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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



THE LAZY SON!

How are you feeling this week? Exhausted!?! Why?

Well, where do I start? After a month of waking up early for Selichot, two deep days in prayer at Rosh Hashanah, ten days of repenting followed by a beautiful fast on Yom Kippur, a further few days building a Succah and searching for that perfect Lulav and Etrog, followed by seven days spent outdoors living in a Succah, and two final days dancing with all our energy for Simchat Torah! Wow! What a manic two months! So, what's next?? Shall we shut our eyes? Where are we heading to now?

It's interesting to note that the next month Cheshvan is void of any festivals.

After such commotion, we seem to be left with a void. How are we to proceed after such a successful run?

In life, we are faced with many challenges. Sometimes, these challenges start small. We garner the courage and outweigh these. We can do it!

Yet at other times, we are faced by a barrage of challenges one after the other, slowly hitting us and eroding away at our faith.

It is at times like these that we need to dig deep into our heap of faith, be strong and face these challenges with a strong hand.

Our Parasha relates how the whole world was flooded; only Noach, his immediate family and the animals in the Ark survived.

It must have been tough, but Noach exits from the Ark and aims to rebuild.

The Midrash Tanchuma explains that Noach began and planted a grapevine. On a single day it grew, he harvested it, crushed the grapes, drank from it, got drunk and his embarrassment was publicized.

The Torah relates that whilst his son Cham took advantage of his father's situation, his other brothers Shem and Yefet came to his father's aid and covered his nakedness.

Eventually, when Noach sobered up, Cham was cursed whilst Shem and Yefet were blessed.

Interestingly, Shem received a bigger blessing than Yefet.

Rashi, commenting on this narrative (9:23), notes that the Torah describes Shem and Yefet's response with the singular form "Vayikach (not Vayikchu) Shem VaYefet Et Hasimla", indicating that one of the two brothers played the primary role in this Mitsva.

Citing the Midrash (Tanchuma 15, Bereishit Rabba 36:6), Rashi explains that "Shem exerted himself in the Mitsva more than Yefet." Shem's greater role in this incident, Rashi adds, is reflected in the eternal reward granted to his descendants, Am Yisrael. We are given the Mitsva of tzitzit – corresponding to the garment used by Shem to cover his father. The reward for Yefet, by contrast, was the burial that the nation of Magog – who descend from Yefet (10:2) – will receive in the future (Yechezkel 39:11). Shem's descendants received a greater reward because Shem played a greater role in dressing Noach.

Although Shem and Yefet seemed to act similarly, yet at the end due to their exertion of the action they both received different rewards.

Sometimes, we perform Mitzvot with lacklustre. We don't understand that the extra effort that we put in could be the jackpot – it could end up making all the difference.

There is a fascinating story of a lazy young man who grew up at home with everything being prepared for him. He never worked, always rising from his bed at 2pm. His mother prepared him brunch daily, catered and pampered him. Yet as he grew older, his father was starting to worry.

26 TISHREI 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 5:56 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 07:01 PM

> MAZAL TOV

CLAUDE & ANNA AMAR
on the birth of their baby boy



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"No one ever injured their eyesight by looking on the bright side."

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DVAR TORAH

The Lazy Son!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

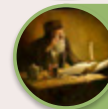
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"What is going to be with you? How are you going to settle down, get married? You need to go out into the real world and work!"

The son, of course, took no notice until one day, the father put his foot down.

"Son, if by tomorrow night you don't go out to work and come back with at least £20, I am throwing you out of this house. No roof over your head and no food!"

The son knew that the father was serious and that night went to sleep worried.

He arose the next day at 2pm as usual. Time was against him. He waded down to the kitchen and begged his mother to give him £20!

"Please mum! If you don't, dad will kick me out. Give me £20! You don't have to tell him, and I will pretend I worked".

The mum had mercy on her child and handed over £20.

That night, when the dad came back from work, his son happily rushed to him with £20. The father looked at the money and tore it up. The son was startled, but didn't say anything.

The father looked to his son and said, "Tomorrow I want at least £20 or you are out!"

The next day, the son found himself in the same situation. He arose at 2pm, ran to the kitchen, begged his mother and received £20. That night, he handed it to this father who again tore it up.

The third day, the son arose and ran to the kitchen. "Mum! Did you tell dad that you paid me £20?" asked the son.

The mother answered with an emphatic "No".

So why does he keep tearing it up, he thought. Nevertheless he continued to ask his mother for £20.

This time, however, the mother said that she had run out of cash, and wouldn't be able to help till next week.

He was in hysterics. Not knowing what to do, he ran to his local food store and begged for the chance to perform some cheap deliveries for them. They agreed and that night he returned tired with £20.

