



August 15, 1997

יב' מנחם אב תשנ"ז

שבת נחמו

פרשת ואתחנן

Volume XXII Issue 7

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Ilana Rosenberg (Waterfront)
Sharona Bloom G18
Moshe Lutwak (Machon)
Tzipora Hait G3
Ephraim Greene (Kollel)
Karen Pelcovitz G15
Daniel Landman B5
Steven Genachowski B18
Danielle Kestenbaum G14
Jason Finkelstein B16
Jordan Katz B2
Jamie Klein G8
Joshua Zelman B18
Ally Simon (Day Camp)
Tzachi Rosman (Macon)
Josh Slomnicki (Waiter)
Seth Grauer (Counselor B15)

*Mazel Tov On Your
Bat Mitzvah
Elishava Weinstein G5*

Friday night speaker
Rabbi Avi Berkowitz
10:30 P.M. -Pargod
Hope to see you there!

**Shabbat Times:
Latest
Candlelighting:
6:42 P.M.
Kabbalat
Shabbat:
7:00 P.M.**

Thank you Asher Fruchter (Woodshop staff) for all your help in making the Birchonim holders.

Honorable Menschen

Yasher koach to Shari Gross and Jessica Rosenberg. They found a large denomination bill on the camp grounds and gave it promptly to Rabbi Schwartz. If anyone lost money recently in the Bondi area please contact Rabbi Schwartz so that the mitzva of Hashovas Aveida can be completed.

MIDAH OF THE WEEK - אמת ושלום

ETHICAL-MUSSAR NARRATIVES

Throughout all generations, *Gedolei Yisroel* have always striven tirelessly to make truth and integrity the very cornerstones of their lives.

The Chozeh of Lublin

Rabbe Yaakov Yitzchak, better known as the "Chozeh" — the "Seer" or the "Prophet" of Lublin, once related to the Rav of his city, Rav Azriel, that he was deeply troubled by the fact that so many people came to see him, and gave him much honor and *kavod*, of which he felt entirely unworthy. The Rav advised him that if this truly troubled him, he should announce in his *Shuleh* during the coming Shabbos that he was really a simple, ignorant person, and unworthy of such honor.

A few weeks later, when Rav Azriel met the Chozeh once again, the Rav asked the Chozeh whether he had heeded his advice, and whether it had been successful. The Chozeh replied that he had, indeed, heeded the Rav's advice, but it only had an adverse effect. The *Chasidim* now regarded him as a great *tzaddik* and *anav* — exceedingly humble, and they flocked to his door even more than before. Whereupon, the Rav advised him to take the opposite approach. "Announce that you are a great *gaon* and *tzaddik*. The *chasidim* will regard you as haughty and arrogant, and will stop regarding you as a great *tzaddik* and saintly person."

"This," the Chozeh replied, "I can never do. I am unworthy of being regarded as a Rebbe, but I cannot lie!"

How did the *Gedolim* of our own generation manifest their incessant yearning to adhere to a course of absolute truth and integrity?

We have already noted above that Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky attributed his blessing of long life to the fact that, from his earliest days, he had resolved to pursue a course of impeccable truthfulness and integrity.¹³¹ The following narratives are indicative of the pains he took to carry out this resolve.

Following a Chasidic Custom

Contrary to Lithuanian custom, Rav Yaakov, who was a Lithuanian Rav, did not eat *gebroshts* on Pesach.¹³² Where did he derive this *minhag*, which was contrary to the custom of his community?

Once, Rav Yaakov was asked to eat something on Pesach, in a home which he felt was of doubtful *kashrus*. To avoid embarrassing the host, Rav Yaakov replied that he did not eat *gebroshts*. He never ate *gebroshts* thereafter, so that his utterance should not have been an untruthful one.

A "Shadchan" With Integrity

One of Rav Yaakov's children once asked him whether he thought a certain young man in his Yeshiva would make a suitable match for his daughter (Rav Yaakov's granddaughter). Rav Yaakov replied that he thought very highly of the young man. When he was then asked whether he would act as *Shadchan* and suggest his granddaughter's name to the young man, Rav Yaakov replied that he was unable to do so. "I have promised someone else that I would speak on behalf of his daughter to this very same young man. I must keep my word. Then, we shall see what shall develop."

