**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Behar-Behukosai 5770**

**RABBIS' MESSAGES**

**We Are Only Here**

**For a Short Time**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“*The land shall not be sold in perpetuity for the land is Mine*.”

 Our perashah discusses Shemitah and Yobel. Shemitah means that once every seven years, the land is left idle for one full year. After seven cycles of Shemitah. the fiftieth year of Yobel arrives. The unique requirement of the Yobel year is the return to their previous owners of all ancestral plots of land that have been sold since the last Yobel. A person should not attach too much permanency to his physical acquisitions. He may enjoy them for years and decades, but, eventually, they will be returned to their rightful ancestral owner.

**Hired a Torah Teacher for His Children**

 Rabbi Avraham Pam z”tl would illustrate this concept with the story of a Jew living in a small community who hired a teacher to teach Torah to his children for a year’s time. The teacher received room and board in exchange for his services and became a part of the household. A few months went by and the homeowner began a costly, major renovation of his house, which took a number of months to complete. When the project was finished, the homeowner made a hanukat habayit to celebrate. Neighbors and friends were given a tour of the newly remodeled home. The teacher also took part in the tours and accompanied the guests around the house, saying, “Here is where we added a wall. Over there we enlarged the bedroom. Isn’t our new kitchen now very spacious and beautiful?”

**Homeowner Becomes Upset**

**Over the Teacher’s Words**

 The homeowner overheard the words of the teacher and became upset. “You are talking like it is your house,” he said to the teacher. “Don’t you realize that you are only here for a limited period?” The teacher eyed his master and softly replied, “My dear master, you too, are only here on this world for a limited time.”

 Even if a person owned a piece of land or an estate for close to fifty years, nevertheless, when the Yobel arrives, the land or the house must be returned to its previous ancestral owner. This teaches a person that his true task in life is to prepare for the World to Come by learning Torah and performing misvot. While a person certainly needs a place to live, that and his physical pursuits should not be the purpose of his existence. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin*

**Preparing for the Future**

**By Rabbi Elazar Meisels**

 I had the privilege of hosting a prominent figure in the world of *kashrus* this past Shabbos, and this gentleman, a *baal teshuvah* of more than thirty years, shared with me an amazing story that I'd like to share with you. I'll simply refer to him as Rabbi B.

 If there ever was a *baal teshuvah* who stood to lose a lot by becoming observant, it was Rabbi B. Ivy-league educated, he is a brilliant and talented man who has dedicated his life and talents to the Jewish world. Yet, he has rarely been recognized or honored for his accomplishments. He lives a life of self-sacrifice, struggling to stay afloat financially; luxuries are simply not a part of his life.

 When his youngest son was barely two years old, it once happened on *erev Shabbos* that the boy wandered off and with only hours to go before Shabbos, there was no trace of him. Rabbi B., a *kollel* fellow at the time, frantically searched for him, becoming more anxious by the minute.

**Desperate Pledge to Order**

**Full Set of Mishna Tapes**

 As Shabbos approached, and he grew even more desperate, he resolved to do something that he had held off from doing for a long time for lack of funds. He pledged that if he found his son, he would order a full set of tapes reviewing *Shisha Sidrei Mishnah* produced by Rabbi A.C. Feuer - although their $350 price tag was well out of his reach. This sum was more than he and his wife earned in an entire month, but it was a small price to pay for finding his precious son. A short while later, his faith was rewarded; his son was located, and he purchased the *Mishnayos* tapes.

 Of course, as anyone who has ever purchased large quantities of any recording knows, the experience is not that different from that of purchasing a treadmill. Once it's all set up and ready to go, the only thing that actually goes is the motivation that had stimulated the purchase in the first place. Rarely did the tapes make it out of their cover and precious little learning ever come from Rabbi B.'s purchase.

 Fast forward twenty-five years. Rabbi B. has not owned a decent car since his marriage. He lived from wreck to wreck, stretching the life of each one until he could no longer afford to repair it, and then promptly purchasing another old banger. He would pray that the replacement buggy would last at least a few months before needing repairs. One afternoon, he received a call from his mother, an elderly woman who lived with her husband in the Midwest. Neither she, nor her husband, ever fully understood what possessed their shining star to trade a life of material success for one of impoverished service to the community. Nevertheless, his remarkable *kibud av v'eim* ensured that their relationship remained strong throughout the years, and they loved and supported him any way they could.

**Flies to Attend to Ailing Father**

 She was calling to let him know that his dad had taken ill, and that he should please come immediately. Of course, Rabbi B. was on the next flight out, and he spent the next five weeks tending to his dad in his final days. Although barely coherent, one thing his dad did manage to do was inquire about his car - probably his most precious possession after his wife and children.

 A number of times he awoke from his incoherent state and expressed concern over how it was being taken care of, and each time Rabbi B. assured him that he would take good care of it. It was nothing too fancy, but it was a very well-cared for sedan that was only five years old. Dad passed away after lying ill for five weeks, and Rabbi B. assumed ownership of the car since his mom had no need for a second one. "Take it," she said. "Dad would want you to care for it just like he did."

