

A COMMUNITY AWARENESS BULLETIN

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הקהל

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1. A Special Siyum Opportunity. This year, if you start on 5 Elul (August 13th) and learn *only three Mishnayos a day*, you will make a *siyum on the entire Mishnayos Mesechta Rosh Hashana* before Rosh Hashana, and if you *then continue learning only three Mishnayos a day*, you will make a *siyum on the entire Mishnayos Mesechta Yoma* before Yom Kippur. Let us utilize our special opportunities!

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2. The Vilna Gaon's View of a Tzaddik. In Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 1:1, the Rema states that "Shivisi Hashem Lenegdi Somid"—placing Hashem before me at all times is a ma'ale of tzaddikim. The Vilna Gaon there notes that this is *the* ma'ale of tzaddikim, meaning that yiras Hashem is the *sole* element that differentiates between the tzaddik, the righteous, and those who are not tzaddikim. Perhaps the message of the Rema, by stating this at the outset of the *Shulchan Aruch* (which is a halacha and not a hashkofa sefer), is to teach us that we all can and must be "tzaddikim," and that the attainment of that goal is not necessarily as complicated as we think if we keep ourselves focused on Shivisi Hashem, that we are in Hashem's presence at all times.

3. What's the Brocha?

a. *Kix.* The popular General Mills cereal, Kix, lists corn meal as its first ingredient, and whole grain oats as its second ingredient. According to the Star-K listing of brochos on cereals, the appro-

prate brocha is shehakol. We confirmed this with the OU's Rabbinic Coordinator in charge of this product.

b. *HoneyComb Look-Alike.* A Heimishe manufacturer markets a "HoneyComb"-like product. The first ingredient is corn flour and the third ingredient is "whole grain oat flour." We called the Rav HaMachshir to ask him what the appropriate brocha rishona would be (i.e., were the oats considered only "ledabek" or were they present for substance), and whether there was enough oat flour in one bowl for a brocha achrona of al hamichya. He responded that he *would not look into it*, as this was not his job, and that we should contact the owner (whose number he gave us). The owner, who understood the question, said he would look into it, and that we should get back to him next week. When we called the owner back the following week, he responded that oat flour was a 25% ingredient and the brocha was a mezonos. He did not know, however, how much cereal one would have to eat in order to make an al hamichya. Question: If the Rav HaMachshir did not know what brocha to make and the owner needed to do further research and still had no idea as to the proper brocha achrona, how in the world should any consumer know what brochos to make before and after eating this product?!

c. *Fruit Cocktail.* A Heimishe brand of fruit cocktail has recently appeared on the market, with the following four "fruits" listed as the ingredients: pineapple, papaya, guava and banana. We note that the brocha rishona on pineapple and banana is borei p'ri *hoadomah*, that the brocha on papaya is a sofek (either hoetz or hoadomah), and only the brocha on guava is borei p'ri hoetz. We additionally note that the size of the pieces in the can is quite large, and may not really be considered a mixture for the purposes of determining what is the majority product in order to make the correct brocha. We finally note that identifying each particular piece may not be easy, especially for children. Let the buyer—and the brocha-maker—beware.

4. Ribbis Alert. As we know, the Torah prohibits charging another Yid interest. The person who intentionally violates this prohibition does not arise in T'chiyas Hameisim (*Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer* 33). Contemporary shailos relating to ribbis in the consumer world include: If I borrow a

Please Note:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to alert the public regarding timely *haskafos* and *shailos*, so that the informed person can ask his Rav the right questions.

friend's car with a half-full tank and fill it up with gas - have I repaid a loan with interest? Similarly, if I borrow a half-empty bottle of grape juice on Erev Shabbos and return a whole bottle on Sunday-is it ribbis? Can a landlord charge a fee for a late rental payment? Can you "keep the change"?"

Several recent English language halachic seforim clearly respond to contemporary practical ribbis situations (See *Bulletin*, Volume 1, Number 1, relating to banks). We wish to highlight one "everyday" issue. Without a proper Heter Iska, one cannot lend someone a credit card and pay the interest charge to the bank for him—since when he pays you back, he is actually paying you principal and *interest*, even though he is only repaying you the principal and interest which you were charged by the bank. NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT A CHUMRA (STRINGENCY) BUT IS THE ACTUAL HALACHA L'MAASEH. Failure to abide by Hilchos Ribbis or to provide for an appropriate Heter Iska when possible constitutes one or more Issurei D'oraysa—complete Torah prohibitions.

