

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan

At the Door

Rav Shlomo Levenstein shlita once relayed how a Jew in Bnei Brak was diagnosed with a terminal illness, the prognosis being only a matter of weeks left for him. It had been caught much too late and its metastasizing had left the man in a dire predicament. Caught in a daze by the dreadful news, the man exited the hospital with his mind racing. But then he paused, wondering to himself what he could possibly do now and where he could go.

Whenever he had experienced issues in his life in the past, he had gone to Meron to the gravesite of Rav Shimon bar Yochai with a Tehillim in hand and sit there and pour out his heart until he finished the entire sefer. And each and every time, like clockwork, he'd return home and there would already be good news waiting for him. At the thought of this, he instantly decided that he'd head to Meron. There, he would implore Hashem, the Ultimate Healer.

On his way, he bumped into someone who was very close to Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l. After expressing his woes, the confidant of Rav Chaim said, "Before you visit Meron, why don't you go see Rav Chaim? You're here in Bnei Brak and you just heard this news. Wait for a few minutes and I'll get you an appointment. Visit the Gadol HaDor and receive a beracha (blessing)." Being handed

this offer, the man complied. "It can't hurt," he thought to himself.

Later that afternoon, the man entered the home of Rav Chaim and informed him of what the doctors had just told him. "The disease spread everywhere and it's very serious," he said. Looking back at the man, Rav Chaim sighed. "Yes, it is very difficult. This is serious." But then Rav Chaim looked back and asked, "Do you remember that I was in your house eight years ago..." At the sound of this, the individual who had ushered the man into Rav Chaim's home grew shocked. This man had Rav Chaim visit him? How did that occur? The man smiled. Rav Chaim had in fact come to his home eight years ago. Rav Chaim too, noticing the exchanged glances between the men, encouraged the man to disclose why the visit had been made.

"My wife, who I married eight years ago, had previously experienced a broken engagement. It hadn't been the smoothest end to a relationship, and following it, things turned rotten. A lot of feelings were hurt and hearts broken. My current wife along with the boy she had been dating tried moving on with their lives, and sure enough, a short time later we met. At that point, she felt more settled and content.

"After we got married, we started living our life in Bnei Brak. Then, one evening, there was a knock on the door. And who was standing at the door? The great Rav Chaim

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Kanievsky zt"l. Shocked to see the Gadol HaDor at our doorstep, we welcomed him into their home and inquired what brought him to here. Rav Chaim then explained.

"Your wife experienced a broken engagement," Rav Chaim began saying to me. "I heard that when the engagement was broken, there were a lot of hard feelings and hurt. Ever since then, the boy's family started coming down with all sorts of sicknesses and illnesses. The man himself went into a terrible depression. I know that it is because of the hurt and broken heart of your now wife. Rav Chaim pulled out a piece of paper and turned to the wife and said, 'Please, forgive the man. Sign here, at the bottom of the paper, that you forgive the man's family and the man himself with a full hurt.'"

The wife looked at Rav Chaim and began to get teary-eyed. "No," she said. "I will not forgive. You don't know how broken they made me become. They broke me to pieces. I will never forgive." Rav Chaim began to plead to the wife, asking her to find compassion in her heart. "Baruch Hashem, you found your husband. You're happy now, and you have a beautiful home and a beautiful life awaits you. Let it go."

Taking in Rav Chaim's words, the wife let up. "I can't say no to you, Rav Chaim. I'll sign the piece of paper, but

I am telling you that in my heart it's worthless. I will never forgive him until the grave." When Rav Chaim heard this, he began imploring with her over and over, time ticking by minute by minute.

Only after a very long discussion and much back-and-forth did she finally wholeheartedly and sincerely agree to forgive him and sign the paper, adding. "I forgive him, I forgive him, I forgive him." Rav Chaim took the paper, turned to her husband and said, "Listen, now that your wife forgave him, I want you to hold onto this piece of paper. Keep it."

