



STORY

Hashem will never let go of us!

In the year 1827 in Pinsk, the wife of Rav Yeshaya Bardaki had passed away after a sudden illness, leaving two orphans, a young boy and his older sister. After much deliberation, Rav Yeshaya decided that the best thing to do for his children was to start anew, and he arranged to move to Eretz Yisroel, where he hoped he would be able to rebuild his life.

On the final stretch of the journey, a storm took them off course and the ship went off schedule. It became obvious that they would still be on the



boat when Succos began. The men on the ship graciously offered Rav Yeshaya some of the wood they were carrying so that he could build a Sukkah. Rav Yeshaya was very grateful and thanked Hashem, and he proceeded to build his Sukka on the boat.

The next day, the winds picked up once again and another storm tossed the ship around, hurling them from one side of the deck to the other. Rav Yeshaya held onto his little children, davening that they would be saved. All of a sudden, a tremendous noise ripped through the air, as the ship had broken in two!

Rav Yeshaya fell into the ocean, holding onto his children with all of his strength. He tried his utmost to hold onto them, but his grasp was slipping. He looked at his children, each one holding tightly onto one of his arms. He felt that as much as he tried to swim with them, he could not do it, and he felt himself being pulled down.

He just wanted, more than anything he had ever wanted, to not to let go of his children. He cried out, "Please Hashem! Please help me!" Suddenly there was darkness and silence. The next thing Rav Yeshaya knew, he felt the sun beating down on him as he lay on the shore. When he finally

managed to open his eyes, Rav Yeshaya looked around and realized that he had made it alive! But where were the children?!

He looked down the shore and saw his son lying there. He ran over and picked him up, and after a moment, the little boy gave a cough and opened his eyes. He was alive! Rav Yeshaya then looked around and noticed his daughter lying farther down the shore. He ran to her and with a feeling of dread, he bent down to pick her up and she too was alive! It was a miracle!

A short while later, the young girl explained to her father that they had somehow managed to grab hold of one of the pieces of wood from the Sukkah on the ship, and had floated with it to the shore. Rav Yeshaya held onto both of his children and looked up to Shamayim. How could he ever thank Hashem?!

He made his way to the center of town where he was welcomed, and the people helped him get settled. Soon after, he traveled to Yerushalayim, settled there, and became one of their most prestigious Rabbanim, where he was zocheh to live with his children and grandchildren for the rest of his life.

When reflecting on this incredible episode, we can compare it to times when people feel that they are drowning in their struggles. When life has overwhelmed them and they feel that they can't hold on, or perhaps they don't deserve to continue because they have failed in their service to Hashem, that is exactly when they must cry out, "Hashem! Please don't let go of me!", and Hashem will never let go. Hashem is our Father and has abundant compassion for each and every one of us. When He sees our fear of drowning in the sea of personal struggles and that we are desperately trying to hold onto Him with all of our strength, Hashem will never let go of us!

**SMILE!
IT'S CONTAGIOUS**



Corona-Time is like a flight to Israel. Everyone's watching movies but the religious guys are trying to make a minyan.



After years of wanting to thoroughly clean my house and closets, but lacking the time, this month I discovered that wasn't really the reason.



2020 is a unique Leap Year. It has 29 days in February, 300 days in March and 5 years in April.



This cleaning with alcohol is totally incorrect. NOTHING gets done after that first bottle.



**HELLO? Mental Hospital?
Yes I would like to reserve
a family suite!**



Moshe is coming back to Israel. The customs officer asks him what he has in his heavy suitcase and Moshe tells him that it's bird-feed. The officer is suspicious and opens it, finding a suitcase full of gold watches! Moshe shrugs and remarks: "Listen, I put the watches down in front of the birds. If they want to eat they'll eat, and if they don't they won't!"

The arrogant ones need to be warned

אָמַר אֶל-הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי אֶהֱרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם (פרשת אמר, פסוק א)
רש"י: להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים

"Tell the Kohanim and say to them:" Rashi: The big should warn (and educate) the small.

The words can be read as follows: Warn those who hold themselves big over the lesser ones. Those who are haughty & arrogant, they are the ones who need to be warned. They are the ones who are constantly on the edge of the cliff. They are the ones who will easily succumb to the *Yetzer Hora*.