5. Stop a Bomb. The Gemara (Brochos 6B) teaches us that tefilah is "Omed b'rumo shel olam—stands at the height of the world, "U'nei odom mizalzelim bohem"—yet people disgrace it. We undermine the awesome power of our very own tefilos. Every one of us is saying Tehillim every day. Before saying one of these k'pitelech, stop and say "Hashem Yisborach, I am saying this k'pital to stop a terrorist's shrapnel-laden homicide bomb or other form of brutal attack in Eretz Yisroel today." The time, date and place of your success will be then solely in the hands of Hashem. We must learn to understand and appreciate that our tefilos are infinitely more powerful than the most dastardly plot.

6. Feeling the Hashgocha Pratis. The Mishna at the end of Sotah (49A) teaches that eventually mankind will come to realize "Al mi yesh l'hishoen elah al Aveinu she' Bashamayim (we have no one to rely upon except for our Father in Heaven)." Rav Matisyahu Solomon Shlita recently taught "The world and its civilization has been stripped of all of its power. We cannot rely on society's governments, finances and security. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is dismantling the deception of the world. Our avodah at this point is to put all of our faith and trust in Avinu she' Bashamayim—with *no one else* to turn to—*AIN OD MILVADO*." We must focus our complete trust in Hashem—to the exclusion of all else including self. In fact, the word "l'hishoen" means that we must sense the hashgocha pratis, Hashem's close supervision, in all that we do (*Eitz Yosef* on the words "Mishaan U'Mivtach" in Shemone Esrei).

7. Wish List. Make a list of 20 things that would change for the better if Moshiach came and the Bais Hamikdosh was rebuilt. When we fervently daven for the binyan Bais Hamikdosh are we davening for just one thing—for the return of one holy and glorious building? After studying our list, we will recognize that the kavana we have when we daven for binyan Beis Hamikdosh should be enormous.

8. A Single Standard. One great indication that a person is not running his business honestly is that he has "two sets of books." One must be cautious not to have a similar "two sets of books" in life. While this may relate to kashrus standards inside and outside the house, it also relates to the activities one may want to do in the summer that they would not think of doing in the winter.

9. Times Five. Chazal (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 8:12) teach us, based on the posuk of "*Haelefelecha shlomo u'mosayim l'notrim es piryo*—One thousand for Shlomo and two hundred to those who watch his fruit"—that the reward for one who learns while traveling ("*lecha*") is five times (1000 vs. 200) greater than for one who simply learns in the Beis Medrash ("*notrim es piryo*"). It is interesting that the numbers the posuk uses for a ratio of 5:1 is 1000:200. A possible explanation may be based upon the Chofetz Chayim (quoted in Item 30, Volume II, Number 2 (Teves/Shevat 5762) of the Bulletin) who states that one can learn 200 words of Torah, which is equivalent to 200 separate Mitzvos, in one minute. If one learns while traveling, Hashem considers it as if he is learning five times as much, or 1,000 words per minute. While traveling, one should await and treasure the incredible opportunity to perform the equivalent of 1,000 Mitzvos per minute.

10. Many Times Over. The Mishne Berurah (Orach Chayim 328, seif katen 39) raises the following shaila: If, Rachmana Litzlan, a sick person on Shabbos must eat meat and there is only treif meat around, with the alternative being to shecht a kosher animal—is it better for the sick person to eat several k'zeisim of treif meat or is it better to shecht a kosher animal which is, of course, a Melacha D'oraysa on Shabbos? Incredibly, he poskens that it is proper to shecht the animal, which is *one* ma'aseh issur of a melacha on Shabbos, then to eat several k'zeisim of treif, which involves several prohibited acts, although seemingly less severe. He brings various reasons for this p'sak. One of the great lessons we learn from here is the severity of repeating an aveirah *over and over*. Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus, Z'TL, (*Shearim B'Tefilah* p. 140) gives the moshal of one who digs a hole, each shovelful creates a bigger and bigger hole. Speaking Loshon Hora is obviously one great example of this allegory (Chofetz Chaim, Introduction). Another example would be shaving with an unkosher shaver (See *Bulletin*, Volume 1, Number 1), as the Gemara (Makos 20A) teaches that for each improper shave, one may violate five separate lavin, or 30 prohibitions weekly. We can clearly see the danger of accumulation.