And now, eight years later, when Rav Chaim asked the man if he remembered Rav Chaim visiting him, all the memories of that evening came back. Rav Chaim then proceeded to ask the important question. "Do you have the paper that your wife signed?" "Yes, I do," the man replied. "If so, go back home, retrieve the paper from your house, and take it with you to Meron. When you come in front of Rav Shimon bar Yochai, pull out the paper and say, 'Borei Olam (Creator of the World), remember this paper. It shows how my wife forgave the man who broke the engagement with her. She enabled him to be able to go on and become somebody else's husband and build a family. In the merit that

my wife forgave him, give her now her husband back and allow him to continue raising a family."

The man proceeded to head back home, pull the paper out from the back of the drawer, and make his way to Meron. Once there, he began to pour his heart out in Tehilim. And then he pulled the paper out, and said, "Borei Olam, here it is. My wife signed this paper. She forgave the man, and allowed him to go on and become someone's husband. Now, please, give her back her husband. Send her husband a clean bill of health." With those words, he finished his Tehilim, got back into his car and left.

A few days later, the man went back into the hospital for the next round of check-ups and he insisted that they take x-rays again. And they did, taking them from head to toe. And they found absolutely nothing."

In the times of the Beit Hamikdash, salt accompanied sacrifices. Today's sacrifices may not be accompanied as such, but they are accompanied by forgiveness of others. Those sacrifices we offer up on High come through forgiving and letting go within the heart. It is the portal for much blessing to enter our lives and the life of our family.

Rabbi Nissan Hakakian

How Many Beds?

The Chofetz Chaim was once approached by a group of supporters and asked if he would attend a gathering for the sake of raising funds to build a hospital. Hearing of such a worthy cause, the Chofetz Chaim agreed to participate.

In walked dozens of people, all keen on having a hand in the con-

struction and development of the hospital. As in those days, individuals would donate a select number of beds which would eventually be placed in the hospital. And so began the process. "I'll donate twenty beds!" one man called out. "Fifty beds!" yelled out another. As each man proceeded to donate the number of beds he desired, he was af-

forded the honor of being asked to sit in front, near the Chofetz Chaim.

As the donation process carried on, the Chofetz Chaim at one point stood up and noticed a yeshiva bachur who had walked in. Immediately, he motioned to the boy to come to the front and take a seat next to him. Seeing this, all

eyes turned in shock. Here, several philanthropists and donors were contributing their hard-earned money to receive the respect and honor of sitting next to the Chofetz Chaim, and without doing a thing, this yeshiva bachur walks in and gets called up to the front! Leaning into a whisper, several participants began murmuring to each other, "How many beds did he donate?"

Turning around, the Chofetz Chaim remarked, "All those gathered here are donating beds for those who are sick. But this boy is learning Torah and he is making sure that there are no sick people to begin with!"

The power of Torah study is above and beyond. When you open a sefer and imbue your mind with the wisdom of Hashem, you

are accessing the most powerful dose of blessing in the world. With a single word that you learn, you save a person from undergoing medical, mental or emotional suffering. Your Torah reaches the high Heavens and enters the homes and sanctuaries of our Jewish brothers and sisters to provide the ultimate security for life.

Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

Boruch Hashem

I called a friend whom I hadn't spoken to for a while. "How are you doing.... How's life" I asked. "Ehh..." "What's ehh?" "Ehh is ehh" she responded. What ever happened to Boruch HaShem, I wondered.

Boruch HaShem. Blessed be HaShem. Words to live by. Words that identify us as Am Yisroel, HaShem's nation. The air we breathe, the clothes we wear, the food on our table. Our homes, our families, our friends. So much to be grateful for. Every moment is precious. Every day is a Boruch HaShem day.

"Vayishma Yisro, and Yisro heard" (Shemos 18:1). In this week's parsha, Yisro, priest of Midyan, father-in-law of Moshe, and quintessential truth-seeker, hears of all the miracles HaShem did for the Jewish people. Rashi explains that Yisro heard about the splitting of the sea, the war with Amalek, the manna from heaven, and the be'er, the well of Miriam. All were the "news stories" of the day. Upon learning of these miraculous events, Yisro was inspired to trek through the desert

and meet up with Moshe and Bnei Yisroel.

