

Got a Match?

Rav Elchonon Wassereman, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Baranovitch, was walking home from the *Yeshivah*, as usual escorted by a crowd of young men. Suddenly R' Elchonon stopped and picked up what appeared to be an empty matchbox. The students at first thought he was simply doing his part to keep the town clean and neat, and expected him to toss it into a garbage bin, but instead he put it into his pocket.

To make the scene even more bizarre, R' Elchonon announced to the crowd that should anyone find an empty matchbox, he should give it to him. Now the *bachurim* were completely bewildered. What could he possibly want with the discarded boxes? But if the *Rosh Yeshivah* asked for them, his students were eager to oblige.

During their next break the students emptied their half-used matchboxes and brought them to R' Elchonon. It was unusual to see their Rebbe showing emotion about anything other than learning, but sure enough he showed tremendous interest in these things. Like a small child collecting his latest hobby items, R' Elchonon had now accumulated a good number of matchboxes and seemed genuinely excited about them. Something just didn't make sense; but soon everything would become clear.

The next day, in the middle of the *shiur*, R' Elchonon was expounding to a group of over 100 students on a point in *Masechet Yebamot* when suddenly the door was thrown open and a young boy named Beirush, whom all knew from the town, burst into the room. Beirush was different from most young men his age; although his bright smile lit up the room, it was clear that his mental and intellectual capacities were limited. It seems that a few days before he had met R' Elchonon on the street and the *Rosh Yeshivah* had spent some time talking to him. That was when Beirush mentioned that he loved collecting matchboxes.

Now it all became clear. In the middle of the *shiur* R' Elchonon stopped mid-sentence and got up to empty his pockets, as well as a bag he had brought from home to carry the tens of matchboxes he had collected for the boy. Beirush smiled broadly and thanked his new friend for all the boxes. He wanted to be sure that R' Elchonon wasn't planning to keep them for himself, so the gentle soft-spoken *Rosh Yeshivah* reassured him that he had access to plenty of others in case he would need them.

As Beirush began walking out of the room, R' Elchonon thanked him for coming by and invited him to come back whenever he would like. Settling back into his chair and ready to resume the lesson, the *Rosh Yeshivah* looked around the room and waited to make sure that Beirush had left. When he was certain that the boy had departed, R' Elchonon said, "Do you see how easy it is to make some people happy?"

There are many individuals, and students in particular, who have hobbies and interest that might not interest us. Some of us think that it is beneath our dignity to show an interest in these childish and trivial pursuits. But R' Elchonon knew better than that. He knew that one small seemingly insignificant deed can impact a child's life forever. (Touched by a Story 4)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition
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SHABBAT

VAYESSE ☆ τ□μ↓H≥υ, □X♥↑

Haftarah: Hoshea 11:7 – 12:12

NOVEMBER 24-25, 2017 7 KISLEV 5778

Friday Minhah: **4:15 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:15 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:13 pm**

Shaharit: **5:53, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:45 am**

Shabbat Class: **3:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **3:55 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:13 pm (R"Y 5:45 pm)**

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

This bulletin is dedicated by Danny & Marilyn Safdieh
in memory of Rachel Safdieh

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Weather permitting, *Bircat Halebanah* will be recited on Saturday night. If not, it may be said until Saturday night, December 2 at midnight.

Mabrook to Rabbi Yosef & Renee Semah on the engagement of their son, Reuven, to Frumie Raful. Mabrook to the grandparents, Rabbi Reuven & Joyce Semah.

Mabrook to Sammy & Elizabeth Sitt on the marriage of their daughter, Stella, to Charles Saka. Mabrook to the grandparents, Morris & Stella Sitt.

A Message from our Rabbi

”וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים”

“So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel” (Beresheet 29:20)

Yaakob Abinu made it possible for his descendants to serve Hashem even in the marketplace. He paved the way for a Jew in commerce, surrounded by individuals whose existence is the antithesis of Torah life, to still be able to think of Hashem and bond with Him even in the most trying circumstances.

Those who spend their days in the hallowed walls of a *Bet Midrash* do not have a monopoly on holiness. Those who face, and do their best to overcome, the challenges

and spiritual tests of the workplace can reach extremely lofty levels of clinging to Hashem.

The businessman plays a role that reveals the truth of the Torah. When the Torah is taken to Main Street, to the court, to the hospital or wherever the workplace may be, and the Jew remains resolute in his commitment to the Torah, and the Torah remains relevant and upheld, this shows the absolute truth of the Torah.

This answers a popular question. If the purpose of our lives is Torah and *misvot*, why would Hashem run the world in a manner that causes most of us to need a major chunk of our time working instead of studying Torah?

Of course, the main place where the Torah is understood, and where one can plumb the depths of the Torah is the *Bet Midrash*. We all yearn to spend our years there. However one shouldn't think that his time in the workplace is less than holy.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Core of Anti-Semitism

The story of Laban and Ya'akov is critical to our understanding of anti-Semitism, the pernicious hatred of Jews. We know this from the Passover Haggadah — we learn briefly about Pharaoh, read that this hatred happens in every generation, and then continue, “Go and learn what Laban the Aramite wanted to do to our father.”