11. Kovod Shabbos. We can fulfill a Mitzva D'oraysa every day by doing things in honor of Shabbos. The Gemara brings Shammai's approach of constantly being on the lookout for something special for Shabbos and saying "Zu l'Shabbos" (Beitzta 16A). In fact, by just remembering Shabbos verbally, one is mekayem a Mitzva D'oraysa. It is for this reason that some are careful to say "Zochor es yom haShabbos l'kadsho" among the Shesh Z'chiros each day after Shachris. Others, including HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Z'TL, said daily before the Shir Shel Yom, "Zochor es yom HaShabbos L'kadsho" (*Ishei Yisroel* Chapter 26, note 44; See *Piskei Tshuvos* 2, 132:12).

12. Chatzos for Everyone. On Shabbos morning, after davening, one may be learning with his chavrusa, listening to a shiur or walking to a simcha. One should remember that according to the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 288:1), it is forbidden to fast past chatzos on Shabbos morning (which, depending on the time of year and location can be as early as 11:30 A.M. or perhaps earlier). This means that the husband must be home from shul (unless the whole family is attending a kiddush) and complete kiddush before chatzos. Since kiddush must be b'makom seudah, the seudah should start soon afterwards. Note: If one drinks a glass of water prior to davening,

it is no longer considered as if he is fasting. Additionally, there may be some dispensation for one attending a shiur. Please ask your Rav.

13. Note on Shabbos Davening. In the Shabbos Mussaf, the proper reading is “Korban Mussaf Shabbos Ka’raui” (meaning the Shabbos Mussaf offering in accordance with Hashem’s instructions). There is *no* stop or pause between the words “Mussaf” and “Shabbos”.

14. Clean Sweep. Many sweep the floor on Shabbos (with a soft bristle broom) and seem to sweep up items which would otherwise be muktza, such as dirt, bones, ripped up pieces of paper and the like. What is the basis for *sweeping* muktza on Shabbos? The Chazon Ish (Moed 47:21) brings two possible answers: 1) The muktza items are botul to the ground being swept; and 2) The muktza items are considered to be as “graph shel re’ei” (an unclean bathroom utensil) and do not fall into the category of muktza because it is socially unacceptable to leave them in a person’s presence. Based on these explanations, we should be careful about sweeping large objects which do not fall into the category of “graph shel re’ei,” such as pens and pencils, unless there is a different heter for their removal.

15. Speedily/Speedily in Our Days. There are four brochos in Shemone Esrei when we ask that Hashem do something for us *meheyra—speedily*. There is even one brocha where we ask that Hashem do something speedily in *our days* (which includes the days of the *most elderly* among us). It would seem that if we are specifically asking Hashem that He act *speedily*--we should especially have kavana when making these brochos. If we ask for something to be done quickly—and don’t even know what we are asking for at all—let alone quickly—it would seem we are going nowhere fast. Practical suggestion: Find and focus with emunah on these four brochos for 30 days, starting today.

16. Daily Epidural. When one recovers from epidural anesthesia, he spends an hour or two tensely waiting for feeling to return to his legs. Slowly he feels tingling in his thighs, then his calves, and ultimately he is able to wiggle his toes. When this happens, the recovery room nurse will let the patient sit up, and later dangle his feet over the bed and finally attempt to walk towards the lavatory. If he is able to take care of his needs—he has recovered! Think of all the brochos we make as we recover from our nighttime anesthesia—pokeach ivrim for opening our eyes, matir asurim for giving the ability to sit up, zokef k’fufim for the ability to straighten one’s body, etc.

