

first time he ever found convenient parking nearby and actually had to wait for the services to begin. It was also the first time he was able to concentrate on the fact that he was talking to Hashem about the priorities of his life and asking Hashem to improve his situation. He decided to change his wake-up time by five minutes from then on.

When you find yourself rushing to do something that you do daily, stop and ask yourself, “Is there a better way?” Constantly looking for the better way – even by making a small change – can lead to permanent improvements in your quality of life. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Food for Thought

Tani Schwartz made *aliyah* with his parents and two siblings when he was eight years old. At the age of eighteen, he enrolled in a *Hesder yeshivah*, which combines Torah study with service in the Israeli Army. After basic training, Tani was one of twenty-four soldiers chosen to serve in an elite reconnaissance unit, whose men were trained for dangerous and daring missions. Tani was the only “yeshivah boy.”

Training in the elite unit consisted of a year and a half of difficult training courses, such as parachuting and fighting terrorists. From early morning until late at night, the soldiers took part in rigorous and grueling exercises. Sleeping for three hours in the evening was considered a good night’s sleep. During the last four months of training, Tani and his fellow soldiers were taught navigation, which required daily walks and runs of twenty-five to thirty miles across the country. Every mountain and valley in Israel became as familiar to these soldiers as their own backyards.

Each evening this small group of soldiers would conclude their day at a designated kibbutz. The kibbutzim were notified in advance of the soldiers’ impending arrival and were asked to prepare a warm meal for them. The soldiers appreciated the hot dinners that awaited them at the end of every long day. However, there was one soldier sitting with the others who did not eat the prepared food. Tani, the “yeshivah boy,” had eaten kosher all his life and was not about to compromise his religious standards. Most of these kibbutzim did not have kosher kitchens and could not prepare kosher meals for the soldiers. And so the army gave Tani vouchers to buy his own food at each kibbutz. Tani made do with whatever basic foods were available at each kibbutz: dry cereal and milk, fresh vegetables, canned foods. It was not easy for Tani to watch his fellow soldiers devour delicious warm meals while he ate his cold food, especially on cold, damp winter days. But the idea of eating non-kosher food never crossed his mind.

One evening, as Tani walked into a kibbutz dining hall later than his comrades, he was bewildered by what he saw. His fellow soldiers were sitting at a table set with plastic silverware and paper plates, eating dry cereal and fresh vegetables.

“What are you doing?” asked Tani.

“We decided that it is not fair that we get warm food while you must eat cold food. Until you can get hot, kosher food, we will *all* eat what you eat,” one of his friends said.

Tani’s eyes welled up with tears. (Yes, even tough soldiers get emotional at times!) He could not believe that his friends, who were not religious, would make such a sacrifice for him. He knew how much they looked forward to the warm dinners that awaited them and gave them strength for the next day’s difficult military exercises.

As soon as the commanding officer heard what had happened, he, too, was touched. He spoke to his superiors in the Army, and, from that day on, arrangements were made for a warm, kosher meal to await Tani at every kibbutz.

Without saying a word, Tani demonstrated his uncompromising Jewish values and thus earned the respect and allegiance of his irreligious comrades. In real life, actions speak louder than words. (For Goodness’ Sake)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition
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SHABBAT

VA'ERA ☆ τ♦ρ∞τ"υ, X♥↑

Haftarah: Yehezkel 28:25-29:21

JANUARY 12-13, 2018 26 TEBET 5778

Friday Minhah: **4:33 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:33 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:31 pm**

Shaharit: **6:18, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am**

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

Shabbat Class: **3:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **4:10 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:32 pm (R"Y 6:04 pm)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Sunday Minhah: **4:35 pm**

Rosh Hodesh Shebat will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 17.

Mabrook to Nathan & Florence Doueck on the Bar Misvah of their sons, Gary & Sammy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Gary & Audrey Erani.

A Message from Our Rabbi

וְשָׂרָץ הַיָּאָר צִפְרָדִּים... וּבִתְנוּרֶיךָ

“The river shall swarm with frogs...and into your ovens.” (Shemot 7:28)

When Hashem brought upon Egypt a plague of frogs, some of these creatures readily crept into the hot ovens of the Egyptians. While all the frogs who had entered far safer areas, such as bedrooms and courtyards, died at the conclusion of the plague, the “self-sacrificing” ones miraculously stayed alive.

Centuries later, Nebuchadnezzar, the evil king of Babelonia, erected a colossal golden image in the Plain of Dura and ordered all present to prostrate themselves before it, or else be thrown into a fiery furnace. Chananya, Mishael, and Azaryah refused, and were cast into a furnace. What made them do it? The *Gemara (Pesachim 53b)* tells us that they made a *kal vahomer* from the frogs in Egypt. They reasoned that if a frog, who is not obligated to give up his life for *Kidush Hashem*, leaped into a burning oven, they, who were obligated, should certainly do so. Then a series of miracles occurred and they were saved.

The frogs represent the concept of *Lifnim Mishurat Hadin*, going beyond the letter of the law. There is an even higher level called *Lifnim Lifnim Mishurat Hadin*, where a

person conducts himself in a manner that goes even further. The impact in the Heavenly realms of this latter level of conduct is astoundingly powerful.

The following story about Rav Chaim Brim zt”l illustrates this level. Rav Chaim Brim’s daughter resided in Yerushalayim, living in a humble apartment. At one point, due to the growth of her family, they needed to make an extension, to build a room where her porch was located. After getting the permits and the permission from her neighbors, she began construction. It was at that point that she received a phone call from one of her neighbors, who had changed her mind. She no longer agreed because it would block the light to her apartment. The only problem was that she already sank \$2000 into the project. She called her father. “Give in to her,” said Rav Chaim. “If she doesn’t want it, don’t do it. Act *Lifnim Mishurat Hadin*, the merit of which is worth a lot more than \$2000.”

