

Today, thank Hashem for all past gifts and then ask Him for greater happiness in the future. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Private Eyes

“When a person walks in the forest, he does not realize that wild animals such as bears, and wolves may be peeking out from behind the trees. It is not as safe as he thinks. The fact that he cannot see them does not mean that they are not there. They are hiding, and at night when nobody is around, all the animals come out.”

Connecting to Hashem and a healthy atmosphere protect us from evil influences and foreign ideologies. The evil inclination is constantly lurking to cause us harm. A Torah-based life is the antidote against these Private Eyes, always watching us. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

Earning Their Place

Although today it is difficult to imagine a world without the *Bet Yaakov* movement, less than 100 years ago the concept of a girl going to school to learn Torah was completely foreign to the Torah world. But in the early 1900’s, the winds of intellectual turmoil were swirling around, luring many young women from their families and from the Torah way of life. A battle had developed that pitted the “isms” – Socialism, Capitalism, Secular Zionism and Communism – against the age-old traditions.

In a monumental decision, the *gedolim* decided to give their approval to the fledgling *Bet Yaakov* movement. The *Hafess Hayim*, the Gerrer Rebbe and many others encouraged a visionary woman named Sarah Schenirer to establish the schools. Before long, hundreds of girls began attending these schools, and their lives as well as the totality of *Klal Yisrael* would never be the same again. Nevertheless, in certain circles it was considered a revolutionary idea, and there was still some strong opposition. Among those places not yet ready to accept the idea of girls being taught Torah in a school setting was the town of Frishtik.

Reb Chuna of Koloshtitz and his father Reb Mendele of Frishtik both strongly opposed the new school system. Thus, the Rebbetzin herself was not supportive of it as well. But all of that would change on one freezing cold day in the year 1918. On that day, almost no one dared to venture outside other than for the obligatory trip to shul and the local market. Leisurely walks were certainly out of the question.

The Rebbetzin, however, had other reasons to venture out in the cold. Today was the 6th of *Tebet*, and the *yahrzeit* of her father, the *Divrei Yechezkel*. She needed to travel to the outskirts of the town in order to pray at his *kever*. There was no way she was going to allow the bitter cold to prevent her from paying the proper respect to her father. So she bundled up in her warmest clothing and set out for the cemetery. But when she got there she was surprised to discover that she was not the only one there on that frigid day.

She watched from the distance as the group stood in front of her father’s *kever* for over an hour, praying with great emotion and intensity. It was *her* father’s *yahrzeit*, but she had no idea who these people were. A woman standing nearby provided the information. “Oh, those are the *Bet Yaakov* girls from the next town. They knew how terribly cold it was and were concerned that no one would be able to come pray by the *kever* on the *yahrzeit* and so they came.”

The Rebbetzin smiled.

And just like that they began a *Bet Yaakov* in Frishtik. (One Shining Moment)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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SHABBAT YITRO ✪ יְתֵרוֹ! שָׁבֻעַ

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 6:1-13

FEBRUARY 5-6, 2021 24 SHEBAT 5781

Friday Minhah: 5:01 pm

Shir Hashirim (midrash): 4:51 pm

Minhah (midrash): 5:01 pm

Candlelighting: 5:01 pm

Evening Shema after: 5:59 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: 6:01, 7:00, 8:00, 8:15, 9:00 am

Morning Shema by: 8:58 am

Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 4:40 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:01 pm (R"Y 6:33 pm)

Sunday Minhah: 5:05 pm

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

Rosh Hodesh Adar will be celebrated on Friday & Shabbat, Feb. 12 & 13.

Mabrook to Donny & Michelle Nakar on the birth of twin girls. Mabrook to the grandparents, Mark & Aileen Mizrahi.

A Message from our Rabbi

”וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים”

“And Moshe ascended to G-d” (*Shemot* 19:3)

We live in such a fast-paced world. Sometimes when one is driving and dealing with phone calls and other things, one feels like he is running some kind of control center. One can feel empowered, busy with so many things, but at the same time overwhelmed by what’s on his plate.

Rabbi Moshe Kestenbaum says, we are constantly moving from one thing to another, and then back again to the first thing. The phone and computer are constantly pulling us in different directions. We are everywhere to the point that we are really nowhere.

Charlie Harary recently related a remarkable idea from Rav Yechezkel of Kuzmir. When Hashem instructs Moshe to ascend *Har Sinai* to learn the Torah (this takes place the day after he gave the tablets to Israel), “Come up to me on the mountain and be there,” (*Shemot* 24:12) Moshe was to come up and Hashem was going to teach Moshe all the *misvot*. Why are the seemingly extra words “and be there” necessary? Obviously if Moshe goes up the mountain, he will be there!

Rav Yehezkel of Kuzmir explained that Hashem was commanding Moshe that not only should he be there physically, but he should be there mentally as well. Moshe *Rabenu* just gave the Jewish people the Torah. He loved them and cared for them. Naturally when he would be away from them, he would still be thinking about them as a parent does for a child. Therefore Hashem instructs him to put aside these thoughts now and completely focus on learning the Torah.

As Charlie Harary expounded, what a gift it would be for us to develop this skill. We need to develop the skill of staying grounded and focused on whatever we are engaged in now. For example, when we spend time with our family, let's try to focus on them and maximize these moments. Let's put aside distractions.