We can still be as great as the Kohen Gadol

The Torah tells us that while a *Kohen* is permitted to marry a widow, a *Kohen Gadol* is forbidden. The question is why? One of the reasons our sages give was that the Torah was concerned that the *Kohen Gadol* may have seen a beautiful married woman at some time, and when he is in the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* on Yom Kippur, he may daven that her husband should die so he can marry her.

Picture this, the holiest day of the year, the holiest place in the world, performing the service that will potentially bring a complete *kapparah* for *Klal Yisroel*, and where might his thoughts be? Joe Schmo's wife. How could it be? The answer is because we are human beings and we have flaws. Indeed, sometimes we are even given tests that we cannot pass now, but in the end we all can surely pass the tests we were given in this lifetime. So even if we've failed in the past, we can't give up. We can still be as great as the *Kohen Gadol* going into the *Kodesh Hakodoshim*!

Emor: One Day at a Time



By Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski

In this *parsha* we have the mitzvah of *sefiras haomer*. Hashem instructed the Jews to count forty-nine days, and this would then lead to the revelation and giving of the Torah at Sinai.

There were many miracles at the exodus, but the greatest miracle of all was that a people that had been enslaved, degraded, and dehumanized, were able, within a few short weeks, to be transformed to the highest level of spirituality and declare "We will do and we will listen." How could so radical a change be achieved?

The answer is the mitzvah of *sefira*, to count one day at a time, and on each day, rectify a particular spiritual shortcoming. The Torah is teaching us that no challenge is so great that it cannot be successfully overcome if only it is broken down to manageable morsels.

The *yetzer hara* (evil instinct) tells a person, "There is no way you can be a *tzaddik*. The Torah's demands cannot possibly all be met." Our response should be, "I only have to do that today, and that is manageable. I'll deal with tomorrow's challenges tomorrow. One day at a time."

Inspirational Image Of The Week

People ask, what does Hashem want from us in these crazy times?



I don't know if He wants anything "from" us.
He just wants "US".

-- R' Avruhim Mordchai Malach

Shemiras Halashon = Shemiras Habris

וַיִּקְבֹּץ בֶּן הָאִשָּׁה הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִית אֶת הַשֵּׁם וַיְקַלֵּל ... וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ שְׁלֹמִית בֵּת דִּבְרִי וַיְקַרָּא כֹּדִיא
“And the Israelite woman’s son cursed the Name. And his mother’s name was Shelomis, the daughter of Divri.”

It is brought down in various *Sefarim* that *bris Hamaor* (*shemiras habris*) is dependent on *Bris Halashon*. Maybe a source can be found in this posuk. Rashi says that *Shlomis bas Divri* was the only Jew that was *nichshal* in *Mitzrayim* with immorality. And how did it start? Chazal say “*Shlomis bas Divri*”, that she used to speak too much (*divri*) and used to greet everyone “*Shalom*” (*Shlomi*), even men. And that breach in *Bris Halashon* caused a breach in *Bris Hamaor*. And the son that was the fruit of this immoral union, was the one who once again breached the *Bris Halashon* by cursing Hashem. So we see a clear correlation between our clean speech having an impact on our ability to guard the *bris*.

And as Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski once wrote to our members:

There are many people who are desperate and say that they would do anything to be free of the compulsion. Here is something that will indeed take much effort, but if one is really ready to do anything, this can help greatly:

WATCH YOUR SPEECH! Be meticulous in avoiding ALL *lashon hara* (defamatory talk), any untruth, and any coarse language.

This may seem simple, but it really takes great effort, because we are in the habit of talking without giving much thought to what we say. To become conscious and watchful of speech is anything but simple, but if one is really interested in being free of lustful compulsions, this can be of great help.