Why is Laban important here? Rabbi Naftali Berlin (the Netzi"v), famed dean of the Yeshiva in Volozhin, explains: because Ya'akov is the father of all Jews, and Laban is the paradigm of the anti-Semite.

Laban is fundamentally dishonest. We see this multiple times.

He and Ya'akov make a deal: Ya'akov offers to work for Laban for seven years, simply for the privilege of marrying Rachel, his younger daughter. And Laban deceives him, setting him up. Laban puts a veil over the face of his older daughter Leah, and brings her to him.

When Ya'akov realizes that he has been deceived and confronts Laban, what does Laban do? Blame Ya'akov! “We don't do things that way here, to marry off the younger daughter first.” In other words, “Ya'akov, this is all your fault.”

Ya'akov faithfully works another seven years, and then says he should go back to his own land. Laban recognizes that he has been blessed by Ya'akov's presence, and asks him to stay. So they make a deal, again, regarding which of the flock would belong to Ya'akov in return for working as a shepherd. Laban repeatedly changes the deal, to make the terms more favorable to himself — the verse says he did so ten times, but the *Midrash* says that this means tens of times, totaling 100.

Despite Laban's dishonesty, Ya'akov performs his work faithfully — and becomes wealthy. What is the reaction? Ya'akov overhears Laban's sons claiming that all that Ya'akov has is “taken” from their father! Later, when Ya'akov shows Laban that he has been scrupulously honest, above and beyond what was required of him, Laban's response is “Everything you see, is mine.”

It has always been this way: that at the core of anti-Semitism is the belief that everything the Jews have, they have stolen, rather than acquired honestly. And it is projection, coming from dishonest people who want the wealth of others for themselves.

Of course there is more to it: Laban wants to do away with Judaism itself, claiming that he could harm all of them were it not for G-d instructing him to leave them alone. And that, of course, is a core element of anti-Semitism as well.

Our response must be like Ya'akov's — to be so honest and ethical that we know the charges are silly. When we do this, it becomes obvious to all neutral parties that it is

simply baseless hatred. This is our best response to the lies of Laban! (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)

Pay Up!

I heard a story involving a Rav Orenstein, who was a Rav in Detroit more than 50 years ago. Rav Orenstein was a student of the *Hafess Hayim* in Radin, Poland. Rav Orenstein commented that he once heard an interesting observation from his esteemed teacher:

The *pasuk* in *Parashat Vayesse* talks about the birth of the Tribe of Yissachar. Reuben brought home certain flowers for his mother. Rachel saw the flowers and asked Leah for some of them. Leah responded “Was your taking my husband insignificant? – And to take even my son's flowers!” Rachel proposed an offer that Leah accepted: “Therefore, he shall lie with you tonight in return for your son's flowers”. [*Beresheet* 30:14-15] Ya'akov in fact spent the night with Leah and that night the Tribe of Yissachar was conceived.

Rav Orenstein said over in the name of his Rebbi that we know that the Tribe of Yissachar is the tribe in *Klal Yisrael* that personifies Torah study. The whole genesis of *Shebet Yissachar* occurred because somebody paid somebody else. This set the tone for the rest of Jewish history. The existence of the “Tribe of Torah learners” amongst the Jewish nation comes about because other people are willing to pay. This is the “*ma'aseh Abot siman l'Banim*” – that there should be a concept amongst the Jewish people that there is a class of individuals devoted to Torah study amongst the nation that involves someone else “footing the bill.” The classic relationship between the supporters of Torah and the Torah learners has its beginning in *Parashat Vayesse* when Yissachar came into existence because of the flowers that Rachel was willing to pay for. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Keep in Touch

There are many executives who won't go on vacation without leaving an itinerary behind, along with a list of contact numbers “in case of emergency.” Others instruct their assistants to be ready for a daily phone call during which various problems requiring the traveling CEO's advice will be discussed. It has also become common to entrust those who really count with cell phone and Blackberry contact details. Whatever the system of communication, people who really care about their companies cannot relax, even while on vacation, unless they are in touch with the business about which they are so concerned.

Employees, on the other hand, can barely wait for their long-planned break from the daily routine of the job. Although work is happily forgotten for a brief time, vacationers do leave contact information with family members, and they call home to check on how things are doing there. A job is just a job, they say, but family is important.

One may conclude that the boss is very different from the employee – and in regard to the business, perhaps the conclusion is correct. But, in another sense, both are identical. People stay in touch with those who are important. To some it is the business, to others it is the bank, and to some it is family. But to all, getting away is not relaxing when there is uncertainty about the things and people that matter.

It should not take a vacation to make you feel the need to keep in touch. During the day, every day, stop your routine and call someone you care about. That phone call

will send a message that the recipient will not miss: “I really care about your welfare. I am with you even when we are apart.”

The moment you take to call will create a bond that lasts a lifetime. (One Moment with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)