He then handed it over to his father, who proceeded to tear it up.

"DAD, DON'T DO THAT!" screamed the son.

The father now turned to his child and said, "AHAH! Finally, NOW I know you worked!"

On the first two occasions, the son never worked for the money and didn't really react when the father tore up the £20. Only on the third occasion did he really react, because it was only on that time that he actually worked hard to gain the money.

Shem went out of his way, put in that extra effort and was eternally rewarded.

We don't realise the reward for every small action; were we to realise, our efforts would change for ever.

This is the lesson that we can take as a bridge from the busy Chagim we have experienced to the seemingly empty month of Cheshvan.

Over the past months, we have experienced real energy. Now it's up to us to take that energy and input it into our daily lives. ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI YITZCHAK HACHOEN TAWIL - MIR KOLEL, JERUSALEM



PARASHA INSIGHTS

"This is how you shall make it: 300 cubits the length of the ark, 50 cubits it's width, and thirty cubits it's height" (6:15).

The Torah informs us of the measurements of Noah's ark - 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. Apart from Noah and his immediate family, this ark was to hold two of every living species that kept to its kind, and seven of each of the kosher species, including all the different types of wild animals, tame animals, birds [there were over 120 species of birds], and insects! Rashi (6:20) citing Medrash informs us that the ark refused to accept those species which corrupted their ways and didn't keep to their kind and hence those species did not survive the flood - they are since then extinct. All surviving species were captured by Noah's ark! The ark also held food supplies for all the ark's inhabitants for an entire year, and space for a year's waste disposal! Obviously we need to come on to a miracle that the ark was able to contain so much in so little space - and a miracle it was indeed! Nachmanidies asks that since anyway a miracle was to be performed,

why did G-d bother Noah for 120 years to build the ark the size that it was - why not allow Noah to make it much smaller and simpler, and perform the miracle a little larger?

One answer offered by Nachmanidies is that G-d in his kindness wanted to give Noah's generation a chance to repent, and therefore commanded Noah to construct this ark, which took Noah a long time to erect. Noah built the ark slowly, and in public, so that everyone would notice him and take heed of the oncoming flood - hopefully they would wake up from their slumber and mend their ways! However, Noah's generation was so corrupt that nothing moved them from their evil and selfish ways!

Very often G-d sends us "reminders", making us realise that things aren't quite as we had wished or expected them to be! Seldom will G-d punish a sinner immediately. He patiently waits for us to repent, giving us an opportunity to mend our ways! If man would receive punishment immediately upon sin that would also defeat the purpose of life, as man would have no free choice and be compelled to do only good! G-d wishes us to overcome our selfish nature, avoiding sin and choosing to do good from our own initiative! If we fail to overcome temptation, and fall prey to sin, G-d nevertheless kindly gives us a chance to repent, holding the punishment in pending, with the hope that we awaken ourselves for the better! So long as the flame of life is burning it is never too late to change our ways and accept

upon ourselves to be good and loyal Jews, loyal to G-d and to His Torah.

Another answer given by Nachmanidies is that G-d doesn't perform miracles unnecessarily, and doesn't perform a miracle larger than the required! G-d wants us to do whatever we can, and only then is there room for miracles to commence! Often, we may feel that it is far beyond our capability to attain the level of spirituality required of us. This misconception is hazardous, and can lead to despair! G-d doesn't expect from us more than we are capable - however we are expected to utilise our capacity to the maximum. It is therefore very important for us to recognise our good talents in order that we make use of them to the full potential! In Torah Study and Mitzvot our aim must be perfection, and to achieve this we yearn and crave, even though it is beyond our capability! Armed with this aim, when we truly strive our best, we will not only reach those spiritual levels that were originally feasible for us to attain, but we will also receive a special Divine aid boosting us higher and higher, over and above our former capabilities! This Divine aid is awarded to he who truly wants to spiritually grow in Torah Study and Mitzvot and tries his best, making the most of his talents. G-d helps those who help themselves and do their utmost, expressing their full will and interest in serving Him! ■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI NAHUM ZEV ZIV

Outside of Israel there are small, remote cities that have gained universal recognition in the Jewish world because of the great men of Torah that resided in them. Among these is Kelm, a city in Lithuania that became famous because of such Tzaddikim as the Maggid of Kelm (Rabbi Leib Chassid), and above all by the man of Mussar, Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv, known in the yeshiva world as the Alter of Kelm. In fact the name Kelm became a synonym in the yeshiva world for Rabbi Simcha Zissel's system of Mussar. It was in Kelm, in the "Beit HaTalmud" that he built for the benefit of wise, G-d-fearing Torah scholars, that he spread his teachings of Mussar. During his entire life, Rabbi Simcha Zissel devoted himself primarily to education. He was a great teacher who knew how to penetrate to the depths of the human soul, which is why he devoted himself to teaching Torah and Mussar to the young. He managed to educate students who became great in Torah and Mussar, and who in turn became the greatest Mussar teachers of their generation. He also merited having children who followed in his footsteps and became exemplary figures.

