

Carefully consider all variables before proceeding. Pulling on the reins is a good habit to develop, and it could prevent many accidents. (One Minute With Yourself)

### Approval Seeking

“Shame is based on people wanting the approval of others. They are embarrassed to reveal any behavior or appearance that they believe will earn them disapproval. People do things in private that they wouldn’t do in public. The fact that there is shame in the world is a tremendous force for civilization, for the well-being of humanity.”

Shamefulness is a kindness of Hashem. Experiencing shame in front of Hashem, is an Approval Seeking method of receiving divine favor. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

### Rebbe Comes First

Shmuel Aharone wanted a new bike, and he was willing to put in the work he needed to get it. It would take a long time, but if he was careful about spending money, he would eventually have the funds he needed.

The fourth grader started saving every penny he received. Hanukah gelt, his *afikoman* present on Pesah – all were put aside into the bike fund.

As the months slowly passed, the bike fund steadily grew. Summer was approaching, and Shmuel renewed his determination to buy that bike.

Along with summer’s approach comes the end of the school year. This year, Shmuel would be bidding farewell to the Rebbe who had been learning with his class for four years – ever since they started school, back in first grade.

The Rebbe had taught Shmuel’s class all five *humashim* of the Torah, and to celebrate this achievement, the class planned a *siyum* at the end of the year.

It was an emotional occasion for the students, the Rebbe and the parents. At the *siyum*, the parents displayed their gratitude by presenting the Rebbe with a gift.

Shmuel went home that day, and told his mother, “Mommy, I want to buy my Rebbe a present with the money I saved.”

His mother was startled. “That’s a nice idea, Shmuel. But if you do that, you won’t have any money left for the bike. And you’ve been saving up for so long.”

Shmuel shook his head. “I don’t care. The bike can wait.”

“That’s beautiful,” his mother said softly. “If you’re sure, I’ll take you to the *safarim* store and you could choose something for your Rebbe.”

The first thing Shmuel saw when he walked into the store was a beautifully framed picture of Rabbi Avigdor Miller zsl.

“That’s it!” he declared, pointing at the picture. “That’s the present I want to get.”

The gift was purchased and wrapped. Then Shmuel went to his Rebbe’s home. The Rebbe was very moved and thanked his young student – though he almost certainly did not realize how much Shmuel had given up to buy this gift.

School had ended, camp had begun. Shmuel enjoyed attending his yeshivah’s summer camp, and the weeks passed quickly. Soon it was time for the big event – the grand banquet on the last day of camp.

The highlight of the banquet was the raffle, culminating in the grand prize. The scene was tumultuous as the campers fidgeted in excitement, waiting for the head counselor to pull out a ticket and announce the winner.

“And the winner is...”

The hall quieted for just a moment, as the head counselor held up the winning ticket with a flourish and read out the number.

Shmuel Aharone was the winner of a brand new bike! (Visions of Greatness IX)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשֻׁמָּת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## **Congregation Magen Abraham**

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שַׁבָּת וְקִרְבָּן - פְּקוּדֵי שַׁבָּת VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

שַׁבָּת הַחֹדֶשׁ SHABBAT HAHODESH

Haftarah: Yehezkel 45:18 - 46:15

**MARCH 20-21, 2020 25 ADAR 5780**

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:00 & 6:40 pm** Shaharit: **5:58, 6:40, 8:10, 9:10 am**

Candlelighting: **6:50 pm**

Morning Shema by: **9:16 am**

Evening Shema after: **7:48 pm**

Shabbat Class: **5:30 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **6:30 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shabbat Ends: **7:49 pm (R"Y 8:21 pm)**

Sunday Minhah: **6:55 pm**

**Rosh Hodesh Nisan will be celebrated on Thursday, March 26.**

### A Message from our Rabbi

”אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן”

“These are the reckonings of the *Mishkan*.” (Shemot 38:21)

It’s not a good idea to count your money. The *Talmud* learns that one’s wealth and possessions are blessed and even increase in quantity when they are hidden from the eye. The *Talmud* continues that a prayer to G-d to bestow blessing on something that has already been measured is in vain. It will not happen. Blessing only attaches itself to something that has not been weighed, measured, or counted.

However, *Parashat Pekudei* teaches us that there is a time when money must be counted to the last penny – when the money is not yours.

Rabbi Eliezer Scheller explains that when the *Mishkan* and the holy utensils were completed, Moshe gave a detailed accounting of every last ounce of gold, silver, and copper that had been contributed for the *Mishkan*. He made a full accounting of the proceeds, and gave his calculations to a second person, Itamar ben Aharon. When dealing with money or donations from others, every detail must be accounted for.

In the town of Kelm, home of the famous yeshivah, there was a small general store for the use of the yeshivah students. The store operated with an honor system so that no one needed to be taken away from his studies to tend the counter. Customers simply took what they needed and left payment in the cash box. After a while, it was found that there were overpayments in the box. Upon hearing this, the *Alter*, Rav Simcha Zissel, ordered that the store be closed. He explained, “There probably was too much

money because the box did not have sufficient small change for customers, and customers would leave more money as a contribution. However, by the same token, it was possible that people who overpaid may one day find themselves with insufficient money for a purchase, and they would feel entitled to underpay. If the calculations are not always exact, it can happen that someone would take something that is not theirs!”

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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### *For the Toil!*

*Parashat Pekudei* concludes the construction of the *Mishkan*. After the construction of all the individual components of the *Mishkan*, the parts were brought to Moshe. *Rashi* quotes the *Midrash Tanhuma* that explains that the *Mishkan* was brought to Moshe because everyone else was unable assemble it. The *Mishkan* was too heavy for anyone to lift. Since Moshe had not been personally involved in any part of the construction of the *Mishkan*, Hashem reserved the privilege of final assembly for him.