The Ohr HaChaim teaches that Yisro was a true friend of Bnei Yisroel, and wanted to hear everything, down to the very last detail. "And Moshe told his father-in-law everything that HaShem did to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for the sake of Bnei Yisroel" (Shemos 18:8) By Moshe telling over the story, it confirmed to Yisro that yes, it was all true, the great miracles really did happen. Furthermore, Yisro's learning of the Exodus second-handedly cannot be compared to hearing the stories from Moshe, who actually experienced the events.

"And Yisro said, Boruch HaShem..." (Shemos 18:10) Yisro's immediate reaction was to thank HaShem. The same Boruch HaShem that we say so often. The words of an Am Kodosh, a holy nation, who attribute everything to HaShem. The ability to recognize the blessings in life. To live with words of gratitude on our lips.

I grew up in a home where every other word was Boruch HaShem. When my mother a"h would receive

a compliment, she responded with Boruch HaShem, Chasdei HaShem. In later years, when each each of my parents experienced illness and great pain, the words Boruch HaShem were still with them.

Herman, a member of my parents' shul, would frequent a local nursing home, spending time with the residents. One year, when Chanukah came around, Herman wanted to go out of his way to bring joy and a smile to their faces. He purchased boxes of chocolates to gift the residents.

One problem. The head nurse told him that many residents were on restricted diets, and unable to eat sweets. She was very apologetic, but made it clear that Herman could not distribute the chocolates. Herman wasn't fazed. Always the quick thinker, he seized the opportunity to thank the nursing home staff for their kind service, and distributed the chocolates to them.

When Herman handed a box of chocolates to Rita, an African-American nurse, she responded with a joyous Boruch HaShem.

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Herman laughed. He couldn't help but ask Rita from where she learned to say Boruch HaShem. "Oh, I was a home attendant for a very holy rabbi in Brooklyn. Whenever anyone came to visit, he smiled and said Boruch HaShem." Herman was curious and asked for the name of that rabbi. "Rabbi Abraham Jungreis.... The kindest rabbi." How happy Herman was to share the story with my parents. Rabbi Avraham Jungreis was my zeide.

Whenever I teach Torah classes, I find that I gain insight and a better understanding of concepts and ideas that we don't often give much thought to.

I was teaching Parshas Yisro. A discussion ensued about Yisro's words of Boruch HaShem. After class, one of the participants approached me and asked if I knew what she found difficult about becoming religious. I began to guess. Kashrus? Shabbos? Dressing modestly? She told me it was none of the above. I gave up.

"Boruch HaShem", she told me. Boruch HaShem? I didn't get it. She explained. "It used to be when I asked people how they were doing, I heard a whole story. I heard about their dates, their husbands, their in-laws, their children. I heard all about the ups and downs in their lives. Now, when I ask my religious friends how they are, the response is always Boruch HaShem. Where do you go from there in conversation?"

It was then that I realized the added benefit of Boruch HaShem. It's a protection from loshon hora, wrongful gossip. How are you? Boruch HaShem. End of discussion. The issue of TMI (Too Much Info) doesn't even exist.

Additionally, each time we say Boruch HaShem, it subconsciously impacts our neshama. It sensitizes us to these special words and strengthens our connection to HaShem. Without even realizing it, we are reminded that HaShem is the source of all good in our life.

This past week, I was menachem

ovel a family who were sitting shiva for a young, beautiful daughter, Hinda bas Mordechai a"h. A girl who was filled with life and spirit even during illness. A girl from whom we can all learn so much.

The mother shared a most inspiring story. She related that as the family sat around the Rosh HaShana table, each child expressed what they will be davening for. Even though Hindy was not well at the time, she said that she will not ask – she will thank.

Each of the verses in Eishes Chayil speaks of the many strengths of the Jewish woman. "Lo yichbeh balaila neira, At night her light is not extinguished." To remain full of spirit and hope even during the "nighttime" of life, the dark and difficult days. Hindy had the ability to say Boruch HaShem. To recognize the blessings in her life – even during challenging times. May the lesson taught to us by Hindy be an aliyas neshama, an elevation for her neshama.

Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l

To the Last Minute

If you look through the life of Yosef HaTzaddik, the way he relates to his brothers is hard to fathom. These were the brothers who wanted to kill him, sell him, who put him in jail and who sold him into slavery to Egypt where he'd have no minyan or yeshiva. And there, in Egypt, he was surrounded by the worst people in the world. And yet, instead of getting angry and taking revenge,

he was the one who fed them, built up their city, took care of them and said, "Don't worry... I love you." He accepted them.

The final Parsha in Sefer Bereishis, Vayechi, is a Parsha of acceptance and forgiveness. What greater way to end the book of Bereishis in which Hashem created the world and created man than discuss a man who represented acceptance, forgiveness, love and breaking his

nature.

When we read the final words, "And he was buried in Egypt," we say the words, 'Chazak, Chazak V'nischazek.' Yosef never forgot the love that he had for his brothers. Even to the last minute, and with his final breath, he took care of them as one brother to another.

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Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 22 Shevat)

פרננדו סימון בן טניה (מרמן) צחי בן דבורה (עידן) קית' שמואל בן גלדיס (סיגל) קרינה בת אירינה (ארייב) רום בן תמר (ברסלבסקי) רומי בת מירב (גונן) רון בן חנה (בנימין) שגב בן גלית (כלפון) שגיב בן נעמית (חן דקל) שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס) שלומי בן רוזיטה (זיו) שלמה בן מרסיל (מנצור) תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	קרמל בת כנרת (גת) לואיס נורבטו בן נורה (הר) ליאור בן מיכל (רודאפי) לירי בת שירה (אלבג) מישל בן סולמירה (ניסנבאום) מקסים בן טלה (הרקין) מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט) מתן בן ירדנה (צנגאוקר) נדב בן חנה (פופולוול) נועה בת ליאורה (ארגמני) נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן) נעמה בת איילת (לוי) עדן בת שירית (ירושלמי) עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ) עוז בן מירב (דניאל) עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט) עומר בן שלי (שם) טוב) עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה) עידו בן כוכבה (קלדרון) עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר) עידן בן דלית (שתיווי) עמירם בן שרה (קופר) עמית אסתר חיה בת אילנה אלין (בוסקילה) עמרי בן אסתר ורה (מירן)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו) אריאל בן שירי (ביבס) בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין) גד משה בן שרה (מוזס) גיב בן מירב (גלבוע דלאל) גלי בן תמר (ברמן) דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו) דולב בן יעל (יהוד) דורון בת סימונה (שטיינברכר) דניאל שמעון בן שרון (פרץ) דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבוע) דרור בן דורית (אור) הירש בן רחל (גולדברג פולין) זיו בן תמר (ברמן) חיים בן נחמה (פרי) חן חנן בן ורד (יבלונקה) טל בן ניצה (שוהם) קורנגולד) יאיר בן רות אדית (הורן) יאיר בן פלור (יעקב) יגב בן אסתר (בוכשטב) יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה) יורם בן בלה (מצגר) יצחק בן אנטה (אלגרט) יצחק בן גילה (גלרנטר) ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס) כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור) אביתר בן גליה (דוד) אברהם גלעד בן ליאת (מונדר) אגם בת מירב (ברגר) אוהד בן אסתר (בן) עמי) אוהד בן אסתר (יהלומי) אור בן טלי (לוי) אורי בן עינב (דנינו) אוריאל בן נעמי (ברוך) איתי בן חגית (חן) איתן בן רות אדית (הורן) איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור) אלון בן עידיית (אהל) אליה בן סיגי (כהן) אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי) אליקים שלמה בן אבישג (ליבמן) אלכס בן אוקסנה (לובנוב) אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה (טרופנוב) אלכסנדר בן נינה (דנציג) אלמוג בן אורית (מאיר ג'אן) אלמוג בן נירה (סרוסי) אלעד בן חנה (קציר) אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט) אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי) אנדריי בן יבגניה (קוזלוב) ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
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