

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR
RABBI YEHIEL KALISH

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

New!

ADAPTED FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM
BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

With Heart and Soul

THE FIRST RASHI IN THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION makes an observation worth noting.

"These are No'ach's offspring—No'ach was a righteous man." [This segue is meant] to teach you that the primary "offspring" of the righteous are their good deeds. (Commentary to 6:9, citing the Midrash)

What are our Sages teaching us?

S'fas Emes explains that a *tzaddik*, a righteous person, identifies very strongly with the mitzvos that he does. A *tzaddik* puts his life and soul into every mitzvah that he performs. Thus we find:

...*Umb'sari echezeh E-lokah*—from my flesh I perceive G-d. (Iyov 19:26)

To the extent that someone puts his life, his essence, into holding on to G-d and His mitzvos, he will see the effects.

No'ach, as we see in this week's Torah portion, put his entire being into fulfilling Hashem's command. The result of that effort is no less than the world we currently live in! It's no surprise, then, that during the *Musaf* service on Rosh Hashanah, we mention:

You (G-d) also remembered No'ach with love, and You spared him with salvation and mercy.

Of course Hashem remembered No'ach with love. No'ach lived in a very difficult generation, and he performed under the most difficult of circumstances—over a period of 120 years, repeating over and over again: "Soon Hashem will bring a flood to this world, and all will be lost! It is imperative that we repent!" And, *Sefas Emes* explains, No'ach did all of this with all of his heart and soul. For over 120 years!

Can we do something for Hashem, with all of our heart and soul, for 120 seconds?

Maybe that's something we can learn from this week's Torah portion. We try to emulate the actions of our Forefathers. No'ach was not a Forefather, per sé, but Hashem called him a *tzaddik*. We should emulate this trait of his, and put our entire hearts and souls into fulfilling every com-

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The son of a wealthy man wanted to tour Europe. When he asked his father to provide him with spending money for the trip, the father agreed—but only on strict condition that his son put on tefillin every day. The son would get some of the money before the trip; if he kept his word, his father would continue to supply him with money during the trip.

A week later, the son requested more money, affirming that he had been putting on tefillin. His father assured him that he would get him the money he needed. After this exchange had been repeated several times, the son still hadn't received any money; now he could hardly buy food, much less travel. He changed his return ticket so he could go home on the next available flight.

Upon his premature return home, he immediately confronted his father and angrily told him that the promised mon-

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PARASHA Q'S 4 U

New!

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

- Which three countries that still exist are listed as children of Yefess?
- As listed in this week's Torah portion, how many seasons are there?

Bring these questions to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answers! 🗣️

TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

New!

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On 26 Tishrei, 5674 (1913), thousands of members of the Cincinnati Jewish community gathered in the Grand Opera House, to protest the murder charges being pressed against Meyer Beilis of Kiev. Beilis—who, ironically, wasn't even religious—was falsely accused with the sadly familiar charge of murdering a Christian child to use his blood for the Passover matza. Leaders of various religious denominations addressed the crowd, including Rabbi Yaakov Lesser, the head of Cincinnati's Orthodox community and president of the national Agudas Horabonim. Also at the gathering was the mayor of Cincinnati, Henry Hunt. Beilis had actually been arrested two years earlier, but he wasn't tried until 1913. The prosecution's star expert, a Catholic priest named Justinas Pranaitis, was made a laughingstock during his cross-examination by the defense. The boy who had supposedly witnessed the crime confessed that he had been confused by the secret police and actually hadn't seen Beilis murder anyone. 🗣️

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED


CONTINUED

ey had never arrived. The father then asked for his son's tefillin bag—and he proceeded to produce a large amount of cash, from inside the tefillin bag! The son, confronted with the evidence of his own failure, committed to again begin wearing his tefillin on a regular basis.

Q Jewish law (O.C. 42) states that, once a container is set aside for the storage of a holy object, it may no longer be used for something mundane. Did the father transgress this law? Or, since the money was placed there to encourage the use of the tefillin, was it permitted?

A Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach allows putting a mirror in a tefillin bag, since the mirror is used in the performance of the mitzvah—to ensure that the tefillin on the head are in the correct spot. It would seem, then, that it would be forbidden to place money in the same container as the tefillin, since the money is not being used in the actual performance of the mitzvah.

However, there might be room to be lenient: Today, we put our tefillin in plastic cases that entirely cover them; the bag may be considered to be a step removed from holding the actual tefillin.

Another consideration, discussed by *Mishnah B'rurah*, is a situation where a bag happens to contain tefillin, but it hasn't been set aside specifically to hold tefillin. This makes for leniencies regarding what can be put inside; it would not be forbidden to place a mundane item together with the tefillin in the same bag—but it would still be disrespectful. However, concludes Rav Zilberstein, in our situation, where the father placed money in the bag in order to see to it that his son would perform the mitzvah of tefillin, it can be argued that the father was not disrespecting the tefillin. 

With Heart and Soul CONTINUED mandment of Hashem.

There are many stories about about *tzad-dikim* from prior generations, who performed mitzvos with love and devotion. I'll never forget the first time I visited Bais Medrash Govoha, in Lakewood, New Jersey. The yeshiva in Skokie, Illinois had sent me to visit prospective parents in Philadelphia—and I took a detour to Lakewood. That morning,

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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

IT WAS EREV ROSH HASHANAH, AND—AS could be expected—Friedman's Kosher Grocery was swamped with last-minute shoppers.

Reuvain was a seventy-year-old grandfather, who wished he could be anywhere but in this store, as he gingerly moved through the crowded aisles to find the items on his shopping list. And, after all the shopping, he still faced daunting lines at the cash registers. As his line slowly inched forward, Reuvain's feet began to remind him of the past seventy years, as they started to throb from standing.

Finally, after a half-hour wait, Reuvain reached the register. All the items from his shopping cart were rung up, and the bill came out to over \$200.

Reuvain reached inside his pocket and made an awful discovery: He had forgotten his wallet at home! What was he to do now?

As he stood frozen in place, trying to decide what to do, he began to hear mumbling from the people behind him in line...

“Let's go...”

“We don't have all day.”


Then he heard a voice call out—“Here,

my host brought me to *daven* in the famous Lakewood yeshiva, and he sat me right in front of Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon, *shlit"a*. Watching Rabbi Salomon *daven* that morning, I saw what it means to put heart and soul into a mitzvah. The veins on his forehead were engaged; his face glowed with gratitude; yet, at the same time, he was obviously con-

charge it to my card. You can pay me back whenever you like.”

Reuvain turned around and saw a man in the next aisle, holding out his credit card. The man did not look like the sort of person who could afford Reuvain's hefty bill.

“Please, use my card,” the man repeated.

Gratefully, Reuvain took it and paid for his purchase, thinking, *Thank You, Hashem, for sending this man in my time of need!* 


Kollel Women's Learning

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alternating weeks, 5–6 PM

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*From Breishis Through Today:
The Evolution of Creation, Man, & Mission*



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centrating intently. Here were body and soul, completely engaged in a mitzvah.

May we merit, this week, to perform one such mitzvah, with such devotion. 