His family was well aware that Rav Yaakov did not merely offer a name for a *shidduch*. This was not his way, and this alone would never suffice for the kindly *Rosh haYeshiva*. Instead, he would offer warm advice and provide encouragement. The family requested that in this instance he should only present the girl's name to the young man and not pursue the matter further, in order that they might yet have an opportunity to interest the young man in meeting the *Rosh haYeshiva's* granddaughter. Rav Yaakov would not even hear of this suggestion. On the contrary, he was honor-bound, he said, to pursue the first *shidduch* to the very best of his ability.

Wearing Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin

After he turned ninety, Rav Yaakov began donning *tefillin* of Rabbeinu Tam.¹³³ When his family asked him why he had suddenly begun to wear Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*, when he had not done so for so many years, he told them that it was because of a conversation he had with Rabbi Shragaï Feivel Mendlowitz, when the latter engaged him as *Rosh Yeshiva* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath many years before. Rabbi Mendlowitz asked Rav Yaakov why he did not wear Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*, since the Chafetz Chaim had begun to do so during the later years of his life. Whereupon, Rav Yaakov replied with a smile, "The Chafetz Chaim began to wear Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin* at the age of ninety. I, too, will do so when I will become ninety years old, G-d willing."

Almost forty years later, when Rav Yaakov turned ninety, he began wearing Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*, to keep his word which had been uttered in jest, so many years before.

An Undeserved Reprimand

When he was six years old, young Yaakov was on his way to *cheder*, when he passed a group of people who had gathered to attend a *bris*. The *Mohel* had not yet arrived, and Yaakov was asked to call the *Mohel* and to urge him to hurry. This caused him to be late to *cheder*. The *Melamed* of the *cheder* did not believe Yaakov's story. "You are lying," the Rebbe said. "You probably saw a *bris* taking place, and stopped to take a piece of cake." Whereupon, he gave the latecomer a slap.

In later years, Rav Yaakov said that he never forgave the *Melamed* for having given him that slap, which he didn't deserve. "A good teacher," he observed, "should understand the nature of each *talmid*. He should have known that this six-year old boy was entirely incapable of lying."

A Perpetual Quest for Truth

The *middah* of truth was likewise a central theme in the life of Rav Moshe, *zatzal*. His approach to *ספק הלכה* — to rendering a halachic ruling was, in essence, a never-ending quest for truth. Once, during a lecture in the Yeshiva, he cited a halachic ruling of the Shach,¹³⁴ making reference to its precise location in the *Shulchan Aruch*, by citing the chapter and paragraph number. A student who had recently studied that particular chapter, disagreed regarding the paragraph number cited. Rav Moshe insisted that his reference to the paragraph number of the Shach was correct.

MIDAH OF THE WEEK CONTINUED

When he later was asked why he had made such an issue of such a seemingly trivial point, he replied that it was not a trivial matter at all, for in order to render a *p'sak halacha* — a halachic ruling — properly, the Rav had to have perfect command of the sources. He had long ago resolved, he said further, never to render a halachic ruling without consulting the sources, unless he knew every Shach and its paragraph number by heart.

Halacha and Secular Sources

He regarded secular studies as a detriment to arriving at a true perspective for rendering halachic decisions. In his *Iggros Moshe*, he renders the following reply to an individual who strongly criticized some of the halachic rulings in his responsa.

After indicating that he did not feel offended by the critical comments, Rav Moshe asserts that his original halachic ruling is correct, because it is based entirely on the words of the *Rishonim*, without any secular influence whatsoever.

"My entire outlook," he writes, "is based only upon Torah wisdom, without the inclusion of any secular knowledge whatsoever. For the rulings of the Torah are true, regardless of whether they lean towards a stringent or a lenient ruling."¹⁵⁵

A POEM TO RECITE EACH NIGHT

Is anybody happier because you passed his way.

