 pm

Shabbat Ends: 5:59 pm (R"Y 6:31 pm)

Sunday Minhah: 5:05 pm

**This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Eli Levy by his children**

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת אֱלִיָּהוּ בֶן סָנְבּוֹל

**Mabrook to Yaakob & Elaine Safdieh on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Joey & Karen Serouya and to the great-grandparents, Abe & Elaine Serouya.**

## *A Message from our Rabbi*

”וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶרֶוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים”

“They shall make an ark of acacia wood” (*Shemot* 25:10)

Rabbi Ephraim Nissenbaum quotes the *Nefesh Hahayim* who describes how the *Mishkan* and its vessels correspond to the human body. The *kodesh hakodashim*, the holiest part of the *Mishkan*, corresponds to the heart, the central organ of the human body.

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein would add that just like the *kodesh hakodashim* is designated specifically for the *aron*, and no man may enter except the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur, one’s heart must also be designated solely for Hashem. One may not allow any foreign ideologies or influences to enter.

A man went to the Metzritcher Maggid and complained about his difficulty in concentrating during prayer. He said that all types of foreign thoughts kept filling his head. The Maggid sent him to a distant town to speak to Rav Zev of Zhitomir. When he arrived at the house, he knocked at the door but nobody answered. He heard people inside so he knocked again. Still nobody answered. He banged on the door repeatedly but to no avail. Finally the door opened and he was welcomed into the house. The man asked Rav Zev what had taken so long to open the door.

Rav Zev responded, “Young man, this is my house and nobody enters until I decide if and when they can enter. Your head, too, should be the same. You must take control of your mind and only allow thoughts to enter if and when you are ready for them.”

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## Bringing Him Home

“They should build a Tabernacle for Me, and I will dwell among them.” (*Shemot* 25:8)

The *Ohr HaChaim* notes that the verse does not conclude “and I will dwell within it,” but “within them.” The goal, the reason to build the Temple, is not merely to create a House for G-d, but to sanctify a place for Him within the people.

In Western societies, it is easy to be influenced by the notion that religion is something we leave in the “House of Worship.” We go, we pray, and then we leave to go deal with other aspects of our lives. This may be a common view, but it is contrary to the Torah’s outlook on the relationship between G-d and human beings.

“They should build a Tabernacle for Me, and I will dwell among them.” If someone goes next door to borrow a cup of flour, G-d goes along. A man enters a store – and G-d observes the transaction. He goes home to talk with his wife over dinner, and Hashem hears the conversation. In all of these cases, *misvot* of proper conduct and honesty must guide us, and they are just as much a part of our religious obligations as saying the *Shema* and blowing *Shofar*.

We have this sort of relationship with Hashem, because we asked. The *Midrash* says that Hashem offered his Torah to every nation of the world – and we are the ones who responded “*na’aseh v’nishma*,” we will do and we will listen. We said we would do, immediately, even while we listened and tried to understand, because we wanted Hashem in our lives. And we still want His influence.

How do we bring him into our homes and our communities? By demonstrating that we desire His presence. In order to build the Tabernacle, materials were needed. How were they acquired? “And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and take offerings for me, from every man whose heart moves him shall you take my offerings.’” [25:1-2]

We bring Hashem into our lives by doing more than required, by going beyond the “letter of the law.” The Tabernacle was built by gifts from those who wanted to go beyond their minimum requirements. Not only must we avoid behavior which would reject His influence, we must also go over and above that which we are commanded to do, in order to express our interest in bringing Him closer. (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)

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## Matching Funds

“This they shall give – everyone who passes through the census – a half-*shekel*.” (*Shemot* 30:13)

Moshe could not grasp the *misvah* of the half- shekel. Hashem took a fiery coin from beneath His holy throne and said to him, “This they shall give...” (*Midrash Tanchuma*)

The Torah commentators find this *Midrash* perplexing: What was so difficult to understand about the half-shekel? With regard to the *misvah* of *kiddush ha-hodesh* (the determining of the new moon), and the construction of the *Menorah*, we find similar statements in *Hazal* (our Sages). Those *misvot*, however, are indeed complex and intricate, and it comes as no surprise that Moshe may have needed a little “Heavenly help” to grasp them. But what was not to be understood about giving a half-shekel? Furthermore, Hashem responded by showing Moshe a fiery-coin taken from beneath His

holy throne. Yet the Jews weren’t giving “fiery coins,” just regular half-*shekels*. In what way did the fiery coin resolve Moshe’s difficulties?

*K’tab Sofer* (the eldest son of the *Hatam Sofer*) explains that Moshe was perplexed by the commandment to take a half-*shekel*: Why a half? Doesn’t the *Mesilat Yesharim* write (in the introduction) that there is no goal greater than the achievement of *shelemut*, completeness, and no greater evil than the lack thereof? Taking a mere half-*shekel* seems to be the antithesis of everything we strive towards!

Hashem responded by showing him a fiery coin from beneath His holy throne. This, says Hashem, is the other half. Without this half, which I alone hold, goals remain unreachable, dreams unattainable. Our drive for self-perfection must be constantly mitigated with the realization that alone, we don’t stand a chance. With Hashem’s help, conversely, we can attain heights and accomplish things we never even imagined possible.

Life is full of doubts and uncertainty. At times, however, the right path stands clearly before us, yet we find ourselves unable to take it, because we are intimidated – it seems beyond our reach. How can we overcome our fears and reservations, especially when “the right path” seems so distant and fraught with difficulties?

At these times, we must remind ourselves that we are only half of the puzzle. We may not always merit witnessing Hashem’s response with such clarity, yet it is there. To the degree we are willing to go out on a line for Torah and Yiddishkeit, Hashem stands there waiting to help us, providing us with the wherewithal we alone could never muster. (Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffman)

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## Deep Breathing

People who read Psalms regularly or pray daily recite the last chapter of *Tehillim*, number 150, hundreds of times a year. In it, David *Hamelech* says, “*Kol Haneshamah te’hallel Yah* – Every soul will praise the Lord.” Our Sages make a play on words: *neshamah*, soul, is similar to *nesheemah*, breath. So, the phrase becomes, “every breath will praise the Lord.” We should praise Hashem, they say, for every breath that we take.

There is a practical application for this conceptual teaching. A deep breath can do wonders to relieve tension. When you are tense or nervous, pause and take a few long, slow, deep breaths. A slow exhalation as you think, “Patience, patience” - and you can actually feel the tightness loosen and your blood pressure go down.

Deep breathing works even for people who do not live with trust in Hashem. However, individuals who realize that every breath of life is generously and lovingly provided by our Father in Heaven will gain more and more. They will realize that it doesn’t pay to get sick over the temporary trials and tribulations that make up our lives – because Hashem is in control. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

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## Something from Nothing

A person should use his imagination to picture himself from the very beginning of his existence. When he was almost nothing, Hashem started putting together the materials that constitute a body and finally when he had a little bit of a body, he should know the author of that body was Hashem.

When we study the miracles of the human body in depth, we will notice millions of miracles happening simultaneously. We will appreciate something precious as breathing fresh air. We will be forever grateful to Hashem that only He can make Something from Nothing. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)