

STORIES

Please Don't Feed the Ducks



On my lunch break today, I felt tempted to go to the internet cafe round the corner to browse not such kosher things.... Nuh uh - red alert! That's way too dangerous; clearly a ploy of the yetzer harah... So instead, I went and sat by a beautiful lake with ducks and colorful trees.

I saw an interesting sign: **'Please don't feed the ducks! They have all they need in the water and bread makes them sick'.** I thought, "Wow, a clear message from Hashem. We're the ducks. Hashem gives us all we need, and yet we often search for extras that makes us sick." **Please don't feed the ducks!**

This is a Yid!

There's a powerful story about Reb Moshe Leib M'Sosov who's yartzeit was recently.



It was on a Parshas Bo that Reb Moishe Leib was in Lizensk for shabbos as a guest of R' Elimelech. During the seuda he got up to say a vort on the parsha. The offering is called korbon 'pesach' because of the skipping over and leaping that Hashem did during makas bechoros.

אָסער פֿסח על בְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל;

Rashi says that the root of the word פֿסח expresses skipping and jumping.

Says the heilige Rebbe M'Sassov: Do you want to know what hakodosh baruch hu did when he found a yiddische house? Do you have any idea what he still does? Posach... He skipped and leaped for joy while calling out "This is a Jewish home! This is a Jewish home!"

While saying this the Sassover got so enthused with simcha that he actually got up on the table skipping and dancing and said "Ah...This is a yidishe home! This is a yidishe home!"

We must constantly remember who we are and how much Hashem loves us. We must remember the power we have. Every time he looks at one of us He smiles and dances. That is a Yid! That is a Yid!

SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS



It's my wife's birthday tomorrow. She's been leaving jewellery catalogues all over the house, so I've bought her a magazine rack.



I went for a run this morning but had to come back after 2 minutes because I forgot something. I forgot that I'm totally out of shape and can't run for more than 2 minutes.



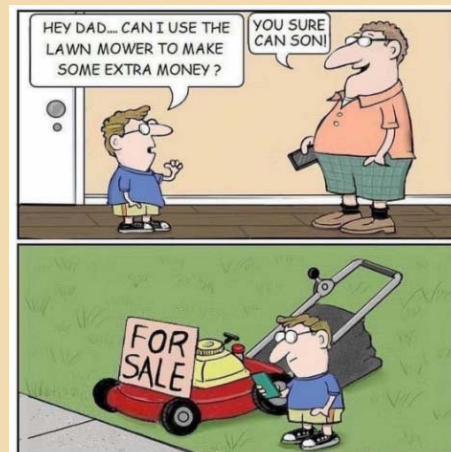
I think I still have some unfinished procrastinating to do from yesterday.



I went down to the paint store to get thinner. It didn't work.



If someone calls you fat, ignore them. You're bigger than that.



If Your Have To Ask, You Are Not Ready Yet



In Parshas Shemos, the sefer Degel Machaneh Ephraim teaches that a person should elevate the machshavos zaros (inappropriate thoughts) that come to him. Regarding this topic, one commenter asked how we should practically go about elevating these thoughts?

Last night, I learned a piece of Degel Machaneh Ephraim, Parshas Bo with the Sudilkover Rebbe that provided an answer. The Degel writes that a person must know the spiritual level he is on and conduct his avodas Hashem accordingly without attempting to perform lofty avodah above his reach. Furthermore, he should know that it is impossible to comprehend the wisdom of a higher spiritual level when he has not yet reached that level.

The Sudilkover Rebbe explained that an example of this could be a married man who is walking on the street attempting to elevate his machshavos zaros when he sees a beautiful woman. If he had not yet attained an extremely high spiritual level, he may fall from his current level if he attempts to elevate his thoughts of her beauty and use them as a stepping stone to contemplate the beauty Hashem has made in His creation. If, however, he recognizes his true spiritual level, he will understand that he should proceed by simply averting his eyes and pushing any thoughts about her out of his mind altogether.

The Rebbe said that advancing from level to level can be likened to a person climbing a ladder made out of wood. If a person proceeds too quickly without first testing to see whether the rung above him will hold his weight, he may fall to the ground once it snaps beneath him.