When Hashem told Moshe to assemble the *Mishkan*, Moshe protested that it was too heavy for him to lift, as well. Hashem told Moshe to make the effort. “Make it look like you are trying to erect it.” Moshe made the effort, and miraculously, it assembled itself. Since Moshe made the effort, he received the credit for having put it up.

Rav Meir Rubman explains that we can learn a very important insight regarding spirituality from this *Midrash*. The *Midrash* teaches us that regardless of the difficulty of the task, we must make the effort. In other areas of endeavor, a person only gets credit for producing. However, when it comes to Judaism, Hashem is not necessarily interested in results; He is interested in the effort.

The concept that a person receives an “A” for effort is usually a backhanded compliment. In actuality, you received a “D” – a near failing grade, but at least you received an “A” for effort. That is the way it is in other areas of life. However, by *misvot*, all Hashem asks from us is that we make the effort. Whether the task is actually accomplished or not is often out of our control and up to Hashem.

At the conclusion of a *Masechet* [tractate of the *Talmud*], we say the prayer “We toil and they toil. We toil and receive reward and they toil and do not receive reward.” What does it mean, “they toil and do not receive reward”? This does not seem to be a true statement. People do not work without receiving payment!

The answer is that when we work (at religious tasks), we receive pay for the effort, regardless of whether or not we produce. However, ‘they’ only receive pay for the bottom line. In all other areas, toil that does not produce results does not get reward.

Success is not the correct measure. Whether or not the *Mishkan* is actually erected is Hashem’s worry. We toil and we receive reward – for the effort. (Rabbi Yisocher Frand)

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### *Up Close and Personal*

These final portions in the Book of *Shemot* summarize the amazing accomplishments of the Children of Israel in building the *Mishkan* while in the desert. Men and women, young and old each had a share in this great endeavor. The Torah tells us: “Every man whose heart inspired him came; and everyone whose spirit motivated him brought the portion of Hashem for the work of the Tent of Meeting.”

And then there were those who did the work. “Moshe summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and every wise-hearted man whose heart Hashem endowed with wisdom, everyone whose heart inspired him, to come close to the work, to do it.” The wording needs clarification. Why use the term, “whose heart inspired him, to come close to the work, to do it”? Why not just say “whose heart inspired him, to do the work”? What is the meaning of coming close to do the work? Just do the work!

The lines outside of Rav Elazar Menachem Shach’s apartment in B’nai Brak were always long. Visitors came from across the world to speak to the eldest Sage in Israel. Young and old, wealthy and poor waited in the corridor of the tiny apartment in order to gain either wisdom, advice, counsel or blessing from the revered Sage.

One evening after almost everyone had left, a wealthy North American philanthropist was about to enter the study to speak to Rav Shach concerning an important matter. Before entering the study he noticed a father clutching the hand of a school-aged child no more than eleven years old.

“Please, sir,” interrupted the father. “It is difficult for my child to sit still in class. *Talmud* seems to bore him. Please let me enter before you. I just want a quick blessing from the Rabbi that my son should develop an interest in Torah learning.” It seemed innocuous enough. The wealthy man had already waited quite a while and he figured that another minute or two for Rav Shach to shake the boy’s hand, give him a blessing, and send him on his way could not take that long, and so, he agreed.

It was almost 45 minutes before the child left Rav Shach’s apartment. The boy and his father were both beaming enthusiastically. Then they spotted the benevolent man who allowed them to go ahead. He was baffled. “What happened in there?” He asked. “Why did his blessing take so long?”

The father of the young boy began to explain. “We entered the room expecting a *berachah* and a handshake. But Rav Shach told us that we didn’t need his blessing. He asked my son what he is learning. Then he took out that Tractate and sat down with him. He learned a *Mishnah* with my son until he understood it. Then the *Rashi*. Then the *Gemara*. Then more *Rashi*. Then a *Tosefot*. It was not long before my son and the revered *Rosh Yeshiva* became entangled in excited *Talmudic* repertoire!

“The *Rosh Yeshiva* explained to us that all you need is to get close to the *Gemara*, draw yourself to it. Then it will grasp you and embrace you! You don’t need a blessing to enjoy it. You must draw yourself close to it and then you will enjoy it!”

Building a *Mishkan*, like any project that entails difficult work for the sake of Heaven, can be arduous and depressing at times, and it is easy to become dispirited and desperate. The key to success lies in the pasuk, “Everyone whose heart inspired him, to come close to the work, to do it.” In order to do the work, you must draw yourself close to the work. If you take small steps with love and bring a project close to your heart, then rest assured you will complete the work in joy! (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

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### *Speed Limit*

A nervous father handing the car keys to his teenage son often cautions the new driver to “Watch the speed limits!”

You must pay attention to the signs in order to avoid getting a ticket, because speed limits vary from area to area and from road to road. Construction zones have reduced limits with increased fines. You really do have to be careful.

In order to set speed limits, experts study the roads and determine the safest speed for each segment of highway and street. Pedestrian traffic, play areas, proximity to schools and business districts, road conditions and visibility, are all to be taken into account before the experts set the safest maximum speed.

In life, you are traveling all the time. This constant movement gives rise to the question: What is the safest maximum speed? In both material and spiritual matters, weighing the variables is the wisest exercise you can do to prevent accidents.

When you are traveling through your prayers, your work, your social interaction, or your meals, always stop to evaluate whether you are traveling at a safe speed.