

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi YY Jacobson

Build the Tablets

Allow me to share with you a story you may have heard before, but teaches something more than the story itself.

There was once a father who sent his son to Hebrew school on Sunday, where they would get two to three hours of some form of Jewish education. One day, the father came to the school to get a sense of the school's atmosphere and make sure his son was growing and utilizing his time. As he arrived, he met his son in the hallway. "David, how's it going?" he asked. "How do you like the school?" David looked back at his father. "It's really amazing, Dad. I'm learning so much and it's a great environment." His father let out a smile. "That's really wonderful, David. I'm thrilled to hear." A moment of silence lingered before David's father gingerly decided on his next move. "Can you I ask you a question? It's something I've been meaning to ask you. Who broke the tablets?" David shot back a look of surprise. "I didn't do it, Dad. I wasn't involved at all. Please, understand." David's father could barely open his mouth at the mention of this. What kind of school was this after all? So he decided to find out for himself.

Making his way to David's classroom, he was met by a tall, respectable-looking, middle aged man. Mr. Cohen was his name. "Good

morning," began David's father, his reservations unguarded at this point. "You're David's teacher, right?" Mr. Cohen nodded. "Please, help me understand something. I just asked my son, 'Who broke the tablets,' and he told me that he didn't do it." Mr. Cohen looked at David's father, a trace of sincerity on his lips. "You know, I'm so sorry you're upset. I've now known your son for seven months and he's an honest boy. If he said he didn't do it, he didn't do it." At this point, the father was beside himself. The last and final stop, the only hope, would be the principal's office.

"Mr. Finkelstein, I'm David's father, and I have an important question." Mr. Finkelstein had welcomed David's father into his office at this point, and was now reclining in his chair. "Yes, please, go ahead. How can I help?" "Are you running this school?" Mr. Finkelstein wasn't sure if the question was serious. "Yes. In fact, I've been doing so for forty-two years." "Well, then you should resign!" said David's father, the last vestige of his patience slipping away. "You're doing a horrible job!" Mr. Finkelstein didn't understand. "Relax... relax... tell me, what's going on?" David's father recounted the story from start to finish. "What type of school are you running?" he finally demanded.

Mr. Finkelstein sat still as he collected his thoughts. "I know you're upset and I'm so sorry about what happened. But let me just tell you

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that on behalf of myself and the Board, we will compensate you for the broken tablets. Just give us a receipt and we will repay you. No need to be anxious about it."

The breakdown of Torah, the breakdown of the tablets of our tradition, our heritage and our destiny, starts from the top. Those who are

empowered to inspire a new generation, guide our youth and raise an age of knowledgeable and dedicated children are the ones responsible for ensuring it is done. If that isn't in place, the Luchos can easily be broken, and repair will be needed to ensure the future of the Jewish nation. However, if there is guidance and direction

in the right way, based on true Torah values and principles, in a way that inspires and uplifts, then the Luchos will remain not only intact, but forever shine brilliantly for many generations to come.

Don't break the Tablets. Build them.

Rabbi Joey Haber

We're All the Same

You come across someone asking you for some tzedakah. Pause. How do you view him and how do you view yourself? Are you different? Or are you the same?

The Torah instructs us, "Im kesef talveh et ami et he'ani imach—If you lend money to the poor man, the poor man that is with you..." What does it mean, "The poor man that is with you?" Rashi explains that it means to teach that you should look at yourself as if you are a poor man. Now, what does Rashi mean? If I lend money to a poor man, why do I have to look at myself as if I'm poor?

The message in Rashi is powerful. Sometimes we look at people the opposite way. We see someone who has less than us and we act like we feel bad. But, truthfully, there's a part of us that feels glad. There's a part of us that says, "Oh, he has less than me... Nebuch, he doesn't have so much. His life is a sad life.

I'm a lucky person. I'm driving a better car, I have a good marriage, I have wonderful children, and I have money. And this person, unfortunately, doesn't have that."

Rashi would tell you to never think that way.

Just like you shouldn't look up to somebody else and think that he is greater or better than you because he has more money and resources, don't look down at anyone else either. If you're in the position to lend money to the poor man, don't think that this means you're in a position of power, and he's in a position of weakness. Don't ever think that way. Don't ever, ever, ever think that you are better than somebody else.

