

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

## Keep Your Eye on the Ball

Our mission in this world is to serve our Creator and reveal His glory in this world. One of the greatest struggles we face in our efforts to fulfill our purpose is prioritization. So many of our failures and successes are sourced in improper or proper prioritization. Deciding where to put time, energy, and money is often a daunting task. However, the key to success is to adjust and manipulate everything according to the Torah's perspective. This, although challenging, is the definite goal.

A unique lesson in proper prioritization is seen in this week's *parasha*. In order to minimally appreciate it, we must mention part of the context. At the end of last week's

*parasha*, Rashi mentions that following the *Akeida* of Yitzchak, Avraham felt an urgency to marry Yitzchak off. If Avraham really felt an urgency to do so, it would seem strange then that in this week's *parasha* Avraham sends his servant Eliezer to look for a wife for Yitzchak. If it was really urgent, why wouldn't he go himself? Wasn't this of utmost importance? Wouldn't he be surer of the right woman for his son if he went himself?

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (*Netziv*) gives a powerful answer. He was busy with something more important. The World Community. The *Netziv* describes various needs that people had that they would bring to Avraham. He was concerned with the good of the public and therefore had

no choice other than to send his servant in his stead. This is no small lesson indeed! We may not be on the level of Avraham, but whatever level we are on we must keep our eye on the ball and prioritize accordingly. Hashem's will must come first. With that clearly in mind we are sure to lead successful lives. ❖

RABBI  
EZRA  
STETTIN

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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

Eight family members were in the cemetery at the gravesite of their father. Before they left, they wanted to recite *Kaddish*, but they were short two men to complete the *minyan* (quorum of ten or more adult males) necessary for reciting *Kaddish*. They saw two (Jewish) workers from a distance and asked them to join the *minyan*. They answered that they were prepared to answer the *Kaddish* from where they were, but they could not stop working to come close and join them.

**Q** Can the workers standing afar be joined to the *minyan* to complete it, or must the entire *minyan* be standing in one location?

**A** *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 55:13) states, "All ten must be in one place with the *chazan* together." *Mishna Berura* (ibid; 48) writes that even if the ten men don't see each other, nonetheless, they can join since they are all in one room. If, however, some are in one room and some are in another, and they cannot see each other, they cannot join even if the doorway is open, because the doorway separates the two rooms into different domains. Some are stringent even if they can see each other.

The *Mishna Berura*'s words imply that ten people scattered over an open field can join together for a *minyan* if they can see each other and hear the *chazan*, provided that a road or path doesn't come between them creating two "areas," in which case some are stringent and do not permit their joining.

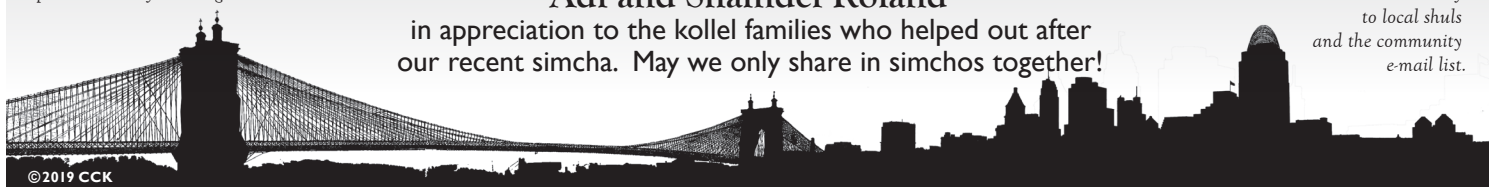
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## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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Therefore, in our scenario, if there is no road or path separating the workers and the family members, they definitely join the *minyan* so long as they see each other and can all hear the one reciting *Kaddish*.

It would appear that even if there is a small road within the cemetery separating the workers and the family, it won't constitute a separation, because the purpose of the cemetery road is to provide easier access to all parts of the cemetery. The road that leads out of the cemetery, which serves to connect it with other places, will be considered a divider. 🕯

## A LESSON LEARNED

Young Yitzchak Elchonon was a poor orphan living in the Lithuanian town of Kovno. Winter came and his shoes were woefully inadequate for the winter. There were several holes and his socks and feet were constantly wet and cold. This proved to be terribly distracting to a boy who was trying to concentrate on his Torah studies. One day he heard that another one of the boys in his Yeshiva, Dovid Hoffheimer\*, was engaged. Dovid's parents were well off and Yitzchak Elchonon was sure that he was going to get new shoes before his wedding, which gave Yitzchak Elchonon an idea. Maybe Dovid would let him have his old shoes! Yitzchak Elchonon approached Dovid and respectfully asked if he could have his old shoes. Dovid's response shocked him. "If you want shoes, go get yourself a job and some money!" Yitzchak Elchonon resigned himself to a miserable winter.

## GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL



Many years later Rabbi Yitzchak Elchonon Spektor was one of the most respected *halachic* authorities of his time. He had written a *sefer* (book) and was raising funds to have the *sefer* published. He traveled to the Jewish metropolis of Vilna and was greeted by huge crowds. A meeting was arranged by the city leaders between Rabbi Spektor and the largest philanthropists of Vilna. At the meeting a man quickly spoke up and said "I am willing and ready to cover all costs involved with the publishing, printing, and distributing of the Rabbi's *sefer*. "What is your name?" Rabbi Spektor asked. "Dovid Hoffheimer," the man an-

swered. Rabbi Spektor stood up and whispered in the man's ear, "You might not realize that I am the same orphan that you refused to give your old shoes to. You were already given a chance to help my Torah learning and you turned it down. Now we must give someone else a chance." 🕯

\*Name changed

## A PARASHA Q & U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

When does ten appear to be less than two?

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

## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

### THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

As Eastern European Jews flowed into New York City from the 1880s until World War I, immigrants sought new ways to support themselves, and a huge proportion found work in New York's burgeoning garment industry. After the invention of the sewing machine made possible mass clothing production, people began to shift away from homemade clothing and bought clothes made in standardized sizes sold in dry goods stores. In the year 1910, 47 percent of all clothing factories were in New York City. Many Jews had previous experience in making clothing and were therefore well positioned to find jobs in the industry. Jews were also locked out of other skilled labor industries due to "gentlemen's agreements" to exclude Jews, whereas a large percentage of clothing manufacturers were Jewish. Because of these factors, 60 percent of all employed Jews in New York were working in the garment industry, and 75 percent of all workers in the industry were Jewish. The working conditions for many were famously bad, as witnessed with the deaths at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in 1911, of which half of the victims were Jewish. But these same jobs led to upward financial mobility in the Jewish world. Almost never did the children of these immigrants stay in the same station as their parents. Those who stayed in clothing generally moved up in the industry, whether by owning factories, designing clothes, or owning stores that sold the clothes. 🕯

SOURCES: Neuman, Johanna. "Modern Jewish History: From Ghetto to Glamour – How Jews Redesigned the Fashion Business." Jewishvirtuallibrary.org.  
Sachar, Howard. *A History of Jews in America*. Vintage Books, 1992, pp. 145-147.

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