

שמחת נישואין של  
מישה וברכה דהאן  
ב' טבת ה'תשע"ט



WEDDING CELEBRATION OF

*Moshe & Bracha Dahan*

DECEMBER 10, 2018

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

ב"ה, ב' טבת, זאת חנוכה, ה'תשע"ט

With gratitude to Hashem, we celebrate the wedding of Moshe and Bracha. To mark this joyous and memorable occasion, we present you with this memento.

The first part of this *Tshura* contains letters of the Rebbe received by the parents, grandparents and great grandparents of the Chosson and Kallah. These letters, all published here for the first time (בפרסום ראשון), are mostly related to the marriage of the couple's parents and grandparents.

The second part is an excerpt of the Chosson's father's upcoming book, *Maayon Yaakov*, offering a Chassidic perspective to the Agadeta of Ein Yaakov, based on the Rebbe's writings.

יה"ר that we should always share and rejoice in each other's simchos, until the ultimate joy of the גאולה השלמה, ומלכנו בראשנו.

יצחק דוד הכהן ראזענבערג  
מיכאל דהאן

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

ראזענבלום-מאנטרעאל

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ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקווי  
ברוקלין, נ. י.

ב"ה, ט' טבת תשכ"א  
ברוקלין

מך שלום שי

שלום וברכה!  
ס'איז מיר אנגעקומען אייער צעטל מיט דאס  
בייגעלייגטע,

בעה רצון וועט מען מזכיר זיין איין און די  
אלע וועגען וועלכע איר שרייבט, אויף דעם ציון הק' פון כ"ק  
מו"ה אדמו"ר זצוקלה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע, צו דעם וואס יעדעקער  
נויסטיגט זיך,

און השם יתברך זאל העלפען, איר זאלט אנזאגען  
גוטעס, איין דעם, און אויך וועגען ארבעט אין פארשפרייטען  
אידישקייט אין דעם חסידות'ן גייסט, אין אן אלץ שטייגענדער  
מאס, לויט דעם אפערנונג פון די חנוכה טעג, פון וועלכע מיר  
קומען ניט לאנג, וואס יעדער טאג ווערט צוגעגעבען אלץ מער  
אין ליכט און ליכטיקייט, וואס דער רמז אין דעם איז אויף א  
כי נר מצוה ותורה אור ודרך חיים וגו'.

בברכה לבשו"ט בכל האמור

בשם כ"ק א"מ ו"ר שליט"א  
מזכיר

מכתב אל אבי זקנו של החתן (דוד זקן הכלה) בקשר לימי חנוכה  
דאזליבן מגייהו

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

הו"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'  
מוה' שלום שי'

כ"ה, ו' תמוז ה'שי"ז  
ברוקלין

שלום וברכה!

כמענה על המכתב, בו כוחב על דבר מכירת החנוה בהצלחה,  
ואשר נכנס בעסק של אינשורענס.

ויה"ר ש'תהי' בשעה טובה ומוצלחה, וחקוים-כמאמר רו"ל-  
יברכך ה' כמיון וישמרך מן המזיקין, שכולל כזה גם הכוונה שיחמשן  
בהממון אן ורק לענינים בריאים ושמחים ולעניני תורה ומצות.

ואחרון חביב, לחתונת בתו מרת שרה מלכה שהלים"א-שחהי'  
בשעה טובה ומוצלחת ויכנו בית בישראל בנין עדי עד על יסודי התורה  
והמצוה מוארים במאור שבחורה זוהי חורה החסידות, וכ' וזוגתו שיחיו  
ירוו מהם רוב נחת חסידותי.

בברכת מזל טוב מזל טוב

מכתב אל אבי זקן החתן (דוד זקן הכלה) המתייחס בין השאר  
לחתונתם של זקני החתן

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

דאהאן = ברונא  
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ברוקלין, נ. י.

בייה, כ"ב אלול תשי"ט  
ברוקלין  
האברך שמעון שי

שלום וברכה!

במענה למכתבו אודות הצעת הנכבדות וכו',

הנה כיון שניין כזהחלוי בהרבה פרטים וקשה  
להעלותם על הכתב, לכן יתייעץ עם ידידיו על אחר, וכמובן לראש  
ולראשונה- עם הנהלת הישיבה אשר השגחה העליונה זיכתו והצליחתו  
שילמוד בה, והשייח יתן לתם הרעיון הנכון איך לייצגו.

ומובן שכל הוספה בעניני תורה ומצות, מוסיפה  
בברכות השייח והצליחתו, וככל שיהי' גם המצב טוב בזה, הרי בכל  
עניני טוב וקדושה תמיד יש מקום להוסיף, כיון שקשורים בהקבייה  
שהוא אין מוסיף.

בברכה לבשו"ט ולכוח"ט

בשם כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א  
M. Schneerson  
מוזכ"ר

מכתב בקשר להצעת שידוכם של זקני החתן

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

הורביץ פאריז

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הונו"ח אי"א נו"נ עוסק בצ"צ  
מוה' ישכר דוב שי'

ב"ה, כ"ה מ"ח תש"כ  
ברוקלין

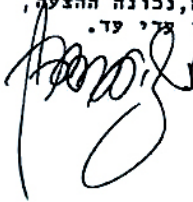
שלום וברכה!

לאחרי הפסק הכי ארוך נתקבל מכתבו המהיר מכ"ג מ"ח.  
ולפלא שאינו מזכיר מאומה בהנוגע להנשף והצגה שעורכים בכל שנה  
ושנה מסעם הבית רבקה, שעאכו"כ שצריך לעשות זה בשנהזו, כיון שנחוסף  
ענין הסמלר וסיומו וכו'. ובפרט שרואים במוחש שבהצגה כהאמורה ישנה  
תועלת לא רק כספיה אלא גם-פרסום בעיר ובסביבותי'. וכך גורם זה  
הרמת רוח של התלמידות ה"ק"ל,

ויהי רצון שעכ"פ עתה יתחילו בהכנוח הדרושות לכל  
הנ"ל, ויעשו בזה באופן המתאים, אבל-בהרחבה כדרישת השעה, ואין לך  
דבר העומד בפני הרצון.

ולהודעתו מהצעת הנכבדות עבור הבחורה ברורי' בוחביס  
תחי' עם אנרך ממלמידי ישיבת חומכי תמימים דברונא, נכונה ההצעה,  
ותחי' כשעה טובה ומוצלחה ולבנין בית בישראל בנין גלי עד.

בברכה לבשו"ט בכל האמור



מכתב למנהל הסמינר בית רבקה בצרפת המתייחס, בין השאר,  
לשידוכם של זקני החתן, ונכתב יום לפני המכתב דלהלן אל סב החתן

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

דאהאן-ברונא

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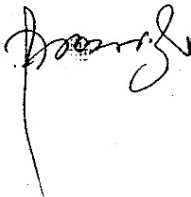
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ברוקלין, נ. י.

כ"ה, כ"ו מ"ח חש"כ  
ברוקלין

האכרך שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!  
במענה למכתבו מ"כ מ"ח, כו כותב אודות השתלשלת  
הענינים בהנוגע להצעה הנכבדות, ואשר ישר הדבר בעיני כל אלה  
שדבר אתם.

ונכונה ההצעה, ויהי רצון שתי' כשעה טובה  
ומוצלחת ולבנין בית בישראל בנין עדי עד על יסודי התורה  
והמצוה מארים כאור וחום חסידותים.

מברכה אלמא  


מכתב המתייחס לשידוכם של זקני החתן

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

דהאן ברו נא

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ב"ה, כ"ו סבב תש"כ  
ברוקלין

האבן תה"ה א"א נו"נ וכו'  
מה שמעון שי

שלום וברכה!

במענה על הודעתו אודות קשו"ה שלו עם  
ב"ג מרת ברורי' ה" בשעה טובה ומוצלחה,

הנה ית"ר מהשי"ה שיהי' בשעה טובה  
ומוצלחה ולבנין עדי עד על יסודי החזרת והמצוה  
כפי שהם מוצגים במאור שבחורה זוהי תורת החסידות.

ברבם מזל טוב  


מכתב ברכה לתנאים של זקני החתן



תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

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ברוקלין, נ.י.

ב"ה, סו' סיון תשל"ו  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

האברך הו"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'  
מוה' יצחק דוד שי' הכהן  
וב"ג תי'

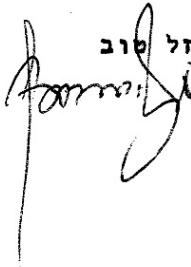
שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה מקביותזמן חתונתם  
ליום ח' תמוז הבע"ל,

הנני בזה להביע ברכתך מל טוב  
מל טוב ושחתי' בשעה טובה ומוצלחת ויבנו  
בית בישראל בנין עדי עד על יסודי התורה  
והמצוה כפי שהם מוארים במאור שבתורה זוהי  
תורת החסידות.

בברכת מל טוב

מל טוב



תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

בי"ה, כא' שבט תשמ"ח  
ברוקלין, נ. י.

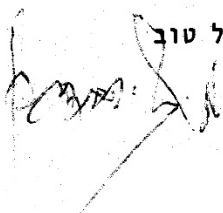
האברך הווי"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'  
מרה' מיכאל שלי  
וב"ג ת"י

שלום וברכהו

במענה על ההודעה מקביעות זמן חתונתם  
ליום כט' שבט הבע"ל,

הנני בזה להביע ברכתי ברכת מזל טוב מזל  
טוב ושתי' בשעה טובה ומוצלחת ויבנו בית  
בישראל בנין עדי עד על יסודי התורה והמצוה  
כפי שהם מוארים במאור שבתורה זוהי תורת  
החסידות.

בברכת מזל טוב  
מזל טוב



תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

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ב"ה, כ"ט מ"ח חשכ"ב  
ברוקלין

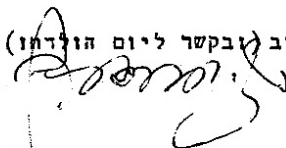
הו"ה אי"א נו"נ זכו  
מגה- שמעון שי

שלום וברכה!

במענה על הודעתו אשר נולד להם בן

למזל טוב,

הנה יה"ר מהשי"ה שיכניסוהו לבריתו  
של אברהם אבינו, וכשם שיכניסוהו לברית כן יכניסוהו  
להנרה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים, ויגדלו ביחד עם זוג  
חי' מהוך הרחבה.

בברכה מזל טוב (בקשר ליום הולדתו)  
ולשנה הצלחה  


במכתב זה לסב החתן ע"ד לידת בנו, הרבי תיקן בכת"ק התאריך מכ"ח מ"ה  
לכ"ז להדגיש את יום הולדתו שחל בכ"ז מ"ה, כנזכר לפני חי"ק

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ב"ה, י"ז שבט תשכ"ד  
ברוקלין

יצחק דוד שי

שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה על דבר יום  
ההולדת שלך,  
ויהי רצון שחתי' שנת הצלחה אצלך  
בהנהגה טובה, כראוי לבן ישראל שכל אחד מהם  
נקרא בן אברהם יצחק ויעקב, ז.א. לימוד  
בהחמדה ושקידה ושמיעה לקול הורים ומורים  
והנהגה טובה בכלל, ועב' שחתי' שוגמא חתי'  
לחברייך ואין לך דבר העומד בפני הרצון.

