

most difficult of domestic battle zones.

The husband and wife were both pretty surprised when, after patiently listening to their emotional tirades about their respective spouses, the Rabbi reached for a bottle of water and said, "This is *Shalom Bayit* water and is the answer to all of your problems."

"How can water solve the deep differences between us?" asked the curious wife.

"It is quite simple," replied the Rabbi. "You both have short tempers and a definite knack for pouring fuel on the fire. What I humbly suggest is that the next time you are ready to scream back at your spouse, take a mouthful of water and hold it in your mouth for a full ten seconds before swallowing."

We all know people who can get on our nerves and ruin an otherwise pleasant day. Keep a bottle of water handy in your "battle zones" – the office, the car, the dinner table. Next time you are about to lose your temper, fill your mouth with water and hold it for ten seconds. This will undoubtedly be the healthiest drink you will ever swallow. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### Ligaments of the Soul

"A person's ligaments, tendons and muscles work together to make his body move in complex ways that would require an elaborate set of mechanical levers, hoists and winches. It's done so expeditiously and so perfectly because it has been designed and planned in a way that could not be equated by the most ingenious of human engineers."

We should reflect and appreciate how our muscles work in tandem with each other. Each step we take influences a muscle group. Treating others with respect and humility influences the ligaments of the soul. (Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller's, Duties of the Mind)

### A Tale of Two Shochtim

Some years ago, I traveled to Uruguay with a group of *shochtim* (ritual slaughterers) from *Eress Yisrael*, who were to supervise the slaughtering of meat for a noted Rav in Bnei Brak. Another pair of *shochtim*, who worked for a different *kashrut* organization, were staying in an apartment a short drive from ours. During the week they would drive to our apartment for prayers, and on Shabbat they came on foot to join us for the *tefillot* and Shabbat meals.

One Shabbat I noticed that one of the group, Reb Baruch, did not appear for *Minhah*. After Shabbat, we were told that on his way to our apartment he had tripped over an almost invisible wire strung across the sidewalk, which some workmen had forgotten to remove. Reb Baruch was in such pain that he could not continue walking, and he was helped back to his apartment.

The next day, instead of coming as usual by car to pray *Shaharit*, he decided to walk, because his back hurt badly when he stooped down to enter the car. The other *shochet*, the driver of the car, drove off without him.

Reb Baruch arrived in good time and prayed with us, but the other *shochet* didn't show up. An hour and a half later, he finally arrived at our apartment, bruised and shaken. While negotiating a sharp curve, the car had skidded and turned over in a gully at the side of the road. Miraculously, the driver escaped with only superficial injuries, but the front passenger seat, where Reb Baruch would have been sitting had his back pain not stopped him from entering the car, was totally crushed.

Reb Baruch stood up slowly, due to the pain in his back, and praised Hashem for the injury he had suffered on Shabbat. Although it had seemed like a punishment at the time, it was actually a preventive remedy for something much worse that might have happened to him, G-d forbid. (There is no such thing as coincidence 2)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*  
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## Congregation Magen Abraham

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### SHABBAT

VAYIGASH ☆ שזגהזש, ח"ט♥↑

Haftarah: Yehezkel 37:15-28

**DECEMBER 14-15, 2018 7 TEBET 5779**

Friday Minhah: 4:13 pm	Shaharit: 6:13, 6:40, 8:10, 9:15 am
Candlelighting: 4:13 pm	Morning Shema by: 8:59 am
Evening Shema after: 5:11 pm	Shabbat Classes: 3:30 pm
	Shabbat Minhah: 3:50 pm
	Shabbat Ends: 5:11 pm (R"Y 5:43 pm)
	Sunday Minhah: 4:15 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

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

ט"התשפ"ח, ח"ט תשפ"ח, ח"ט תשפ"ח, ח"ט תשפ"ח

**This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Sarah Mizrahi לעילוי נשמת שרה בת אסתר by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren**

Weather permitting, *Bircat Halebanah* will be recited on Saturday night. If not, it may be said until Friday night, December 21.

Mabrook to Mr. & Mrs. Neil Tawil on the marriage of their daughter, Michelle, to Eli Sarway.

### A Message from our Rabbi

"ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בי אדני ידברנא עבדך דבר באדני אדני"  
"Then Yehudah approached and said, 'If you please, my lord, may your servant speak a word in my lord's ears?'"

*Parashat Vayigash* begins with Yehudah stepping up to address Yosef and explaining how much of a loss it would be to their father, Ya'akov, if Binyamin wouldn't be allowed to return to him. When we look at the actual content of the impromptu speech Yehudah delivered, it seems that he did not make a single point that

the brothers hadn't made earlier. Yet, somehow, Yehudah's speech got results. Yosef broke down crying and revealed his identity.

Another question: Why did Yehudah start his speech with the words, "May your servant speak a word in my lord's ears"? What did these words add to his arguments?

Rabbi Frand explains: There is a vast difference between talking directly to a person and having someone else convey your thoughts to him or her. That's why *halachah* mandates that every member of the *Sanhedrin* must know all 70 languages, so that they do not need to hear testimony through an interpreter.

Throughout *Parashat Mikess*, there was an interpreter between Yosef and his brothers. At this point, Yehudah approached Yosef and said, "Let me speak directly into your ears." He no longer wanted an interpreter, because he wanted Yosef to be able to hear the emotions behind his words. Although he thought that Yosef wouldn't understand the Hebrew language, he spoke. He felt that he could better convey his emotions directly than through an interpreter.