Rabbi Simcha Zissel had three children: A son by the name of Nahum Zev, and two daughters, Rachel Gittel and Nachama Liba. It has been said that to get an idea of Rabbi Simcha Zissel's greatness, it is sufficient to look at his children, for a tree is recognized by its fruits.

Rabbi Nahum Zev was educated entirely by his father, who upon noticing that the boy was gifted with a sharp mind, devoted himself to him with great resolve. If he saw any fault in his son, he admonished him severely, sometimes even ceasing to speak to him if he noticed a slight deficiency. Because of this type of education, Rabbi Nahum Zev was able to become a great figure of Mussar.

Rabbi Nahum Zev (or as he was called, Rabbi Nahum Velvel) was a businessman during his whole life. He managed large business ventures in wood and timber products, yet at the same time he studied Torah for at least six hours each day. He never changed his study hours, which were fixed.

People say that when he managed his business in Koenigsberg, Prussia, he would wake up at 3:00 am and study until the time of the Morning Prayer. After praying and eating breakfast, he worked in his shop until noon, and then devoted the remainder of his time to community and Torah matters. Every merchant who did business with him knew that he could only be reached before noon, and if by chance a merchant tried to reach him in the afternoon, he had to wait until the following day.

As it happened, Rabbi Nahum Zev became involved in some non-profitable business ventures, losing all his money as a result. Despite everything, however, he did not modify his schedule in any way, and it was impossible to discern the slightest change in him. Even his bodily sufferings could not remove the peace that his soul felt, and he would say, "Sufferings are sent by the Holy One, blessed be He, and one must accept them with love." For the same reason, he refused to take medication to alleviate his pains. Rabbi Nahum Zev was modest in everything that pertained to his service of the Almighty, and he took great care to hide his good deeds. He had the makings of a rich merchant, dressing like a member of the upper middle class rather than as a Rav. From outward appearances, nothing enabled a person to guess that he was a great Tzaddik and that all his thoughts were directed toward serving G-d.

One day a Polish Rav arrived in Koenigsberg. When he came to synagogue, Rabbi Nahum Zev (who excelled in the mitzvah of hospitality) approached him with an invitation to his home. The

Rav, who was extremely meticulous in his observance of mitzvot, did not want to go with him because he had the makings of an ordinary German Jew – and dressed like one too! Rabbi Nahum Zev greatly insisted, however, and the Rav finally accepted his invitation. When he entered his house, the Rav saw that it was apparently the home of a wealthy man who seemed to follow all German customs. He therefore decided not to trust his kashrut, eating only dry foods for which there could be no concerns.

In the middle of the night, the Rav heard the sounds of weeping coming from Rabbi Nahum Zev's room. Frightened, he quickly arose and approached the room, and from outside the door he could hear Rabbi Nahum Zev repeating the same verse over and over: "Whatever you are able to do with your might, do it. For there is neither doing nor reckoning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave where you are going" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Once Rabbi Nahum Zev finished his Mussar session, the Rav heard him begin to study Gemara with a beautiful voice until the early morning hours. He found all this rather odd, and it was only the next day that he learned who his host really was.

At the end of the year 5670 (1910), Rabbi Nahum Zev went to live in Kelm and there he directed the Beit HaTalmud with his brother-in-law, Rabbi Tzvi Broida. He wholeheartedly devoted himself to this task, putting all his time into it. He received no salary whatsoever from the institution, and he often paid its budget shortfall from out of his own pocket.

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, the Mashgiach of the Mir Yeshiva, considered Rabbi Nahum Zev as his greatest Rav. He said that through his words and wisdom, he could draw everyone towards Mussar, yet because he was extremely humble he considered himself to be unworthy of such a task. He stated that Rabbi Nahum Zev was Rabbi Simcha Zissel's most beautiful creation.

Rabbi Nahum Zev's students spoke much about the last days of their Rav. He suffered greatly during his final illness, which eventually took his life, yet despite everything he rested with complete serenity. When his non-Jewish doctor told him that his days were numbered, he was asked why he had given him such news, since it could have a negative affect on his health. The doctor replied that he knew the Rav, and that for him death was but a passage from one world to another. On the day before he died, he gave a Mussar lesson before the public in the Beit HaTalmud. It was entitled, "The day of death is better than the day of birth."