**Owns a Decent Car for First**

**Time in His Married Life**

 While saddened over the loss of his dad, he now owned a decent car for the first time in his married life - a rare comfort. Especially since a big part of his job as a *kashrus* supervisor entailed driving for hundreds of miles in all directions. It really was nice to finally have a reliable and comfortable vehicle.

 There was, however, one little disappointment. Dad was never one to fall for new technology, and although the car was a relatively recent model, he had refused to install a CD player. Only a tape-deck would do, because, having amassed a beautiful tape collection over the years, Dad was not going to invest in CD's. Rabbi B., on the other hand, a father of five children, had long ago switched from tapes to CD's and hardly owned anything worth playing in his new car.

 Then he remembered that he did have some tapes - not just a few, but a whole set of tapes on *Mishnayos* to which he had never really listened. It took but a few minutes of searching before he located them in their original box. Now, as he drives across the country, he always has a tape playing, and he's plowing through *Shisha Sidrei Mishnah* as he piles on the miles.

 His dad's support for him all those years, culminating in the use of his first respectable car, paid off for Dad in a big way. His son is studying *Shisha Sidrei Mishnah* in his memory, using the cassette deck that Dad made sure to have handy when the moment called for it.

*Reprinted from this week’s Mentor Talk, an email publication of Partners in Torah*

**L’Chaim to the**

**Chozeh of Lublin**

 It is said that the holy *Chozeh of Lublin* once told his loyal disciple Rabbi Yisroel of Ziditchov zt"l that so long as he remains alive, he does not fear for the spiritual health of Rabbi Yisroel, but after his passing, he cannot guarantee that all will be well. Rabbi Yisroel responded that if that is the case, he does not want to live longer than his rebbi. Stunned, the *Chozeh* pointed out that he was an elderly man, whereas Rabbi Yisroel was yet young and had many years to live.

 "If so," said Rabbi Yisroel, "I'd pray that my master should live forever," to which the *Chozeh* wondered whether anyone could actually live forever. To this Rabbi Yisroel responded that he'd pray that he live for 120 years. "Well, which one is it, 120 or forever?" asked the *Chozeh*.

 "Truthfully," answered Rabbi Yisroel, "My intent originally was to bless you to live until 120 years, which is the number of jubilee cycles that will pass from the beginning of the universe until it's conclusion at 6,000 years. The Torah refers to the jubilee year as "forever," and this is what it meant by that. Similarly, Moses lived for 120 years, each one corresponding to one jubilee cycle. So I bless you to live until 120, representing all the jubilee cycles - akin to living forever."

*Reprinted from this week’s Mentor Talk, an email publication of Partners in Torah*

**Remembering Rabbi**

**Moshe Sherer, Zt”l**

 This past Wednesday was the 12th Yahrzheit of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, Z’tl, one of the great Torah personages of our time. This year, we were zoche to finally have a book about his life, Rabbi Sherer: The Paramount Torah Spokesman of our Era, written by R’ Yonasan Rosenblum and published by Artscroll. We provide below several lessons from this outstanding work, and urge you to read the rest of the book, which can provide a great understanding as to what an individual, with the right Hashkofos and drive, can accomplish.

 (1) Rabbi Sherer once shared with his granddaughter, Mrs. Chavie (Langer) Galinsky his secrets of success. First, he said, begin every day by thinking about what you have to do that day, and then praying to Hashem for help doing it. People make the mistake of thinking that one only davens when things are going badly, he said. The second key, Rabbi Sherer said, is to do everything as if one’s whole life depends upon it.

**Making it the Most Important**

**Thing in Your Life**

 “Sometimes I give a person or a team a project to complete. After a week or two, they come back to me and tell me that they have tried their best but they just cannot complete the project in the allotted time. I go into my office and come out an hour later with the project done. No magic. You just have to look at it as the most important thing in the world, and as if your life depended upon it. You cannot imagine what it is possible to achieve with that attitude.”

 (2) At one of their initial meetings, after Rabbi Nesanel Kasnett’s appointment as the first director of Agudath Israel’s new office in Washington, D.C., Rabbi Sherer asked him a completely unexpected question. Why, he wondered, is Yosef referred to as an “ish matzliach”? (Bereishis 39:12). Rabbi Kasnett replied, because he was successful in all his endeavors.

**Helping Others to Become Successful**

 But Rabbi Sherer did not agree. In that case, he replied, the Torah would not have used the causative form, but rather described Yosef as an “ish mutzlach.” Rather, said Rabbi Sherer, the Torah uses the active form to tell us that Yosef made “others” successful everywhere he went: in Potiphar’s house, in the prison, and as viceroy of Egypt.” The measure of Yosef’s success was that he helped everyone around him succeed in his assigned role.

 (3) Rabbi Sherer taught his son how to view others, by providing an analogy to the laws of borer (separating) on Shabbos: Just as it is only permitted to separate if one takes the “ochel’ (the desired object) from the “psoles” (the undesired object), so too, when one looks at another, he must learn to see the “ma’alos” and not the “chesronos” (failings).

 But there is a difference, he noted: Borer is forbidden only on Shabbos; whereas when it comes to judging people, we must focus on their ma’alos, not their chesronos, even during the week.