When we pray or say *Bircat Hamazon*, we shouldn't become edgy over where we have to run to afterwards. We should try to live in the moment.

When we are everywhere, we end up nowhere. Everything done is half-baked. If we can focus more, life becomes much more peaceful. We can enjoy our family more, our praying more, and every aspect of our lives.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

What to Answer

The *Midrash Aggadah* records the following exchange: "The wicked Turnusrufus asked Rabbi Akiva, "For what reason is the name of the Holy One mentioned in the first five of the Ten Commandments and not in the latter five?" Rabbi Akiva went to the palace of Turnusrufus, and in particular to the room designated for his weapons of war, and there he showed him his entire magazine of armaments. Then he went with him to his bathroom, and Rabbi Akiva asked him, "Why do you not put here some of your weaponry?" Turnusrufus answered, "It would be a disgrace to put them in such a disgusting place!" Said Rabbi Akiva, "So it is with the first five commandments which is an honorable context but the latter five speak of murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, and lusting, The Holy One Blessed Be He, did not want His Name to be directly associated with them..."

We can learn not only from the content of Rabbi Akiva's answer but by the style of his reply. "Answer the fool according to his foolishness..." King Solomon, the wisest of all men advises in *Mishlei*. It's a daily challenge that comes with the territory for those of us who darn the garb.

I was entering a prison to visit and a guard asked me, "Why do you guys wear hats and dress like that?" I pointed out to him that the identifiable difference between a prisoner and guard is just a piece of cloth. You have a couple of stripes on your gray khaki shirt and the prisoners wear beige khakis. Everybody wears a uniform of some kind. Even those who think they don't wear a costume of non-conformity manage to dress alike. Your uniform says, "You're a guard!" Mine declares, "I'm a guard, of a different sort!"

A man I was seated next to, at a local *simcha*, started to lecture loudly about evolution. Everyone sat politely, without reacting. Then he turned to me and said, "I don't expect you to agree because you are religious!" I told him, "I'm not as religious as you!" He answered me, "I'm not religious!" I insisted, "Every Jew is religious! You happen to be religious about evolution. I was not preaching to you but you were sure trying hard to convince or convert me and my friends! You're even more religious than I am."

A Russian woman went looking for an apartment for her daughter in Russia and had to face an Anti-Semitic Communist party bureaucrat who promptly accused her of

having killed his lord. She challenged him, "Why didn't you stop me?" He retorted, "I wasn't there!" Then she told him pointedly, "Neither was I!" She got the apartment!

A Hassidic friend of mine was on a plane to Israel and was eating his kosher meal while carrying on a casual conversation with the secular Israeli gent seated next to him. He offered to share his meal or to try to get him a kosher meal too. The man refused with the reply, "I'm a Jew in my heart!" As the plane ride and the conversation continued, the topic turned to politics and things got heated. The Israeli asked my friend with full animation, "Why don't you serve in the army?" The Hassid insisted he was in the army. The fellow was extremely skeptical and when pressed the Hassid confessed, "I'm in the army – in my heart!"

The *Mishnah* insists, "Know what to answer to a heretic!" We need not always answer but is it important to know "what to answer" and to know that there is "what to answer!" (Rabbi Label Lam)

Some Things Never Change

This is the *perashah* which mentions the prohibition of *Abodah Zarah* (in the *Aseret HaDibrot*). We assume that *Abodah Zarah* is something that applied in the Dark Ages — even before the Dark Ages — but now Enlightened Man, in the latter part of the Twentieth Century is not even tempted by *Abodah Zarah*.

There is an interesting *Akedah al HaTorah* that says that this assumption is not true. There is a concept of *Abodah Zarah* that exists today as much as it existed thousands of years ago. In fact, perhaps it is more prevalent now than ever. The *Akedah* says that today's '*Abodah Zarah*' is devoting all of one's time to amassing wealth and property. When the *pasuk* says "Do not make with Me, gods of silver and gods of gold for yourselves" [20:20], it does not just mean little idols that one bows down to three times a day! It means do not make money - gold and silver - into a god.

Lenin once said "A capitalist would sell the rope to his own hangman." To make a buck, the capitalist would sell the rope that he himself would be hanged with.

To one extent or another we all face this test. It is not true — *Abodah Zarah* has not been nullified. Unfortunately, it is alive and well among us. Especially among us, in our capitalistic society where we see how people become consumed with this god called making money. It hasn't changed at all.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Keep It Coming

Most people pray. Some devote a great deal of time to prayer and to reciting *Tehillim*.

It is unfortunate, however, that many individuals who spend their time involved in this activity don't expend the effort to do it right. When you are praying, you are talking to Hashem – yes – really talking to Him! Make sure you take advantage of this opportunity.

The trick is to anticipate. David *Hamelech* said, "*Al zot yitpallel kol Hasid elecha le'et metzo* – For this every pious person should pray to you for the time of finding" (*Tehillim* 32:6). His suggestion is to ask Hashem for anything and everything we might need. Many people really *feel* their prayers in times of trouble and dire need. But we should not limit our prayers to what we believe we are missing; we should train ourselves to ask for continuance of all the good that we already have. We should pray to the One Above that our lives should not diminish, but, instead, improve.

Remember that while prayer – any prayer – is valuable, there is no comparison between one who prays under duress and one who prays out of sincere appreciation.