Does anyone remember that you spoke to him today.

The day is almost over and the toiling time is through.

Is anyone to utter now a kindly word of you.

Can you say tonight is parting with the day that's slipping fast,

That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed.

Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said.

Does the man whose hopes were fading now with courage look ahead.

Did you waste the day or lose it? Was it well or sorely spent?

Did you leave a trail of kindness or a scar of discontent.

As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that you can say -

I have earned one more tomorrow by the work I did today.

TORAH THOUGHTS

The vivid recounting of the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai by Moshe in Parshat VaEtchanan is accompanied by a command to Bnei Yisrael never to forget the revelation they experienced. Moshe charges Bnei Yisrael with the task of telling the story of Matan Torah to their children and grandchildren, and to future generations.

Moshe reminds Bnei Yisrael that on the day they stood before Hashem at Horeb, Hashem had commanded Moshe,

“הקהל לי את העם ואשמיעם את דברי”

“Gather the people to Me that I may let them hear my words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children.”

Following this recollection, Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments for Bnei Yisrael.

There is a clear command for Am Yisrael to bear witness to the divine revelation they experienced at Har Sinai, but most of the people who were alive at Matan Torah were already gone at this point, forty years later. How was this new generation expected to pass on the revelation without losing some of the drama and significance of the event in their second-hand transmission to their children.

Hashem anticipated this difficulty and provided us with a special tool to aid us in the transmission of the message. This tool, found in Parshat Vayelech, is the mitzva of Hakhel, a gathering of all of Am Yisrael every seven years to read selections from the Torah intended to inspire them spiritually and bring them closer to Hashem. From the verses which describe the Hakhel ceremony, it is clear that Hakhel is a re-enactment of Matan Torah, as the language is quite parallel to our verses in VaEtchanan.

“הקהל לי את העם” - “Gather the people - the men, the women, and the children...that they may hear and so learn to revere the Lord your God and to observe faithfully every word of this teaching. *Their children, too, who have not had this experience, shall hear and learn to revere the Lord as long as they shall live in the land...*”

This mini Matan Torah at Hakhel, with its awe-inspiring gathering of all of Am Yisrael speaks louder than any story told describing the original event, and brings a genuine piece of Matan Torah into the lives of every member of the Jewish people, every seventh year, on the holiday of Succot.

Dassi Jacobson

STAFF CLOSEUP

Joining the staff, at Camp Morasha, this summer are Rabbi Uri and Aviva Sondhelm. Aviva is on the music staff and Rabbi Sondhelm is on the Ed staff. Rabbi and Mrs. Sondhelm are here all the way from Israel. During the year the Sondhelms live in Har Nof with their children Dvora, 18, Menachem, 15, Shira, 12, and Zvi, 8. Their oldest two children, Asher and Sara are married and also live in Israel.

During the year Aviva, who is originally from Baltimore, gives music lessons. She teaches children how to play the guitar. Aviva also works in a day care center helping to care for children that have Downs Syndrome. She finds this work most rewarding.

Rabbi Sondhelm, who is originally from New York, is a teacher at Ohr Yerushalayim. There he teaches boys who have just graduated from high school. Most of his students are from the United States and England. On occasion, Rabbi Sondhelm also does fundraising for the Yeshiva.

Both Rabbi Uri and Aviva Sondhelm are having a wonderful summer at Morasha. They love working with the campers and are also enjoying getting to know the other staff members. In fact the Sondhelms have only positive things to say about Morasha. Their son Zvi is having a terrific time at day camp too.

Attention All Staff:
Perek Near the Library
Rabbi Allen Schwartz
Shabbos Afternoon 5:30 PM

Thanks to the entire office staff: Aliza, Ronit, Miriam, Paula, Shirley, and to Chavie, Michellele and Aviva for all your help with the Shalhevet

OPERATION TIKUN SEFORIM

Yasher koach and thank you to all the Alufim boys for rebinding the camp's Siddurim and Chumashim on Tisha B'Av and making them useable again. 273 books were fixed through their efforts.

תזכו למצוות !