A few minutes after this conversation, he called her back. “I would like you to call your neighbor and tell her that you changed your mind about the extension.”

“Changed my mind?”

“Yes,” said Rav Chaim. “I realize that your neighbor, despite her objection to the project, is going to feel bad that she caused you to lose money. Call her back and tell her that the reason you’re not going ahead with the extension is because you changed your mind. This way she won’t have feelings of guilt. This is *Lifnim Lifnim Mishurat Hadin*. The merit is beyond comprehension. So go ahead, call your neighbor and let her know you changed your mind.” Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Silver Linings

וַיִּדְבֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה'

"G-d spoke to Moshe and He said to him, 'I am Hashem.'" (*Shemot* 6:2)

It is well known that the name "*Elokim*" always indicates the quality of judgment, and the name "*Hashem*" indicates the quality of mercy. At the beginning of the verse, Hashem is referred to in His role as a judge, an administrator of strict justice. Then, when Hashem speaks, He identifies Himself with the Name that indicates His mercy.

To understand why this reversal occurs, let us look back to the end of the previous *perashah*. After hearing that he had been ordered by Hashem to allow the Jews to go serve their G-d, Pharaoh accused them of laziness and ordered their workload drastically increased. Some of the Jews complained to Moshe and Aharon, and Moshe said to Hashem, "Why have You caused harm to this people and why have You sent me? And since my coming to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he has wronged them and You have not rescued Your people" (*Shemot* 5:22-23).

At the beginning of our *perashah*, Hashem addresses Himself to this grievance. "Originally I decreed that the Jews had to spend 400 years in exile in Egypt, but so far only 210 years have gone by. In order to redeem them before their time is up, I have to make their servitude harsher to make it as if they had served the full time of their bondage. That is why I allowed Pharaoh to increase their workload."

Now we can understand why the verse uses two different names for Hashem. It is as if Hashem said to Moshe, "You complain to Me because you think I am acting in My role as Judge Who metes out strict justice. But really My actions were purely merciful. I only want to redeem My people as soon as possible. Even though at first their lives became harder, I did it entirely for their good."

This lesson applies in many situations. Whenever something seemingly unpleasant happens, we have to keep in mind that it is really for our good. This is why the *Gemara* (*Berachot* 60b) says that we should be happy when we recite the blessing

, וְטוֹ יִהְיֶה לְפָנָיו - Blessed is the True Judge, which is said on hearing bad news. Even when an event appears to stem from Hashem's attribute of justice, really it is nothing but pure mercy. We should recognize that it is for our good, and be happy with it.

In 1940, the Russians sent many yeshiva students to Siberia after the occupation of Lithuania, and the students were all very upset. The war had not yet started in that region and the Jews who remained in Lithuania were still relatively free, while those in Siberia were in forced labor camps. It seemed to them that Hashem had forgotten them. Only later, when they found out that the Jews who stayed behind had been exterminated by the Nazis, may their name be erased, did they realize that Hashem had been taking care of them all along, and that they survived only because they had been in Siberia.

When we have moments of suffering, we should be happy with the knowledge that Hashem is not ignoring us, and that eventually we will come to see that the things that seem bad to us now are really to our benefit. This is why we have to say the blessing "*Blessed is the True Judge*" joyfully. (*Kol Dodi* on the Torah)

The Name of the Game

וַיִּקַּח עַמְרָם אֶת־יֹכֶבֶד דֹּתוֹ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד לוֹ אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־מִשֶּׁה

"Amram took his aunt Yochebed to him for a wife, and she bore him Aharon and Moshe." (*Shemot* 6:20)

It is noteworthy that the Torah does not name Moshe's parents until after he had been chosen to be the redeemer of the Jews. This holds a lesson for anyone privileged to have unusually gifted children. It is premature to praise them for their great potential until they have shown that they will actually use that potential in Hashem's service. Their parents cannot simply rely on the hope that they will automatically turn out to be great and pious scholars. The parents cannot neglect their responsibility to guide them to use their gifts in Torah. On the contrary, the danger is that much greater that they will be drawn to use their great talents in other fields and come to sin, as the Sages said, "The greater the person, the greater his *yesser hara* (evil inclination)." Thus, such a child requires even more of his parents' attention than an average child.

For this reason the Torah does not mention Moshe's parents until after he was grown and it was apparent that his parents had educated him to use his potential in Hashem's service rather than in vain pursuits. (*Darash Moshe*)

Small Changes

It seems our days pass too quickly to allow for careful consideration of our actions. We live our lives from moment to moment, and don't have time to make changes.

The quality of our lives can be improved by making a series of little changes to create a better environment for ourselves.

For example, one of the great inventions of all time is the cup holder, which enables drivers or passengers to put down a drink while traveling, rather than fumble with the container until they finish downing the beverage. It's not a headline-grabbing invention, but it really does make life more pleasant.

Similarly, there are many simple ways we can rearrange our lives to improve our quality of life. At home, at work, or in our cars, little changes can make a big difference. *Midrash Rabbah* on *Shir Hashirim* quotes the phrase, *kevutsotav taltalim* (5:11). The *Midrash* explains that *taltalim* refers to mounds, and *kevutsotav* refers to cutting them apart.

If one has to remove a huge mound of earth, one does so by "cutting it apart" and removing a small amount at a time.

A friend of mine was consistently five minutes behind schedule for everything. One morning he was awakened early by some noises outside his window. He got up, got dressed, had a quick hit of caffeine, and went to the synagogue to pray. It was the