

# עֵטְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

**פרשת קדושים**  
שבת מברכים אייר  
כ"חניסן תשס"ה  
May 7, 2005

ל"ג בעומר - יסוד שבגבורה

Candle Lighting:	7:17
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:59
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:35
Latest שחרית:	10:42
Earliest הבדלה:	8:22

This week's edition of ATERES HASHAVUA is sponsored by Mark & Debbie Gold Upon the engagement of their daughter Ora to Reuven Krasner and for a speedy recovery to שרה רבקה בת רחל בלימה

## SELF JUDGEMENT

Aryeh Pearlman, Mesivta Alumnus

בצדק תשפט עמיתך (ויט:טו)

WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS YOU SHALL JUDGE YOUR FELLOW

In his explanation of this *pasuk*, Rashi brings down a famous Chazal from Pirkei Avos, "judge all men in a favorable, meritorious light." Chazal are giving us more than good advice; they are telling us how a Jew should act when interacting with other individuals. The Sfas Emes translates the words '*kol adam*' here not as every man, but as the 'whole man'.

If one wishes to find some merit in a person he should judge him as a whole. He should not focus on his faults but rather look at the whole individual, whereby he will surely find a commendable trait or some redeeming feature. If one views a person's flaws with the whole he might find a reason behind this person's scuff marks; a special circumstance that gives us an understanding to the person's behavior.

If this is the case, a simple question can be raised. Why should we judge someone favorably if we know his actions are not above reproach or that his intentions are highly questionable? The Baal Shem Tov explains this by citing a Chazal: the same way a person judges his fellow man so too heaven will judge him - "by the yardstick that a man uses to measure, by that he will be measured." Hence, one who refuses to overlook another's iniquity or denies forgiveness cannot expect Hashem to deal in a favorable fashion towards him. Likewise, one who judges meritoriously will receive the same treatment from 'upstairs'.

The Baal Shem Tov expands on this idea. Before one's divine sentence is sealed, Hashem asks every individual if he agrees with the decree. Of course a person is not going to give his consent for his transgressions. So how is this process done? Hashem presents the person with a hypothetical situation, similar to his own, happening to a different person's life. The manner in

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## THE SINKING PILLOW

Reuven Davies, 12th Grade

לא תלך רכיל בעמך לא תעמד על דם רעך אניה' (ויט:טז)

YOU SHALL NOT BE A GOSSIPMONGER AMONG YOUR PEOPLE, YOU SHALL NOT STAND ASIDE WHILE YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD IS SHED - I AM HASHEM!

These are the words that Hashem makes sure we vigorously recognize. What is implied by stating the first commandment next to the latter? The *pasuk* is explaining that gossiping is compared to murdering - like standing by and watching your friend suffer at your own hands! To further the point, Hashem adds His own Name at the end. Nevertheless, perhaps there is a deeper message that lies here. Even though on the surface Hashem's Name added to the *pasuk* is a further emphasis, are there more reasons here than the obvious? There must be another point that Hashem is telling us concerning *lashon hora*.

Rabbi Label Lam explains the severity of *lashon hora* with the following story. A man once came to the rav of the town on Erev Yom Kippur and openly confessed that he had said *lashon hora* about him, and asked the rav for forgiveness. The rav agreed to be *mochel*, but only on the condition that he would follow a number of steps to forgiveness. He must first enter the market place of the town with a goose feather stuffed pillow, and cut it open and shake out all the feathers. "After fulfilling this," the rav said, "Come back and I will give you one more step before I forgive you." The man quickly went to his house and grabbed his most comfortable pillow and ran to the marketplace. He cut open the pillow and waved it back and forth as all the feathers were carried by the wind in all different directions. When completing the task, the

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This week's edition of ATERES HASHAVUA is sponsored by Rabbi & Rebbetzin Mordechai Yaffe and Family in memory of his father אברהם שלום בן מרדכי ע"ה

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# FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Yishai Kadry

## Rav Meir Chodosh zt"l Mashgiach Chevron Yeshiva

27 Shevat, 5658 / February 19, 1898 - 28 Teves, 5749 / January 5, 1989

- Meir Chodosh was born on a Shabbos in Shevat, 5658, in the Lithuanian city of Paritch.

