

A Joke With A Lesson

Avraham woke up and saw 30 missed calls from Yisroel. Right away he called Yisroel back. No answer. He tried again and again, but still no answer.

Finally at night, Avraham called back. Avraham cried into the phone, "Yisroel! What happened? Thirty calls!! I called you back all day! Is everything okay?"

Yisroel said calmly, "Oh, nothing happened, and everything is perfectly fine."

So why on earth did you call me so many times? Avraham asked.

I dialed your number by mistake and I felt bad, so I kept calling to apologize."

For a few seconds, Avraham couldn't even speak. "Yisroel, next time you call me by mistake, please do me a favor, please... DON'T call to apologize..."

What's The Lesson? Elul is a time to make the RIGHT phone calls! Maybe it's a call to someone we hurt to say, "I'm sorry." Maybe it's calling someone who could use some chizuk, or even to red a shidduch, to show that we care. Sometimes ONE phone call can change someone's entire day, and maybe even much more!

Shlome was very proud of his father's property and told his friend Yitzy, "You know, my father has such a big property update that it takes *hours* to drive from one side to the other!"

Yitzy started laughing, "Yeah, Of course! I've seen your father drive. He goes two miles an hour! Even a turtle passes him..."

What's The Lesson? When it comes to spiritual growth, it's the opposite! It's not about how fast you move.

One must take small steps in the right direction, have a strong will to grow, try his best, and ask Hashem for help. Hashem will help him in ways he never dreamed of.

Short Stories and Inspiration.

When R' Mattisyahu Salomon ztl was a young bachur, his father passed away. It was a very hard time for him and his family. R' Mattisyahu's mother once said to him, "We have no money, and now you have no father. But there is one thing I can give you: simchas b'rachim, a positive way to look at life and be happy. When you live with Hashem, and you trust in Hashem, you will always be happy no matter what is happening around you."

What's The Lesson? Trusting Hashem doesn't mean that life will always be easy. It means that we have the strength to deal with whatever life brings. Sometimes life has very hard moments and it can take a day or a week, but we remind ourselves of this great truth: it's ALL part of Hashem's plan, and Hashem loves me!

This Connects To This Week's Parshah:

Question: Earlier, the Torah says that the curses would come because we didn't keep the mitzvos. Why does it say later that the reason is that we didn't serve Hashem with joy?

Answer: The fact that we messed up and didn't keep all the mitzvos, one can say that the Yetzer Hara was very strong. Deep down, they really didn't want to sin. The sin itself, maybe there can be an excuse. But why didn't we do teshuvah from love?

Hashem loves us! He loves us so much that if we return and do teshuvah from love, all our sins actually become mitzvos! That is why 'not serving Hashem with joy' is so serious. Even after we sinned, Hashem gave us the chance to return to him with love and turn those sins into mitzvos. Why didn't we grab that chance? The fact that Hashem allows us to turn our sins into mitzvos shows us how much He loves us. That itself should make us want to serve Hashem with love, hope, and joy! (Based on Nesivos Shalom)

We Control Our Mind!

Once, there was a terrible fire, and all the money of the Chiddushai HaRim was burned. He wasn't upset or sad. His wife asked him, "Doesn't it bother you what happened?" He answered, "Of course it is very hard. But I try to think ahead. For most people, it takes a week, a month, or even a year to move on from something like this. I try to think about how I will see it once I calm down, and I try to see it that way right now. I calm myself down now and remember: it's all b'ashtet. It's all from Hashem, and it's all for my best."

What's The Lesson? Life has hard moments. Those are the times when we need to stop, refocus, look at the bigger picture, and remember what life is really all about.

Story: A rich man once asked the *Chofetz Chaim*, "Where is all your fancy furniture?" His house was small and almost empty. The Chofetz Chaim asked the person back, "Where is your furniture?" The person answered, "I'm just passing through this area."

We may not be like the Chofetz Chaim or the Chiddushai HaRim and be able to stay calm right away. But we can try to remember that this world is just a hallway: we're just passing through. We're here to accomplish as much as we can. We aren't here forever. Part of our mission is to remember that when things aren't working out, those moments are also part of our journey and our growth!

