



RABBI ARYEH PRIDONOFF



Think, and Change

IN THE SAGA OF YOSEF AND HIS BROTHERS, ONE disaster follows another. At a certain point, the brothers realize they have caused their own tribulations. Selling Yosef wasn't only a bad decision—they are now paying for it!

How often, in our own lives, do we blame others for difficult situations? Only after the fact, when we connect the dots, might we glimpse the reality, whether it was set in motion by our own irresponsibility—or by a lack of action.

Indeed, indecision is a *choice*. All too often, many people cannot face their mistakes. They would rather live with the notion that the events in their lives are disconnected.

At Aish HaTorah, Rabbi Noach Weinberg gave us a definition for “insanity.” When a person does the same exact action and expects a different result each time, that is insanity.

With further self-scrutiny—*cheshbon hanefesh*, in Hebrew—we may not be able to reverse our previous misdeeds, but we can certainly take steps to fix our behavior for the future.

Writing about repentance in *Ohr Yisroel*, Rabbi Yisroel Salanter says that a person will get the biggest punishment for sins that are easily fixable. That might seem hard to understand, at first, but it can easily be

explained. When we display indifference to our service of Hashem, we may slip into the lull of complacency. At that point, we are the cause of our own small mistakes—and then for the following big ones.

All the while, just a few minutes of introspection a night can make a world of difference.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler refers to a passage in the Talmud:

Rabbi yochanan says... “The [ultimate Redemption] will only come in a generation which is either completely deserving or completely unworthy... (Sanhedrin 98a)

He explains, in his essay “Earning One’s World in One Hour,” that for a generation to be in a state where it is “completely unworthy,” there must no longer be any hope for it to climb, independently, up the spiritual ladder. However, he writes, “So long as the ability to climb has not been lost... one can still get the top.”

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER—
ADAPTED FROM ME’AH SHE’ARIM
BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

A fellow once spent a night in a hotel. At some point, he became very thirsty, and he took a bottle of water from the fridge in his room. Aware of the fact that the hotel would charge him triple the retail price for that water, this man went to a grocery store the next day, bought the same exact bottle, and placed it in the fridge, in place of the original bottle.

Q Is this man still obligated to pay the full price the hotel charges, or did he suffice by replacing the new bottle in the hotel fridge?

A If, when taking the bottle, he planned to acquire it, the acquisition is then based on the terms set by the hotel, which dictate that one who takes an item from the fridge will pay the price the hotel has established.

If his intent upon taking the bottle was not to pay the price that the hotel had established, he would be considered

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A PARASHA Q & A

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

- The five gifts that Yaakov advised his sons to bring (the yet-to-be-identified) Yosef included *bot'nim*. Can you properly identify *bot'nim*?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer!

TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

In 5581 (1821), a Cincinnati man by the name of Benjamin Lape lay on his deathbed. He requested that someone call a Jew to his bedside. Two Jews, Morris Moses and Joseph Jonas, were brought in, and Lape said he had something to confess: Although he had not lived as a Jew, and had not married within the faith, he was born Benjamin Leib and wanted a Jewish burial. The Jewish community of Cincinnati at the time consisted of only six people, and they hadn't yet acquired a place to bury their dead. Morris and Jonas bought a plot of land on the corner of Chestnut Street and Central Avenue from a prominent man named Nicholas Longworth, thus opening “the first cemetery west of the Allegheny Mountains,” as is stated on a plaque on the cemetery wall. Five years later, Mr. Longworth donated an adjoining piece of land; another purchase in 1838, from the same Mr. Longworth, expanded the cemetery yet again. The cemetery was used until it was filled to capacity during the 1849 cholera outbreak.

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

a thief, since the hotel's policies don't allow for an exchanged item as recompense for an item taken. Although, in Jewish Law, a thief cannot be forced to pay if he instead returns the stolen items, this applies only when the original item is returned intact. If the original item is not in his possession, he must pay for what he stole. (See Choshen Mishpat 363:2.)

The man might argue that the hotel can still sell the item he returned, for the same price they were asking for. However, the Rama (Rabbi Moshe Isserlis), quoting the Rosh (Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel), dismisses a similar claim. The Rama (ibid. 304:5) speaks of a scenario where someone damaged a barrel of wine on market day, when the price per barrel is four gold coins (on an average day, a barrel is worth three). He must pay the barrel's owner four coins, and he cannot force the owner to accept a new barrel, instead—even on a market day—because so long as the owner has other barrels, the owner can counter that he doesn't need any more barrels now. Similarly, the hotel owner may be entitled to respond to the guest that he has enough bottles and doesn't need the guest's bottle. 🍷

GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

IN 1990, AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM IN Hungary, several dedicated individuals set out to start a Jewish school in Budapest. The response they received was above and beyond expectation, with five times as many applications as they had expected.

After the school year got under way, they reached out to parents, to find out why so many people who had grown up without Judaism were now jumping at the chance to send their children to a Jewish school.

One father's response was incredibly moving. He related that in 1944, when he was a child in Budapest, the Nazis invaded Hungary and quickly began deporting Jews. While lying in bed one night, he heard his parents having a heated discussion downstairs in the living room. He snuck from his bed and watched through the keyhole.

"Why should we worry?" he heard his

father say. "No one knows we're Jewish. We don't have anything in our house that would even hint that we're Jewish."

"Are you sure?" he heard his mother say.

He could see them scanning the room when their eyes fell upon a small book on the top shelf of the bookcase. It was the siddur his mother had been given at her wedding! He heard his mother say, "I guess we don't need this anymore," and watched as she

threw the siddur in the fireplace. Horrified, he ran back to his bed and began crying into his pillow.

"I knew, somehow, that my mother had done something she shouldn't have," the man continued sadly, "and I promised myself that if I had the chance, my children were going to learn how to use a siddur like the one my mother threw in the fire. Now I finally get to fulfill that promise." 🍷

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Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....

Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM

Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ Kollel Yisgaber K'ari (amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....

Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ Mishnah Kavuah online

two mishnayos and some mussar

Rabbi Ezra Stettin.....any time you like

🖐️ Daf Yomi

Rabbi Meir Minster.....

Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM

Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ Night Seder Chabura

in the Annex Library

(Maseches Avodah Zara)

led by Rabbi Tzvi Fishman

Sunday–Thursday 9–9:55 PM

followed by Ma'ariv at 9:55

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weekdays noon–1 PM • Sun.–Thurs. 8–9:45 PM

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