 (4) In the course of learning the Maharal’s commentary on Rashi, Gur Aryeh (Bereishis 2:5), Rabbi Sherer was once troubled by a statement of the Maharal: “It is forbidden to do a favor for someone who will not show proper appreciation.” He even asked Rabbi Elya Svei, Z’tl, how he should conduct himself in light of the Maharal’s statement.

 In the end, however, he continued doing favors for people, even when he knew that they would show minimal gratitude. The MaharaI, Rabbi Sherer explained, is speaking where a person feels he is doing a favor for someone else. But if he views the favor as for himself, he need not concern himself with the likelihood of ingratitude. As he used to say when people would thank him for some favor rendered, “Would you thank me for putting on tefillin this morning or for keeping kosher?!”

**Don’t Hide from Your Own Flesh and Blood**

 (5) For his part, Rabbi Sherer had a one-line oral tzavaah (ethical will) for his descendants, one which fully reflected his commitment to family: “Mi’besarecha Al Tisalam -- from your own flesh and blood do not hide yourself.” All he asked is that his

children remain close and never forsake one another.

 (6) Rabbi Sherer once posed the following question on this week’s Parsha of Bechukosai: Why does the subject of eruchin (the valuation of human beings for purposes of vows to the Beis HaMikdash) follow immediately after the terrible tochachah (curses) of Bechukosai? He answered, in the name of an adam gadol that the juxtaposition teaches us that we can only know the true worth of a person after having seen how he reacts to adversity.

**An Important Concept of the Shmittah Year**

 (7) On this week’s Parsha of Behar, Rabbi Sherer related how at the beginning of one Shmittah year, the Ponevezher Rav had once gone out to the fields of Kibbutz Chofetz Chaim, prostrated himself on the earth, kissed it, and called out, “Gut Shabbos, Mother Earth.” It was clearly a gesture with which he identified fully. Still, Rabbi Sherer asked: What is so fundamental about Shmittah that the Mishnah (Pirkei Avos 5:11 -- also this week’s Pirkei Avos!) lists it together with the three cardinal sins, murder, immorality and idol worship, as one of the causes for which Bnei Yisroel is sent into galus?

 He answered that the basic lesson of Jewish belief contained in the observance of

the Shmittah year is even more important today when mankind “having gained some small insight into the secrets of Creation is intoxicated with his newfound power, and lays claim to mastery of the Earth....” Now especially do we need to know, “The earth is Hashem’s and all that it contains.”

 For Jews, Shmittah contains another message as well:

 We are subject to a metaphysical Law “over and above the laws of nature [and] of history that govern other peoples and other lands.” When we place our faith solely in the “laws and principles of military science, of economics, of political science, which may be valid for other peoples,” and therefore outside the metaphysical system that governs our existence, we jeopardize our very existence. For according to the former laws and principles, there is no way that a nation whose every border is occupied by enemies could survive at all.

 (8) Although the following thought of Rabbi Sherer is not in the outstanding book, it certainly reflects his approach to life and his feelings towards Klal Yisroel: Chazal teach that if Hakadosh Boruch Hu comes to Shul and does not find a Minyan there at the designated time of prayer: “Miyad Hu Koeis -- He immediately gets angry.” Why would Hashem immediately get angry, Rabbi Sherer questioned, after all, isn’t His anger directed to the people who are not there -- not to the people who are?

**Why is Hashem Getting Angry?**

 Rabbi Sherer concluded that Chazal are teaching us that it is our responsibility -- the ones who are there -- to bring all those not yet there -- in. This was most certainly a significant part of his life’s work.

 He (Rabbi Sherer) was not satisfied, however, with his own accomplishments -- he wanted everyone else to follow suit as well. Certainly, a vital lesson for each and every one of us to take to heart. While many of Rabbi Sherer’s great accomplishments can be attributed to his great God-given talents, there is much that each and every person can learn, as a Torah spokesman to his family, neighbors, friends, co-workers and the world.

*Reprinted from the Hakhel Email Community Awareness Bulletin* of 21 Iyar 5770/May 5, 2010.

**Jewish Airline Pilot Declares Icelandic Volcano to Be a Heavenly 'Heads Up'**

**By Hana Levi Julian**



 An observant Jewish commercial airline pilot says the ash cloud that spewed from the eruption of a volcano in Iceland, paralyzing air traffic throughout Europe for nearly a week, was a sign from Heaven not to take the ability to travel the skies for granted.

 But his attitude comes as no surprise: David Price, 47, is an observant Jew, the only Chabad-Lubavitch commercial pilot in the world. He doesn't get many personal holidays, despite the numerous legal perks that come with his high-end job as a pilot for Air France, and he uses his vacation days to make sure he doesn't have to accept flight assignments on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays.

 The Paris native learned about the Torah commandments as a child, with the advent of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. His mother, in a show of solidarity with the Jews of Israel, took her son to synagogue. Soon the small family became more observant, and the mother approached Chabad of Paris for help in giving her son a Jewish education.

 Price visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, twice during that time, and both experiences left a deep impression on the youth. He later attended flight school in Toulouse, and with 15 years and two thousand hours of flight time to his credit, he eventually moved up the ladder to become a pilot.