- His parents; Rav Ben Tzion and Machla, were very virtuous people whose primary concern was providing their children with a genuine Torah education.

- When Meir was 10 he was sent to learn under Rav Pesach Pruskin in Shklov, since Paritch had no yeshiva of its own.

- After learning in Shklov for a year, he went to learn in Slabodka, yet was turned down by the mashgiach, Rav Ber Hirsch Heller because he was too young.

- Meir decided to prove to the administration that he should be accepted into the yeshiva. He hadn't been accepted into the yeshiva, and Meir had no place to sleep or eat. He therefore slept in the hallway of a home owned by a Kovno resident, and subsisted on a loaf of bread he had brought from home.

- In just three weeks after he came to Slabodka, Meir managed to learn in depth twenty eight *blatt* in *Maseches Kiddushin*. Word of his accomplishment soon reached the mashgiach, who decided to test young Meir and soon accepted him into the yeshiva despite his young age.

- When in Slabodka, Meir became closely attached to the yeshiva's mashgiach, HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel; the Alter of Slabodka. Their relationship lasted for seventeen years, until the Alter's passing in 5687 (1927). It is said that Rav Meir not only absorbed the Alter's teachings, but also resembled him in all of his traits and manners.



Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l  
The Alter of Slabodka

- In his first year in yeshiva, Meir was acclaimed as a great *masmid* and was granted the highest stipend offered by the yeshiva. He was even commended for passing the demanding 'pin test'.

- During the war, the Slabodka Yeshiva moved to Minsk, along with many other Eastern European yeshivos.

- Because of the terrible oppression against the Jews at that time, including the draft of yeshiva bachurim into the army, the administration of the yeshiva suggested that the staff and

talmidim go to Eretz Yisroel as a group and open a new yeshiva there in the Slabodka tradition.

- Small parts of the yeshiva began migrating to Eretz Yisroel, where the Knesses Yisroel Yeshiva was opened in Chevron. Finally in 5685 (1925), the



Alter, accompanied by Rav Meir and the final group of bachurim still living in Europe, set out for the already established yeshiva in Chevron.

- In 5686, Rav Meir married Tzivia Leah Hutner, the daughter of Rav Naftali Menachem Hutner. She had come to Eretz Yisroel alone, and lived in the home of her uncle, Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva.

- After the Alter's passing in 5687, Rav Meir remained in the yeshiva, overseeing its students' growth, together with Rav Yehuda Leib Chasman.

- Rav Meir's approach to his talmidim was an outgrowth of his shared belief with his rebbi, the Alter, in the *gadlus ha'adam*. In his capacity as mashgiach, he maintained that since man is the crown of Creation, the way to encourage him to achieve perfection is not by belittling or rebuking him, but rather by uplifting him and encouraging him to realize his potential.

- Rav Meir often repeated the Alter's maxim that one who is spoon-fed cannot become a *baal mussar*. In line with this teaching, Rav Meir didn't appoint a bachur to wake up the others for davening in the morning. He felt that the yeshiva students should feel compelled to wake up on time on their own.

- An amazing highlight of Rav Meir's role as mashgiach was his *shmuessim* (lectures). It never had to be announced when he was starting to speak; as soon as he rose from his spot in the Beis Medrash, everyone knew what was about to place. At that moment, the talmidim would form a semicircle around the mashgiach, each one vying for a closer position, in order to catch the mashgiach's first words, which were generally uttered quietly and with intense concentration.

- During these *shmuessim*, Rav Meir would urge his talmidim to constantly progress and strive to reach the greatest heights. He would stress that remaining in one place is forbidden, since every lapse in progress marks the beginning of a regression.

- In addition to serving as the mashgiach of Chevron, Rav Meir founded Yeshivas Ateres Yisroel, along with his son-in-law Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi, and Yeshiva Or Elchonon, together with his son Rav Moshe Mordechai. He served as mashgiach in both of these yeshivos. He also founded the Chevron Yeshiva's famous kollel, Yeshivas Beis Midrash LaTorah.

