

STORY

Why Can't You Look At Me?



The 350 Mehadrin bus from Bnei Brak to Ashdod is normally jammed, but at 3 PM more than half the seats were still vacant. Four young

women in slacks, obviously not from the Haredi or religious neighborhoods along the route, boarded the bus at the stop adjacent to the Coca Cola factory in Bnei Brak. Rather than moving to the rear of the bus, they sat down demonstratively in the front two rows seats on the right side of the bus. Some of the male passengers were baffled; two others decided to get off the bus. A Breslever Chassid, sitting across the young ladies on the left side of the bus, simply closed his eyes and smiled. This was not a reaction that the headline-seeking heroines were looking for, having so boldly entered the mobile Haredi lion's den.

No one yelled at the fearless four, women's-rights or democracy activists in their late twenties. No one even spoke to them. There was nothing to document on their cell-phone videos. What a waste! Well, at least they might be able to take a nice walk on the beach in Ashdod...

If there's no news, then make the news! One of the young woman got out of her seat (while the three others were poised with their cell-phone video cameras, waiting to pounce on the action they hoped would come) and stood next to the Breslever, whose toothy smile would have done justice to any Crest or Colgate commercial.

"Hey, why can't you look at me?" the young lady asked abrasively, obviously itching for a conflict.

"Do you want your husband looking at other young women?" the Breslever responded.

"I'm not married," she said.

"I bless you that you should find your soul-mate this year!"

The activist wasn't ready for this turn in the conversation. She needed to steer things differently. "What are you so happy about with that imbecilic grin of yours?"

"In Torah 282 of Likutei Moharan, Rebbe Nachman teaches us to appreciate our good points and to be happy with every little mitzvah we do; and in Torah 17, first part, Rebbe Nachman says that the slightest good deed that a person does makes a tremendous impression in the upper spiritual realms..."

The activist was getting more and more impatient. This was not the action she was looking for, wasting half a day on a bus ride going someplace where she didn't need to go. "So what," she snapped.

"You asked me why I'm smiling. I'm answering you. I never thought that riding a Mehadrin bus was a big deal; I mean, it didn't seem to be such a great mitzvah. But if the Yetzer Hara is going to such lengths to bother me on this bus ride, then it must be really significant in shamayim that men and women don't mix. This morning, when I was learning Tosefot on Baba Kama, the Yetzer wasn't bothering me as much as he is now. Thank You, Hashem, for giving
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SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS



If you ever get cold, stand in the corner of a room for a while. They're usually 90 degrees.



There was a kidnapping at school yesterday. Don't worry though, he woke up.



I don't always have time to study, but when I do, I don't.



People say that I act like I don't care. It's not an act.



I dream of a better tomorrow, where chickens can cross the road and not be questioned about their motives.



Did you hear about the guy who invented the knock-knock joke? He won the "no-bell" prize.



I wondered why the ball seemed to be getting bigger. And then it hit me.



Dear Math, please grow up and solve your own problems. I'm tired of solving them for you.



the mitzva of riding this bus.” With eyes shut, he turned at the activist and added, “and thank you, cherished sister, for adding to my rewards in the World to Come.”

The young lady’s antagonism was melting into frustration. She was obviously the ring-leader, and her three sisters-in-arms were eagerly awaiting to see how she’d react. Their game plan (or battle plan) to wave the flag of women’s rights on the Mehadrin bus didn’t anticipate a frontal confrontation with a Breslever...

“What do you people smoke that gets you so spaced out?” she chided.

“I’ll admit that I’m high, dearest sister, but that comes from tallit, tefillin, Torah, and an hour of talking to Hashem every day.” “What’s with this ‘dearest’ and ‘cherished sister’ garbage?”

“You see,” explained the Breslever, “your soul and mine both are a tiny part of Godliness. We have the same Father; you don’t need a PhD in genealogy from Hebrew University to know that we’re brother and sister. Besides, the Torah says so explicitly...”

“Are you the real deal or are you just putting on a good show?”

“If I invite you and your girlfriends for Shabbat...,” meanwhile removing his kosher cellphone from his shirt pocket, about to dial his wife’s number, “will you come? When you taste Shabbat and my wife’s cooking, you’ll understand how much Hashem loves you, and so do we.”

