

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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RABBI YITZCHOK
HISIGER, EDITOR

DESIGN & LAYOUT:
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WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY

L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

NOW I KNOW

Zera Shimshon, by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל תְּשַׁלַּח יָדְךָ אֶל הַנֶּעֱר וְאֵל תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מֵאֲמֹמָה כִּי עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי
כִּי יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּךָ וְלֹא חִשְׁבָתְךָ אֶת בְּנִי אֶת יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי.

And He said, "Do not send forth your hand at the lad nor do anything to him, for now I know that you are G-d fearing, and you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me" (22:12).

The words "now I know" have a special message for us.

There is no question that Avraham Avinu always fulfilled the *mitzvos*, not just now. What happened suddenly to cause Hashem to say, "Now I know"?

Also, what is the significance of the word *mimenu*, "from Me"? The Torah could have just as easily written, "You have not withheld your son, your only son," without using the seemingly extra word *mimenu*. Why is it there?

Avraham Avinu personified *chesed* in every way, sharing of his goodness with the entire world. However, the fact that he was so perfect could lead a person to believe that Avraham Avinu was just a good-natured person who had been born with an exceptionally wonderful heart, which compelled him to obey Hashem's commands.

Following this train of thought, you might say that Avraham Avinu kept the *mitzvos* because he liked pleasing people (and certainly Hashem), not because he had fear of Hashem or because he loved Hashem, just because he had been given a list of instructions and asked to fulfill them.

And if that was indeed the case and he was only carrying out the *mitzvos* because he was a nice person who liked pleasing others, then he didn't deserve any major reward for his actions!

Hashem therefore presented him with a series of very difficult tests culminating

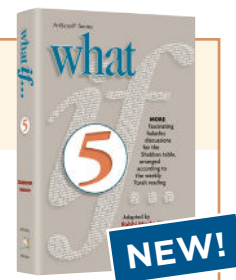
with *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the order to sacrifice his son atop Mount Moriah. Such an action went against everything Avraham Avinu represented. When Hashem saw that Avraham was ready to carry out this command as well, He had the greatest proof in the world that everything Avraham Avinu had done until that point was not because of his nature, but rather because of the fear and love that he felt for Hashem, which was embedded in his heart and soul.

HE SERVED HASHEM WITH ALL HIS HEART AND SOUL.

This, then, is what the Torah means when it uses the words "now I know," since until that time there had been some uncertainty about Avraham Avinu's true motivation. Now, however, everyone understood that Avraham's behavior stemmed from his fear of Hashem and an intense desire to honor his Creator.

For this reason, the Torah uses the word *mimenu*, "from Me," stressing that all of Avraham's actions were taken on Hashem's behalf, and that he would do anything Hashem asked him to do, no matter how difficult or against his nature it may be, because he served Hashem with all his heart and soul, and not because of his nature. 📖

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QUESTION:

Yankel had tangled with the authorities and was sentenced to pay a fine of \$100,000. He decided to appeal the case, and before he appeared in the appeals court, he made a vow. If Hashem would help him win the appeal and absolve him from the \$100,000 fine, Yankel would give \$20,000 to *tzedakah*.

The judge was inclined to exonerate Yankel from most of the charges against him, and he decided to cut the fine from \$100,000 to \$20,000.

Now Yankel wants to know what to do about his pledge. Since he was only partially absolved, does that mean that his pledge is not binding at all, since he stipulated that he should be freed of the fine in its entirety, or, since he received an 80 percent discount, perhaps he should fulfill 80 percent of his pledge to the tune of \$16,000. What should he do?

ANSWER:

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh De'ah* 218:7) delineates that the key to understanding a vow is to investigate the motivation that spurred the person to utter the vow in order to deduce his real intention. That means that we should follow the context in which the vow was made, and not the literal meaning of the words that were said. Although Yankel did not mention in his vow a partial waiver of the fine, the circumstance in which he made his pledge is telling. He certainly intended to obligate himself even if part of the fine would be waived, and especially if a whopping

80 percent would be forgiven. Therefore, Yankel is obligated to give \$16,000 to *tzedakah*.

However, it would seem that if he starts to haggle over the cost after Hashem had mercy on him and saved him from a tremendous loss, he would be considered a



Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein

HE WOULD NOT WANT HASHEM TO BE SO EXACTING WITH HIM, EITHER.

fool. He should be sensible and pay his entire pledge of \$20,000.

