

The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of
Mendy Klein
 ר' מנחם משה ז"ל
 בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא
 נפטר ל"ג בעומר
 י"ח אייר תשע"ח
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Only Six Words

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

A Jewish family lived in a village in a house that belonged to an important Count. The father of the family owed the count lots of money but had no way of repaying the debt. The count's patience wore thin and he sentenced the entire family to rot the rest of their lives in prison.

A while passed and the family suffered terribly, but then they had a new problem. The wife had just given birth to a baby boy and they very much wanted to perform the brit mila (circumcision) at the age of eight days.

Sure enough, a number of influential personalities convinced the cruel count to allow this to happen. Under the watchful eyes of many armed guards, they were released to fulfill this important mitzvah. They quickly gathered ten men from the surrounding area and performed the circumcision, which was then followed by a celebratory meal.

Present at the affair was the local chief of police. As the meal wore on, the alcohol flowed freely and loosened some tongues. Highly intoxicated, the police chief offered a few wealthy Jews at the party a daring proposal: "I have three extremely fast horses that run like deer, if you all pay me well, I will take the Jew and his family away to a distant place and no one will ever know what happened to them."

They agreed, and paid the policeman a hefty sum. It was a long winter night and the roads were icy, so a chase would be very difficult and the escapees would be able to cover a large distance without pursuit.

After making sure that the guards were completely intoxicated, the police chief led the Jew and his family into the night.

A short while into their dangerous journey the parents came to a horrifying realization; the baby had been left behind! Weeping bitter tears, they begged their gentile benefactor to turn around and pick up the infant. However, the man refused to do this; he felt it would endanger his life if the guards awoke and discovered them to be missing.

The horses galloped on as planned and they arrived at the city before daybreak. He bid them farewell and rode off into the distance towards home.

At midnight the guards had shaken off the effects of the strong drinks and were wide awake when they realized that the prisoners had made a run for it. They quickly told the count what had happened and he ordered his men to take the fastest horses and conduct a manhunt far and wide to locate the escapees. However, as thoroughly as they searched they were not able to locate the vanished Jews. Meanwhile, they informed the count about their shocking discovery of a bundle that was left behind in the courtyard, which was in fact the little baby boy.

Despairing of recapturing the baby's parents, the count decided that he would keep the infant and raise him to be his servant.

When the chief of police returned home and got wind of the whole incident, he passionately pleaded with the count to allow him to adopt the baby as his son, because he and his wife were

childless. The count was very fond of the chief of police and agreed to relinquish the boy.

As the years passed on, this little boy grew up believing that this policeman and his wife were his real parents. When he reached the age of eight they taught him how to herd cattle, which he did diligently.

One day, while grazing the cattle, the young boy got into a quarrel with some of the other shepherds. Names and taunting were slung freely through the air, until eventually they teased him that he was actually a Jew boy and not a child of the honorable officer of the law.

Of course at first the boy didn't believe them and dismissed it as childish teasing, but they continued tormenting him about this and told him that the proof was that he was circumcised.

In private he decided to check. Realizing that indeed he was a Jew and these were not his real parents, he decided that he wanted to devote himself to discovering his true roots and find his father and mother. He began hatching a plan of how to escape.

The perfect opportunity arose when his adoptive parents left on a trip for a few days. Running with every ounce of strength, the boy arrived in a city that had a Jewish community.

After hearing his incredible story, the compassionate Jews stripped him of his gentile attire and dressed him like a good Jewish boy, complete with a talit katan (four-cornered garment) and tzitzit (strands) dangling from them.

For one year he remained in this city and learnt the Alef-Beit and how to read, but then for fear of discovery he left to another town where he furthered his education and learned Chumash (Scripture), Gemara (Talmud) and had a proper bar mitzvah when he turned thirteen. At that point he felt it was time for him to leave once again, in order to find a larger town that had a proper yeshiva.