17. A Short Prayer. Rabbi Pincus, Z’TL, (*Shearim B’Tefilah*, page 90) writes that when seeing a sick person on crutches, in a wheelchair or with an arm cast, or teenagers hanging around street corners—he should *not just* look on in pity, but *daven for them*. In fact, Hatzolah not so long ago asked people who heard a siren or saw an ambulance speeding by to say a k’pitol Tehillim for the person inside (provided you are in a clean place—not facing garbage, improperly dressed people, etc.). Let us utilize the opportunities we have, not only to pity—but to help others constructively.

18. Daily T’chiyas Hameisim. The Ritva (Taanis 2A) notes that T’chiyas Hameisim is referred to *four times* in the second brocha of Shemone Esrei—why need it be mentioned four separate times? The Ritva answers that there are in

fact four different kinds of T’chiyas Hameisim for which we praise Hashem. The *first* refers to rain—which causes the dormant seeds to grow and feed the world. The *second* reference is to Hashem’s revival of the deathly ill back to everyday life. The *third* refers to the T’chiyas Hameisim that occurs in this world (Eliyahu, Elisha, etc.) and the *fourth* is the ultimate T’chiyas Hameisim. Of course, there is always the T’chiyas Hameisim of a baby being born out of its mother’s womb and a person awakening from sleep. We should appreciate and thank Hashem that T’chiyas Hameisim is going on around us at all times!

19. It is Hashem’s Medication. Chazal (Brochos 10B) teach us that Chizkayhu Hamelech hid the Sefer Harefuos (the book containing all medications and remedies) because he wanted us to recognize that healing and relief come from Hashem—and not from a little yellow pill, a large hot mudpack or a new, computerized treadmill. The Mishne Berurah (Orach Chayim 230:6,7) brings l’halacha that before taking medication or undergoing treatment, one should daven to Hashem specifically that “May it be Hashem’s will that what I am about to do should serve as a refuah shelema to me, because it is up to Hashem to grant the gift of healing” (See the exact text in the Mishne Berurah or in the Brocha sections of your Siddurim). After taking the medicine or undergoing the treatment, one should say, “Boruch Rofeh Cholim.” It would similarly seem appropriate on a day that you are to visit the doctor (or other health-care advisor) that you have kavana in “Atah Chonain” that Hashem grant the doctor or advisor the wisdom and understanding to give you the proper advice.

20. Digging In. The Medrash (Yalkut Shimoni, V’Eschanan) teaches that an advanced level of davening is called “itur” or “digging.” Why? Because this means that davening is repeated again and again and again and again. The analogy is to digging a hole deeper and deeper and deeper. Just as the hole gets deeper, so too does the tefilah build on the previous tefilah, and goes farther and farther and farther.

21. A Clean Environment. Soiled, odorous diapers in a room cause problems for one who wants to make a brocha or learn Torah (See Orach Chayim 76). Therefore, it is a good idea to check diapers before learning, making Kiddush or Havdalah, or in similar circumstances.

22. Boruch Shem K’vode. How loud must one say the words “Boruch Shem K’vode...Voed” when reciting Shema? Rav Moshe Shternbach, Shlita, poskens (*Teshuvos V’Hanhagos* 2:46) that one must be careful that his ears hears the words. In fact, Rav Shternbach writes that according to the Vilna Gaon, the words of Shemone Esrei must also be recited loud enough for the ears to hear them.

23. Ein Elokim Zulasecha (Selah). After Kriyas Shma in Shachris, immediately prior to “Ezras Avoseinu,” we affirm “Ein Elokim Zulasecha (Selah).” We note that the meaning here of Elokim is *Kodesh* (i.e., the phrase does not mean there is no power but You—it means that there is no All-Powerful Master except You), and accordingly, should be treated with the same reverence as any other time you say the Name of Hashem.

24. Daily Birchas Kohanim. Ashkenazim outside of Eretz Yisroel do not have daily Birchas Kohanim as part of Shachris (Rema to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 128:44).

Nevertheless, people living in Chutz L'Aretz are considered the "Am She'besados—the people of the fields" and the brochos of the Kohanim in Eretz Yisroel come upon us here. The *Piskei Teshuvos* (2,128:57) writes that it is proper for someone living outside of Eretz Yisroel to ask a Kohen in Eretz Yisroel to have him specifically in mind at the time of Birchas Kohanim.