Squirming and completely off guard, the activist snarled, “Your wife is probably an illiterate cook and bottle washer pregnant with her twelfth - what would she and I have in common?”

The Breslever chuckled, “No, my wife is only pregnant with our eighth. But you’ll like her -she has a MBA in Finance from the University of Tel Aviv. Besides, she was a sergeant in the Artillery Corps of the IDF, an army medic and a training-base instructor in first aid. She even served in Lebanon for two months...”

“What?! Don’t tell me you were in the army too?”

“Yeh, I admit it. I was a tank commander. Then I did a degree in Communication from UTA. That’s where my wife and I met...”

All the stereotypes were crumbling. The four activists were disarmed. No fight, no arguments, no protests - only an invitation for Shabbat...

The activist tried one last effort. She sat down next to the Breslever. This will surely get his goat and make him lose his cool, she thought. He still smiled, but a tear trickled down his cheek.

“Why are you crying?” she asked, jolted by this additional surprise. Her compassion was a sign of the Jewish soul that shined from deep within her.

“I’m not really the prude that you think. But I love my wife and want her face to be the only female image in my brain. You, dear sister, are a Bat Yisroel, a Jewish daughter. Every Bat Yisroel is beautiful. Please, I wouldn’t embarrass you by getting up. But I’m not a holy man - I wish I were. You’re really testing me. You are a moral young lady; would you steal something from a pregnant woman with seven children?”

By making me look at you, you’d be stealing some of my affection for my wife. I’m sure that’s not your intention.”

Gently, as if walking on eggs, the young lady stood up. “I’m so sorry,” she said, showing her true delicate and considerate inner self. “I never thought of it that way. Besides, if all the Haredim were like you, things would be different. Tell me, are you the ones that go to Uman every Rosh Hashana?”

“Yes, I’m one of them.” “Are all of you this nice? I mean, you don’t try to act like Hashem’s cop.” She surprised herself by saying “Hashem”. Since when do such words come out of an ultra-liberal libertarian feminist’s mouth?

“I only try to police myself.” The bus arrived at the Breslever’s station in Ashdod’s Rova Gimel. The Breslever got up but added, “Let us know if you’re coming for Shabbat...”

PRACTICAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Explore your values



Make a list of your top 5 values, (What do you feel are the most significant things needed for you to have a successful life? e.g. Peace, Family, Financial security, Purpose in life, Harmony, Responsibility,

Love, Yiddishkeit, Wisdom, Humility, Honesty, Serenity, Spirituality, Integrity, Trust, Health, Independence). Then think about how your problematic behavior interferes with it.

A Free Gift



Rashi says on the word “*Va’eschanan*” that Moshe used a *Lashon of Chanun* because it implies a “*matnas chinam* - a free gift”. Moshe said, “Hashem, I want to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, but don’t let it detract from my reward; let it

be free”. And Rashi goes on to say that all *Tzaddikim daven* in this fashion, even though they have many merits.

“If Moshe wanted to enter the land so badly, why not throw in some of his reward on the deal? Why did he want *davka* a free present? Wouldn’t he have been more likely to get it otherwise?”

Perhaps we could say that it’s not that these *Tzaddikim* ask for “freebies” even though they have a lot of merit. It’s that they are *tzaddikim* specifically because they only ask for freebies. Meaning: some people deal with Hashem on a business-like level: “Listen G-d, you know the deal. I *daven* 3 times a day, learn a *shtickle*, give some charity, etc... and you provide me with money and health. Deal?”