At what time then is a person ready to proceed to the next level and take on a new and higher avoda?

The Rebbe answered that a person is ready when he doesn't have to ask if he is ready or how to proceed and accomplish his new avoda. Hashem will help him advance automatically. He will suddenly look back and see how far he has come.

On the Doorposts: Sanctifying Our Homes



I heard a good vort at shiur yesterday which gave me a lot of chizuk, especially in regard to our struggles.

The first Mitzvah that was given to Klal Yisroel in this week's sidrah is the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh. However, the first Mitzvah that involved an 'action' is the Mitzvah of Korban Pesach, also in this sidrah.

What is the importance of this Mitzvah of Korban Pesach? Part of the commandment was to put the blood on the doorposts so that the Yidden would not be affected by Makkas Bechoros. Why should the Yidden have been more at risk from this Makkah as opposed to all the others which did not affect them at all? Also, why should blood on the doorposts help?

In the Hagadah we read that Makkas Bechoros was carried out by Hashem Himself and not through a Malach, Saraf or messenger. We can infer that the other Makkos were in fact carried out by Malachim and other heavenly messengers. The reason that the Yidden were not affected by the first nine Makkos is because these heavenly beings have no power over the Yidden, as the Yidden are greater creatures (even when they are on the 49th level of Tumah). To give an example, it is as if the Malachim etc. are pouring dirty water down from the ninth floor of a tower building. The Yidden are on the tenth floor and therefore are not in the 'firing line' and cannot be harmed. However, Makkos Bechoros was carried out by Hashem. He is a much higher source and therefore the Yidden were at risk as well.

The only way that the Yidden could be protected was by becoming part of Hashem's camp. Putting the blood on the doorposts signified that this home was a Mikdash Me'at and part of Hashem's territory. It is a similar concept to an embassy building. For example, the Israeli embassy in England is considered as Israeli territory despite the fact that it is situated in London. Therefore, in Mitzrayim, the Jewish homes were not considered as being within Mitzrayim and were Passed Over. Hence the name of the Yomtov is 'Passover', as this was the key element.

This is the fundamental of Mezuzah. By putting a Mezuzah on our door we are declaring that our home is no longer in the territory of the goyim of England, America, etc. but in fact it is the territory of Hashem. Our homes become a Mikdash Me'at, totally separate from the schmutz around us.

If we bring the schmutz of the street into our homes, we are totally contradicting the message of the Mezuzah. If we do this, our homes become the same as those of the goyim and may not be 'Passed Over'.

Tying our sheep to the bedpost.

by Yaakov from GYE



The Yetzer Hara is much stronger than us. Our only hope is for Hashem to fight it for us. But why would Hashem do such a miracle, especially if we've been sinning and falling for so many years?

Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim. The Yidden in Egypt had reached the 49th level of impurity. They had cried out to Hashem in utter powerlessness, and Hashem had heard their cry. But they didn't have any merits of their own. As the Pasuk in Yechezkel (16:6) says: "Ve'at Erom ve'eraya - and you were naked and bare". So in what merit were they able to leave? As the Pasuk continues... "and I passed over you and I saw you soaking in your blood, and I said to you, in your blood you shall live, and I said to you in your blood you shall live". The Targum Yonosan translates these two bloods as referring to the blood of the Pesach sacrifice and the blood of the Bris Milah that the yidden made before leaving Mitzrayim. This is because the Yidden did indeed need some Zechusim before they were able to merit Yetziyas Mitzrayim.

Let us try and understand what was unique about these two particular Mitzvos that enabled them to break free from the lowest levels.

