

THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS NEWSLETTER

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

PARASHAH

SEIZING THE MOMENT

Aleinu L'shabe'ach – Devarim by Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein

וְאַתָּחֵן אֶל ה' בָּעֵת הַהְוָא לְאָמֶר
I pleaded with Hashem at that time, saying (3:23).

A certain individual served for a long time as the mayor of one of Israel's largest cities. During his tenure as mayor, he developed close connections with the local police chief. Whenever he summoned the police chief, within minutes, the police chief would hurry over to hear what he wanted, even if it was in the middle of the night.

After serving several terms as mayor, this man lost the municipal election. The loss was quite humiliating to him, especially since the public opinion polls taken in advance of the election had indicated that he was the front-runner and would be reelected.

Several weeks after the election, this former mayor's car was stolen from his driveway. As he had done many times in the past, he dialed the police chief's cell phone and asked him to come to his house quickly. The police chief mumbled several words in response and then hung up the phone. The former mayor thought that the unintelligible words uttered by the police chief had been an expression of shock and horror at the theft of the former mayor's car, and he was certain that the police chief would arrive shortly to conduct an investigation personally.

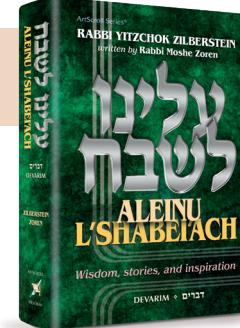
He waited a few minutes, then a quarter of an hour, then half an hour, and was surprised that the police chief had not yet arrived. He called the police chief a second time and asked him why he hadn't come.

"Sir, did you file an official complaint?" the police chief asked indifferently.

The former mayor, who was still smarting from the loss of the election, now understood that he no longer enjoyed the perks of being

mayor. As long as he had sat in the posh office of the mayor at city hall, the police chief had been at his beck and call. But now that he was an ordinary citizen, the police chief was no longer interested in paying personal visits to him.

The *Midrash Rabbah* on our verse teaches that " – I implored" is to be understood in light of the verse that teaches, "He alters times and seasons; He deposes kings and establishes kings" (*Daniel 2:21*). The *Midrash* goes on to explain that R' Avin said: To what can the matter of Moshe's



“SIR, DID YOU FILE AN OFFICIAL COMPLAINT?”

plight be compared? To a king who had a dear friend who was given the power of appointing ministers and governors. After some time, people saw that the friend was requesting of the guard to allow him entry into the palace, but the guard did not allow him in. Everyone was puzzled and said, "Yesterday he was appointing ministers, governors and kings, and now he is asking the guard to allow him entry into the palace and he is not being allowed in?" They explained, "His time has passed." Similarly, in the past, Moshe would issue decrees for Hashem and Hashem would fulfill them, but now, Moshe was reduced to imploring and begging

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פרשת ואתחנן

5780

JULY 31, 2020

ISSUE #2

RABBI YITZCHOK HISIGER, EDITOR

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ARTSCROLL MESORAH

FAILURE TO KNOCK

*From the new, bestselling biography of Rabbi Dovid Trenk,
Just Love Them by Rabbi Yisroel Besser*

One of the firm rules of the Adelphia Yeshivah was that *bachurim* were not permitted to smoke. Rabbi Dovid Trenk didn't want the boys to smoke, but he also didn't want to catch them smoking, so he would cup his hands around his mouth, creating a fake microphone, and call out, "Trenk's on the way. Trenk's on the way. Put out the cigarettes quickly."

Despite Rabbi Trenk's hesitation to catch them breaking rules, if he did happen to see it, he wouldn't look away. Being caught meant certain discipline.

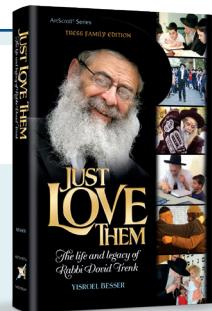
One day, Rabbi Trenk entered a room and saw a *bachur* smoking.

"You broke the rules," Rabbi Trenk exclaimed,

"because you're not allowed to smoke, but the thing is, I also broke the rules, because the *halachah* is that you're supposed to knock before coming into a room. So let's do this again: I will go out and knock, and this time, you had better not be smoking when I come in!"

That was the Rabbi Trenk way – educating and disciplining with pure love, even putting the onus on himself if he felt that would do the trick.

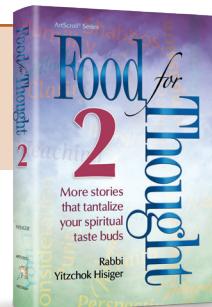
That was what Rabbi Trenk did. What would you have done? ☩



FLASH OF CHIZUK

RIGHT THERE

Food for Thought Volume 2
by Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger



Levi visited a city he'd never been in before and made a stop at the local *mikvah*. At the front door, he noticed a turnstile requiring an entrance fee of ten shekel. Levi pulled some coins out of his pocket and began to drop them in to the designated slot. One after the next, Levi placed the coins in, listening as they fell to the bottom of the machine.

