

educational opportunities. We pay attention to a myriad of details when we shop around, in order to make the best decisions we can about every aspect of our lives.

Would you pick a doctor because he had a pleasant smile?

Would you buy a car because your brother-in-law's attorney bought that model?

Would you choose a school based on the color of its walls?

Certainly not!

Your decisions are based on detailed research, expert analysis, and reliable ratings.

Choosing a doctor, a car, or a school is, after all, an important decision.

Our Sages advise us to "acquire a friend" (*Pirkei Abot* 1:5). There are many who make this important "buy" based on looks, financial status, and social skills. These criteria may be factors, but we should understand that they don't measure up against the true yardstick of a good friend. Friends must be loyal to fill the needs of their fellows in good times and in bad. Friends must be honest to direct colleagues who may be swerving off the track. Friends must be kind to support others when the going gets tough.

You spend a great deal of time shopping for many of the things you need. When you are in the market for a friend, use your skills to get the product with all the right ingredients. This will lead to a beneficial relationship for everyone concerned. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Well Worth the Wait

During his tenure as one of the premier leaders of Russian Jewry, R' Yitzchak Zilber taught countless Jews who otherwise would have been completely ignorant of all Torah. Even after he made his way to *Eress Yisrael*, he would still make it his business to sneak back into his native country to inspire and instruct. During those trips, he had to make sure to keep a low profile because if his true identity were revealed he risked being sent to the Russian gulag, a prison from which few return.

Once, as he was on one of his trips, a man called out to him, "Reb Yitzchak! Reb Yitzchak!" Shocked that someone would call his name publicly, he turned around and recognized a man whom he had taught many years before, obviously in dire straits, dressed in rags. Poor and hungry and cold as he was, the man could not control his excitement upon seeing R' Yitzchak for the first time in many years.

R' Yitzchak tried to temper his own excitement in seeing the man, and after quickly looking around to make sure no one was watching, he asked many questions about how his former student was doing. Nothing, though, could have prepared him for the question this poor, hungry man asked him. "Reb, seven years ago I bought a new coat to wear during the winter months. I have not worn it yet. I was wondering if you would be able to check it for *sha'atnez*."

R' Yitzchak could hardly believe his ears...or his eyes. He looked at the coat the man was wearing. It was literally falling off his shoulders, it was so worn down. The man had purchased a coat *seven* years ago. Despite the brutal Russian winters, he was worried about the possibility that the new coat *might* contain *sha'atnez* and therefore had not worn it. Any Rabbi would have given him a *heter* (allowance) to wear the coat, regardless of whether or not it had *sha'atnez*; it was *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life), without the coat the man could have frozen to death. But to this unbelievably sincere Jew, *sha'atnez* was poison! He had probably been hoping, for the past seven years as his old coat became more and more tattered, that he would find someone able to check the coat for *sha'atnez*. It boggles the mind!

And now we can ask ourselves, and dig deep to find the answer:

What would we have done? (Touched by a Story 2)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition

ט"ה תשע"ח, חג שבועות, חג המצות, חג סוכות, חג שמחת תורה

ס"ט

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT VAYESHEB ✪ חג שבועות, חג המצות, חג סוכות, חג שמחת תורה

Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8

DECEMBER 8-9, 2017 21 KISLEV 5778

Friday Minhah: **4:12 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:12 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:10 pm**

Shaharit: **6:07, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:56 am**

Shabbat Class: **3:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **3:50 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:10 pm (R" T 5:42 pm)**

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

Mabrook to Mark & Aileen Mizrahi on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, and on the birth of a granddaughter.

Mabrook to Rachamim & Esther Dabbah on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, Rabbi & Mrs. Reuven Semah.

Mabrook to Rabbi & Mrs. Reuven Semah on the engagement of their son, David, to Ruchamah Harary.

Mabrook to Zuckie & Sofia Levy on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, Robbie & Sheryl Levy.

Mabrook to Charles & Racquel Ishay on the marriage of their son, David, to Sharon Falack.

Condolences to Jimmy and Bobby Rishty on the passing of their mother, Eva Rishty.

A Message from our Rabbi

(Bereshheet 38:26)

וַיִּכְרַח יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר צְדִיקָה מִמֶּנִּי

"Yehudah recognized and he said, "She is more righteous than me"

Once a group of people representing another town came to visit the Chafetz Chaim. They came to ask for his help on a very important spiritual matter. They also asked that he come personally to their town to resolve the problem. Even though he was very old, the Chafetz Chaim was known to extend himself for the sake of the people.

Since the town was not so far, it was assumed he would go right away. However, a long time passed and he did not go. It seemed that he forgot all about it. Suddenly one day, right after shul, he went to the nearest wagonmaster and hired him to take him right away. He went to the town and came back three days later. When he got back, people asked him where he went in such a rush.

He revealed that he went to that town and hadn't forgotten for a moment to go. However he couldn't go all this time because there was a problem. The Rav of the town was someone he didn't want to visit (presumably the local Rabbi either didn't conduct himself in an appropriate matter, or perhaps had inaccurate views on *hashgachah*). "However," the Chafetz Chaim said, "if I came to his town without paying him a visit, it would cause him to be embarrassed in front of his community. Therefore, despite the great importance of the issue, I decided not to travel to the town at all. Three days ago, I happened to hear that the Rav had left for his summer vacation. Once I knew that the Rav was not at home, I could no longer delay my journey even by an hour. I hired the first wagon driver I saw to take me there. Baruch Hashem, I was successful in rectifying the matter."