**Plenty of Time to Marvel at G-d’s Creation**

 That was 10 years ago. The husband and father of three has since continued to fly transatlantic commercial flights, which he said give him “plenty of time to marvel at [G-d's] creation.”

 The recent eruption of the Icelandic volcano, with its week-long disruption of flights all over Europe, was one such marvel, noted Price in a Lubavitch.com interview translated from Hebrew by Rabbi Eli Friedman. “I have no doubt that this is a sign from Heaven, to teach us not to take the fact that the skies are open to use for granted. Besides, an amazing thing happened as a result of the volcano," he added. "Thousands of Jews did not fly on the Sabbath." (IsraelNationalNews.com)

*Reprinted from the Aruzt Sheva email of 21 Iyar 5770/May 5, 2010*

**The Golden Column**

**Rabbi Shemuel Haduni, Zs"l**

 Hazal interpret the opening pasuk of Parashat Behukotai ("If you walk in accordance with My laws") as referring to diligence in Torah study.

 There was once a man named Shemuel Haduni who lived in the city of Barzan, Persia. He was honest and upright, God-fearing and careful not to do wrong. However, he did not know any Torah, not even how to read the siddur. All he knew was the Hebrew alphabet, so when the time for tefilah came he would whisper the sacred letters until completion. He would then say, "Master of the world, after all, You know people's minds and hearts, and You know that I very much want to pray before You but do not know how. Take these letters and combine them into a prayer!"

 Once he felt thirsty and went to the basin near the well. He then remembered that he had forgotten his pitcher and thus had no way to get water. He remembered his having heard from a rabbi that one can pray for anything, but in his ignorance he mistakenly assumed that there exists a fixed text for this, as well. Not knowing this text, he recited his usual "prayer." He lifted his eyes heavenward and reviewed the letters of the alphabet, hoping that the Almighty will combine them into a proper prayer.

 The letters still coming from his mouth, a magnificent looking man with a belt round his waist suddenly appeared. The man presented him with a golden pitcher and said, "Hashem has heard your tefilah. Recite a berachah and drink as much as you need."

**Ignorant of the Berachah to**

**Recite on Drinking Water**

 "I do not know how to recite a berachah," Shemuel said, "as I am ignorant."

 The man said to him, "If so, then say the letters, as is your want."

 He did as he was told and drank. The man then continued, "I am Eliyahu Hanavi. Tell me what it is that you want - wisdom or wealth; longevity or honor."

 Shemuel said, "I have but one request - that Hashem enlighten my eyes with the light of His Torah!"

 Eliyahu replied, "This is not given from heaven; a person must work for this by himself. If you would like, however, I will teach you."

 Shemuel agreed enthusiastically and studied Torah from Eliyahu Hanavi. Not too much time passed before he emerged as a remarkable scholar. He was appointed rabbi of the city of Mussol and established eleven generations of prominent Torah giants.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Aram Soba Foundation Newsletter, a publication of Congregation Bnai Yosef in Brooklyn.*

**PERASHIOT BEHAR - BEHUKOTAI**

**Perke Abot As Heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l**

"*He (R' Hanina Ben Dosa) said, If the spirit of one's fellows is pleased with him, then the spirit of Hashem is pleased with him; but if the spirit of one’s fellow is not pleased with him, the spirit of Hashem is not pleased with him*” (Abot 3:13)

 Rabbi Miller, zt”l, explains that this Mishna provides an answer to the big question which we should all have. How can I recognize how Hashem feels about me? If He would only just send me a telegram and let me know. This knowledge would be a tremendous help in directing me to make adjustments in my life in order to serve the Creator with increased perfection.

 This Mishna provides us one way for us to see and affect the way Hashem thinks of us. When people are pleased with us, this is an indication that Hashem is pleased with us. When we make it our business to make people happy through respecting or encouraging them, people will then be pleased with us, which results in Hashem being pleased with us.

**The Great Purpose of Life**

 Therefore, every day we should realize that a great Purpose of Life is to make it a prime objective to make sure people are pleased with us. R’ Hanina assures us then, that Hashem will be eternally pleased with us.

 In order to help us gain in our Sensory Awareness of Him, Hashem revealed to us that people are created in ‘the Image of G-d’. When we gain this Awareness we can think that Hashem is watching us through people’s eyes. This Mishna teaches us that a reminder of our relationship with Hashem is through our relationship with people.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of As Heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l*

**A Lesson from the Census**

 With $14.5 billion ($340 million in publicity alone) being spent on the United States Census, it is highly unlikely that anyone in the United States has not heard that this year is census year!

 But just a little background for those of you reading this from outside the U.S.! Every ten years in the US, a census is taken of the entire population. The census allows a federal budget to be calculated and funds allocated per state and district. It determines the representation of each state in congress. And, perhaps most importantly, it yields much information about the nation's population and distribution: Is the trend towards urban, suburban or rural living? What is the mean and mode income? What is the racial distribution of the population?