25. One Hundred Brochos for Women. Are women obligated to make 100 brochos every day? According to the sefer *Halichos Bas Yisroel*, an encyclopedic work by Rav Yitzchak Yaacov Fuchs, Shlita, on halachos for women, the answer is no. (Volume II, page 32, citing the Shevet HaLevi Volume 5, Number 23). See also *Teshuvos V'Hanhagos* 2:129.

26. Writing a Note. If one must communicate during Pesukei D'Zimrah or the brochos of K'riyas Shma, Rav Moshe Shternbach, Shlita (*Teshuvos V'Hanhagos* 2:40) poskens that writing a note would not be a hefsek. He notes, however, that this "eitzah" would not help during Shemone Esrei (because there, one is standing before the King—Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 98:1), nor during the first parsha of K'riyas Shma, where even gestures or motions are forbidden (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 63:6).

27. L'chol L'rosh. Every day in davening in the tefilah of "Vayevarech Dovid" we say "Hamamlacha V'hamisneseh L'chol L'rosh". What does the expression that Hashem has the kingship and leadership "l'chol l'rosh" mean? The answer can be found in Rashi, Divrei Hayomim I, 29:11, which is where the posuk is located.

28. Hishtachava. When we fall on our faces during the Musaf services of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we must take care that a separate object such as a towel separate between our *face* (not only our knees) and the floor. We note that according to the *Piskei Teshuvos* 2:131:27, carpeting is insufficient for this purpose.

29. Thanks for Thanks. In the Modim D'Rabbonim, we conclude "Al She'anachunu modim loch"—We thank Hashem for giving us the wisdom to know that we have to thank Him. Look around you and see which other creations (man and animal alike) know or understand to say thank you to show their appreciation for Hashem for all their blessings.

30. Three Steps Forward. The posuk from Tehillim (51:17) which precedes Shemone Esrei, "Hashem Sefosai Tiftach" is considered part of Shemone Esrei itself (Brachos 4B; *Tefilah K'hilchasa* 12:20). Accordingly, one should not be in the process of taking steps backward or forward while saying this posuk. Rather, one must have *already* reached his position after taking three steps forward before saying "Hashem Sefosai Tiftach."

31. Communication Interference. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 98:1) concludes that [when saying Shemone Esrei,] "he should regard it as if the Divine Presence is before him and remove all thoughts which bother and preoccupy him until he remains with a clear thought and concentration on his tefilah. In addition, if he were speaking before a human king, surely he would arrange his words and concentrate on them so that he would not stumble or fail. How much

more so, before Hashem, the King of kings who explores all thoughts and intentions."

Given this fundamental concept, that the Shechinah is actually present before one who davens Shemone Esrei, we can understand that it is *forbidden* to stand, lean or pass within four amos of someone davening Shemone Esrei. The Chayei Adam (26) explains that all of the above is forbidden even if the person who is davening Shemone Esrei closes his eyes and would not be disturbed by the person near him. We all acknowledge that it is considered disrespectful to walk in between two people conversing on the street. How much more disrespectful it is then to likewise interrupt a person's prayer in front of the Shechinah.

It is well-known that Rav Moshe Feinstein, Z'TL, was once called from the Beis Medrash to a very important overseas phone call, but there was a person davening Shemone Esrei in front of the door to the Beis Medrash. Rav Moshe stopped and waited until the person took three steps backward. He explained that he could not move because there was a "brick wall" in front of him.

Exceptions: If one is himself **davening**, he may sit within four amos of one davening Shemone Esrei (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 102:21). If one is **learning Torah** and enunciating the words, he may sit within four amos of one davening Shemone Esrei b'shas hadehak, but he is always permitted to sit **behind** the person davening Shemone Esrei.

If one is davening Shemone Esrei in front of another person davening Shemone Esrei (without a separation which is ten tefachim high and four tefachim wide), the person davening in front is prohibited to walk back the three steps (out of Shemone Esrei) until the person behind him has walked out of his Shemone Esrei, even if the person behind him began saying Shemone Esrei after him.

