

Weekly Pele Yoetz

Each week we will offer a brief excerpt from the *sefer Pele Yoetz*. **This week's topic is: Eating and Drinking – אכילה ושתייה**

There are three types of eating and drinking: For the purpose of a *misvah*, permissible (but not obligatory) and forbidden. If a person follows the advice of our great Sages, he can elevate all of his meals to the category of *misvah*.

First, he should have the intention that he is eating in order to be healthy and strong so that he could serve Hashem to the fullest. He should also be careful to say a *berachah* slowly, word by word, and thank his Creator for giving him this food to enjoy. Extra care should be given to *Bircat Hamazon*, which is a Torah-based *misvah*, that it should not be rushed.

One should feel privileged to have the opportunity to bless the King of the Universe and to even speak His holy Name, and even be rewarded for it! Reciting *berachot* out loud helps a person have proper concentration, and helps to prevent a person from making mistakes or having any doubt whether the *berachah* was said correctly.

A Perfect Host

When Rav Shabsi Frankel proudly showed the Steipler Gaon his monumental revised edition of the *Rambam*, the Steipler smiled broadly and glowingly declared, "The *Rambam* and his commentators will wait to greet you in *Gan Eden*!" Reb Shabsi used his means to assemble the various manuscripts that would help to improve the accuracy and quality of the *Rambam*. Tens of scholars worked diligently for many years on the project. But perhaps what is most amazing about this undertaking is the fact that during all those years Reb Shabsi never held himself higher than his colleagues and employees. He always made them feel important and integral to the success of the project. The following episode illustrates his refinement and humility.

Stored in his home were many manuscripts worth millions of dollars. Acquiring these documents from universities and collectors was a process that took many years.

Once, Reb Shabsi was sitting at his table working with another respected *talmid hacham* on a recently purchased manuscript. For hours on end they labored, analyzing the nuances in the scripts and comparing them to one another. This intense process required endless patience and a skilled eye. Noticing the need for some refreshments, his wife brought two cups of coffee, one for her husband and the other for a guest he had brought to observe and help out with the new manuscript. Although Reb Shabsi saw the coffee being brought in, his guest did not, and when it was placed down on the table he inadvertently turned around and to his horror knocked it over onto the priceless manuscript. Not only would it cause a loss of thousands of dollars, but now the documents were rendered completely useless!

Reb Shabsi jumped out of his seat and ran into the kitchen. He most certainly was distressed that his valuable manuscript was ruined, but he did not want to cause his colleague any shame or embarrassment. And so, two minutes later he emerged from the kitchen with a fresh cup of coffee. "I figured since the first one spilled, you would probably want another one."

The man smiled. He knew that what had happened had probably caused Reb Shabsi to be disappointed and upset. But he also knew that Reb Shabsi understood that it was an accident, an accident anyone could have caused. The Steipler's comment about the *Rambam* and his entourage had never rung truer. "The *Rambam* and his commentators will wait to greet you in *Gan Eden*!" But maybe not because of the reason we had thought. (Touched by a Story 3)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת ברייה

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SHABBAT MIKESS ☆ שַׁבַּת מִקֵּס

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

DECEMBER 23-24, 2022 30 KISLEV 5783

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 4:06 pm (upstairs) Shaharit: 6:20, 6:45, 8:25, 8:30, 9:00 am
Minhah: 3:00 & 4:16 (main shul) Morning Shema by: 9:04 am
Candlelighting: 4:16 pm Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 3:55 pm
Evening Shema after: 5:14 pm Shabbat Ends: 5:14pm, R"Y 5:46 pm
These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Shabbat Class: 3:40 & 5:14pm
Weekday Shaharit: 6:45, 7:10 am, Sundays: 8:15 am, Weekday Minhah: 4:15 pm

This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell & Robin Antar
in memory of her father, Mr. David Shamula לעילוי נשמת דוד בן אסתר

This bulletin is dedicated by Morris Sutton
in memory of his mother, Rachel Sutton לעילוי נשמת רחל בת וקטורה

We will be having an early *minhah* on Friday at 3:00 pm so that you can pray *minhah* before lighting Hanukah candles. Please be careful to get back to *shul* for *arbit* by 4:30 to avoid violating the Shabbat.

Rosh Hodesh Tevet will be celebrated on Shabbat & Sunday, December 24 & 25.

Mabrook to Marty & Sharon Arking on the marriage of their son, Ezra.

Mabrook to A.J. & Joy Gindi on the birth of a grandson.

Mabrook to Shlomo & Camelia Sheinkopf on the *Bar Misvah* of their son, Aaron.

A Message from our Rabbi

"הרגיל בנר הויין ליה בנים תלמידי חכמים"

"One who is careful to light the (Hanukah) candles will merit children who are Torah scholars" (*Gemara Shabbat* 23b)

Although the *misvah* of Hanukah can be fulfilled by lighting one candle each night, it is common practice to light an additional candle each night. Rabbi Ephraim Nisenbaum asks, why are we so meticulous with this *misvah*?

Rav Ben-Sion Abba Shaul suggests that once the *Gemara* promises the merit of children who will become Torah scholars to those who are careful to light the Hanukah candles, we light the optimal way, since we can never do enough when it comes to the

education and success of our children.

A school bus driver had an argument with the bus monitor, stating that he could not focus on the road while constantly opening and closing the bus door. He suggested instead that the monitor manage the door. The monitor, however, preferred not to. The two brought their dispute to Rav Ben-Sion Abba Shaul.

The Rav asked, “On *Rosh Hashanah*, when the honors are auctioned off in the synagogue, do you ever bid for the honor of opening the *heichal*?” Both men nodded in the affirmative.

“What would you pay for that honor?” the Rav asked.