**A Teaching of the Baal Shem Tov**

 Usually the census is performed by census workers, who canvass a given region of the country collecting data. The 2010 Census is hiring 870,000 people to work on the census in total. Many of those jobs go to census workers who will go house-to-house to collect information from families who do not return the forms that were mailed to them.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chasidism, taught that everything that happens in the world can teach us a lesson in our relationship with G-d. What can we learn from a census?

 In the desert, G-d commanded Moses to take a census of the Jewish people. "Count the heads of the entire Jewish congregation... you and Aaron and the heads of the tribes." Unlike a typical census, G-d told Moses himself to take the count! The most esteemed members of the community - Moses, Aaron and the heads of the tribes - were designated to perform the census.

**Why Did G-d Assign the**

**Census Job to Moses**

 Why did G-d assign this job to Moses himself - the one who received the Torah from Sinai and taught it to the Jewish people? Moses, Aaron and the heads of tribes were asked to go from tent to tent, to perform a count of the Jewish people.

 By placing this job on the most esteemed members of the community, G-d wished to demonstrate the preciousness of every Jew. Counting the people is an exalted task, one that can be assigned only to the most distinguished individuals. G-d counts the Jewish people because he loves them so; we count our most cherished possessions repeatedly, so as not to overlook a single one.

 The counting of the Jewish people is no mundane task. Every Jew is holy; an actual part of G-d above. Counting the people was a mitzvah. When the counters approached the tents, they were dressed in their most festive clothing, and conducted themselves with respect, dignity and pleasantness.

**A Seemingly Ordinary Task**

 Performing a census, in and of itself, is an ordinary task, not requiring any special skill or talent. However, when it comes to counting the Jewish people, the ordinary and mundane becomes transformed into something holy. The same is true of every mundane task - the way we eat, sleep, work, run our homes, bring up our children - these are all holy, exalted matters which must be carried out with great care.

 Transforming the mundane into the holy is our task during exile; when completed, the world will be prepared for an overwhelming revelation of G-dliness. During the time of Moshiach, the count of the Jewish people will be performed once again, to ensure that not a single one is left behind in exile. G-d will gather up each one, "two from a city and one from a family," to return home to Jerusalem.

*Based on an address of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1985*

*Reprinted from this week’s issue of L’Chaim, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization*

**It Once Happened**

**An Opportunity to Perform**

**A Most Unique Mitzvah**

 The great Rabbi Moshe Sofer (the Chasam Sofer) was sitting with his students one day when they were interrupted by the Parness (the head) of the Jewish community. He hadn't want to disturb the rabbi when he was busy with his students, but when the Chasam Sofer noticed the man's distraught face, he excused himself and called the Parness into an adjoining room.

 "What has happened?" the rabbi inquired.

 The man answered with a sigh. "I am in deep trouble. I have lost my entire fortune. There's no hope, for I am in such deep debt, and I've signed promissory notes for others as well. I'm on the brink of utter ruin. Tomorrow, when it becomes known that I didn't go to the fair at Leipzig, my creditors will come running, and that will be my end."

**“How Much Money Do You Need…”**

 "How much money do you need to go to the fair?" the Chasam Sofer asked.

 "Oh, Rabbi, the amount I usually bring is not worth talking about. At this point, I would be grateful for travelling money and a bit of cash." The Parness mentioned an amount.

 "That's no problem. I think I have just that amount here." The Chasam Sofer went to a certain drawer in his desk and withdrew the cash.

 "Rabbi, I can't take the money from you. I came to you for advice, not a loan. If I take your money, how can I guarantee that I will be able to repay you?"

 The Chasam Sofer smiled. "Don't worry, with G-d's help, you will repay me. May you have much success. "

**Incredible Mazel with the Coffee**

 Deeply grateful and with new hope, the Parness took the money and left. He caught the early train to Leipzig, and upon leaving the train met a friend who was a big wholesaler and importer. He offered the Parness a shipment of coffee. The price was right, so the Parness gave a deposit and concluded the deal. Before the day ended, news reached the fair that the crop in Brazil had been damaged by bad weather, and the price of coffee had risen.

 The Parness sold the coffee at a great profit. The next day he bought large quantities of merchandise. The pattern repeated itself every day of the fair, and by the end, he had not only recouped all his losses, but had become even richer than before. It occurred to the Parness to buy something special for the Chasam Sofer. The rabbi was knowledgeable in jewels, so he purchased a valuable gem to present to him. Back home, he went at once to visit the rabbi and tell him the good news. "Your blessings were fulfilled beyond my dreams. In addition to repaying you, it would be an honor if you would accept this gift."

**The Rabbi Returns the Beautiful Gem**

 The rabbi eagerly took the box and opened it, revealing the gem. "It's beautiful, and very valuable as well," he said turning the gem this way and that, all the while smiling in delight. Then he handed it back to the Parness.

 "But, Rabbi, it's yours."

 "No. You see, if you had given it to me at any other time, perhaps I would have accepted it, for it would support my yeshiva for some time. But since I gave you the loan, I cannot accept even something which has 'the dust of interest' on it."

 The Parness left, and some students who had observed the scene came to their rabbi with a question: "If you had no intention of accepting the gift, why did you receive it with so much happiness and pay it so much attention?"

