

In the spiritual realm, this attitude is even more crucial to success. The precious seconds Hashem has graciously granted each of us to earn spiritual reward – our lives – are just too valuable to “kill.” In fact, we should know that we are here to go to a very special place – the Garden of Eden, the World to Come – and if we are not moving in that direction, we are not merely “going nowhere.” We either go up or down; we do not stay the same. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

A Mother's Shield

“With the strong shield of its mother’s body around it, a fortified shelter with food provided for it, the baby continues to grow until it is strong enough to move inside its mother. Even a blow to the stomach of the mother is cushioned so that hardly any effect is felt by the baby inside.”

Within the entire animal kingdom, a mother’s shield safeguards her young. Hashem (like a mother) gave us the Torah and its commandments to maintain a healthy safe environment for our children, protecting our young from foreign influences. (By Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller’s, Duties of the Mind)

Nice to See You

When R’ Menachem Savitz was learning in the Ponevezh Yehsivah, he took the opportunity to form a close relationship with Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz, the head of the Mesivta of Ponevezh. R’ Menachem’s brother, R’ Avraham Yeshaya, also learned in Ponevezh, though he wasn’t a student of Rabbi Lefkowitz.

One Shabbat afternoon, R’ Avraham Yeshaya was walking outside when Rabbi Lefkowitz came over to him. “Shabbat Shalom!” he greeted him warmly. “How are you doing? How are you learning?”

R’ Avraham Yeshaya was surprised by the warm greeting, since he didn’t have a close relationship with Rabbi Lefkowitz. Nevertheless, he made the correct responses and assured Rabbi Lefkowitz that he was doing fine.

Puzzled, he watched as Rabbi Lefkowitz left his side and hurried over to another person walking just ahead. He, too, received a warm greeting from Rabbi Lefkowitz. When the Rav had moved on, R’ Avraham Yeshaya went over to the other person. Maybe he could explain Rabbi Lefkowitz’s behavior.

“Do you know why Rabbi Lefkowitz greeted you?” R’ Avraham Yeshaya asked.

“No, I don’t – and look over there!”

Sure enough, Rabbi Lefkowitz had gone over to yet another person and was giving him a warm greeting. Now the two men were determined to get to the bottom of this.

R’ Avraham Yeshaya managed to track down one of Rabbi Lefkowitz’s grandchildren, and he asked if he could explain the Rav’s behavior.

“My grandfather had a cataract operation done on Thursday,” the grandson said, “and it will take a few days for his vision to get back to normal. In the meantime, he was afraid that he might walk by a student, or someone close to him, without realizing it, and that person would get insulted that he’s not greeting him in his normal fashion. So he decided that he would greet everyone warmly until his vision returns.” (Visions of Greatness IV)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition
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Haftarah: Yeshayahu 6:1-13

JANUARY 25-26, 2019 20 SHEBAT 5779

Friday Minhah: **4:48 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:48 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:46 pm**

Shaharit: **6:12, 8:10, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **9:04 am**

Shabbat Classes: **3:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **4:25 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:47 pm (R"Y 6:19 pm)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Sunday Minhah: **4:50 pm**

This bulletin is dedicated l'ilui nishmat Yaffa bat Kayla – in memory of Karen Mizrahi – by her husband and children

This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Ralph Kassir by his wife and children

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A Message from our Rabbi

וַיּוֹצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם לְקִרְיַת הָאֱלֹקִים מִרְהַמְּחֶנֶה וַיֵּתֵּן צִבּוֹר

“And Moshe brought the people forth from the camp towards G-d, and they stood.” (Shemot 19:17)

The goal of the Exodus from Egypt was to come to Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah. All of the plagues, the splitting of the Red Sea, even the slavery itself was a preparation for this great day at Mt. Sinai. One could only imagine the anticipation the Israelites felt on that day. We have a custom on the night of Shabuot to stay awake all night and study the Torah. It is called the ‘tikun’ of Shabuot. A tikun implies a repair. We stay up to “repair” the damage. Our Sages in the Midrash tell us that the Israelites went to sleep on that all-important night, and when Hashem came down onto Mt. Sinai, the people were sleeping. Frantically, Moshe had to wake them up telling them that the “groom” (Hashem) is here already awaiting his “bride” (Israel). How could this happen? How could they have slept?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that the Jews didn’t just go to sleep like any other night. They thought that the Torah would be given to them through prophecy, and like most prophets, Hashem appears to them in a dream-like appearance. They thought that

the happiness of the holiday and its meal, together with a pleasant sleep would create a happy feeling in order to receive the prophecy. Moshe had to wake them and tell them that Torah is not like prophecy. One must be fully awake with a clear head and a sharp logic. He taught them that otherwise we wouldn't be able to learn and study the Torah with clarity. Receiving the Torah is greater than prophecy! The *Talmud* (*Baba Batra* 12) says that a *hacham* is greater than a prophet. We must utilize all of our senses to learn Torah. Therefore it had to be initially received with clarity. This is why the Torah makes a point that they “stood” (שָׁמְדוּ) at Mt. Sinai. The whole experience at Mt. Sinai is referred to as שְׁמַד הַר שִׁינַי - the standing at *Har Sinai*, to imply that they stood on their own two feet and used their clear senses. This is why we stay up all night to study Torah, to be awake with open eyes and an open mind.