I was once speaking to a wealthy philanthropist in the Jewish world, and I said, "Can you do me a favor and speak to a group of boys and inspire them?" "I'm not that way," he said. "I don't look at myself like I did

something grand or I'm someone powerful. Hashem made me fortunate. I happen to be in this position. But it's not like I have some powerful story."

If you ever meet someone who might seem beneath you, imagine that he's with you and you are with him. Don't think, "I'm successful, and I'm doing this and that, but he doesn't know what he's doing." Hashem places everyone where they are in life. It's not that "they" got themselves there. Rather, think, "That person is just the same as me." Hashem decided to give you a blessing right now, and decided to give him a challenge. But, ultimately, there's no difference between the two. We're both in the same position. We're both run by Hashem, and Hashem decides. Don't ever, ever, ever think that because you have a life of blessing, you're greater than anybody else.

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Of Deserts and Stars

Life is full of little annoyances. You smile at someone on the way to work, wish them good morning, and they look straight through you as though you didn't exist. You're waiting in line at the post office, and three other people barge in

front of you, claiming that the person in front of you was saving their place. You get back to your car and find that someone has neatly boxed you in, so you have to wait for them for fifteen minutes before they come back to the car. Life can be so full of really annoying things, and

sometimes they're even more than annoying. Sometimes you can really let yourself go and let the other person know exactly what you think of them.

The basis of all anger is conceit. What makes me think that things are supposed to be the way I want them to be? Why is it written that I have to be constantly fulfilled emotionally, financially, aesthetically, and vocationally? We live in a society that constantly teaches us that our own

self-fulfillment is the yardstick of success in life. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The yardstick of success in life is how little these annoying things annoy us.

There's a holy Jew who teaches at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. He has three life maxims. The first is: "I was created to serve others and no one was created to serve me." The second is: "I wouldn't do it to you, but if you do it to me, it's okay." Now, that doesn't mean that a person should be a doormat and invite the world to trample on him. But post facto, and as our Sages teach, if someone did something to you that you can actually take them to court for and you let it go, you're forgiven for all of your sins. Sounds like a pretty good deal. His third principle is: "Whatever I do for you is never enough. Whatever you do for me is more than I deserve."

Why did G-d give us the Torah in the desert? Because just as the desert is free for all to step on, so a Jew must be humble. To be learned in Torah, one must seek great Torah scholars and be prepared to follow their direction. A conceited person will find it difficult to believe that anyone knows better than him. Someone who is convinced of

how great he is will give scant attention to the mitzvos that he considers to be insignificant. Nor will he exert himself to fulfill the detailed requirements of those mitzvos that he must do. Nothing pleases G-d more than someone who is humble. The sole reason that Moshe Rabbeinu was selected to receive the Torah was because he was like the desert. He was the humblest of men. In fact, no one will ever reach that level of humility again. Theoretically, though, were they able to achieve that level of humility, then they too will be able to receive the Torah in its totality, just like Moshe Rabbeinu.

But alongside our aspiration to be humble and like the desert, is our purpose to reflect the stars in the heaven and recognize our beloved status in the eyes of Hashem and others.

The Book of Numbers begins with G-d commanding Moses to count the Jewish people for a third time. The first count was after the exodus from Egypt, the second after the disaster of the Golden Calf, and now again, when the Divine Presence rests on the Jewish people, G-d counts us. Why does Hashem count the Jewish people so often?

When something is dear to you, you count it. You check it constantly.

Rashi says at the beginning of the Book of Exodus that G-d counts the Jewish people to show their dearness that they are like the stars, such that He brings them out and in by their number and name. What is the connection between the Jewish people and the stars?

At the beginning of the Torah, it says, "And G-d made two great luminaries, the greater luminary to rule the day and the lesser luminary to rule the night, and the stars." Rashi says that the sun and the moon were created equal in size, in luminance, but the moon was diminished because it protested and said, "Is it possible for two kings to use the same crown?" The stars were only created after the diminution of the moon, and only to be the moon's comfort for the loss of its radiance by giving it the honor of being accompanied by myriads of lights. In other words, the entire purpose of the creation of the stars was to make the moon feel better, just as the entire creation of the stars was to be there for the moon. So the creation of each Jew is for us to be there for each other.

And when we're there for each other, we're like the stars, and we're dear in Hashem's eyes.