After a few years of devoted study, he became an accomplished Talmudic scholar. The owner of the local tavern, a Jew who was a chasid of Rabbi Michil of Zlotchov, hired the brilliant young man to tutor his children.

On one occasion, when the tavern owner was planning to travel to his Rebbe, R. Michil, he invited the young man to join him on the trip, if he so desired. The young man replied, "Why wouldn't I want to come along? In fact this would be an excellent opportunity for this great man to help me find my parents."

When the young man was allowed to speak privately with R. Michil, he poured out his heart to the Tzadik (holy man) and told him all that had happened, begging him for help in finding his true roots.

Reb Michel listened carefully to the whole story but didn't say a word, instead he took out a piece of parchment and wrote a few words on it. Turning to the young man and handing him the tightly rolled little scroll which he had sewn into a pouch, he said, "Take this and always keep it on you. But don't open it! On the day of your wedding, arrange for a qualified rabbi to tear open the stitching and read it. You will then be able to marry according to Jewish Law."

Following the Tzadik's instruction explicitly, although without any comprehension of its meaning, the young man returned home and continued his lifestyle of teaching and learning.

It Once Happened..

At the age of nineteen he agreed to begin looking into different proposals for marriage. It so happened that his employer had a wealthy acquaintance who lived some distance away but from time to time would come to town, and they would do business together. This man noticed the teacher and was very impressed by what he saw; he felt this young man would be perfect for his daughter.

Everything went as the girl's parents planned and within a short time the engagement was celebrated. The rich man was very pleased with his son-in-law to be and brought him to his city amidst great honor and fanfare.

The day of the wedding arrived and hundreds of people gathered together to join in the festive occasion. Standing under the chupah/canopy, the groom suddenly remembered the scroll from Rebbe Michil. He turned to his future in-laws and told them, "The wedding mustn't take place today; it will have to be rescheduled for tomorrow. We need a knowledgeable rabbi here first."

He then went on to relate all the details of the meeting with Rebbe Michil. A messenger was quickly dispatched to a nearby town to bring the head of the rabbinical court, so that the festivities could go on.

The next day the young man handed over the mysterious scroll to the rabbi and waited with impatient curiosity. As soon as the rabbi opened it, he noticed that it had only six words written on it. It was inscribed: "How can a brother marry his sister?"

The rabbi was completely dumbfounded by what he read and had no idea what it could possibly mean. He showed it to the young groom who, much to the astonishment of the rabbi, became very joyous and began clapping his hands. He then set out running towards the house of his bride's family.

Meanwhile, all the guests and family had become concerned by the odd behavior of the intended groom. They worried that he had gone crazy. When the rabbi arrived and saw the worry on the face of the bride's father, he turned towards the young man and asked for the meaning behind the mysterious words.

The young man agreed happily. He related his entire life story from beginning to end, concluding that he was certain that the words of the Tzadik were there to help him find his family, and that the bride was none other than his sister, and her father, who was standing in front of him, was also his father.

After doing some research and asking some questions, all the dates and locations matched up. Everyone realized simultaneously that a miracle had just occurred.

Parents and son embraced emotionally after so many years of being separated from one another. The joy that day was much greater than any wedding would have been. Soon thereafter, the siblings both found excellent marriage mates.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times – Acharei-Kedoshim

Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:44	7:59 8:37
Tel Aviv	6:59	8:02
Haifa	6:52	8:03
Be'er Sheva	7:01	8:01

Slice of Life

Torah Compilations With Yossi Parshat Acharei-Kedoshim

The Fruits of a Butcher's Donation to Support Torah

By Rabbi Efrayim Eliyahu Shapiro

There was a young boy in pre-war Poland called Arik Sisslovitzker. Sadly, he was orphaned from his mother at an early age - and after having been cared for by his father for a few years, his father also passed away. Arik was sent away to Minsk, which was sixty six miles away from Sisslovitzk, where he was looked after by his uncle, a Rav whose name was R' Shlomo Zalman.