**A Story About Rabbi Nosson Adler**

 "I will tell you a story which will answer your question. Once I was traveling with my Rebbe, Rabbi Nosson Adler of Frankfurt. It was a trip of extreme urgency to the Jewish community. We started out after dark, and after we had gone but a short distance, the team of horses refused to budge. The driver went off to get help and we tried to shake off the cold by immersing ourselves in learning.

 "Finally the driver returned and readied the team to continue the journey. Suddenly, my Rebbe leaped out of the carriage and began dancing in the snow. I was shocked and couldn't understand his actions.

 "'Don't you see, Moshe, the driver has harnessed a team of oxen together with horses!'

**An Explanation to the Driver**

 "I explained to the driver that we were forbidden to be drawn by a team composed of mixed species ("kilayim," is forbidden, since the animals have differing strengths and it causes them hardship). I offered him extra money if he would exchange the oxen for horses.

 "When he had gone, I asked my teacher to enlighten me as to his strange behavior. He answered, 'My dear Moshe, when in Frankfurt do I get to do the rare commandment of kilayim? Now, that it comes my way, once in my life, should I not rejoice?'

 "That is why, when I got the chance to do the mitzva (commandment) of "ribbit" (not accepting interest from a fellow

*Reprinted from this week’s issue of L’Chaim, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization.*

[**The Human Side of the Story**](http://ohr.edu/yhiy.php?seriesid=17&archive=1)

**The Pareve Office**

**And Pareve Food**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 Although the term *pareve* to us means a neutral food matter which is neither meat nor milk, the term originates from the name of one of the offices in the *Beit Hamikdash*.

 Different explanations are offered by our commentaries for this unusual name. In his commentary the Bartenura writes that this office was built through magic by a magician named Pareve and therefore bore his name.

 Rambam's explanation is that Pareve was a curious magician who tunneled his way into the Holy of Holies to observe the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur and was slain for this violation, and the scene of his crime was named for him to discourage others from doing the same.

 There is a popular assumption that because this office was in a holy area but not really sanctified as its neighboring vicinity, but rather used for salting the skins of sacrificed animals, its name connotes something of being in-between.

Reprinted from this week’s website of Yeshiva Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim, Ohr.edu

**Flatbush Kinus for Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin Highlights the Need**

**For All Jews to Be Concerned**

**By Daniel Keren**



 Hundreds of men and women participated in a highly emotional *kinus* at the Agudath Israel Bais Binyomin in Flatbush on Tuesday night, April 27th, in order to hear words of *hisorerus* and to recite *Tehillim*.

 The program was organized by Hakhel in an effort to beseech Hashem to inspire the Federal Judge to hand down a lenient sentence in the controversial trial that resulted in a jury convicting Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin, an Orthodox Jewish Chassidic businessmen on charges of bank fraud and failure to pay cattle owners promptly. Hakhel is a Flatbush-based organization devoted to promoting a greater awareness of Torah-true values in our community.

**Operated the Largest Kosher Meat**

**Production Company in the U.S.**

 Reb Sholom Mordechai was originally arrested on immigration-law violations related to how he operated Agriprocessers, at the time the largest kosher meat and poultry production company in the United States.

 Lawyers familiar with the case point out that it clear the prosecutors for the federal government have been overly zealous in pursuing Mr. Rubashkin and have submitted him to considerably more severe restrictions and potential punishment than others convicted in similar cases.

 The enormous disparity between the treatment of Mr. Rubashkin and others who committed similar offenses began with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") raid on Agriprocessors ("Agri") on May 12, 2008, and has continued to this day.

 The *beis medrash* of the Agudath Israel Bais Binyomin was packed and many men had to listen to the *kinus* from the nearby library. The women’s section was equally packed. Rabbi Chaim Dovid Chaim Zweibel, executive vice president of the Agudath Israel of America began the program by telling those attending the *kinus*, “We have a big *shlichus* (mission) tonight. What more can we do? We signed petitions. We made the phone calls and we wrote the letters.”

**A Major Undertaking by**

**Jews Across the Nation**

 Rabbi Zweibel was referring to the major effort being undertaken by Jews across the United States to send messages to the federal judge requesting leniency on the sentence handed to Mr. Rubashkin in connection to his conviction on the above mentioned charges that his lawyers are preparing already to appeal. At the time of the *kinus* the federal prosecutors were demanding that Mr. Rubashkin, the father of 10 children, including one with severe autism who depends on his father be sentenced to life in prison, G-d forbid.

 Rabbi Zweibel informed the *kinus* audience that a special letter had been submitted to the judge who will pass judgment that was signed by six former U.S. Attorney Generals (a presidential cabinet position supervising the U.S. Department of Justice), all stating that the sentence requested by the prosecutors was draconian and way in excess of what such a crime should justify.

 “In more than 25 years of my efforts on behalf of the Agudath Israel of America as a *shtadlan*,” Rabbi Zweibel said, “I have never seen such a major effort as has been undertaken on behalf of Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin.

 “If we understand that everything comes from Hashem, why must we be involved in *hishtadlus* (making a practical effort to help Reb Sholom Mordechai)? The [author of] Chovos Halevovos teaches us that this is what Hashem wants us to do.”