בברכה הצלחה בכל האמור

בשם כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

מזכיר

מכתב שקיבל אבי הכלה ליום הולדתו העשירי

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

# מעייין יעקב

ביאורים באגדות התלמוד

מיוסדים על תורת כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

תדפיס



Excerpts of the upcoming book

## Ma'yon Yaakov

Chasidic Commentary on Ein Yaakov

Based the Lubavitcher Rebbe's works

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

ב"ה

For a number of years, I have been compiling a collection of stories from the Gemara and the Zohar that have been elucidated by the Rebbe Nossi Doreinu. Inspired by the Alter Rebbe's statement (Igeres Hakodesh, 23) that most secrets of the Torah are hidden in Ein Yaakov, I aim to unveil these secrets by adapting Sichos, letters and Reshimos drawn from the Rebbe's monumental works. I have published a small portion of these *biurim* previously, and I am in the midst of preparing new material to be printed in the near future. I have named this project *Ma'yon Yaakov*, as it exposes the wellsprings of Chasidus hidden in the tales of Ein Yaakov.

In honor of Moshe and Bracha's wedding, it is my pleasure to present you with a preview of this upcoming Sefer.

With heartfelt prayers that the merit of disseminating the Rebbe's wellsprings will stand to bring much Mazal to the Chosson and Kallah, seeing only *Chassidische Nachas* from them, and hasten the fulfillment of Moshiach's promise to the Baal Shem Tov, כאתי מר, דא מלכא משיחא, מיד ממש, Tov,

מיכאל דהאן  
זאת חנוכה התשע"ט



## INDEX

Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaria's age ברכות נז.ב	17
Nissuch Hamayim סוכה מז.ב	25
Tasteless Sleep סוכה נג.ב	29
Enjoying the Feast מגילה יג.א	35
The Merkavah חגיגה יד.ב	41
Entering the Pardess חגיגה יד.ב	49
Rav Zeira's Neighbours סנהדרין לז.א	55
Rabbi Chanina Ben Teradyon's Martyrdom עבודה זרה יח.א	59
A Priestly Nation זבחים יט.	62
The Shiloach ערכין יב.	73
Ish Har Habayis מידות פ"א מ"ב	77
Rabbi Chiya's Methodology זוהר וישב, קצ.א	83

## Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah's Age

In an effort to assert the authority of the *Sanhedrin*, Rabban Gamliel<sup>1</sup> would ensure, in the strictest fashion, that his rulings would be followed by all. To this end, he harshly sanctioned and reproached Rabbi Yehoshua publicly on numerous occasions<sup>2</sup> for his opinions which differed from the ones of the Nassi. The following Talmudic passage<sup>3</sup> recounts the steps taken by the leading Rabbis of that time to stop Rabban Gamliel.

תא ונעבריה, מאן נוקים ליה? נוקמיה לרבי יהושע בעל מעשה הוא, נוקמיה לר' עקיבא דילמא עניש ליה דלית ליה זכות אבות, אלא נוקמיה לר' אלעזר בן עזריה דהוא חכם והוא עשיר והוא עשירי לעזרא, הוא חכם דאי מקשי ליה מפרק ליה והוא עשיר דאי אית ליה לפלוחי לבי קיסר אף הוא אזל ופלח והוא עשירי לעזרא דאית ליה זכות אבות ולא מצי עניש ליה. אתו ואמרו ליה ניחא ליה למר דליהוי ריש מתיבתא? אמר להו איזיל ואימליך באינשי ביתי, אזל ואמליך בדביתהו, אמרה ליה דלמא מעברין לך, אמר לה [לשתמש אינש] יומא חדא בכסא דמוקרא ולמחר ליתבר, אמרה ליה לית לך חיורתא, ההוא יומא בר תמני סרי שני

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<sup>1</sup> The first Nassi after the destruction of the second Temple

<sup>2</sup> See Rosh Hashana 25a, Bechoros 36b and Brachos 27b

<sup>3</sup> Brachos pp. 27b-28a.

הוה אתרחיש ליה ניסא ואהדרו ליה תמני סרי דרי חיורתא,  
היינו דקאמר ר' אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה  
ולא בן שבעים שנה

ברכות נז.ב.נה.א

*Come, let us depose him! Whom shall we appoint instead? We can hardly appoint Rabbi Yehoshua, because he is one of the parties involved [and it would cause Rabban Gamliel too much aggravation - Rashi.]. Shall we appoint Rabbi Akiva? He has no ancestral merits [and may be disposed to Heavenly punishment through Rabban Gamliel's prayers – Rashi]. Let us then appoint Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, who is wise and rich and the tenth in descent from Ezra. He is wise, so that if anyone puts a question to him he will be able to answer it. He is rich, so that if occasion arises for paying court to Caesar he will be able to do so. He is tenth in descent from Ezra, so that he has ancestral merit and he [Rabban Gamaliel] cannot bring a curse on him. They went and said to him: Will your honor consent to become head of the Academy? He replied: I will go and consult the members of my family. He went and consulted his wife. She said to him: Perhaps they will depose you later on. He replied to her: [There is a proverb:] Let a man use a cup of honor for one day even if it be broken the next<sup>4</sup>. She said to him: You have no white hair. He was eighteen years old that day, and a miracle was wrought for him and*

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<sup>4</sup> Meaning, I will be the Nassi for as long as it will last.

*eighteen rows of his hair turned white. That is why Rabbi Eleazar ben. Azariah said: Behold I am like seventy years old, and he did not say [simply] seventy years old.*

The Iyun Yaakov suggests that the rabbis specifically elected Rabbi Elazar for his wisdom despite his young age, to emphasize that knowledge is more important than experience. However, this commentary leaves many questions unanswered.

The quality of old age lies in the years of life experience lived by an elder. As written<sup>5</sup>: “*The abundance of years will testify on wisdom*”. One does not become wise merely by appearing old. So how can Rabbi Elazar’s appearance command the respect fit for elders?

Moreover, why was his wife concerned with his young appearance when the lack of white hair didn’t seem to be a disqualifying factor from the perspective of the Chachomim who were on the “nominating committee”?

Furthermore, the Talmud<sup>6</sup> mentions the importance of sincerity, observing that specifically in Rabban Gamliel’s time, all scholars must be as pious inward as they appear to be outward. It seems that Rabbi Elazar did not adhere to that exigency, since he was a young man portraying himself to be a seventy-year-old man.

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<sup>5</sup> Eyov 32:7

<sup>6</sup> Brachos 28a

It is certain that Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah was an honest and truthful person. His elderly appearance was not a disguise. He really had all the qualities of a seventy-year-old. Until he received white hair, this fact was hidden from everybody. After the miraculous emergence of his white hair, it became obvious for all to see that he was as old inward as he was outward. His new appearance testified on his true spiritual age<sup>7</sup>. In fact, the Talmud states<sup>8</sup> that a Halachic ruling has the power to change the physical nature of things. In that sense, pursuant to the Chachomim's ruling, Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah's physical appearance changed in accordance to his true spiritual state.

Being regularly exposed to Rabbi Elazar's erudite persona, the sages were aware of this reality and didn't need to see it expressed exteriorly. His wife, however, wanted to see his "elder" status take a tangible, irrefutable form, which came along with his newly emerged white hair.

But how can a young man have the qualities acquired through old age? He did not have "the abundance of years" required to earn wisdom?

The Arizal explains<sup>9</sup> that Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah was a reincarnation of the prophet Shmuel. Rabbi Elazar inherited his strength and wisdom. Shmuel died at the age of 52. According to the Talmud, Rabbi

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<sup>7</sup> The previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitschak, said that the true age of a person is not necessarily the one inscribed on his passport, but rather his inner age, the one that reflects his qualities and knowledge.

<sup>8</sup> Yerushalmi, Kesubos 1:2

<sup>9</sup> Sidur HoAriZal

Elazar was 18 years old at the time he became the Nassi. Adding the years of Shmuel's life to his own, Rabbi Elazar was effectively 70 years old.

Similarly, we find that the Rabbis mentioned the fact that he was the tenth generation from Ezra. The Mishna states<sup>10</sup> that a son inherits his father's wisdom. Therefore, Rabbi Elazar inherited the wisdom of Ezra, who himself was a Nassi.

This point can be better understood through a story<sup>11</sup> told about the Rebbe Maharash. Once, his older brother, Rabbi Yisrael Noach, sarcastically asked him how a young man such as him could be so knowledgeable in Talmud. The Maharash answered: "You might be older than me with your own years, however, I am older than you accounting for our father's years."

Since the Maharash was born after Rabbi Yisroel Noach, at the time of his birth, his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, was older and wiser. Therefore, he inherited a greater amount of wisdom and knowledge from his father, albeit vast knowledge can only be acquired with time.

This also explains Rabbi Elazar's statement in the Mishnah<sup>12</sup>: "*I am like a man of seventy year, yet I didn't succeed in proving that the Exodus of Egypt must be mentioned at night*". If, in fact he was only eighteen years old, how can he expect to readily find other sages who agree with him, to the point of being somewhat

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<sup>10</sup> Eduyos 9:2, see also the commentary of Tosfos Yom Tov, ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Sefer Hasichos 5705 , p.31

<sup>12</sup> Berachos, 1:5, also mentioned in the Haggadah

surprised that he “didn’t succeed in proving” his point? The above-mentioned explanation clarifies that, even at eighteen, he had all the intellectual and spiritual assets of a seventy-year-old man, and thus he rightfully wondered why, as such, his opinion could not be corroborated.

An encouraging message can be taken from this story. Throughout our lives, we are faced with challenges and tasks that seem to be much too difficult for us to endure. We might wonder if we are up to the challenge. This story demonstrates that with the powers transmitted to us by our ancestors and earlier *Gilgulim*, we have all we need to succeed<sup>13</sup>.

This is particularly relevant with regards to the imminent redemption. Considering the lowly spiritual level in which we find ourselves, in the global decadence of this era in which “*the darkness shall cover the earth*”<sup>14</sup>, we might skeptically ask ourselves how can we bring Mashiach now, considering that the great generations that preceded us did not succeed.

Once again, we learn from the tale of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah that we are not alone in this struggle. We are only completing a task that was started by our illustrious ancestors. The merit of their good deeds is eternal<sup>15</sup>, in contrast with evil, which is not everlasting<sup>16</sup>. The light they brought to this world

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<sup>13</sup> See Shaar Hagilgulim, preface 3 and 4

<sup>14</sup> Yeshaya 60:2

<sup>15</sup> see Tanya ch. 25

<sup>16</sup> When a person repents for his sins, his transgressions are transformed in good deeds, thus erasing all evil. See Yoma 19a.

through their Torah and *Mitzvos* has accumulated during all these years and is standing by our side, making it possible to easily finish the work they started, and finally bring Moshiach.

*Based on Likutei Sichos vol. I, p. 246  
and vol. VII, p. 123*



תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Nissuch Hamayim

תנו רבנן: מעשה בצדוקי אחד שניסך על גבי רגליו, ורגמוהו כל העם באתרוגיהן. ואותו היום נפגמה קרן המזבח.  
סוכה מז.ב.

*The Rabbis taught in a Braisa: There was once an incident with a certain Kohen who was a Tzedoki<sup>17</sup> who poured the water of Nissuch Hamayim upon his feet and all the people pelted him with their Esrogim. On that day, the corner of the Mizbeach was damaged.*

*Talmud Bavli, Sukah, 48b*

A number of questions present themselves:

Why did the Tzedoki pour the water on his feet?  
If he didn't believe in Nissuch Hamayim he shouldn't have pour it all together!

It also seems that the response came from the populace and not from the other Kohanim or the Chachomim. Shouldn't they have been the ones

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<sup>17</sup> The *Rambam* in his commentary on the Mishnah explains that the Mitzvah of *Nissuch Hamayim* is not clearly stated in the Torah, rather it is an allusion pointed out by the Chachomim. The Tzedukim did not recognize the Oral Law, and therefore, did not practice the mitzvah of *Nissuch Hamayim*.

reacting? And why is it that they responded by throwing their Esrogim rather than anything else?

To answer these questions, we must first understand the emblematic meaning of water and wine. Because water has no taste (*-Taam* in Hebrew), we are required to make a Brocho only if we drink it to alleviate thirst<sup>18</sup>. The word *Taam* also means reason. Hence, since water has no *Taam*, it symbolizes Mitzvos which are done without the precondition of intellectual comprehension. Wine has a good taste, and so it symbolizes doing Mitzvos which we fully understand and therefore can take full pleasure in doing.

