

Highways of the Soul

“The veins and arteries through which blood flows are marvels in themselves. As the blood courses through the vessels, it only flows in one direction. Blood is constantly being recirculated through the entire body. The bloodstream conveys all the nutrients that the body needs to give it energy to create new cells to replace worn out cells.”

Veins, arteries and blood are highways towards our physical health. Our spiritual health is a highway of the soul, sparking a daily renewal of energy to learn our Torah and its traditions. (By Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller's, Duties of the Mind)

The Big Problem

Praying in the *Yeshiva* of Norfolk for Rosh Hashanah was a real privilege for Reb Michel Berman. He loved to feel the energy of the entire *Yeshiva* praying together. It was especially gratifying for two of his children, who suffered from an unusual eating disorder that created a protein deficiency and changed their normal growth patterns. The Bermans had put tremendous effort and endless love and devotion into their children, looking for the small victories, appreciating the subtle triumphs, things that most parents might take for granted. A small step, a smile, a question, perception, awareness. Things that most would never think about. Coming to services like this for Rosh Hashanah was one triumph they truly enjoyed.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah they eagerly walked to *Tashlich*. It was very cloudy and everyone worried that it might rain. Sure enough, after a short while, the sky darkened and within minutes a torrential rainstorm poured down on them.

Eli, the younger of the two Berman boys, looked up at his father. His father knew what was coming. “Tatty, make it stop raining. I hate rain!”

Eli took his *kipah* and turned it inside out to “protect” himself from the rain.

Reb Michel was patient with his son, as always, and explained that there was nothing he could do about it. After all, he was not the one who made it start raining and he was not the one who could make it stop. That was up to Hashem. He and only He could make it stop raining. So he explained to Eli that if he wanted the rain to stop, then he should ask Hashem to make it stop.

Seemed simple enough. So without thinking too much, Eli looked up and started to plead and beg Hashem. “Hashem, PLEASE make it stop raining! I HATE rain!”

Michel looked at his wife through the downpour. They knew that it was not going to stop raining for quite a while. Seeing the gloomy skies, they knew that this was not one of those 10-minute storms. But what should they do? They were not about to tell their son that it was not going to work for him to ask Hashem to make it stop raining.

So again Eli looked up and cried out, “Hashem, I asked You and I mean it! Stop the rain!”

This time Michel saw clearly that his son meant business. And suddenly, inexplicably, the rain stopped.

Michel and his wife and could not believe what they had just seen. It was as if heaven and earth had stopped their natural course because of some little innocent boy's plea. They thought about what had transpired. What were they going to tell him now? How would they break the news to their son? How would he deal with the disappointment of realizing that you can't just ask Hashem for anything you want and expect it to magically happen? He no doubt thinks that whenever he wants something, all he has to do is ask Hashem and he will be answered right away.

But then it hit them.

Maybe he could. (Touched by a Story 4)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition
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SHABBAT

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Haftarah: Yehezkel 28:25-29:21

JANUARY 4-5, 2019 28 TEBET 5779

Friday Minhah: **4:25 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:25 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:23pm**

Shaharit: **6:20, 6:40, 8:10, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **9:08 am**

Shabbat Classes: **3:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **4:05 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:24 pm (R"Y 5:56 pm)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Sunday Minhah: **4:30 pm**

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

Rosh Hodesh Shebat will be celebrated on Monday, January 7.

Condolences to Steven Rothstein on the passing of his father, Stanley Rothstein.

Condolences to Teddy Uziel on the passing of his brother, Avi Uziel.

A Message from our Rabbi

”לָכוּן אֶמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם” (Shemot 6:6-7)

“Therefore say to *B'nei Yisrael*...I shall take you to me for a people.”

The four cups of wine that we drink on the Seder night correspond to the four expressions of redemption stated in these verses. I shall remove (*vehoseti*), I shall rescue (*vehisalti*), I shall redeem (*vega'alti*), and I shall bring (*velakachti*).

Between the first three cups of wine, it is permitted to drink. However, between the third and fourth cups, it is forbidden to interrupt by eating or drinking. This comes to teach us an important lesson.

Rabbi Asher Weiss explains: Some people today view our awaited redemption as no more than a national liberation, in which we will be freed from the oppression we suffer under the hands of the nations (as depicted in the Hollywood movie, The Ten Commandments). In their opinion, the first three expressions of redemption are sufficient. They wish to be removed, rescued and redeemed. However, they do not see

the great importance of being brought to Hashem, as His holy nation. This does not play an important role in their vision of redemption.

In order to contradict their erroneous ideology, our Sages instructed us not to make any interruption before the fourth cup. Taking our place as Hashem's chosen nation is in fact the most crucial aspect of the redemption. This is the redemption of the soul from the hands of the evil inclination, as it returns to draw close to Hashem. This is our true aspiration, to see the *Bet Hamikdash* rebuilt, and to see the *Shechinah* rest upon the nation of Israel. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Remember the Maror

”וַיִּרְא פָּרְעֹה כִּי הִיָּתָה הַרְוָחָה וְהִכְבֵּד אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם”
“Pharaoh saw that there was a relief, and kept making his heart stubborn. He did not heed them.” (*Shemot* 8:11)

Every time Pharaoh was down and the plagues were getting to him, he ran to Moshe *Rabenu* and implored him to pray to Hashem. The instant he experienced relief, he forgot that Hashem could just as well send another devastating plague. He did not care. He experienced relief at that moment. The *Midrash* claims that this is the way of the wicked. When it hurts, they cry. When circumstances change and life becomes tolerable, they forget about Hashem and immediately proceed to revert to their old ways. One of the *gedolei hamusar*, after citing this *Midrash*, once commented, “Are we any different? Do we remember Hashem during a time of joy as we do during a period of grief? When the sun shines upon us, when things are going well, do we exclaim, *Baruch Hashem* that I merited what I did, in the same manner in which we cry out to Him when we are dealt one of life's challenges? Indeed, this *Midrash* does not apply only to the wicked. *Hazal's* statement is regrettably a portrayal of our own attitude towards Hashem's gifts. We simply forget to thank Him once life seems to take a turn for the better.”