After putting in six coins, he tried the turnstile, but it wouldn't budge, so he continued to deposit money. After dropping in the ninth coin to no avail, Levi was exasperated. He tried the turnstile one more time and then turned around in a huff. He had put in all that money for naught! Levi was livid.

As he walked away, he was stopped by another visitor to the *mikvah*.

"Why are you leaving?" asked the man.

"Are you kidding?" said Levi. "I put in coin after coin - nine shekel in all - and the thing won't open. You think I'm going to continue throwing out my money?"

"Fool," the man responded. "The entrance fee is ten shekel. You've put in nine. One more shekel and you're in! If you leave, you're wasting nine shekel to avoid paying one more!"

Sometimes, we are in dire need of a yeshuah and we daven and daven, pleading with the Ribono Shel Olam to send us our salvation. But then, we give up. We feel like we've davened so hard already. How much more can we beg? We've reached our limit.

Our mistake is that we never know just how close we are. We might be one coin away from entry. We might be standing right at the door of our yeshuah. One more tefillah, one more krechtz, one more heartfelt request to our Father Above could be all we need. ☩

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to enter Eretz Yisrael, and his supplication was not accepted, for his time had passed.

The words of the *Midrash* impress upon us the importance of capitalizing on our opportunities and using our every moment in this world to accomplish whatever we possibly can. For who knows what the next moment will bring?

Perhaps this is what Mordechai meant when he told Queen Esther, "And who knows whether it was for such a time as this that you attained the royal position" (*Esther* 4:14). "Now," he was telling Esther, "you are enjoying a moment of success, but times can change, and who knows for how long you will be seated on the royal throne? You therefore have to seize the moment and act." ☩

INSPIRATION

SELECTION BY NAME

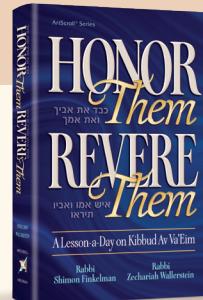
From the newly-released Honor Them, Revere Them by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein

Kibbutz av v'eim, honoring one's father and mother, can be performed in so many ways, big and small, obvious and no-so-obvious.

Every day, Rav Chaim Kanievsky responds to letters that he receives from around the world. Until a few years ago, he would personally sort the letters into four piles. The pile that Rav Chaim responded to first were letters from *Kohanim*, followed by a pile of letters from *Levi'im*.

The third was from people named "Yaakov Yisroel."

Rav Chaim began making such a pile around 18 years ago after the passing of his father, the Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky. Rav Chaim reasoned that it was very likely that some of these letter-writers were named after his father, and giving their letters precedence was a form of *kibbutz av*. ☩



GIVING THEIR LETTERS PRECEDENCE WAS A FORM OF KIBBUD AV.

INSPIRATION

KNEIDEL WITH A NESHAMAH

At His Rebbi's Side, by Rabbi Yehoshua Liff

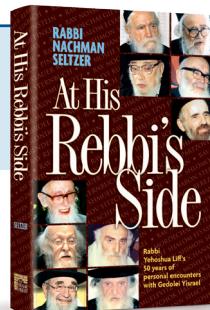
Rav Nachman and Rebbetzin Shaindel Bulman were a dynamic couple who touched so many lives. They also always knew just the right thing to say in any given situation.

Rebbetzin Bulman was a beloved visitor to Rabbi Yehoshua Liff's home after Rav Bulman passed away, and on one occasion she was a guest at a *sheva berachos* meal the Liffs hosted. Though most people are familiar with *kreplach* — small, dough-filled pockets of meat that are placed in soup — few had ever come across anything like Mrs. Liff's *kreplach* that evening. There, floating in the soup, were *kreplach* masquerading as *matzah* balls; in other words, *matzah* balls stuffed with meat. Of course, this was a very nice surprise for the Liffs' guests, who had been

expecting ordinary *matzah* balls and found themselves with an entirely new culinary creation that they'd never seen before.

When Rebbetzin Bulman realized what was going on, she picked up her head, looked Mrs. Liff in the eye, and quipped enthusiastically, with trademark Bulman originality, "Ah, *Devora'le*, ah *kneidel mit ah neshamah* (a *matzah* ball with a soul)!"