This Connects To This Week's Parshah:

One of the curses in this week's parshah is that a person will have to worry about the future. R' Chaim Shmulevitz ztl said 'worry is mainly in the mind. We can train our minds to relax, focus on today, and not always worry about what might go wrong tomorrow. Someone who doesn't learn to appreciate what he has today will have a hard time being happy even when he has enough for the next few years, because the mind can always find something new to worry about."

Of course, if there is something practical we can do to prepare for the future, we should do it. Sometimes worry is there to remind us to take action, daven, but at the end of the day, thank Hashem for each moment of life and make the most of it!

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This is not meant to rule practical *halachah*; rather, it's to show the sweetness of learning.

Based on R' Yitzchak Zilberstein's *seforim*

Q. How Honest Are You?

Yankel didn't speak English very well. He had come from Europe and mainly spoke Yiddish and German.

This became a bit of a problem when Yankel decided to sell his house to Ari, an American who only spoke English, but as difficult as it was, they tried their best to understand each other.

But when it came to how much money Ari would pay, it seemed they understood each other VERY well! Yankel wanted \$950,000. Ari wanted to pay no more than \$875,000.

"Good house! Very good! \$950,000!" Yankel kept saying.

"No, no, too much! Good house, but not THAT good!" Ari also kept saying.

They went back and forth. A few English words, a few Yiddish words, numbers, hand motions... somehow, when it comes to money, people make it work. Finally, Ari said, "Listen, I saw a nicer house for \$925,000. I'm not paying more than \$925,000."

Yankel thought about it for a few moments. The room was silent. Then he waved his hand. "Okay. Deal!" They also agreed to write up a contract and sign the deal right there. Yankel carefully wrote the price on the contract and pushed it across the table.

Ari picked up his pen, ready to sign. Then he looked at the number - \$915,000. Ari looked again. \$915,000? Because of the language problem, Yankel misunderstood him. He thought Ari had said \$915,000, not \$925,000.

Seems like that mix of languages, numbers, and hand motions wasn't such a great translator after all! This was great for Ari! If he stayed quiet, the house was his for \$10,000 less! But now Ari had a serious question: Does he have to tell Yankel that he made a mistake?

Who To Ask?

Of course to R' Yitzchak Zilberstein Shlita!

A. Who makes Torah Learning so sweet & geshmak!!!

Chazal say (Makkos 24a) that a person came to buy something from Rav Safra and offered him a certain price. Rav Safra didn't answer because he was in the middle of saying Shema.

The person thought Rav Safra wasn't answering because the price was too low. So he offered Rav Safra even more money.

After Rav Safra finished saying Shema, he told the person he would sell it to him for the first, lower price. Rav Safra explained that in his mind, he had already agreed to the first offer. He just couldn't answer because he was saying Shema.

So in our case, it would seem that Ari should pay the extra \$10,000. After all, Ari had really offered \$925,000, just like the buyer in the Gemara had really offered the higher amount.

But R' Zilberstein said our case is different from the case of Rav Safra.

Rav Safra had already agreed to a price, and it was not a back-and-forth discussion.

But in our case, a seller will often ask for a higher price, knowing he may not get it. The buyer agrees somewhere in between.

Since Yankel agreed to \$915,000, that price was clearly a price he was willing to accept. Therefore, Ari does not need to tell him about the mistake and may pay the \$915,000 they agreed to.

The Power Of Showing Warmth!

When World War II broke out, R' Yankel Galinsky ztl was forced to run from place to place to save his life. At one point, he arrived in Vilna, where he hoped to meet the gadol hador, R' Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky ztl.

R' Yankel was a serious yeshiva bachur, and he studied an entire masechta to share a *chiddush* with R' Chaim Ozer.

When he entered, however, R' Chaim Ozer surprised him with a very different question: "When was the last time you spoke to your parents?" R' Yankel was surprised. He thought he would be asked about his learning, but he answered, "Six months ago."

R' Chaim Ozer continued asking him simple, personal questions, like whether he had a blanket. Then he looked down and asked, "Please show me your shoes?" R' Yankel showed him his shoes. They were completely torn. R' Chaim Ozer took out money and said, "Go buy yourself a new pair of shoes, and know that my home is open to you 24 hours a day!"