This week our Sages teach us from Tamar that "it is preferable for a person to throw himself into a fiery furnace rather than let his friend's face turn pale from shame in public." Tamar had very powerful reasons to take a different course. It was a matter of life and death and the future of the Jewish people, since one of her children was the ancestor of King David. But she chose not to embarrass Yehudah.

From the story of the Chafetz Chaim we see it's not only for mundane matters that this rule applies. Sometimes when there is a spiritual obligation, it must not be done to spare a person's shame. At times a synagogue needs to take a certain step to make the people happy. Their happiness takes a back seat to someone's shame.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Not What It Seems

"So [Ya'akov] sent [Yosef] from the valley of Hebron . . ." (*Beresheet* 37:14)

Rashi comments: Is Hebron in a valley? Hebron is on a mountain! Rather, this refers to the "deep" plan relating to the *saddik* who is buried in Hebron (i.e., Abraham), to bring about what was told to Abraham, "Your descendants will be foreigners in a land which is not theirs" (i.e., Egypt).

R' Mattisyahu Solomon *shlita* elaborates on *Rashi's* comment as follows:

This is a *parashah* in which all the major players make mistakes that not only have serious consequences, but also seem to us to be obvious errors. Ya'akov openly favors one son over the others. Yosef persists in relating his dreams to his brothers despite their negative reactions. Yosef's brothers conspire to kill him and sell him into slavery.

How could so many intelligent people – indeed, prophets – make such blunders? The answer is that Ya'akov, Yosef and his brothers were all "playing into the hands" of Hashem's master plan. This is what *Rashi* is telling us – every seemingly irrational event that occurred happened because of Hashem's "deep" plan.

This lesson, that Hashem stands behind the scenes pulling the strings of history, is so important that the Torah drew our attention to it by seemingly making a "mistake" (so-to-speak) and saying that Hebron is in a valley.

Another point regarding Hashem's hand in history: If we had been present when Yosef was sold into slavery, we would have thought it was an immense tragedy. Had we been present when Ya'akov traveled to Egypt to be reunited with Yosef, we would have rejoiced. Yet, we would have been wrong both times. Yosef's sale to Egypt was a good thing, for it led to his becoming viceroy and saving his family from famine. On the other hand, Ya'akov's journey to Egypt was an unhappy event, for it was the beginning of the long exile in that land. (*Hamaayan*)

Looking Out

Divine Providence seems to work in strange ways, especially for Yosef languishing

in an Egyptian prison. Unjustly accused of making advances to Potiphar's wife, Yosef has been thrown into the dungeon and left there to rot. But destiny requires that he be released and elevated to high office in the royal palace, and to effect this important result, Divine Providence contrives a very outlandish set of circumstances.

As we read in this *parashah*, ten years after his incarceration Yosef meets up with two discredited palace functionaries, the royal cupbearer and the royal baker. One morning, he finds them despondent. He questions them and discovers that they both had disturbing dreams the previous night. He offers astute interpretations of their dreams, and the sequence of events bears out his predictions. Two years later, when Pharaoh has his own puzzling dreams, the cupbearer remembers Yosef's interpretive skills and recommends him to Pharaoh. Yosef is brought to the palace, where his brilliant interpretations and wisdom win him high office, and the rest is history.

Why were all these farfetched developments necessary? Why didn't Divine Providence manifest itself in a simpler way? Couldn't Yosef's release and rise to power have been effected through more commonplace events?

The commentators explain that Yosef's release from prison is meant to teach a lesson. The ups and downs of life can cause a person to experience confinement of many sorts, both physically and emotionally. How is a person to extricate himself from these situations?

The answer is to focus on the needs of others. As long as a person is absorbed in his own miserable condition, he cannot help but wallow in self-pity. Once he shifts his focus to others, however, he is no longer purposeless and negative. On the contrary, his is a positive presence bringing relief to others and fulfillment to himself. By freeing the spirit, he will in effect have emancipated himself from the shackles of his condition.

Yosef personified this approach. Unjustly accused and imprisoned, he did not withdraw into himself to bemoan his awful fate. Instead, he immediately became the heart and soul of the prison, always there to help a stricken inmate. In this sense, he effected his own emancipation even as he still remained confined within the prison walls. And to drive home the point, Hashem contrived that his actual physical release should also be the result of the kindness he performed for others.

In our own lives, we are often pummeled by financial difficulties, family and childrearing problems, pressure in the workplace and all sorts of other strains and stresses. We can easily find ourselves becoming gloomy and depressed. So what can we do? How can we regain the equilibrium and morale we need to deal with our problems constructively? By throwing ourselves into helping families less fortunate than ourselves or an important community project. For one thing, focusing on others immediately relieves the distress of our own situations. But more important, it elevates us spiritually and allows us to view our troubles in the broader perspective of what has lasting value in the ultimate scheme of things and what does not. (Rabbi Naftali Reich)

Shopping

Hannah's parents had just returned from their first trip to the United States. Filled with curiosity, the young girl bombarded her mother and father with question about the lifestyle of those who lived in the far-away place she had heard so much about.

"What do people in America do for fun?" she asked.

"They go shopping," replied Ima.

"And what else do they do?" the little one persisted.

"Shopping, shopping, shopping – Americans are always shopping," was the reply.

We might not realize it, but this mother was speaking the truth about our American way of life. We are constantly comparing products, services, medical treatments, and