**A Possible Double-Edged Sword**

 Yet, Rabbi Zweibel acknowledged that trying to do our *hishtadlus* in helping Reb Sholem Mordechai can be a double-edged sword. “For, we have to realize that ultimately we have acknowledge where it all comes down to – our salvation comes only from Hashem.”

 Rabbi Zweibel spoke about how especially since the Second World War, the United States has been a unique haven of *chesed* for the Jewish people, particularly those who survived the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe. But, he said that the manner in which the government has handled its case against Reb Sholem Mordechai and how the United States government under the direction of President Barack Obama is treating the Jewish State of Israel in an increasingly hostile manner is a lesson we must be aware that things are changing.

**We Are Also Praying for Ourselves**

 In gathering at the Agudath Israel Bais Binyomin in the heart of Flatbush, we must realize, Rabbi Zweible hinted darkly that we are being *mispallel* (praying) not only for Reb Sholem Mordechai Rubashkin, but also for ourselves and our secure future in this country.

 After Rabbi Zweibel’s comments, HaRav Shloime Mandel, the *Rosh Hayeshiva* of the Yeshiva and Mesivta of Brooklyn led the participants of the Flatbush *kinus* in a heartfelt recitation of *Tehillim* on behalf of Reb Sholem Mordechai.

 HaRav Moshe Tuvia Lieff, the *Mora D’Asra* of Agudath Israel Bais Binyomin referred to the *Chazal* that teaches that when Pharaoh wanted to begin his brutal suppression of the Jews, he asked his three primary advisors for their opinion.

 Bilaam the *Rasha* urged Pharaoh on and was punished by Hashem *mida kineged mida* by being killed with the sword later by the *Yidden* in the *Midbar*. Yisro was unable to bear the pain and when he tried to advise Pharaoh not to kill the Jews, he saw the rage in the face of the Egyptian ruler and had to flee from the palace.

**Yisro’s Special Reward**

 As a reward, Yisro later became the father-in-law of Moshe Rabbeinu and his offspring would centuries later meet in *Chizkas Hagazas* section of the *Beis Hamikdash* and pass judgment on the lineage of the *Cohanim*.

 Iyuv, who sensing the futility of protesting after he saw the reaction of Pharaoh to Yisro simply remained silent. And the *Chazal* teach us that he was punished even more severely than Bilaam, being subjected to intense and indescribable painful physical ailments and suffering.

 This, Rav Lieff said “comes to teach us that as *Yiddin* we can’t stand quiet and ignore the pain and threat to another Jew. Rav Lieff told the participants in the audience that he has known Reb Sholom Mordechai since they were both young students in elementary school in yeshiva in Brooklyn.

 He spoke of Reb Sholom Mordechai’s incredible chesed and his strong commitment to *Yiddishkeit* despite the difficulties he has had to endure in prison when following his conviction, his request for bail pending sentence was denied.

**Haircuts in Prison**

 For five months Mr. Rubashkin has been unable to get his hair cut because the prison only give haircuts on *Shabbos* and they have refused to accommodate his religious beliefs by scheduling a haircut for him on any of the other six days of the week.

 Rav Lieff concluded his *hisorerus* by requesting that everyone in the *Kinus* continue to keepin mind Mr. Rubashkin and his family in their *tefillos*.

 In a side note to the above report, it should be noted that two days later, the federal prosecutors amended their original request of life in prison to 25 years in prison. No doubt, they were partially shamed by the letter from the six former U.S. Attorney Generals ranging from Ramsey Clark of the Johnson administration to Edwin Meese of the Reagan administration. And also, no doubt, the many prayers of Jews around the world and the *histadlas* efforts by Jews from all sectors of *Klal Yisroel* have also contributed to the lesser sentence demands of the federal prosecutors.

 For more information on the situation confronting Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin and his family, please contact justiceforsholom.org and *daven* for Sholom Mordechai ben Rivka.

*Reprinted from the Matzav.com website of this past Monday, May 3, 2010.*

**A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l**

**Why Is Having Children**

**So Important?**

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**Rabbi Avigdor Miller**

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| **ANSWER:** |

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And the answer is. Why are you so important? Certainly I am important. If my mother wouldn't have had me, I wouldn't be around to talk about it. The most important event in history to me was when my mother had me. Nothing excites me more than that. That elicits my full enthusiasm. I told you this story of a President of a sisterhood, who was talking about the subject of zero population. So the Rabbi said to her, how many children were in your family? She said, my mother had 12 children. Who was the 12th one? She said, I was the 12th one.

 So the Rabbi said to her, suppose your mother had decided to stop before you, look what we would have missed. Such a good active member of our Synagogue. Look how many good things you did, not only for us, but for yourself to. And therefore, why is having children so important? "Halo Lo Nivra Ha'Olam Ela L'Piryah V'Rivyah", the world was created only for having children.

 Nothing is more important than having children. That's a very big statement, but it has to be explained. And therefore we see how evil, and stupid, is the populace that allow themselves to be befuddled by the propaganda of the liberals against having children.

 Here is a couple, he married, he is a decent fellow, not too smart, but he married. And the girl said to him, No Children, Zero, Period. So he is a weakling, not able to fight, and years have passed by and no children. This selfish and stupid women, is a victim of what people told her, and the wrong people.