The *Responsa Yashiv Moshe* (Vol. 2, *Siman* 211) was asked concerning someone who pledged *tzedakah* on condition that he would find something that he had lost, and he eventually found it in someone else's possession. The one who found it refused to return more than half of it, as he wanted to keep the other half. The original owner wanted to know if he was required to fulfill his pledge, and if so, how much he was to give to *tzedakah*.

The *Yashiv Moshe* originally wanted to exempt him from paying anything, since the words of his vow imply that he should find the entire

item that he lost. In addition, most lost items, if they are found, are found whole. Moreover, the intent behind the pledge was that he will find it and be happy that he did not lose it, after all. Now that he found only half of it and is still upset over having lost the other half, the stipulation of the vow has not been fulfilled.

(This would not be a precedent for our case, since in the incident described in the *Yashiv Moshe* the man had made the condition "if he would find his lost item." In such a case, it is logical that he meant to find it completely, as most lost items are found in their entirety. In the case of a heavy fine, any amount by which it is reduced is significant, and even more so if the bulk of the fine was waived.)

The *Yashiv Moshe* concludes that the person should be stringent and pay the proportionate sum of the value that he recovered, as he is partially relieved to have recovered whatever he did.

In our case, there is even more reason for Yankel to minimally pay the proportionate value of what was waived, which would be \$16,000, as that is included in his original vow, as explained above. If he is wise, he will not be so exacting and he will simply pay the whole amount, as he would not want Hashem to be so exacting with him, either.

In summary, even if according to the strict *halachah* Yankel is obligated to pay only \$16,000, it would be appropriate for him to give \$20,000 to *tzedakah*.

Rav Yitzchak of Vorka had a *chassid*, Shimon, who was very wealthy, but was an extreme miser, not spending money even on himself. Each day, he would eat a small amount of black bread and salted fish.

Rav Yitzchak addressed his *chassid* about his tightfisted conduct.

“My dear Shimon,” said Rav Yitzchak, “if *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* blessed you with wealth, you should use your money to live comfortably, eating full meals of meat and fish each day, along with some wine.”

Chassidim who heard of Rav Yitzchak’s comments were bewildered. Why did it bother the Rebbe that Shimon ate frugally? And why admonish Shimon to eat more extravagantly?

Rav Yitzchak explained: “Don’t think that I am concerned for Shimon to lavish on himself fancy foods and indulge in worldly excesses. What I am



Rav Yitzchak Hutner

concerned about is how he treats the poor and needy. If he eats meat and fish each day, and drinks wine, then he’ll at least give the destitute folk some bread and salted fish. But if he’s only eating

IF ONE SPENDS MORE ON HIMSELF, HE IS MORE LIKELY TO SPEND MORE ON OTHERS.

bread and cheap fish, what can the impoverished expect to get from him?”

My father, Rav Yisroel Hisiger, told me that his rosh yeshivah, Rav Yitzchak Hutner, is quoted as having said that if a wealthy individual makes a lavish affair, he is then more likely to give more generously to others.

This is an important lesson, especially when we hear people questioning the manner in which those blessed with material wealth spend their money. Remember: If one spends more on himself, he is more likely to spend more on others. 📖

NEW!



The Shimoff Edition Introduction of the Talmud

Rav Chananel – רב חננאל
Amora / Babylonia

Second-generation Amora
and student of Rav

Rav Chananel was one of the main students of Rav, whose teachings he cites many times in the Talmud.

One of his close colleagues was Rav Beruna, another student of Rav. The Talmud records several incidents in which they took part (*Pesachim* 103a-b, *Yevamos* 110a). Other colleagues of Rav Chananel were Rav Huna (Rav’s successor as *rosh yeshiva*) and Rav Chisda. Since Rav Chananel was very knowledgeable about

Rav’s rulings, the sages would ask him what his teacher held about certain matters (see *Bechoros* 24b).

Among Rav Chananel’s students

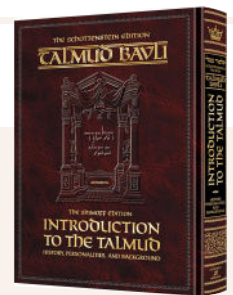
**“THE ENTIRE TORAH
COULD BE WRITTEN
FROM YOUR MEMORY.”**

were Rav Ikka bar Avin and Rav Ze’ira. Rav Chananel’s son was Rav Yehoshua (*Yerushalmi Megillah* 1:9).