- In every yeshiva which Rav Meir was mashgiach, his apartment was located on the ground floor near the yeshiva's main door, so that he would be near his talmidim.

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which the individual judges the others person's actions is then applied to his own. For this reason one should be extremely careful to never utter a harsh statement about somebody else, for this statement may generate his own doom.

In conclusion, there is no greater merit than to view all Jews with a favorable eye. As we seek to justify our own irrational and sometimes unforgivable behavior, we should do the same for others. Reb Aharon Karliner said, "As we are urged to view others in a favorable light, how much more so should we judge the Almighty favorably and not question His ways and actions." Many events happen that are hard to accept as we have difficulty understanding the rationale behind certain aspects of our fate. Therefore we must learn to "trust" in Hashem and realize that whatever He does is inherently good.

man ran back to the rav and declared that his mission was accomplished and he is now ready for the final part.

The rav told the man that all he needed to do was return to the marketplace and gather back all the feathers, returning them to the pillow. The man was horrified, and told the rav that it was impossible to retrieve all the feathers because they were now all over town and still blowing in the wind. The rav glared at this man and retorted, "That's what you did to me! If you can retrieve the words and undo the harm that is still traversing the airwaves, then you can be completely forgiven!"

*Lashon hora* is like a bomb. It destroys anyone near it, not just the single person who said it! Just like if someone drills a hole through the bottom of a boat carrying many passengers, he is endangering everyone's life and not merely his own – so too a small leak can turn into many and it will be impossible to repair every single one. Hashem is the sea on which we float, and supports us in all our travels through life. By placing His name at the end of this *pasuk*, Hashem is trying to tell us that He knows where the leaks sprout from! At the end of the day, only Hashem can determine who did what, and who is responsible for being the original bearer of sin. Hashem therefore places His name in the same *pasuk* to warn us of falling into the biggest *nisayon*, the one that can ruin our unity.

We the Jewish People are truly a singular unit, and yet we are so beautiful in that we sprout in so many different directions. There are different

aspects of a tree; roots, leaves, branches, fruits, and seeds - and we know that it depends on all of its parts for its sustenance and ultimate existence. Any part which is severed becomes dead because it cannot survive independently. Before we received the Torah on *Har Sinai*, we gathered around the mountain and as Rashi points out, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – we received the Torah at a time when we achieved perfect unity. In fact, some *Meforshim* bring down that when we say in *Dayeinu* on the night of the *Pesach seder* that it would have been enough to gather around *Har Sinai* without receiving the Torah, they explain this to mean that it was worth leaving *Mitzrayim* and coming to the mountain just to be unified!

There are many laws in the Torah governing liability for damages, robbery and theft, etc. Hashem intended that the laws we have should preserve unity. Without civil order, unity is compromised. When Hashem gave Moshe and the Bnei Yisroel the directive to build the *mishkan*, He said "*Build me a sanctuary, ושכנתי בתוכם - and I shall dwell among them.*" If we are truly united and dwell well with each other, then Hashem will come and dwell among us as well. This is Rabbi Akiva's true meaning of *אהבת לרעך* in reference to the *miztva* of 'גדול בתורה כמיוחד'. The commandment to love your fellow Jew as much as yourself emphasizes the basic reason of why we must maintain this unity. Unity is the first and most important step to the fulfillment of our goal as Jews. Only with this can we keep the boat afloat.

- Rav Meir gave the key to his private home to scores of students, explicitly telling them, "You can come inside whenever you want." All day a huge vat of boiling water was positioned on the counter in his kitchen. Beside it was a can of coffee, tea bags and cookies, where talmidim throughout the day would enter and refresh themselves with hot drinks.
- On Erev Shabbos, Rebbetzin Tzivia would prepare a huge pot of cholent and dozens of portions of gefilte fish for the many students who invariably came to visit.
- Rav Meir's power of concentration was immense. Talmidim could enter his house, stand beside his table, and even make noise, but he wouldn't look up until he had completed the material he had undertaken to study at that time.
- On a Thursday night in Teves, 5749, Rav Meir was suddenly rushed to the hospital. At 2:30 in the morning he lost consciousness, and two hours later, while surrounded by his family, he returned his pure *neshama* to its Maker.
- Rav Meir Chodosh's *levaya* set out from Yeshiva Or Elchonon and was attended by thousands. He was buried on Har Hazeisim, near the grave of the Alter of Slabodka, in the plot of the roshei yeshiva of Chevron.