Both men replied that they would agree to pay over \$100 for the honor.

“I do not understand you,” the Rav continued. “Here you are given the opportunity to open the door for children to study Torah, which is an honor even greater than opening the *heichal*, and it can be yours at no cost! And neither of you wish the honor for yourself?!”

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Ideal Answer

This week’s *perashah* begins with Pharaoh dreaming two dreams which he could not understand. All of Pharaoh’s wise men could not adequately explain the dream to him. The Royal Butler then informs Pharaoh of Yosef, who is languishing in jail, and who perfectly interpreted his and the Royal Baker’s dream in last week’s *perashah*. “And Pharaoh summoned Yosef, and they rushed him from the prison...and he came before Pharaoh.” Pharaoh addresses Yosef: “I heard that you can interpret dreams.” Yosef replies, “It is not I, but G-d who will speak for Pharaoh’s well-being.”

Consider all that Yosef has gone through. First he is sold to Egypt, then he is sold as a slave where he works for Potifar, the head butcher. Potifar’s wife is attracted to him, and realizing that he will never reciprocate, she frames him and has him locked up in prison.

Twelve long years pass, and one morning the door opens and Yosef is brought before Pharaoh. None of the wisest advisors in Egypt were able to explain Pharaoh’s dream to him. Only Yosef was able. The greatest honor was being done to Yosef at this moment. “I heard you can interpret dreams.” Even in Yosef’s wildest imagination he would not have imagined that he would find himself in this situation.

If we would be in Yosef’s shoes with a clear mind, how would we answer Pharaoh? We would be filled with such a feeling of self-importance, and at the same time, happiness at this opportunity to achieve our freedom. We would weigh every word very carefully. We certainly would not want to jeopardize our possibilities of remaining free. We certainly would not interject anything seemingly irrelevant. Even more, we certainly would not correct Pharaoh regarding something we disagreed with him about. Yet Yosef answers, “It is not I, but G-d, Who will speak for Pharaoh’s well-being.”

The Alter of Kelm comments that this is the Torah’s lesson to us regarding the profundity of the education we receive in our formative years. Yosef was so imbued with the knowledge that G-d is the One who gave him the ability to interpret the dreams that he did not even consider any of the aforementioned concerns. The education which he received from his parents was such that even though he left home at seventeen years of age, he held fast to their teachings. From this we can see the deep roots which we can cultivate in children that even the strongest winds cannot uproot.

Another lesson we learn from this is that we should never be embarrassed to express our ideals, even if others would not understand. Just as Yosef spoke his beliefs to people who could not at all relate, we too should not be ashamed to manifest our ideals in

tangible ways. In the long run people will attribute value to our efforts just as Pharaoh did with Yosef. Pharaoh himself states this after Yosef interprets his dreams, “Being that G-d has made all of this known to you there is no one with wisdom and understanding such as you.”

Are we imbuing those in our care with ideals which we hope will last? Is the exposure they are getting the kind that would give them strength and convictions? We should always keep in mind the wise words of the Alter of Kelm and the words of Yosef, as the guides for the type of education we should give to our children and those who follow our example. (Rabbi Label Lam)

Guilty as Charged

“The brothers proclaimed one to another ‘We are guilty about our brother, whose suffering we saw when he pleaded to us, and we paid no attention. Therefore, this trouble has come upon us.’”

I would like to relate a story involving Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. In 1929, the infamous massacre occurred in Chevron. The Chevron Yeshiva had come from Slabodka in Europe to Chevron. In a premeditated attack, the Arabs attacked the Yeshiva and the Jewish quarter of Chevron and killed 67 students and wounded another 58.

After this incident in August 1929 the survivors of the Yeshiva moved to Jerusalem. That is why the Chevron Yeshiva today is in Yerushalayim. They left Chevron.

After this incident, some people came to Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld and asked why this happened to Chevron. They suggested to him “It happened because in Chevron they play soccer on Shabbat.”

Rav Yosef Chaim, who was no softy, got up from his table. He held onto the table and said “Who are these people who play soccer on Shabbat in Chevron? These are people who came from Russia. They were drafted into the Czarist army. They were forced to eat *treife*. They were forced to be *Mechalel Shabbat*. They had no connection with their parents. They made *Aliyah*. They don’t know any better. So they play soccer on Shabbat. Why would you expect them to know any better with that type of background?” He said, “The soccer players are not guilty because they don’t know any better. *AVAL ASHEMIM ANACHNU!* (But it is we who are guilty.) It is our fault because we know better and we are not behaving properly. These were the very words uttered by Yosef’s brothers in this week’s *perashah* – *AVAL ASHEMIM ANACHNU*.

The Brisker Rav used the same concept. When Yonah was on the boat in the middle of the terrible storm at sea and the boat was about to go under, the *Navi* relates that everyone took out their idols and began praying to their idols. Yonah said “It is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.”

The Brisker Rav asked – what did Yonah mean by this? All the other sailors and passengers were taking out their *Avodah Zarah* and worshipping their idols, yet Yonah, the prophet of G-d was saying “It’s my fault!” How are we to understand this?

The answer is, yes. The *Ribono shel Olam* holds the people who know better, accountable. I am not suggesting anything about any current event. No one knows why a specific tragedy occurs. But when confronted with such questions, our reaction has to be what Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld said back then and what the Brisker Rav said in his time. The answer is *AVAL ASHEMIM ANACHNU*. We need to point the finger at ourselves. What exactly we are doing wrong is not for me to say, and I don’t know if it is for anybody to say short of a *Navi*. But we can say one thing: Don’t blame “them.” Most of “them” don’t know any better. The people who know better are the people that should be held responsible. That is the message of *AVAL ASHEMIM ANACHNU*. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)