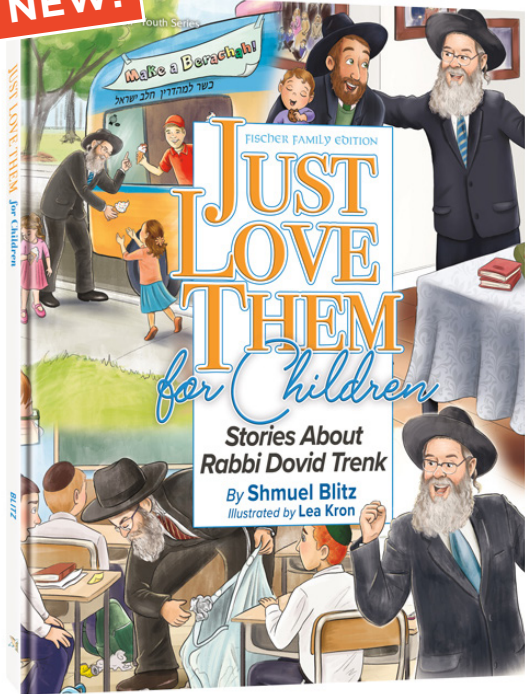
Rav Chananel was a scribe by profession (*Tosafos*; see *Moed Katan* 19a and *Yerushalmi* *ibid.* 3:4) and had absolute recall of the entire Torah. Rav Chisda once found

Rav Chananel writing Books of Scripture from memory, rather than copying from a text as was the accepted practice. Rav Chisda told him, “The entire Torah could be written from your memory, but the sages have already ruled that it is forbidden to write even one letter of a Scriptural scroll unless it is copied from a text” (*Megillah* 18b).

Unsurprisingly, many of Rav Chananel’s teachings concern the laws of writing Torah Scrolls, *tefillin*, and *mezuzos* (see, for example, *Yerushalmi Megillah* 1:9 and *Menachos* 30b, 31b, and 34b). 📖



NEW!



The Freezer

FROM THE NEW

Just Love Them for Children - Stories About Rabbi Dovid Trenek

by Shmuel Blitz, illustrated by Lea Kron

One winter afternoon, Rebbetzin Leah Trenek went to a woman's home to drop off a package. Walking into the apartment, she could not believe what she saw. The woman was so poor! There were holes in the walls, and hardly any furniture.

When the Rebbetzin's husband, Rabbi Dovid Trenek, came home that evening, she told him about what she'd seen in the woman's house. "She even had her food sitting outside in the snow on the windowsill to keep it frozen, because there was no freezer inside the house. It was so sad," Rebbetzin Leah said.

Rabbi Trenek nodded his head sympathetically, but did not say a word.

The next week, without even telling his wife, he went to an appliance store and bought a brand new freezer. He used his own money to pay for it. Then he went back to Adelpchia Yeshivah and picked up a few students in his car.

"Boys," he said, "please come with me to do a big mitzvah. Help me deliver this freezer to a woman's home. This will make her very happy."

He had already told the woman that the freezer would not cost her a penny. He didn't want her to feel embarrassed, so he explained that a family had moved away and could not take it with them. "I will bring it to your home with the help of a few of my students," he explained.

For Rabbi Trenek this was just another day, and just another good deed. It was not important that anyone else knew what he'd done, not his students and not even his wife.

Rebbetzin Trenek would never have known about this, but when she was sitting shivah after Rabbi Trenek passed away, this woman came to visit. She told the Rebbetzin about the freezer Rabbi Trenek had brought to her and how grateful she was. The Rebbetzin quickly figured out what had really happened. No one had moved away, and her husband had gone to the store himself to buy it for her. That was who he was. ■

Rabbi Trenek preferred that nobody knew when he helped others. How many good deeds like this did he do during his life? Only Hashem knows!



WIN A \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD!

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Vayeira:

Why was Lot's wife turned into salt, and not something like pepper or cinnamon?

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.

The winner of the Bereishis question is:

TUVIA ALEXANDER ZWIEBEL, Lakewood, NJ

The question was: What kind of fruit tree was the Eitz Hada'as? The answer is: There are many opinions. It was one of the following: esrog, wheat, figs, or grapes. (Many people think that it was an apple, but that is a mistake.)