(l to r) R' Ezra Brizel, R' Meir Chodosh, R' Sholom Schwadron

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

וְאִם הָאָכַל יֹאכַל בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פְּגוּל הוּא לֹא יִרְצָה (ויט:)

AND IF IT WILL BE EATEN ON THE THIRD DAY, IT WILL BE CONSIDERED PIGUL, AND IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

In this week's *parsha* we learn about the laws of *pigul*. When a person brings a *korban*, he has a set amount of time in which to eat it. If a person offers a *korban* - while having in mind to eat it after the established time has elapsed - the *korban* is invalid, and is called "*pigul*; rejected". If a person eats *pigul*, he is *chayiv kares*. However, these laws only apply if the *korban* was otherwise offered properly. If there was another problem that invalidated the *korban*, then the *korban* is not considered *pigul*, and one is not *chayiv kares* for eating it. While eating it is still forbidden, it does not bear the same severity as *pigul*.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l points out that we can learn a very important *hashkafa* lesson from the *halachos* of *pigul*. When a *korban* that is *pigul* is otherwise offered properly, the punishment for eating it is much more severe than for eating a *korban* that would have been invalid anyway. This is a *mashal* to the way that the world runs. Something that is on a higher level can be ruined by a problem that would have no noticeable effect on something of lesser importance. For example, if a single soldier makes a mistake during a battle, this may affect him and the few soldiers around him. On the other hand, if a general makes a tactical error, that can effect the outcome of the entire war. The greater the responsibility, the greater effect a mistake will have. This concept is represented by *pigul* by an otherwise good *korban*, which carries much harsher repercussions than if there is another error in the bringing of a *korban*. For the same reason, we as members of Klal Yisroel, the nation for whose sake the world was created, have an added responsibility to ensure that our actions are befitting a nation of our stature. The responsibility that we have to the world demands that our actions always be above reproach.

Rav Yaakov uses this idea to explain a somewhat ambiguous phrase found in the *vidui* that we say during *selichos*. We confess that, "אֲשַׁמְנוּ מִכָּל עַם, We are guiltier than any other nation." Is this really true? Can it be that Klal Yisroel is truly worse than any other nation? Based on what we have explained above, we can now understand this phrase not to mean that our actions have been worse than the wickedest nations in the world, but rather that our actions have had the most impact on the world, and as such, we must carry a greater portion of the blame.

The Ribnitzer Rebbe; HaRav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz zt"l, would spend some time during the year in Florida in retreat from the harsh winters of New York. One Shabbos afternoon, a young chassid decided to make the long trek from his home to where the Rebbe was staying, to dwell in his presence and be of help in securing a minyan for *mincha*. He knew he had a long walk ahead of him along Collins Avenue through the searing sun, but he was devoted to make the trip just as well.

Along the way, the young chassid didn't pay much attention to the fact that nobody was out on the Avenue. He slowly began to take notice of the fact that throughout his entire journey to the Rebbe's residence, Collins Avenue, which is usually full of people immodestly dressed, was completely deserted - except for him. He was truly amazed that when he finally made it to the Rebbe's house some time later, he had not passed a single person outside that afternoon. In any event, the young chassid was happy that he in fact completed the minyan and basked in the Ribnitzer Rebbe's presence till after Shabbos.

After Shabbos was over, the Rebbe asked his Gabbai to drive this young chassid to his house. The chassid argued that he didn't want to be a burden to the Rebbe and doesn't mind walking back the entire way. After a few exchanges, the Ribnitzer Rebbe finally implored him to take the car ride, explaining, "I can't clear the Avenue twice!"



R' Yaakov on his last trip to Eretz Yisroel at the Kaminetz cheder

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