

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

The Great Equalizer

RABBI
MOSHE DOVID
ZEFFREN


"MOSHE AND AHARON." "AHARON AND MOSHE." The Torah can't seem to decide which to put first. Rashi explains that there is an important message here: Moshe and Aharon were equal.

Equal? How could they have been equal, asks Rav Moshe Feinstein. Moshe was the greatest of all prophets and was chosen by G-d to transmit the Torah. Clearly, nobody else approached his stature, even the great Aharon. The answer, he says, is that the true measure of greatness is not spiritual stature, rather it is whether a person served Hashem to the fullest extent of his abilities. Moshe was unquestionably greater in the sense of reaching loftier heights, but that was because of his superior spiritual capacity. Aharon was more limited by nature, and was therefore measured by a different yardstick. In this, more important evaluation, they were equals.

This can explain a Gemara in *Baba Basra*: Yosef the son of Yehoshua reported a heavenly vision experienced while deathly ill. He had seen the World to Come, and it was "an overturned world," in which the lowly were elevated and the elevated were lowly. His father explained that he had seen not an overturned world, rather "a clear one," which represented reality. Rav Moshe is perturbed by Yosef's description of the World to Come as "overturned." Was Yosef not aware that his perspective of the spiritual stature of those around him was a superficial one? Wasn't it obvious that people's internal struggles, though

not evident to him, would be reckoned with in the World to Come? He should have been prepared to see a world that was totally different from the one that he knew.

Rav Moshe explains that the next world had in fact reflected his perception, to a degree. Those who had been more objectively righteous people, who had served G-d more righteously in deed and in thought, were recognizable as such, even though they were relegated to relatively low positions due to potential left unrealized. The opposite was true with some objectively less righteous people. Yosef was bewildered that the World to Come had elements of both G-d's assessment of the degree to which one fulfilled his spiritual potential in this world, and his spiritual achievements on an objective scale. This incorporation of seemingly paradoxical standards of assessment is indeed difficult to fathom. However, it reminds us that we must maintain an important balance in our *avodas Hashem*.

It is true that our spiritual struggles take place in the context of our unique circumstances and that it is therefore foolish and usually damaging to compete with others in spiritual matters. A proper appreciation of this is vital; however, exclusive focus on this is hazardous. We must remember that no matter our level or pace, we are ultimately working towards the goal of fulfilling G-d's will to the extent that we are able. Without a paradigm of spiritual success and perfection to which to aspire, we are apt to unwittingly and unnecessarily limit our achievements. When we look at a true *talmid chochom*, and *ba'al musar*, we see what spiritual perfection looks like and the capacity inherent in mankind for greatness. We are thereby motivated to strive to fulfill our individual G-d-given potential. 

A HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

In these *parshiyos* we learn how the Jews were enslaved by Paroah in Mitzrayim. The Midrash explains that at first, Paroah encouraged all residents of Egypt to help build up the country, promising wages and even joining in himself. Eventually the payments stopped, and the Jews were stuck. For a Jew, paying a worker ON TIME is a Torah obligation (*Devarim* 24:15).

A frequently asked question is, must a baby-sitter be paid immediately upon completion of the job or can payment be delayed?

The Torah commands that a laborer who completes his work must be paid "on that day." This means that a worker who finishes his job during the daytime must be paid in full by sunset of that day. If not, his employer has transgressed a Biblical prohibition (*C.M.* 339:2). Similarly, a worker who completes his job during the night must be paid in full before daybreak. If the worker is hired for a full day [or night] or for a full week or month, he must be paid by the morning [or evening] after his term of employment is over.

Payment must be made on time to a minor as well (*Ahavas Chesed* 9:5). Thus, when a baby-sitter is hired, she must be paid before the day [or night] is over.


There are, however, several exceptions to the above rules.

* This prohibition applies only if the worker asks, personally or through a messenger, to be paid. If the worker does not mind being paid at a later date, it is permissible to defer payment (*C.M.* 339:10). If, however, the worker would like to get paid but is too shy to ask outright, payment must be made on time (*Nesiv ha-Chesed* 9:29).

* If the common practice in a given locality is to pay a laborer's wages at the end of the month or at a time when accounts are calculated, then the payment does not have to be made until then (*C.M.* 339:9).

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A RIDDLE FOR YOU

What word in the Torah has the largest gematriah (numerical value)? (Hint: Think Parshas Korach) 

See reverse side for the answer

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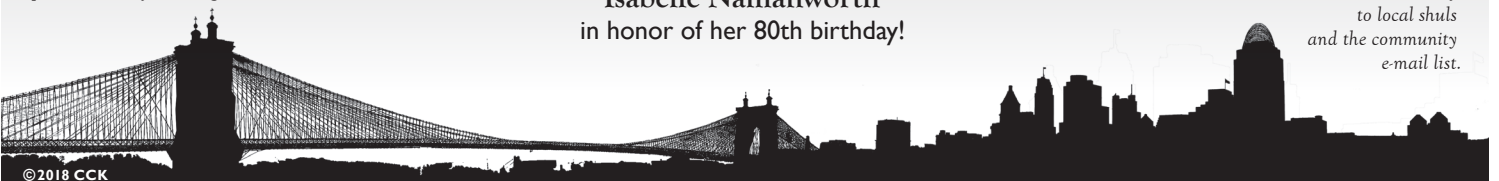
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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