On the Seder night, we are enjoined to say/focus on three things: Pesah, referring to the *Korban Pesah*, that we slaughtered prior to the liberation; Matzah, a reference to the speed of our redemption, not even allowing our dough to rise; *Maror*, recounting the suffering and persecution to which we were subjected. The *Ba'al Hagadah* formats these three concepts in the above sequence, with *maror* following matzah. This is enigmatic. The bitterness that was so much a part of our lives preceded the matzah/speed of redemption. Should it not be Pesah, *maror*, matzah?

Hamayan Hanitzchi points out that all too often we reach the “matzah,” we are finally liberated from bondage, we are freed from persecution; we finally merit the opportunity to experience peace and harmony. But, regrettably, we quickly forget the past, the suffering, the “*maror*” that preceded the “matzah.” Some of us simply forget, while others block the past out of their minds. We think that it is over, it can never happen again. The *Ba'al Hagadah* would like us to know otherwise. It can happen again! Always remember the “*maror*,” so that through prayer we will merit that it will not occur again. The tribulations to which man is subject are for the purpose of stimulating him to reach out to the Almighty through prayer. Rav Yechezkel Levenstein z”l cites the *Midrash* that says that when *Klal Yisrael* were in Egypt suffering from the persecution, they turned to Hashem and cried out. He responded to their pleas and took them out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Hashem wanted to hear their voices one more time. But *Klal Yisrael* no longer responded. They were saved! Hashem, therefore, sent Pharaoh after them – to provoke

their prayer. It is that simple. The purpose of Creation is for man to cling to Hashem, If we do it on our own, we will not need Hashem's “encouragement.”

We are called “*Yehudim*,” says the *Hidushei Harim*, “because ingrained and imbued in the Jewish *neshamah*, soul, is the ability and proclivity to be *maker tov*, show appreciation, to offer gratitude for every favor and gift that we receive. We are *Yehudim* because of our ability to give *hoda'ah*.” How important it is for all of us to live up to the standard of *Yahadut*. (*Peninim* on the Torah)

A Snake in the Grass

(*Shemot* 7:9)

”קח אֶת־מִטְדָּךְ וְהִשְׁלַךְ לִפְנֵי־פָּרְעֹה וְהִי לְתַנִּינִי”

“Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh so it becomes a serpent.”

Environment has a profound influence on a man. Even the most evil of men can improve when he comes into good and noble company. Conversely, even the best man can turn into a "serpent" when put into an environment where corruption predominates.

Moshe sought to make Pharaoh understand that although they were hated and oppressed in Egypt to such a degree that they had lost all resemblance to human beings, the Jews could become the greatest and noblest among men if only they would be freed from the corrupt atmosphere of Egypt. To accomplish this end, Moshe showed him the "rod of G-d," the rod on which the Ineffable Name was engraved. This was the rod by means of which the greatest miracles of all were performed. When it was cast down before Pharaoh, i.e., when it was placed into the environment of Pharaoh, it turned into a poisonous serpent. But, as soon as Moshe took hold of it, i.e., as soon as it returned to the immediate environment of Moshe, it was transformed back into a "rod of G-d." Such is the strength of the influence of the environment on man. (*Wellsprings of Torah*)

Peace Plan

The embattled couple sat, troubled, before the Rabbi. Their latest spat seemed to be the last straw. In turn, each specified the intolerable conditions to which the other subjected them. Neither saw any future for the marriage.

The Rabbi patiently listened to the angry complaints and then reached for a book on his library shelf. He told them: “The *Rambam* says, “a man must respect his wife more than himself, and love her like himself. If he has financial means he must increase what he gives her according to his means. He should not instill fear in her and he should speak to her pleasantly. He should not display unhappiness or temper” (*Hilchot Ishoot*, 15:19).

The quotation brought a “see, it's all your fault” stare from the woman and an embarrassed expression to her mate's face.

The Rabbi continued: “The woman is commanded to exceedingly respect her husband, and to do his bidding. She should see him as a king.” The husband regained his composure and the stare of his wife became a countenance of one who failed to fulfill her duty.

“You see,” said the Rabbi, “each of you is being selfish but you should be selfless. Your spouse should come first and things will fall into place. If you want to be treated as a monarch you must treat your spouse as one. The queen lives with a king and vice versa.”

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein z”l was the Torah giant of the last century. One day one of his students came to his apartment to ask a ruling on a question of Jewish law. The student was surprised to see Rav Moshe standing by the sink – rinsing dishes. When the Rabbi saw the shocked look on his student's face, he smiled and said: “My wife is

not feeling well today and I know that she does not like dirty dishes in the sink. I thought I would make her feel better by taking away that which would bother her.”

Putting the other first is a peace plan that can work in every home. It can convert a battlefield into a peaceful palace occupied by a king and queen. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)