Now we can understand why the Tzedoki poured the water on his feet. He thought that only the simple Mitzvos can be performed without comprehension, but that the more complex Mitzvos should be performed only if we fully understand their reason. He also wanted to convey the message that the *Kabbolas ol* reflected in doing Mitzvos without understanding the reasons for them is intended only for those who are intellectually weak, that is, simple folks who are 'low', as symbolized by feet. Those who are knowledgeable, he argued, should not do Mitzvos simply because they have been transmitted to us by Moshe Rabenu through the generations, as Nissuch Hamaim. The Tzedoki therefore spilled the water on his feet, the lowest part of his body, expressing his disdain for the performance of Mitzvos which lack full comprehension. This Kohen, however, did not do the same thing with the wine. Because wine

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<sup>18</sup> Brochos 44a; Shulchan Aruch Harav, Birkos Hanehenim 7:7

has taste (*Taam*, reason), symbolizing the performance of Mitzvos whose meaning can be fully understood, he respected it and properly poured it on the altar.

With this in mind, we will understand why the ordinary people present are the ones who responded, and not the other Kohanim or the Chachomim. Torah scholars are able to synthesize their Sechel and Kabolas Ol, so they did not fully appreciate the gravity of what the Tzedoki did. On the other hand, the simple people who rely mostly on Kabolas Ol noticed at once that his action was dangerously wrong.

They threw their Esrogim at him because the Esrog is the loftiest of the four species used on Sukos: The Lulav (a frond from date palm tree), having good taste but no smell, represents Jews who are knowledgeable but lack in deeds. The Hadass (myrtle), which has a good smell but no taste, represents those with deeds but lack in knowledge. The Arava (willow) has neither taste nor smell. Only the Esrog has both *Taam* (taste) and *Re'ach* (smell). They were informing the Tzedoki that water is not only for simpletons, but even a person who is at the level of an Esrog, possessing both *Taam* (representing intellect) and *Re'ach* (representing *Taanug* - enjoyment in performing the Mitzvos), needs the Bitul symbolized by water. Indeed, all Mitzvos should be performed with unconditional commitment, and not because their reasons are understood. The pursuit of understanding is valid, as long as it is accompanied by this commitment.

Now we can understand why the obligation of Nissuch Hamayim applies before the obligation of

Nissuch Hayayin<sup>19</sup>. Serving Hashem with Kabolos Ol, as symbolized by water, should come before the pursuit of understanding, symbolized by wine. When we stood at *Har Sinai* ready to receive the Torah, we uttered *Naaseh* first, undertaking to fulfill Mitzvos without the precondition of understanding their reasons (like water which has no taste). Only then did we say *Venishma* – we will try to understand the reasons for the Mitzvos. Therefore, water may be offered before wine (which has taste). Yet, both water and wine were offered together, to point out that a synergy of both approaches is necessary for a wholesome *Avoda*, although submission should come first.

*Adapted from the Sicha of  
Simchas Beis Hashoeivo 5715 ch. 13,  
Likutei Sichos vol. II p. 429*

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<sup>19</sup> Although wine and water were offered simultaneously, it would be acceptable to offer the libation of water first, starting from the evening of Sukos, being that Nisuch Hamayim was Chovas Hayom (a duty associated with the holiday), and Yom Tov starts in the evening. Whereas the obligation of pouring wine, being Chovas Hazevach (a duty associated with the korban), only begins the following morning, since with regards to Korbonos, the day begins in the morning. *Talmud Yerushalmi, Sukah 4:7.*

## Tasteless Sleep

תניא, אמר רבי יהושע בן חנניה: כשהיינו שמחים שמחת בית השואבה לא ראינו שינה בעינינו. כיצד? שעה ראשונה - תמיד של שחר, משם - לתפלה, משם - לקרבן מוסף, משם - לתפלת המוספין, משם - לבית המדרש, משם - לאכילה ושתייה, משם - לתפלת המנחה, משם לתמיד של בין הערבים, מכאן ואילך - לשמחת בית השואבה. איני? והאמר רבי יוחנן: שבועה שלא אישן שלשה ימים - מלקין אותו וישן לאלתר - אלא הכי קאמר: לא טעמנו טעם שינה, דהוּוּ מנמנמי אכתפא דהדדי.

סוכה נג.א

*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya<sup>20</sup> says: When we would rejoice at the Simchas Beis Hashoeivo, our eyes saw no sleep [throughout the Yom Tov of Sukos]. How so? The first hour of each day was devoted to the morning Tamid sacrifice; from there, we proceeded to the morning prayer<sup>21</sup>, and from there to Korban Mussaf; from there we proceeded to the Mussaf prayer; afterwards we went to the Beis Hamedrash to study Torah; from there we*

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<sup>20</sup> Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya was a Levi whose duty was to sing at the services in the Beis Hamikdash, therefore he actively participated in the festivities. *Rashi, ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> The daily Tfilos –which are substitutes for the Korbonos, were observed even when the Bayis sheini stood, although Korbanos were offered as well. *Tashbatz, 2:161.*

*went to eat and drink [a festive meal]; from there we went to the Mincha prayer; from there we proceeded to the afternoon Tamid sacrifice, and from then on we rejoiced at Simchas Beis Hasho'eivo [until the morning].” Is this possible? Did not Rabbi Yochanan state: “If one says: ‘I swear I will not sleep three days, he shall get lashes for a false oath<sup>22</sup>, and shall go to sleep immediately,”? We must, therefore, say that he meant, “We did not have a taste of real sleep,” for they would only doze on each other’s shoulders.*

*Sukah, 53a*

How relevant is the way the participants of Simchas Beis Hasho'eivo slept, and what is the meaning of “*the taste of sleep*”? Furthermore, why should we be told about their entire schedule, when most of the daily activities mentioned by Rabbi Yehoshua were not related to the festivities?

We can deduce from our Gemara that sleep is such a necessity that it is impossible to do without. Indeed, certain things are necessary in order to survive, such as eating and sleeping. However, it is not appropriate to put our whole energy into enjoying these physical needs, such as the food we eat. We should not relish our food (or other needs) beyond necessity.

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<sup>22</sup> Since he has sworn to do the impossible, he is considered to have taken a false oath from the start, and he is liable even before 3 days go by. *Rashi, Ibid.* See also Shvuos 25a

This concept can be found in the interpretation of a Talmudic story<sup>23</sup>: The students of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai once suggested that the entire Jewish nation was subject to annihilation at the time of Haman was because they rejoiced at Achashverosh's party. How could they suggest that this was the cause of that infamous decree? After all, the food and beverages were Kosher.<sup>24</sup> Rather, their sin was the enjoyment they had at the party rather than attend out of dire coercion. It would have been acceptable to be present at the celebrations (without enjoying it) merely to fulfill the king's order.

Following this logic, vital physical matters are to be done without much enthusiasm, but rather out of mere need. Similarly, the fact that those who took part in the festivities of Simchas Beis Hasho'eivo never "*tasted sleep*", means that they never indulged in the pleasure of sleep, because they rested only in order to sustain themselves.

This was also emphasized in the manner in which they slept. The main difference between a person who is asleep and one who is awake is the awareness and the use of one's intellect<sup>25</sup>. All the other senses and vital organs are as operative in a sleeping person as they are in the one who is awake<sup>26</sup>. This is also expressed by

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<sup>23</sup> Megilah 12a, see Likutei Sichos Vol. XXI, p. 17, and the interpretation of the next story.

<sup>24</sup> Megilah, *ibid*.

<sup>25</sup> Dreams are the products of our imagination rather than our intellect.

<sup>26</sup> The eye-sight is the only sense which is not functioning while asleep, and that is because the eyes are the windows of the mind.



the position adopted while asleep. When someone lies down, his head and feet are on the same level. This symbolizes the lack of intellectual activity. However, sleeping whilst sitting up - “*on each other’s shoulders*”, symbolizes a state in which the intellect is always on top and in control, in any situation.

A similar phenomenon is related in a story told by the previous Rebbe about a person who, after studying Torah the whole evening, went to bed puzzled about something he had just learned. He woke up the next morning with his question answered. Even while asleep his mind was working, because he did not “taste his sleep”, albeit lying down, he slept in the way described by Rabbi Yehoshua.

The joy of Simchas Beis Hasho’eivo uplifted its participants to such height that even while they slept their heads remained above the rest of their bodies. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya alludes to this sublime and constant spiritual alertness when he recounts in details the schedule of their entire day, including events that were not related to the festivities, such as their prayers, meals and studies. This is precisely to point out that the whole day was influenced by the all-encompassing elevation brought about through Simchas Beis Hasho’eivo.

This point also resonates in the Talmud’s statement<sup>27</sup> that “*the women of Jerusalem were able to sort grain in their courtyard by the lights shining from Simchas Beis Hashoeivo celebration in the Beis Hamikdosh*”. Even physical and mundane matters, such

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<sup>27</sup> Sukah 53a

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

as food preparations, were inspired and uplifted by the holiness of Simchas Beis Hashoeivo.

*Based on the Sichos of Simchas Beis Hasho'eivo  
5721, ch. 1 & 5723, ch. 9.*

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Enjoying The Feast

Haman's decree at the time of Purim was particularly severe in its scope. Never before was the entire Jewish nation in danger of total annihilation<sup>28</sup>. Trying to uncover the cause for this decree, the Talmud relates the following discussion<sup>29</sup>:

שאלו תלמידיו את רשב"י מפני מה נתחייבו שונאיהן של ישראל שבאותו הדור כליה אמר להם אמרו אתם אמרו לו מפני שנהנו מסעודתו של אותו רשע אם כן שבשושן יהרגו שבכל העולם כולו אל יהרגו אמרו לו אמור אתה אמר להם מפני שהשתחוו לצלם אמרו לו וכי משוא פנים יש בדבר אמר להם הם לא עשו אלא לפנים אף הקב"ה לא עשה עמהן אלא לפנים

מגילה יג,א

*The disciples of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai asked their master: "By what sins had the Jews incurred the decree of Haman in that age?" "Tell me your opinion," said he. They said: "Because they enjoyed the feast which Achashveirosh the wicked man made." "If so, then only those of Shushan [who took part in the feast] should have suffered. Why did those of all provinces suffer?" They said to him: "Let then the master explain to us."*

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<sup>28</sup> See Iyun Yaakov's commentary on this story-

<sup>29</sup> Megillah, 12a

*“Because,” he answered, “they kneeled to the idol.<sup>30</sup>” “If so,” his disciples asked, “they were then actually guilty; why were they not killed?” And he answered: “They bowed to the idol not because they wanted to, but only for the sake of outward appearance; so the Holy One, praised be He also made the decree against them for appearance [and it was not carried out].”*

Albeit just a suggestion, Rabbi Shimon’s students’ opinion needs an explanation. Why would joining Achashverosh’s feast be punishable by death? After all, even one who eats not Kosher doesn’t deserve such a harsh punishment. Moreover, it is inferred from the text that the sin was the fact that they enjoyed themselves at the meal rather than the meal itself. In fact, the commentaries<sup>31</sup> on the Megillah<sup>32</sup> mention that the food and wine were prepared adhering to Kosher laws. So what was their sin?

The Rif<sup>33</sup> explains that Achashveirosh made a feast because he thought, based on erroneous calculation, that the time of the Jews’ redemption promised by the prophets had passed, thus the Beis HaMikdash will surely not be rebuilt. Hence his joy, for he would now be able to keep the bounty of Jerusalem

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<sup>30</sup> This refers to the idol placed by Nevuchadnetzar in the Dura valley when the Jews were exiled from Jerusalem to Babylonia. At that time the entire nation was there. *Rashi*, see also Maharsha *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Ester Rabbah, 2:13

<sup>32</sup> Based on Possuk 1:8

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, based on the Talmud, Megillah, 11b

that he inherited. Therefore, any individual partaking in these festivities was in fact sharing in his joy over Jerusalem's destruction. Such an inappropriate joy would justify Haman's horrific decree.