 And people that listen to the radio, people that read the New York Times, people that look at television, are acquiring every day attitudes that are just the opposite of Kabolas Hatorah. It's impossible to talk about Kabolas Hatorah, if at the same time you are mekabail Anti Torah. Now don't say I am able to do these things, and despite them I will be able to be Mekabail the Torah. You can not talk from your mouth, two different things, from two sides of your mouth. And therefore Kabolas Hatorah requires, we should first cut loose from Anti Torah, and then we can talk about Kabolas Hatorah.

*Reprinted from this week’s “A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller” email l’ILUY Nishmas Rochel Rus bas Avrohom that was transcribed from questions that were posed to Harav Miller by the audience at the Thursday night lectures. Tape 508 @ 1:21:33. To listen to the audio of this Q & A please dial: 732-534-8868*

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**The Dutch Treat**

 On the first day of Chol Hamoed Sukkos over 25 years ago, Reb Moshe Holczler, Z”L and his wife received a carefully wrapped package in the mail. They opened the package and discovered an old book with Hebrew writing. The book was a Sukkos Machzor, printed in Lineville, France about two hundred years ago. On the front flyleaf of the prayer book, a Jewish father had carefully listed the births of his nine children, born between 1835 and 1851. On the rear flyleaf, the father had listed the yarhzeits of his ancestors who died between 1851 and 1894.

 The wife of a German lawyer had sent the prayer book to the Holczlers. The Holczlers had recently met with the German lawyer to discuss Holocaust reparations. What was the story behind the prayer book? How did the Sukkos prayer book end up in the hands of the gentile German lawyer and his wife? How did the Germans know to send the prayer book during Sukkos?

 We will try to answer our questions by looking into some of the deeper meanings behind our double portion this week Behar-Bechukosai.  The Torah tells us this week, “If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them… I will walk among you and I will be a G-d unto you and you will be a people unto Me.” (Vayikra 26:3,12)

**The Importance of Being**

**Loyal to Hashem**

 The commentator Sforno explains that Hashem is telling us: Be good, keep My mitzvahs, and I, Hashem will go with you the Jewish nation wherever you go in exile. Our lesson for this week is therefore the following: As long as we stay loyal to Hashem, He will walk with us; even if some of the sheep may get lost, the flock will remain intact, no matter how dark this exile may seem. As Dovid Hamelech tells us “Hashem is my shepherd, I shall not lack anything…”(Tehillim 23:1)

 We can now begin to understand how and why our friends the Holczlers happened to visit Germany. In the summer of 1974, Reb Moshe Holczler and his wife had traveled to Germany to meet with a certain lawyer to discuss reparations. Reb Moshe, of blessed memory, had represented many Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who were seeking compensation for their suffering and for their lost and stolen property as the result of German persecution during the war.

**Uncomfortable About**

**Traveling to Germany**

 The Holczlers were uncomfortable about traveling to the land of hatred, however they had the interests of their clients in mind when they arrived in Germany. The Holczlers were surprised when they received a warm reception from the German lawyer and his wife. Weeks later, they were even more surprised to receive an old Sukkos Machzor (Yom Tov prayer book) from Germany. The Holczlers could not figure out why the German lawyer and his wife had sent them a Sukkos prayer book.

 The answer came two days later, in the form of a letter in German written by the wife of the lawyer:

*Dear Mr. and Mrs. Holczler,*

 *I had a dream two nights in a row that I had given you the Hebrew books which my mother had saved from Krystallnacht in November, 1938. As you probably know, [Krystallnacht] was the shameful night when on orders of the Nazi government, all Jewish synagogues were vandalized and burned throughout Germany. All Jewish prayer books and other holy volumes [which had been seized] were piled up and publicly burned.*

 *My mother, who is a very brave woman, somehow had an urge to run out to the plaza in Koeln and grab two Hebrew books, before they could be consumed by the flames. [My mother] said that millions of broken glass chips of the synagogue windows covered the ground, like crystals in the flickering flames of bonfires of Hebrew books. That is why it was called “Krystallnacht.” My mother gave me these books for safekeeping, and somehow I felt they were like a good luck charm in our house.*

 *[After dreaming] a second time that I gave them to you, it was about 3 in the morning. I got up and made a note so that I should not forget it in the morning. When I woke, I decided to keep the one with a German translation from which I often pray, because I enjoy the depth of your prayers and I feel that all prayers go the same place. The other one I mailed to you. I do not know what this book is about, but you will surely know how to use it. I feel that with you it will be in the right place.*

*With regards…*

**Recognizing the Divine Providence**

 The Holczlers finished reading the letter and marveled at the Divine Providence which had brought the Sukkos prayer book into their hands just in time for the Yom Tov of Sukkos.

 Hashem was walking with the Holczlers as they traveled to the house of that German lawyer. The Holczlers themselves had experienced amazing miracles in being saved from the hands of the German monsters during World War II. During those war years, Hashem walked with the Holczlers. So too, Hashem is walking with all of us.

*Reprinted from this week’s Good Shabbos Everyone email.*