Hashem gave man an unbelievably powerful intellect. Man can develop almost anything. We see this all the time with man's scientific and technological advances which are mind boggling. Why did Hashem do this? Because Torah is mind boggling! He gave us a great mind to meet the challenge of Torah study. Let's grab that opportunity! Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

On Wings of Eagles

(Shemot 19:4)

וְאָשָׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וְאָבֵא אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי”

"And I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you unto Me"

The *Sforno* explains that Hashem allegorically conveyed a message to the Children of Israel. An eagle carries her young on her shoulders, soaring higher than all other birds, to protect them. Similarly, Hashem took *B'nei Yisrael* out of Egypt into the barren desert, on a path untrodden by others. This was necessary to remove the newly formed nation from the immoral environment of Egypt. In order to purge the Israelites from the influence of their former surroundings and prepare them for the revelation on Mount Sinai, it was necessary to take them to a desolate area, devoid of any outside contact.

Why was this isolation required, considering the miraculous events the Israelites witnessed upon leaving Egypt? Wasn't the impact of seeing the ten plagues and the splitting of the Red Sea adequate to bring them closer to Hashem and prepare them for receiving the Torah? The *Sforno's* commentary gives us insight into the pervasive influence society has upon us, and tells us what we can do to counteract this influence.

Even experiencing fantastic miracles was not sufficient to shield the Israelites from the negative impact of the corrupt Egyptian culture. Only physical isolation in the barren desert enabled them to psychologically separate themselves from these destructive influences. This complete seclusion prepared the Israelites to receive the Torah.

We can implement this in our own lives. By separating ourselves, at least psychologically, from our permissive and materialistic society, we can protect ourselves from its subtle yet powerful influence. The *Hazon Ish* suggests that we can find refuge from our environment by frequenting the *bet midrash* and learning Torah. Besides being literally a sanctuary from the onslaught of contemporary society, the *bet midrash* is a place to reinforce ourselves and strengthen our resistance to the spiritual ailments so rampant in our environment. This has been the secret of Jewish survival throughout the ages, as applicable now as it was then. (Majesty of Man)

I'm In!

The *Midrash* explains that when Hashem went around the different nations to offer them the Torah, each nation asked what restrictions they would have to implement if they were to accept it. Hashem responded to each nation with a specific restriction which that nation felt they could not keep. The children of Esav would not accept a Torah which prohibited murder, the people of Ammon would not accept it if adultery was prohibited, and Yishmael would not accept a Torah which said not to steal. However, the Jewish People came along and said, “*Na'aseh Venishma* – we will do and we will hear what is in it,” and so Hashem gave them the Torah without specifying any restrictions.

Rav Yitzchak Berkovits asked in the name of the *Avnei Nezer*, “If the Jewish People would not have said *Na'aseh Venishma* and they would have asked what was in the Torah, what would Hashem have told them? Which aspect of the Torah runs so contrary to the inner workings of a Jew that he would have refused to be bound by a Torah which contained this prohibition?

The *Avnei Nezer* answers that we see many times that Hashem warned Moshe to tell the Jewish People not to ascend Mount Sinai. They even required physical fences in order to prevent them from touching the mountain even though Hashem had already warned them that anyone who touches the mountain will die. With this, the *Avnei Nezer* answers his question – What aspect of the Torah would the Jewish People not have accepted? They would have rejected any law that limited their spiritual growth and stopped them coming closer to the Ultimate source of Holiness. This is because a Jew's innate nature is to grow and to seek out and cling to holiness, and anything that would prevent them doing this would not have been accepted as a value system to live by. (Short Vort)

Where Are You Going?

“Where are you going?”

“Nowhere!”

“What are you going to do?”

“Nothing!”

Such simple small talk is often repeated by people who are trying to be friendly, but who don't have much to say. I guess most people would say that it's harmless conversation.

While driving through one of those small towns in the Catskill Mountains, I saw a sign on a bar, a hangout for people who don't really have much motivation – probably because they feel that they are going nowhere and have nothing to do. So they drop in to this place to imbibe some alcoholic refreshment and engage in small talk in order to “kill time.” This saloon is called the “Where are you going? – Nowhere” bar.

The Torah (*Beresheet* 16:8) relates that an angel appeared to Hagar, when she was wandering in the desert. He asked her two questions: (1) Where are you coming from? (2) Where are you going to?

She answered only the first question. She said: “I am escaping from Sarai, my mistress.”

She did not answer the second question.

She knew where she was coming from. She did not know where she was headed.

She had no destination.

There is a very big danger in thinking that killing time with social small talk is harmless. As a productive professional, entrepreneur, craftsman, or employee, your most valuable asset is time. Your ability to maximize your output and produce income

is tied to your ability to use your work minutes efficiently. In the world of business and finance, timing is everything and every second counts.