However, Haman's vicious edict did not spare any individual Jew, including children who would not deserve any punishment. This seemingly insignificant sin certainly doesn't call for annihilation of an entire nation.

The gravity of the Jews' error can be understood in light of the following parable told in the Midrash<sup>34</sup>. G-d's constant safeguard of the Jewish nation, which ensures its miraculous survival amid hostile nations, is compared to a single sheep surrounded by seventy wolves that would surely be devoured if the Great Shepherd was not watching and protecting her. However, this particular protection is granted only to those who rely upon it, whereas one who demonstrates through his actions that he is not interested in Hashem's miraculous protection but relies on the "seventy wolves" might be subjected to the rules of nature and the expected fate of that lonely sheep.

Similarly, when Haman - the Jew hater - was appointed as Achashverosh's prime minister, the Jews of that time were in the dire position of the sheep surrounded by seventy wolves. Yet, they took pleasure in being invited to the king's feast; it indicated that they valued Achashverosh and his government and felt safe under their watch, just as the seep felt safe in the wolves' company. This feeling was further intensified when.

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<sup>34</sup> Ester Rabbah, 10:11; Tanchuma, Toldos ch. 5

Esther became the queen and Mordechai sat in the king's court. There was a certain artificial sense of security. The threat of extermination came as a natural result of this trust in the "wolves", for the Great Shepherd was no longer watching.

Given the required respect any Jew is commanded to display towards the local authorities, as we are told in the Mishnah<sup>35</sup> "pray for the welfare of the kingdom", it would have been acceptable to attend the feast without much enthusiasm, just to fulfill their civic duty, as long as they would be aware that their survival and wellbeing comes from a divine supernatural source and does not depend on Achashveirosh. Under such circumstances, they would have surely not enjoyed the party, which is precisely what Rabbi Shimon's students were suggesting.

The particular character of the Purim miracle, a miracle "disguised" in a mundane political plot, is a fitting response to the Jews' misguided conduct. Such a miracle demonstrates that Hashem's intervention is not limited to the supernatural realm but affects natural circumstances as well, just like the physical life of the Jewish people is permeated with wonders.

This explains Esther's perplexing plan of action<sup>36</sup>. Before endangering her life by going – uninvited – to Achashverosh to plead for her people, Esther fasted for three days. If she relied on the king's favors, she should have made herself attractive to him.

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<sup>35</sup> Avot 3:2; see also Yirmiyahu 29:7

<sup>36</sup> Ester 4:11

Fasting for three days surely does not seem to be the most effective way to prepare for such a fateful audience. On the other hand, if she relied on her fasts and prayers, why did she even bother going to Achashverosh?

Indeed, her odd intercession was meant to offset her people's mistake. They thought that in times of need one should put all efforts in gaining favor in the eyes of authorities. In contrast, she wanted to emphasize the importance of prayer and reliance on the true Savior. Going to the king was secondary, merely creating a vessel through which G-d would channel his miracle. Consequently, such visit was done without eagerness or delight.

A message relevant to our daily life can be drawn from this episode. When it comes to earning a livelihood, we often err, thinking that our efforts, business savvy or rapport with our employer and associates are the source of our success. In truth, wealth comes from Hashem's blessings<sup>37</sup>. We are, nonetheless, required to prepare a vessel ready to take in these blessings, which is why we have to work, but we must realize that our occupation is merely the channel through which we receive His blessings. This is the meaning of the Passuk<sup>38</sup> "and G-d will bestow his blessing upon all that you shall do", implying that the blessing will come via our doing. Consequently, all efforts are to be directed toward the true source of our

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<sup>37</sup> Mishlei, 10:22

<sup>38</sup> Devarim, 16:18



livelihood, which is G-d's blessing, for even the Jews' physical sustenance isn't bound by nature.

Similarly, we are all made of a body and soul. We need to nourish our body properly in order to function well and serve Hashem better<sup>39</sup>. But let us not forget that our body is only a vessel inhabited by our soul and thus is secondary. Consequently, caring for our body can be done out of necessity and without fervor or delight, while our emphasis should be on nourishing our soul.

*Based on the Sichos of Purim 5722, 5724, 5727  
and Likutei Sichos Vol. XXXI, pp. 170-176*

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<sup>39</sup> see Rambam Hilchos Deos, 4:1

## The Merkava

Before Chassidus was revealed and spread by the Baal ShemTom, the secrets of the Torah found in kabalistic writings were reserved for the most erudite scholars. The Rambam<sup>40</sup> even discouraged such studies before mastering the revealed part of the Torah. This approach and the wonders that could result from such studies is related by the Talmud<sup>41</sup> in the following story:

ת"ר מעשה ברבן יוחנן בן זכאי שהיה רוכב על החמור והיה מהלך בדרך ור' אלעזר בן ערך מחמר אחריו, אמר לו רבי שנה לי פרק אחד במעשה מרכבה, אמר לו לא כך שניתי לכם ולא במרכבה ביחיד אלא א"כ היה חכם מבין מדעתו? אמר לו רבי תרשיני לומר לפניך דבר אחד שלמדתני, אמר לו אמור! מיד ירד רבן יוחנן בן זכאי מעל החמור ונתעטף וישב על האבן תחת הזית אמר לו רבי מפני מה ירדת מעל החמור אמר אפשר אתה דורש במעשה מרכבה ושכינה עמנו ומלאכי השרת מלוין אותנו ואני ארכב על החמור? מיד פתח ר"א בן ערך במעשה המרכבה ודרש וירדה אש מן השמים וסיבבה כל האילנות שבשדה פתחו כולן ואמרו שירה ... נענה מלאך מן האש ואמר הן הן מעשה המרכבה. עמד רבן יוחנן ב"ז ונשקו על ראשו ואמר ברוך ה' אלקי ישראל שנתן בן לאברהם אבינו שיודע להבין ולחקור ולדרוש במעשה

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<sup>40</sup> Hilchos Yessodei Hatorah, 2:12

<sup>41</sup> Chagigah, 14b

מרכבה יש נאה דורש ואין נאה מקיים נאה מקיים ואין נאה  
דורש אתה נאה דורש ונאה מקיים אשריך אברהם אבינו  
שאלעזר בן ערך יצא מחלצין  
וכשנאמרו הדברים לפני ר' יהושע היה הוא ורבי יוסי הכהן  
מהלכים בדרך אמרו אף אנו נדרוש במעשה מרכבה, פתח  
רבי יהושע ודרש ואותו היום תקופת תמוז היה, נתקשרו  
שמים בעבים ונראה כמין קשת בענן [ורעשה הארץ]<sup>42</sup> והיו  
מלאכי השרת מתקבצין ובאין לשמוע כבני אדם שמתקבצין  
ובאין לראות במזמוטי חתן וכלה, הלך רבי יוסי הכהן וסיפר  
דברים לפני רבן יוחנן בן זכאי ואמר אשריכם ואשרי  
יולדתכם אשרי עיני שכך ראו ואף אני ואתם בחלומי  
מסובין היינו על הר סיני ונתנה עלינו בת קול מן השמים  
עלו, לכאן עלו לכאן טרקלין גדולים ומצעות נאות מוצעות  
לכם אתם ותלמידיכם ותלמידי תלמידיכם מזומנין לכת  
שלישית

חגיגה יד.ב

*Once Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai was riding on a donkey while going on a journey, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach was following him. [Rabbi Elazar] said to him: Master, teach me a chapter of the 'Maasse Merkavah'<sup>43</sup>. He answered: Have I not taught you: 'The Maasse Merkavah shall not be lectured in the presence of one, unless he is a sage and understands of his own knowledge'? [Rabbi Elazar] then said to him: Master, permit me then to say before you something which you have taught me.*

<sup>42</sup> Talmud Yerushalmi, Chagigah 2:1

<sup>43</sup> Lit., 'Work of the Chariot', a mystical prophecy of Yechezkel (ch. 1) describing the different attributes of Hashem.

*Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai answered, "Speak!" and then dismounted from the donkey, and wrapped himself up [in a Tallis], and sat upon a stone beneath an olive tree. [Rabbi Elazar] said to him: Master, why did you dismount from the donkey? He answered: Is it proper that while you are expounding the 'Maase Merkavah', and the Divine Presence is with us, and the ministering angels accompany us, I should ride on the donkey!*

*Then Rabbi Elazar ben Arach began his exposition of the 'Maasse Merkavah', and fire came down from heaven and encompassed all the trees in the field; [thereupon] the trees all began to utter a song. ... An angel then called out from the fire and said: This is indeed the very 'Maasse Merkavah'.*

*Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai rose and kissed him on his head and said: Blessed be the Lord G-d of Israel who has given a son to Avraham our father, who knows to comprehend, to investigate, and to expound upon the Maasse Merkava. ...*

*Now when these things were told to Rabbi Yehoshua<sup>44</sup>, while he and Rabbi Yossei Hakohen were going on a journey. They said: 'Let us also expound on the Maase Merkavah. So Rabbi Yehoshua opened (i.e., began) an exposition. Although it was a summer day during the month of Tamuz, nevertheless the heavens became overcast with clouds and a kind of rainbow appeared in the cloud [and*

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<sup>44</sup> In the Yerushalmi's version, this story is attributed to Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel

*there was an earthquake<sup>45</sup>]; and the ministering angels assembled and came and were huddling to listen like people who assemble and come to watch the entertainment for a groom and bride.*

*Rabbi Yossei Hakohen went and related what happened to Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai; and [the latter] said: Happy are you, and happy is she that bore you. Happy are my eyes that have seen thus. Moreover, in my dream, I and you were reclining on Mount Sinai, when a heavenly voice was heard, saying: Ascent here, ascent here! Here are great banqueting chambers, and fine dining couches that are prepared for you;*

The Maharsha suggests that these two events took place while the scholars were on a journey because this was the best time to discuss these secretive esoteric issues, as no one was around to hear.

Rashi points out that the Talmud specified that the second story happened in the month of Tamuz, in the heat of the summer when it is unusual to see clouds in Israel, demonstrating the supernatural effects of Rabbi Yehoshua's lecture.

It seems from Rabbi Yochanan's response that the exposition by Rabbi Yehoshua was more praiseworthy than the one by Rabbi Elazar, but what made it more laudable? One would also wonder why Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai blessed his two sets of

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<sup>45</sup> This account is found in the Yerushalmi's version

students differently, referring the first to Avraham Avinu and praising the second personally?

The main difference between the two lectures is the fact that Rabbi Elazar merely repeated something he learned from Rabbi Yochanan. Despite the great revelations that followed his lecture, his merit was not that commendable, as it didn't imply creativity and innovation. The supernatural phenomenon came in his teacher's merit, for it was his teachings that were being repeated. Consequently, *Hashem's* delight was symbolized by a Heavenly fire coming down. Like the revelations that ensued, his wisdom also came from above<sup>46</sup>. In contrast, Rabbi Yehoshua's lecture was his own, as it is obvious not only from the content, but also from the word used by the Talmud to describe his lecture, *patach*, he opened<sup>47</sup>, referring to a new channel of wisdom opened and initiated by him<sup>48</sup>. The revelations also came from down below. In the version of this story told by the Talmud Yerushalmi, Rabbi Yehoshua's lecture caused an earthquake, symbolizing the impact his teachings had on the world below<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> i.e., from his teacher.

<sup>47</sup> See Kesser Shem Tov, ch. 256.