Arik made his uncle's life difficult, because life in Minsk was a struggle and an extra mouth to feed wasn't easy. So R Shlomo Zalman breathed a sigh of relief when Arik reached the age of twelve years old, because he was a bright boy, and so he was sent to learn in the Katzovisher Shul. In those times, the boys who were learning would go every night knocking on doors, asking families to have them for supper.

Fast forward 58 years - Rav Efrayim Eliyohu Shapiro's father Rav Mordechai Shapiro was Rav of a Shul called Beth Israel in Miami Beach. He once was in Tel Aviv on a Friday afternoon looking to change money and came across a kiosk on Rechov Allenby. He changed his money, but something about the man in the kiosk piqued his interest: he was an old European Jew with a grey beard and he was learning from a pocket Mishnayot.

So Rav Shapiro stood back and watched people come and go to the kiosk, do their business and move on. A few minutes later, a gentleman came along and asked to purchase a pack of cigarettes. The kiosk owner asked what the time was and the customer told him it was half past two. The kiosk owner said 'I'm sorry - I don't sell cigarettes after chatzot on a Friday'.

This really got Rav Shapiro fired up, so he decided to go over to talk to this chap. He engaged him in conversation; they discussed where they were from and that Rav Shapiro was from America.

The kiosk owner, whose name was Reb Yakov Oxenkrug said to Rav Shapiro, 'Whatever became of that young prodigy Arik Sisslovitzker?'

Rav Shapiro said he didn't know of him - but he asked him some questions about this boy, who the kiosk owner thought might have made his way to America during the war, and he realized the kiosk owner was talking about Rav Aharon Kotler, the Rosh Yeshiva of Beit Midrash Gavoha in Lakewood, the biggest and most highly regarded Yeshiva in America.

Rav Shapiro got a little excited and said "Who do you think you are calling 'Arik Sisslovitzker'? He's

one of the Gedolei Hador, a leader of the American Jewry, the Sar Hatorah Rav Aharon Kotler!"

Throughout Rav Shapiro's rant about who Rav Aharon Kotler had become, the kiosk owner's eyes started to fill with tears until he was sobbing uncontrollably. Rav Shapiro apologized and said "I hope I didn't upset you! Why are you getting all emotional?"

The kiosk owner explained that when he was a young man growing up in Minsk; he wanted to learn Torah but in those days only the best and brightest were given the opportunity to learn full time in Yeshiva - the rest had to work. Many people lived in abject poverty, where the opportunity simply wasn't there for them to learn.

The kiosk owner had not been destined for the top - so he went to work. He became a butcher - but he never lost his yearning and longing to be involved in yeshiva life. Business was good and every kilo of meat that he sold, he made one ruble of profit. He resolved that for every ruble he would make, he would put one little kopek in a jar and give it to help the boys who were lucky enough to be allowed to learn full-time. Day after day, one Kopek after another made its way into the jar - and the day arrived when the jar was full.

So he made his way to the Katzovisher Shul where he davened. He gave the jar full of money to the head of the Chabura and said to him "Do with this money as you see fit, in order to further the Torah learning of the boys in your Chabura." The Rosh Chabura said to him "You know we have two boys who are really exceptional and we wanted to send them to Slabodka for some time; but we haven't had the money. With your donation we can send them to Slabodka."

The kiosk owner remembered that one of the boys was Arik Sisslovitzker - and that's why he asked Rav Shapiro what happened to him. He cried tears of joy when he heard how he had turned out, all because of the kiosk owner's financial assistance.

In the 1970's, Rav Shapiro had a special visitor to Miami Beach: Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky was visiting town and came to the Shapiro household for lunch. Rav Shapiro was very taken with the story that had taken place in Tel Aviv, so he started telling Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky the story.