Hashem told the Yidden to take a sheep and tie it to the bed post. The Beis Ahron of Karlin writes that the miracle was twofold. Firstly, because the sheep were worshiped by the Egyptians who saw their G-d being tied up as a sacrifice, and yet they didn't say anything. And the second miracle was, quote:

"...that the Yidden themselves did such a thing and gave themselves over with complete Messiras Nefesh for the faith and honor of Hashem. And this could not have been done in any other way, only with Messiras Nefesh. Because from such an abominable and disgusting place (like Mitzrayim) that the yidden were in, as it says "you were naked and bare", they could not have left from there to freedom *except* through this - that they were Mosser nefesh completely for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And the Sefarim write that they tied it to the bedpost because that is the place where the strength of the Egyptians came from (sexual promiscuity). And even so, from the very place that the Egyptians took their strength of impurity, the Jewish people tied it there - with Messiras Nefesh for Hashem".

When we train ourselves to give our will and life over to Hashem's care with Messiras Nefesh, in essence, we are figuratively tying our animal nature to the bed post by surrendering our desires to Hashem. In this merit, we are worthy of the miracle that occurs afterwards when Hashem removes us from Mitzrayim and we see - as the Pasuk says: "Hashem Yilachem Lachem, Ve'atem tacharishum - G-d will fight for you, and you shall be silent".

And this is also perhaps why the second blood was the blood of Milah, which again symbolizes the Messiras Nefesh that the Yidden had in guarding the bris and covenant with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

As the Bnei Yissachar writes (Derech Pikudecha): "We have a tradition from our fathers that the Yetzer Hara desires more than anything to attack a person through carnal sins, because in this desire are included all the others".

Since carnal desire encompasses all other desires, by tying the sheep to the bed-post and by making a Bris Millah, both of which symbolize Messiras Nefesh in the area of kedusha, the Yidden were in essence giving ALL their desires over to Hashem, and in this merit they were able to break free of the impurity of Egypt.

וְרָאִיתִי אֶת הַדָּם וַיִּפְסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא יְהִי בָכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחִית

"And I will see the blood and I will jump over you, and there shall not be within you a plague of destruction"

May the merit of shmiras habris protect us all from the pandemic!

PRACTICAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Sanctifying Our Time

החודש הזה לכם



The first Mitzvah is that of Kiddush Hachodesh. The posuk says 'Lachem' which signifies that we have control over setting the month. What is the significance of this Mitzvah as the first Mitzvah given?

The answer is in relation to the issue of time. A slave is not in control of his own time. He gets told what to do and when. Whilst we were slaves to Pharaoh, we were not in control of our own time. At the time of the Geulah we became free and therefore gained control over our time and our activities. This is the message of Kiddush Hachodesh. Now that we are no longer slaves, we have control of our time and have to use it wisely in the service of Hashem. How many of us waste hours and hours of time as slaves to our Yetzer Hara? May we all have a full Geulah soon!



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AND - FOR A CHANCE
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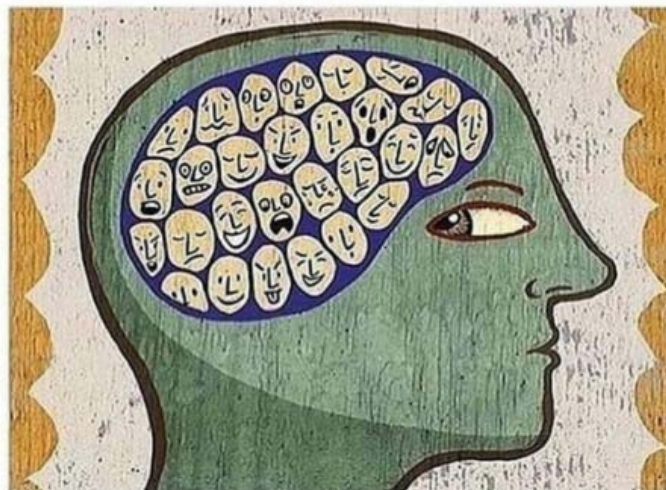
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This Shabbos is perhaps the most powerful Shabbos of Shovavim since we read about Yetzias Mitzrayim. In a spiritual sense, everyone of us is given a chance this Shabbos to leave the Mitzrayim of the Yetzer Hara behind us once and for all.

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK

Don't allow your mind to play tricks on you. Overthinking and worrying is one of the biggest causes of unnecessary pain. Let go and embrace the present moment.



DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

**Do you see a triangle
where there isn't one?**

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!