If one is davening Shemone Esrei in front of another person who has already completed Shemone Esrei but has not yet walked out of his Shemone Esrei because he has someone behind him who is still saying Shemone Esrei, the front person may walk back three steps even within the four amos of the person behind him.

Because these important halachos are rather detailed, we urge readers to review with their Rav each particular situation(s) in which you find yourself.

32. Closing Words. As Koheles teaches, "Tov Achris Dovor Meireeshiso—the end is better than the beginning." Even in the world at large, the common man knows that the "end of the book" or the "end of the game" is what counts, much more so than the beginning. L'havdil to the infinite degree, we find that the tefilos at the end of davening, Ashrei, U'va Litzion, Aleinu and Shir Shel Yom, are awesomely powerful. For example:

U'va Litzion. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 132:1) writes that one must be "very careful" to say the Kedushas U'va Litzion with kavana. The Zohar (Teruma 129:A) writes that Hashem's Kavod is uplifted when we say this tefilah. The Sefer *Rokeach* writes that one who says it with kavana and simcha will be zoche to Ruach HaKodesh.

The Mishne Berurah (Orach Chayim 47, seif katen 10) writes that when saying “Lo Nigah Larik v’Lo Neled L’Behalah,” one should have kavana for his children to be “Lomdei Torah, Tzadikim and Baalei Midos Tovos.” For more incredible insights on this truly special tefilah, see *Piskei Teshuvos* 2, 132:1.

Aleinu. The Mishne Berurah (Orach Chayim 132:1, seif katen 8) paskens that one must be careful to say Aleinu with kavana, in awe and fear, because “all of the Heavenly hosts are listening, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu stands with the “Pamalia shel Maaleh” who all say “Ashrei Haom Shekacho Lo, etc.” when they hear us say Aleinu. The Arizal adds that when saying “Mishtachavim” we should bow down greatly (a “Hishtachava Gedola”).

Shir Shel Yom. As noted earlier, one is mekayim a Mitzva D’oraysa of remembering Shabbos when saying Hayom Yom.

Based upon the foregoing, those who leave shul early, talk, or even rush through the words because it is late, they are tired, or simply because it is the end, have lost nothing short of eternity.

Note: How can we picture eternity? Rav Pincus, Z’TL, refers to a large mountain. Every 1,000 years a bird takes one speck of dirt off of the mountain and places it somewhere else. When the mountain has been fully relocated...eternity has not yet concluded.

33. “Tissue-Va”. The Gemara (Chagiga 5A) cites the posuk “Ki es kol ma’aseh H’Elokim yovee b’mishpat”—Because Hashem will bring every action to judgment (Koheles 12:14), and applies it to someone who does something which causes another to be disgusted or repulsed. Many have expressed their disgust to us of used tissues being left in shul on tables, chairs and floors. *Even if* one engages in this practice in his own home (where family members may have grown accustomed to such behavior), this practice must be avoided in public places, and young children should also be taught to take care to cause others to smile at, and not be repulsed by, their conduct.

Note: In our MarCheshvan 5762 issue (Volume II, Number 1), we noted that certain brands of facial tissue (and pre-cut toilet paper) are manufactured in an inferior way, which results in not all tissues being thoroughly cut, creating a hilchos Shabbos problem. We have especially noted this problem to be prevalent in lower-quality products and in those manufactured in foreign countries. Accordingly, care should be taken when purchasing tissue products for use on Shabbos.

34. Feeling the Pain; Spreading the Word. In our Adar 5762 issue (Volume II, Number 3), we published the names of the eight Iranian Jews in prison. Here are the names once again:

Yaakov ben Mohtairam	Asher ben Soltanat
Natzair ben Furan	Farhad ben Hamdam
Shahroch ben Shahnaz	Farzad ben Eshrat
Ramin ben Marzena (Mazal)	Doniel ben Soraya

A 19 year-old student teacher in one of the local Bais Yaakov schools told her class that *her father* is one of these eight sh’vuyim. They all began to cry together. The names

were no longer distant and strange sounding, as the girls felt the pain of another frum young woman standing in front of them who did not know if she would ever see her father again. We should each be sensitive enough to personalize our prayers for the sh’vuyim as well as cholim--to feel the pain and suffering of another.