Rabbi Benzion Klatzko

A Dream to See

Tragedy struck in Israel. A yeshiva was taking a Lag Ba'Omer trip to visit several different holy sites of tzaddikim in Tzefas, Meron and Tveria, and they were on their way to the gravesite of the holy Yonasan

ben Uziel in Amuka. Unfortunately, the bus tipped over and rolled down a ravine, three of the boys perishing.

That night, one of the boys came to his friend in a dream. "I'm coming back down to you," he said, "because you and I learned Chumash

with Rashi b'iyun (in-depth). And we made up once, a little while ago, that whichever one of us passes away first should come to his friend in a dream and tell him what the reward is for learning Chumash with Rashi b'iyun. So I want to tell you.

Thank you for reading this edition of The TorahAnyTimes Newsletter. If you've enjoyed, please let us know – we'd love to hear from you! Email info@torahanytime.com.

They took me to a place in Gan Eden called 'Heichel shel Rashi,' the private chamber of Rashi, and I now sit at the feet of Rashi. I'm understanding the depths of Chumash and I'm hearing it from Rashi himself.

"But there's one other boy, and the way he was greeted with angels and song when he arrived in Heaven was unlike the way we were greeted. His Neshama (soul) was taken straight to the Kisei HaKavod (G-d's Throne of Glory) where he is honored as he sits next to Hashem. He is shown such great honor because he was extra careful since he was young with shemiras ha'einayim (guarding his eyes)."

The seforim tell us that if someone is careful with shemiras ha'einayim, their Neshama is brought to the Kisei HaKavod in Heaven after they pass away. The boy then continued.

"I'm going to tell you one more thing and then I have to leave because being in this dream is painful for me. I need to be back in Gan Eden. Because we were young, our passing had a great effect on provid-

ing atonement to the Jewish people. Tomorrow there's going to be a bomb on a bus in Tel Aviv, and more than twenty adults are going to pass away, may Hashem show them mercy and compassion."

The boy woke up, shaken, shocked. He ran to his Mashgiach (supervisor of the yeshiva), recounting that the boy who passed away was his chavrusa and they made up a deal that whoever would pass away first would come to the other in a dream. The Mashgiach was visibly moved, and decided that he'd tell over this story at the levaya (funeral).

Thousands of people were in attendance, and true to his intention, the Mashgiach relayed the story about the dream. That boy had been brought to the Heichel Shel Rashi, he stated, and then another boy who was careful with shemiras einayim had been brought to the Kisei HaKavod, to the highest place for all of eternity. As the Mashgiach relayed this, he began wondering if he should include

the last part of the story. He decided that he should. If he was meant to hear it, he was meant to tell it over.

"G-d forbid, it shouldn't happen," he said, "but it was predicted in this dream that there is going to be a bomb on a bus in Tel Aviv, and twenty people are going to be niftar."

People driving back from the levaya were visibly moved. And as they turned on the radio, all of the sudden, there was breaking news. A bomb on a bus in Tel Aviv. Twenty people perished.

This unfortunate true fact screams to the validity and veracity of this story. When one is careful with their eyes, they are brought to a place of greatness next to Hashem, forever and ever. There is no greater pleasure than that.

Certainly, it should be a goal of ours to be as close to Hashem as possible, and the best way to do that is to be careful with our eyes and to hold ourselves back even when we want to look.

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

A Message for You

The Gemara (Shabbos 119b) tells us if one answers Yehei Shmei Rabbah in response during Kaddish with all one's might, one can overturn evil decrees. In specific, he will be saved from the Chevlei Mashiach, the birth pangs of Mashiach. The purpose of those Chevlei Mashiach is to cause us to shout out to Hashem. One who already shouts out to Hashem through Yehei Shmei Rabbah, however, does not need any external wakeup in the form of Chevlei Mashiach to cause him to shout out.

The one who says Yehei Shmei Rabbah with great concentra-

tion causes a Kiddush Hashem by prompting G-d's Name to be sanctified both in this world and in the upper worlds. Through doing this and demonstrating that he yearns to sanctify G-d's name, he merits to nullify evil decrees. No matter what is looming over the world, an individual's yearning for the sanctification of G-d's Name is clear testimony that he yearns for Mashiach and the future building of the Beis Hamikdash.