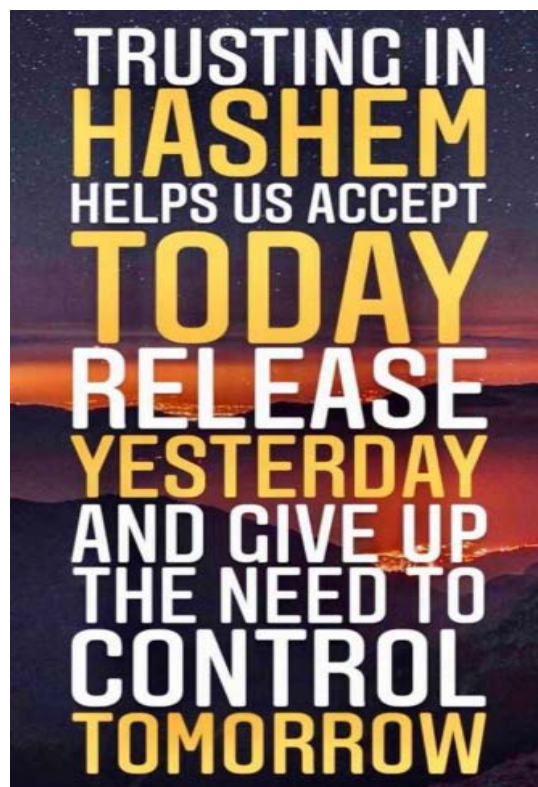
But *Tzaddikim* know that Hashem is their Father. He doesn’t want deals. He just wants to give. He’s the ultimate giver. Anyone who asks to be closer to Him, gets it. He is waiting to shower us with blessings. We have the key to His treasury, we only have to open it. As the *Pasuk* says: “God is close to all those who seek Him in Truth”.

And my friends, this principle works the other way around as well. Don’t ever say to yourselves: “Why should Hashem help me? I haven’t done anything good for Him lately”. He is your Daddy. His greatest pleasure is to give you everything and see that you’re happy. Don’t be afraid to ask. Just cry your heart out to Him. He is right there beside you, even in the darkness of the night.

Am Chacham Ve’Navon

I was doing *shnayim mikreh* and I encountered unkelus’ translation of *eloheyhem*. The *passuk* says that Hashem inflicted punishment on Egypt’s *elohim*. Unkelos translates it as “*Ta’vusehon*”, which comes from the word “*Ta’us*” or mistake. The gods of Egypt were false gods, or items in which they placed a false belief. But unkelus’s word reminded me of the word “*Ta’avah*” too, so in my mind, I envisioned understanding the translation of *eloheyhem* as “their lusts”, and I was thinking that when we lust after someone or after an image, what we are actually doing is placing our salvation in a false image, or, in other words, worshiping Egypt’s *elohim*. And the common denominator is that we are living a false life. Hashem wants us to live a true and real life, to be a “*am chacham venavon*,” and when we worship idols or pursue our lusts we are living a false fantasy fairy tale life, which is not why we are here and which is why such action is abhorred by Hashem. Hashem put us here for a reason, and instead of living here, we have created a virtual alternate twilight galaxy in which we live. In a sense, we reject Hashem’s creation and what Hashem has given us, and choose to pursue our own creation.

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK



Va'eschanan: Just For Today

By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski



"And you, who are cleaving to G-d, you are alive this day" (Deuteronomy 4:4).

Chasam Sofer says that a person's evil instinct tells him that he can never meet all the Torah's demands all his life. Inasmuch as that is futile, one may as well give up the battle now. Moses tells us, "Don't undertake an entire lifetime challenge. Just do it this day. Tomorrow you can deal with tomorrow's challenge."

If you tell an alcoholic that he can never drink again, that is too formidable a challenge. Taking it "one day at a time" is doable.

A friend who was sober 43 years recorded every day of his sobriety. The day before he died he entered 16,472 days in his diary.

How do I get out??

Reb Zilberstein says that the measure of a man is what he does after a fall. He brings down a story with Reb Yonason Eibkichsaz who was once sitting learning in his house late one Shabbos night. Suddenly he hears a noise and sees two feet coming down the chimney followed by the rest of the body. The would be robber is stunned when he sees Reb Yonason standing there. Reb Yonason turns to him saying, no doubt you have come to ask me a shaileh and when you found the front door locked you came down the chimney. What's your shaileh? The person turns to Reb Yonason and says, I have one question, "how does one get out of here?"

That, says Reb Zilberstein, is the question we have to ask ourselves when we fall.

DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

Look at one of the circles, do you notice that the other circles start turning?

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!

