

Life and Death

The phone rang at 3 a.m., frightening Rabbi Moshe Faskowitz, Rabbi of the Torah Center Synagogue in Hillcrest, New York. He wondered who would call at this hour. "Is this Rabbi Faskowitz?" an elderly woman asked apologetically.

"Yes," he replied, "and who are you? Is everything all right?"

"Rabbi, I am so sorry to call in the middle of the night, but I have been searching for your number for the last three hours. I don't know if you remember me. My name is Mrs. Worthington from Canarsie."

Rabbi Faskowitz tried to think as quickly as one could at 3 o'clock in the morning. Surprising himself, he suddenly flashed back to an incident he hadn't thought about in years. "Are you the woman that I gave the ride to about fifteen years ago?"

"Yes, that's me," she said, sounding relieved but exhausted.

How could he forget it? One afternoon in the winter of 1986, he was driving on Ralph Avenue in Brooklyn as windswept sleet and rain sliced the air. Under the awning in front of a kosher supermarket was a middle-aged woman laden with bags of groceries, hesitant to walk out in the storm. He pulled alongside the curb and called out, "Hello, I am Rabbi Faskowitz of the Young Israel. Can I offer you a ride home?"

"That would be nice, but I am not Jewish so maybe you don't want to take me."

"I am a Rabbi and I'm glad to help anyone," Rabbi Faskowitz replied with a smile.

The woman settled into the back seat of the car with her groceries, introduced herself by name and thanked the Rabbi profusely. Rabbi Faskowitz asked, "Tell me, if you are not Jewish, why do you shop in this kosher food market?"

"The food is not for me," she replied. "I live in an apartment house and there is an elderly Jewish couple on my floor. Both of them are invalids. They can't get out to buy their own food, so once a week, I go out and buy what they need. I know they eat only kosher food so I shop at the store where I know everything is kosher."

Hearing this, Rabbi Faskowitz was doubly delighted to have helped this considerate woman. He drove her home, helped her with the groceries and complimented her generosity.

Now, in the middle of the night, Mrs. Worthington was on the verge of tears. "Rabbi," she said, "the man I brought food to all these years died yesterday and his wife died a few years ago. I have spent a few hours trying to find you. Forgive me for calling so late. You are the only Rabbi I know. If you don't help, the man will be buried by city authorities in Potters Field. I know he would want to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. Do you think you could help?"

Rabbi Faskowitz was astounded at the kindness, consideration and perseverance of this woman. He made numerous phone calls and was able to get the body released for a Jewish funeral service and burial.

No one attended the funeral except Rabbi Faskowitz. It was sad, simple and solitary. Tears welled in Rabbi Faskowitz's eyes as he eulogized the gentleman softly to himself and said, "You must have been an *adam kasher* (worthy [lit. kosher] man), because by the virtue of kosher food, you merited Jewish burial." Then in silent dignity the man was laid to eternal rest. (Reflections of the Maggid)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition
ט"תתפ"ח, כ"ט כסלו, ה'תשנ"ח

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SHABBAT VAYESHEB ☆ חג השבועות, חג המצות
Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 1, 2018 23 KISLEV 5779

Friday Minhah: **4:13 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:13 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:11 pm**

Shaharit: **6:01, 6:40, 8:10, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:49 am**

Shabbat Classes: **3:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **3:50 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:11 pm (R"T 5:43 pm)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Sunday Minhah: **4:15 pm**

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

Begin saying *Barech Alenu* on Tuesday night, December 4 in *Arbit*.

Mabrook to Rabbi & Mrs. Mordechai Dabbah on the marriage of their son, Yosef, to Chaya Simi Malul.

A Message from our Rabbi

"מִסְרַתְּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים, וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מַעֲטִים"

"You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few." (Al Hanisim)

Hanukah celebrates the great self-sacrifice of the Macabees, who fought the mighty Greek armies for the right to fulfill Hashem's Torah. Sacrifice for the sake of Torah shows that a person puts the highest personal value on Hashem's *misvot*.

There was a businessman in Europe who would study Torah for two hours each morning. He would not allow anything to disturb him. One morning, a fantastic business opportunity came his way, but he refused to meet with the customer during the time he allotted for Torah study.

This sacrifice made such an impression on his son, that he decided to dedicate himself totally to Torah study. The boy grew up to be Rav Aharon Kotler, the *Rosh Yeshivah* who singlehandedly had the most profound effect on Torah life in America.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

No One Greater than I

Now it came to pass after these events that his master's wife lifted up her eyes to Yosef, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused, and he said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me my master knows nothing about anything in the house, and all he has he has given into my hand. In this house, there is no one greater than I, and he has not withheld anything from me except you, insofar as you are his wife. Now how can I commit this great evil, and sin against G-d?" ... So she grabbed him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" But he left his garment in her hand and fled and went outside. (*Beresheet* 39:7-12)

Yosef is crowned with a unique title, "Yosef *HaSadik*," because of the firm resolve he exercised by resisting extreme temptation. Is there any insight provided to educate us about how he managed to escape from moral danger?

