

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Secret To Success




RABBI
SHOLOM
ZEHNWIRTH

UPON THE BIRTH OF BINYOMIN, WHICH MARKS the completion of the *shevatim*, the Torah lists all Yaakov's children: "The sons of Yaakov were twelve... These are the sons of Yaakov that were born to him in Padan Aram" (*Bereishis* 35, 23-26). The commentators ask, why does the Torah state that all these sons were born in Padan Aram? Binyomin, who is included in this list, was not born to Yaakov when he lived near his father-in-law Lavan in Padan Aram; rather Binyomin was born later in *Eretz* Canaan.

Ibn Ezra suggests that although Binyomin was not born in Padan Aram, all the other *shevatim* were, and the Torah therefore records everyone as having been born there based on the majority. The Chizkuni offers a different explanation. When Yosef was born, Rochel *davened* for another child through naming him Yosef, as she said, "*yosef Hashem li ben acher*"—may Hashem add on for me another

son. Therefore, the Torah considers it as if Binyomin was born in Padan Aram. In this, Harav Elya Baruch Finkel points out the power of our *tefillos*: Although Binyomin was actually born in *Eretz* Canaan, since Rochel *davened* for him in Padan Aram, it is considered that he was born there.

We find the same idea in the Gemara *Brachos*, 54a. The Mishna states that one who sees a place at which a miracle occurred to our forefathers should say, "Blessed is the One who made a miracle for our forefathers in this place." The Gemara gives an example of one such place: "the stone that Moshe sat upon when Yehoshua waged war with Amalek." This example seems quite puzzling. Moshe sat on top of the mountain *davening*, while Yehoshua led the battle in the valley. How can we say that a miracle occurred at the stone on top of the mountain? Wouldn't it be appropriate to recite the *bracha* at the bottom of the mountain, where the actual fighting took place? We see from here that the miracle really occurred in that place where Moshe *davened* for the success of the Jewish people. Therefore, we make the *bracha* by the stone and not in the valley, for *davening* is the driving force behind our accomplishments.

Often, we overlook the power of *davening*, or view it as something to check off the list before we actualize our goals. We need to remind ourselves that finding that dream house, closing that big deal, or success in any endeavor doesn't take place in the office or at our desk. All success begins back at the *siddur* and *shtender!* 

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN Reuven left his house to bring the garbage to his building's garbage can by the curb. When he got to the curb, he opened the garbage can and found a large, empty cardboard box taking up the entire can. He removed the box, placed it next to the garbage can, and put his garbage inside the can.

A short while later, the inspector for the Municipality passed by and saw the box outside the garbage can (which was against the law). He searched all over the box and found Shimon's name on it, and fined him for leaving his box outside the garbage can.

Reuven and Shimon come to the Rabbi to ask who is responsible to pay the fine. Shimon claims that Reuven is responsible for he was the one who took the box out of the garbage. Reuven, on the other hand, claims that the box was wrongfully placed there, so he had the right to remove it.

Q Who is responsible?

A Logic dictates that Shimon, the box owner, is responsible to pay, because he placed the box in a place where it would inevitably be removed, since the neighbors also need a place, free of big boxes, to put their garbage.

Now, even if Reuven is exempt from the fine, he did cause indirect damage to Shimon. Is he held accountable in Heaven for his actions (*chayav bidinei Shamayim*)? It would seem that this would depend on his motive for taking the box out. If he took it out to make space for others to put their garbage in the can, he's exempt

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A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Over what *mitzvah* item would it be possible to make seven different *brachos*?

See reverse side for the answer

PREVIOUS RIDDLE:

Q When is the *bracha* of "*asher kid-shanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu b'mitzvos v'chukim shel Avraham Avinu*" made?

A At a *chalitza* ritual (the alternative to a levirate marriage) 

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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(this view is also found in *Shu"t Mahari"t* 1:95; Chazon Ish, *Bava Kamma* 5:4). If, however, he took out the box to teach Shimon a lesson, wanting him to get fined so he wouldn't put his box in the garbage again, his intent is to cause damage and he would be held accountable in Heaven.

Ultimately, even if his intention was not to cause damage, Reuven is still far from acting piously, for he should have approached Shimon directly and asked him to remove his box. But in the strict letter of the law, Reuven is not responsible to do so, and is, therefore, exempt from the fine. 🥂



Learning Program for Boys. Thank you Nosson Kunin and Shmuel Botnick

RIDDLE ANSWER

An esrog (1) when separating terms and matters (2) upon when redeeming matters and selling, smell with a pleasant smell, (3) when performing the mitzvah of lulav and esrog (2) upon performing the mitzvah the first time (2) after when eating it after Yom Tov (7) after eating a fruit 🥂



GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

DORON WAS A MAN KNOWN IN THE ISRAELI UNDER-world, with many contacts. He had planned and executed several armed robberies, and had begun scoping out his next target, a jewelry store in Jerusalem. In order to get to know the layout of the store, Doron went inside and pretended to be interested in purchasing a piece of jewelry. As Doron conversed with the owner, he fabricated a story to explain why he was interested in buying something. He told the owner that he was unemployed but had been scrimping to buy his wife a necklace for her

birthday, and as he spent more time looking around the store, he made up more and more details to keep the story going. Doron was very convincing and the owner progressively felt more and more sympathy for Doron's "plight." Finally, the store owner went to his safe, drew out 10,000 dollars, and put it down in front of Doron. "What's this?" "Money for you to start a business," the jeweler answered. "But you don't know me!" "I made it in this business because I'm a good judge of people. I see in you a person with a tremendous amount of ability

and potential. All you need is for someone to believe in you. I'm going to be that person. Go start a business." Doron walked out of the store in a daze. He sat down on the couch in his house and cried. No one had ever told him that he believed in him. He was so shaken by the kindness of a stranger that he then and there decided he was going to pay back the loan with honest money. All the creative energy he had used to live a life of crime he now poured into the world of business, and he turned a handsome profit on his loan. He paid back the loan as a changed man. 🥂

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

One of the issues communities in America faced was finding a *shochet*, a ritual slaughterer, to provide kosher meat for the community. When a *shochet* applied for a vacant position in Lexington, KY, he was instructed to travel to Cincinnati to visit Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Gershon Lesser (which would make it seem Lexington did not have its own rabbi at that point), to be tested on his proficiency of laws pertaining to ritual slaughter and receive a letter of approbation. Rabbi Lesser found that, in fact, the man was *not* qualified, and he refused to give him a letter. The man began to describe his difficulty in finding a livelihood in America, and Rabbi Lesser suggested that he apply for the position of *shammash*, sexton, for the congregation in Lexington. Rabbi Lesser even offered a letter stating that, although the man was not qualified to be a *shochet*, he was qualified to be *shammash*. The man returned to Lexington and showed his letter to the president of the shul, who did not understand Hebrew and mistakenly thought the man was endorsed as a *shochet*. When Rabbi Lesser visited Lexington the next time, he was not happy to discover that the man had been *shechting*. He promptly had him removed from the position. 🥂

SOURCE: Belsky, Rabbi Yisroel. *Shulchan HaLevi*, PP.211

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