Rav Yaakov listened to the story throughout with a big smile on his face. When Rav Shapiro finished the story, he asked him "Do you know who the second bachur was, who was sent to Slabodka?" (Rav Shapiro shook his head, so he answered "It was Yaakov Kamenetsky.")

This young butcher, who just wanted to do his little bit, saved a few kopeks which sent the two giants of American Jewry to Slabodka, where they became the Gedolei Hador. -Lo Alecha Ham'Lacha Ligmon - it's not for you to finish the task - but just do what you can and Hashem takes care of the rest.

As heard from Binyamin Feiner and Chayim Schwab. Reprinted from an email of Oneg Shabbos (London, UK)



In Parashat Acharei Mot we are told, "בזאת יבוא אהרן אל הקדש" - With 'this', Aharon, the High Priest will enter the Holy of Holies. But the word 'זאת' -this', seems to be surplus to requirements in the context of the text. So what was it that Aharon came with, as he entered into the קודש הקודשים - the Holy of Holies? The Midrash explains that Aharon took with him the merit of all the Shabbatot that the Jewish people had kept during the previous year. This indicates to us the power and significance of keeping Shabbat.

But we still need to understand, what the thematic connection is between Shabbat, Yom HaKippurim and the service of the Kohen Gadol on that day?

I heard from the Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, the following: Remarkably, on the day of Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol changed his garments five times. And before every single one of those occasions, he immersed himself in a Mikvah and then purified his feet and his hands with kiddush yadayim ve'raglayim.

But the question that Rabbi Mirvis asks is this: Yes, we can understand why he needed to purify himself when he was coming from the outside, inwards. But going from inside the Holy of Holies to the outside, to his regular garments, to his regular environment - why did he have to sanctify himself before that as well? Why was there a need to immerse himself in a Mikvah once again?

It's a bit like being given the privilege of meeting a monarch. You might try on this garment and that, you would get yourself ready, you would look forward to that remarkable occasion. But whilst actually experiencing that audience with the monarch, would you start preparing for the experience of going back to your ordinary life afterwards?

But that's exactly what the Kohen Gadol was doing - and that's the connection with Shabbat.

You see, Shabbat is so special for us, not only because it is an incredible day's experience but also because it provides inspiration for us throughout the week that follows. That is why in our Havdalah ceremony, we take the בשמים - the spices, we smell them to symbolize the way that the spirituality of Shabbat lingers on. So too with the Kohen Gadol. He didn't want his experience in the Holy of Holies to just be a one-off moment of spirituality. He wanted it to empower him, to inspire him. To take that קדושה - that holiness and infuse the rest of the year with the sanctity of what he had experienced. And that is why he immersed himself in the Mikvah to prepare for putting on his ordinary clothes thereafter. From the experience of the Kohen Gadol we learn how important it is to savor every precious moment in life and also how important it is to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

In today's pandemic, we have learnt how important it is to savor life, so let's pray with all our hearts for the recovery of all those who are sick from the pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers who go out to protect us and those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet, happy Shabbat and Pesach Sheni Sameach.

Yossi

תורת אהרי מות - קדושים

If you would like to help keep The Jewish Weekly in print, or to subscribe or dedicate an issue, please email editor@thejweekly.org to help continue our weekly publication.

To subscribe to THE JEWISH WEEKLY or to dedicate a month, please contact us by email: editor@thejweekly.org or www.thejweekly.org

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

Parshat Acharei Mot
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 28
MITZVOT ASEH: 2
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 26
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 80
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1170
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 4294

Parshat Kedoshim
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 51
MITZVOT ASEH: 13
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 38
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 64
NUMBER OF WORDS: 868
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 3229

HAFTORA:
Ashkenazim: Amos 9:7 - 15
Chabad & Sephardim: Yechezkel 20:2 - 20

שני פסח - Pesach Sheni is Friday, 14 Iyar - May 8, 2020.

This Shabbat we study Chapter 3 of Pirkei Avot