The Slonimer Rebbe has a deep and practical approach to surviving such a terrible test. At the zenith of this crisis the verse testifies, that she grabbed him by his garment. The Hebrew word for his garment is "*b'bigdo*." Another implication of that word is "his rebellion". It seems she appealed to and held him by "his rebelliousness." It does not say that she grabbed his garment but rather that she grabbed *him* by his "rebellious tendency".

Yosef revealed his strategy in his initial response to her petition, "In this house, there is no one greater than I." This is a giant recognition. This prepared Yosef for the real big test when it came. How is this statement the potent antidote?

We once invited a fascinating guest speaker to address the girls in the seminary. Avraham is a close friend of mine for many years and he told us an amazing personal story. A friend had called on him to speak to his son who was going through something more than a rebellious stage. When he met the boy, he saw a young Hassidic chap. There was no way to determine from the outside appearance that anything was wrong. When he spoke to the boy he was shocked to hear the words that exited his mouth. "I hate being a Jew!"

My friend Avraham did not know what to respond. He invited him to join him the next day on a business trip to upstate New York. The man he was visiting happened to be a religiously oriented gentile with a large business. Avraham introduced his young companion and shared with the client the fact that this boy was a Levi. The boss of the company was so excited he got on the intercom and called all his employees into his office. Suddenly the room was crowded with people waiting to be blessed by the Levi.

The young man turned to Avraham in bewilderment and asked what he should do. "What do they want from *me*? Who am *I* to give them a blessing?" Avraham told him, "They know more about you than you know about you!" For the next long period of time he proceeded to bless each and every one of the employees of this company. It was a transformational experience.

Avraham said that after that, the boy never looked back. Now he is married with children and living a proud Jewish life. He was made aware of his lofty status as a son of Levi going all the way back to Levi ben Ya'akov and beyond.

To stand up to life's tests great and small, it is important to recognize how important we are. Yosef remembered that he is a son of Abraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akov. The entire world is hanging in the balance- waiting for my next move. "In this house, there is no one greater than I." (Rabbi Label Lam)

The Price of Success

"וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ"

"Hashem was with Yosef, and he became a successful man." (*Beresheet* 39:2)

Rav Bunim M'Peshischa notes the Torah's emphasis on Yosef's "remembering" the source of his success. He realized that the success he had achieved was only because "Hashem was with Yosef." All too often, we pray to Hashem for various favors. Shortly after Hashem grants us His good will, we seem to forget the source of our benefaction.

Along these same lines, the *Hafess Hayim* explains that in the *tefillah* that we say on the Shabbat prior to *Rosh Hodesh*, we implore Hashem to grant us a life replete with *Yirat Shamayim*, fear of Heaven, and *Yirat Het*, fear of sin. Once again, at the end of the *tefillah*, we ask for *Ahabat Torah Veyirat Shamayim*, love of Torah and fear of Heaven. Why do we ask Hashem to grant us *Yirat Shamayim* twice?

The *Hafess Hayim* relates that after our first request for *Yirat Shamayim*, we ask for a life of *osher vekabod*, wealth and honor. Once a person has "tasted" a life of wealth and honor, he seldom retains the *Yirat Shamayim* he had once developed. Consequently, it is necessary to request *Yirat Shamayim* a second time. (*Peninim on the Torah*)

Do Unto Others

Pride can prevent you from following the correct course of action. Forgiving someone who hurt you financially or emotionally is often prevented by ego. "Why should I give in to him? He was the one who hurt me!"

Some people may own up to a wrong and request forgiveness, and it still might be difficult to grant it. Then there are others who, although they are to blame, will not apologize because it will hurt their pride, or because they simply lack the courage to do so. In such instances, you should initiate the conversation.

Our Sages teach that whoever forgives is forgiven. Keep that in mind when you get the urge to be tough in order to "prove" that you are right. Also, according to the Heavenly scales, the harder something is to accomplish, the more Heavenly reward is dished out for success. Since "giving in" is one of the most difficult human accomplishments – because it is contrary to nature – the reward is immeasurable.

When you get the urge to harden your position – because, of course, you are right! – change your course and give in! It only hurts for a minute, but it will get you forgiveness that you might not deserve.

Do good unto others, and the good you do will be done unto you. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

The Gift of Insulation

"One of the most remarkable things about the human body is that it must be maintained at a constant internal temperature. The precise regulation of the temperature doesn't happen by itself. There is a thermostat in the brain, which is constantly adjusting to the heat of the body."

Clothing insulates external weather conditions. The Torah and its teachings insulate our souls and protect us from external negative influences. (Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller's, Duties of the Mind)