<sup>48</sup> Though the word '*patach*' was also used in reference to Rabbi Elazar's lecture, the Talmud states that he merely repeated his Rabbi's teachings. Nonetheless, he surely added his own insights, and this alone justifies the use of the term '*patach*', though the whole lecture wasn't the product of his creative thought.

<sup>49</sup> The clouds, despite being the sky, are only a condensation of the water from earth which evaporated and formed a cloud. Thus, clouds – and rainbow which appears through them – reflect earth rather than heaven. See Sha'arei Emunah, p. 202.

This difference is also noticeable in the wording of the respective blessings given by Rabbi Yochanan. Regarding Rabbi Elazar, he praised Avraham Avinu for having such a worthy descendant. Once again, associating Rabbi Elazar's merit to his ancestry, in other words, coming from above. Whereas regarding Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Yossei the blessing was directed at them, being linked to their own compositions.

Why then is there no mention of Rabbi Yossei's contribution to Rabbi Yehoshua's lecture? He surely participated as he was equally praised for it, being invited to ascend atop the Har Sinai along with his teacher. Yet his participation is not recorded as part of this story to avoid confusing the reader. The emphasis on the second Maase Merkavah lecture was on stature reached by means of personal effort. Being a Kohen which is inbred and cannot be acquired through study or effort, Rabbi Yossei's merit could be perceived as inherited (from above), hence it would not be as commendable.

Nevertheless, why was such a great event marked by a sign such as a rainbow, which is associated with destruction and punishment?<sup>50</sup> Many Tzadikim, like Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, were praised for the fact that no rainbow appeared in the land throughout their lifetime<sup>51</sup>, and here the rainbow was brought as a sign of exaltation.

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<sup>50</sup> Noach 9:9

<sup>51</sup> Kesubos, 77b

There is another side to the rainbow. The Midrash says<sup>52</sup> that a rainbow is associated with Hashem himself, so much so that one is not allowed to stare at a rainbow for this would be disrespectful to the Creator<sup>53</sup>. Furthermore, in the very prophecy of Yechezkel describing the *Merkava*<sup>54</sup>, G-d's appearance is compared to the sight of a rainbow. It is logical to say that the rainbow that appeared was associated to the one mentioned in Yechezkel, which they were in the midst of discussing, rather than the unflattering rainbow associated to Noach. Therefore, the fact that the rainbow appeared on a clear summer day demonstrated an unusual Divine revelation on earth, triggered by Rabbi Yehoshua's<sup>55</sup> mystical lecture, and not a stern sign symbolized by a rainbow on a rainy day<sup>56</sup>.

No matter who we are or the depth of our understanding, our personal effort will have a tangible effect on our environment, which is always worthy of praise, and can yield great revelations.

*Based on Likutei Sichos vol. XVII, pp.361-363*

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<sup>52</sup> Bereshis Rabbah, 35:4

<sup>53</sup> Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, 229:1

<sup>54</sup> Yechezkel, 1:28

<sup>55</sup> Or Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel according to the Yerushalmi.

<sup>56</sup> See Brachos 32b



תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Entering the *Pardes*

The Talmud<sup>57</sup> tells the story of four Tana'im who were exposed to the deepest secrets of the Torah.

ת"ר ארבעה נכנסו בפרדס ואלו הן בן עזאי ובן זומא אחר רבי עקיבא, אמר להם ר"ע כשאתם מגיעין אצל אבני שיש טהור אל תאמרו מים מים משום שנאמר דובר שקרים לא יכון לנגד עיני, בן עזאי הציץ ומת עליו הכתוב אומר יקר בעיני ה' המותה לחסידיו, בן זומא הציץ ונפגע ועליו הכתוב אומר דבש מצאת אכול דייך פן תשבענו והקאתו, אחר קיצץ בנטיעות, רבי עקיבא [נכנס בשלום<sup>58</sup> ויצא בשלום

חגיגה יד.ב.

*Our Rabbis were taught: Four men entered the Pardes<sup>59</sup> and they were: Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher<sup>60</sup> and Rabbi Akiva. Ben Azzai gazed and died ... Ben Zoma gazed and went mad .... Acher cut the plants (i.e., made bad use of his learning and became a heretic). Rabbi Akiva entered in peace, and departed in peace.*

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<sup>57</sup> Chagigah 14b

<sup>58</sup> Talmud Yerushalmi, Chagigah 2:1

<sup>59</sup> [heavenly] orchard

<sup>60</sup> Lit., *the other one*. His name was Elisha ben Abuya but he was nick-named Acher because of his turn of faith

Rashi explains that they ascended to heaven using one of Hashem's names. Tosfos clarifies that they had experienced a spiritual arisen rather than physical. The Maharsha describes the *Pardes* as the heavenly garden of wisdom, comparable to Gan Eden, a place in which the souls learn to understand the secrets of the Torah reserved for the great Tzadikim.

However, we must understand why Rabbi Akiva was the only one to come out of the *Pardes* in good standing. Moreover, the Talmud only relates the way the other three Tana'im came out. Why is it then necessary to point out how Rabbi Akiva *entered* the *Pardes*? Also, why was Rabbi Akiva's journey associated with peace? Would it not be more accurate to say that Rabbi Akiva "went in alive and came out alive"?

It is obvious that the dramatic events that took place at their visit to the *Pardes* were consequences of their sublime spiritual elevation. A similar situation is reported in the Torah, as interpreted by the Or Hachayim<sup>61</sup>: Nadav and Avihu died because they came too close to an exalted light, which they could not endure. They were so focused on elevating themselves spiritually, to the detriment of the limitations of their physical bodies, reaching *Kallus Hanefesh*, when the soul detaches itself to cleave to the Divine.

Our role on Earth is to elevate the material world. Although there is an apparent conflict between the physical and spiritual in this world, *Hashem* gives us the ability to reconcile them by fulfilling the *Mitzvos* using material things, revealing that the true purpose of

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<sup>61</sup> Vayikra 16:1

this world is to rise and become fit to be a dwelling place for *Hashem*<sup>62</sup>. To do so effectively, we must elevate ourselves first and then remember to come back down in order to imbue the world with the G-dliness we have gathered at the time of our spiritual ascension. One has to “go up” with the intention of “coming down” to refine the world. This is why the Talmud mentions that Rabbi Akiva entered *and* departed in peace. In this manner, a return is guaranteed. However, if one aspires to connect to *Hashem* without thinking about bringing the inspiration back to his daily mundane occupation, it is as if the soul detaches itself to cleave to the Divine without fulfilling the intended purpose. The notion of peace expressed with regards to Rabbi Akiva’s entrance and exit of the *Pardes* emphasizes that his intention going in was to come out and bring spiritual peace to the world, to permeate the material world with the spirituality acquired in the *Pardes*.

Rabbi Akiva went up to the *pardes* in order to come out and bring something down, therefore he was the only one who came out in good standing. In contrast, Ben Azzai died because the intention of his visit to the *Pardes* was solely to elevate himself and bond with *Hashem*. He was not preoccupied with the idea of coming back to a physical life. This characteristic of Ben Azzai can also be noticed in the fact that, like Nadav and Avihu, he never married<sup>63</sup>. He wasn’t concerned with bringing down souls into this world, and didn’t want the burden of providing for a family. His

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<sup>62</sup> Tanya ch. 33

<sup>63</sup> See Sotah 4b

only interest was in elevating himself, rejecting the constraints and material responsibilities associated with marriage. Ben Zoma became insane because his only preoccupation was learning Torah, having little contact with earthly activities.<sup>64</sup> He too entered the *pardes* without thinking of coming back. There was no ‘peaceful entry’ and therefore there was no ‘peaceful exit’<sup>65</sup>. Neither of them was ordained as Rabbi, hence their names are not preceded by the title. Although they were learned enough to be worthy of accompanying Rabby Akiva on this lofty journey, they avoided ordination, as it would have propelled them in communal business and away from their spiritual endeavors. Acher, on the other hand, was not yet ready to go in and see these great revelations, consequently his visit to the *pardes* led to bad results<sup>66</sup>.

The lesson that may be learned from this episode is to stay focused on our true task on this earth, which is to elevate ourselves only in order to return and elevate the rest of creation. Though we are unlikely to experience the type of *Kallus Hanefesh* related in this story, we all have our own type of *Pardes*. At times one may feel inspired and very spiritual, for example on *Shabbos* or *Yom Kippur* when we separate ourselves from worldly occupation, and shelter ourselves in the

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<sup>64</sup> See Bereshis Rabbah, 82:4

<sup>65</sup> The Maharsha explains that Ben Zoma was not as great as Ben Azzai, therefore, he did not merit *Kallus hanefesh*. This opinion can be corroborated by the Bartenura on Avos 4:1, who says that Ben Zoma was not called Rabbi because he was too young to be ordained.

<sup>66</sup> Maharsha, *ibid*.

holiness of the moment. Nevertheless it is important to remember that one must “go up in peace in order to go out in peace”. One must go into Shabbos and Yom Tov with the intention of carrying on its inspiration into the rest of the week. Similarly, when praying and studying Torah, one has to bring the enlightenment and inspiration into his daily work, so that his whole being can be enlivened with spirituality.

*Based on Likutei Sichos vol. III, pp. 990-991.*

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Rav Zeira's Neighbours

After the Talmud<sup>67</sup> discusses the potential that exists in every Jew, the following story is related:

הנהו בריוני דהוה בשיבבותיה דר' זירא דהוה מקרב להו כי היכי דניהדרו להו בתיובתא והו קפדי רבנן כי נח נפשיה דר' זירא אמרי עד האידנא הוה חריכא קטין שקיה דהוה בעי עלן רחמי השתא מאן בעי עלן רחמי הרהרו בלבייהו ועבדו תשובה

סנהדרין לז,א

*There were brigands who lived in the neighborhood of Rabbi Zeira, who nevertheless associated with them so that they should repent. The other Rabbis (his students<sup>68</sup>) disapproved.*

*When Rabbi Zeira passed away those brigands said: "Hitherto there was the little man<sup>69</sup> who prayed for us, but now who will do so?" Whereupon they repented and became righteous.*

The *Anaf Yosef* explains the disagreement between Rabbi Zeira and his students. Rabbi Zeira

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<sup>67</sup> Sanhedrin 37a

<sup>68</sup> Anaf Yosef, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Rabbi Zeira was a short man. Rashi, *ibid.*



follows the teachings of the Talmud<sup>70</sup>, that a sinner should be rebuked with the left hand (which is the weak one) and then brought closer with the right hand (which is the strong one), unlike Elisha who rebuked his servant Gechazi with both hands (after Gechazi had sinned)<sup>71</sup>. Therefore, the students who knew the story of Elisha (but did not know that the Talmud disagreed with him) believed that Rabbi Zeira should unequivocally rebuke those brigands, whereas Rabbi Zeira, being their teacher and more knowledgeable, followed the Talmud's opinion and thus decided to befriend them, knowing that this would eventually influence them to do *Teshuva*.

What message is the Talmud giving us in this story? Is it that Rabbi Zeira's approach is the right one, since the brigands did *Teshuva* in the end, or is it perhaps that his students were right inasmuch as the brigands waited until Rabbi Zeira died before doing *Teshuva*?

There is no question that if we see a person erring, no matter who he might be, we should try to gently bring him to the right path<sup>72</sup> and even be *Melamed Zechus*<sup>73</sup> for his actions. In fact, the most effective way to correct someone's wrongdoing is to communicate with him in a pleasant and peaceful manner<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Sanhedrin 107b

<sup>71</sup> see Melachim II, 8

<sup>72</sup> see Igrot Kodesh Vol. V p. 115

<sup>73</sup> seek to justify

<sup>74</sup> see Sefer Hasichot 5752, p. 440

But if Rabbi Zeira's approach was the right one, as it seems, why then did those brigands wait so long to do *Teshuva*?