In one shul, we found the names of the eight Iranian Jews on “pocket-sized” strips of paper for people to carry around and daven for. Perhaps you can make this your project, as well. The more people that are involved in a cause, the greater chance for success in that cause. (See, for example, Tosfos Rosh Hashona 16A d.h. K’Maan and Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 335:6 and Nosei Keilim there).

35. Yesomim V’almanos. The Torah specifically prohibits causing pain by word or deed to a widow or orphan--even if they are mature and even if they are wealthy. The Rambam (Hilchos Deos 6:10) adds that one should be *even more careful* with their money than with his own. Even those who are trying to assist a yesom or almonah in some way (teachers, social workers, etc.) should seek specific halachic guidance. The Torah warns that if a yesom or almanah cries out against a person, that person is Rachmana Litzlan chayav misa bidei shomayim, as Hashem will hear their cry (Shmos 22: 21-23). Rashi in Chumash there incredibly comments that the same is true for afflicting *anyone* who cries out to Hashem because they are being afflicted--Hashem will heed their cry and severely punish their afflicter. On the other hand, as Hashem’s reward is so much greater than his punishment, if a yesom or almonah blesses a person to Hashem, the blessing that Hashem will shower on that benevolent person is incomprehensible.

36. Business Ethics. A dayan was posed the following question: Reuven had two suppliers—one was a frum Yid (“Shimon”) and the other was an akum. The akum was much easier to deal with and usually had better prices. Can Reuven give all his business to the akum?

The dayan answered that, while according to Choshen Mishpat laws of ona’ah, Reuven could limit himself to dealing with the akum, there was something else called *Ahavas Yisroel*, which obligates a person to feel a kinship to another who has the same Shoresch HaNeshama as he does. Remember also that Shimon may not be pleasant, but that he has children in ye-shiva, has to buy glatt kosher meat, needs to donate money to Hatzolah and has orchim at his house, too. Perhaps we can take this concept a step further—is it preferred that one buy his groceries at Waldbaums, PathMark or ShopRite or at a heimishe supermarket? Is there a preference between a national pasta brand and the now-between five and ten heimishe brands of the same product? Each local community can get guidance from its Rav on this issue.

37. It’s Public Property. Rav Yisroel Salanter, Z’TL, explains that each one of us *personally* owns an expensive piece of public property. Where is it? It is actually your face. A frown, a grimace, a stern look. These cause a negative reaction in the many people around you. A smile, a chuckle, a cheery look, they could change the day of all those you speak to or pass by. In fact, Rav Chaim Friedlander, Z’TL, (Mashgiach of Ponovez) after a discussion of the tragic three-week period and Tisha B’Av concludes with the following advice: One should undertake to improve his bein odom l’chavero. *How?* By smiling at everyone, realizing that your facial countenance

can affect not only yourself, but the lives of many (*Sifsei Chaim*, Moadim 3:275). Rav Friedlander writes elsewhere that one should develop this ability to the extent that one can “see your smile over the telephone.” Chazal teach (K’suvos 111B) “Uleven Shinayim Meichalav” it is better to furnish someone with a smile than a glass of milk, for a glass of milk refreshes the body, but a smile refreshes the soul.

38. Recognizing True Emunah. Rabbi Shimshon Dovid Pincus, Z’TL, in *Shearim B’Tefilah* (page 79) provides a vital yesod in true Emunah. He points out that true Emunah is not simply to state Hashem “will help me,” “will take care of me,” “will guide me,” etc., without further thought or analysis. Rather, we must indeed reflect first on the situation—the difficulty, the danger, the sheer dependence we have on Hashem—and then conclude that Hashem will help, protect, guard or shelter us.

39. The Three-Word Posuk. The Torah has a three word posuk, “Leeshuoscho keeveesee Hashem—I await Your salvation, Hashem (Bereshais 49:18).” This is one of the brochos that Yaakov gave to the tribe of Dan. It is reported that the Brisker Rav, Z’TL, would repeat this posuk many times throughout the day (*Shearim B’Tefilah* p. 31). In addition to the Mitzva of Talmud Torah, the posuk can obviously serve as a tefilah to Hashem, praying for Hashem’s yeshua in general or for a specific yeshua, and it also serves to heighten our Emunah and awareness of Hashem all the time. If one recites the posuk, he should be careful to do so in a halachically “clean” place, as it contains the name of Hashem.