Staying Up in the Down Times

The *Noam Elimelech* in the beginning of *Parshas Emor* interprets Rashi’s explanation of the seeming redundancy “*Emor Vi’Amarta*” - “*LeHazhir Gedolim Al HaKetanim*” as follows:

Every Yid has times that he feels elevated and close to Hashem - like when he is engaged in Torah or Tefillah or

any other Mitzvah - and at these times he feels like he’s on top of the world. His mind and heart are open; he feels that he has attained clarity and sees the world in a spiritual light (*Mochin DeGadlus*). But then, when it’s time to go back to the humdrum material realm, he falls from this high level and can’t bring that same clarity to his mundane affairs (*Mochin Dekatnus*). Says the *R”R Meilich Zy”a*, this is not the way to do things. Rather, one should make sure to “charge his spiritual batteries” to the max when he feels uplifted, in such a way that he will be able to connect his thoughts with Hashem even when he steps down from that *madreigah* where he was earlier. And that is alluded to by the *Ma’amar Chazal* which Rashi cites:

“*LeHazhir Gedolim*” Take heed when you are in an uplifted (big) state of mind, “*Al HaKetanim*” that one must remain holy even at times that are mundane (small).

Get as much *chizuk* as you can and put some away for the bleak days. When feeling high, remind yourself to remind yourself how good it feels to be close to Hashem, and this will help us ride out the tough times.

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PESACH SHEINI - A SECOND CHANCE!

Do you feel trapped in a cave?

Reb Shimon bar Yochai didn't give up and lose hope. If he did, he wouldn't have reached his great heights. For thirteen years he lived in a cave, alone with his son, and didn't stop studying Torah. No one would have blamed Reb Shimon if he lost hope, after he had to live in a cave, possibly forever, removed from all Torah centers. But Reb Shimon continued to study Torah with all his might and it was specifically there, in the cave, that he reached his outstanding heights. As we say, *שם קניית הוודק והודק*, "There [in the cave] you acquired your glory." Let us all learn from this the power of determination and never giving up hope not matter how bleak things seem!



Don't make him king!

Reb Tzaddok HaCohen zt'l (Tzikdas HaTzaddik 127) writes, "The Zohar (Chayei Sarah 129) states that when a person, even a big *rasha*, does *teshuvah*, he rises up to the highest levels. I heard that Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa zt'l said that this is all in the merit of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. With his great toil in *avodas Hashem*, he accomplished and decreed that a *baal teshuvah* should reach the highest levels.



There was a *bachur* who was falling spiritually. Many *mechanchim* (educators) spoke with the *bachur*, but they couldn't stop his descent. Rebbe Shlomke Zvhil zt'l said he wants to speak with the *bachur*. People told him, "It isn't worth the Rebbe's time. So many people tried and failed..." But Rebbe Shlomke tried. He told the *bachur*, "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has immense *nachas ruach* from a Yid when he battles with the *yetzer hara*, even if he loses the fight. Hashem enjoys the Yid's attempts. He enjoys watching him put up a fight against the *yetzer hara*. Hashem has more pleasure from the Yid's skirmish than He derives pleasure from the *malachim*. "The *yetzer hara* is called *מלך זקן וכסיל* an old, foolish king. I request one thing from you. Don't make your *yetzer hara* king. When a king decrees something, everyone must listen immediately. I request that you don't listen immediately. When he asks for something, push it off for later..." The *bachur* followed this advice, and he ended up doing *teshuvah*, becoming one of the respected *Yidden* of Yerushalayim.

The secret weapon in the battle against the *Yetzer hara* is: wanting so much to overcome temptation that your aspiration to win is stronger than your urge to give in. This comes from recognizing how much you gain from victory. We need to want the greatness and everything else we gain by defeating the *yetzer hara*.

This makes our battles exhilarating rather than painful and draining. If we lack motivation, we will just hang on as our strength slowly wanes, hoping we can hold off the *yetzer hara* until our desires go away. But if we cultivate excitement about our opportunity to reach greatness, we will be full of energy. We will be ready to win the battle no matter how long it rages. We will win without straining ourselves and we will be flying high as we succeed.

To spark this excitement, we must have the right attitude toward *nisyonos*. We must remember that challenges are really opportunities from Hashem to accomplish. They are our big chance to become great through spiritual accomplishment, the only way that matters. Our battles are something to be excited about! Once we acquire this attitude toward *nisyonos*, we can put it into practice by pumping ourselves up when we expect a challenge. These feelings will continue during the challenge, and we will want victory more than what we desire. The battle will be neither painful nor draining. Rather, it will be exhilarating and empowering because we will be doing what we want to do rather than straining ourselves to act against our will.

Desires are an Illusion

Stare at the black dot in middle, and move your face slowly back and forth. Do you see the wheels turning?

Our eyes trick us! Let's not let our eyes lead us after illusionary pleasures.