Indeed, Rabbi Zeira was right in connecting with the brigands. The mistake, however, was on their part. Rabbi Zeira's approach comes with the risk that the brigands may be *Melamed Zechus* for their own wrongdoing by making up excuses. Such a person will never feel the need to do *Teshuva*. Shlomo Hamelech said<sup>75</sup> "*Love conceals all faults*", and self-love is always strong. Man is blind to his own shortcomings and will always try to justify his sins. Therefore, it was appropriate for a Rabbi to associate with a sinning man, and even to be *Melamed Zechus* on him, so long as the Rabbi's affection will not be interpreted as approval of the sinner's wrongful deeds.

In this story, those brigands' mistake was to rely entirely on Rabbi Zeira's prayers and only after his passing did they acknowledge the need to stand on their own merits. As much as we must always seek to justify and excuse someone else's faults, we need to assess ourselves objectively and accurately. Recognizing our qualities is important, but only if we are ready to use these assets to improve our flaws.

*Adapted from a Sicha of Shabbat Shemini 5718, ch. 10.  
Igros Kodesh Vol V, p. 115*

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<sup>75</sup> Mishlei 10,12

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Rabbi Chanina Ben Teradyon's Martyrdom

Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon was one of the ten great Torah scholars who were killed because of their uninterrupted Torah study<sup>76</sup> despite the Romans' prohibition. The Talmud<sup>77</sup> recounts his last moments:

תנו רבנן כשחלה רבי יוסי בן קיסמא הלך רבי חנינא בן תרדיון לבקרו אמר לו חנינא אחי (אחי) אי אתה יודע שאומה זו מן השמים המליכוה שהחריבה את ביתו ושרפה את היכלו והרגה את חסידיו ואבדה את טוביו ועדיין היא קיימת ואני שמעתי עליך שאתה יושב ועוסק בתורה [ומקהיל קהלות ברבים] וספר מונח לך בחיקך אמר לו מן השמים ירחמו אמר לו אני אומר לך דברים של טעם ואתה אומר לי מן השמים ירחמו תמה אני אם לא ישרפו אותך ואת ספר תורה באש אמר לו רבי מה אני לחיי העולם הבא אמר לו כלום מעשה בא לידך אמר לו מעות של פורים נתחלפו לי במעות של צדקה וחלקתים לעניים אמר לו אם כן מחלוקך יהי חלקי ומגורלך יהי גורלי אמרו לא היו ימים מועטים עד שנפטר רבי יוסי בן קיסמא והלכו כל גדולי רומי לקברו והספידוהו הספד גדול ובחזרתו מצאוהו לרבי חנינא בן תרדיון שהיה יושב ועוסק בתורה ומקהיל קהלות ברבים וס"ת מונח לו בחיקו הביאוהו וכרכוהו בס"ת והקיפוהו

<sup>76</sup> See Kinos of Tisha Be'av, Arzei Halevanon

<sup>77</sup> Avoda Zara 18a

בחבילי זמורות והציתו בהן את האור והביאו ספוגין של צמר ושראום במים והניחום על לבו כדי שלא תצא נשמתו מהרה ... אמר לו קלצטונירי רבי אם אני מרבה בשלהבת ונוטל ספוגין של צמר מעל לבך אתה מביאני לחיי העולם הבא אמר לו הן השבע לי נשבע לו מיד הרבה בשלהבת ונטל ספוגין של צמר מעל לבו יצאה נשמתו במהרה אף הוא קפץ ונפל לתוך האור יצאה בת קול ואמרה רבי חנינא בן תרדיון וקלצטונירי מזומנין הן לחיי העולם הבא בכה רבי ואמר יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת ויש קונה עולמו בכמה שנים

עבודה זרה יח.א

*When Rabbi Yossei ben Kisma became sick, Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon went to visit him. Rabbi Yossei said to him: "Chanina, my brother"<sup>78</sup>, are you not aware that it is Heaven that has ordained this [Roman] nation to reign? For though she laid waste His House, burnt His Temple, slew His pious ones and caused His best ones to perish, still is she firmly established! And in spite of this, I hear that you occupy yourself with the Torah publicly, and you bear with you the Holy Scrolls at all times!"<sup>79</sup> "Heaven will show mercy" was Rabbi Chanina's answer. "I am telling you words of reason, and you say, 'Heaven will show mercy,'" exclaimed*

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<sup>78</sup> They were cousins.

<sup>79</sup> And if you are caught with the scrolls, you would not be able to claim that you were doing anything other than teaching Torah, thus endangering your life and the life of your students. *Chidushei Geonim, ibid.*

*Rabbi Yossei.*<sup>80</sup> “I will be surprised if they will not burn you with the Holy Scrolls.”

*Rabbi Chanina then said:* “Rabbi, will I deserve the world to come?” And Rabbi Yossei asked him: “Haven’t you done any [meritorious] acts?”

*Whereupon he answered:* “I once mistook Purim-money for ordinary charity-money, and I distributed [of my own] to the poor [and I have not collected from the charity].<sup>81</sup>” “If so,” answered Rabbi Yossei, “I wish that my share should be like yours, and my fate similar to yours.”<sup>82</sup>

*A few days later Rabbi Yossei ben Kisma died, and all the great men of Rome followed his coffin, lamenting greatly. On their return, they found Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon studying the Torah publicly with the Holy Scrolls on his chest. The Romans enwrapped him with the Holy Scrolls and surrounded him with branches, which were kindled. Tufts of*

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<sup>80</sup> I am telling you that the Romans were appointed by *Hashem* and you expect *Hashem* to pity you while He is allowing this to happen. - *Marsha, ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *i.e.*, he put aside money to buy food for the Purim feast in one purse and money to distribute to charity in another purse. When poor people came to him on Purim, he got mixed up and gave them from the money he set aside for his meal instead of taking from the purse he set aside for charity. When he realized his mistake, he did not reimburse himself from the charity treasury. Rather he also distributed that money to poor people. He then had to spend additional funds for the expense of his own Purim meal. Effectively, he spent on Tzedaka double the amount that he originally planned. *Rashi, ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> It uses a double language to show that “*share*” refers to Torah, and “*fate*” refers to Mitzvos. *Maharsha, ibid.*

*wool, soaked in water, were placed on his heart that his soul might not depart too quickly...*

*The executioner then said to him: “Rabbi, if I will increase this fire and will take off the tufts of wool from your heart [in order to stop your suffering], would you bring me to life in the world to come?”*

*He answered, “Yes.” He then asked him to promise, which he did. Immediately, the executioner increased the fire, took off the tufts of wool and Rabbi Chanina’s soul departed. The executioner himself then jumped into the fire. A heavenly voice was then heard: “Both Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon and the executioner are invited to life in the world to come.”*

*Rebbi then wept, saying: “There is one who acquires his share in the world to come in one moment, while another acquires his [through the work] of many years.”*

The Maharsha comments that although Rabbi Chanina studied Torah the entire day and deserved *Olam Haba*, he was only in doubt about himself because the Talmud states,<sup>83</sup> that a person who only learns and does not occupy himself with doing Mitzvos is considered as if he does not worship G-d.

The Chidushei Ge’onim explains that after hearing reprimand from Rabbi Yossef about endangering his students’ lives, publicly teaching Torah

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<sup>83</sup> Avoda Zara 17a

while it was prohibited, Rabbi Chanina was worried about his share in the world to come.

This intriguing story can be further clarified. Rabbi Chanina was so devoted to *Hashem* to the extent of risking his life to study Torah, so how could he have a doubt about deserving *Olam Haba*? Furthermore, from his answer to Rabbi Yossei it seems that the action of giving *Tzedakah* was what justified his share in *Olam Haba*. Would this one-time charity be indeed worthier than his lifelong dedication to Torah, to the point of *Mesiras Nefesh*?

The Alter Rebbe explains this episode based on the following introduction.<sup>84</sup> The wide spectrum of human personality traits goes from one extreme being called a *Marah Shchorah*, commonly mistaken for one who is depressed, to the jolly person, referred to as *Marah Levanah*<sup>85</sup>. The *Marah Shchorah* is more of an introvert; he more often secludes himself and does not need an actively social environment. Therefore, he likes to study because learning can be a stimulating yet solitary pastime. Being self-absorbed, such a person is more likely to be parsimonious and does not spend much, especially not on other people. In contrast, the *Marah Levanah* cannot sit and learn because he is so outwardly. He prefers to socialize and is usually more of a spender.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See Torah Or 19b

<sup>85</sup> Lit. White gall; the counterpart of a *marah shechorah*

<sup>86</sup> See Toras Chayim, p. 81



This *Marah Levanah* has to apply himself in order to study. It takes a real effort for him to sit down and learn. Thus when he does, he has a greater merit; whereas the *Marah Shchorah*'s merit is questionable, as learning comes to him naturally.

A similar concept is found in Tanya<sup>87</sup> regarding a man who reviews a subject one hundred and one times being so much more praiseworthy than the one who reviews it a hundred times. How can one single extra review make a difference to the point of calling the one who reviews a hundred and one times *Oved Hashem* and the one who studied “only” a hundred times is considered as one who does not serve Him? The Tanya explains that the norm then was to study every subject a hundred times. The one who exceeds the norm and goes beyond his habit is commendable, for he has changed his nature in order to serve *Hashem*.<sup>88</sup>

In effect, Rabbi Chanina was questioning whether the reason for his diligence in Torah studies was stemming from his *Marah Shchorah*, which would make his study part and parcel of his nature rather than doing so for the sake of *Hashem*. If that would be the case, he would not deserve any reward, or even *Olam Haba*. This is why Rabbi Yossei needed to analyze Rabbi Chanina's personality.

When Rabbi Chanina answered that he gave two or three<sup>89</sup> times the necessary amount of money to charity, it showed that he was a spender, thus inherently

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<sup>87</sup> Ch. 15

<sup>88</sup> See Torah Or, p. 76a

<sup>89</sup> According to Tosfos, he spent three times the necessary amount

a *Marah Levanah*. And since it was not in his nature to be so studious, it was clear that he had worked hard on his character and changed it completely and became an *Oved Hashem*, who merits *Olam Haba*.<sup>90</sup>

If it was so difficult for Rabbi Chanina to obtain his share in the world to come, how was it granted so easily to the Roman executioner? The Zohar<sup>91</sup> explains the difference between a *Tzaddik* and a *Baal Teshuvah*. A *Tzadik* constantly progresses from level to level. Such a worship is compared to a consistent walk, albeit advancing, his next step forward is always relative to his former position.

A *Baal Teshuva*, on the other hand, can leap to the level of a *Tzadik* in a moment. His service of *Hashem* is described as ‘hopping and skipping’. Having both feet off the ground, his next step isn’t bound by his previous state, for it only takes a moment to return to *Hashem* and see all his sins converted into meritorious deeds<sup>92</sup>. Although it took a lifetime of self-sacrifice for Rabbi Chanina to reach the reward of *Olam Haba*, the executioner leaped to that level instantly as he performed sincere *Teshuvah*.

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<sup>90</sup> See *Derech Chaim*, pp.161-162. To suggest that perhaps he was rather a *Marah Shchorah* who worked on himself only on Purim to overpower his nature and spend beyond all requirements would not be consistent with Rebbi’s statement: “There are those who acquire their *Olam Haba* in many years”, referring to Rabbi Chanina’s lifelong effort. Earning his *Olam Haba* merely because of one action would not distinguish him apart from his executioner.

<sup>91</sup> Vol. I, p. 129a

<sup>92</sup> See *Yoma* 19a

This story puts an emphasis on the importance of improving our character, even if it requires aiming for the polar opposite of our current demeanor. Yet we should not be discouraged if our natural tendencies are less than ideal. Not only it is within our reach to refine ourselves, but we also get a greater reward for having transformed our personality for the better.