40. It’s Not Middas Chassidus. Because of the speed in which they daven, many people mistakenly believe that it is a middas *Chassidus* (exceptional piety) to have kavana while making a brocha.

The *Shulchan Aruch*, however, as a matter of halacha, devotes the entire Siman 5 exclusively to Kavonas HaBrochos, and states as follows:

“One must have in mind the meaning of the words when he makes a brocha. When he says the shem (Hashem) he must have in mind that He was, is and will be and when he says Elokeinu he must have in mind that Hashem is All Powerful, Omnipotent and the Controller of all activities.”

See the Mishne Berurah, otherwise known for his succinct style, there (seif katen 1) who makes the following heart-felt plea:

“One must not throw a brocha out of his mouth [rather] *When one washes his hands or makes a brocha on fruit or on Mitzvos, the brochos for which are set in our mouths, one must have prior kavana in his heart that he is making the brocha to Hashem whose wonderous kindness has provided him with these fruits or Mitzvos.*”

41. Prayer at the Table. The Mishne Berurah (Orach Chayim 167, seif katen 3) writes that one should recite Tehillim Chapter 23 at each meal as a prayer for parnasah.

42. Al Hamichya. In the after brocha of Al Hamichya, we recite the words “Unevorechecha oleho b’kedusha u’v’tharo”. What do these words “Oleho b’kedusha” mean? We invite your response.

43. Eye Win. The sefer *Shmiras HaMachshava* (Chapter 6) writes that if we fulfill the posek in Shma of “V’lo sosuru... achrei einchem” and guard our eyes from looking at something forbidden (by turning away or looking down) or *better yet avoiding* such situations entirely, that moment becomes a tremendous force in the World Above. The baraisa in Mesechta Derech Eretz Rabba (end of Chapter 1) adds that in the z’chus of not looking at the wrong thing, one is zocheh to see and greet the Shechina (“mekabel p’nei Hashechina”). How great is the power of controlling desire!

44. Special Opportunity for Women. A special study program on the laws of tznius is taking place in our communities. The Oz V’hadur Levusha Home Study Program is a free home study program for women based on the work *Oz V’hadur Levusha/Modesty: An Adornment for Life* by Rabbi P. Eliyahu Falk, Shlita, of Gateshead. Two short reading assignments in the book, to be studied in a small group, are assigned each month followed by a quiz. Prizes are awarded monthly by raffle among those scoring 85% or higher on that month’s quiz.

Rabbi Falk mentions that at the end of the sefer Chofetz Chayim Al HaTorah it states, that only where there is immodest behavior do we find the frightening words, “Veshov me’achoreicho ([Hashem] will turn away from you)” leaving us unprotected. What better way than to strengthen ourselves in this vital yesod of Yiddishkeit during these difficult times!

For more information or to join the program, please call 718-871-8827, 973-472-8324 or 877-769-8342 (toll-free) or write to Rabbi Katz, c/o Passaic Torah Institute’s Home Study Program, 41 Park Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055.

45. The Purpose of the Mitzvos. The Sefer *Chofetz Chaim* (Introduction) enlightens us as to exactly why Hashem wants us to do the mitzvos—it is actually an explicit posuk in Shma that we say twice a day: “L’maan tizkaru v’asisem es kol mitzvosai-u’hiyeesem kedoshim l’Elokechim” (Bamidbar 15:40). Performing the mitzvos makes our lives dedicated to Hashem. If you remember, before doing a Mitzva, think--I am doing this to be kodosh to Hashem. You are thereby fulfilling the purpose of the Mitzva.

This issue is presented l’zchus l’refuah shalayma for Brocha Fayga bas Shaindel b’soch sha’ar cholei Yisroel.

Note: **We received a very positive response to our prior Bulletins and we thank all those who have given us chizuk in this matter.** If you would like a copy of one or all of our prior Bulletins please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for each Bulletin requested to Hakhel, 1327 East 26th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

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