HERSHEL HAD SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST TO rebuild his life in America. He had remarried and had a beautiful family. There was one thing that seemed to be a remnant of darker times. Hershel would constantly be saying *ay-ay-ay*. No matter the situation, if it was happy or sad, you could hear Hershel saying *ay-ay-ay*. One day one of Hershel's sons could not contain his curiosity any longer. "Daddy, why are you always making that noise?" "I'll tell you," said Hershel. "When I was in the camps, I knew that to keep my will to live strong I needed to be learning Torah. So I would try as much as I was able to say words of Torah. Friends I made would join me. We'd say words of *chumash*, *tehillim*, phrases of *mishnayos*, anything that we could remember. But the Nazi guards suspected us for all our mumbling. A friend came up with another idea. Sound like you're groaning. Say *ay-ay-ay*. But the *ay-ay-ay* stands for something. There are six constant *mitzvos* that you can fulfill through contemplating any one of them, such as the *mitzvah* to fear G-d. Each letter stands for another one of these *mitzvos*. This was our code to each other. Do a *mitzvah* now. Here in the concentration camps. These six letters kept me strong. So for the rest of my life I've been saying *ay-ay-ay*. Always remembering this continues to give me strength to continue after everything to keep rebuilding my life. [A – *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* (believe in Hashem); Y – [Lo] *Yihyeh Lecha Elohim Achairim* (have no other gods); A – *Ahavas Hashem* (love Hashem); Y – *Yiras Hashem* (fear Hashem); A – [V'lo Sasuru] *Acharei Levavchem* (do not turn away in your heart); Y – *Yichud Sh'mo* (believe in Hashem's Oneness)]

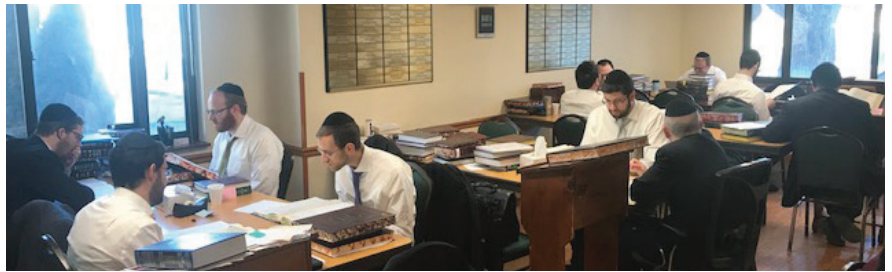
RIDDLE ANSWER

⚡ The word "sister" (אחות) is a word that is used in the Torah.

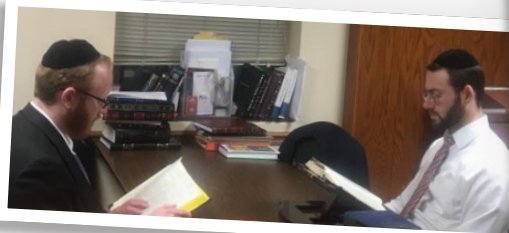
GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL

First Seder

"First Seder" refers to the intensive textual study that takes place each morning. Our staff scholars, under the direction of Rabbis Minster and Heinemann, delve into a variety of codes and commentaries, seeking clarity on complicated matters of Halacha [Jewish Law].



Mazel Tov to the Mishna Berura Yomi Chaburah for completing the third chelek of Mishnah Berurah!



A HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

CONTINUED

It follows that if a baby-sitter is hired on a one-time basis, she must be paid upon completion of her job. If, however, the baby-sitter is hired on a steady basis, there is no deadline for the time of payment since many people do not pay their regular baby-sitter after each session.

* One is allowed to make a pre-condition with his worker that he will not be paid on time (*Shach* 339:2). This condition must be

made before the worker agrees to do the job. Thus, even a one-time baby-sitter may be paid at a later time if told beforehand.

An employer who has no money to pay his employee does not transgress this prohibition. If he has no money but is able to borrow, he must do so. Not having the exact change on hand is no excuse to delay payment (*Ahavas Chesed* 9:7).

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

Later Jewish immigrants to America would often poke fun at the less stringent halachic observance of earlier immigrants who had settled in America. As one joke went, if a person in America lost a relative, it was presumably acceptable to hire someone to sit shivah in his place, which begged the question: was there a *mitzvah* for him to comfort the paid mourner who was sitting shivah on his behalf! Indeed, the early American rabbi was commonly proficient in the three "Ys"—*Yahrtzeit*, *Yizkor*, and *Yisgadal*. Various questions were raised pertaining to honoring the memory of those who passed. One question of synagogue practice dealt with the Prayer for the Souls of the Departed that was traditionally read during *Yizkor* by the rabbi of the synagogue, for each departed soul separately. Saying each name took a tremendously long time and lengthened the service considerably, to the annoyance of the congregants. A suggestion was made to have one all-inclusive prayer for names that had been submitted. This question was asked to Rav Yaakov Mendelson, then chief rabbi of Newark, NJ, who did not think this suggestion to be advisable.

SOURCE: Schwartz, Harav Gedalia Dov, *Shaarei Gedulah*, pp. 186-187, Chicago Rabbinical Council, 2007.

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