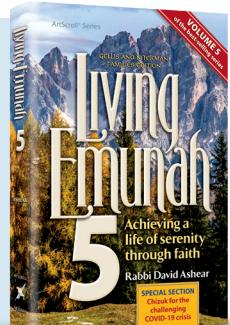
This was the style that Rav and Rebbetzin Bulmans used in their thousands of interactions with people. They were relaxed, down-to-earth, complimentary, good-natured, and extremely intelligent — truly rare kinds of human beings. ☩



A MILLION DOLLARS

From the newly-released Living Emunah 5 by Rabbi David Ashear

Rav Asher Druk related that a man from Eretz Yisrael was traveling to America for an artificial heart transplant that cost about a million dollars. Rav Druk said, "If an artificial heart is worth a million

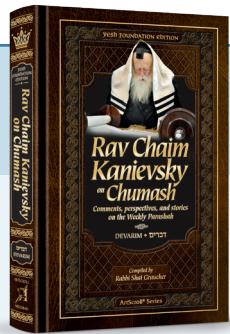


HASHEM MAKES THEM WORK.

dollars, how much is a real heart worth?" He continued, "Imagine if someone approached that patient and told him that he wanted to cover the full cost of the heart transplant and gave him a million dollars. How much gratitude would the patient have toward that most generous individual?

"If a person has a working, healthy heart, he should be thanking Hashem far more for that gift than the transplant patient would thank his benefactor. Our hearts work only because Hashem makes them work. He decides on a second-by-second basis that they should function properly and do their job."

If we start to concentrate more on what we have and thank Hashem daily for what He gives us, we will start having a different attitude toward Him and become much happier. Perception and attitude are crucial. ☩



Rav Eliyahu Mann related that he once asked Rav Chaim Kanievsky whether the majority of questions in *Shas* remain unresolved or if the *Gemara* reaches a conclusion on most of them.

Rav Chaim replied that most of them do have an answer.

Rav Mann explained, "I am asking because of a story that I heard from Rav Dovid Soloveitchik. His grandfather, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, was once traveling with the Chafetz Chaim. An unstable person burst into the room and asked, 'Why is it that most of the questions in *Shas* are unresolved?' Rav Chaim Soloveitchik immediately calmed him, saying, 'That is untrue; most of them are answered.'

"For the next few minutes, the Chafetz Chaim was uncharacteristically quiet. After those minutes passed, he suddenly declared, 'Rav Chaim is correct!' Apparently, he had reviewed the entire *Shas* by heart in those few minutes, and tallied up the numbers of resolved and unresolved questions."

Here are some obscure sources regarding which Rav Chaim Kanievsky was asked:

Q: Where in Chazal do we find that Pharaoh remained alive after the Splitting of the Sea?

A: Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 43.

Q: Tosafos (Menachos 37a s.v. Oy) cite a Midrash regarding a two-headed man. Where is this Midrash found?

A: Otzar Midrashim, p. 533.

Q: There is a common saying, "Yeshuas Hashem k'heref ayin – Hashem's salvation comes in the blink of an eye." What is the source of this statement?

A: It is the opening line of a piyut in the Sefardic liturgy.

Q: The Mishnah Berurah (1:13) cites a Yerushalmi that says that anyone who recites the Parashas Hamann is guaranteed that he will not lack sustenance. Where is this Yerushalmi?

A: It does not appear in our versions of the Yerushalmi. However, many Rishonim quote it, and attribute it to the Yerushalmi in Berachos or Yoma (see, e.g., Tashbetz Kattan 256; Sefer HaManhig, p. 30; Perishah, Orach Chaim 1:14).

Q: A certain person who would regularly visit the Steipler Gaon to discuss points he made in his sefer, Kehillos Yaakov, said that every time he entered, the Gaon would ask, "Have you come with a proof to what I said, or a proof against me?" When he said that he had a proof for the Gaon's position, he would reply, "That is good." Is there a source for being happier at being proven right than at having one's conclusions attacked?

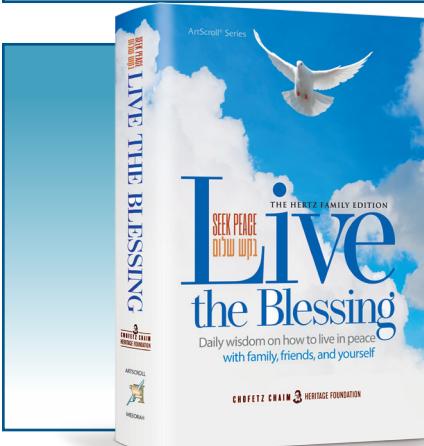
A: The Ramban (Milchamos Hashem, Bava Metzia 66b in the Rif) writes that the Amoraim rejoiced when questions were not raised on their rulings.

Q: Someone told me that he has a pain in half of his head, but not in the other half. Is such a thing mentioned anywhere?

A: Rashi (Shabbos 90a and Gittin 68b) describes such a phenomenon, which the Gemara calls tzelichah.

Q: The Gemara (Berachos 37a) teaches that Rabbi Akiva was asked, "Until when will you insert your head in disputed matters?" Where do we find that he previously acted this way so that it would make sense to say "until when"?

A: Tosefta, Demai 5:26.



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LIVE THE BLESSING
Daily wisdom on how to live in peace
with family, friends, and yourself