*Based on Likutei Sichos vol. XX, p. 306  
and vol. XVIII, p.122.*

## A Priestly Nation

Regarding the belt that the Kohanim wore, it is stated in Yechezkel<sup>93</sup>, “*They should not gird themselves where one sweats.*” The Talmud<sup>94</sup> explains that they should not fasten their belts as low as their hips or higher than their elbows, rather against their elbows<sup>95</sup>. The Talmud<sup>96</sup> than relates a story in connection with this law:

אמר רב אשי אמר לי הונא בר נתן זימנא חדא הוה קאימנא קמיה דאיזגדר מלכא והוה מדלי לי המיינאי ותיתייה ניהליה ואמר לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש כתיב בכך, כי אתאי קמיה דאמימר א"ל אקיים בכך והיו מלכים אומניך:  
זבחים יט.א

*Rav Ashi said, [Rav] Hunah Bar Nasan related to me that on one occasion when he had an audience with King Izgader<sup>97</sup>, his belt was fastened lower than required. The king descended from his throne to fix Rav Huna's belt, saying: “You are a nation of priests and a*

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<sup>93</sup> Yechezkel 44:18

<sup>94</sup> Zevachim, p 18b

<sup>95</sup> Rashi explains that fastening the belt too high or too low, where the Kohen would sweat, may stain the garments at that spot.

<sup>96</sup> Zevachim, p. 19a

<sup>97</sup> The Persian king ruling over Babylon at the time. It is worthwhile to note that Babylon was a “superpower” at that time.

*holy people*<sup>98</sup>, [so you have to wear it higher]”.  
When Rav Huna recounted this to Amimar<sup>99</sup>,  
Amimar told him: “The prophecy of kings  
becoming your servants<sup>100</sup> was fulfilled for  
you”.

Rashi explains that Izgader intended to point out that a Jew should present himself in a glorious fashion, as fit for a priest, therefore, he should wear his belt at the proper place, as stated in Yechezkel.

Knowing that he was going in front of the king, it would have been appropriate for Rav Huna to ensure that his appearance is perfect. Why then did he not gird his own belt in the proper position before coming to the king? Furthermore, how did Rav Huna allow the king to fix his belt? Shouldn't he have respectfully declined the king's gesture, and fix it on his own?

To understand this we must first point out that the real purpose of creation will become clear only when Moshiach will come. Meanwhile, the darkness of exile conceals this reality. So long as we are exiled in foreign lands, it appears to be as if we depend on the gentiles' favors or support in order to study Torah and perform mitzvos. But this illusion is caused by the confusion of this *Golus*. In reality, the very purpose of creation, including all of its inhabitants, is for the Jews to study

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<sup>98</sup> Yitro, 19:6

<sup>99</sup> Amimar was the *Reish Galuta* (president of the Jewish community in the Diaspora) at the time.

<sup>100</sup> Yeshaya, 49:23, referring to the times of Moshiach

Torah and perform mitzvos<sup>101</sup>. Anyone who helps a Jew do a *Mitzvah* is fulfilling his *raison d'être*. As the Mittlerer Rebbe points out:<sup>102</sup> in every generation, the country that hosts Jews is prosperous, and once the Jews are compelled to leave, the country's economy fails<sup>103</sup>.

But this reality displays itself in the form of the Jew depending on the gentile's grace. This is a consequence of the darkness and confusion of this exile in which the truth is concealed. This is why the prophet says that at the time of Moshiach, kings will be our servants<sup>104</sup>, for only then this truth will be revealed.

Certain Tzaddikim, such as Rav Huna, merited to see this reality while in exile, for at their high spiritual level, they were not confused by the fiction of exile. They were able to see and live the true purpose of creation. When a Jew lives in this manner, it is visible on him that he belongs to the "nation of priests and holy people." Therefore, when Rav Huna appeared in front of the king, they both knew that it would be proper for the king to serve him.

Nevertheless, Rav Huna should have looked presentable in the first place. To understand this, we must relate a situation recounted in the Midrash. When Zimri sinned, Moshe Rabeinu forgot what the punishment should be. Remembering that the zealous should attack

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<sup>101</sup> Rashi, Bereishis 1.1. See Tanya ch. 36.

<sup>102</sup> Toras Chayim, p. 92a

<sup>103</sup> Currently, a multitude of Jews live in the United States, thus this country is today's economic and military "superpower".

*Likutei Sichos* vol. XX, p. 142.

<sup>104</sup> See Yesha'yah 60:10

such sinners, Pinchas stabbed Zimri and his companion<sup>105</sup>. One may wonder how Pinchas could have remembered what Moshe had forgotten. The Midrash<sup>106</sup> answers that Hashem wanted to grant Pinchas the gift of priesthood. For that reason He caused Moshe to forget, so Pinchas would remember, take action, and thereby merit priesthood. Similarly, Hashem made Rav Huna oblivious to his appearance in order to give the king the opportunity to serve him, so Rav Huna would already benefit from the revelations that are reserved for the world to come.

Every story and its commentary has a message we can apply in our own life, particularly, such a story which is told as part of the Talmud. What can we take from this event knowing that we are not at Rav Huna's level, but rather subjected to the false impressions of exile?

We must realize that since the exile is only temporary, we should not be intimidated by it. If we would be aware of the true purpose of the entire existence and all of humanity, we would present ourselves as "a nation of priests and holy people", and not try to assimilate in order to appease or please our neighbors. This concept is particularly relevant to the situation in the holy land, where politicians believe that in order to gain recognition by other nations, we must compromise on *Halacha* and security. We learn from this story that, on the contrary, by standing strong with our conviction, we will gain their respect and their support.

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<sup>105</sup> See Bamidbar 25:7-8

<sup>106</sup> Tanchuma, Balak Ch. 20.

To gain the world's proper recognition, we always stand with "the pride of Jacob"<sup>107</sup> and vigorously conduct our lives as Jews, without paying attention to the trends that surrounds us. Showing our commitment only to Hashem and His Torah, we will merit a preview of the imminent redemption<sup>108</sup>, when "strangers shall stand and pasture your sheep, and foreigners shall be your plowmen"<sup>109</sup>.

*Based on Likutei Sichos vol. XX p. 142,  
vol. XXIV p. 175, vol. XXIX p. 307  
and Hisvaadyos 5742, p. 2165.*

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<sup>107</sup> Tehilim 47:5

<sup>108</sup> Especially now that we are at the time of "Erev Shabbos after Chatzos" - the end of the sixth millennium, a time in which we get a taste of the "Shabbos food", the revelations of the times of Moshiach.

<sup>109</sup> Yeshayahu 61:5, see Rashi and Radak ibid.



תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## The Shiloach

תני רשב"ג שילוח היה מקלח מים בכאיסר, צוה המלך  
והרחיבוהו כדי שיתרבו מימיו ונתמעטו, וחזרו ומיעטוהו  
והיה מקלח מים, לקיים מה שנאמר אל יתהלל חכם בחכמתו  
ואל יתהלל גבור בגבורתו  
ערכין י.ב.

*Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel taught:  
The Shiloach<sup>110</sup> was trickling forth through a  
mouth of the size of an issar<sup>111</sup>. The king  
commanded and it was widened so that its  
waters be increased, but the waters  
diminished. Thereupon it was narrowed again,  
whereupon it had its [original] flow, to make  
true that which was said<sup>112</sup>: Let not the wise  
man glory in his wisdom<sup>113</sup>, neither let the  
mighty man glory in his might.*

*Arachin 10b*

The *Maharsha* explains that the kings were anointed next to the Shiloach, as a symbol of continuous

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<sup>110</sup> The Shiluach is a man-made spring that Shlomo Hamelech drew from the Gichon river. As he did so by divine inspiration, it was considered a part of the vessels of the Beis Hamikdosh.

Rashi, *ibid*.

<sup>111</sup> A small coin (about the size of a dime).

<sup>112</sup> Yirmiyahu 9

<sup>113</sup> For the king's reasoning only damaged the spring. Rashi, *ibid*.

royalty, like the wellspring which runs forever. This king believed that if there was a strong flow, his kingdom would be strengthened, but he was proven wrong.

In this story, the king should have been satisfied with the Shiloach's water as it was. His interference with Hashem's plans only decreased the flow. He mistakenly imagined that he could change the quantity of the water using the powers that a king possesses.

A powerful message can be drawn from this story. Water symbolizes *Kabbolas ol*,<sup>114</sup> unconditional acceptance of the 'Yoke of Heaven,' which is the conduit for performing mitzvos without the precondition of comprehension. It is appropriate to attempt understanding Torah and all its commandments, as the Rambam says<sup>115</sup> "although every mitzvah should be considered a *chukka*, you should try to understand its reason .... for the mitzvos should perfect your morals and your actions." Nonetheless, we must accept the Mitzvos as they were given by the Almighty, without altering them in any way on the basis of one's own reasoning and logic.

We know that the Torah is compared to water<sup>116</sup> and Talmidei Chachomim (Torah scholars) are called "kings"<sup>117</sup>. Sometimes, a scholar might believe that having learned a great deal and having reached sublime

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<sup>114</sup> See the commentary on Nisuch Hamayim, p. 25

<sup>115</sup> end of Hilchos Tmurah, 4:13

<sup>116</sup> Sukah 7a

<sup>117</sup> Gitin 62a

levels, he is not bound to confine himself to the limitations of Halacha. He argues that his privileged position and knowledge allow him to introduce his own logic into the Torah and to alter its very structure. This is, of course, completely wrong: he must remember that he, like the king in this story, is dealing with water, which requires (and represents) *Bitul* and *Kabbolas Ol*.

This might also explain how Yochanan Kohen Gadol became a Tzedoki after serving Hashem in the Beis Hamikdosh for eighty years<sup>118</sup>. Confident that his own understanding would guide him better, he abandoned his *Kabbolas Ol* to rely on his background and became a Tzedoki, whose performance of Mitzvos is guided by his own understanding.

Although a person might be very knowledgeable in Torah, he must remain humble. In fact, even a great king is required to be humble. A Talmid Chacham must concede that even though his Torah knowledge grants him certain powers and privileges, he does not have the authority to make any changes in the Torah. Modifications of that nature will not increase the flow of the wellspring, but rather will decrease it.

*Adapted from the Sichos of Simchas Beis Hashoeivoh 5715, ch. 22, 5716, ch. 27 and 5717, ch. 13*

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<sup>118</sup> Brachos 29b

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Ish Har Habayis

During the course of each night, the guards in the Beis Hamikdosh would be inspected by their superior, *Ish Har Babayis*, the Officer of the Temple Mount, whose duty it was to ensure that the watch was being kept as required. The following Mishnah<sup>119</sup> describes the authority that he was given to punish any guard found sleeping at his post:

איש הר הבית היה מחזר על כל משמר ומשמר ואבוקות  
דולקין לפניו וכל משמר שאינו עומד אומר לו איש הר הבית  
שלום עליך ניכר שהוא ישן חובטו במקלו ורשות היה לו  
לשרוף את כסותו והם אומרים מה קול בעזרה קול בן לוי  
לוקה ובגדיו נשרפים שישן לו על משמרו רבי אליעזר בן  
יעקב אומר פעם אחת מצאו את אחי אמא ישן ושרפו את  
כסותו

מידות א,ב

*The man in charge of the Temple Mount would make the rounds to each and every guard with lit torches before him; and any guard who did not stand, the Officer of the Temple Mount would say to him, "Peace onto*

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<sup>119</sup> Middos, 1:2

you!”<sup>120</sup> *If it was apparent that he was sleeping, he would strike him with his staff, and he had permission to burn his garments*<sup>121</sup>. *And they would say “What is that noise in the Courtyard? It is the sound of a Levi being beaten and his clothing being burned, because he fell asleep on his watch.” Rabbi Eliezer Ben Yaakov says, one time they found my mother’s brother sleeping and they burned his garment.*

According to the Rosh, destroying the guards’ useful property did not consist of Bal Tashchis, because of the general rule of “*Hefker beis din hefker*”. As the Torah empowers the rabbis to legislate as they see fit regarding monetary matters and punitive damages, they may declare anyone’s property as forsaken. However, some commentators<sup>122</sup> argue that this answer cannot be acceptable, since the prohibition of Bal Tashchis applies also to property that is *hefker* or abandoned<sup>123</sup>. Thus it would still be forbidden to destroy even property that was rendered hefker by the Beis Din.