He demonstrated why, by giving Yosef an example of a few words that could be interpreted in a variety of ways. How do you interpret the words, "*Ki kamocha kePar'oh* – For you are like Pharaoh"? Is it a compliment? An insult? A threat? *Rashi* gives four meanings! It all depends on the emotion behind the words, which can only be determined through direct conversation, not through an interpreter.

And sure enough, when Yosef sent the interpreter away, everything changed. When Yehudah spoke directly to him, he was able to convey the depth of emotion and the anxiety he and the rest of the brothers felt about returning home without Binyamin, the worry that Yosef never heard them express before.

I would like to end with an additional thought. There is no greater demonstration of this concept than the use of texting in our phones. We have gotten used to this means of communication instead of talking. You don't hear the emotions; you don't get a clear intent of the texter. It is often subject to misinterpretation and sometimes a person would text things that he otherwise would be embarrassed to say! Let's talk!

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## *Accomplishing the Impossible*

Did you ever hear of the expression, "You can't fight city hall"? If this is what is said of a minor leader of a democracy, imagine what could be said of a world leader of a dictatorship or tyranny? Yet we find that Yehudah dared to fight with Yosef, the leader of a world power. Is it not a losing battle? Why even bother to fight? The truth is that Yehudah had no choice; he had accepted responsibility, and his portion in the world to come was at stake. However this itself necessitates explanation; how could Yehudah accept responsibility on things that were beyond his control?

How many times do we think "If I would only have the capability, then I would accomplish great things. But what could I do, I don't have that kind of brain, energy, charisma, talent etc." However we must recognize that there is one thing which deters people from accomplishing great things more than the lack of ability; it is the lack of confidence in our abilities. With our misconceptions we tend to build virtual walls around ourselves that limit our ability to even attempt to accomplish anything.

Did you ever wonder how a traveling circus is able to lock up their elephants for the night? What chain is strong enough to contain an elephant? What pole is adequately tough to tie an elephant to? The surprising answer is; they use a regular chain tied to a regular stake. Why does the elephant not pull the stake out of the ground? The secret is that they start this game when the elephants are very young and not yet strong enough to dislodge the stake. Therefore the elephants grow up with the misconception that they

are not capable of performing such a feat. Even when they are fully developed animals they do not attempt to remove the pole. How many of us suffer from this phobia? Perhaps this is why the famed Mir *Mashgiach* Harav Yerucham Levovitz stated, "Woe to one who does not recognize his shortcomings; even worse is someone who does not recognize his talents and capabilities." The difference between the simple and those who have accomplished much is that the great were not afraid to try.

This is on a level which pertains to mundane matters, however when it comes to serving Hashem then even our actual limitations are suspended. It's our job to try, and Hashem will do the rest. As the *Baalei Mussar* say, "When it comes to serving Hashem, ask not if it's possible, just ask if it's necessary." This is why Yehudah accepted to do the impossible. (Tiferes Yosef)

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## *Living an Elevated Life*

Once, a large group of people came to visit R' Yaakov Kamenetsky to hear his pearls of wisdom. Being that there were not enough chairs for everyone, they were instructed to go down to the basement to bring up folding chairs. Dutifully each one of them brought up a chair for themselves. Seeing this, R' Yaakov commented, "The way you are doing it, you are mere porters. Wouldn't it be worthwhile for each one of you to bring up a chair for their friend instead of bringing it for themselves, thereby uplifting their action to a spiritual act? It is the same trouble; why not turn it into a *misvah*?"

There are times when there can be two motives for the same action; one self-centered, and the other for the benefit of others. If we have the right intention, it has the power to uplift our action and transform it into a *misvah*.

After twenty-two years of separation, Yosef finally had the opportunity to see his beloved father. We can imagine the excitement and anticipation he must have felt. Yet, this was not his motive to go greet Ya'akov. The *pasuk* says, "And he appeared to him," *Rashi* comments, "Yosef appeared to his father." The *Shem MiShmuel*, in the name of his father, the *Avnei Nezer* says that the *pasuk* is stressing that Yosef did not go in order to see his father; rather he went so that his father could see him. He knew how excited his father would be to finally be reunited with him and he went to bring pleasure to his father, not for his own enjoyment. By going for the right reason Yosef elevated his action and transformed it into a *misvah*.

When Ya'akov saw Yosef for the first time in years, Ya'akov did not greet him initially. *Hazal* say he was preoccupied in saying *Shema*. Many commentaries discuss this, why was Ya'akov saying *Shema* specifically at this point?

The *Maharal*, in *Gur Aryeh* explains, "When Ya'akov saw that Yosef was a king, his heart became full of love and awe of Hashem upon seeing the goodness and completeness of Hashem's ways and how he bestows good payment upon the righteous. This is the way of *Sadikim*; when they are beneficiaries of Hashem's kindness they connect to Hashem for giving them the good. For this reason Ya'akov took advantage of this opportunity to say *Shema*, for it affirms Hashem's sovereignty over the world and our love for him."

*Sadikim* transform their physical emotions into spiritual closeness. Instead of enjoying the physical, they use it as an opportunity to connect to Hashem. (Tiferes Yosef)

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## *Peaceful Waters*

The benefit of water to human health is an oft-discussed and rarely debated issue. Drinking about eight glasses a day will keep your body clean and remedy the effect of many toxins you will ingest in the food you eat and the air you breathe.

There was once a couple who constantly argued. Their relationship was stressful not only for themselves, but also for their children. At the advice of a concerned friend, they went to see a Rabbi who seemed to have a talent for bringing peace even to the