R' Yankel was so touched by the warmth and care that he began to cry. In the middle of all the fear and pressure of the war, he suddenly felt like a human being again. Someone noticed him. Someone cared about him. Someone saw what he needed and cared enough to help.

What's The Lesson? Caring about others is so powerful! Especially when someone is going through a hard time, a little warmth and care can mean EVERYTHING!

This Connects To This Week's Parshah:

We learn about what is truly important and what comes second. First, we thank Hashem for the Beis Hamikdash, and only afterward do we thank Him for the land of Eretz Yisroel. First comes the spiritual, and then the physical.

The Beitzer Rav said: If another person needs physical help from you, then helping him becomes your spiritual avodah! Everything can become holy!

Story: There's a story told about an American soldier who helped free and liberate a concentration camp after the war.

The soldiers set up a big pot of soup, and the starving children were lined up waiting for food. The soldier saw a little boy who seemed to have gone through too much for his age, and felt very bad for him, realizing that this young boy had lost his entire family - all killed! Unable to speak his language, the soldier gave the little boy a hug.

Both of them were crying, and when he looked up, he couldn't believe what he saw. The children had made another line, not for soup, but for a hug! Food was very important, but these children needed something else too: they needed to feel that someone cared.

The greatest thing we can give another person isn't something expensive or complicated. Sometimes it's simply showing them: I CARE ABOUT YOU!

A Geshmaka Question & Readers Answers

This weeks geshmaka question:

In this week's parshah, we learn about the mitzvah of *Bikkurim*. Chazal say (Bereishis Rabbah 1:4) that one of the reasons Hashem created the world was for the mitzvah of Bikkurim. *Bikkurim* means bringing the first grown fruits to the Beis Hamikdash. Question: Why is this mitzvah so important that it is considered one of the reasons Hashem created the world?

Last week's Geshmaka Question: Why do we blow the shofar the whole month of Elul; why isn't it enough to blow only on Rosh Hashanah?

Shaya F. Answers: To confuse the Satan, we blow the shofar during Elul, and then right before Rosh Hashanah, we stop blowing it to confuse him.

R' Avrum rosenblum Answers: The sound of the shofar is supposed to remind us that Rosh Hashanah is coming up.

Text your answer in by Sunday to (347) 669 0369 or by email to torahsheeter@gmail.com

Appreciating Time!

R' Zechariah Wallerstein ztl liked to repeat this story: A teacher walked into his classroom carrying a large glass jar. He put it on the desk and filled it with a few big rocks. When the jar was full, he asked the students, "Is the jar full?" "Yes!" they answered. "Is the jar full?" "Yes!" they answered.

The teacher then took a handful of small pebbles and poured them into the jar. The pebbles slipped into the spaces between the large rocks.

The teacher looked at the class and asked, "Is it full now?" The students looked carefully and said, "Yes, now it's for sure full!"

The teacher smiled. He took a cup of sand and slowly poured it into the jar. The sand filled all the remaining spaces between the rocks and pebbles. Once again, he asked, "Is it full?" The students laughed. "Yes!"

Finally, the teacher took a cup of water and poured it into the jar. The water filled whatever spaces still left. The teacher put down the cup and said, "Now imagine this jar is your life.

The large rocks represent the things that matter most: Yiddishkeit, your family, your health, your values, and the things you truly want to accomplish.

The small pebbles represent the smaller but still important things: your work, responsibilities, and daily things you need to get done.

The sand and water represent all the little things that fill our days, the extras we squeeze in, and the things that really aren't so important."

"But here's the important lesson: If I had started with the sand, there would have been no room for the rocks. Life works the same way. If you fill your time with the small things first, you may have no time or room left for the things that matter most."

What's The Lesson? Every person has 24 hours in a day. We can't add more time, but we can choose what comes first.

This Connects To Elul:

Elul is a time to think, be honest with ourselves, and make sure we are using the special gift of time for what truly matters. And if we haven't until now, it's never too late. We can start RIGHT NOW!

Eli Lowenberg Answers: Just like a ship blowing

its horn to remind passengers to come on board before it leaves, so too, Elul: wake up!