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<sup>120</sup> The purpose of this greeting is to rule out that the guard was awake but too weak to stand, or that he was lost in his thoughts and didn’t notice the Officer’s arrival.

<sup>121</sup> Only the guard’s outer garment would be burned as they didn’t want to leave him unclothed. (Tiferes Yisroel, 18)

<sup>122</sup> Ezras Kohanim on this Mishnah.

<sup>123</sup> See Shulchan Aruch Harav, Hilchos Shmiras haguf venefesh, 14.

The commentary of Ezras Kohanim<sup>124</sup> suggests that it is permissible to waste the guards' garment since that punishment was meant to deter him from sleeping on his watch ever again. But this answer is also not satisfactory, based on the Alter Rebbe's ruling<sup>125</sup> that "whoever breaks utensils or damages garments is in transgression of Bal Tashchis, even if is doing so in order to impress fear upon members of his household who are misbehaving".

To understand this, it is first necessary to note that, the Alter Rebbe makes the following statement as a preamble to the laws relating to property destruction<sup>126</sup>: "Just as one is to be careful with [not damaging] his body, in the same manner one should be careful with [not damaging] his property."<sup>127</sup> It can be inferred from this that the same rules, restrictions and derogations applicable to the laws of bodily harm are also applicable to property damages.

In the laws relating to bodily harm, the Alter Rebbe rules<sup>128</sup> that "It is forbidden to hit another person ... even depriving oneself of food or drink [is forbidden], unless it is done in order to do Tshuva, for this suffering is for his own benefit, to save his soul." Hence, although the benefit brought to the afflicted person came through hardship, this suffering is

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. see also Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah 529.

<sup>126</sup> Hilchos Smiras haguf venefesh, ibid.

<sup>127</sup> See Bava Kama, 91b, where a similar statement seems to be inverted.

<sup>128</sup> Hilchos Nizkei haguf venefesh, 4



nonetheless permissible, as it is for his own benefit. A similar exception is also found in the laws of Bal Tashchis<sup>129</sup>: while it is forbidden to cut fruit bearing trees even when besieging an enemy's city, it is permissible to do so if the trees are more valuable as lumber than they are as food resources. In other words, when the benefits of destruction outweigh the value of the object, Bal Tashchis does not apply.

As we have established above, the restrictions of Bal Tashchis apply only in the same measure as the ones related to bodily harm. Therefore, the Officer of the Temple Mount was allowed to burn the sleeping guard's garments, since the affliction was intended for the guards benefit, i.e., to prevent him from sleeping again on his watch in the future. Alternatively, we may say that the guard is to be considered the officer's employee, and in the event an employer makes such a condition with a prospective employee that he reserves the right to strike him if he isn't performing his duties, he would be allowed to do so, providing the employee accepted this condition. The reason being that since this is the only way that he would get the job, accepting the affliction is therefore for his benefit.<sup>130</sup>

It is important to note, that only Ish Har Habayis had the right to do this, being that he was appointed by the Sanhedrin with G-dly inspiration to be in charge of all the guards; however, not everyone can claim the right to punish his fellow, while claiming that it would be for his fellow's own good. This is also alluded to in

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<sup>129</sup> Hilchos Bal Tashchis, 15

<sup>130</sup> See Hilchos Nizkei guf venefesh, 4.

the name the Mishnah gives to this officer: “the man of Har Habayis.” The Talmud<sup>131</sup> associates the word *Har*, the Mount, with Avrohom Avinu, who is the epitome of love and mercy<sup>132</sup>.

Hence, a person permeated with love, as implied by the title *Ish Har Habayis*, certainly tries to influence the people on his watch in a pleasant and merciful manner; when such an officer assesses the situation and concludes that, as a last resort and for the benefit of the guard, he must strike him with his staff or burn his garment, only such a man would be allowed to do so under these particular circumstances. For the rest of us, the only option is to judge others favorably and gently reprimand them in the most positive manner.

*Adapted from the Sicha of  
Erev Rosh Chodesh Av 5736, ch. 6*

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<sup>131</sup> Pessachim 88a

<sup>132</sup> See Maamarim Kuntressim, vol. I, p. 39

תשורה משמחת הנישואין של משה וברכה דהאן

## Rabbi Chiya's Teaching Methodology

The Zohar<sup>133</sup> relates the following story regarding Rabbi Chiya's ability to recognize his students' intentions when studying Torah:

דהא רבי חייא כד אתא מהתם לארעא דישראל קרא באורייתא עד דהוו אנפוי נהירין כשמשא. וכד הוו קיימין קמיה כל אינון דלעאן באורייתא, הוה אמר דא אשתדל באורייתא לשמה ודא לא אשתדל לשמה, והוה צלי על ההוא דאתעסק לשמה דליהוי הכי תדיר ויזכי לעלמא דאתי, וצלי על ההוא דלא אתעסק בה לשמה דייתי לאתעסקא בה לשמה ויזכי לחיי עלמא. יומא חד חמא חד תלמיד דהוה לעי באורייתא ואנפוי מוריקן, אמר ודאי מהרהר בחטאה איהו דנא. אחיד ליה לקמיה ואמשיך עליה במלין דאורייתא עד דאתיישב רוחיה בגויה. מן ההוא יומא ולהלאה שוי על רוחיה דלא ירדוף בתר אינון הרהורין בישינ וישתדל באורייתא לשמה.

זוהר וישב, קצ.א.

*When Rabbi Chiya came from there [Babylonia] to the land of Israel, he studied Torah until his face was shining like the sun. When his students who were immersed in*

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<sup>133</sup> Zohar Vayeshev, 190a

*Torah study would all stand before him, he would assert: “this one is learning lishmo (solely for the sake of fulfilling Hashem’s commandment) and this one is not”. He would pray that those who learned lishmo should continue to do so and therefore merit a share in the world to come, and those who do not should begin to learn lishmo and merit to see the everlasting life.*

*One day, he noticed a student whose face was turning yellow. He deduced that this particular man was having sinful thoughts. He took him aside and taught him until he decided never to follow such thoughts and began to learn Torah lishmo.*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok explains<sup>134</sup> that Rabbi Chiya had, in fact, three types of students: those who studied Torah lishmo, the ones who studied neither lishmo nor shelo lishmo but without any particular purpose, and finally, the ones who had ulterior motive in learning, for instance, to become a Rosh Yeshiva and gain respect. Rabbi Chiya was satisfied with the first, prayed for the second to improve, and personally addressed the third, for in such a case, praying would not be enough, action would be required. The student mentioned in this story needed more attention

But why was it necessary for Rabbi Chiya to proclaim publicly that some of the students were not studying lishmo? Approaching them personally and discreetly would seem to be a more effective way of

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<sup>134</sup> Likutei Levi Ytzchok, p. 108

bringing about change in their way of learning, particularly when such a public statement might cause embarrassment to these students, an act comparable to bloodshed<sup>135</sup>. Suggesting that Rabbi Chiya did indeed address his students privately does not seem to be plausible, as indicated in the Zohar's wording: "When all of his students would stand before him studying Torah, he would say, this one is learning lishmo and this one is not", implying that these statements were made in everyone's presence.

We must therefore conclude that Rabbi Chiya's observations were made in public to benefit every one of his disciples, in order to trigger some envy amongst them, for "jealousy amongst pulpits will increase wisdom"<sup>136</sup>. Were Rabbi Chiya to approach each student individually, the ones not learning lishmo would argue that their master is demanding from them a type of devotion that is unattainable by a young scholar, whereas pointing out to the entire student body that most of the students did reach this level eliminates the possibility for any excuses, and instead it encourages the students not learning lishmo to be more diligent and reach the level of their peers. Rabbi Chiya's assertion brought a kind of jealousy that prompted each and every student to put in more effort in order to fulfill his potential.

A story told in the Zohar, as any part of the Torah, must bear a message that is relevant to our daily life, even if we are not of Rabbi Chiya's stature.

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<sup>135</sup> Bava Metzia 58b

<sup>136</sup> Bava Basra 21b

Following Rabbi Chiya's example by fulfilling one's own obligation of studying Torah properly is not sufficient, it is necessary to ensure that other people will also study Torah, even those who are “having sinful thoughts” ought to be drawn to study in the appropriate fashion. Rabbi Chiya did not rebuke these students; rather, he invested even more energy in them than he did for ordinary students.

Some of the seemingly insignificant details in this story will further elucidate this message. Rabbi Chiya's name, from the root Chai, denotes vitality. Only if Torah is your life you may reprimand another for not learning lishmo. Ordinary people such as ourselves must give everyone else the benefit of the doubt. But this is not the only prerequisite. The Zohar mentions that Rabbi Chiya acted this way only after coming to Israel from Babylonia. The underlining difference between the two countries is that, as stated in the Talmud<sup>137</sup>, Babylonian scholars forcefully argued with one another in their exegeses, whereas the scholars of Eretz Yisrael feebly reasoned each other in order to peacefully clarify the law. As opposed to the Babylonian exiles, the holiness of Israel made it possible for its inhabitants to shed light on the Talmud without any argument. Therefore, the fact that Rabbi Chiya was then in Israel indicates that the reprimand must be done pleasantly and agreeably, in the way that is typical to Eretz Yisrael's scholars. Furthermore, it is pointed out “when he came from there (Babylonia) to the land of Israel” alluding to an ascension from a less than perfect place

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<sup>137</sup> Sanhedrin 24a

to a lofty stature, implying that anyone can always reach higher grounds.

From another perspective, we see that Rabbi Chiya personally took care of his unfit students. He did not leave this task up to someone who was not as occupied as he was, for when one takes upon himself to reach out and bring another Jew closer to G.d, he will also benefit. This particularly selfless trait observed in Rabbi Chiya's character could also be found in another event told in the Talmud<sup>138</sup>:

Rabbi Chiya would plant and harvest flax to make nets in order to catch deer. He would then take their deer's skin and make parchment, write the Torah on five scrolls and go to villages that did not have a Torah teacher. He would then gather five children, teach each one of them one of the scrolls and tell them to teach the scroll that each one knows to the other four boys. And thus each one of the five boys knew the entire Chumash.

Despite his greatness, Rabbi Chiya went himself to these remote villages, so remote that they did not even have one person capable of teaching Torah to children. Moreover, he was personally involved in every step of harvesting the flax, hunting, tanning and writing the scrolls, such activities that do not require the involvement of a man like Rabbi Chiya. Any one of his assistants could have completed these time-consuming chores. Yet, he insisted in doing it all himself, showing us to what extent one should go to spread the wellsprings of the Torah.

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<sup>138</sup> Kesubos 103b



We can also deduce that no action is unimportant when preparing for the precious duty of educating our children. Every phase of the preparations for this Mitzvah might be as important as performing the Mitzvah itself, and should therefore be fulfilled with the same enthusiasm. We also see that Rabbi Chiya expected no less devotion from his young disciples. Just like him, they cannot be satisfied with their own progress; they have the responsibility to share their knowledge with others, regardless of the recipient's condition. For this exceptional teaching methodology Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi exclaimed<sup>139</sup>: “How great are the deeds of Chiya!”

*Based on Hisvaadyos 5743, p.709, 5744 p. 716,  
5745 p. 918 and Likutei Sichos Vol. XVII, p. 386*

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<sup>139</sup> Kesubos, ibid.

לזכות

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**דהאן**

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בשעה טובה ומוצלחת

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