The Chofetz Chaim often bewailed the fact that people spend money and time on all different kinds of segulos (auspicious practices), and yet the greatest segulah of all is say-

ing Yehei Shmei Rabbah. The Chofetz Chaim published a letter in the beginning of the First World War, and writes that he assumes the war to be the birth pangs of Mashiach. He urged people in every town to congregate in large numbers for all three prayers and to answer Yehei Shmei Rabbah. That way, he writes, thousands of people will surely be saved from peril, and it would be a great merit for whoever can organize such gatherings since they are bringing about their own private salvation as well as the salvation of the entire Jewish nation.

May the Yehei Shmei Rabbah from all of the Jews throughout the world and from all the soldiers who scream it before they go into battle cause great salvation, and may we all be protected as Hashem's great Name is revealed in this world.

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 29 Iyar)

עומר בן שלי (שם טוב)	גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)	אבינתן בן דיצה (אור)
עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)	גיא בן מירב (גלבוע דלאל)	אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)	גלי בן טליה (ברמן)	אברהם גלעד בן אמונה (מונדר)
עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)	דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)	אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
עידן בן דלית (שתיו)	דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)	אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי)
עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)	דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבוע)	אוהד בן אסתר (יהלומי)
צחי בן דבורה (עידן)	הירש בן רחל (גולדברג פולין)	אור בן גאולה (לוי)
קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)	זיו בן טליה (ברמן)	אורי בן עינב אפרת (דנינו)
קרניה בת אירנה (ארייב)	טל בן ניצה (שוהם קורנגולד)	איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)	יאיר בן רות אדית (הורן)	איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
רומי בת מירב (גונן)	יגב בן אסתר (בוכשטב)	אלון בן עידית (אהל)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)	יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)	אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)	יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)	אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)	ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)	אלכסנדר בן אוקסנה (לובנוב)
שלומי בן רוזיטה אירה (זיו)	כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
שלמה בן מרסיל (מנצור)	כרמל בת כנרת (גת)	אלכסנדר בן נינה (דנציג)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	לירי בת שירה (אלבג)	אלמוג בן אורית (מאיר ג'אן)
	מקסים בן טלה (הרקיו)	אלמוג בן נירה (סרוסי)
	מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)	אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
	מתן בן ירדנה (צנגאוקר)	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
	נועה בת ליאורה (ארגמני)	אנדריי בן יבגניה (קוזלוב)
	נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן)	ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
	נעמה בת איילת (לוי)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
	עדן בת שירית (ירושלמי)	אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)
	עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)	בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין)
	עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)	

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 29 Iyar)

Shlomi ben Rosita Ira (Ziv)	Matan ben Anat (Angrest)	Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)	Avinatan ben Ditza Tirtza (Ohr)
Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour)	Matan ben Yardena (Tzangauker)	Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)	Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)	Noa bat Liora (Argamani)	Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)	Avraham Gilad ben Emunah (Mondar)
	Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)	Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)	Agam bat Meirav (Berger)
	Naama bat Ayelet (Levi)	Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Mozes)	Ohad ben Esther (Ben- Ami)
	Eden bat Shirit (Yerushalmi)	Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal)	Ohad ben Esther (Yahalomi)
	Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz)	Gali ben Talya (Berman)	Ohr ben Geula (Levi)
	Omer ben Niva (Venkrat)	David ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)	Ori ben Einav Efrat (Danino)
	Omer ben Shelly (Shemtov)	Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher)	Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen)
	Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra)	Daniella bat Orli (Gilboa)	Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)
	Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon)	Hirsch ben Perel Chana (Goldberg-Polin)	Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
	Idan ben Yael (Alexander)	Ziv ben Talya (Berman)	Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen)
	Idan ben Dalit (Shtivi)	Tal ben Nitza (Shoham- Corngold)	Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)
	Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran)	Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)	Alexander ben Oksana (Lubanov)
	Tzachi ben Devorah (Idan)	Yagev ben Esther (Buchashtev)	Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah (Tropanov)
	Kieth Shmuel ben Gladis Chava (Segal)	Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana)	Alexander ben Nina (Dantzig)
	Karina bat Irena (Ariav)	Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat)	Almog ben Orit (Meir-Jan)
	Rom ben Tamar Noa (Brasalevsky)	Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)	Almog ben Nira (Sarusi)
	Romi bat Meirav (Gonen)	Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)	Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut)
	Segev ben Galit (Chalfon)	Carmel bat Kineret (Gat)	Emily Tehilla bat Amanda Francis (Damari)
	Sagi ben Naamit (Chen- Dekel)	Liri bat Shira (Elbag)	Andrei ben Yevgenia (Kozalov)
	Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)	Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin)	