He was perfectly lucid up until his final moments. He gave various instructions on how his funeral should be conducted, as well as on how the mourning afterwards should proceed. He ordered his family not to eat fish on the Shabbat that followed his passing, lest by reason of their sadness they might swallow a bone and suffer as a result. He asked that no tributes be paid to him after his death, but rather that after a week of mourning, Rabbi Israel Stam from the Beit HaTalmud should make one statement in his honor: That he had the desire to come closer to his faith.

On Friday, 2 Shevat 5619 (1916), Rabbi Nahum departed from this world at the age of almost 50. He left behind three daughters who married the most talented men of the Beit HaTalmud: Rabbi Daniel Movshovitz, Rabbi Gershon Miadnik, and Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler. The first two replaced Rabbi Nahum as head of the Beit HaTalmud, later dying in the Holocaust. The third assumed the duties of Mussar instruction in various Torah institutions abroad, and near the end of his life he was the Mashgiach of the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

CAN A SOFER MAKE A CORRECTION AFTER INK SPILLS ON A LETTER?

The Shulchan Arukh (32:1) discusses the important halacha of "hak tochtot." The Torah says, regarding the writing of a get, "vechatah lah" (and he wrote for her). The gemara (Gittin 20a) derives from the verse "and he wrote" that the sofer must "write" the letters, and they cannot be carved (vehakak). This means that the letters must be formed through writing, and not through carving. Therefore, if a blotch of ink falls on the parchment, the sofer must not carve a letter out of the ink, rather, letters must be written. This principle is called "hak tochtot."

There are numerous applications of hak tochtot. For example, if a sofer is writing the letter "bet," and a drop of ink spills and the letter instead looks like a "peh" and not a "bet," the sofer cannot carve out the extra ink; rather, the entire letter must be carved out and then re-written. As we discussed previously, this may be more difficult when writing tefillin, as the sofer cannot go back and rewrite a letter out of order, as the letters of the tefillin must be written in order, "kesidran,"

The Mishna Berura (32:67) cites an interesting debate regarding the following case. If a sofer wrote part of a letter, such as the top and one of the lines of an "alef" (a letter "yud" attached to a letter "vav"), and ink spilled on the letter, can the sofer scrape away the spilled ink, and continue to write the letter? Some Poskim maintain that once the ink spills, the entire letter is invalid and he must erase and rewrite the entire letter. It is clear, however, that according to Maran (Even HaEzer 125:4), hak tochtot is only a problem when carving out the ink finishes a letter, and not when the sofer is in the middle of writing a letter.

Summary: A sofer may not form letter by carving out ink which spilled on the parchment. There is a debate regarding whether he may scrape away ink to fix part of a letter before it is finished. Although these halachot may not be very practical for the consumer, it reminds us how important it is to purchase Sifrei Torah, tefillin, and mezuzot from reliable, God-fearing sofrim. ■

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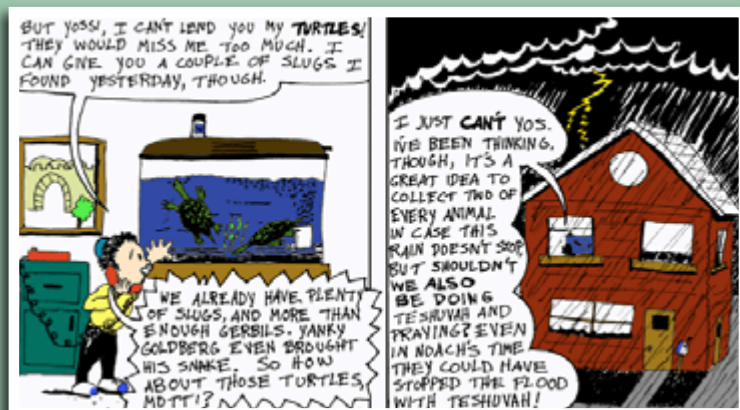
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TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Which particular sin sealed the fate of the flood generation?
- ❷ Why did Hashem tell Noach to build an ark, as opposed to saving him via some other method?
- ❸ The ark had three levels. What function did each level serve?
- ❹ What indication do we have that Noach was familiar with the Torah?
- ❺ Why did Hashem postpone bringing the flood for seven days?

Answer

❶ 6:13 - Robbery. ❷ 6:14 - So that people would see Noach building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noach would answer, "Hashem is bringing a flood," it might encourage some people to repent. ❸ 6:16 - The top level housed the people, the middle level housed the animals, and the bottom level, the refuse. ❹ 7:2 - Hashem told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. "Kosher" and "non-kosher" are Torah concepts. ❺ 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Mesushelach.



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